



HOLIDAY HABITS 2026-27



FOREWORD

The headlines of this Holiday Habits report are broadly positive – people going on holiday nearly back to pre-pandemic levels, and a continued appetite for holidays into the next 12 months.

Demand has held up well despite a range of challenges this year, and that looks set to continue, as does the willingness to prioritise spending on travel over other discretionary items.

Behind the headline figures, it has been a tough year for the travel industry.

The conflict in the Middle East shook the sector, not just in terms of the initial disruption to travel, but also the ripple effects of changes to fuel supply and prices. How we travel to and through the Middle East has changed and there does not appear to be an immediate resolution of the disruption on the horizon.

Closer to home, Europe's new Entry/Exit System, and climate-related events such as wildfires and extreme heat, have also affected people's travel plans. Together, this is a lot for an industry to deal with over a short period.

Perhaps, though, it is the cost of living – more than anything – that has been the constant challenge shaping customer behaviour. While people do continue to spend on travel, they are leaving it much later to departure before committing to their holiday. It is a pattern that is becoming regular for travel businesses, adding increased pressure and unpredictability.

However, whenever there is disruption it's an opportunity for the organised travel sector to show its strength and value. More people book with travel agents and tour operators, and more people are choosing a package holiday for the protections it offers, with customers seeing these ways of booking as routes to securing good value for money during these cost-conscious times.

The difficulties of the last 12 months aren't behind us but, as an industry, we can move forward with confidence that organised travel remains in demand, and we are part of a growing industry that now contributes £57bn annually to the UK economy.



Mark Tanzer
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

This report is based on research with a nationally representative sample of 2,082 UK adults and was carried out between 21 July to 6 August 2026. It looks at people's holiday habits in the 12 months prior to then and what their travel plans are for the year ahead.

Any references to 'the last year' or 'the past 12 months' refer to August 2025 to July 2026, with 'next year' referring to the 12 months from August 2026.

This is an annual piece of research, which has been conducted each summer since 2010 by The Nursery Research and Planning (www.the-nursery.net) on behalf of ABTA.

WHAT THE PAST 12 MONTHS TELL US



HOW MANY HOLIDAYS DID PEOPLE TAKE?

The total proportion of people who said they took a holiday in the past 12 months rose by one percentage point on last year to 88%, and the average number of holidays each person took remained in line with the past two years at 3.9. Both figures now match those of 2019, before the covid pandemic.

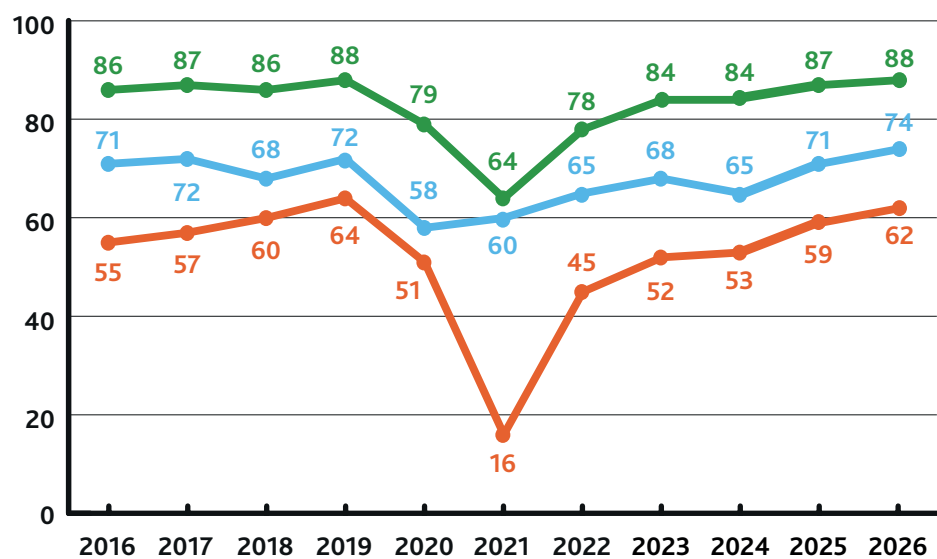
When broken down by the number of people who took 'UK holidays' and 'holidays abroad', the increase is three percentage points year-on-year to 74% (its highest point

in the past ten years) and 62% respectively, continuing the upward trend of the past five years. This suggests that despite disruptions in the last year, people have remained determined to travel.

62% said they had been on an overseas holiday, almost reaching the peak of 2019

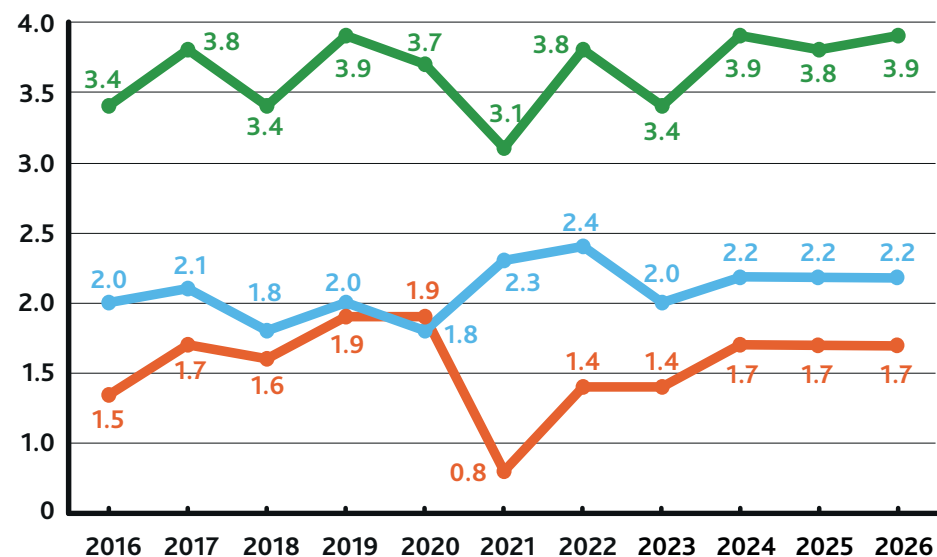
PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE TAKING HOLIDAYS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (2016-2026)

■ All holidays
■ UK holidays
■ Holidays abroad



AVERAGE NUMBER OF HOLIDAYS TAKEN PER PERSON IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (2016-2026)

■ All holidays
■ UK holidays
■ Holidays abroad



Base: Respondents who took a holiday in the past 12 months

NB – The 2020 data in these charts covers August 2019 to July 2020, reflecting a period of six months of travel prior to the emergence of the COVID pandemic
Figures rounded to one decimal place

WHO TRAVELLED?

