



UK Leisure Travel 2026 Survey Results

July 2026



Introduction

As leisure travel habits continue to evolve, understanding what motivates consumers has never been more important. This report explores how people living in the UK are planning and experiencing leisure travel across the UK in 2026, revealing the behaviours, spending habits and priorities shaping travel decisions today.

For the purpose of this research, leisure travel refers to trips taken for enjoyment, relaxation or personal experiences rather than for work or business purposes.

As travel patterns continue to shift, the findings offer valuable insight into current travel behaviours and emerging trends to show how consumers are choosing to spend their time and money, what they seek from their travel experiences and the factors influencing their choices.

Snapshot

37%

plan to take more UK leisure trips in 2026 compared to 2025

43%

are purposefully choosing UK travel over international travel in 2026

25%

are planning to spend more on UK leisure travel in 2026

79%

said value for money is the most important factor when choosing where to stay

92%

consider quality rating schemes or user reviews before booking

45%

plan to visit the north of England in 2026, making it the most popular overall destination

21%

will go camping, glamping or caravanning this year

48%

choose scenic drives when opting to take a less direct route

55%

are planning a coastal trip

2026 UK Travel Intentions

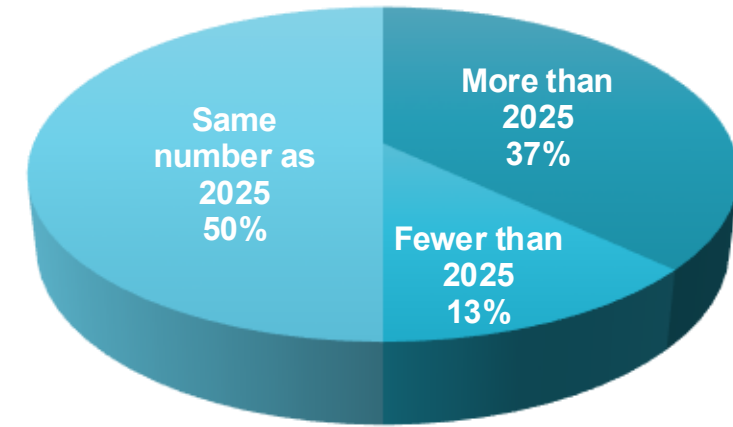
9 in 10 people (**93%**) said they would be taking a leisure trip in the UK in the next 12 months.

More than a third (**37%**) plan to take more UK leisure trips in 2026 compared to last year, with half **50%** taking the same number as last year.

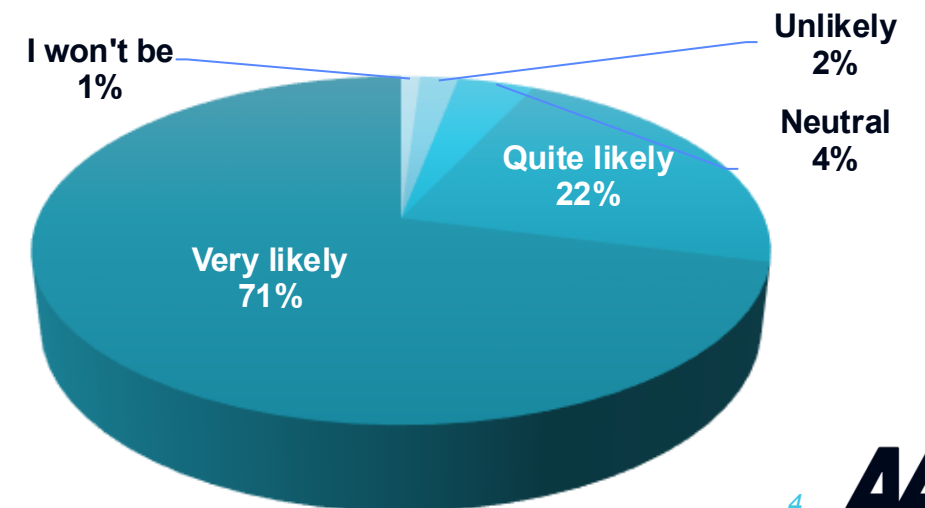
Over half (**56%**) are seeking shorter, more frequent breaks this year compared to last year, with **48%** expressing a desire to explore more of the UK.

43% are purposefully choosing UK travel over international travel in 2026.

In 2026, how many UK leisure trips do you plan to take in 2026?

