

Skyscanner Horizons

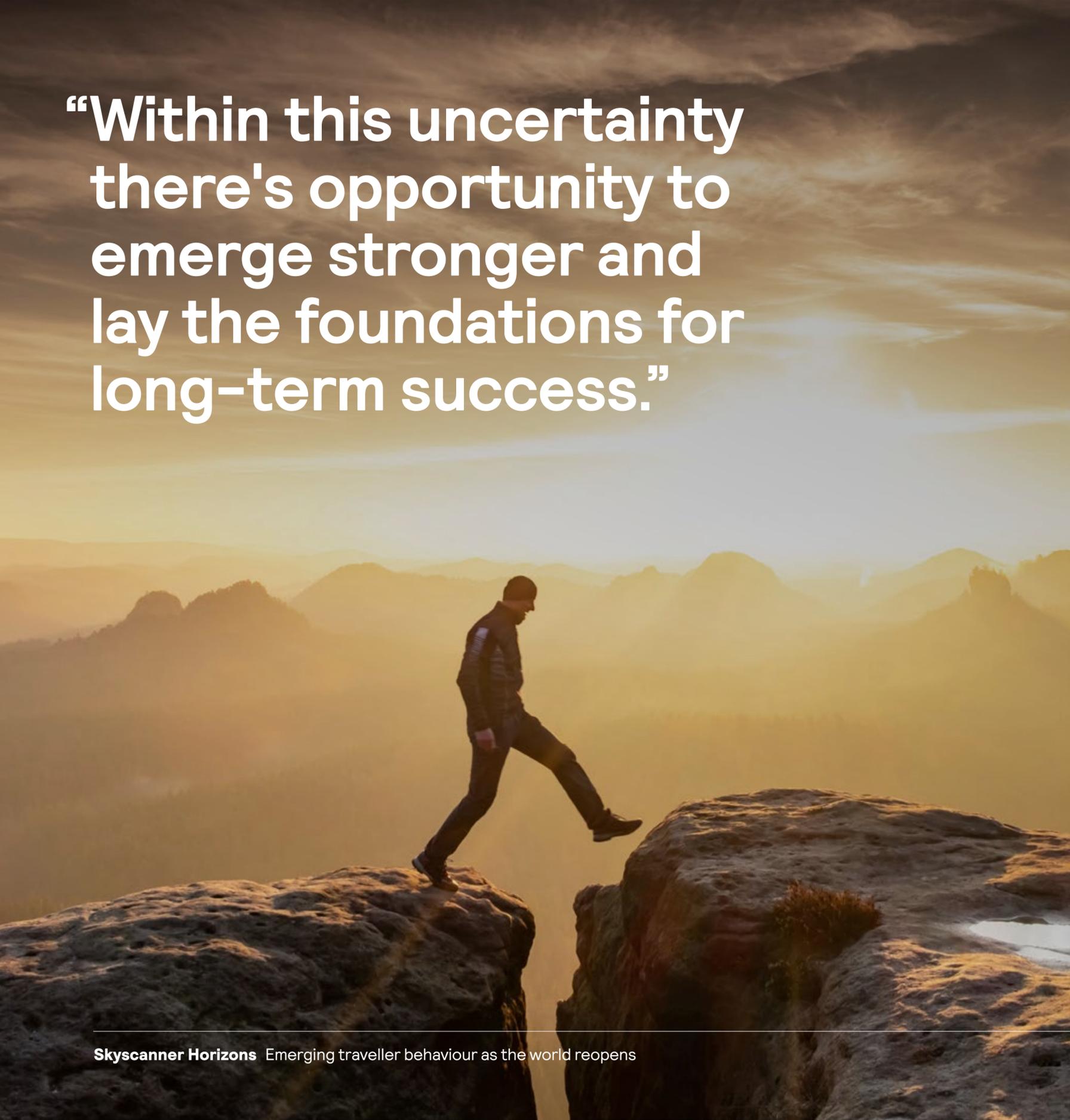
Emerging traveller behaviour
as the world reopens

October 2021

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“Within this uncertainty there's opportunity to emerge stronger and lay the foundations for long-term success.”

Travel is bouncing back

It's been more than 18 months since COVID-19 began to sweep the world, upending the travel industry and putting the breakers on years of economic growth. But now, with most of 2021 behind us, travel is steadily, even significantly, returning to many parts of the world.

Alongside vaccinations, recovery is being driven by exciting, pioneering innovations in tech. Traveller-first solutions are building confidence among the public, enabling easier, safer and more secure travel, while helping ensure resilience for destinations and travel providers.

However, travel's return is sporadic and can vary significantly by region. Travellers and businesses must continually adapt to ever-changing rules and restrictions. Case numbers continue to rise and fall. Routes open and close. And people remain cautious.

But within this uncertainty there's opportunity. The ripple effects of the pandemic will be felt for years and it's those businesses which embrace a traveller-first approach and are led by the latest trends and insights that will find it easier to emerge stronger and lay the foundations for long-term success.

In our second Skyscanner Horizons report, we look at two key areas of opportunity for businesses as travel begins to bounce back. They are:

1. **Improving understanding of traveller attitudes and booking preferences**
2. **Capturing growing traveller demand for unserved routes and destinations**

Commentary from the experts

In our latest Horizons report, we have combined in-depth survey data with analysis of Skyscanner global search data to provide a unique perspective of emerging traveller behaviour.

Our findings reveal that for the majority of travellers, low price offers provide the biggest incentive to book. However, other factors and outcomes from the past 18 months are also top of mind. For example, greater ticket flexibility and COVID-19 travel insurance. And there is now a focus on the booking experience, in particular trust and service.

When it comes to flight search, we see increasing demand for long-haul leisure and VFR destinations, some of which are only currently possible with indirect itineraries. Within this demand, there may be opportunity for more direct routes – especially within the VFR segment – as travellers look to reconnect with family after prolonged periods apart and corporate travel takes longer to bounce back.

Overall, air travel in 2022 will look very different to 2021 as both travellers and travel providers continue to adapt to a new reality and the world gradually reopens. But I'm confident that one aspect will remain the same – and that is people's desire to travel.

Hugh Aitken

VP of Flights at Skyscanner



The world's travellers are ready to reconnect with loved ones and connect to new places and cultures. But they want to do so **safely, affordably** and **sustainably**, as documented in this timely research paper from Skyscanner. The industry players that have prepared well and are ready to deliver across these dimensions will do well in – and beyond – the recovery phase.

Derek Sadubin

Managing Director of CAPA



The report highlights a maturing of trends witnessed early on in the recovery, whilst also pinpointing specific opportunities where supply hasn't yet caught up with demand. Together, this gives us a more detailed understanding of how destinations can support their industry partners to respond directly to changing travel preferences, such as through co-operative marketing campaigns supporting route reinstatement or content initiatives to convey layers of depth.

Strong demand for cultural and authentic experiences further confirms that travellers are still seeking more meaningful and value-driven experiences which bring us closer together. The strategy that many destinations have pursued has therefore been the right approach. Investing in product and experience development, with a strengthened focus on sustainability and values, will continue to reinforce competitive positioning in the long run.

Nick Hall

CEO, Digital Tourism Think Tank



Chapter 1:

Attitudes toward travel in 2022

Next year, travellers want to seek out new experiences, people and destinations, but with the safety net of flexible tickets and free cancellation if their plans need to change.

