



Booking.com

# SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL REPORT 2023



## The Dilemma Dividing Sustainable Travel in 2023

Now in its eighth year, Booking.com's annual Sustainable Travel Report, which gathered insights from over **33,000 travelers across 35 countries and territories**, spotlights how economic uncertainty is informing meaningful sustainable travel decisions this year. This highlights a dilemma where people feel potentially forced to choose between cutting costs and making more sustainable travel choices.

In a world with the turbulence of geopolitical conflict and rising inflation, travelers are increasingly recognizing the urgency to act now to save the planet for future generations.

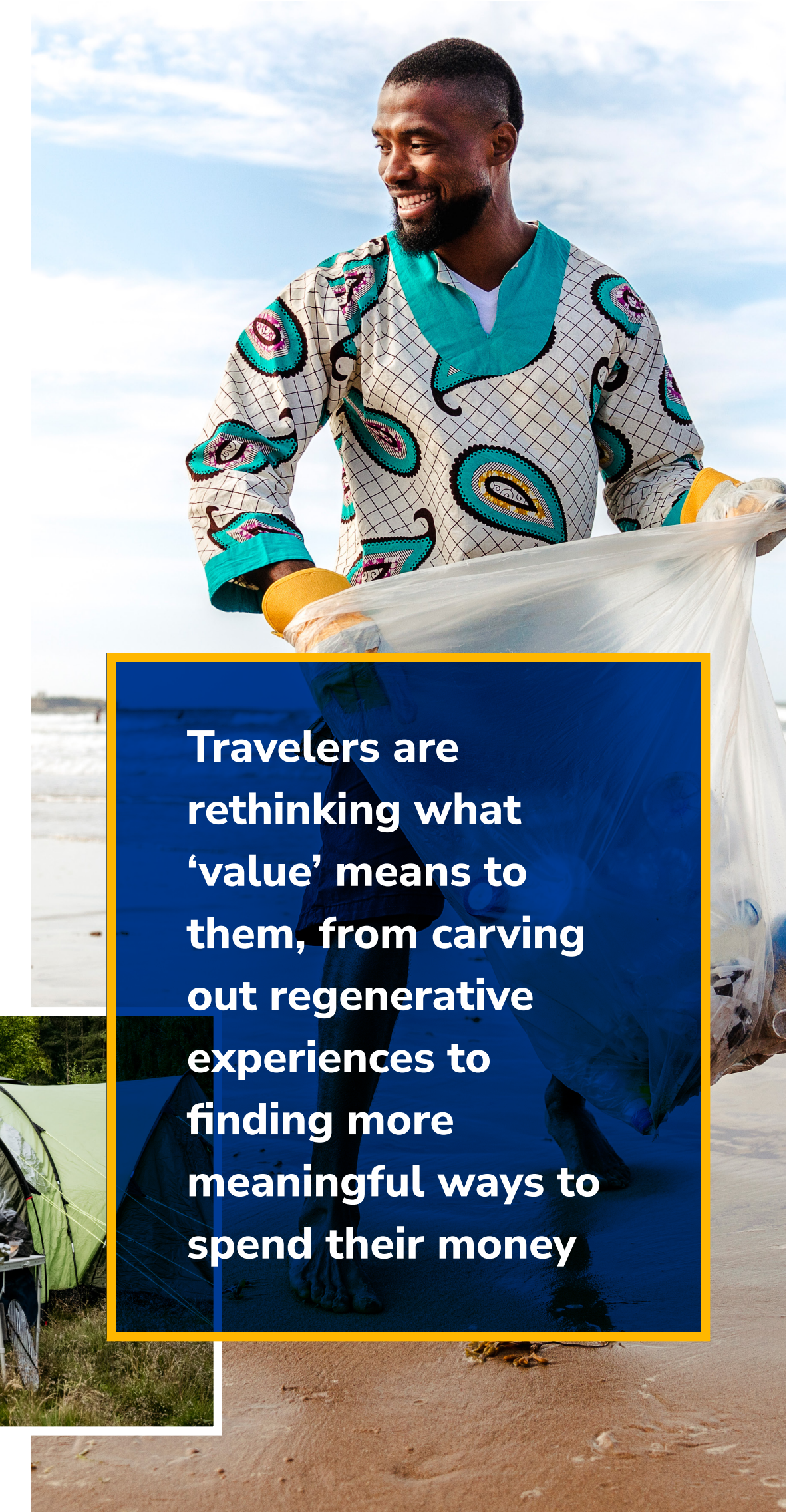
The most extensive Sustainable Travel research from Booking.com to date also highlights a divide in people's actions; some are more intentional about how they spend their money with the perception that sustainable travel options are too expensive, while others are willing to pay more for these options to feel reassured they are driving impact.

Despite financial barriers, it's clear there's a huge appetite for sustainable solutions – especially those that don't impact spend. On a micro level, today's responsible traveler is converting intent into action with a meaningful uptick in more sustainable travel behaviors such as turning off the air conditioning and reusing towels in accommodations. Travelers are also making conscious choices beyond everyday habits such as choosing more sustainable ground transport and shopping local.

From the economy to the environment, travelers are rethinking what 'value' means to them. At a macro level, sustainable trends point to an increase in more purposeful travel in

2023, with travelers finding more meaningful ways to spend their money. More and more, they are carving out regenerative experiences that positively impact destinations with benefits to wildlife, conservation and the local community, and engaging in local philanthropy and ethical experiences.

While travelers recognize the critical nature of climate change, there is still some disconnect between impact and action. From limited data to a perceived lack of credible options, this report exposes barriers to traveling more sustainably and the huge strides travel providers need to make in order to gain their trust. Ultimately, building a truly sustainable industry will take time, but progress is underway to ensure that it's becoming easier for everyone to experience the world in a more mindful and responsible way.



**Travelers are rethinking what 'value' means to them, from carving out regenerative experiences to finding more meaningful ways to spend their money**



“Over the eight years that Booking.com has conducted this research, the growing urgency that people feel to act now and make more sustainable travel choices continues to be encouraging. The report promisingly points to the traveler mindset evolving with some noticeable shifts in the more

sustainable behaviors that travelers say they have put into practice over the past year.

We feel that urgency too and at Booking.com, our ambition is to create a more sustainable business, as well as contribute to a more sustainable travel industry. This will take time, cooperation and systemic changes.

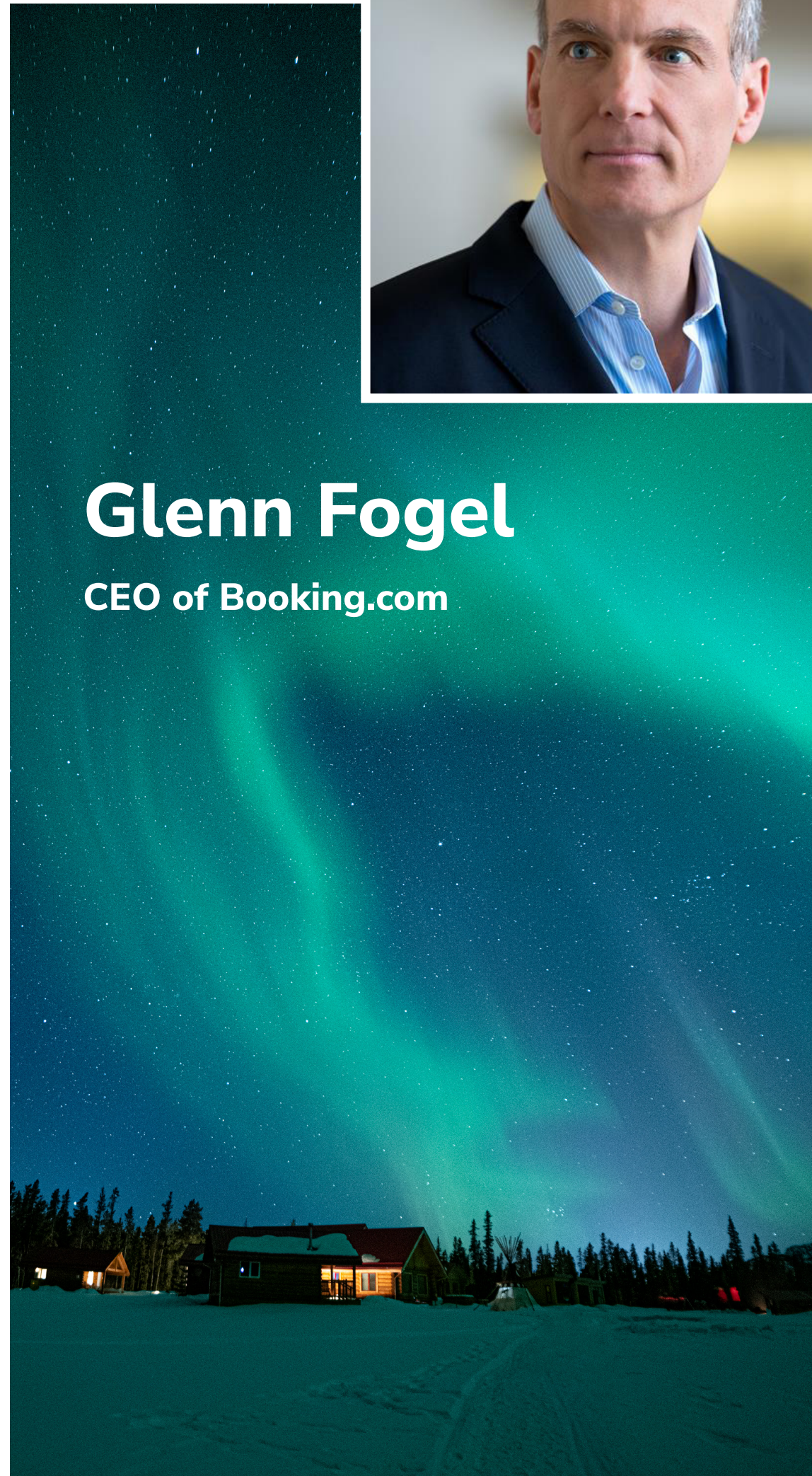
With regards to our own business, in 2022 we set out our ambition to be net-zero by 2040 as part of our Climate Action Plan, aligning our emission reduction roadmap to the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTI). As such, our aim is to achieve a 95% reduction in scope 1 and 2 emissions and a 50% reduction in scope 3 emissions by 2030 and to reach net-zero by 2040.

