

OCTOBER 2023

Travel Tracker

Navigating the path to the future of travel





“ 45% of consumers told us that holidays are their number one spending priority.”

Introduction

After what has been an unprecedented period for the travel industry, consumer demand has surged over the past year. The sector is undoubtedly basking in the glow of what was a very successful peak summer season.

In the midst of the current cost-of-living crisis, the question I'm constantly asked is whether we should expect demand for travel to remain so healthy in the year ahead. I am incredibly optimistic on that front.

Not only are our forward bookings at Travel Counsellors stronger than ever before, up more than 20% against this time last year, but this report – which explores consumers' attitudes towards travel – reinforces our confidence in the outlook.

45% of consumers told us that holidays are their number one spending priority. More than three quarters of those surveyed told us that they plan

to spend at least as much on travel next year as they did in the last 12 months, with most already planning a trip for the next six months.

We're excited to launch our first Travel Tracker report, which explores some of the other hot topics shaping the future of our industry, including sustainable travel.

While the travel industry has changed dramatically in recent years, these research findings reinforce my strong conviction that the best is still yet to come for consumers and travel operators alike.

Steve Byrne
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Contents

This inaugural Travel Counsellors Travel Tracker gathered data to help answer three critically important questions for the travel industry as we look to the year ahead:

- 01 How do we value travel?
- 02 How much do we spend to get our travel fix?
- 03 Does sustainable travel matter to consumers?

Report methodology:



The findings of this report are drawn from independent research, commissioned by Travel Counsellors and undertaken by Censuswide.



Through Censuswide, Travel Counsellors surveyed 2,000 nationally representative UK respondents aged 16+ between 18.09.2023 – 20.09.2023 and 2,001 nationally representative UK respondents aged 16+ between 11.10.2023–12.10.2023.



Censuswide is a member of ESOMAR – a global association and voice of the data, research and insights industry, and complies with the Market Research Society code of conduct based on the ESOMAR principles.

How do we value travel?

Our research shows there is a lot to be optimistic about for the future of the travel industry. Despite the current pressures on consumer spending, for nearly half of them, holidays are their number one spending priority in the year ahead (a figure that rose to 80% when we surveyed our own customers).

Covid-19 has transformed consumers' approach to travel. 38% say they value holidays more than before the pandemic and nearly a quarter (23%) say they are more motivated to get out and explore the world.

29% of respondents told us their main motivation for going on holiday was to escape everyday life, making it the second most important driver behind the desire to relax and unwind. Nearly a fifth (16%) admitted they 'live for their holidays'.

When it comes to booking a holiday almost one in ten (7%) said they decide to book a holiday after a bad day at work and a further 16% are prompted to book after hearing about their friends' travels. 15% are inspired by seeing others' holiday experiences on social media.

Overall, 58% of Brits have been on an international holiday in the last 12 months and on average, the data showed that consumers are planning to take two holidays abroad next year. Spain was the number one overseas destination, followed by France and Greece. Looking ahead to 2024, USA tops the travel bucket list for most consumers, followed by Australia and Italy. This sits in line with our own data which saw Spain as number one destination visited in the last 12 months, and looking ahead to summer 2024 Florida is currently taking the top spot.

Beach holidays were among the most popular holiday type last year, with nearly half (47%) of respondents selecting this option. City breaks also scored highly for nearly two fifths (39%) of respondents.

When it comes to all-time favourite holiday types, the trend continues as beaches take the top spot for half (50%) of all respondents, closely followed by city breaks (39%).

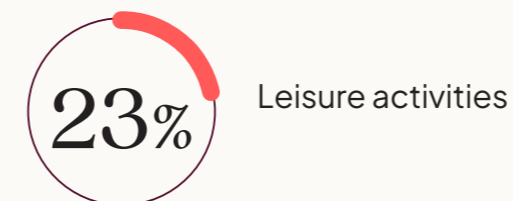
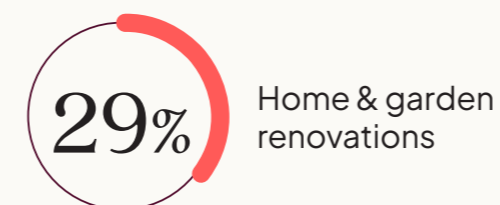
When we asked respondents to describe the perfect holiday, the top must-haves were to soak up the local culture (35%), followed by enjoying new experiences (31%).

We asked consumers what their number one spending priority over the next 12 months is.