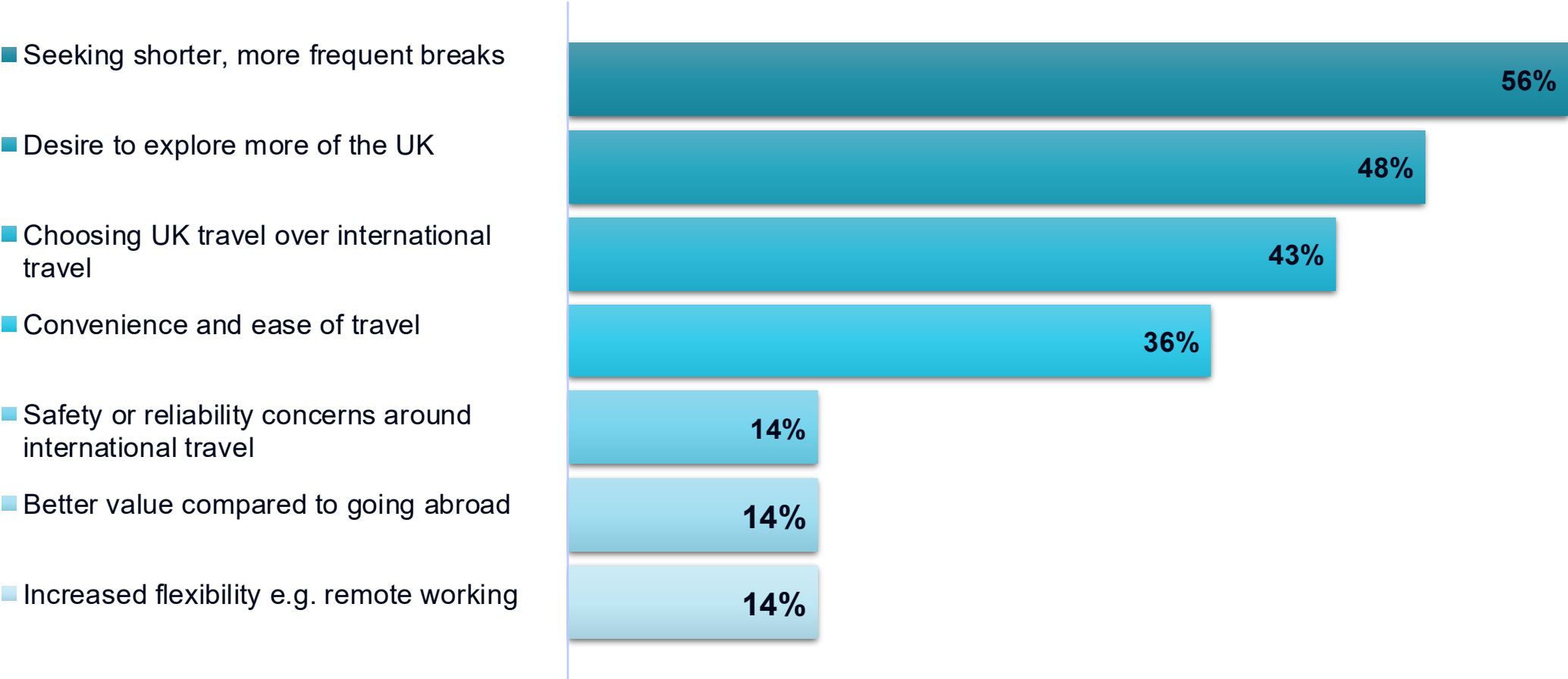


How likely are you to take a UK leisure trip in the next 12 months?



Reasons for taking more UK leisure trips in 2026

(respondents invited to select all that apply)



2026 UK Travel Intentions

These findings suggest that demand for UK leisure travel remains remarkably resilient, with domestic tourism continuing to play a central role in how people choose to spend their leisure time. The fact that 93% of respondents intend to take a UK leisure trip in the next 12 months demonstrates the enduring appeal of Britain's diverse destinations.

Even more significantly, a third (37%) are planning more UK trips than last year, indicating that domestic travel is continuing to gain momentum.

The results also highlight a shift in travel behaviour. Rather than taking fewer, longer holidays, consumers are increasingly opting for shorter, more frequent breaks, reflecting a growing desire for flexibility, convenience and the opportunity to make the most of leisure time throughout the year. At the same time, almost half (48%) of respondents say they want to explore more of the UK, suggesting that travellers remain eager to discover new destinations closer to home.

Perhaps most notably, 43% say they are deliberately choosing UK travel over international alternatives. For the tourism and hospitality sector, these findings present a significant opportunity. As travellers seek more frequent and diverse domestic experiences, destinations and accommodation providers that can offer quality, value and memorable experiences will be well positioned to benefit from rising demand throughout 2026.



Simon Numphud
Managing Director, AA Media

Destinations & Experiences

Almost half (**45%**) are planning to visit the north of England this year, with the South West being the second destination of choice for **41%**. Scotland is also a popular destination, with **38%** set to visit the country this year.

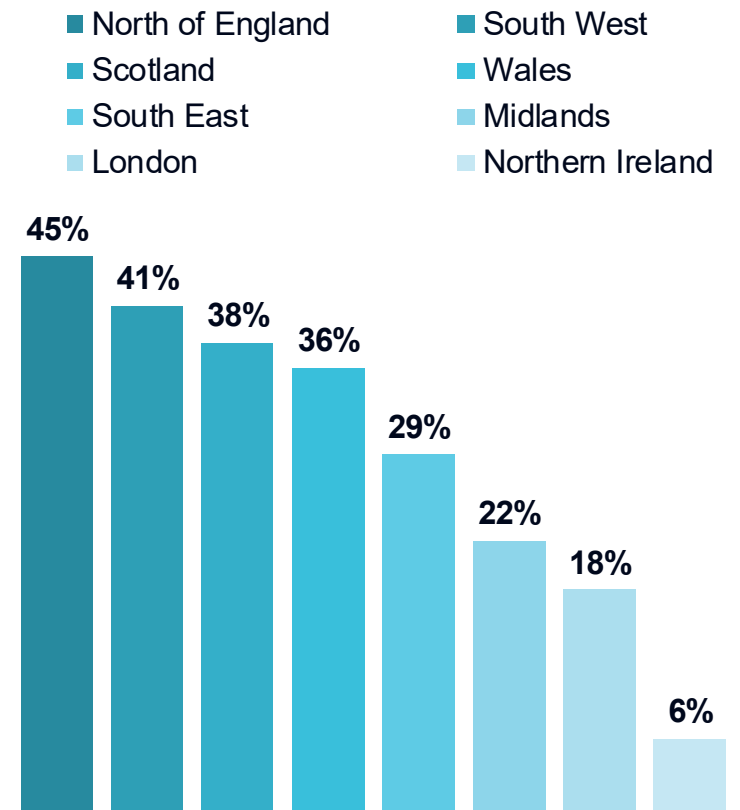
Coastal and countryside trips are the most popular UK leisure destinations in 2026, favoured by **55%** and **46%** respectively, closely followed by cultural or heritage trips, favoured by **45%** of travellers.