When it comes to our platform and the impact we are striving to have across the travel industry, our Travel Sustainable program now recognizes the sustainability efforts of more than 500,000 accommodations worldwide. We are encouraged by the number of our accommodation partners that are taking steps to operate more sustainably, but there is more work to be done to make it easier for travelers to find and book more sustainable options across the entire travel experience.

At Booking.com, our aim is to find scalable ways to surface experiences across the entire trip that truly enrich the connection between travelers and destinations, from impactful activities to supporting local communities.

In order to bring the ethos of traveling more sustainably into the mainstream, the onus is on us in the travel industry to provide more information to travelers in a credible and trusted way. With continued industry collaboration and the dedication of our partners, we are on course for more sustainable travel to become the norm, and not the exception.”

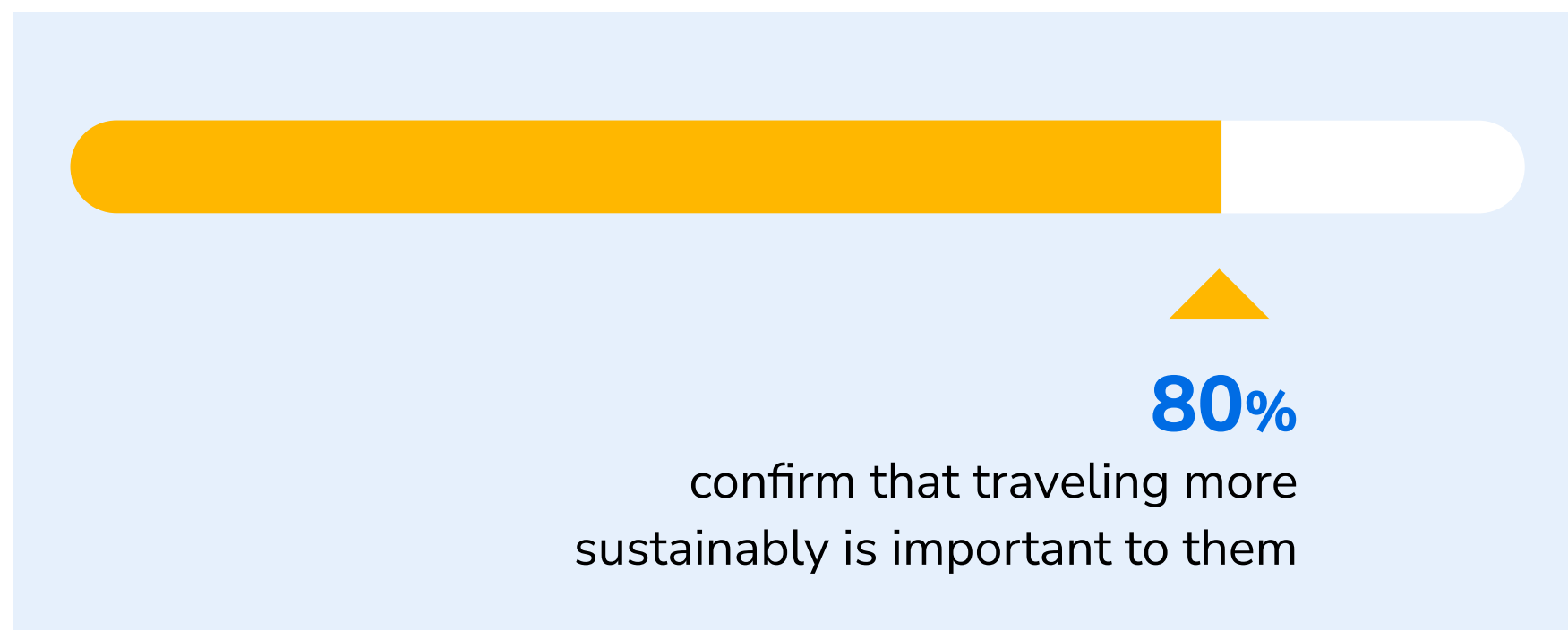
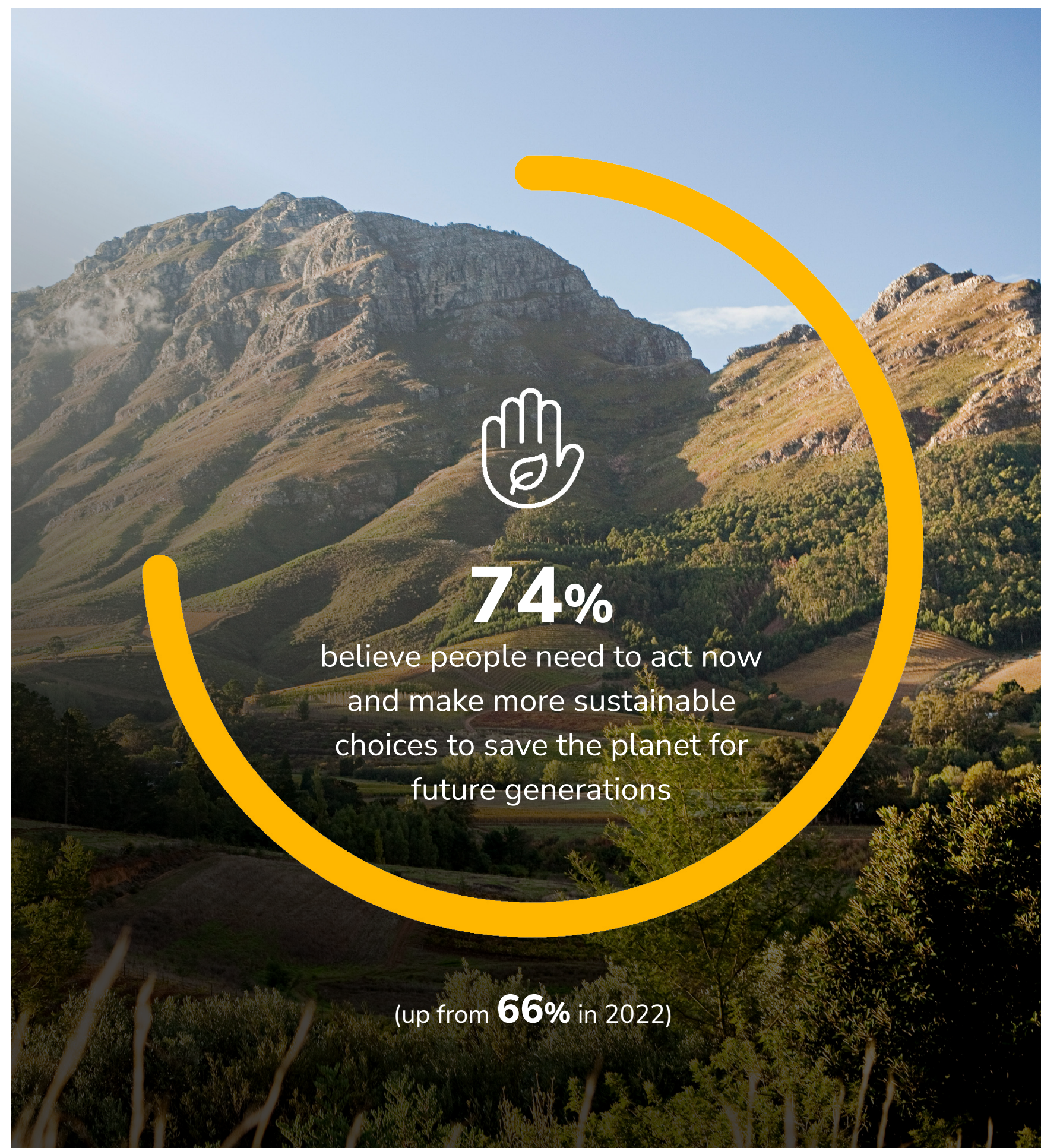
**“With continued industry collaboration and the dedication of our partners, we are on course for more sustainable travel to become the norm, and not the exception.”**