45%

picked holidays and travel. This rose to 80% when we surveyed our own Travel Counsellors customers

Other top household spending priorities include:



“

I honestly believe travel really does broaden the mind and I love being able to create amazing experiences for my clients

Karen Thornton

Travel Counsellor based in Devon



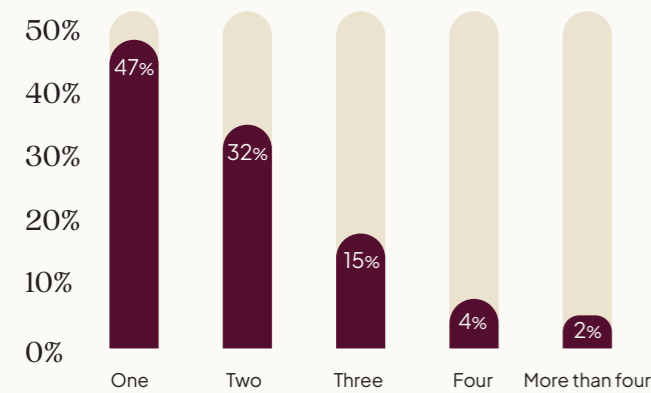
How do we value travel?

On average, the data revealed **1.84 holidays** abroad per person in the last 12 months.

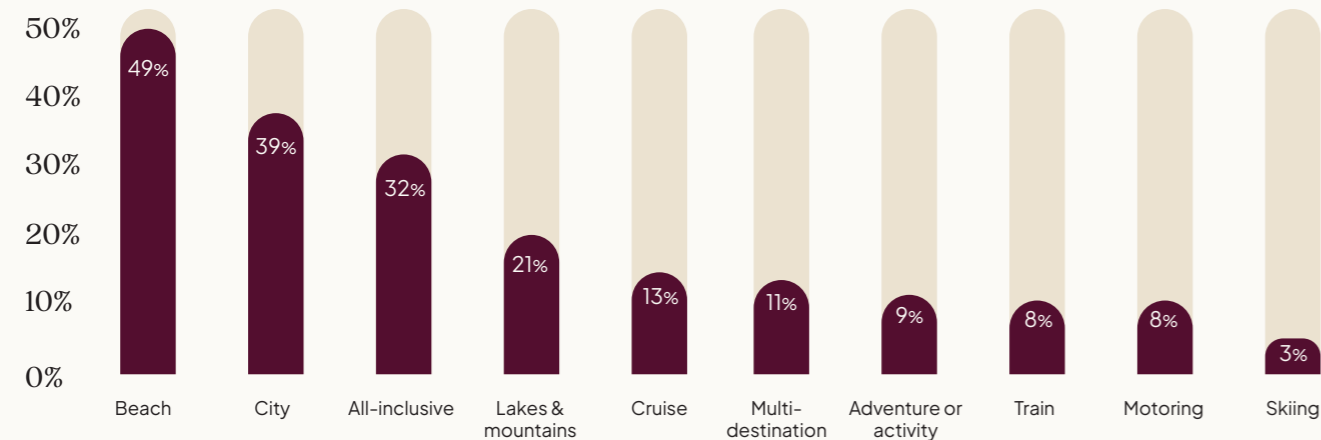
Two thirds of 25–34 year olds took **more than two holidays last year** compared to just under half of those aged 55+.

This age group were also the most favourable towards multi-destination holidays.

Number of holidays abroad per person over the last 12 months

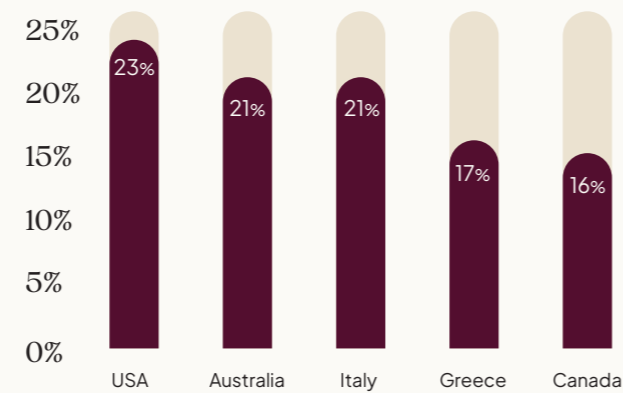


Favourite holiday types



Whilst **6%** of people visited the USA in the past 12 months, **nearly a quarter (23%)** say it tops their list as a travel destination in 2024

Top five holiday destinations for 2024



What, if anything, is your main motivation for going on holiday?



I want to escape everyday life

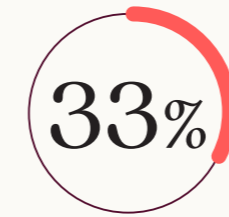


I need something positive to look forward to

What makes the 'perfect' holiday?



