Tourism has been consolidated as one of the most important economic activities of our time and has growth forecast to reach ever higher levels. Associated with economic, social, political and cultural factors that has enabled a growth in tourist demand, it seems to emerge an intensifying phenomenon in travelers’ expectations referring to a strong affective/cognitive trend of active and passive involvement with travel, translated into an intense love for travelling. Travelers that show themselves passionate about the act of travelling were the target of this work. Seeking to study the elements that motivate these travel lovers, resulting from experiences, beliefs and perceptions about the benefits of traveling, a qualitative exploratory research using Grounded Theory supported by in-depth interviews with 16 travelers was held. The results showed seven recurrent motivations: 1) search for self-knowledge and personal growth; 2) interest to live cultural diversity; 3) routine break and escape from reality; 4) search for novelty; 5) search for adventures and challenges; 6) search for authenticity and freedom and 7) search for stories to tell. It was also possible to group the motivations in three levels of recurrence among respondents: high recurrence (motivation 1 and 2), average recurrence (motivation 3, 4 and 6) and low recurrence (motivation 5 and 7).

KEY WORDS: consumer behavior, tourism, desire to travel, motivation, Grounded Theory.