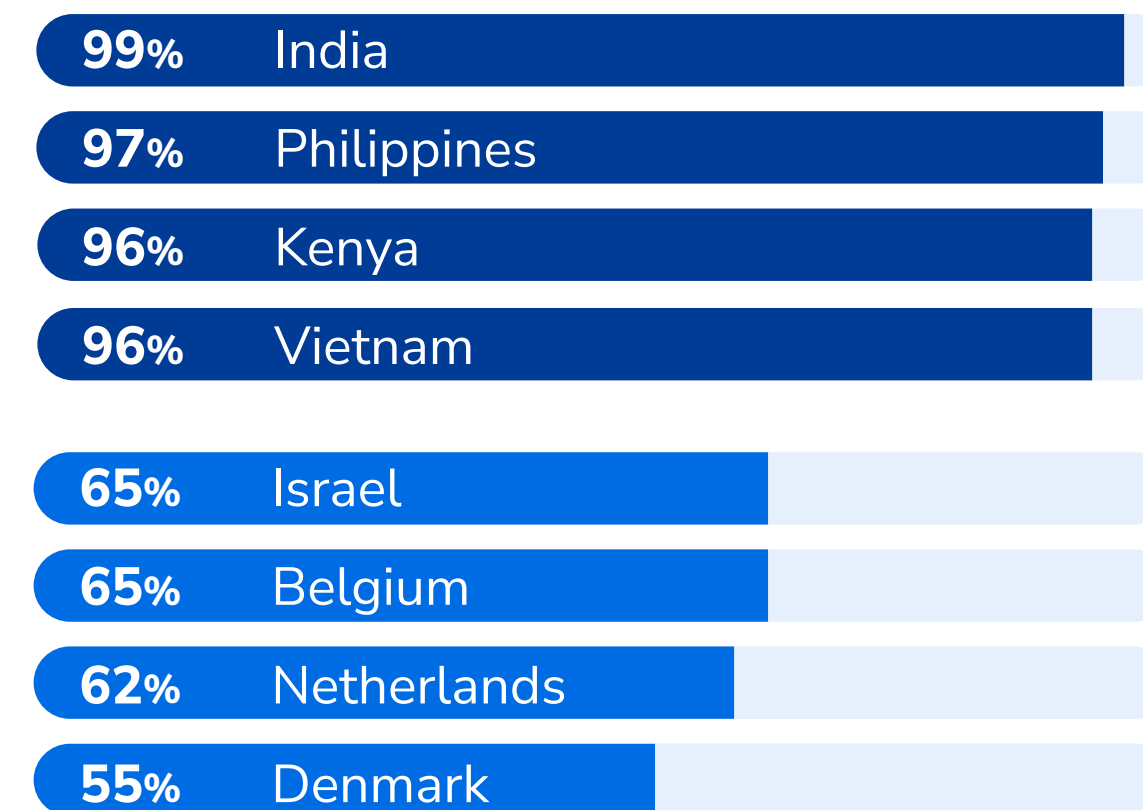


## An Urgency to Act Now

At a time of general global uncertainty, with the turbulence of climate change and rising cost of living, traveling more sustainably continues to be front of mind for travelers.



### 4 Highest



### 4 Lowest

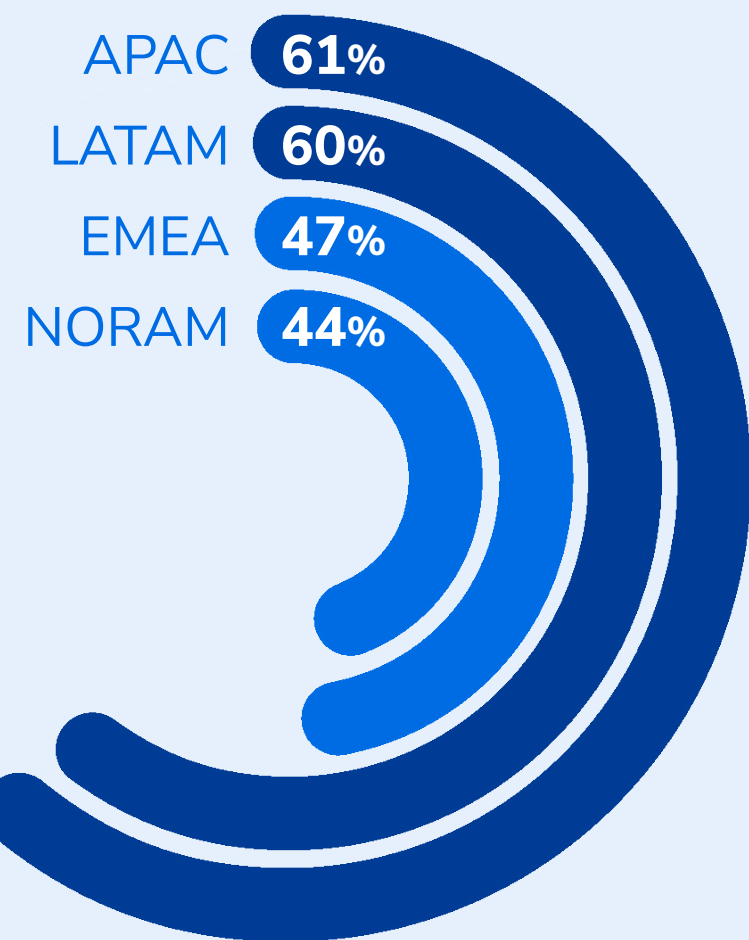
### The news continues to be a key influence driver:



**43%** would consider themselves knowledgeable on sustainability, with the news and social media the two top sources of learning about the topic



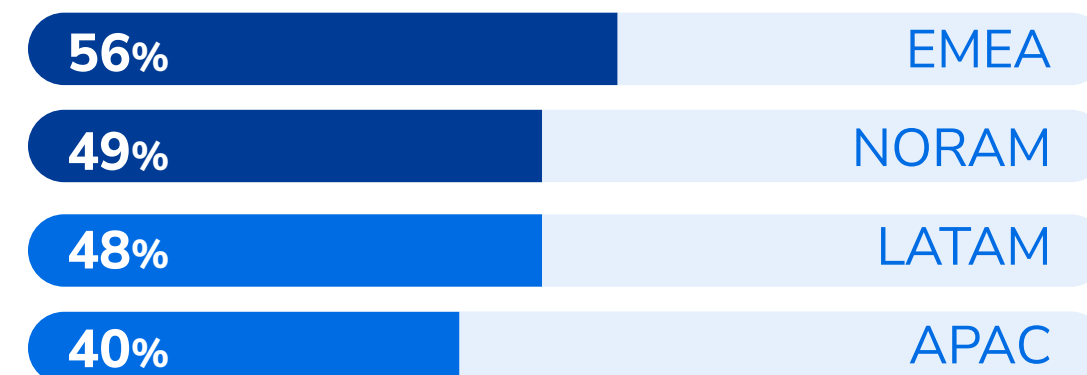
**53%** say that recent news about climate change has influenced them to make more sustainable travel choices



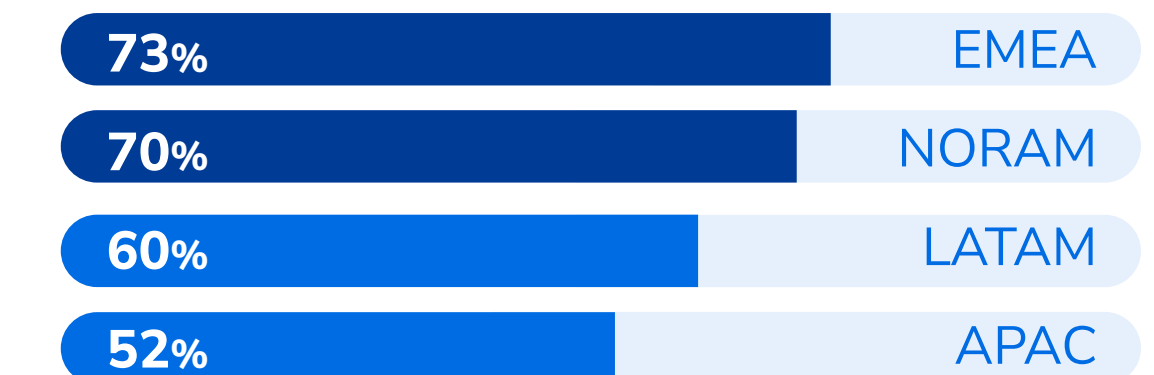
Yet the news also speaks to a quandary people are facing when it comes to being more mindful about when, where and how they travel. Increasingly, people are unsure of what to prioritize as they work to reconcile what is important to them with the demands of everyday life:



**49%** think the environment will get worse in the next six months



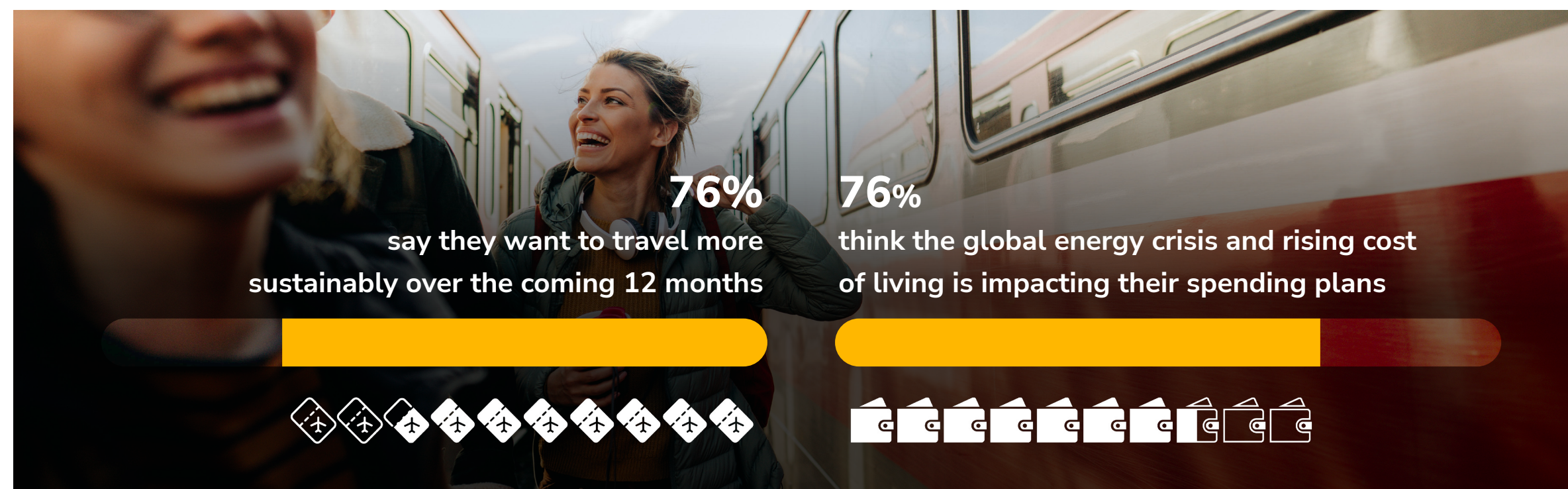
**64%** believe the cost of living crisis will get worse in the next six months



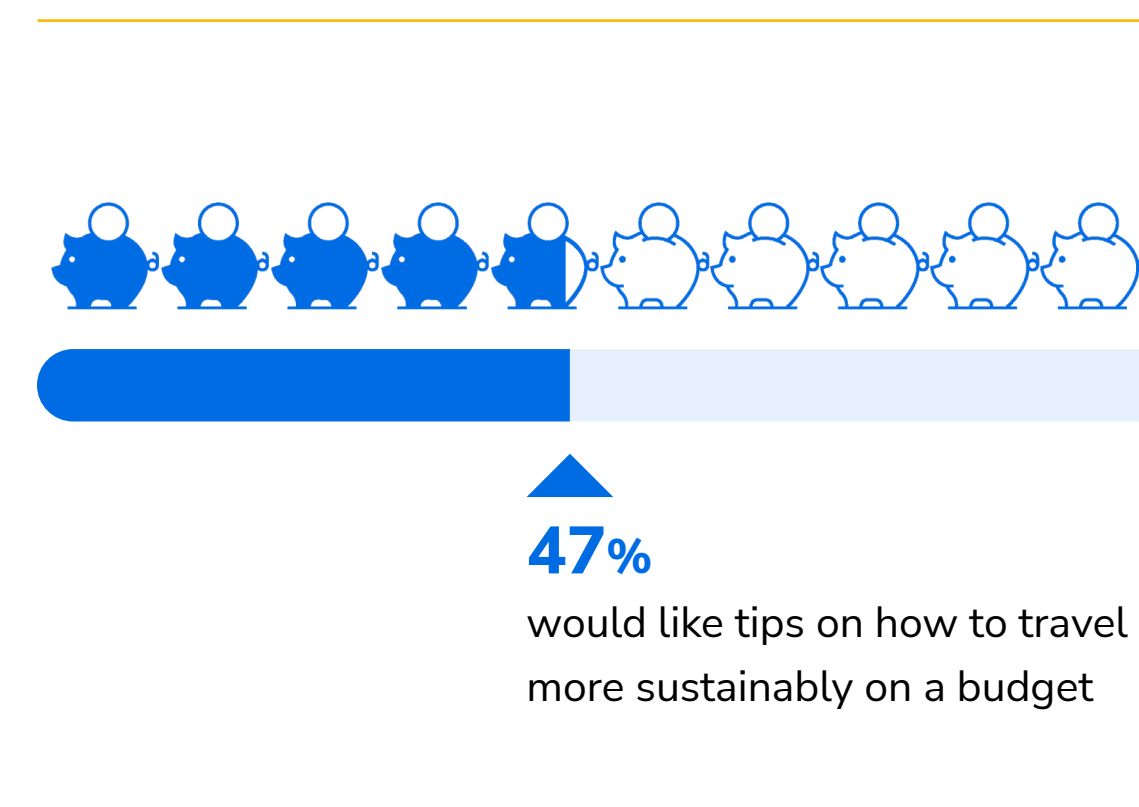
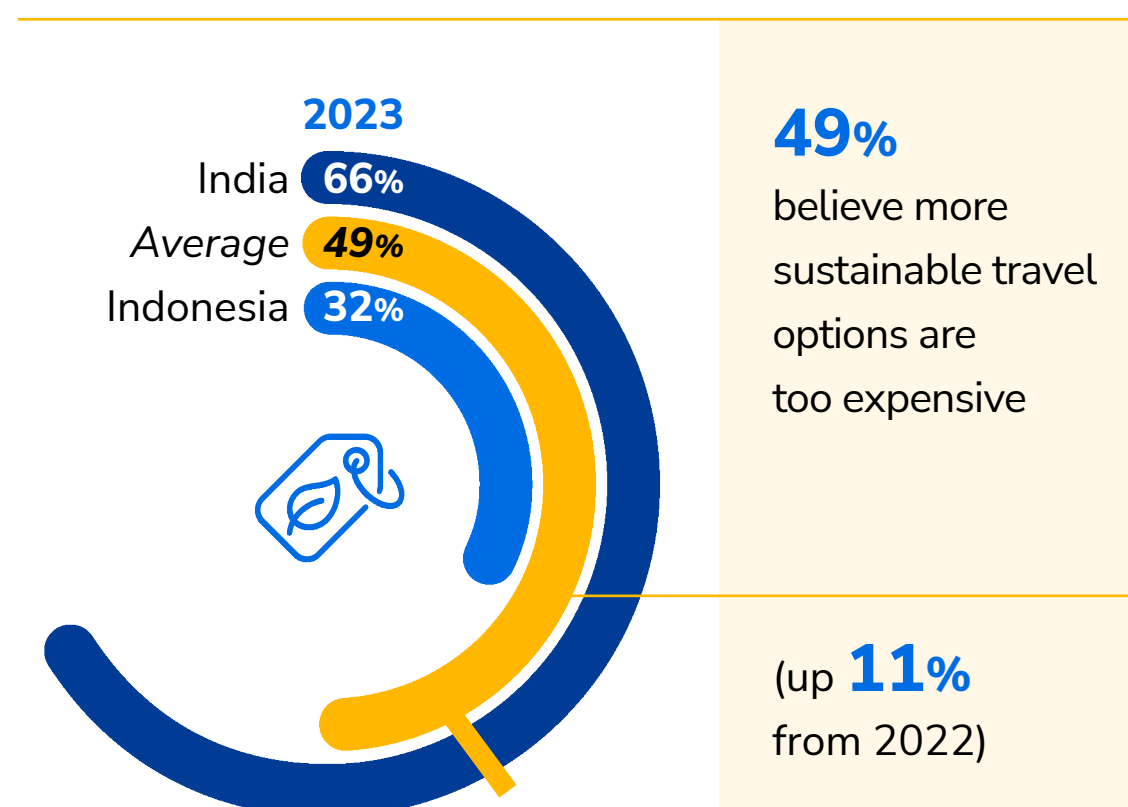


## Cost vs Conscience

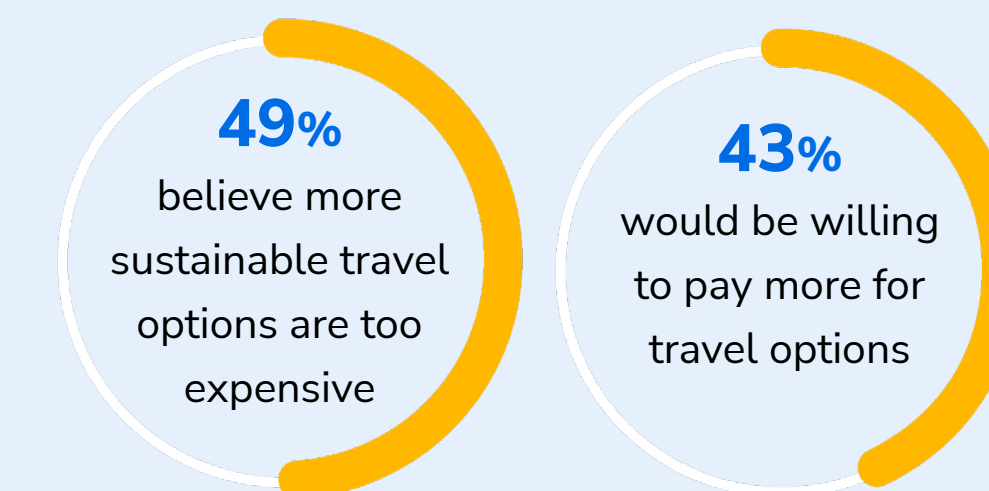
The economic weather has changed drastically in the past 12 months, and the big topics at the front of people's minds today are the cost of living crisis and the climate crisis.