The top factors influencing travel

We commissioned a global survey of 24,000 travellers across eight key markets to understand their attitudes towards travelling now and in the future. The results revealed three major findings:

Price

Low prices and flexible tickets are the biggest incentives to book.

Trust

Travellers want to use providers they trust.

Culture

There's a greater desire to seek out new cultures and experiences.

For travellers globally, the most important factors when discovering and gathering trip information are:

Confidence

Assurance from the provider they have the traveller's best interests at heart.

Relevance

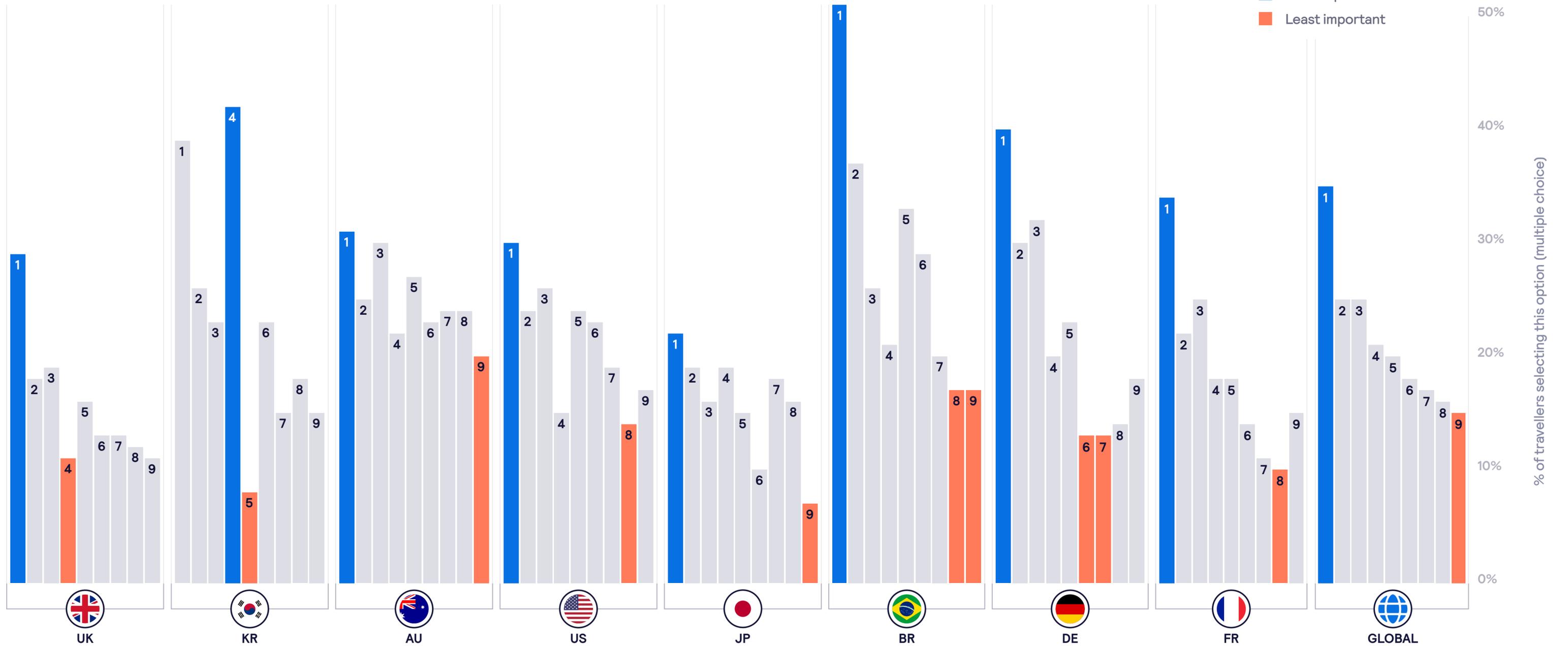
Finding useful and reliable booking, destination and COVID-19 information quickly.

Safety

Being reassured about their travel provider's COVID-19 safety measures.

We asked: Thinking about your previous trip, which of the following played a role in helping you discover potential destinations?

- 1 = Low price offers
 - 2 = Inspirational images
 - 3 = Personalised recommendations
 - 4 = Detailed testimonials
 - 5 = Exclusive offers
 - 6 = Inspirational videos
 - 7 = Limited time offers
 - 8 = Discount codes/vouchers
 - 9 = Money back guarantees
- Most important
■ Least important



Low price offers are the top travel incentive

Price is the biggest incentive and appeals to travellers of all nationalities. In fact, it's the leading factor influencing trip bookings for every country except South Korea, where it's a close second after detailed testimonials from fellow travellers. In the UK, Brazil, Germany and France, a low price offer is the best incentive by some margin.

Globally, inspirational imagery and personalised recommendations, such as Instagram content and ads, provide the next best incentives to travel, while exclusive offers resonate well with Brazilians and Australians. Money back guarantees offer the least incentive for people to travel, coming last behind discount codes, vouchers, limited time offers and inspirational videos.

If travel providers focus on these areas, especially deals and discounts, there's opportunity to reassure even the most hesitant or extra-cautious traveller to book their next trip.

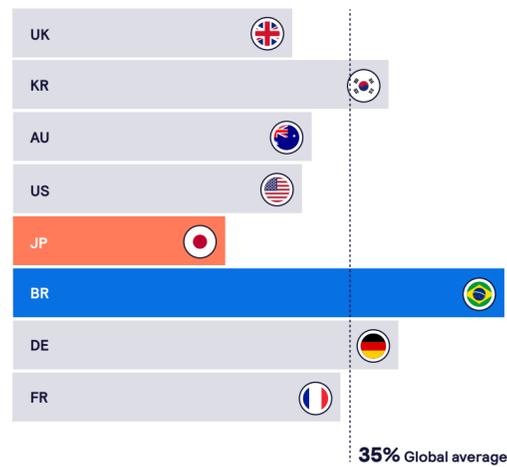


“Price is the leading factor influencing trip bookings for every country except South Korea.”

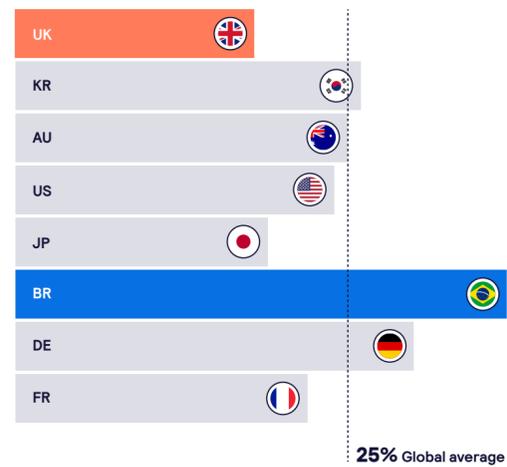
These graphs compare the importance of each incentive on a country-by-country basis.

