



Booking burnout: What stresses UAE residents in 2025?

Unpacking how UAE residents book travel in 2025,
and the parts of the booking process they find the
most stressful.



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Foreword



Advances in technology, such as AI-driven recommendations and mobile-friendly platforms, are transforming how travelers research, compare, and secure their trips. But not every traveler is taking advantage of these tools, or the tools aren't necessarily helping with the most impactful pain points, leading to continued stresses for UAE travel bookers.

This report examines how UAE residents are navigating the travel booking landscape, identifying which stages of the process create the most stress. By understanding real-life pain points, travel and tourism businesses can optimize their services and enhance the travel planning experience.

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Report takeaways



Who's booking, and when?

56% of UAE residents say they are the “primary person responsible for booking trips.” Of these vacation bookers, 76% are male, and 47% are aged between 18-34. UAE vacation bookers are typically early bookers, with 37% of travelers make bookings more than 3 months in advance.



The AI opportunity

77% of vacation bookers who use AI-powered recommendations say it is “helpful” – indicating a clear appetite in the region for AI-powered booking experiences.



Baggage blues

69% of UAE vacation bookers find at least one part of the booking process stressful, with selecting luggage allowance as the most commonly selected step that people find stress inducing (47%).



Destination hit list 2025

Switzerland is the top international destination for UAE travelers, with 23% of UAE residents planning to visit. This increases to 25% and 26% among those aged 35-49 and 50+ respectively.



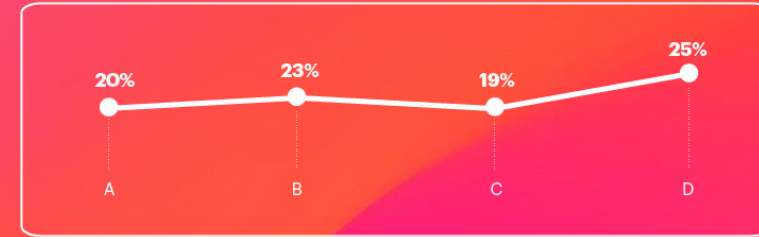
Real insights into what the world thinks

Gain access to real-world data and expertise in market research, powered by reality – from real people, in real time.

Get unsurpassed data accuracy, without the distortions and biases that often compromise research data. We're here to help you generate insights that lead to better decisions and keep you ahead of the competition.

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Data results

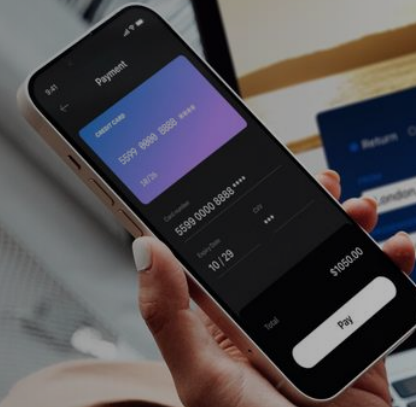


37%
(vs. Nat Rep)