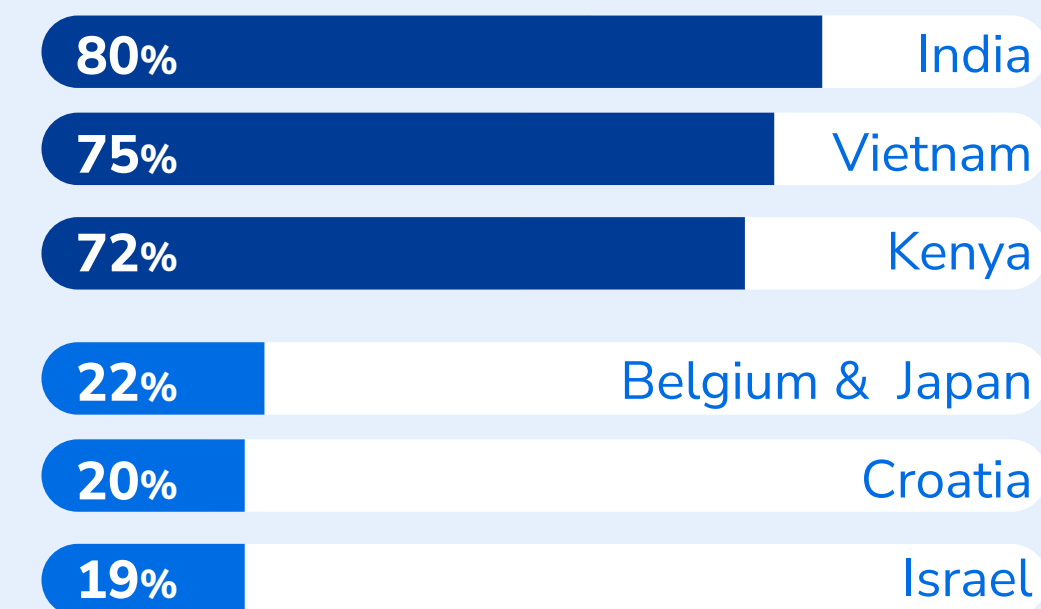
With rising inflation, travelers are stuck in the notion that they must make a choice between sustainability and spending. For these people, sustainability and travel combined can seem non-urgent when they are worried about bills and the energy crisis.



On the flip side, with bucket-list travel well and truly back for others and a more urgent focus on conscious choices:



### 3 Highest

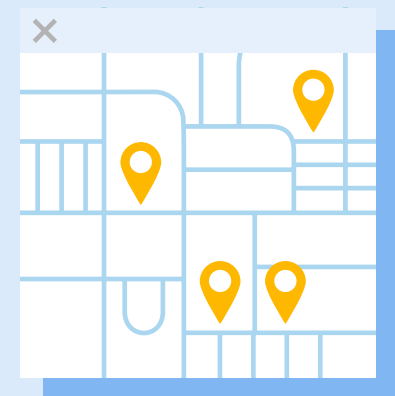
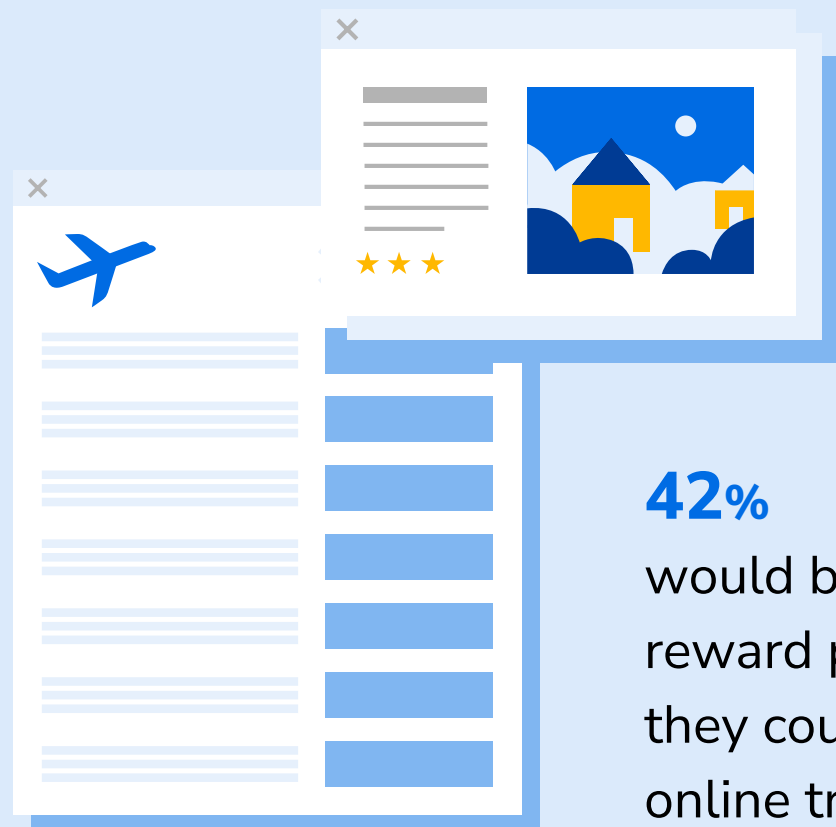
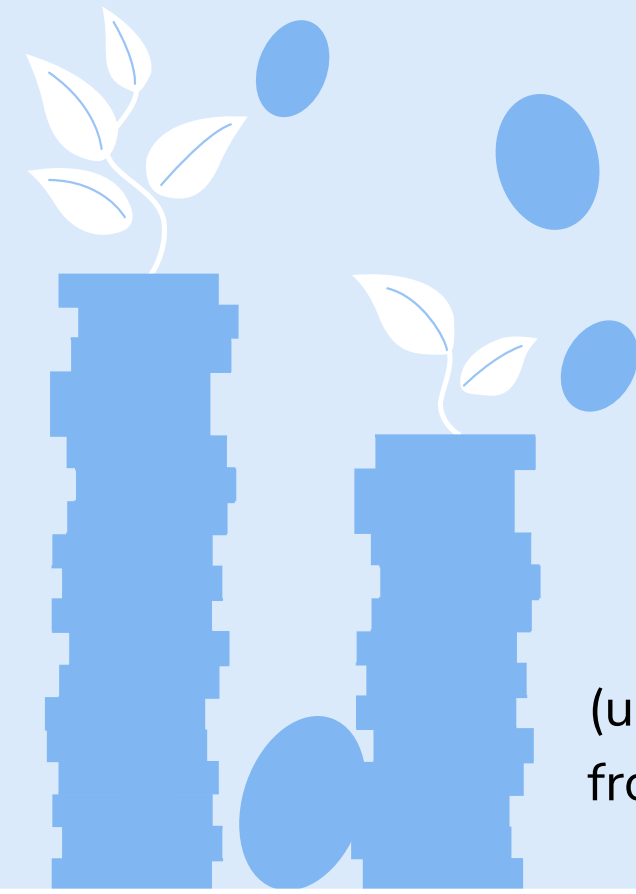


### 3 Lowest

With an increasing number of travelers feeling the pinch, they are seeking more sustainable travel options rich in rewards, with the need for incentivization:

**49%**  
want discounts and economic incentives to opt for eco-friendly options

(up **12%** from 2022)



**42%**  
would be encouraged to travel more sustainably with reward points for making more sustainable choices that they could use for free extra perks or discounts through online travel booking sites





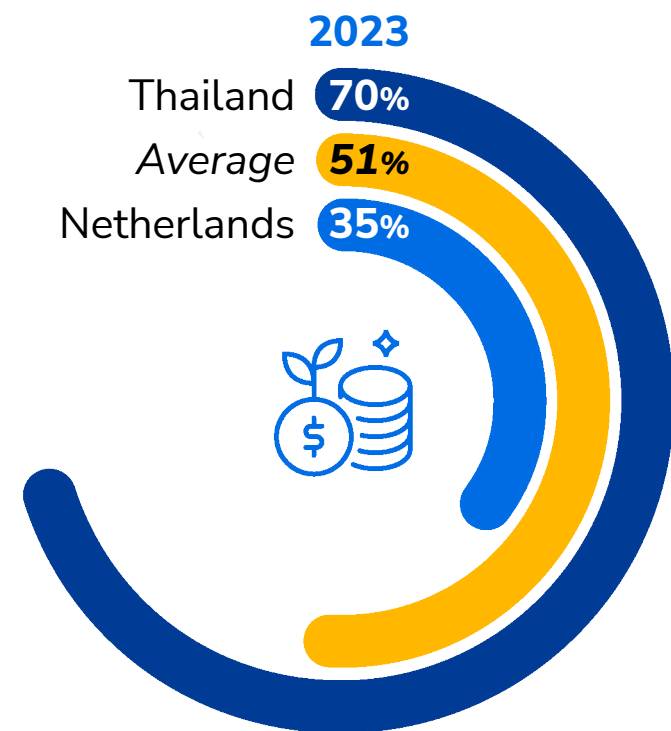
# Breaking Through Barriers

It's not just cost that is a perceived hurdle to traveling more sustainably. From limited data to a perceived lack of options, barriers to traveling more sustainably appear higher than ever, with some telling shifts in the past 12 months.