■ Most important
■ Least important

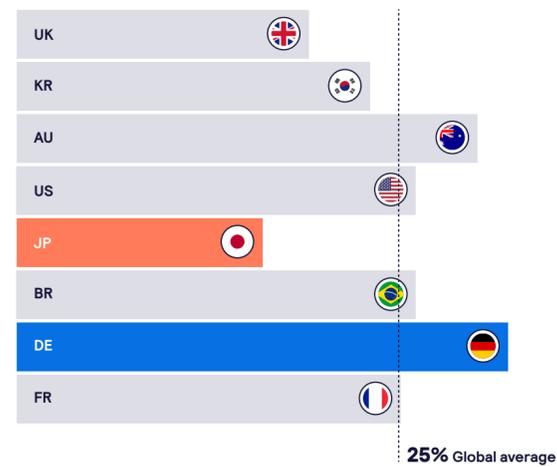
Low price offers



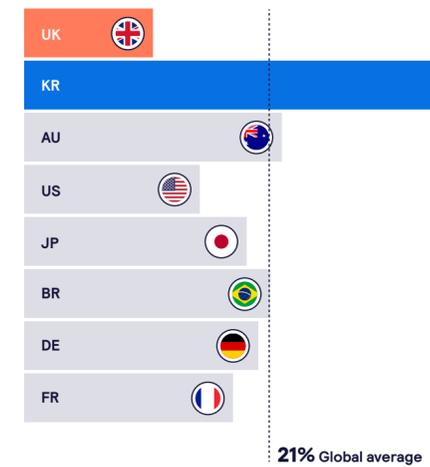
Inspirational images



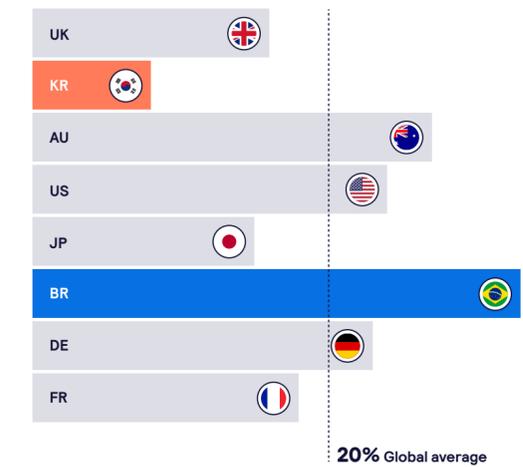
Personalised recommendations



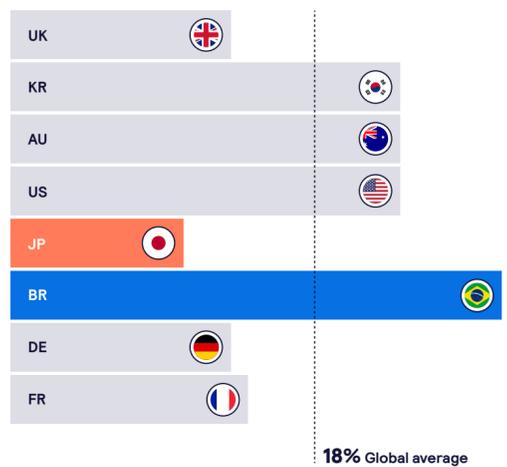
Detailed testimonials



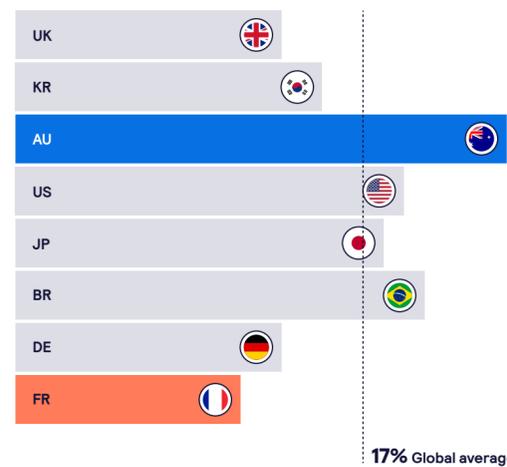
Exclusive offers



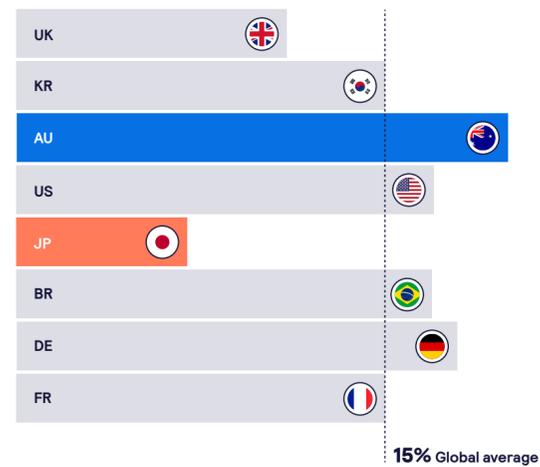
Inspirational videos



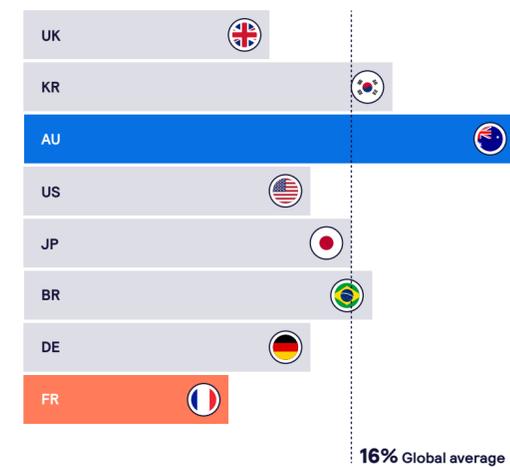
Limited time offers



Money back guarantees



Discount codes

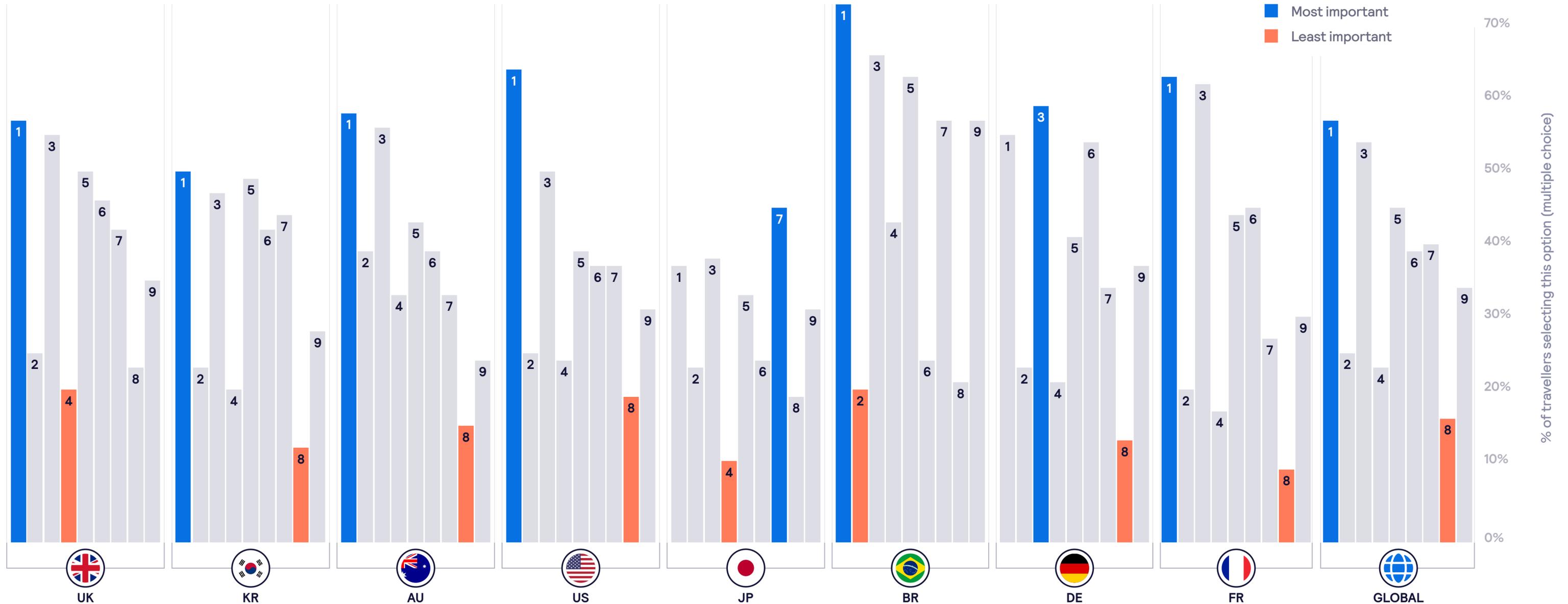


We asked: Which of the following are important to you when booking flights for your next trip?