Almost 1 in 4 (**38%**) are choosing road trips or scenic driving holidays when travelling in the UK for leisure.

1 in 5 people (**21%**) will be heading off on camping, glamping or caravan holiday.

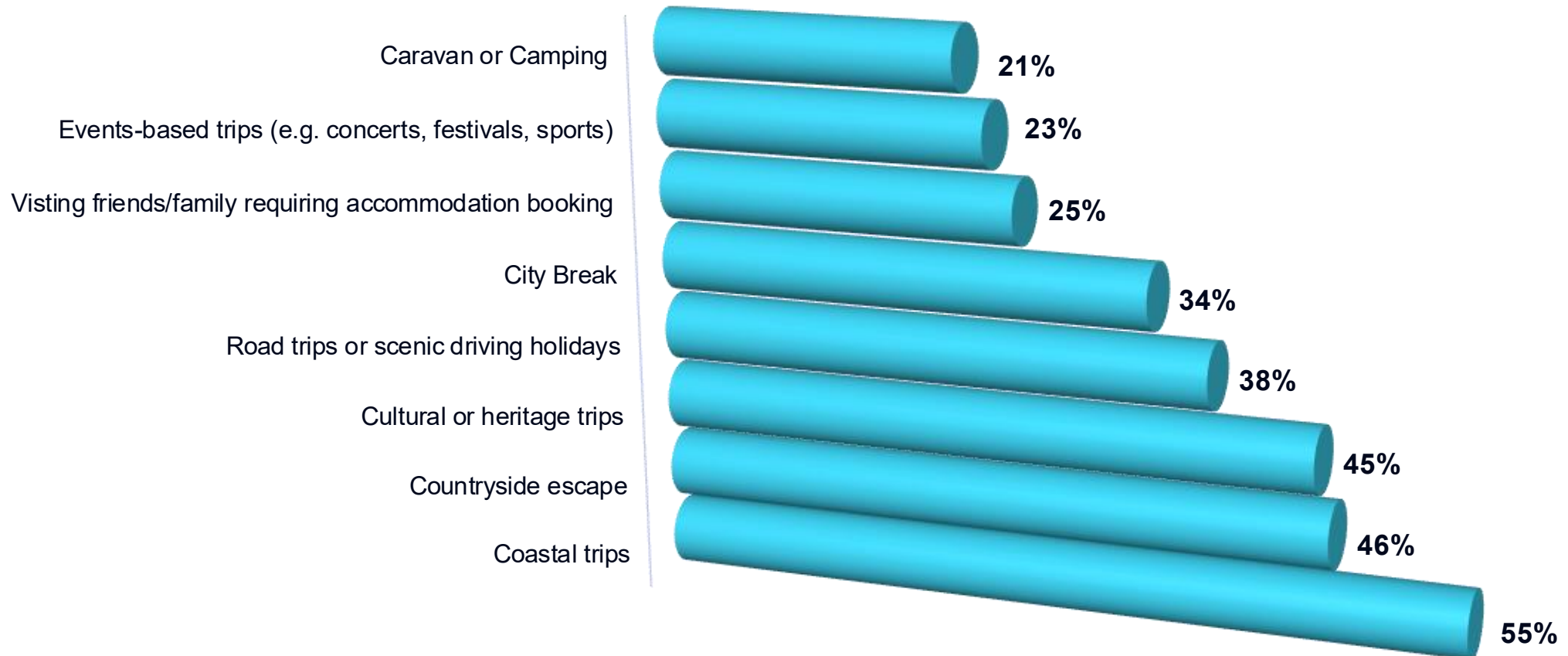
Which UK regions are you most likely to visit in the next year for a UK leisure trip?

(respondents invited to select all that apply)



What types of UK leisure trips are you planning in the next 12 months?

(respondents invited to select all that apply)



The AA's view

These findings reinforce the importance of domestic tourism, highlighting a growing desire to explore more of what the UK has to offer. UK travellers continue to be drawn to the country's greatest strengths: its coastline, countryside and abundance of cultural and heritage sites, all of which offer the freedom for travellers to explore at their own pace.

With more people taking shorter, more frequent breaks, destinations that offer relaxation, outdoor experiences and easy accessibility to sites and attractions are well placed to benefit.

The continued appeal of road trips and scenic driving holidays is particularly significant. Almost one in four (38%) respondents are choosing this style of travel, highlighting a desire to make the journey as much a part of the experience as the destination itself. Rather than travelling directly from A to B, many are looking to discover hidden gems, explore lesser-known routes and enjoy the flexibility that travelling by car provides. The enduring popularity of caravan and camping holidays also reflects a growing appetite for flexible, independent travel.

Regionally, the strong performance of the North of England and Scotland demonstrates that travellers are looking beyond traditional hotspots to embrace the breadth and diversity of experiences available across the whole of the UK.



Simon Numphud
Managing Director, AA Media

Booking Behaviour

Despite more than a third (**37%**) planning to take more UK leisure trips in 2026, only 1 in 10 (**11%**) are booking earlier than last year.

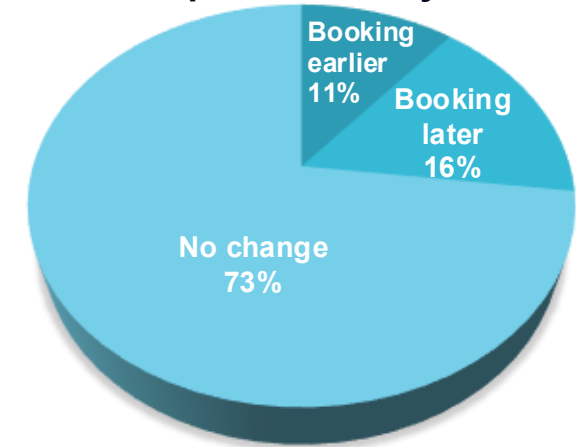
The most popular option for booking accommodation is directly with the accommodation provider (**51%**) followed by online travel platforms (**45%**).