**74%** want travel companies to offer more sustainable travel choices

(up from **66%** from 2022)



**51%** believe there are not enough sustainable travel options



Despite good intentions, **44%** of travelers don't know where to find more sustainable options. For example:

**75%** seek authentic experiences that are representative of the local culture

**40%** don't know how or where to find tours and activities that will ensure they give back to the local community





## The Responsible Traveler

Despite existing barriers and the tightening of purse strings, it's clear there's a huge appetite for solutions, with two thirds (59%) more determined to make more sustainable choices now than when they traveled a year ago.

In the past 12 months, people say they have been converting intent into action by taking active small steps at home – and increasingly when traveling – to drive a more sustainable future.

### Sustainable Steps taken at Home

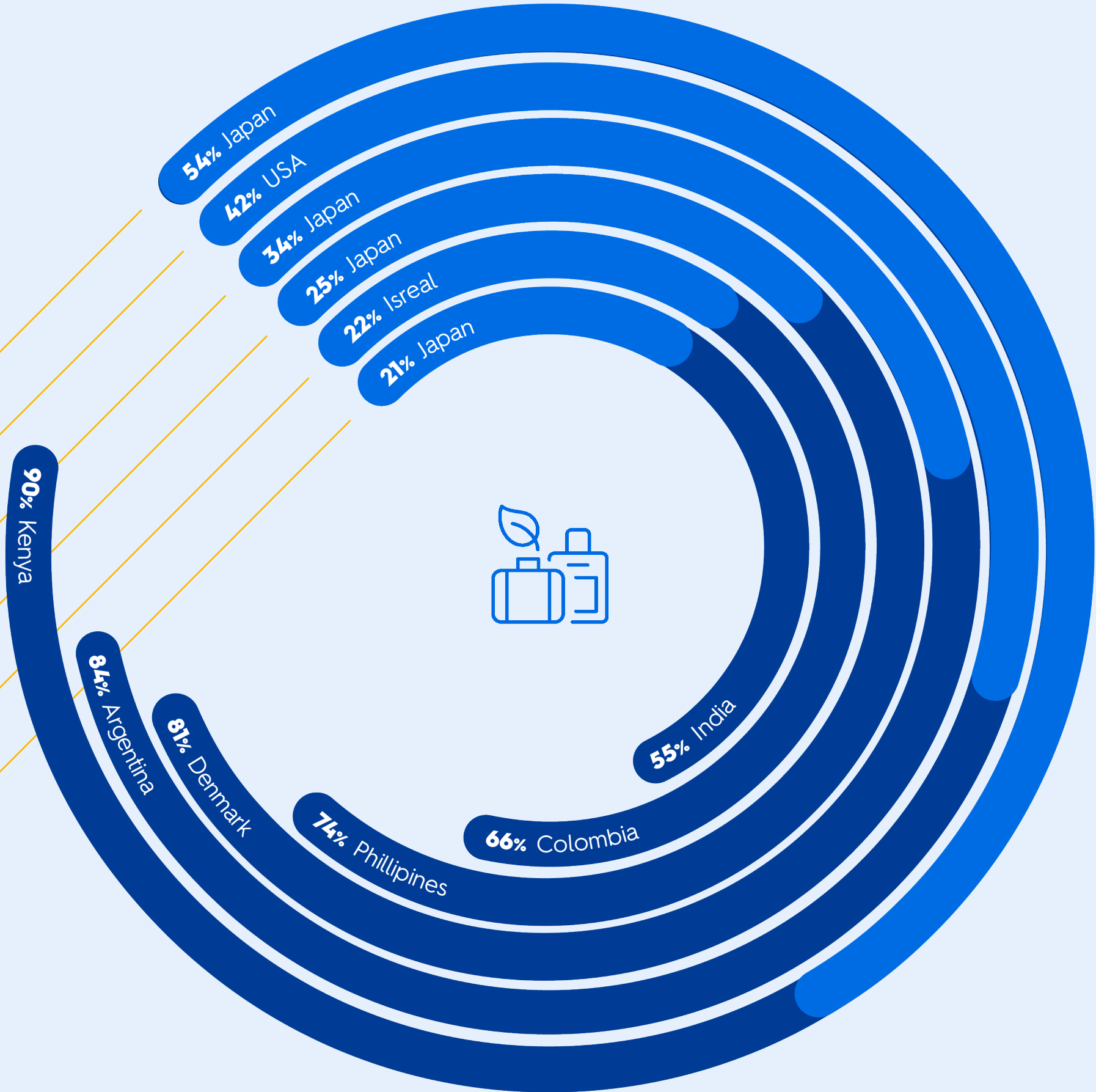
- 68% used reusable shopping bags
- 64% recycled waste
- 58% carried their own reusable water bottle
- 56% reduced their usage of single-use plastic
- 39% took public transport or bicycle over car
- 39% favored small, independent shops
- 13% have eaten an exclusively plant-based or vegetarian diet





### Sustainable Steps taken on Vacation

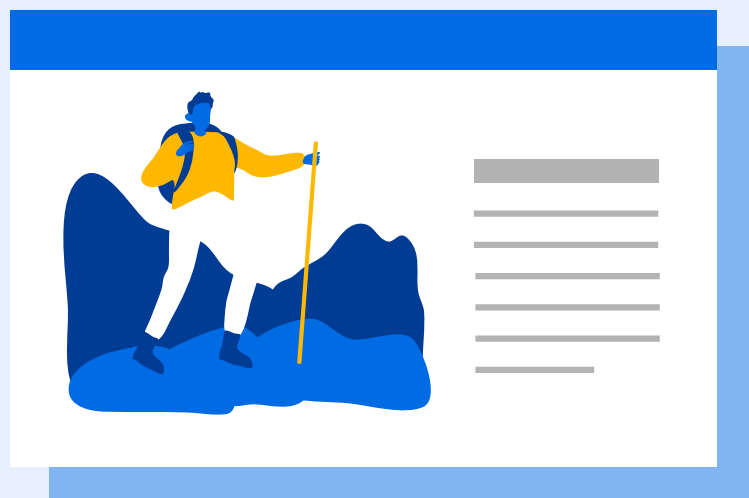
- 67% turned the air conditioning off at accommodations when they weren't there
- 60% re-used the same towel multiple times
- 55% used their own reusable water bottle
- 77% turned off the lights and appliances at accommodations when they weren't there
- 45% recycled their garbage when traveling
- 40% opted out of having their room cleaned daily



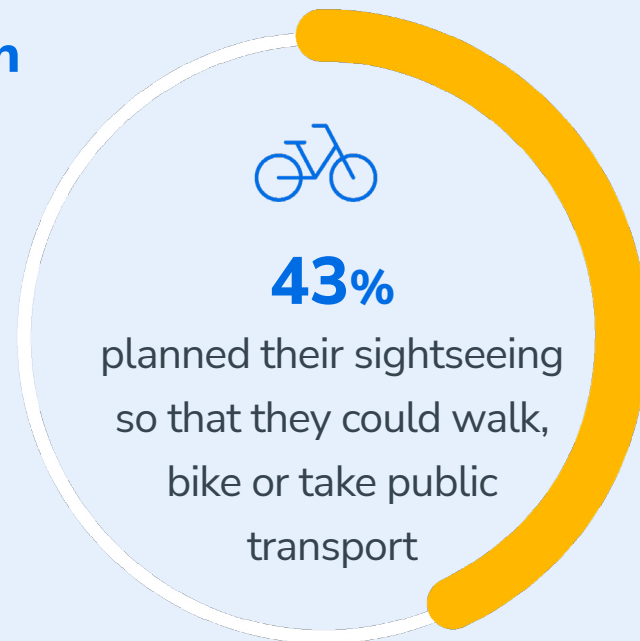
## From Tourist to Changemaker

The responsible traveler is switching up responsible travel in 2023 – and their every small step counts. This shift in behavior highlights the urgent action travelers are taking as they strive to make more sustainable choices to save the planet for future generations.

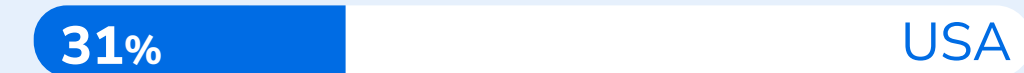
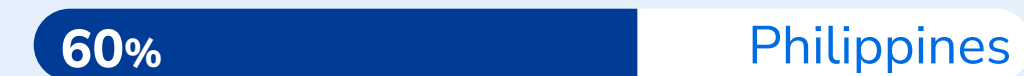
Even more promisingly, travelers took action to make conscious choices on vacation that went beyond everyday micro-habits in the past 12 months.