- 1 = Flexible flight tickets (allows you to change your flight date or destination for free)
- 2 = Flexible name changing (allows you to change the names on your flight booking for free)
- 3 = Free flight cancellation (allows you to cancel your flight booking for free)

- 4 = Flexible flight payment (opportunity to pay for flights in installments)
- 5 = Travel insurance which covers COVID-19
- 6 = Not having to quarantine after/during the trip

- 7 = Up-to-date information on COVID-19 rates of the destination
- 8 = Up-to-date information on the air corridors around the destination
- 9 = Up-to-date information on travel restrictions at the destination



Travellers worldwide
want flexible tickets

When booking air travel, the majority of respondents said having flexible tickets is most important.

Globally, travellers said flexible tickets are the most important factor when considering whether to book, followed by being able to cancel flights for free and having travel insurance that covers COVID-19.

Access to up-to-date information on air corridors around a destination scored the lowest. This is followed by the opportunity to pay for a flight in installments and the ability to change the names on a flight booking for free.

In Japan, however, having up-to-date information on a destination's COVID-19 rate is most important. While for Germans it's having the peace of mind they can cancel a flight for free.

It's uncertainty that leads to caution. No one wants to feel anxious or be left out of pocket. Airlines and travel providers will benefit too by offering financial and practical peace of mind that boosts confidence levels to ensure people feel protected if they have to cancel or change a booking.



Free flight cancellation

is most important for Germans.

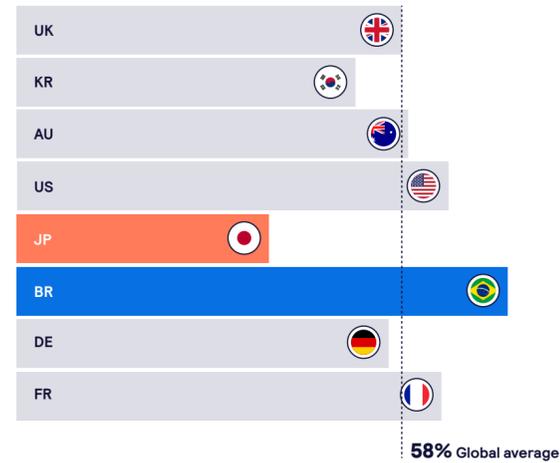
Up-to-date information

on destination COVID-19 rates top scored for
Japanese travellers.

These graphs compare the importance of each booking preference on a country-by-country basis.

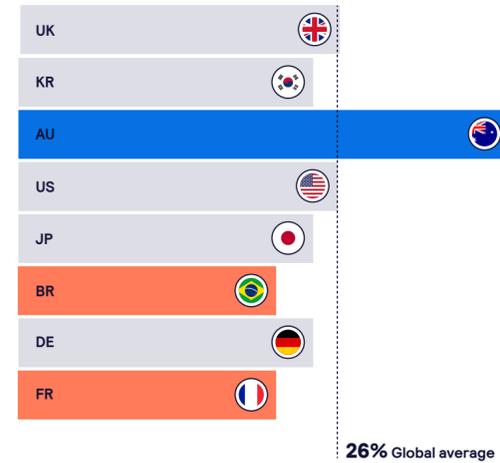
Flexible flight tickets

(allows you to change your flight date or destination for free)



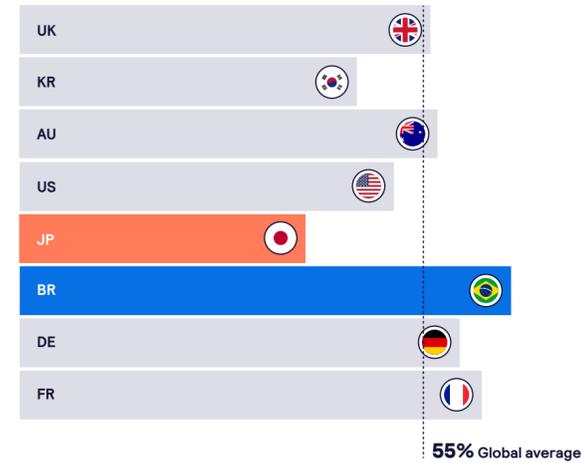
Flexible name changing

(allows you to change the names on your flight booking for free)



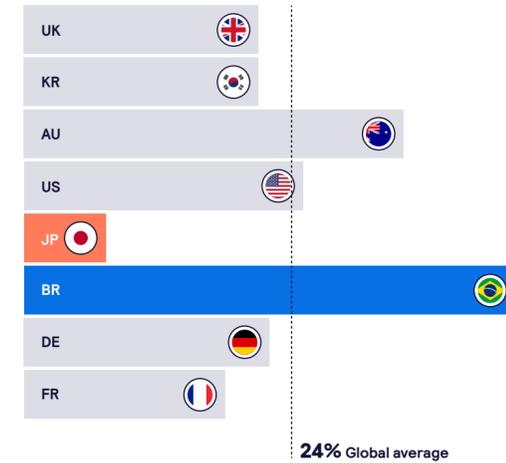
Free flight cancellation

(allows you to cancel your flight booking for free)



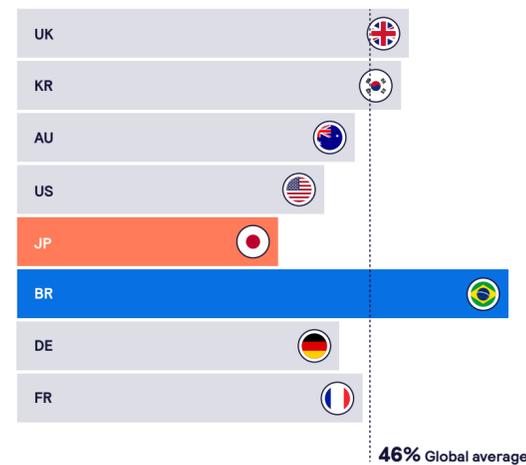
Flexible flight payment

(opportunity to pay for flights in installments)

