

The Growing Allure of Asia

*Travel Trends Across
Europe and the UK*

TRIP.COM INSIGHTS REPORT 2026

Trip.com





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Key Stats

Interest in Asia among European travellers is not new, but the evidence in this report suggests it is increasingly translating into real travel demand.

Across the five European markets surveyed — the UK, France, Germany, Italy and Spain — **41% to 53% say they are likely to travel to Asia in the next five years**, with 9% to 14% already have firm plans in place. Among those likely to visit Asia in the next five years, between 24% and 35% say they are more likely to do so than they were five years ago. Trip.com booking data suggests that this momentum is already converting into real travel demand, with **bookings to Asia increasing year on year across all five markets in FY2025 vs FY2024**, from +51% in the UK to +166% in Italy.

The report also highlights a **clear gap between aspiration and booking reality**. Survey findings show that Japan leads future desire across Europe, yet Trip.com booking data shows that China remains the top booked destination in aggregate across the five markets. At the same time, **demand is being influenced by culture and experiences** as much as by destinations themselves. Screen-inspired travel, food-led discovery and event-driven interest all emerge clearly in the findings, while Trip.com search data shows a 700% YoY increase in searches for “food tour”, pointing to growing interest in experience-led travel.

Notes: See Methodology for the destinations included in the report's definition of Asia.

While barriers remain, travel to Asia is becoming easier to navigate. The cost of flights remains the most cited deterrent, ranging from 31% to 39%, alongside distance, language concerns and broader perceptions of complexity. Even so, digital tools such as online booking platforms, navigation tools and AI-powered translation are helping reduce friction before and during the trip, making long-haul travel feel more manageable than it once did.

The UK stands out as a market where interest is strong, but confidence still plays a particularly important role. 41% of UK respondents say they are likely to visit Asia in the next five years, and among those likely to travel, 35% say they are more motivated to go now than they were five years ago. Yet British travellers are also among the most concerned about flight costs and distance. **Visa-free entry for UK nationals travelling to Mainland China for up to 30 days, introduced on 17 February 2026, is therefore a significant development**. If the pattern seen in continental European markets following comparable visa-free announcements is any guide, this policy may help further support UK demand.

A white outline map of the world is centered on the page. A yellow location pin with a white circle is placed over the Asian continent. The text 'Asia in the spotlight' is overlaid on the left side of the map.

Asia in the spotlight

Asia has long appealed to European travellers

Asia has long appealed to European travellers, but the evidence in this report suggests that interest is taking on new momentum. Across the five European markets surveyed — the UK, France, Germany, Italy and Spain — between 41% and 53% of people say they are likely to

travel to Asia in the next five years and Trip.com booking data shows that intent is already converting into travel demand. The question is no longer whether Asia is on Europe's radar — it is what is driving that demand, and what is shaping where people actually go.

For many years, long-haul travel to Asia could feel ambitious rather than immediate, held back by practical concerns such as language barriers, unfamiliar currencies and the complexity of planning multi-stop trips.

Attitudes are now evolving. For a growing number of Europeans, travelling to Asia has shifted from vague aspiration to active consideration. Travellers have become more confident and digitally savvy, and technology is helping make long-haul travel easier to research, compare, book and navigate.



A Desire to Visit:

Demand Across Europe and the UK

Survey findings point to broad and growing appetite for travel to Asia across the five European markets, spanning major gateway cities, cultural capitals, beach destinations and multi-stop itineraries. Across the five countries surveyed, **41% to 53%** say they are likely to travel to Asia in the next five years, with a further **9% to 14%** already having firm plans in place.

Germany (43%) and the **UK (41%)** have the highest share of respondents who have visited Asia previously, and **Gen Z and Millennials** consistently show higher intent to travel than older age groups. Among those likely to visit the region, the share saying they are **more motivated to visit Asia now than five years ago** — ranges from **24% to 35%**.



Trip.com booking data suggests that this interest is already translating into real travel demand. Across the five European markets, the most-booked Asia destination cities in FY2025 were **Shanghai, Tokyo, Beijing, Kuala Lumpur and Guangzhou**. Among the leading cities in the broader top 10, **Beijing (+281%), Tokyo (+195%), Hong Kong (+178%) and Shanghai (+163%)** recorded the strongest YoY growth versus FY2024, pointing to accelerating demand for major regional hubs and high-profile urban destinations.