I like to soak up the local culture



I want a holiday that matches my personal interests

1 in 4

said that needing something to look forward to was their main motivation for booking a holiday



How much do we spend to get our travel fix?

Despite the current pressures on consumer spending, three quarters (76%) of our respondents told us that they plan to spend at least the same on their travel next year as they did in the past twelve months.

The average spend on overseas holidays in the last twelve months was £3,223. Meanwhile, only 16% of respondents told us they actually stick to their budgets when on holiday, with 81% telling us they either don't budget or don't stick to their budgets when travelling.

How much people plan to spend on their holidays next year compared to this year



£3,223

Mean spend on overseas holidays

10%

Of respondents spent more than £7,000 on overseas holidays in the past 12 months

Those in the West Midlands spent the most on their annual holidays in the last 12 months,

33%

 more than the national average

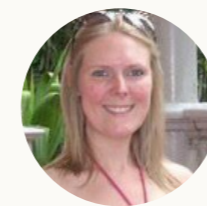
No corners are cut for the perfect holiday experience, as **81%** say they are likely to exceed their budget when on holiday or while travelling

The role of the travel advisor

With the industry continuing to gain momentum since travel has resumed post-pandemic, Travel Counsellors has seen a huge uptick in the number of customers that are actively seeking the expert advice and personalised service to craft the perfect holiday experience. This demand has helped to propel the business to over £800m of total transaction value on its platform in the last 12 months.

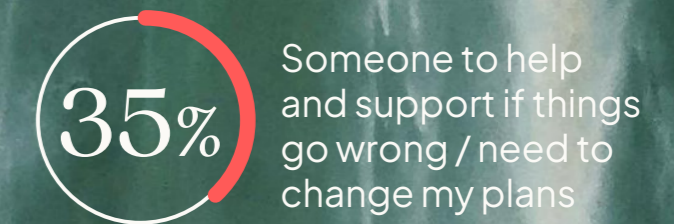
When we spoke to our own customers, two thirds of respondents said that having a Travel Counsellor made a difference in being able to find the best holiday possible, tailored to what they want. Our customers said that having someone to stay in touch if anything changes such as flights, and to ensure a smooth and easy process was hugely important to them.

With holidays being such a priority, our research indicates that a third of people are looking to book trips 4-7 months in advance, with 1 in 3 people opting to book through a travel advisor because it saves them time.



“ I'm lucky my lifelong passion for travel has become a fulfilling career that I love
Karina Bawler
Travel Counsellor based in Cardiff

Top reasons for booking through a travel advisor



36%

of respondents have booked a holiday through a travel advisor in the last 12 months. This rises to 53% among those with a household income over £75,000

Does sustainable travel matter to consumers?

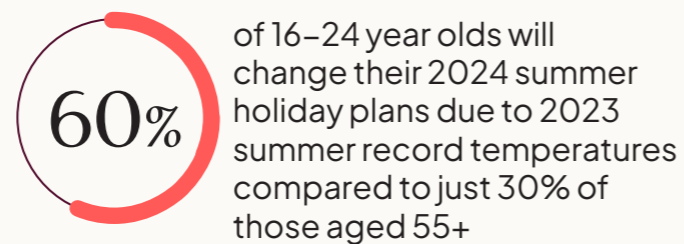
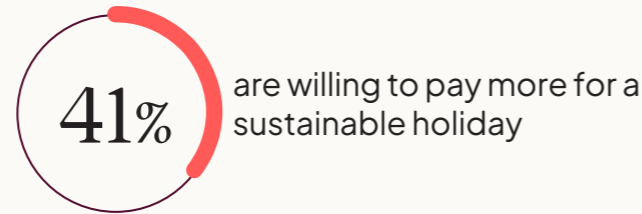
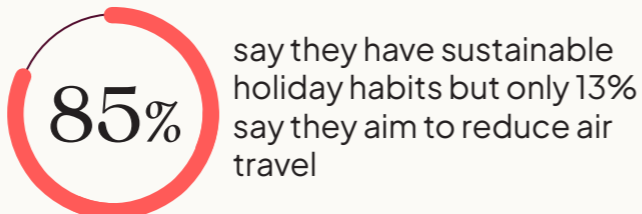
The focus on sustainable travel has intensified in recent years. This was brought to the fore again during the summer when southern Europe suffered from a record-breaking heatwave.

But, there's a gap between awareness and action. Our research found that nearly half of respondents are concerned about the impact of air travel on the environment, while just 13% plan to reduce it.

It was clear that attitudes differ by generation and young adults are more eco-conscious.

Nearly three quarters of 16–24-year-olds would consider sustainable travel options, and over half are willing to pay extra for a sustainable holiday compared to 41% of all adults polled.