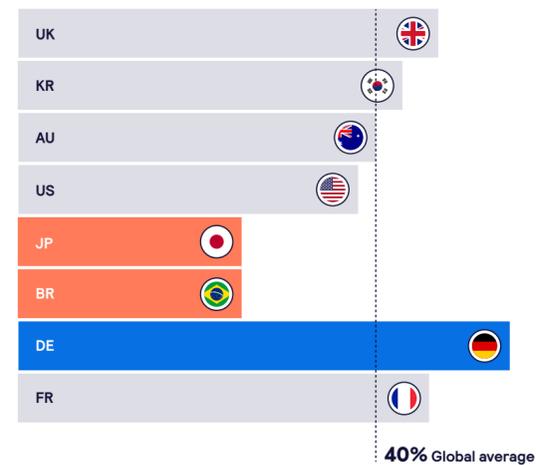


■ Most important
■ Least important

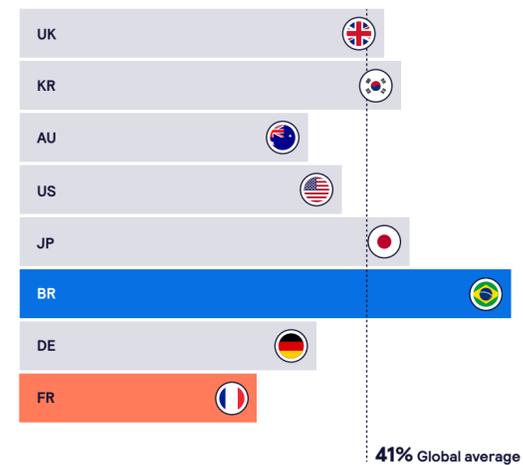
Travel insurance which covers COVID-19



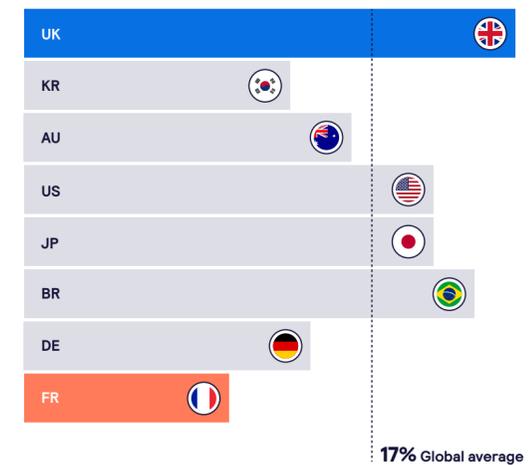
Not having to quarantine after/during the trip



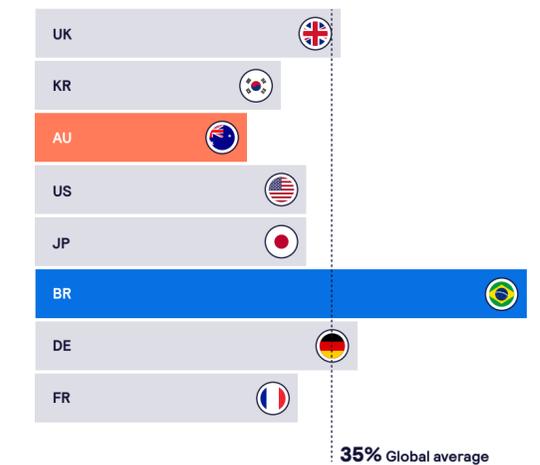
Up-to-date information on COVID-19 rates of the destination



Up-to-date information on the air corridors around the destination



Up-to-date information on travel restrictions at the destination



Brazilians, Americans and Australians are the most engaged travellers

Travellers from Brazil, the United States and Australia are set to be the most engaged for 2022, with more prepared to try new experiences on their upcoming trips compared to those from other nations.

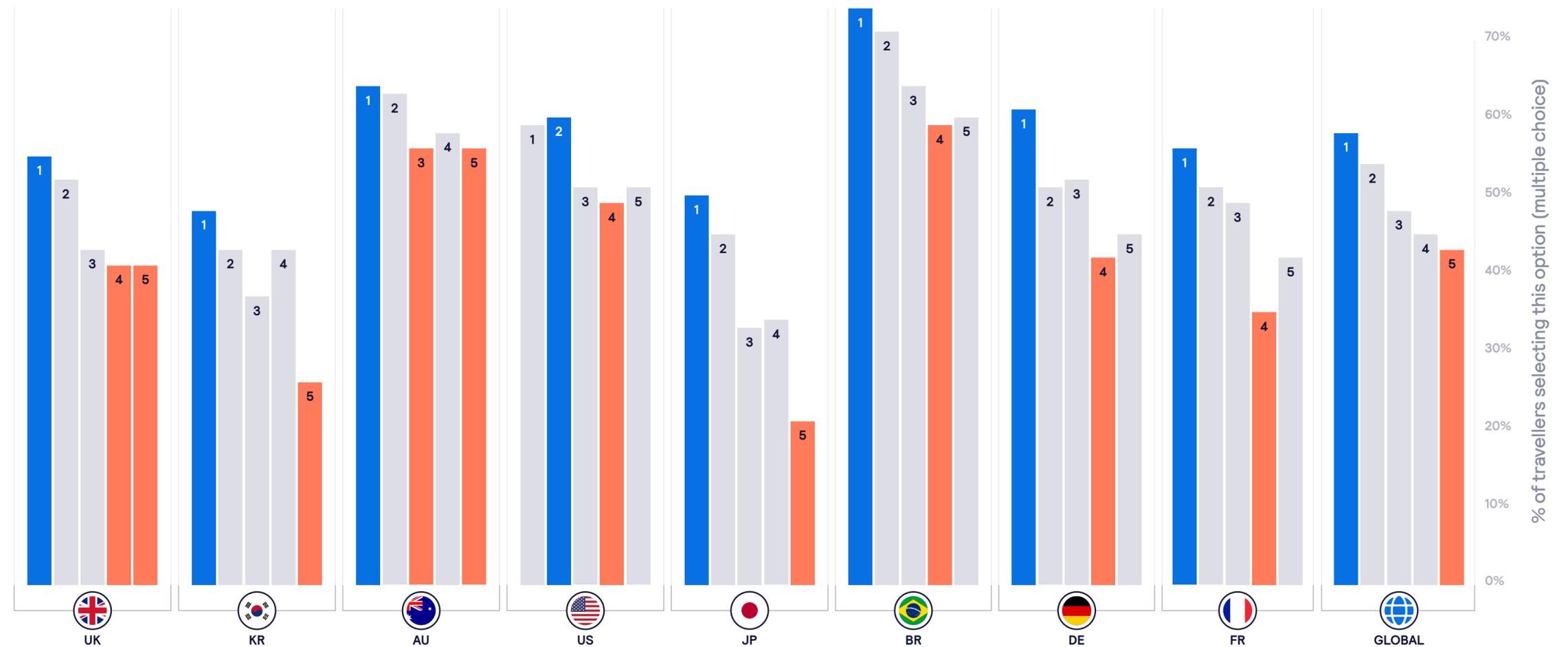
When asked to reflect on a series of statements relating to the overall travel experience and engaging with local people, places and cultures, travellers from these three countries scored the highest in nearly every category.

In fact, Brazilians are the most open to trying new things across the board – from sampling local cuisine to seeking out those ‘must see’ attractions.

On average, travellers across all markets are most likely to try authentic food and drink when they’re away, followed by experiencing local history and architecture. However, only 43% like to connect with local people, the lowest of all five categories.

- 1 = I like to try the local cuisine when travelling
- 2 = I like to see local history and architecture when travelling
- 3 = I like to immerse myself in local culture when travelling
- 4 = I like to find must-see visitor attractions when travelling
- 5 = I like to connect with local people when travelling

■ Most important
■ Least important





“Brazilians are the most open to trying new things across the board – from sampling local cuisine to seeking out those ‘must-see’ attractions.”