Families at the fore

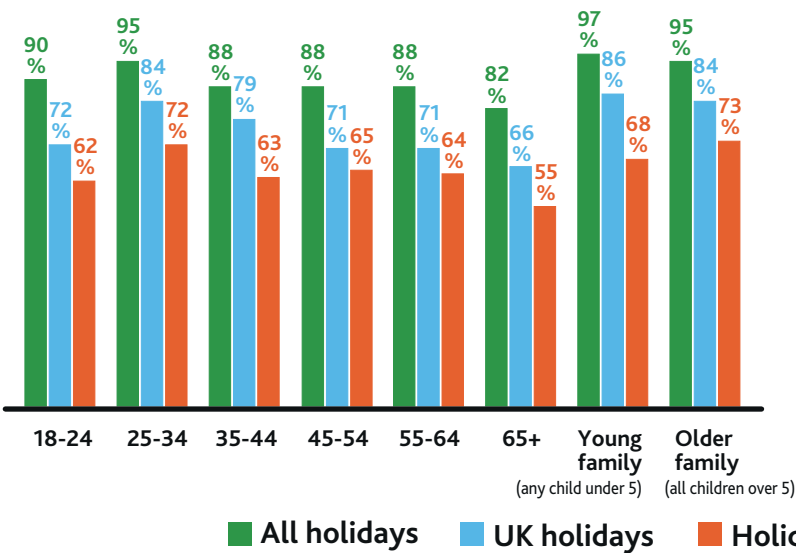
Holidays have become even more popular with families, with them taking more holidays than any other group in the past year. While the proportion of young families (children under five years old) taking any holiday increased two percentage points to 97%, the number who took holidays abroad increased by four percentage points to 68%. It is older families with children over five years who saw a greater increase in the proportion taking holidays abroad, up eight percentage points to 73%.

Who else travelled?

The strong demand for travel is shown by the increase in the proportion of people taking holidays abroad across all age groups. More 25-34 year olds took holidays abroad than any other age band, at 72%, which is also a four percentage point increase on the past year. There was also a four percentage point increase for those aged over 65 travelling abroad.

Looking at who people travelled with, the number of people travelling by themselves rose a further two percentage points to 21% in the previous year, continuing the upward trend of the previous three years.

HOW DIFFERENT AGES AND LIFE STAGES TRAVELLED IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS



AVERAGE NUMBER OF HOLIDAYS TAKEN PER PERSON IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS BY LIFE STAGE

All respondents	3.9	2.2	1.7
Under 45 (no kids at home)	3.6	2	1.6
Younger family (any child under 5)	5.4	3	2.4
Older family (all children over 5)	5	3	2.1
Over 45 (no kids at home)	3.2	1.8	1.4

Base: all respondents who took a holiday in the past 12 months. Figures do not always reflect the total due to rounding



WHERE DID WE GO?

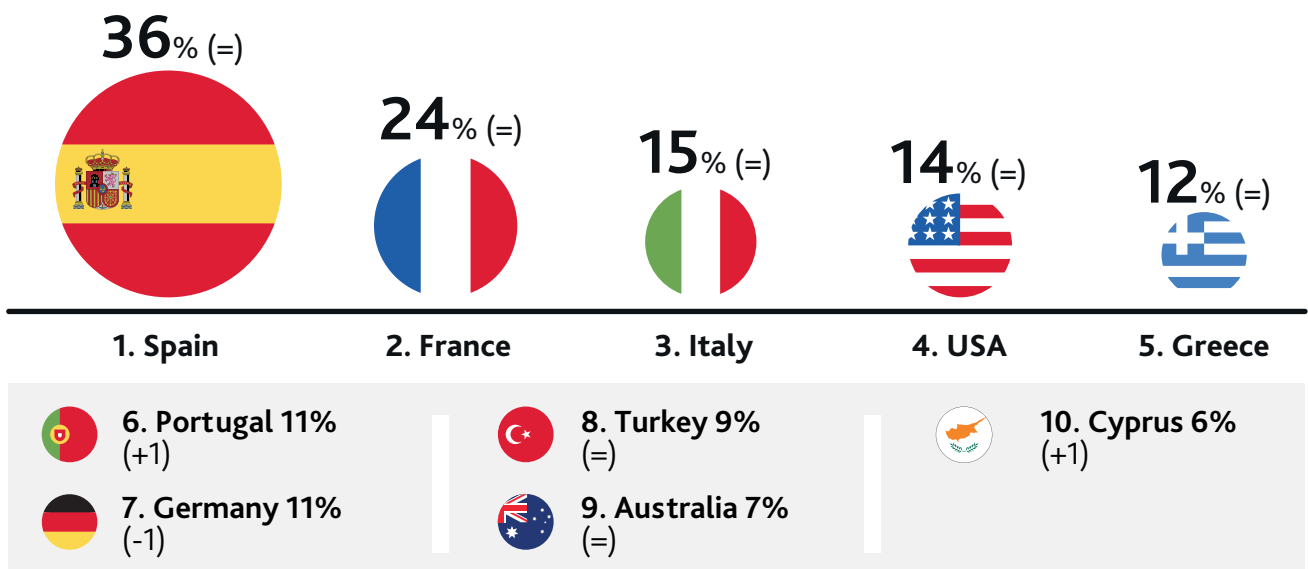
Europe remained the most popular choice for holidays in the past year, with just over eight out of ten respondents stating they had visited. Its popularity extends across all age and life stage groups, with young families increasing their visits the most (82%, up six percentage points).

North America, Asia and Africa maintained their popularity. It is, perhaps, not surprising that people reported travelling less to the Middle East, or some longer-haul destinations where the Middle East acts as a transit point. However, the conflict which affected travel in the region covers only four months of the survey

period for this report – had it been longer we may have expected to see a larger change in Middle East data. Australia managed to maintain its popularity, suggesting travellers found alternative routes to reach their desired destination.

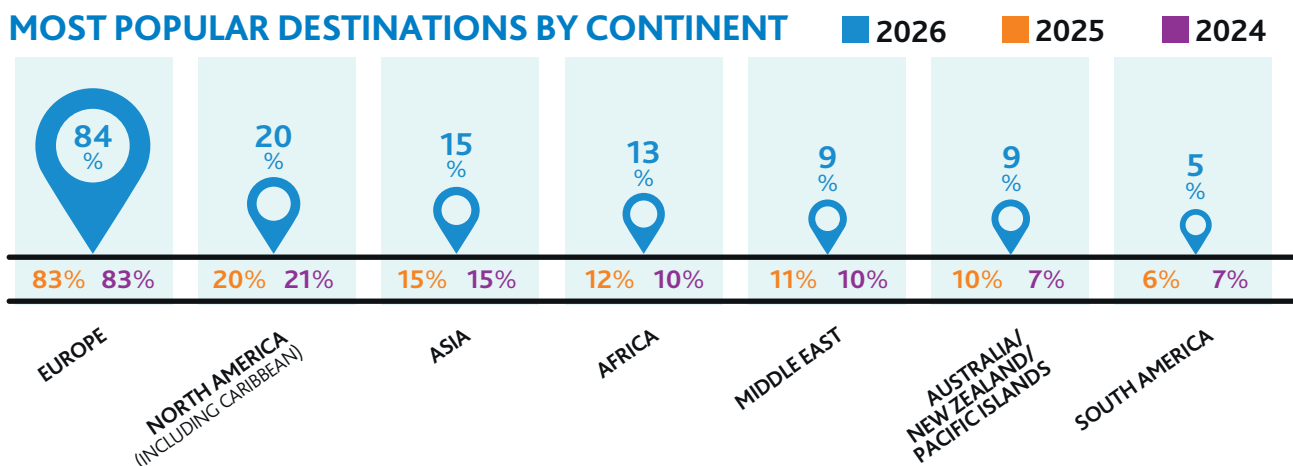
ABTA members have reported that some destinations saw an uptick in visitors due to the inability to travel to or via the Middle East, with Spain being one of them. This is also reflected in our data with Spain up four percentage points (36%).

