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The  
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# HOW INDIA Travels

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PHOTOGRAPHS: SHUTTERSTOCK



Domestic travel is on the rise among Indians, with over 70% planning for international travel in the next year

Words: OT Staff

## A

RECENT SURVEY CONDUCTED BY OUTLOOK AND TOLUNA, AS PART OF THE 75TH YEAR

of Indian independence celebration, revealed that while more young Indians are travelling within the country after the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions were removed, the numbers are yet to reach the pre-pandemic figures (77% at least once in last year vs 87%).

But, compared to the increase in domestic travel, international travel by Indians is yet to pick up significantly. The survey revealed that 71% of the travellers are planning to travel to any international destination in the coming one year, with Europe, US/Canada figuring among the top destinations.

The survey was conducted among the Indian youth (18-35 years) to understand what they are thinking about travel and other aspects.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world of travel in many ways, including restrictions and regulations on the domestic as well as the international front. During the pandemic lockdown, in-home entertainment had largely replaced travel, and people were initially reluctant to travel for various reasons. Even now, health and hygiene, the choice of destinations, the kind of holidays, among others, all play a key part in building an itinerary.

'Safety for women and friendliness' followed by 'cleanliness

and hygiene' were the top two considerations for choosing a destination. Among the respondents, 40% said they prefer to travel during festive times (Diwali, Christmas, and more), and 40% said they prefer to travel during their special days (birthdays, anniversaries). Interestingly, while 78% of the respondents said that they were aware of sustainable travel, only 43% felt it very important to practise the same.

The methodology\* of the survey basically consisted of an online quantitative survey through a self-filled questionnaire. A total of 1,804 interviews were conducted in more than 40 cities of the country across metros and non-metros, including Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Pune, Jaipur, Lucknow, Indore, Surat, and others.

Data collection for the survey was conducted between June 26 and July 6, 2022.

The survey revealed that 60% of the respondents had said that

**The survey revealed that 71% of the travellers are planning to travel to any international destination in the coming one year, with Europe, US/Canada figuring among the top destinations**





they had travelled abroad for leisure (no business travel) in the pre-pandemic period (i.e. 2019 and before). People from the northern part of the country made up the bulk of travellers while the age-wise score was highest among the 26- to 30-year-old group.

In the last one year (when most of the COVID-19 restrictions were lifted), international leisure trips have seen an upward movement, with 63% of the respondents saying that they have taken at least one trip abroad.

In the pre-COVID-19 phase, 77% (three out of four) respondents said that they travelled to domestic destinations for leisure at least once a year, with the highest score seen in the 31- to 35-year-old category. But in the past one year (post-

pandemic), the number has increased to 87%, partly owing to the fact that international travel began to open up much later, that too selectively, compared to domestic travel.

Most respondents said that they resorted to watching movies, web series, etc. for entertainment in lieu of international travel while 46% said they resorted to virtual travel. In fact, museums and similar institutions banked on virtual tours to stay relevant during the global lockdown. Interestingly, in the domestic sector, 64% resorted to movies, web series, and the like, during the travel ban, with female respondents, respondents from



the southern part, and respondents in the 31- to 35-year-old group scoring higher in this category. Respondents from the north indicated they had opted for virtual travel.

Since the start of the pandemic and lockdown, travel experts have been saying that sustainable/responsible tourism is the way to go forward. In the survey, more than three-fourth of the respondents said they were aware of sustainable tourism, with female respondents and respondents from the western part of country showing higher scores. However, close to half of the respondents said that the concept is important but they find it either impractical or cannot understand how to contribute. 18% believed the idea was created by environmentalists and following these are not very practical, 16% agreed it was important but said they cannot follow it every time they travel for leisure, while 13% agreed it was an important factor but were not sure of their roles in this.

**Close to half of the respondents of the survey said that the concept of sustainable tourism is important, but they find it either impractical or cannot understand how to contribute**

Among the parameters that people consider while planning a trip to a destination, 'safety for women' and 'cleanliness' were the major considerations. Female respondents as well as those in the 26- to 35-year-old group also said that engagement activities for kids was also a major consideration while planning a trip. Other parameters which were also considered important included scenic views and experiences, wellness, sightseeing, experiencing local food and culture, etc. Asked separately, majority of the respondents felt that wellness travel (travel for the purpose of promoting health and well-being through physical, psychological, or spiritual activities) has



become important this year.

While 55% of the respondents (driven by the 26- to 30-year-old age group) showed an inclination towards undertaking both international and domestic travel, 71% of the respondents indicated they would like to travel to international destinations in the next one year.

While Europe, the US and Canada topped the list of international destinations, others in the reckoning were Australia, New Zealand, South Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Budget hotels (26%) topped the list of preferred accommodation, three- or four-star hotels (25%) came a close second, followed by five-star hotels (21%). Respondents from the south and those in the 18- to 21-year-old group preferred budget hotels more. Homestays garnered only 3% overall.

68% of the respondents admitted to travelling with their family members (with a higher score among females) the 26- to 35-year-old group said they travel with their spouses mostly. The 18- to 25-year-old group travels more with their friends.

Talking about their travel plans, 61% said they normally plan their travel on their own and book by themselves too. Among 84 % of the respondents who said they plan their travel around special occasions and festivals, people from the western part showed preference for special occasions, while those from the eastern part preferred to travel during festivals. Those in the 31- to 35-year old-group, said they plan around festivals or according to their child's exams.

Talking of their budget for one trip (including travel, stay, food and local sightseeing), 64% of the respondents said their budget lies below Rs 1 lakh. Four out of 10 said they always take a travel



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insurance; this tendency was seen more in the 30- to 35-year-old group.

While 60% said they prefer travelling using public modes of transportation, those in the 26- to 35-year-old group said they preferred air transport while those in 22- to 25-year-old group said they prefer railways or self-driven cars.

A total of 1,804 interviews were conducted in more than 40 cities of the country across metros and non-metros, including Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Pune, Jaipur, Lucknow, Indore, Surat, and others.

The interviews were conducted among the youth (defined as 18-35 years), who were a part of the Toluna panel, across genders, socio-economic classes and employment status.

The survey was conducted online using a standard, structured questionnaire, which was self-filled by the respondents. The segments covered were Expression of Freedom, Cinema and Freedom Struggle, Business and Career, Investments (only to working professionals), Travel, and Society in General. 📍

#### \*METHODOLOGY

The methodology basically consisted of an online quantitative survey (12-15 minutes) through self-filled questionnaire.

Data collection for the survey was conducted between June 26 and July 6, 2022.