Overall, 9 in 10 people (**92%**) will consider either official hotel ratings or user reviews before booking accommodation.

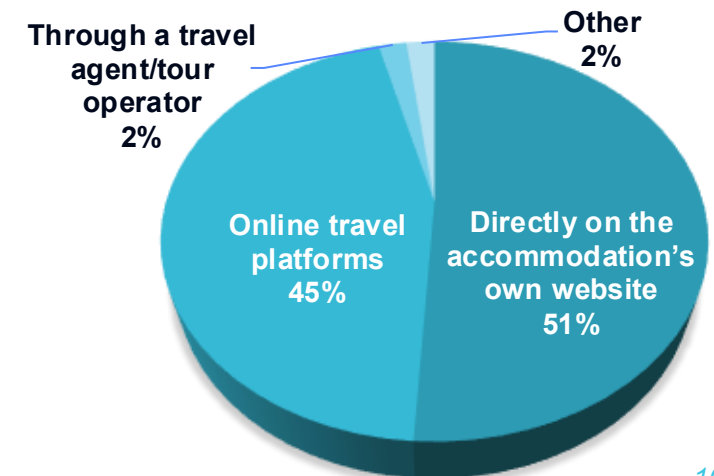
6 in 10 people (**60%**) consider both in their booking decisions.

Only **5%** of travellers do not consider reviews or ratings at all when booking UK leisure travel.

Has your booking behaviour changed compared to last year?

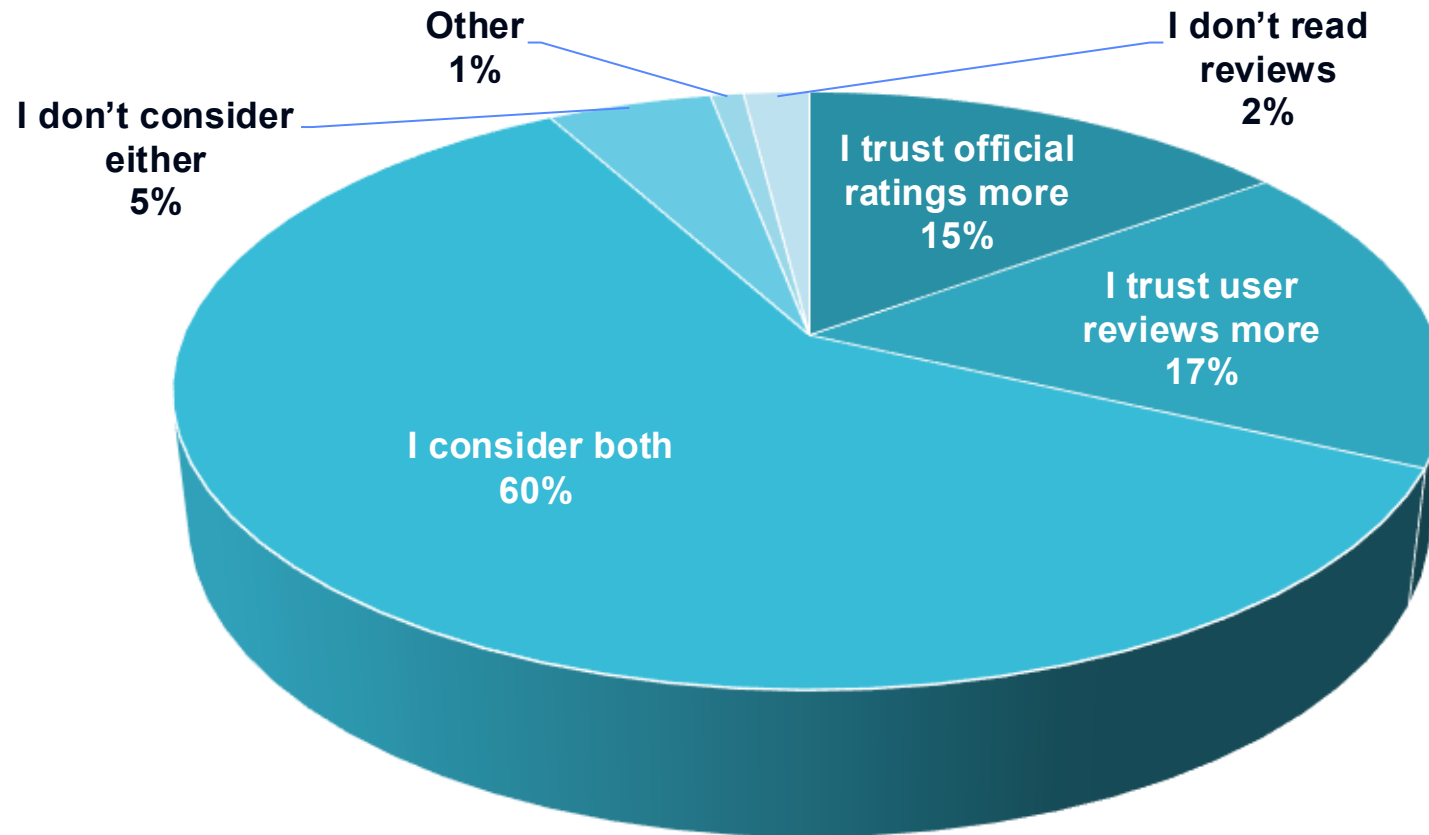


How do you usually book your accommodation for UK leisure trips?