At the same time, the most-booked experiences suggest a preference for iconic attractions and immersive cultural moments, from major theme parks to heritage landmarks



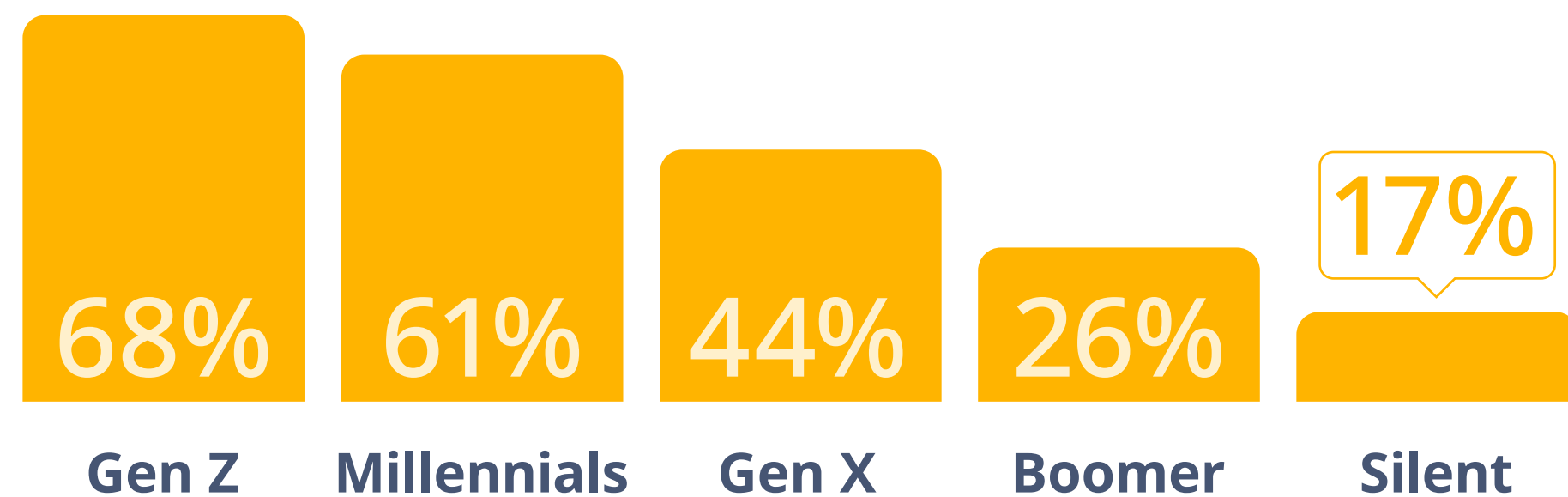
Strong Europe-wide interest

24% - 35%



Among those likely to travel to Asia, interest in visiting the region is higher than five years ago, ranging from 24-35%

Interest in Asia travel by generation



Gen Z and Millennials are leading demand, with consistently higher intent than older age groups across all markets.

Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January, n=6,000 nationally representative adults across the five European markets