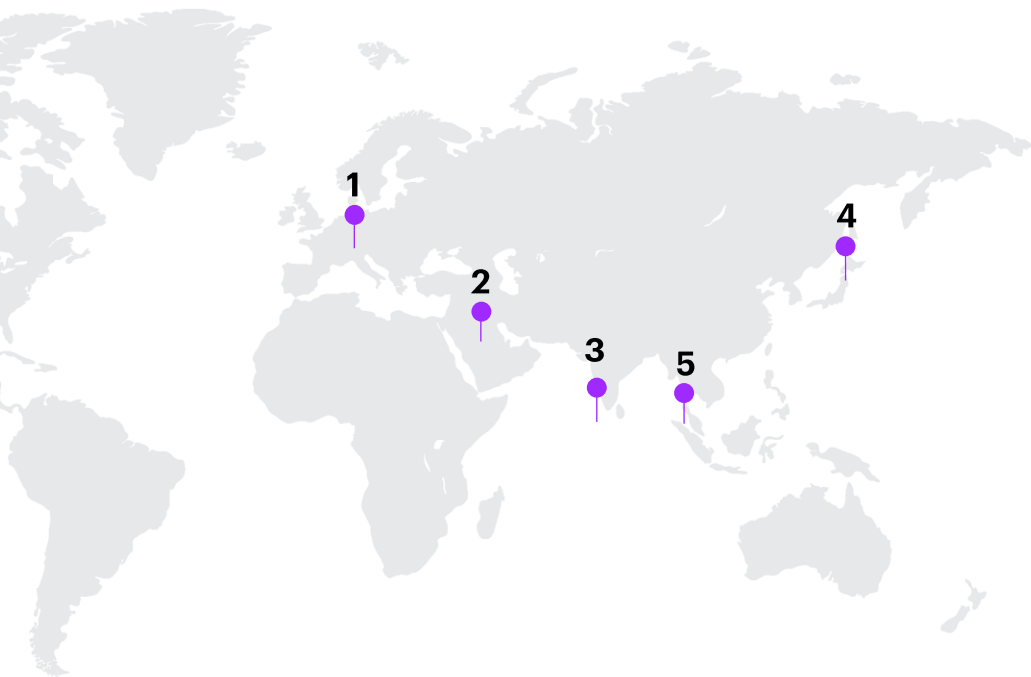


How UAE residents are traveling in 2025

Where are UAE travelers heading, what type of trips are they going on, and how are they booking?



Travel itinerary: Where UAE residents are vacationing in 2025



When you are in the market next to plan a holiday or a fun day out for yourself / your family, which destinations would you consider?

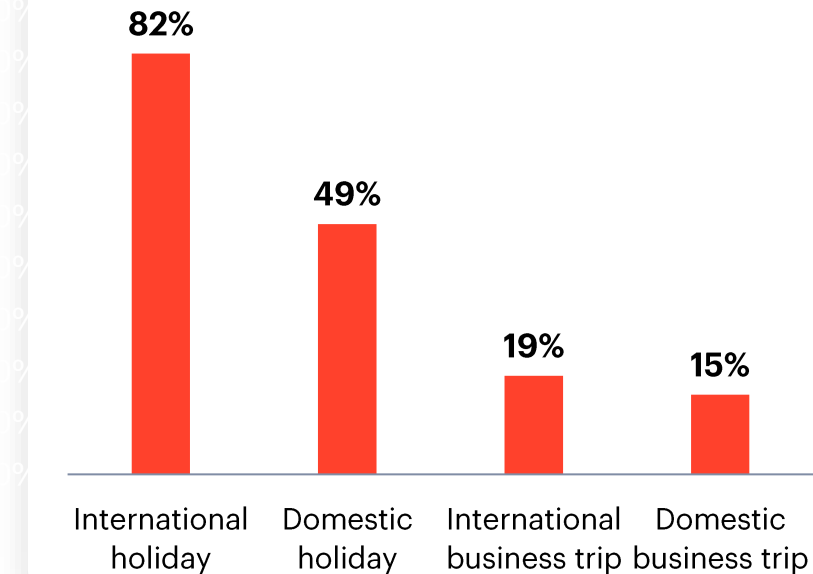
Top 5 international destinations		Nat Rep	18-34	35-49	50+
1	Switzerland	23%	20%	25%	26%
2	Saudi Arabia	22%	23%	21%	22%
3	Maldives	22%	20%	22%	26%
4	Japan	18%	16%	20%	20%
5	Singapore	18%	14%▼	19%	26%▲

YouGov Profiles. January 2025, UAE. Target group: Nat Rep by generation: n> 200
▲/▼: Indicates statistically significant differences compared to nat rep.
*Excluding. Dubai, Abu Dhabi

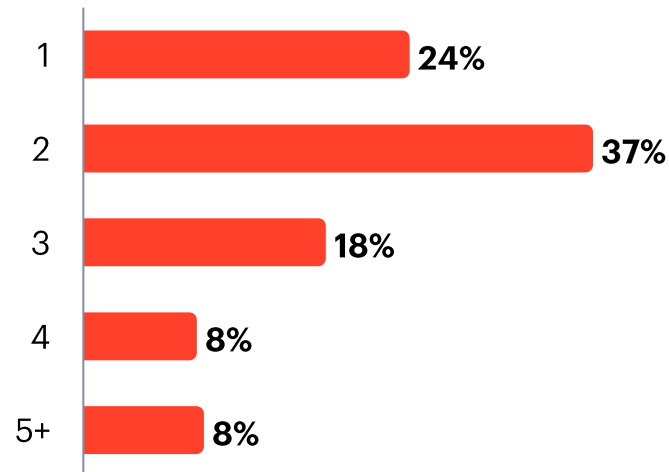
1 in 3 of UAE vacationers plan to take 3+ trips in 2025

■ UAE vacationers

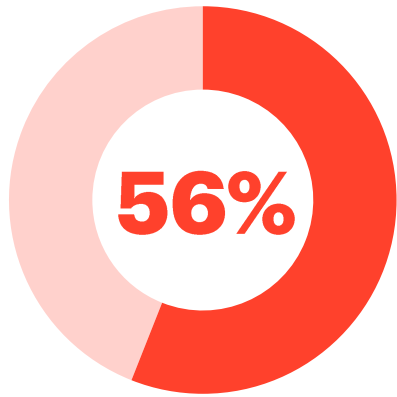
Which, if any, of the following trips are you planning to take in the next 12 months? Please select all that apply.