TOP COUNTRIES VISITED IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (DIFFERENCE IN RANKING COMPARED TO 2025)



Base: respondents who took a holiday in the past 12 months

MOST POPULAR DESTINATIONS BY CONTINENT



Base: respondents who took a holiday in the past 12 months

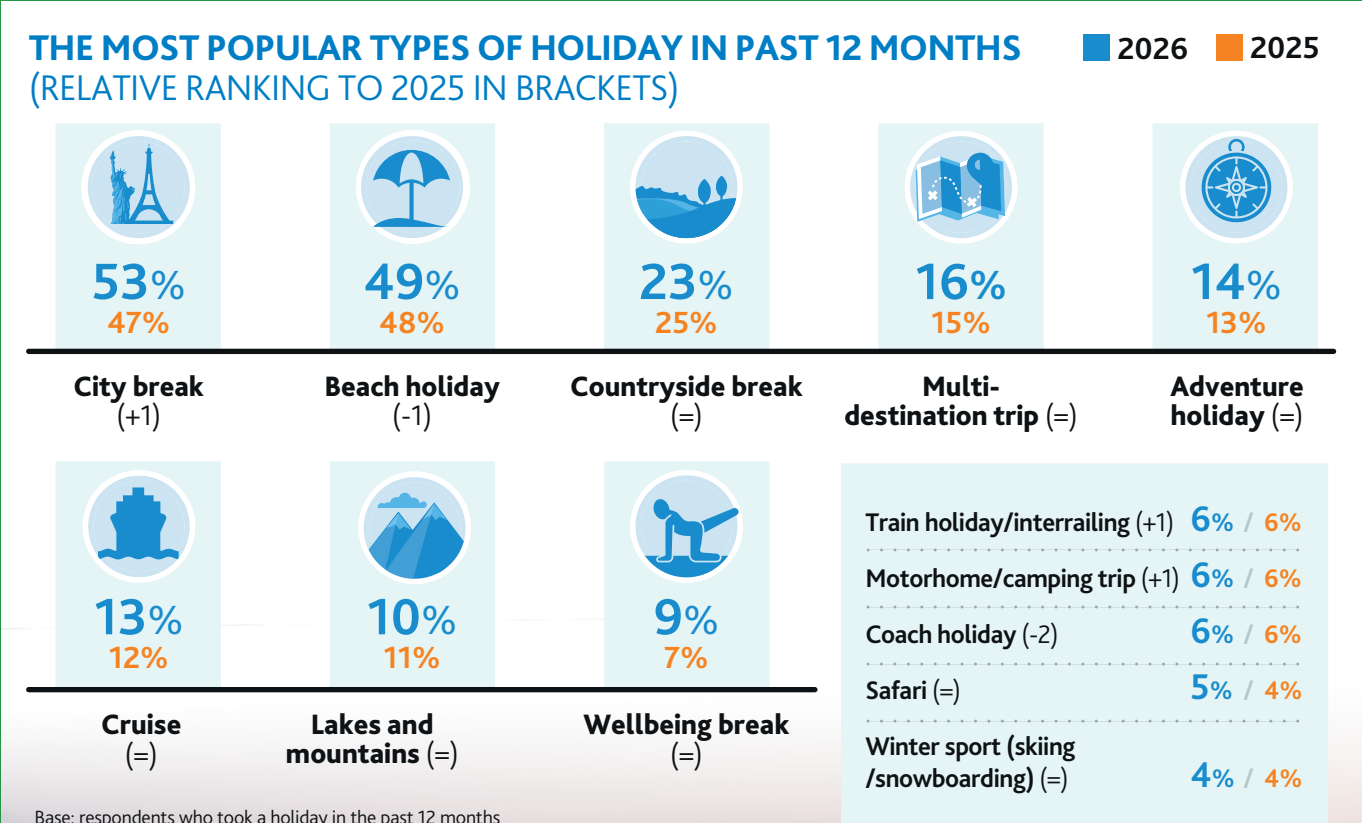
WHAT TYPES OF HOLIDAYS PROVED THE MOST POPULAR?

City breaks (up six percentage points) have overtaken beach holidays as the most popular holiday type overall, with countryside breaks completing the top three. Those under 45 years old with no children at home (56%) took city breaks more than the average.

However, when it comes to families, a beach holiday is still the most popular choice, with 57% of them having been on one in the past year. Beach holidays were also most popular with 25-34 year olds (57%) and 55-64 year olds (51%).

Those aged 55-64 years old took more countryside breaks than any other group (27%), followed by 45-54 year olds (25%), and one in ten 18-24 year olds took a coach holiday.

30% of 25-34 year olds took an adventure holiday, up four percentage points year-on-year



Base: respondents who took a holiday in the past 12 months



CRUISE APPEALS TO ALL AGES WITH SHORTER TRIPS ON THE UP

The proportion of people taking a cruise remained in line with the past year, at 13%. Increasingly, the main reasons for choosing a cruise holiday were value for money 52% (up from 49%), the convenience of having meals, accommodation, transport and entertainment all in one place 57% (up from 52%) and being able to pay for all essential costs up front 40% (up from 38%).

Cruise is popular across all demographics, a reflection on how the industry has diversified its offering to appeal to different ages and interests. This is shown by 23% of young families with children under five taking a cruise, a three percentage point increase on the past year, and 20% of 25-34 year olds.

13% of over 65 year olds took a cruise, with a similar proportion of 18-24 year olds and 35-44 year olds (both 14%) which is up four and three percentage points, respectively.

Interest in wellness

Looking at the types of cruises people would be interested in taking in the future, we see that different types appeal

to different age groups. Over 65 year olds are most interested in ocean cruises, adult-only and no-fly cruises for future trips, a stark contrast to 18-24 year olds who would prefer a UK cruise or wellness cruise.

There is an increased appeal for wellness cruises, up seven percentage points to 28% and with strong interest among 35-44 year olds. Adult-only cruises saw a three-percentage point increase, at 38%.

Cruises around the UK have increased in popularity with 35% interested in doing so, up three percentage points year-on-year, and particularly favoured among 35-44 year olds at 51%.

The wider variety of cruises also extends to the length of trip, with interest in short breaks on the up. More people say they would take a three to five day cruise, up from 27% to 33%, surpassing those who are interested in 10 (31%) and 14-day (28%) cruises. Although seven-day cruises were the top choice (40% up three percentage points), particularly among 35-44 year olds (48%).