### Transportation



#### Highest

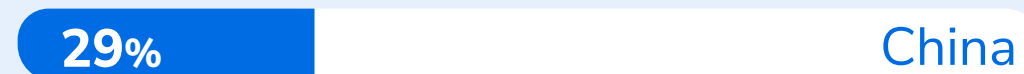
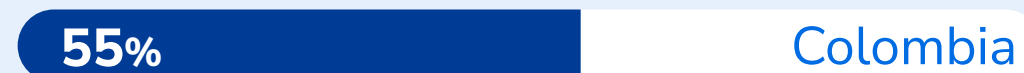


#### Lowest



**43%** traveled outside of peak season in a bid to avoid overcrowding

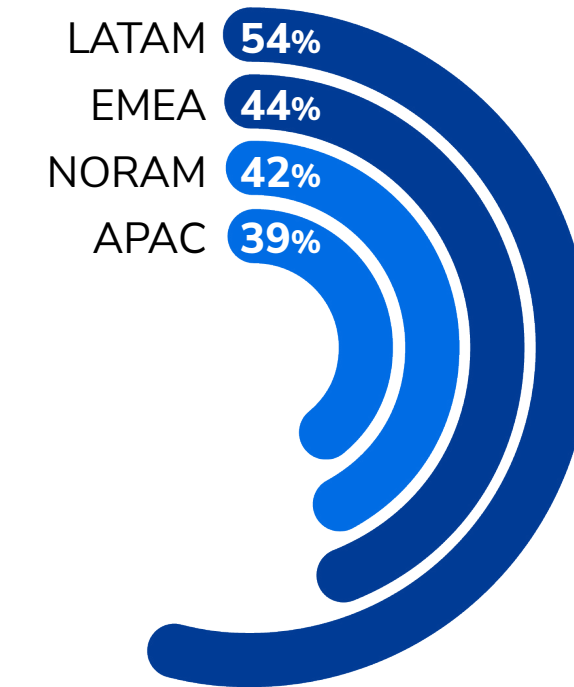
#### Highest



#### Lowest

## Buying Local

There is also consensus amongst travelers on adopting the 'buy local' mantra on vacation and using their currency as a force for good:



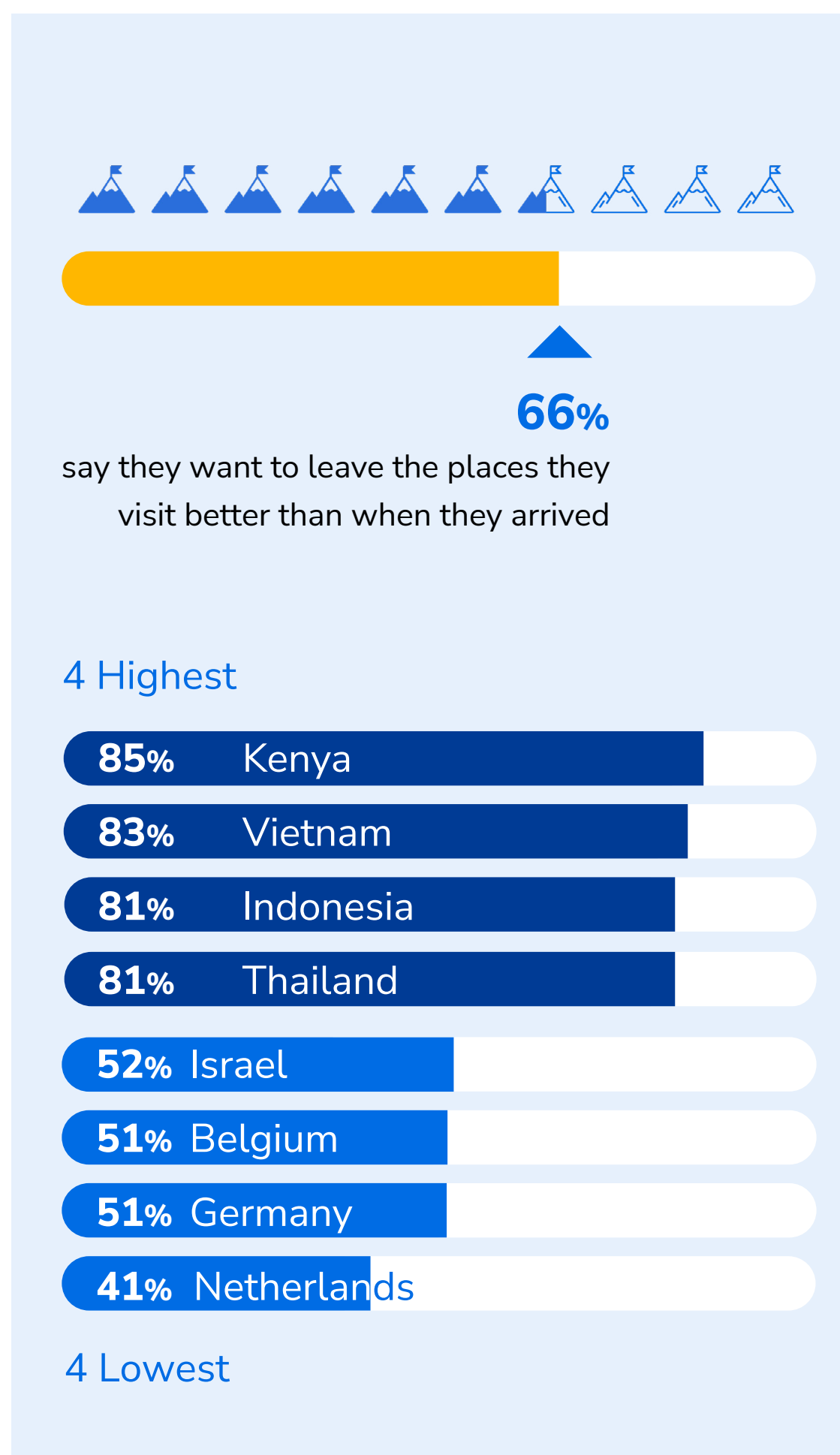
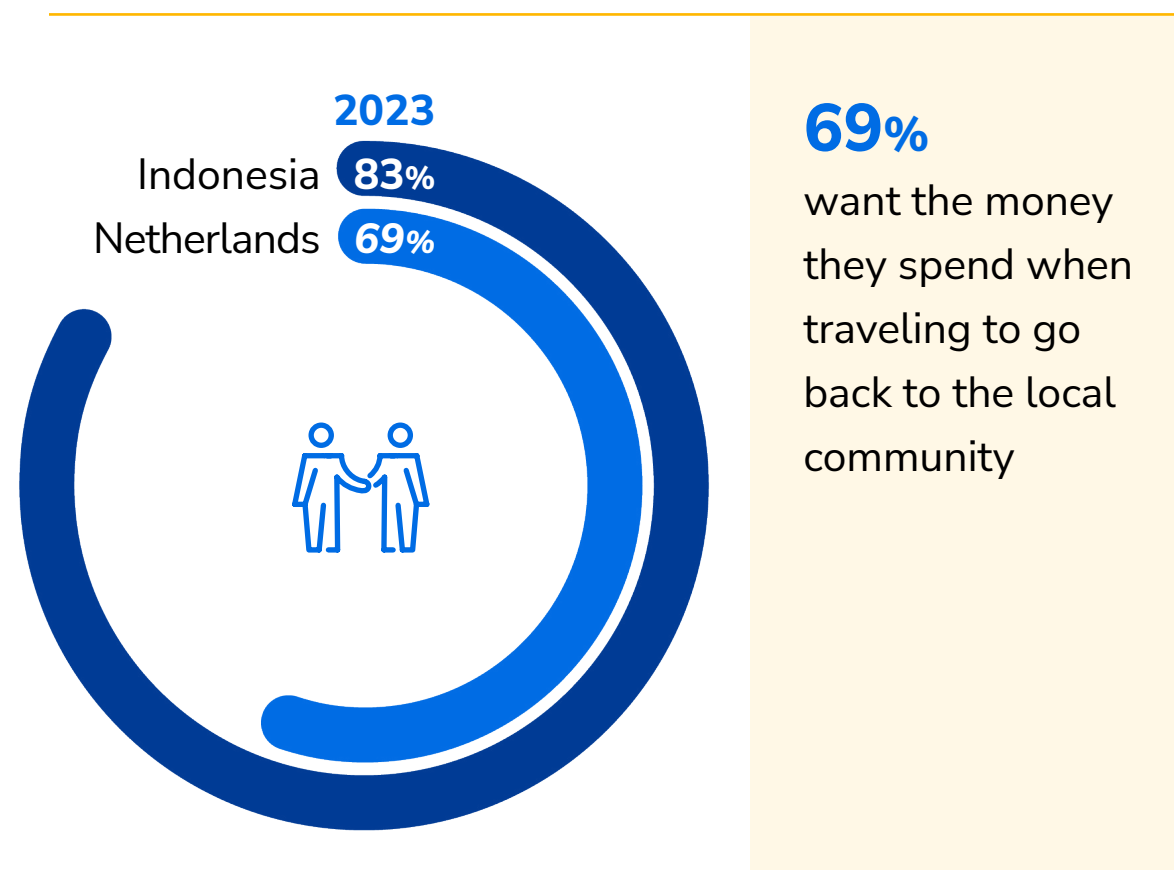
**43%** favored small, independent stores