Booking Behaviour

When booking UK accommodation, how important are quality ratings (e.g. AA Star ratings for hotels) compared to user reviews (i.e. Trip Advisor)?



The AA's view

These findings reveal travellers who are informed when making booking decisions, placing considerable importance on trust and reassurance before committing to a stay through the consideration of quality ratings and user reviews.

The results reinforce the importance of reputation when attracting guests. With over 9 in 10 (92%) considering official quality ratings, user reviews or both before booking, independent validation has become a fundamental part of the decision-making process.

Particularly noteworthy is that six in ten (60%) travellers consider both quality rating schemes and user reviews, suggesting consumers are seeking an independent, balanced view of quality and value to help book with confidence.

The preference to book directly with accommodation providers is particularly encouraging for the hospitality sector. It highlights a desire for greater transparency, better rates and offers businesses an opportunity to communicate their unique offering more effectively to encourage repeat bookings.

However, despite plans to take more domestic trips in 2026, relatively few are booking earlier than last year, suggesting that flexibility remains important.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that trust, credibility and clear quality indicators continue to play a vital role in influencing UK travel bookings.



Simon Numphud
Managing Director, AA Media

Planning

The most important consideration when planning a UK leisure trip is value for money for almost 8 in 10 (**79%**), followed by local attractions (**49%**).

The most popular type of accommodation usually booked is mid-range hotels for 45%, followed by a B&B or budget hotel (**29%** and **28%** respectively).

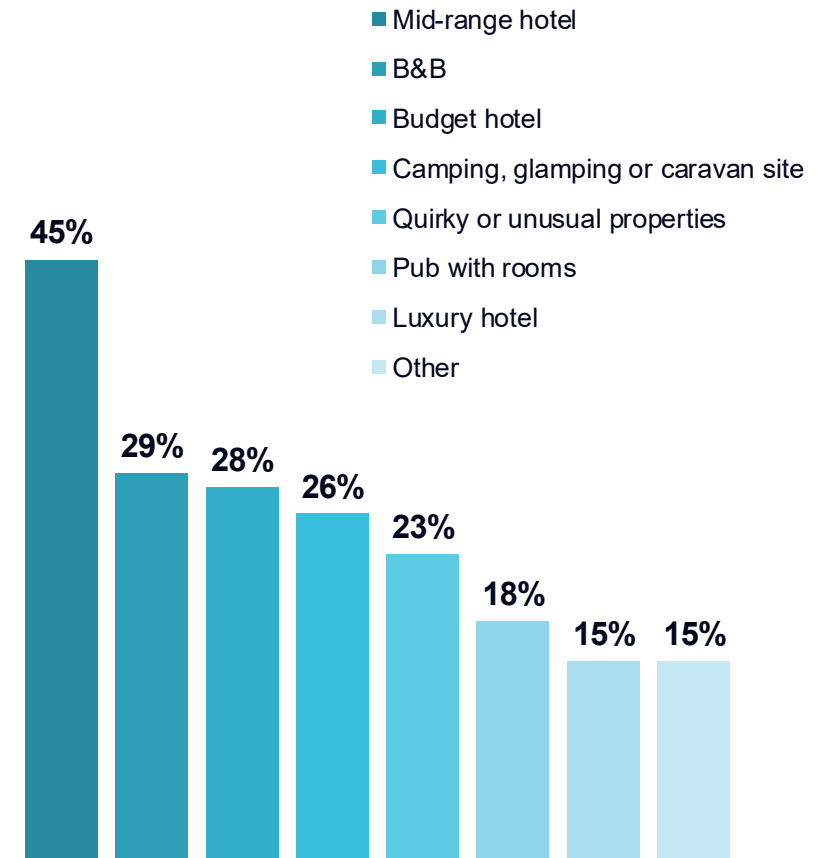
1 in 4 travellers (**26%**) usually book camping, glamping or caravanning holidays.

For two thirds (**67%**), search engines are the most popular way to discover new UK places to visit, and **44%** rely on recommendations.