There's a strong desire from European nations to visit Asia

41-53%

of European travellers plan to visit Asia in the next five years



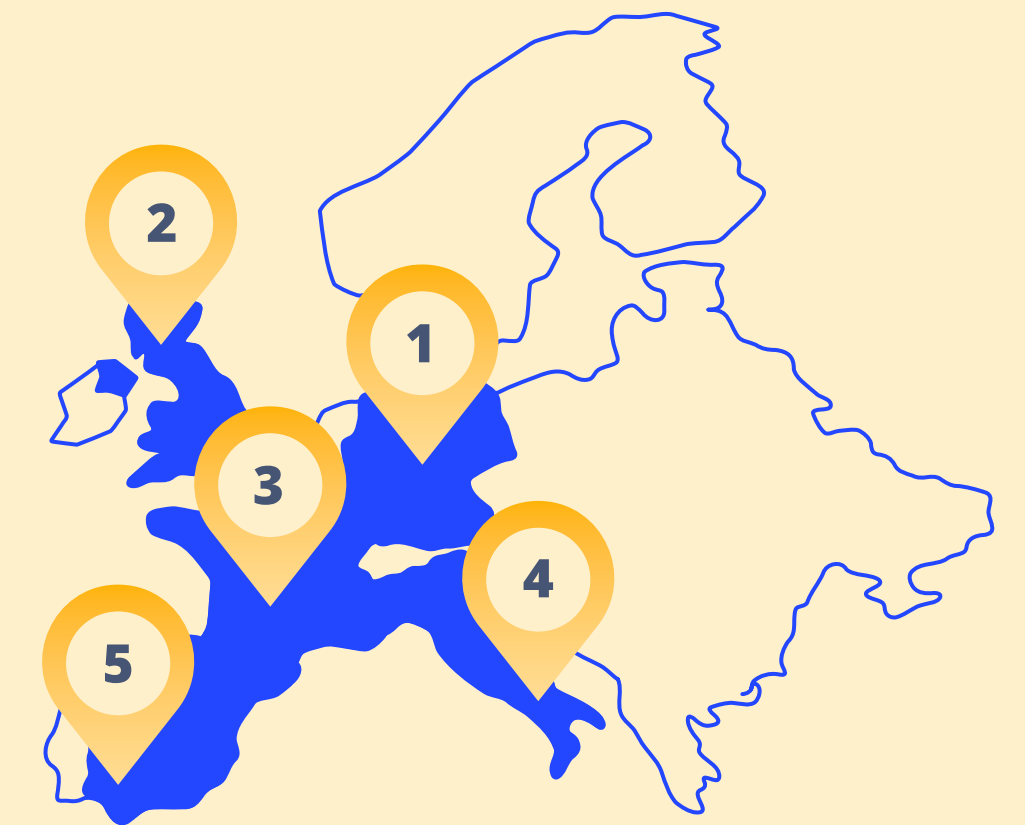
9-14%

of European travellers have firm travel plans to Asia in place



Germany and the UK have the highest share of travellers who have visited Asia previously

- 1 Germany 43%
- 2 United Kingdom 41%
- 3 France 33%
- 4 Italy 31%
- 5 Spain 29%



What travellers are booking

Among the leading destination cities, **Beijing (+281%)**, **Tokyo (+195%)**, **Hong Kong (+178%)** and **Shanghai (+163%)** show the strongest YoY growth, underlining the role of major gateway hubs in current travel demand.

Top 5 destination cities in Asia by total trip volume

- 1 Shanghai
- 2 Tokyo
- 3 Beijing
- 4 Kuala Lumpur
- 5 Guangzhou

Strongest YoY growth

+281%
Beijing

+195%
Tokyo

+178%
Hong Kong

+163%
Shanghai

Source: Trip.com booking data;
Points of Sale: The five European markets (FY2025)





**Intent is
converting
into bookings**



Trip.com booking data suggests that rising interest in Asia is translating into real travel demand across the five European markets

The proof is in the bookings — Trip.com booking data shows that EU to Asia bookings are up YoY (FY 2025 vs. FY 2024)

**Bookings to Asia —
YoY growth by market**

1	Italy	+166%
2	France	+134%
3	Spain	+114%
4	Germany	+76%
5	United Kingdom	+51%

**Bookings to Mainland China —
YoY growth by market**

1	Italy	+245%
2	France	+208%
3	Spain	+201%
4	Germany	+111%
5	United Kingdom	+97%

In the **five European markets** other high-volume destinations also recorded strong YoY growth, including **Japan (+175%)** and **Singapore (+137%)**, reinforcing the survey’s picture of broadening demand across Asia.