TYPES OF CRUISE PEOPLE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN TAKING

	Average	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Ocean	50%	31%	35%	56%	57%	72%	62%
Adult-only	38%	27%	24%	31%	36%	53%	59%
Cruise around the UK	35%	41%	45%	51%	20%	16%	22%
River	24%	13%	17%	30%	27%	22%	32%
Food-focused*	23%	31%	34%	30%	20%	9%	7%
No-fly	19%	7%	6%	15%	30%	22%	39%
Wellness	28%	32%	42%	45%	25%	6%	3%
Expedition	21%	18%	29%	28%	31%	14%	4%

Base: respondents who took a cruise in the last 12 months and those who plan to take a cruise in the next 12 months

*Food-focused cruises refer to those where the main priority is the dining options available on board and food-based excursions

HOW WE BOOKED OUR HOLIDAYS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS



INCREASING DEMAND FOR TRAVEL PROFESSIONALS

More people sought the expertise of travel professionals (travel agents and tour operators) this year.

When it comes to holidays abroad, 38% of people said they booked with a travel professional, back to its peak and up from 34% the previous year. 65+ year olds used them the most, at 44% in line with the past year, followed by 39% of 25-34 year olds (up five percentage points), with 34% or more of all other age groups (all up between three and six percentage points) having booked a holiday abroad with a travel professional. The biggest proportion increase has been by six percentage points to 35% of 18-24 year olds.

The top three reasons for using a travel professional were ease of booking, saving time (up four and three percentage points, respectively), and value for money, with a notable increase of five percentage points and perhaps a reflection of the wider cost of living challenges households are under.

Value for money saw the biggest increase in the reason people gave for booking with a travel professional



Base: All booked with a travel professional in the past 12 months

PACKAGE HOLIDAYS GROW IN POPULARITY – PARTICULARLY AMONG FAMILIES

Package holidays remain the most popular type of holiday overall in the past 12 months, with 63% having booked their holiday abroad as a package – a two percentage point increase over the previous year.

Package holidays are particularly favoured among families chosen by 78% of those with children under five, and 75% with children over five, who took a holiday abroad in the last year. The best value option for the price was the top reason for families choosing a package, at 50% up seven percentage points, followed by convenience (saves time) at 47%.

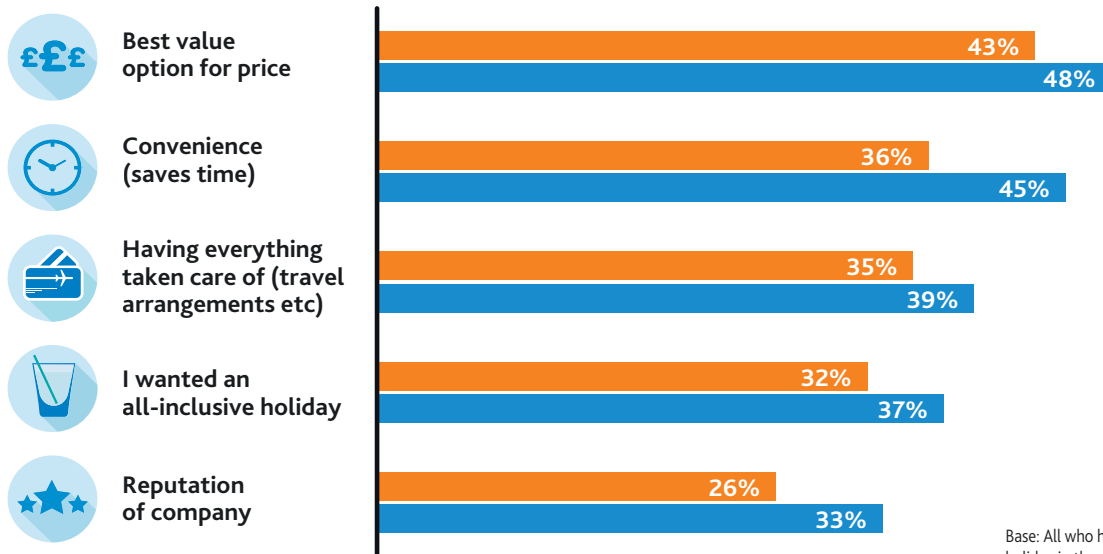
Overall, across all age groups, best value option for price is the top reason why people chose a package, with almost half of people (48%) citing this as a reason, up from 43% last year, which again could be a reflection of the wider cost of living pressures.

We've seen increases across all the other top five reasons for booking a package, with convenience up nine percentage points to 45% and having everything taken care of up to 39% (rising to 57% for over 65 year olds). This could be customers looking for certainty and reassurance that someone else is managing their holiday plans, given some holidays and travel arrangements were made more complicated this year due to the conflict in the Middle East, as well as other disruption.

By contrast, those booking their own separate travel and accommodation declined a further two percentage points to 43%, continuing the decline of the previous year.

TOP REASONS FOR BOOKING A PACKAGE (2025-26)

2025 2026



Base: All who have booked a package holiday in the past 12 months



SPOTLIGHT ON ALL-INCLUSIVE HOLIDAYS

All-inclusive holidays' popularity has remained steady for 26% of UK travellers, up from 25%, and steady at 33% for those who had taken a holiday abroad.

With all-inclusive holidays providing the ability to budget with more certainty, 37% of families said they took one and 13 percentage points more than any other life stage. When it comes to holidays abroad, all-inclusive has now become families' top board basis with 43% choosing them, (an increase of four percentage points) overtaking room-only serviced hotels or apartments (41%).

HOLIDAY SPENDING RINGFENCED, BUT MORE CAUTION CREEPING IN

As with previous years, holidays remain a spending priority with, typically, fewer people looking to cut back on a UK or abroad holiday than other non-essentials, such as eating out, clothes and other leisure activities.

But the data does suggest a bit more caution when it comes to holiday spend as people feel the impact of the increased cost of living.

While holidays are still far down the list in terms of what people will cut back on, the gap between holidays and other areas of spend has tightened. For the first time this year, our survey differentiated between cutting back spending on holidays in the UK and abroad, showing people would cut back spending on UK holidays (23% and less than any other activity), with more people likely to cut back on holidays abroad (32%).

People would rather cut back on spending in other areas of life than their holidays

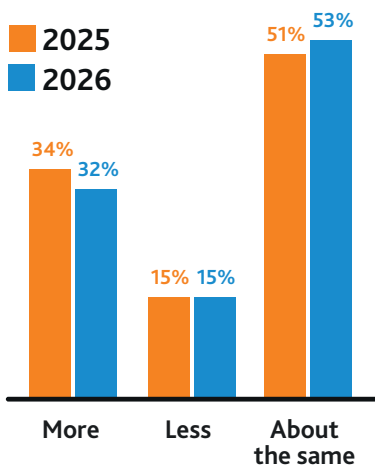
People are still committed to holidays, but we are seeing more cost-conscious travellers as we head into the coming year.

To look at people's intention to spend from a different perspective, 32% of people said they would spend more on holidays next year, down from 34% last year. While 'taking more holidays' remains the top reason for doing so at 45%, it is down from 49% the previous year. 'The cost of holidays going up' was the second most popular reason at 38%, in line with last year's figures.

Those who said they'd spend less remains at 15%, with the increased cost of living the main reason for this (52% up from 47%).