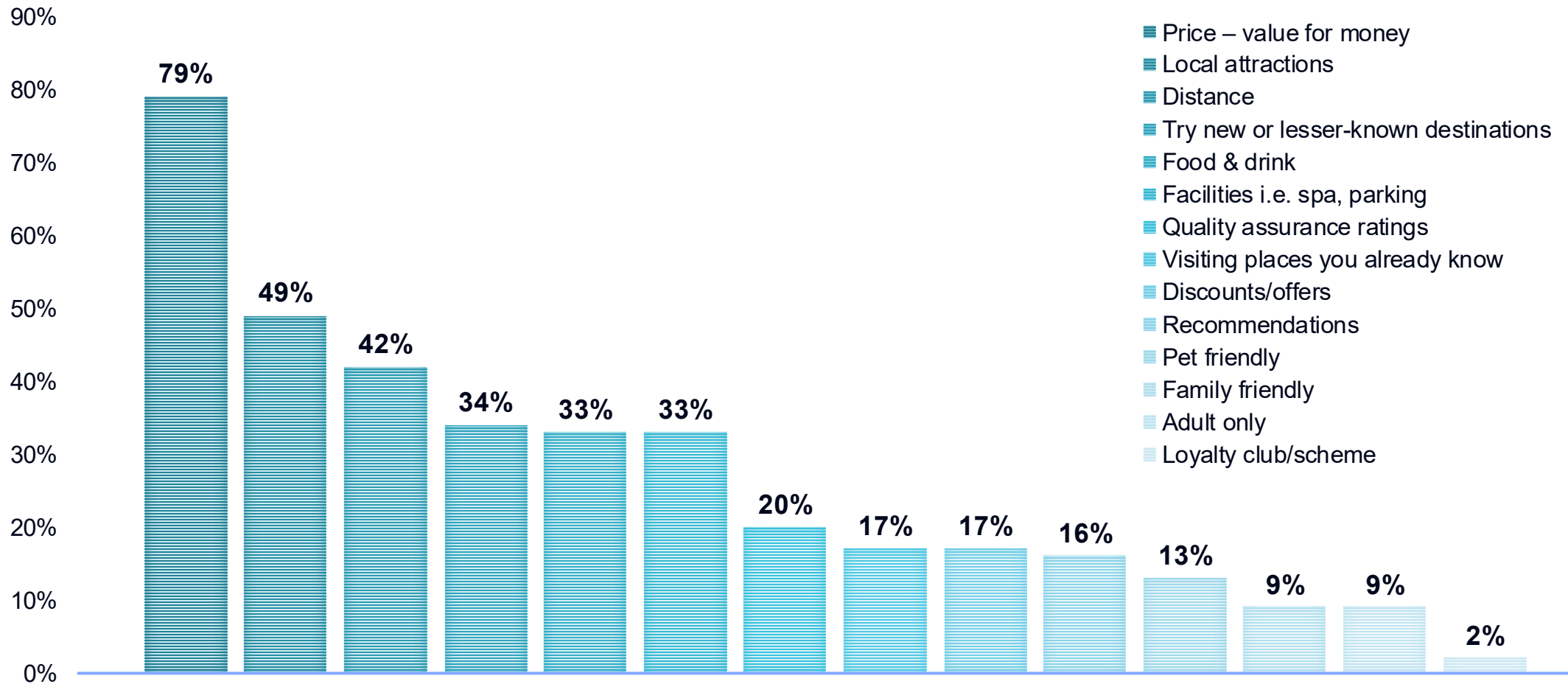
A third of people (**33%**) look at a physical map when planning a UK leisure trip.

What type of accommodation do you usually book in the UK for leisure trips?

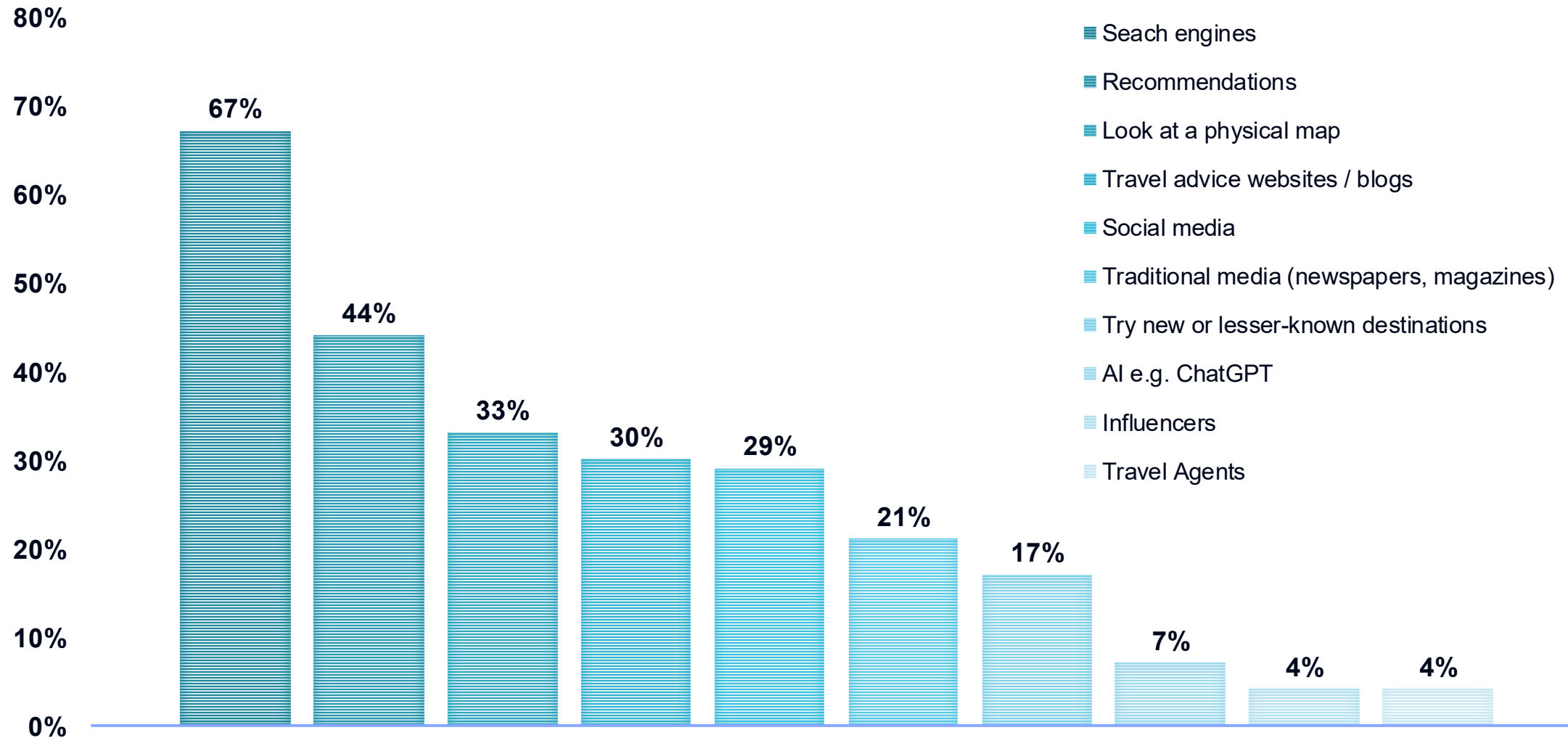
(respondents invited to select all that apply)



What are the TOP FIVE most important factors when choosing where to stay?