How many trips, if any, are you planning to take for leisure, business or personal reasons in the next 12 months?

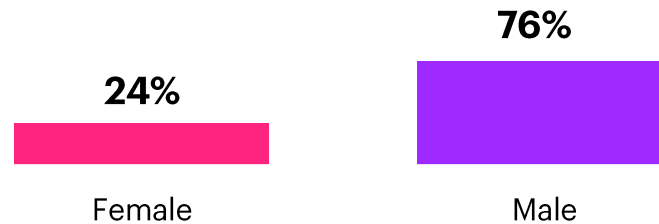


Meet the planners: Who are **UAE vacation bookers** in 2025?

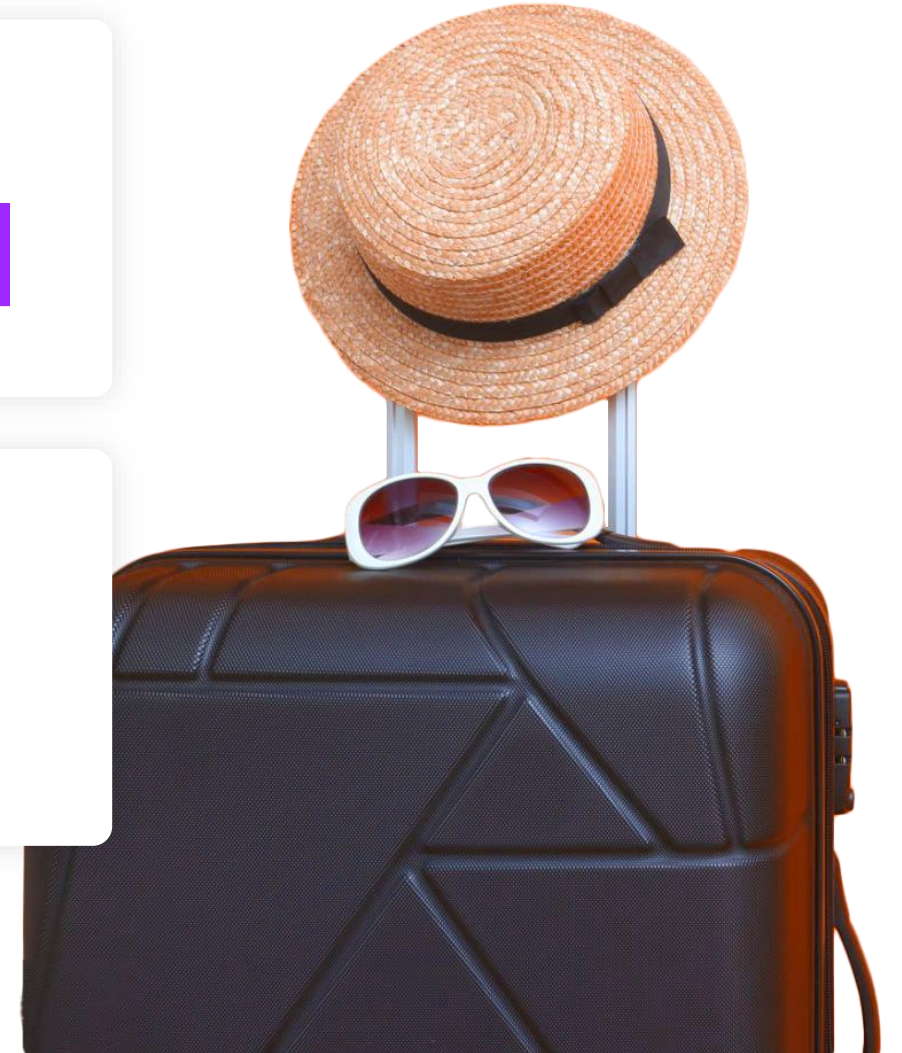
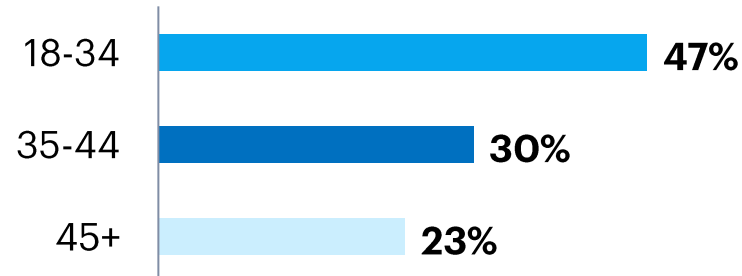


of UAE residents identify as the **“primary person responsible for booking trips”**