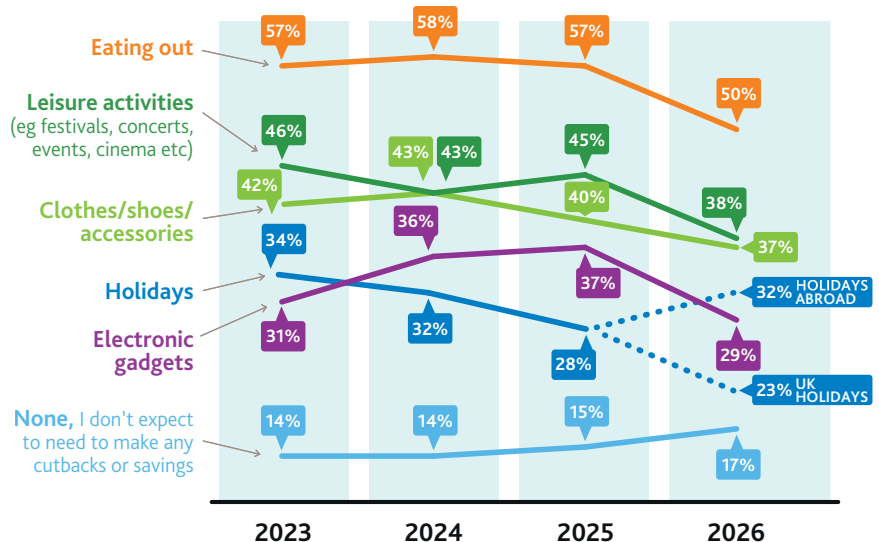
We also asked how the cost of living might impact people's holiday plans overall and, while some will book cheaper accommodation (21%) or eat out less on holiday (19%), only 7% said it would have such an impact that they would not go on holiday at all.

HOW MUCH PEOPLE PLAN TO SPEND ON THEIR HOLIDAYS NEXT YEAR COMPARED TO THIS YEAR



Base: respondents who went on holiday in the last 12 months
(Note: figures exclude those who said "unsure")

ACTIVITIES WHERE PEOPLE PLAN TO REDUCE THEIR SPENDING TO COVER THE COST OF LIVING (2023-2026)



Base: all respondents



THE TRAVEL CONFIDENCE INDEX

The Travel Confidence Index is designed to give a snapshot of how confident consumers are feeling about travelling overseas, fitting neatly with ABTA's brand message of 'Travel with confidence'.

Now in its fourth year, ABTA's headline Travel Confidence Index score has fallen back a little for the first time. However, there's more behind this year's results than a straight year-on-year comparison might suggest.

THE TRAVEL CONFIDENCE INDEX

HOW WE CALCULATE THE TRAVEL CONFIDENCE INDEX

Our Travel Confidence Index is calculated by asking a nationally representative sample of 2,082 UK adults to rate how confident they are currently feeling about taking an overseas holiday on a scale of one to 10, with one being not confident at all and 10 being extremely confident.

Excluding those who rate their confidence levels as neutral (five or six out of 10), the scores are calculated by taking away the percentage of those with low confidence levels (one to four) from the percentage of those with high confidence levels (seven to 10).

The 2026 Travel Confidence Index is

+50

a three point decrease year-on-year

THIS YEAR'S RESULTS

This year's Travel Confidence Index stands at +50, a decrease of three points since 2025, but still higher than in 2024.

While that shows that consumer confidence has taken a bit of a knock, it is perhaps surprising that the number has held up so well – given the disruption to travel caused for much of 2026 by conflict in the Middle East and reporting of long queues and (in some cases) missed flights as Europe adapted to Entry Exit System (EES) border controls.

With 2026 having proven an unusual year for overseas travel, ABTA decided to ask its Travel Confidence Index questions of consumers an extra time, in May 2026 – a period when speculation was rife about the availability of jet fuel and the potential impact on holiday prices, and as EES teething problems were receiving widespread media coverage.

A Travel Confidence Index calculated then would have been +26 – a result which still showed many more people confident to travel overseas than not, but nonetheless a significant fall from 2025. To have reached +50 by the time of our annual report is a remarkable bounce back.

It shows vividly how temporary events can quickly knock confidence to travel and therefore, potentially, bookings. It equally shows that when the environment changes, confidence can be quick to come back.

Looking at the annual findings, the change from +53 to +50 has been driven by a small decline in those who are highly confident (from 70% to 68%) and a similarly-sized rise in those who are low in confidence (up from 17% to 19%).

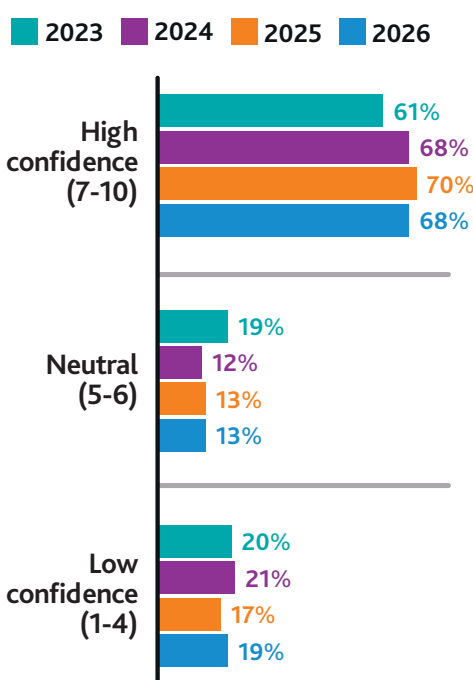
May 2026

+26

August 2026

+50

HOW CONFIDENT ARE CONSUMERS?



Figures do not always reflect the total due to rounding

HOW HAVE CONFIDENCE LEVELS CHANGED AMONG DIFFERENT GROUPS OF TRAVELLERS?

Most age groups have seen a small fall in confidence this year, although this appears to be more pronounced among younger travellers. However, scores of over +50 and – in the case of the 25-34 age group – over +70, show that these demographics are far more confident to travel than not.

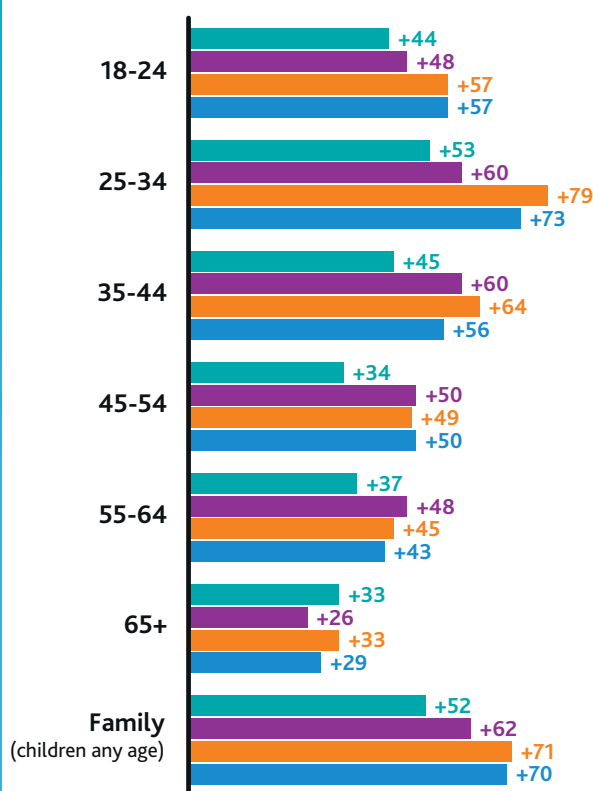
The over 65 age group once again has the lowest confidence, though, at +29 is higher than two years ago.