Chapter 2:

Unserved Routes

– Identifying gaps
in the market

As confidence grows around international travel and people start planning bigger trips abroad, there's clear demand for new direct flights.

Engaging untapped traveller demand

'Unserved routes' are journeys from destination A to destination B which currently aren't served by any direct flights; they're only connected via a one- or two-stop itinerary.

They also have a large volume of searches behind them – a pool of travellers who aren't connected to other parts of the world as well as they could be.

For the traveller, unserved routes are far less convenient than flying direct. They may have to depart from an airport further away from their home, spend more time in transit or change aircraft once or twice in a different country to their end destination.

For travel providers, particularly airlines and airports, there's opportunity. Identifying the most popular unserved routes means knowing where they can engage untapped traveller demand, launch new direct services, expand their network and unlock new, reliable sources of revenue.

The share of virtual interlining itineraries (travel on multiple carriers for a particular route) selected by travellers on Skyscanner platforms is 4x pre-COVID-19 levels. While capacity is returning to the market, travellers are having to take more connecting flights.

“The share of virtual interlining itineraries selected by travellers on Skyscanner is 4x pre-COVID-19 levels.”

There's demand for bucket list leisure and VFR travel

The most popular unserved routes for 2021 show a demand for exploring coastal tropical climates and visiting friends and relatives (VFR) in distant corners of the world.

At a global level, across all markets, the top unserved routes are predominately for leisure travel – and from Warsaw, Poland. But at a country level, especially in larger markets like the UK, there's a strong demand for VFR travel.

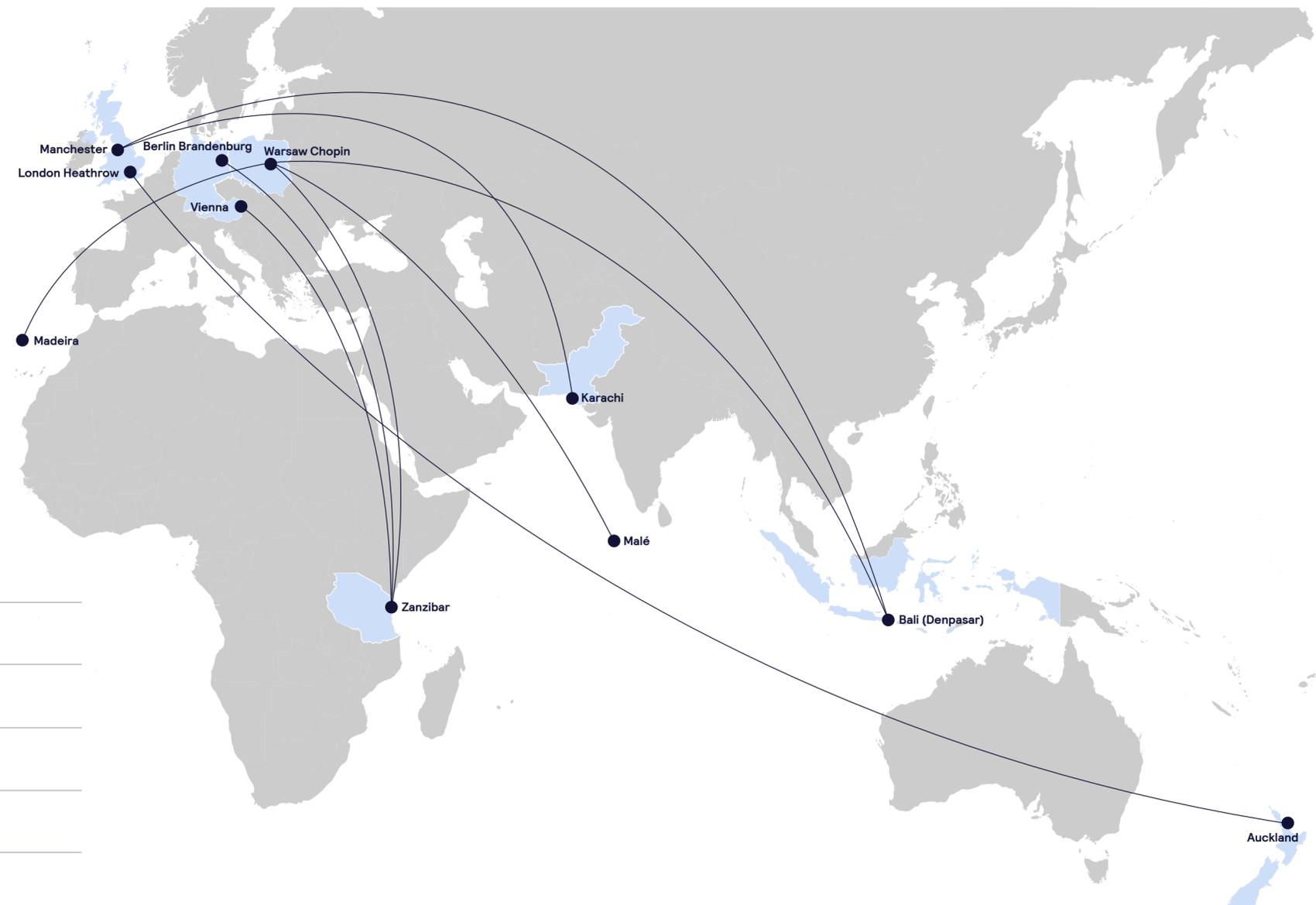
The VFR market is thriving and will play an ever-increasing role in post-pandemic recovery. By building new strategies and services around the VFR segment, international carriers and airports can reduce or negate the loss of earnings from corporate travel, which will be slower to recover.



The world's top 10 unserved routes

The top 10 is comprised mostly of long-haul leisure routes from Europe to bucket list destinations like Zanzibar, Bali and the Maldives. The list also features VFR routes like the UK to Auckland and Karachi, showing a desire for people to reconnect with friends and loved ones after a prolonged time apart.

Both Poland's Warsaw Chopin and the UK's Manchester Airport feature more than once, highlighting the lack of direct routes from these two cities and the number of people who would benefit from improved connections.



- 1. Warsaw Chopin » Zanzibar**
- 2. Berlin Brandenburg » Zanzibar**
- 3. Warsaw Chopin » Madeira**
- 4. London Heathrow » Auckland***
- 5. Manchester » Karachi**
- 6. Vienna » Zanzibar**
- 7. Fortaleza » Porto Alegre**
- 8. Warsaw Chopin » Bali (Denpasar)**
- 9. Warsaw Chopin » Malé, Maldives**
- 10. Manchester » Bali (Denpasar)**



*Not currently flyable

Top unserved origin airports

Manchester tops the global list as the airport with the most demand for new non-stop routes, with Warsaw Chopin and Berlin Brandenburg also in the top five. Footfall is being lost from these places as travellers seek alternative departure airports or travel via a large 'hub' airport.

Some 'hub' airports, such as Amsterdam Schiphol, Madrid and London Heathrow, do feature in the list, showing that there's demand for direct point-to-point routes currently not served by these locations.