Gender



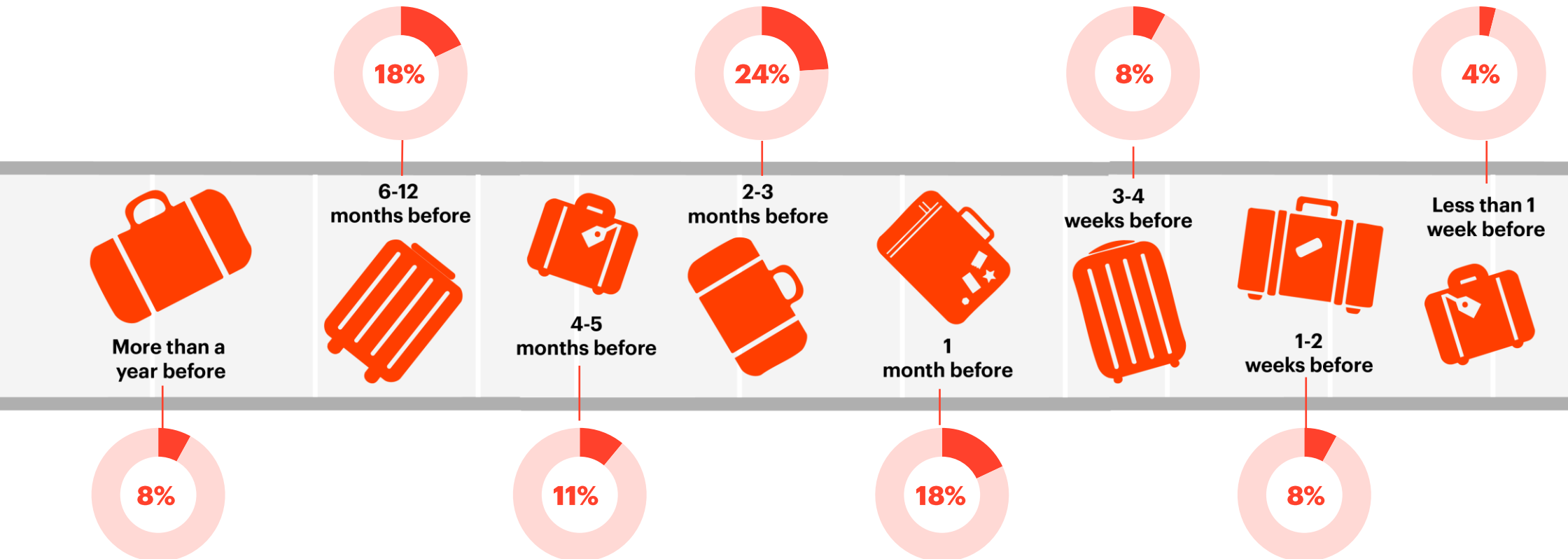
Age



When are UAE vacation bookers making reservations?

37% of travelers make bookings more than 3 months in advance, while less than a fifth (18%) of vacation bookers book within a month of traveling.