How do you discover new places to visit in the UK?



The AA's view

Value-conscious travellers have an equal focus on making the most out of their trips as local attractions play a significant role in decision-making, with people considering the overall destination experience.

The dominance of mid-range hotels, alongside the continued popularity of B&Bs and budget accommodation, highlights the importance of offering a balance between quality, comfort and affordability. The continued appeal of camping, glamping and caravanning demonstrates the diversity of accommodation choices available to UK travellers and the demand for flexible, experience-led breaks.

Value for money is by far the most important consideration when choosing where to stay (79%), demonstrating that travellers look carefully at what they get for their money, rather than simply seeking the lowest price.

Though search engines are the primary tool for travel inspiration, recommendations carry significant influence. Interestingly, the enduring popularity of physical maps also suggests that many travellers still enjoy the process of discovery when exploring new parts of the UK.

Overall, the findings point to a self-directed traveller who seeks destinations that offer value and rewarding experiences, creating opportunities for accommodation providers and destinations to clearly communicate what makes them unique.



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Spending Priorities & Travel Habits

A quarter of people (**25%**) expect to spend more on UK leisure travel in 2026.
1 in 5 (**20%**) expect to spend less.

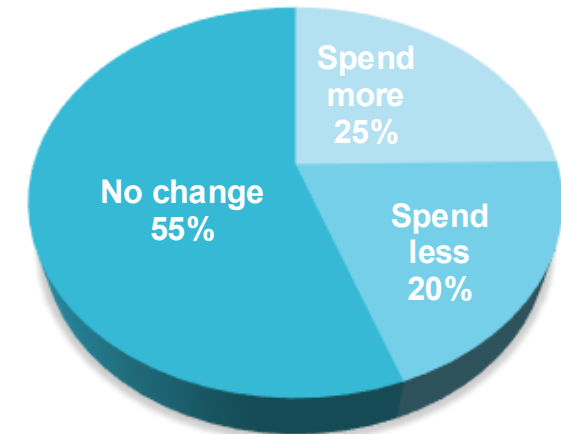
Those spending more will prioritise accommodation and taking more trips (**63%** each), half (**50%**) will spend more on dining out, and almost (**29%**) a third with spend more on activities/experiences.

Of those spending less, 56% will take fewer UK trips in 2026. Of those booking trips, almost half (**48%**) will cut back on dining out, and **28%** will reduce their accommodation level.

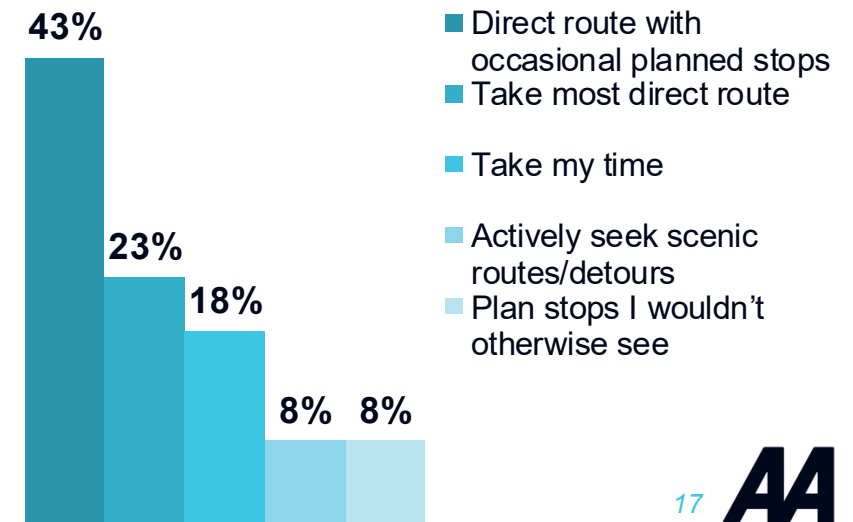
When travelling to UK destinations, **43%** opt to take the most direct route with occasional planned stops along the way. Only **8%** plan stops or visits to places they wouldn't otherwise see or actively seek out scenic routes or detours.

Those who decide to take a less direct route, nearly half (**48%**) do so to enjoy scenic drives, **44%** want to discover new places or avoid traffic/busy routes, and nearly 1 in 4 (**24%**) detour to explore food, pub or local attractions.

Do you expect your expenditure on UK leisure travel to change in 2026?