- 1. Manchester**
- 2. Amsterdam Schiphol**
- 3. Warsaw Chopin**
- 4. Berlin Brandenburg**
- 5. Dublin**
- 6. Madrid**
- 7. Barcelona**
- 8. Prague**
- 9. Munich**
- 10. London Heathrow**



Top unserved destinations

Bali is the world's top unserved destination, followed by Cancún on Mexico's Yucatán peninsula, then Sydney and the tropical paradises of the Maldives and Zanzibar.

Average ticket prices for flights to Zanzibar, Malé and Bali are high, so there's reward here for airlines entering the market with new direct services. Destinations such as Miami, Cairo and Barcelona also feature due to a high number of connecting itineraries.

1. Bali

2. Cancún

3. Sydney

4. Malé

5. Zanzibar

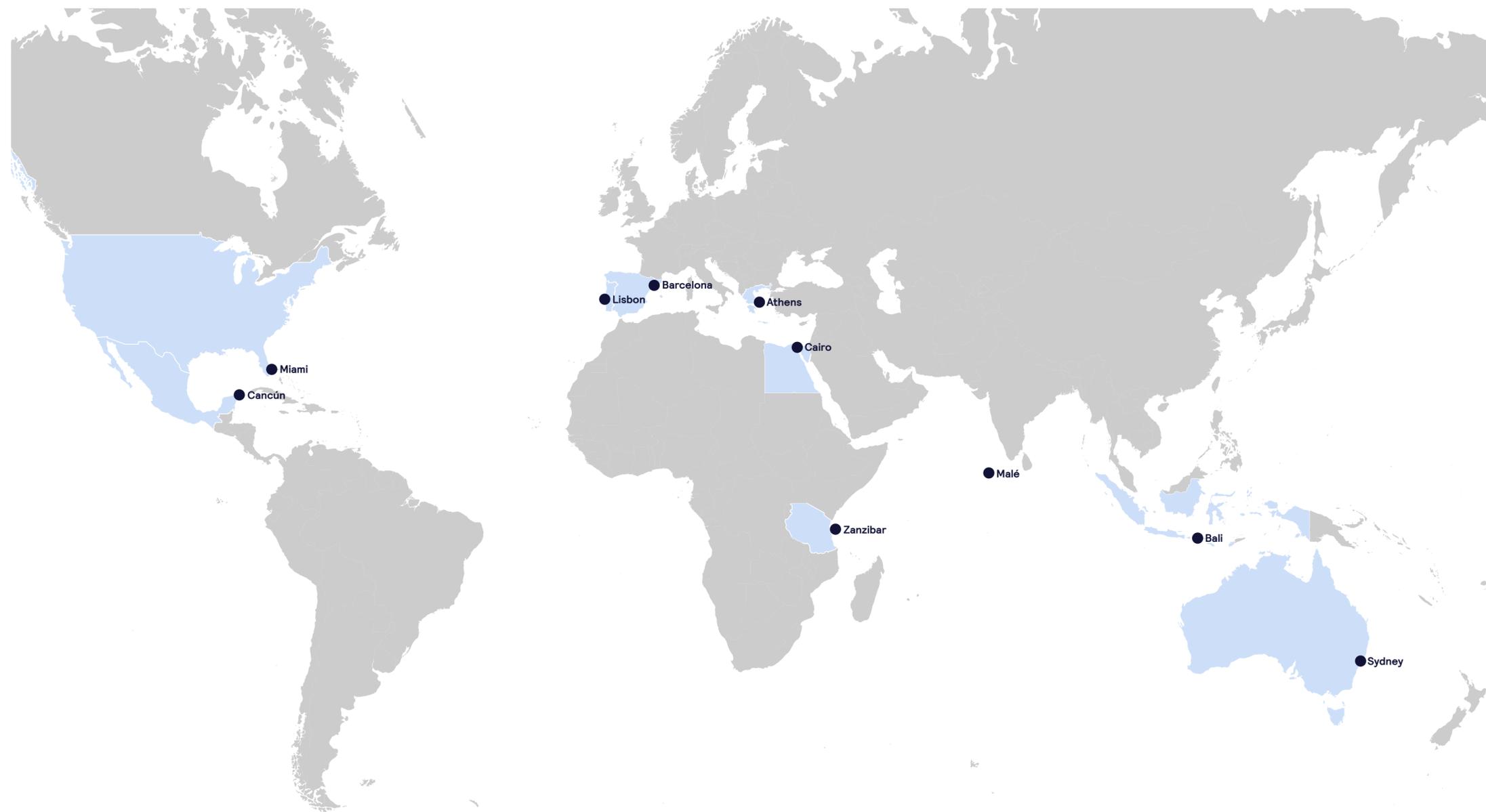
6. Miami

7. Lisbon

8. Cairo

9. Athens

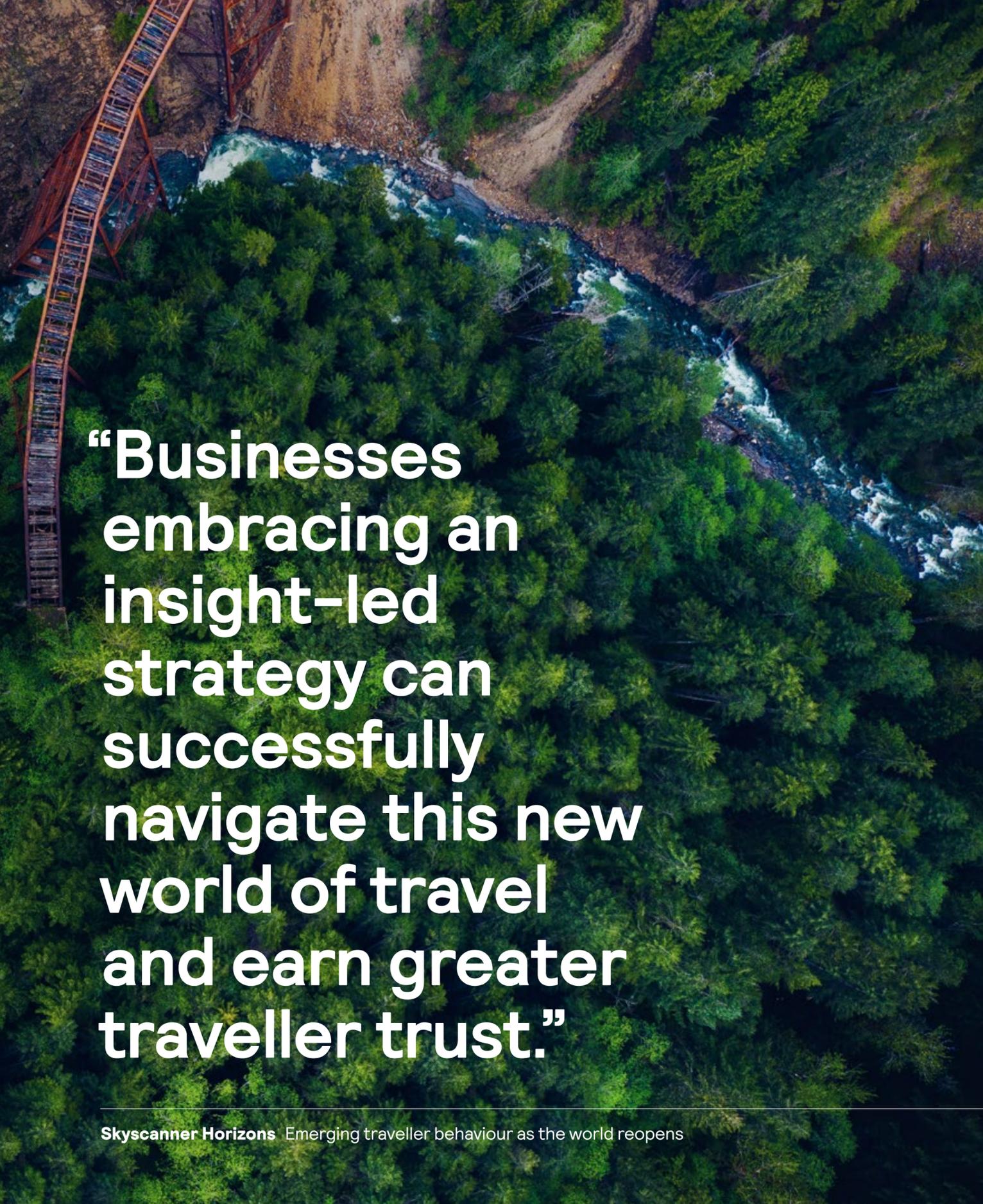
10. Barcelona



Conclusion:

New opportunities as travel returns

Travel is entering its next chapter and where restrictions allow, demand is returning. But traveller behaviour has changed and will continue to evolve. 2022 won't look like 2021 or even 2019.

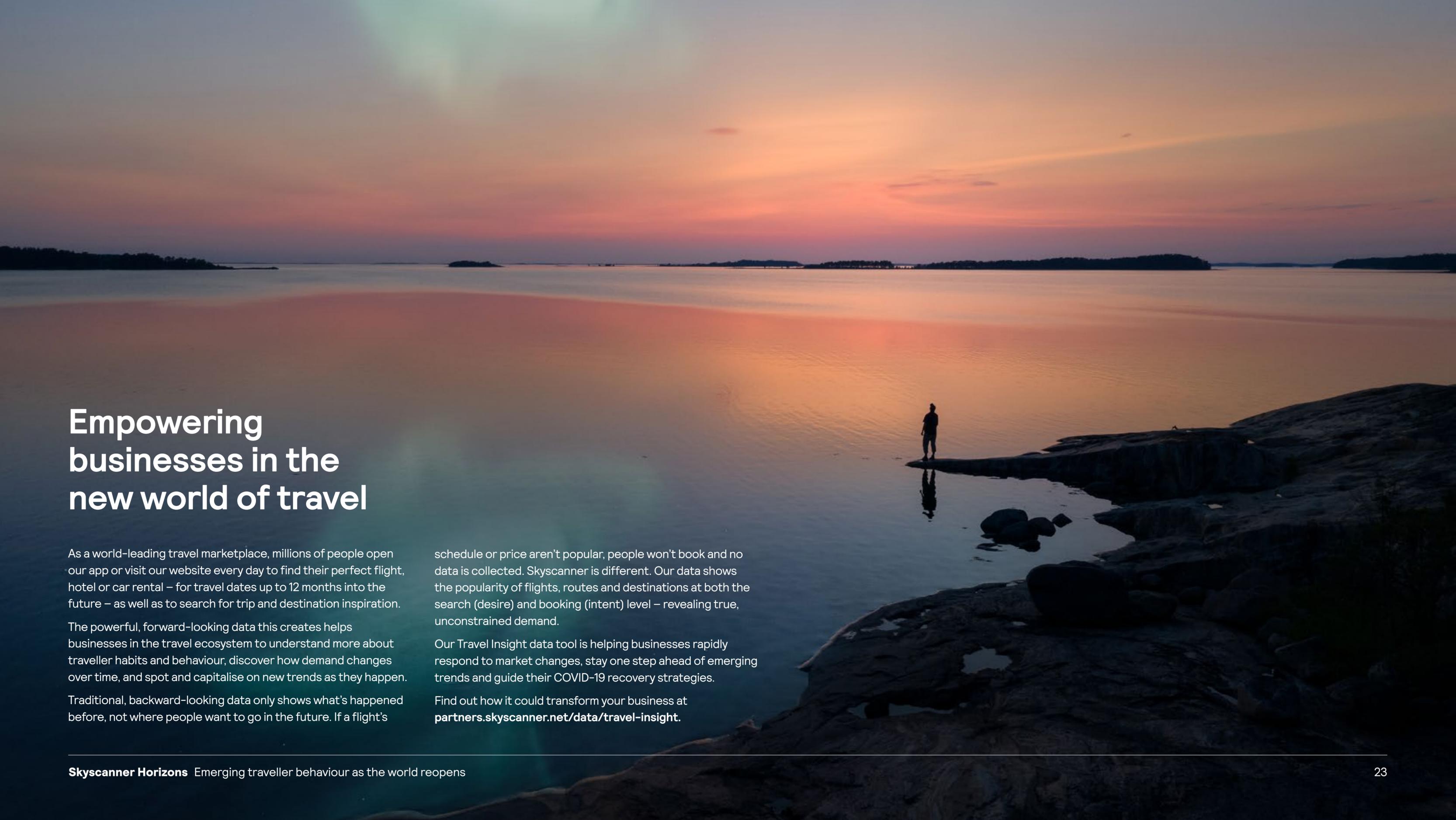


“Businesses embracing an insight-led strategy can successfully navigate this new world of travel and earn greater traveller trust.”

Highlights of the report reveal that:

- Low price offers are the top travel incentive in encouraging people to book a trip.
- Trust and peace of mind are paramount – travellers worldwide want greater ticket flexibility.
- Brazilians, Americans and Australians lead the field as the travellers who are the most engaged for 2022 and ready to try new things.
- The world’s top unserved routes are a mix of long-haul leisure destinations and VFR travel, with the latter being favoured by larger markets like the UK.
- Manchester is the world’s top unserved origin airport – traveller demand for new direct services from this location is high.
- Bali is the world’s top unserved destination, as travellers search for dream bucket list hotspots.

For detailed country-specific unserved routes data, please get in touch with our team by emailing partners@skyscanner.net.

A person stands on a rocky shore at sunset, looking out over a large body of water. The sky is a mix of orange, pink, and blue, with the sun low on the horizon. The water is calm, reflecting the colors of the sky. The person is silhouetted against the bright light of the sunset.

Empowering businesses in the new world of travel

As a world-leading travel marketplace, millions of people open our app or visit our website every day to find their perfect flight, hotel or car rental – for travel dates up to 12 months into the future – as well as to search for trip and destination inspiration.

The powerful, forward-looking data this creates helps businesses in the travel ecosystem to understand more about traveller habits and behaviour, discover how demand changes over time, and spot and capitalise on new trends as they happen.

Traditional, backward-looking data only shows what's happened before, not where people want to go in the future. If a flight's

schedule or price aren't popular, people won't book and no data is collected. Skyscanner is different. Our data shows the popularity of flights, routes and destinations at both the search (desire) and booking (intent) level – revealing true, unconstrained demand.

Our Travel Insight data tool is helping businesses rapidly respond to market changes, stay one step ahead of emerging trends and guide their COVID-19 recovery strategies.

Find out how it could transform your business at partners.skyscanner.net/data/travel-insight.



Methodology

Consumer research conducted by CrowdDNA in June 2021 in the United Kingdom, South Korea, Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, Japan and the United States.

24,000

the representative sample size

3,000

responders per market

Unserved routes analysis is based on Skyscanner search data analysed in August 2021, including all search and travel months.

For more information, please email:
partners@skyscanner.net