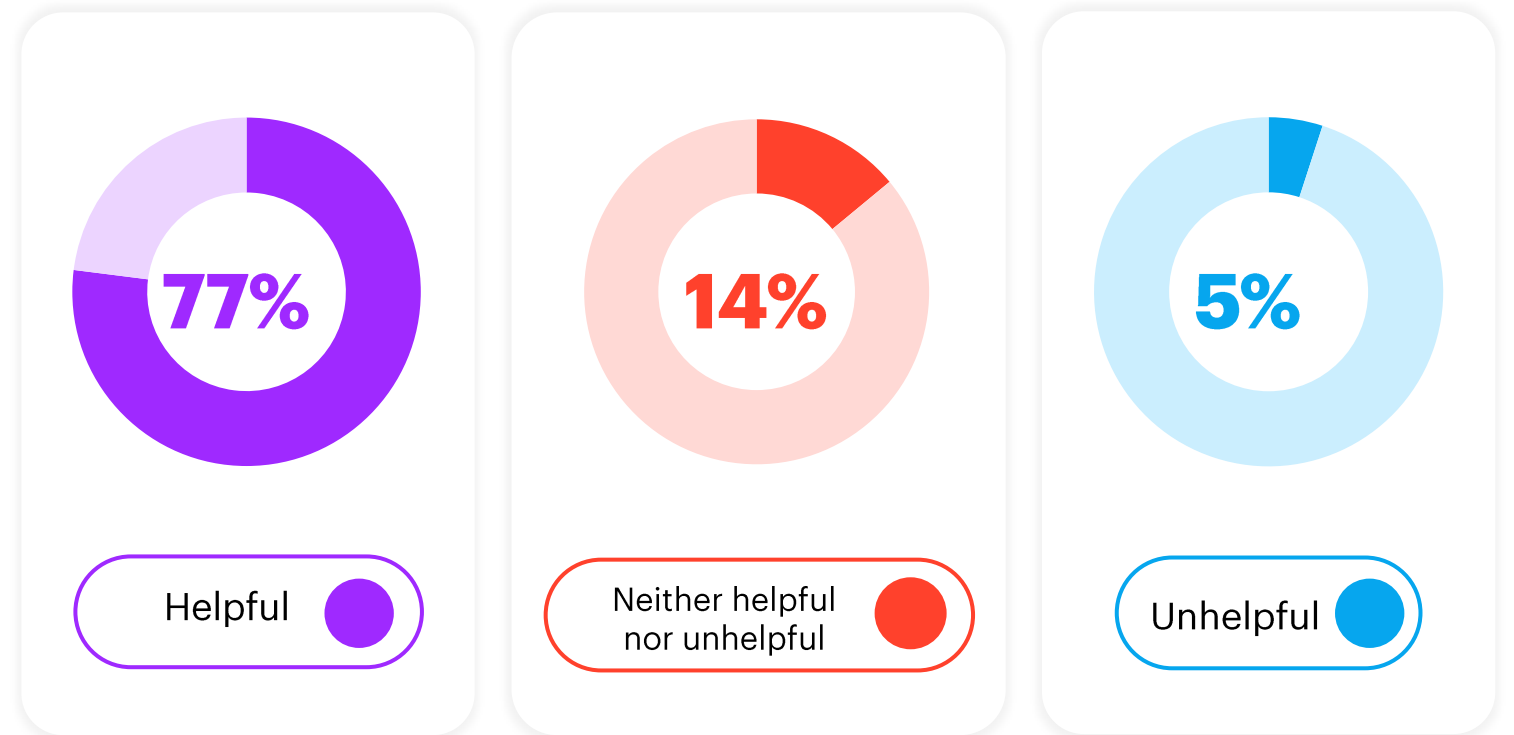
How far in advance do you typically book vacations?



The travel AI-volution: 3 in 4 UAE vacation bookers who use AI-powered recommendations find it helpful

Only 14% of vacation bookers who use AI-powered recommendations say it is “unhelpful.”

How helpful or unhelpful do you find AI-powered vacation recommendations (such as suggested destinations, flights and accommodation) when it comes to booking a vacation?



DIY or bundle booking: How do UAE vacationers make bookings in 2025?

The split is almost equal between those who book flights and accommodation separately (48%) and those who book vacation packages (45%) in the UAE.