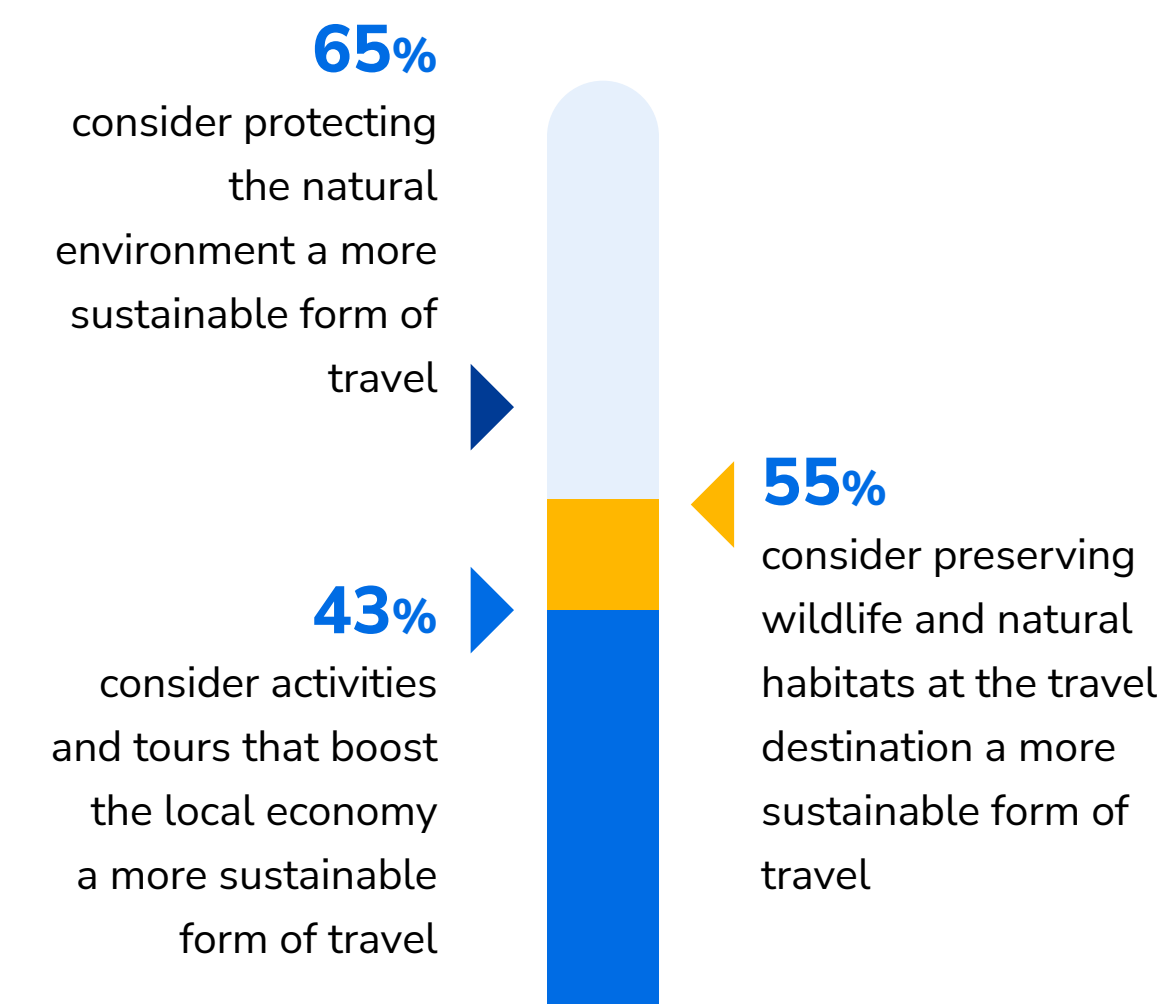


# The Rise of Regenerative Travel

Amid rising climate anxiety, today's travelers are increasingly adopting a regenerative approach to travel and searching for vacations with maximum positive impact.



Travelers are also rethinking what they consider to be more sustainable forms of travel:



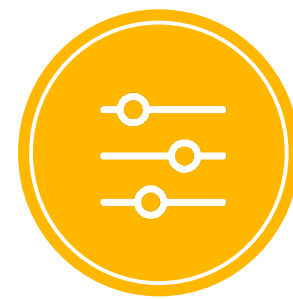


# Trust, truth and the Travel Industry

Travelers are becoming more responsible amid rising climate anxiety – from their accommodation to their transport choices. As a result, they are seeking credible assurance when booking across the entire travel experience.



**65%** would feel better about staying in a particular accommodation if they knew it had a sustainable certification or label

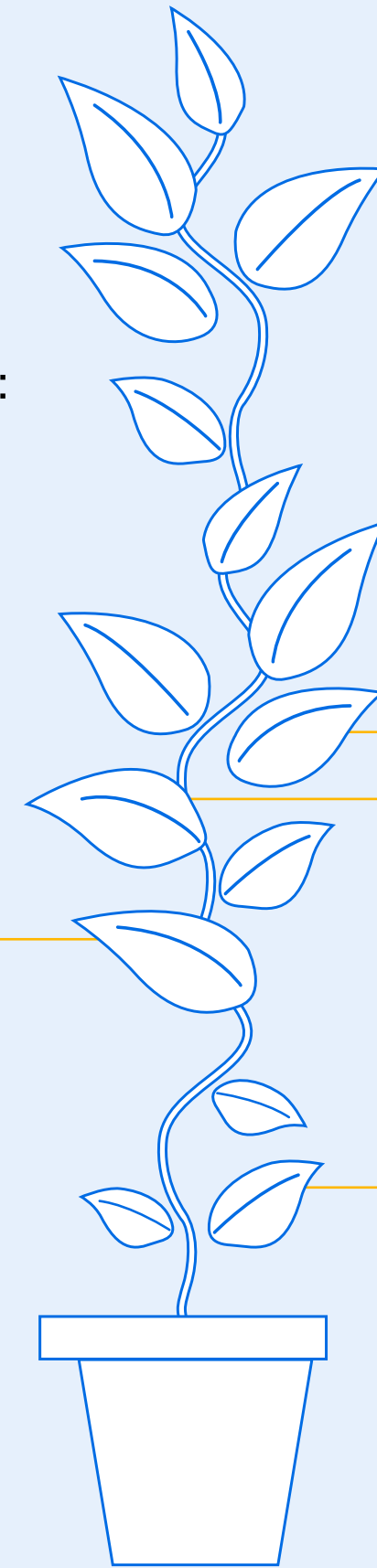


**59%** want to filter their options for those with a sustainable certification next time they book



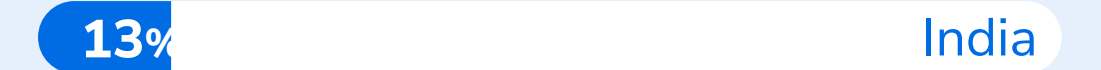
**69%** are interested to learn more about why specific options are recognized as more sustainable

In response, the travel industry must adapt to meet the changing expectations of these more conscious travelers, and make strides to gain their trust:

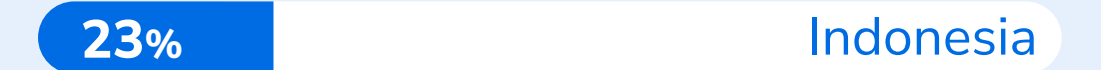


**30%** are always on the lookout for brands that promote sustainability

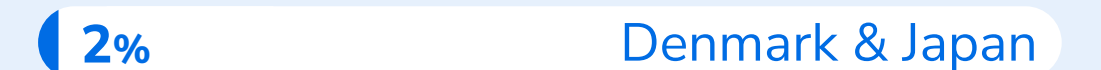
**44%** like it when brands offer products or services that are more sustainable, but it doesn't always influence their decision



**39%** don't trust that the sustainable travel options labeled are truly more sustainable



**11%** only buy products and services from brands that promote sustainability





## Making solutions Easier for *Everyone*

Travelers can choose more sustainable options across the world for their next trip through Booking.com search filters.



**500,000+** more sustainable accommodations available, no matter the property type, labeled with a certified Travel Sustainable badge



Rental car search filters to quickly find fully electric and hybrid cars across **111 countries**



**95 cities** worldwide where travelers can now find and book greener taxi options by looking for the 100% Electric tagging in the search results



**47 cities** worldwide where public transport ticketing options are now available after making an accommodation booking



Tagging to indicate when a certain route or carrier is offering a relatively lower emissions option – for transparency on the impact of flights and to compare CO2 emissions for different options





## Methodology



Research commissioned by Booking.com and independently conducted among a sample of 33,228 respondents across 35 countries and territories (1,019 from USA, 1,002 from Canada, 1,007 from Mexico, 1,005 from Colombia, 1,008 from Brazil, 1,015 from Argentina, 1,008 from Australia, 504 from New Zealand, 1,008 from Spain, 1,002 from Italy, 1,008 from France, 502 from Switzerland, 1,008 from the UK, 1,000 from Ireland, 1,008 from Germany, 1,006 from the Netherlands, 1,006 from Belgium, 1,004 from Denmark, 1,007 from Sweden, 1,016 from Croatia, 1,012 from Israel, 504 from UEA, 1,012 from India, 1,001 from China, 1,000 from Hong Kong, 1,000 from Thailand, 1,020 from Singapore, 1,001 from Taiwan, 1,000 from Vietnam, 1,002 from Indonesia, 1,007 from Philippines, 1,002 from South Korea, 1,009 from Japan, 1,005 from South Africa and 510 from Kenya).

In order to participate in this survey, respondents had to be 18 years of age or older, had to have traveled at least once in the past 12 months and must be planning to travel in 2023, and be either the primary

decision maker or involved in the decision making of their travel. The survey was taken online and took place in February 2023.