Families continue to score well, with their rating virtually unchanged. It's a group which tends to travel frequently, and that familiarity may play a part in maintaining high levels of confidence.

THE TRAVEL CONFIDENCE INDEX

(by age and life stage)

2023 2024 2025 2026



Base: All respondents. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

WHERE ELSE IS CONFIDENCE PARTICULARLY HIGH?

As last year, there are two types of travellers who stand out as supremely confident.

Those who booked with a travel professional scored +77, falling back by two points.

And edging ahead are those who booked a package holiday. While also declining a little, from +80 to +78, there is a vast difference between this group and those who didn't book a package, where confidence is a much lower +38.

Whether package holiday takers feel they are benefiting from convenience and protection, or those booking with travel professionals feeling supported by forward planning and accessing expert knowledge, it's seems clear that confidence is a direct result of the way they have opted to choose and arrange their breaks.

The Travel Confidence Index of those who booked:

with a travel professional

+77

a package holiday

+78

WHAT GIVES PEOPLE CONFIDENCE TO TRAVEL?

As in previous years, we offered respondents a list of 20 potential 'confidence builders' and asked them to rank how important they are in giving them confidence. Respondents ranked these as 'essential', 'important', 'nice to have' or 'not important'.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding travel in the earlier part of 2026, there were very few changes on previous years. For example, despite widespread reporting when EES-related queues developed at some airports, there was barely any change in the proportion of people saying that 'Being able to easily travel through the airport/port' is 'essential' to giving confidence to travel, rising just one percentage point from 32% to 33%.

'Knowing I have the correct documents for travel eg a valid passport and/or visa' remains the most important confidence builder, edging up from 68% to 72% and reinforcing to the travel industry that customer communication on this point continues to be important.

'Being able to get home if my travel company goes bust' stays second with 59% deeming this to be essential, with the top three rounded off by 'Knowing the total price in advance', selected by 56%.

'Travelling to somewhere I feel familiar with/have visited before' scored the lowest of the 20 options, with only 14% saying this is essential to give them the confidence to travel.

44% believe that 'knowing the company I've booked with is an ABTA member' is essential for their travel confidence, with a further 32% saying this is important



OUTLOOK FOR THE YEAR AHEAD



PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

The number of people planning to travel in the next 12 months has remained steady, with 70% planning on going abroad, and 56% planning a UK holiday, up two percentage points on the previous year. On the face of it, this seems an encouraging result for the industry, although it comes with a caveat that this data set does not quantify how many holidays people plan to take.

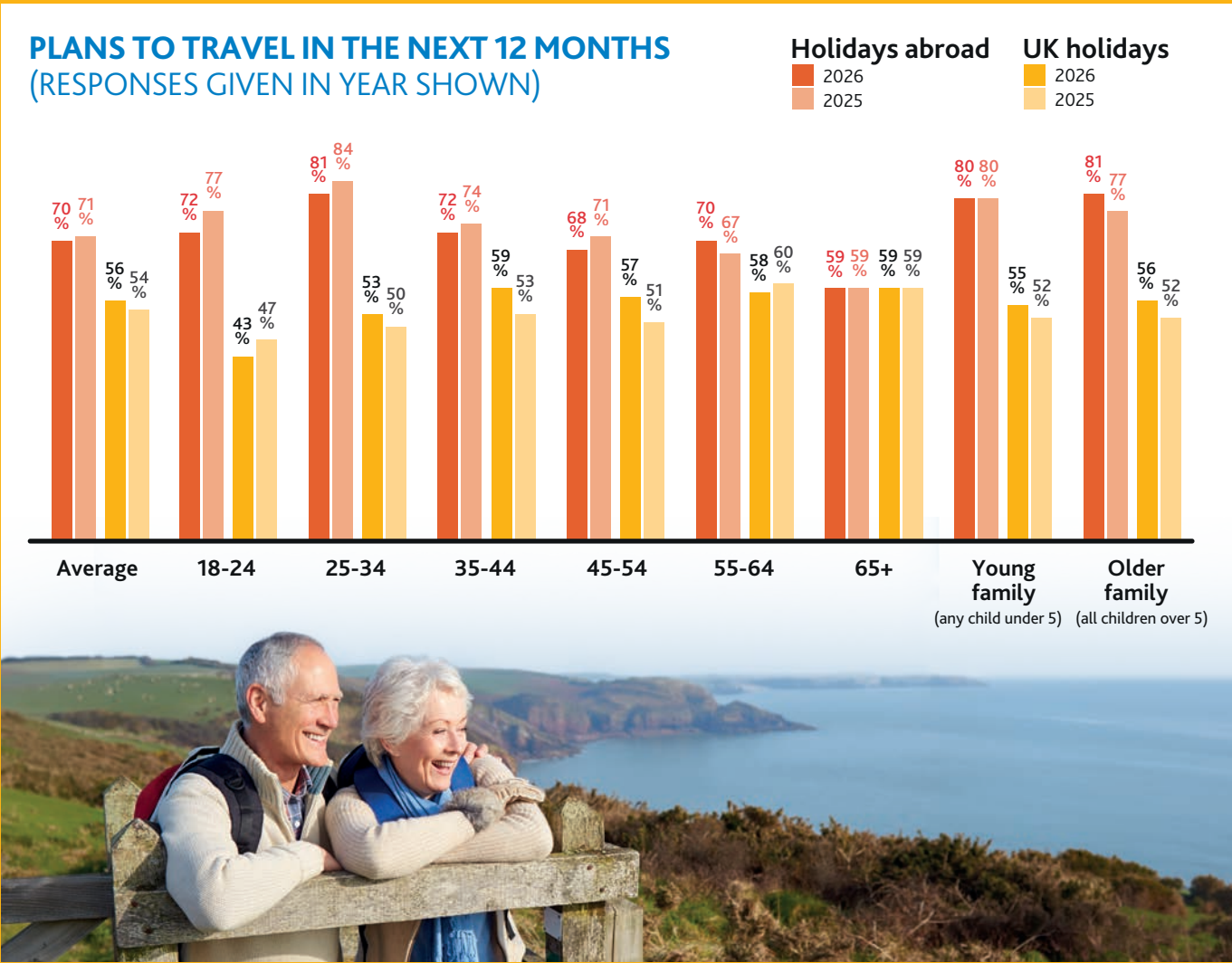
It's 18-24 year olds and 35-44 year olds who are most likely to say they plan to go abroad (both 72%), followed by 55-64 year olds, at 70% up from 67% the previous year. By life stage, the proportion of families planning on taking a holiday abroad has risen to 80% or more.

We asked those who said they are planning on taking a holiday abroad next year whether they have already booked anything. 46% of people said they had booked something, down from 48% last year; this covers people who have booked all of their planned trips, booked one holiday

and plan to book more, or have booked part of a trip(s).