DIY bookers

48%



of UAE vacation bookers
**book flights and
accommodation separately**

Bundle bookers

45%



of UAE vacation bookers
**book vacation
packages**

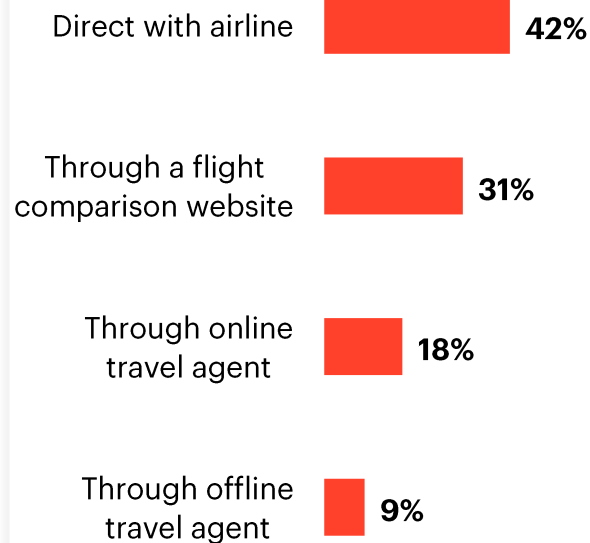
DIY bookers deep-dive

How DIY bookers find flights and accommodation

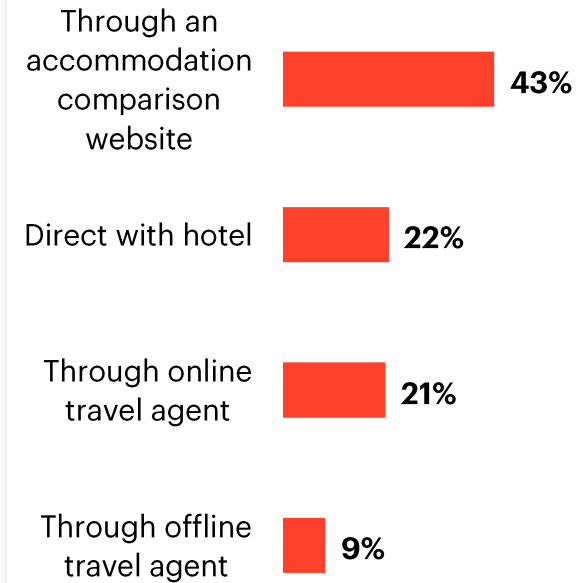
48%

of UAE vacation bookers book flights and accommodation separately.

How do you typically book flights?

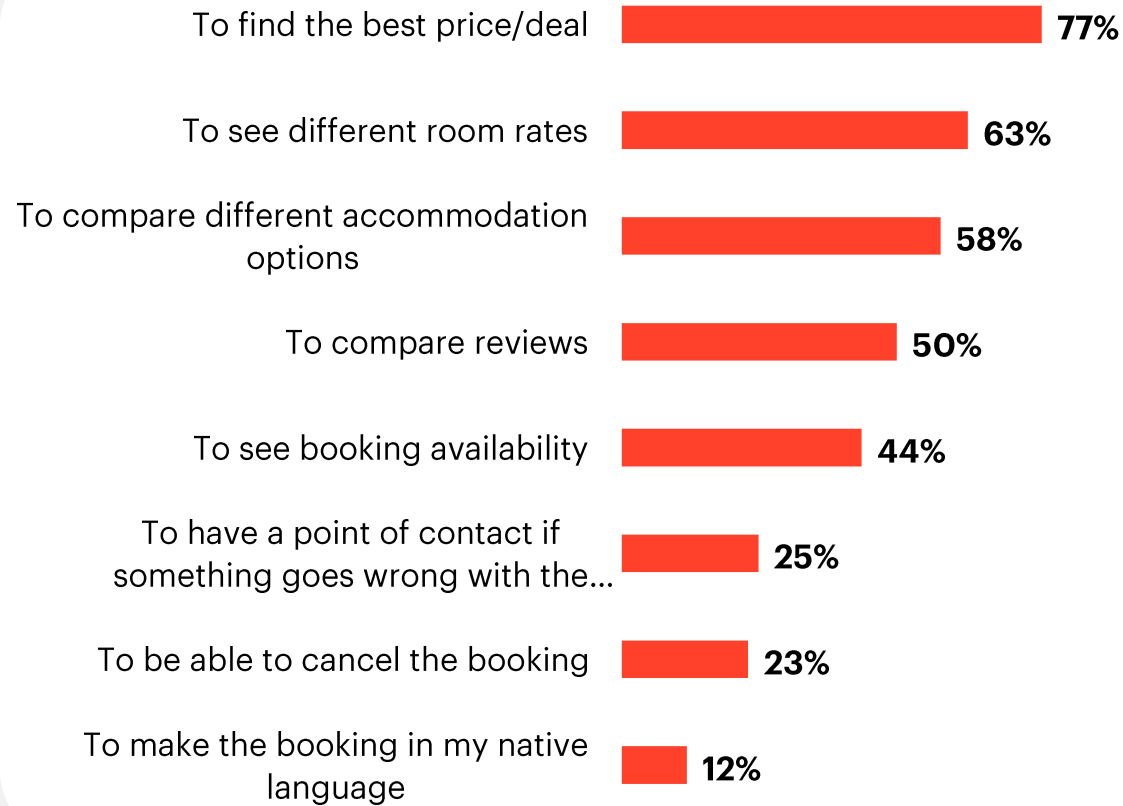


How do you typically book accommodation?



● DIY bookers deep-dive

Why DIY bookers use comparison websites:



YouGov Surveys, November 13 – December 3, 2024. DIY bookers (accommodation comparison website): n > 100

Questions allow multiple-choice answers. "None of these" and "Don't know" responses not shown.

Question: Why do you typically book accommodation through an accommodation comparison website? Please select all that apply.