Breaking this down even further, the average Brit is willing to spend 14% on top of the existing price to ensure their holiday is more sustainable, whereas 16–24 year olds would pay nearly a quarter more.



“ Sustainability and so-called eco-travel are topics that come up with my customers more and more. At Travel Counsellors we understand the options available to travellers to make their holidays as green as possible.

David Bishop
Travel Counsellor based in Edinburgh



What our customers say...

“Michelle Hyland organised a fantastic holiday for myself and my 17 year old son. The whole trip ran so smoothly, all transfers were amazing and the hotels lovely. Michelle thought of everything and was always on hand whenever needed.

July 2023

“Fabulous Sonia Murray-Smith took away any stress. She is amazing and I will always use her for any holiday I book. I have also recommended her to family and friends who all use her now too.

August 2023

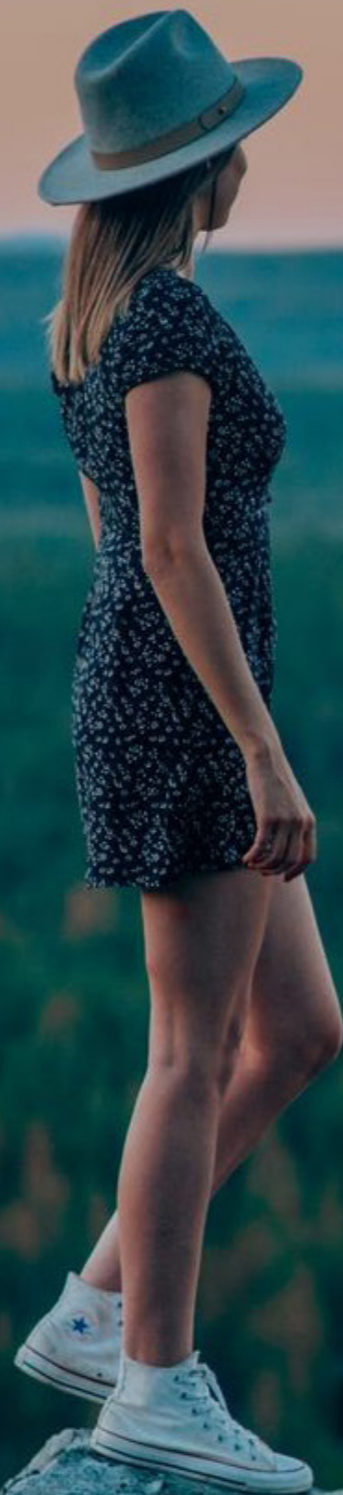
“Uli at Travel Counsellors helped to craft the holiday of a lifetime for us! No detail was too small, and no question too silly. From giving us advice on the local tipping culture to the ideal packing list, Uli made sure we were prepared and this paved the way for a seamless holiday with no bad surprises.

September 2023

Excellent



Based on 6,127 reviews



About Travel Counsellors

Manchester-based Travel Counsellors is the UK's largest and fastest-growing technology platform for travel entrepreneurs that connects over 1,900 independent business owners, ultimately enabling them to deliver exceptional levels of customer service. In the year to 31 October 2022, Total Transaction Value (“TTV”) on the platform was more than £800m, up more than 20% against the prior year.

Travel Counsellors operates across six countries (UK, Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, South Africa and the UAE) and employs 300 people in its UK headquarters and overseas offices. The Company provides a high touch, digitally enabled platform, that enables and empowers business owners to harness innovative and constantly evolving tools and technology to build their businesses in a way that suits them, with limitless potential and scale. This is underpinned by the knowledge and power of a global community and strong people first culture.

The company operates its own ATOL supported financial trust which safeguards customers from any failure of a travel supplier involved in their booking.

Since 2018 the company has been backed by international investment firm, Vitruvian Partners.

Travel Counsellors is multi-award winning and has a five star, 'Excellent' rating on Trustpilot. It was founded in 1994.

www.travelcounsellors.co.uk

£800m+

Total Transaction Value increase against the previous year

1,900+

Independent business owners empowered by Travel Counsellors' platform

96%

Travel Counsellors' world-leading customer satisfaction



Sunday Times Best Places to Work 2023



WINNER

Top Homeworking Agency | TTG Top 50 2023



WINNER

Travel Weekly Agent Achievement Awards 2023
Homeworking Agency of the Year (Large), Best Agency to Work For (Large) and Sustainability Champion of the Year (Large)



FINALIST

Luxury Homeworking Business of the Year | TTG Luxury Awards 2023



www.travelcounsellors.co.uk

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