There is a particularly marked shift among 25-34 year olds, with 46% saying they have booked something, compared to 55% last year, indicating a later booking trend coming through for this important age group. There is a similar pattern among families with young children (children under five), as 49% have booked something, down from 54% last year, albeit it is worth noting that figures for older families (children over five) are slightly up on last year (51% and 49% respectively).

When looking at those who have booked all their overseas holidays for the coming year, that stands at 16%, down from 18% last year. This suggests that the pattern of coming back from a summer holiday and immediately securing bookings for the coming year isn't as quite as prevalent, reflecting a more dispersed and late booking pattern.



Base: All respondents

WHERE ARE PEOPLE PLANNING TO GO?

There is no change in the top seven most popular countries UK travellers say they are considering for their overseas holidays in the next 12 months. Spain retains the top spot for where people most want to visit and, in line with the trend for this year, an increasing proportion of people are looking to visit there in the coming 12 months, up three percentage points on the past year.

The impact of the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the conflict in the Middle East, and continued reduced flight options, is seemingly affecting travellers' future intentions. Those planning to visit the Middle East are down from 7% to 5%.

Despite the most popular countries remaining the same, more than half of UK travellers are considering a new place within them, as 54% are planning on visiting a resort

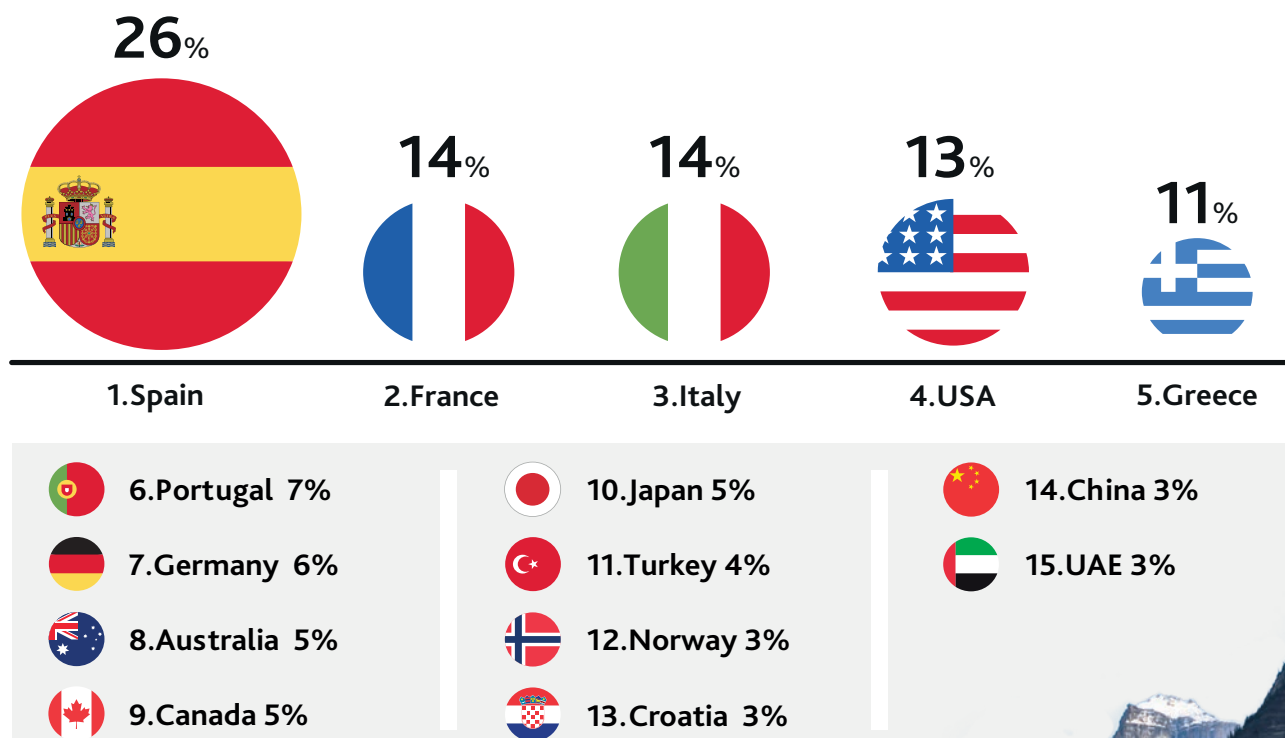
or city they have never been to before, with 25-34 year olds most likely (73%), followed by 18-24 year olds (57%).

Overall, 48% said they were planning to visit a *country* they have never been to before, again mostly shaped by 25-34 year olds (71%), followed by 18-24 year olds (57%).

City breaks are set to continue their rise in popularity over the next 12 months, with more than half looking to take this type of break (51% – up four percentage points).

There is an increased appetite for beach holidays (50% – up three percentage points) and countryside breaks (28% – up three percentage points), over the coming year. These are followed by multi-destination trips and cruise (both 17%), and adventure holidays (16%).

TOP 15 DESTINATIONS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD



Base: all planning on travelling abroad in the next 12 months

WHEN ARE PEOPLE PLANNING TO TRAVEL?

Looking at the year ahead in 2027, the trend continues to holiday across the year, as opposed to just in the main summer months.

May emerges as the most popular month overall, with older travellers without children at home favouring the value of shoulder season trips in the spring, as well as early autumn, while families continue to plan to travel around the school summer holidays and December.

The search for good value holidays is a strong theme across our data and is likely to be driving the continued embrace of shoulder season travel. The increased appetite for city breaks may also be a reason why people

are looking to travel in the slightly cooler months, with them being more comfortable for city exploration.

We also asked respondents about intention to travel between September-December 2026. With our research conducted in July/August 2026, one would expect higher levels of intention to travel looking a short time ahead rather than a year ahead – for example, 23% of people said they were planning on going on holiday abroad in September 2026. The data is presented with a caveat that for the later months of 2027, people will be less likely to have made firm holiday plans than they will have done for late 2026. Actual numbers intending to travel later in 2027 will be likely to grow over time.

WHEN PEOPLE ARE PLANNING TO TRAVEL ABROAD

	2027											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Average*	10%	12%	14%	15%	17%	15%	14%	13%	15%	10%	5%	6%
Under 45 (no kids at home)	10%	9%	14%	13%	14%	16%	19%	13%	13%	9%	4%	5%
Young family (any child under 5)	9%	13%	10%	16%	13%	11%	14%	19%	11%	11%	5%	15%
Older family (all children over 5)	8%	11%	12%	15%	13%	15%	20%	21%	11%	7%	3%	7%
Over 45 (no kids at home)	12%	14%	17%	16%	22%	17%	9%	9%	19%	12%	6%	3%

Base: All planning on travelling abroad in the next 12 months



HOW ARE UK TRAVELLERS FINDING THEIR HOLIDAY INSPIRATION?



ARE MORE UK TRAVELLERS TURNING TO AI?

Recommendations from family and friends (42%), general internet searching (without AI assistants) (37%) and travel websites and guidebooks (35%) remain the three most popular sources of holiday inspiration.

But advances in technology and a willingness to embrace them, see people increasingly look to digital sources for inspiration. AI use is up six percentage points, from 8% last year to 14% this year. This makes AI platforms now a more popular source of inspiration than film and TV shows (13%) and newspapers and magazines (11%), albeit it is worth noting that AI may draw on content from these sources.