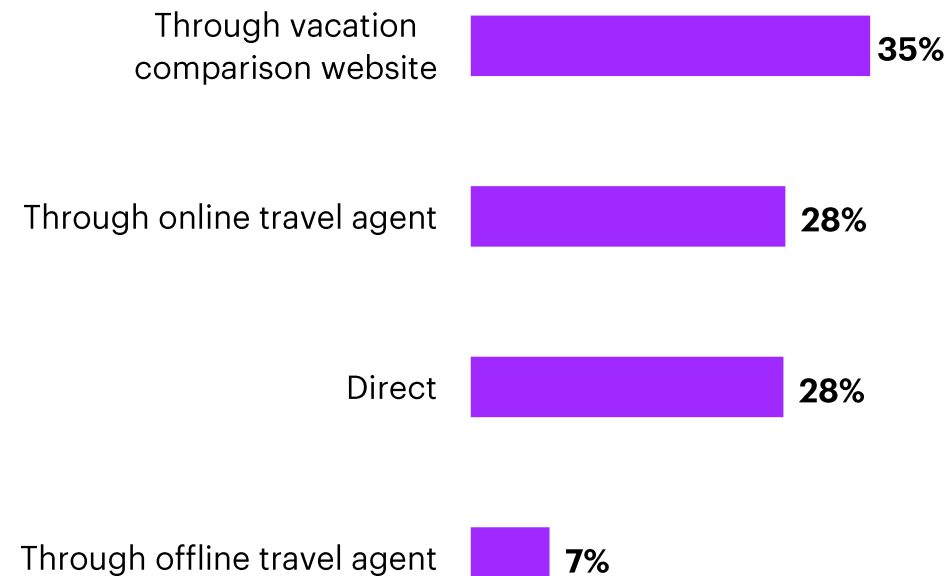
● Bundle bookers deep-dive

How all-in-one vacation bookers find the best package deals

45%

of UAE vacation bookers book package vacations (which combine flights and accommodation)

How do you typically book vacation packages?

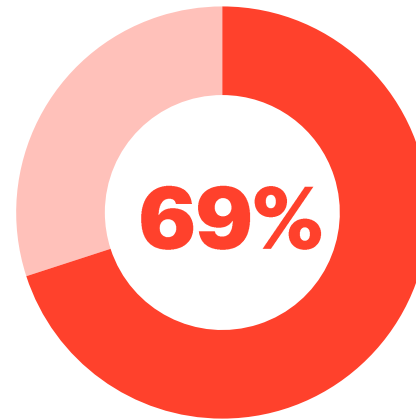


Unpacking the top stressors among UAE vacation bookers

What induces stress when UAE residents book vacations?



**More than 2 in 3
vacation bookers
find at least one
part of the process
stressful...**



of UAE vacation
bookers find at
least **one part** of
the **booking**
process stressful.

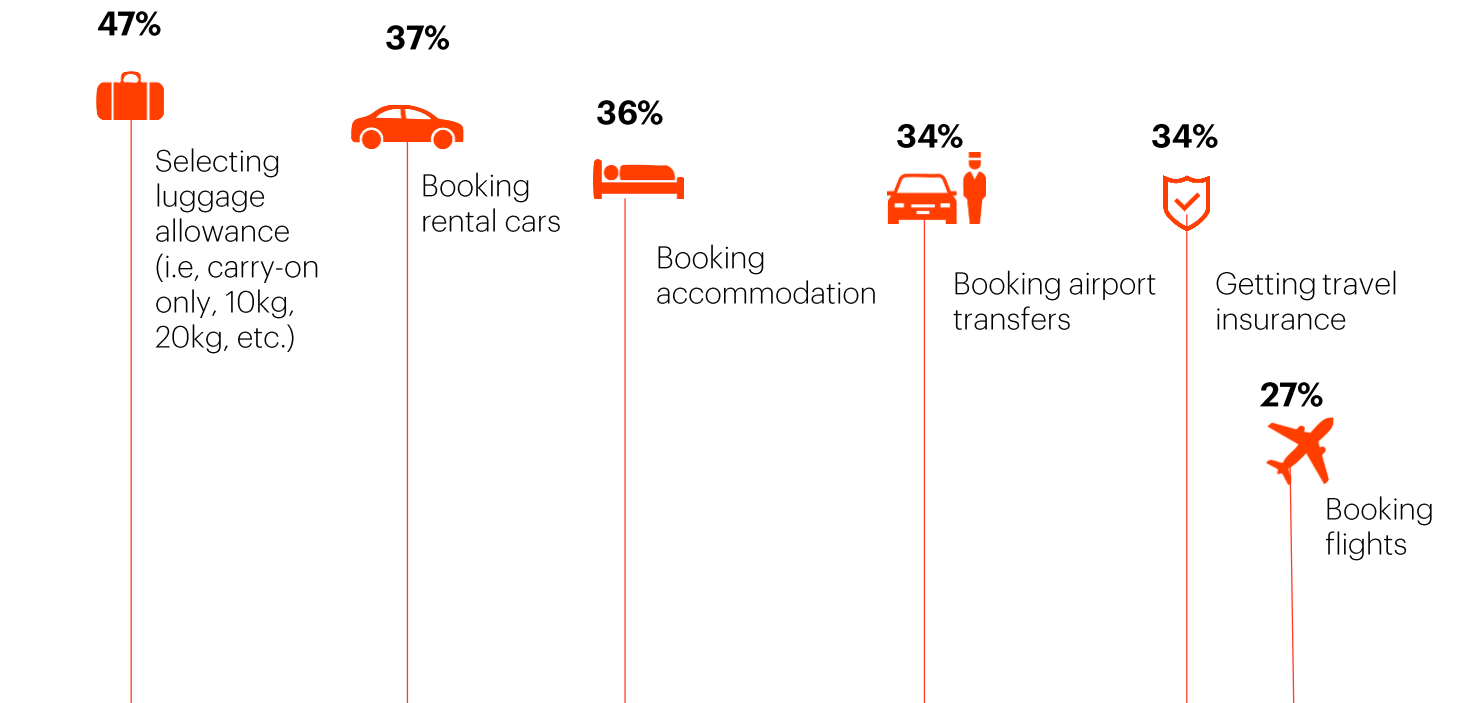
YouGov Surveys, November 13 – December 3, 2024. UAE vacation bookers. n> 550. "Stressful" combines respondents who selected "very stressful" and "somewhat stressful."