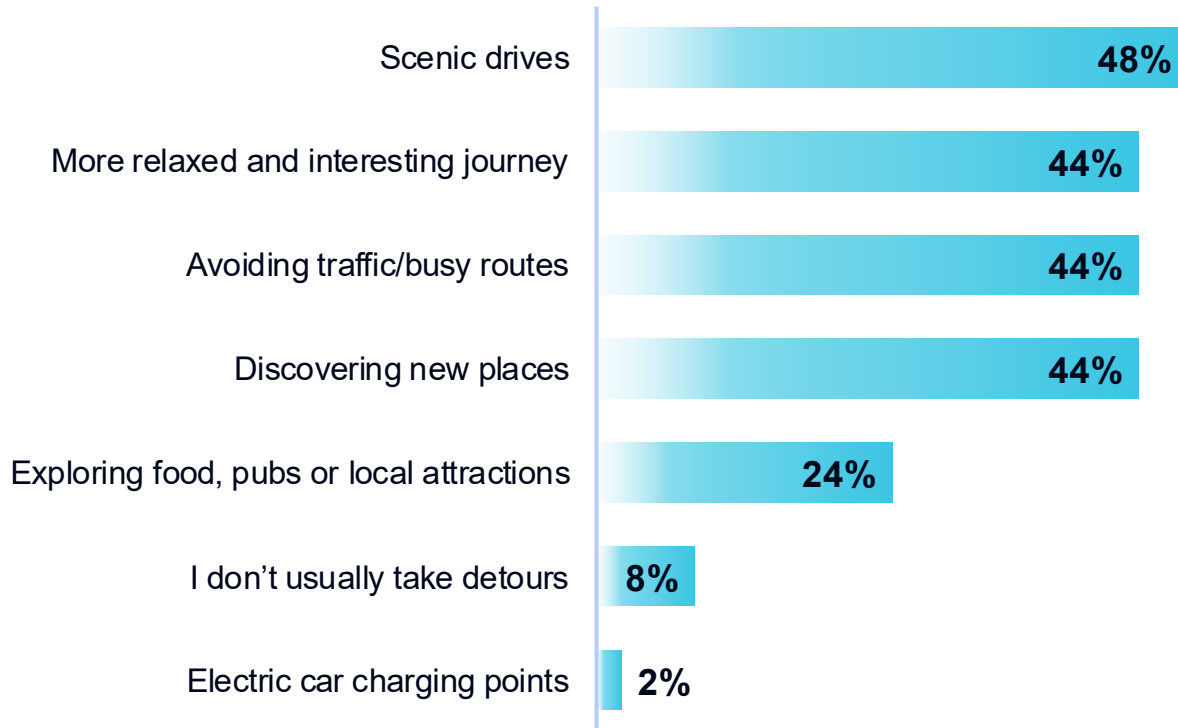


When travelling to UK destinations, which best describes your usual approach?

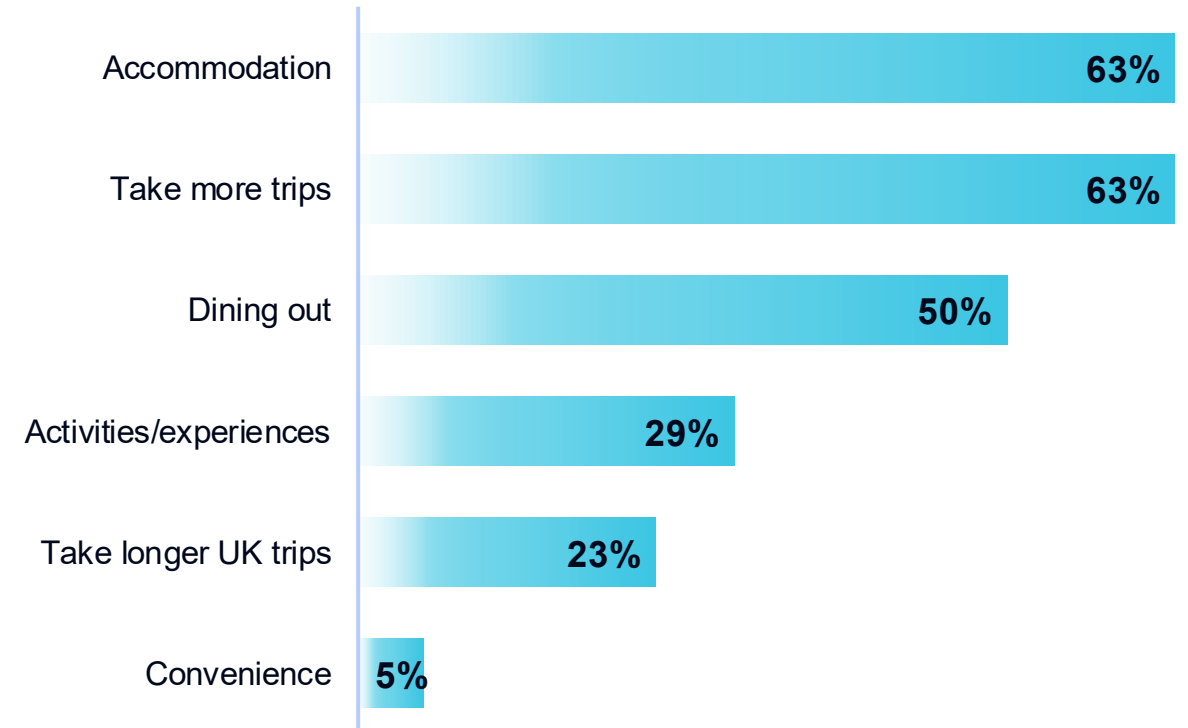


Spending Priorities & Travel Habits

When taking a less direct route, what motivates you?



In which areas do you plan to spend more on UK leisure travel in 2026?



The AA's view

It's clear that convenience remains a priority for many UK travellers, however, there is still a strong appetite to make more of the journey when time and circumstances allow.

Though most travellers continue to favour direct routes often with planned stops along the way, those who purposefully take a less direct route do so because of the appeal of scenic drives, discovering new places and exploring local attractions as they look to make the journey itself part of the overall leisure travel experience.

Encouragingly for the UK hospitality sector, a quarter of travellers (25%) expect to increase their expenditure on UK leisure travel in 2026, and though 1 in 5 (20%) anticipate reducing their spend, the majority (55%) plan to spend the same.

Those spending more are prioritising additional spend on accommodation, more trips and dining experiences, suggesting that travellers continue to place a high value on quality leisure experiences.

Overall, the findings point to a resilient UK leisure travel market, with consumers continuing to maximise the overall experience, albeit with careful consideration of how and where they spend their money.



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Managing Director, AA Media

Survey Methodology

- Fieldwork, data processing and analysis took place May - July 2026
- Number of respondents: 744

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