Those aged 25-34 years old are leading the use of AI, with twice as many as the average using AI for inspiration at 29%, up eleven percentage points, followed by 21% of 35-44 year olds and 20% of 18-24 year olds (both up seven percentage points).

When considering the 13% of people who said they used general internet searching with the assistance of AI overviews like Google Gemini, it places a combined use of AI as the joint fifth most popular source of inspiration, on a par with social media platforms.*

*Combined total 24%, not 27%, by adding both sources – as some respondents will have selected both options.

INCREASE IN USE OF AI AS A SOURCE OF HOLIDAY INSPIRATION

	AVER- AGE	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
AI (eg ChatGPT, Copilot, Claude, Meta AI) Year-on-year change	14% +6	20% +7	29% +11	21% +7	12% +7	6% +4	4% +3
General internet searching (with AI overview)	13%	11%	19%	13%	20%	12%	7%

Base: All respondents

MOST POPULAR SOURCES OF HOLIDAY INSPIRATION

	AVERAGE 2025	AVERAGE 2026
General internet searching (without AI summary)	48% combined	37%
General internet searching (with AI overview)		13%
Recommendations from family and friends	41%	42%
Travel websites or guidebooks	36%	35%
Online forums	26%	27%
Social media platforms	22%	24%
Holiday / destination brochures	25%	23%
Travel agents and tour operators	21%	21%
Online video sites	20%	21%
AI (eg ChatGPT, Copilot, Claude, Meta AI)	8%	14%
Films or TV shows	12%	13%
Newspapers, magazines or blogs	11%	11%
Podcasts / travel-related audio	6%	7%

Base: All respondents

Note: With new AI models launching and awareness of them continuing to grow, this year travellers were asked whether their most popular choice of inspiration (general internet searching) was with or without their integrated AI assistants.

CONFIDENCE IN AI FOR PLANNING AND BOOKING HOLIDAYS

As well as understanding the current use of AI, we also wanted to gauge its potential use in the future, by exploring people's level of confidence in AI for planning and booking holidays.

46% of people say they have some degree of confidence in AI to help them plan which destination to visit and/or accommodation to book, and 48% confident it could help them plan what to do while they are there. Hence,

we expect to see the proportion of people using AI to shape their holiday plans increase.

The confidence to book a holiday using AI is also growing (44%), up six percentage points, although only 19% say they are extremely confident to do so (up four percentage points). 31% of both 25-34 year olds and families with any children by life stage were extremely confident to book with AI.

CONFIDENCE IN AI FOR PLANNING AND BOOKING HOLIDAYS

	Extremely confident	Somewhat confident	Neutral	Less confident	Not at all confident
Planning which destination to go to, and/or which accommodation to book	17%	29%	14%	16%	25%
Planning what to do when you are on holiday /create an itinerary	16%	31%	16%	14%	23%
Booking	19%	24%	13%	17%	27%

Base: All respondents asked 'How confident would you feel about an AI tool planning or booking your next holiday?' Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding



RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL



RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

ABTA believes that the drive for travel to become more sustainable and have a positive impact should be proactively led by industry, destinations and national and local governments - instead of just responding to consumer behaviour. It is still worth noting that there is an expectation from customers, with 41% saying it is their travel company's responsibility to manage the impact on the environment and local people, not theirs.

More people say the travel industry is taking action to reduce its impact on the environment – 38% of people agreed with this statement compared to 35% in 2024, and 16% disagreed versus 21% in 2024. Similarly, people are increasingly seeing official certification schemes as helpful for identifying which holidays have a better impact on the environment and local people, at 46% up from 43% in 2024.

Customers also want support and guidance to play their part; 42% said they would like advice from their travel company about how they can make better choices for the environment and local people on holiday. As well as industry taking responsibility for its own action, the industry has the opportunity to help customers make more sustainable choices when planning their holiday and in destination.

OVERTOURISM

Levels of concern about overtourism remain at 57%, and there continues to be high awareness of overtourism protests (72%), albeit slightly down on last year (77%).



TOP CONCERNS ABOUT THE IMPACT OF HOLIDAYS

		2025	2026
1	Welfare of animals in tourism	65%	67%
2	Nature conservation	63%	65%
2	Preservation of culture and heritage	64%	65%
3	Waste and plastic pollution	64%	64%
4	Impact of overtourism	57%	57%
5	How local people are impacted by tourism	58%	56%
6	Impact of climate change	57%	55%
7	Water stress	52%	54%

Base: All respondents

A large percentage of people did at least one thing while away to make their holiday more sustainable (82%). The most common action was following recycling rules at their accommodation (49%); avoiding single-use plastics was third (38%). This correlates with the concern people have around waste and plastic pollution, and suggests increased information to customers, either when on holiday, or before arrival, could see more people taking action in this area.

CUSTOMERS TAKING POSITIVE ACTION

	2026
Followed recycling rules at my accommodation/destination	49%
Bought local products and produce as much as possible	40%
Tried to avoid single use plastics	38%
Was conservative with water use	33%
Used public transport instead of taking a car/taxi	32%
Hired an electric car instead of a petrol/diesel one	8%
Percentage of people who took at least one action on holiday	82%

Base: All taken a holiday in the past 12 months

People's concerns about the impact of their holidays are pretty consistent year-on-year, and continue to relate to nature and culture. But this information can be used to inform and help shape future communications to customers; for those businesses wondering what to tell their customers about sustainability, this data tells us what they're interested in.

More information on the work ABTA does to promote responsible travel can be found at www.abta.com/sustainability



CONSUMER VIEWS OF ABTA*

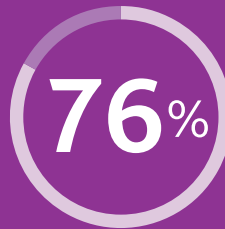
This year's research underscores the positive view that consumers have of ABTA, with over 83% of those asked again associating it with confidence, reliability, and expertise. They also consider the brand to be a source of reassurance and safety.



of consumers associate ABTA with confidence

THE POWER OF THE ABTA BRAND*

The power of the ABTA brand remains very strong, with 76% of respondents stating that they would recommend booking with an ABTA member to their friends and family, and 75% stating that they only trust companies that are members of ABTA. More than half, 54%, are willing to pay more for a holiday booked through an ABTA member.



recommend booking with an ABTA member to their friends and family

*Research by The Nursery Research and Planning (www.the-nursery.net) of a nationally representative sample of 1,000 UK adults in February 2026

ABOUT ABTA

ABTA is a trade association for UK travel agents, tour operators and the wider travel industry. We're the largest travel trade body, with over 3,500 travel brands in membership who have a combined annual UK turnover of over £41 billion. We work closely with our members to help raise and maintain standards and build a more sustainable travel industry, and provide travellers with advice, guidance and support.

Our members sign up to a code of conduct and commit to agreed service standards and fair trading. When you need clear travel information, and accurate and impartial advice relating to your trip, we're here for you. When you book with an ABTA member, reliable advice comes as standard. This means that booking with our members brings peace of mind.

ABTA also offers ABTA Travel Insurance to help you on your travels.

All this together means we help you travel with confidence.