Almost 1 in 2 find selecting luggage allowance stressful

“Selecting luggage allowance (i.e, carry-on only, 10kg, 20kg, etc.)” is the top travel planning activity that vacationers find stressful (**47%**), followed by booking rental cars (**37%**) and booking accommodation (**36%**).

Get in touch

What UAE vacation bookers find stressful:



YouGov Surveys, November 13 – December 3, 2024. UAE vacation bookers. n> 550.
“Stressful” combines respondents who selected “very stressful” and “somewhat stressful.”

The best for booking: travel agency/booking platform rankings

Based on net customer satisfaction.



Top ranked travel agencies/booking platforms based on net customer satisfaction

Explore more data

Rank	Travel agency/booking platform	Net customer satisfaction
1	Booking.com	62.5
2	trivago	55.6
3	Expedia	53.6
4	Wego	50.9
5	MakeMyTrip	49.5

YouGov BrandIndex UAE: January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024. Current and former customers (n> 450 per brand). To qualify as top ranked, brands have held tracked scores for at least 6 months (183 days). Q: Of which of the following brands would you say that you are a "satisfied customer"?

Methodology

The insights in this report have been sourced via YouGov Surveys: Serviced, YouGov Profiles, and YouGov BrandIndex.

The insights in this report were sourced via YouGov Surveys: Serviced – providing rapid answers from the right audience. The multi-region survey was conducted from November 13 – December 3, 2024, with 1,006 UAE respondents.

Only UAE data from this multi-market survey was referenced in this report, but additional insights are available for 16 other markets.

The profile deep dive in this report was powered by YouGov Profiles – an ever-growing source of living consumer data, with 2+ million data variables from YouGov’s 27+ million global panelists. The data used in this report was accessed via Profiles+ UAE on 2025-1-26.

The brand rankings are sourced from YouGov’s always-on brand tracker, YouGov BrandIndex. To qualify as a top ranked brand, brands must have scores available for at least 183 days between January 1 to December 31, 2024. A minimum base size of 300 (N) is required.

To qualify as a top improver, brands must have scores for at least 18 months (548 days) between January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2024. Top improvers are ranked based on the change to their satisfaction scores.

Net satisfaction scores are rounded to the nearest decimal point, and differences are determined from those rounded scores

In cases where the change in scores is the same, the current scores are used as a secondary metric to determine their ranking. A minimum base size of 300 (n) is required.

Throughout the report, various consumer segments are referenced:

- The target group of **UAE vacationers** refers to UAE residents who are likely to travel within the next 12 months.
- The target group of **UAE vacation bookers** refers to those who answered: “I am the primary person responsible for booking my trips” to the question “Which of the following statements best describes your role in booking vacations?”
- The target group of **DIY bookers** additionally filters UAE vacation bookers by looking at the subgroup who answered “I book flights and accommodation separately” to the question “Do you usually book package vacations or book flights and accommodation separately?”
- The target group of **bundle bookers** additionally filters UAE vacation bookers by looking at the subgroup who answered “I book package vacations” to the question “Do you usually book package vacations or book flights and accommodation separately?”.

Thank you

/Research Reality

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