Japan +175%

Singapore +137%

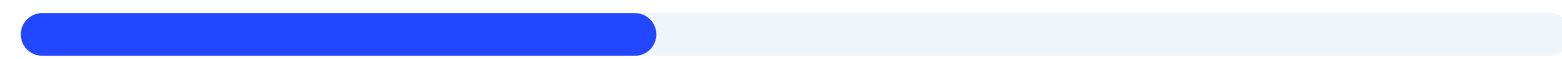
Source: Trip.com booking data;
Points of Sale: The five European markets (FY2025 vs FY2024)

The British perspective

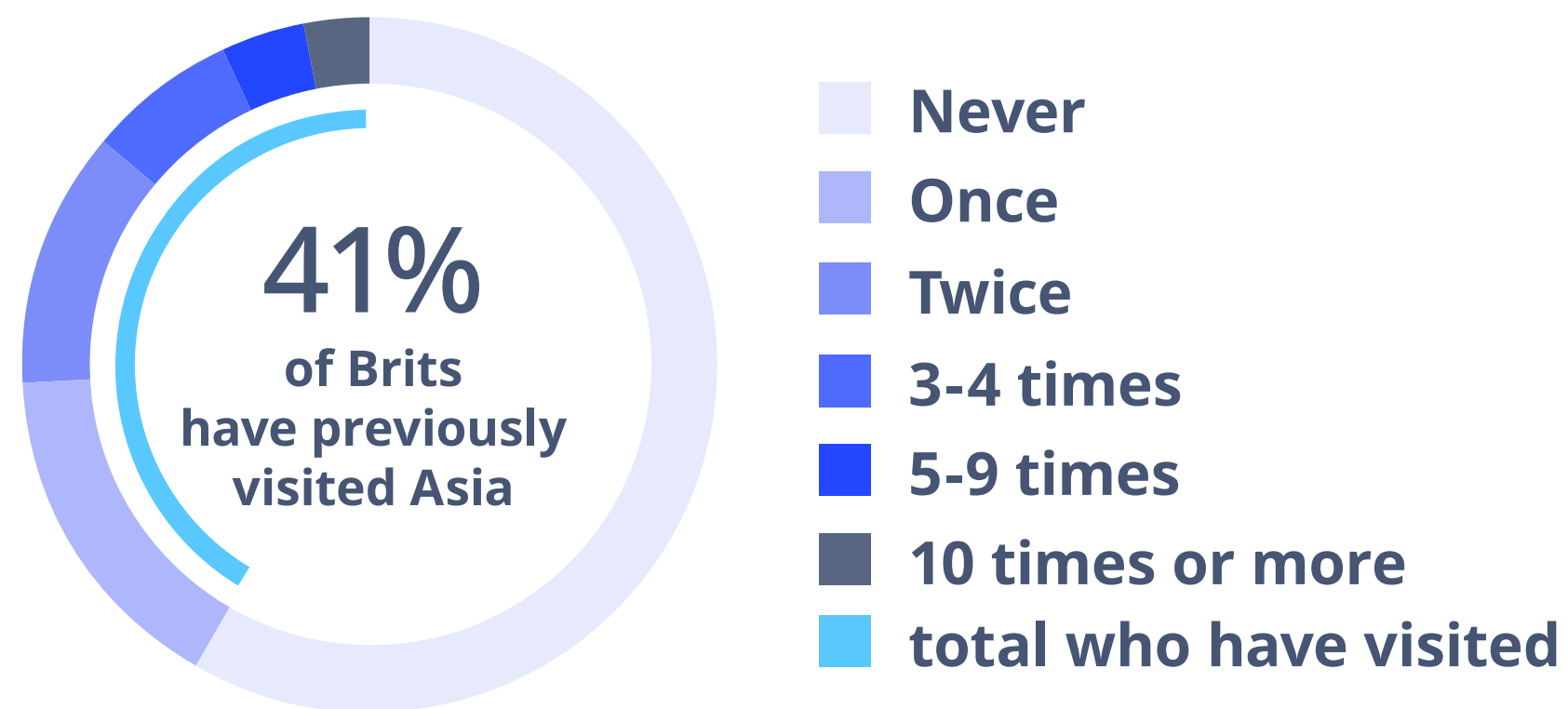


41%

say they are likely to visit Asia **in the next five years**



41% of UK respondents have previously visited Asia, including 14% who have visited more than three times.



Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January 2026, n=2,000 nationally representative UK adults

Brits are now more interested in travelling to Asia than they were 5 years ago



35%

All age groups

45%

35-44 year-olds

Among those open to travelling to Asia in the next five years, 35% say they are more motivated to travel now than five years ago (particularly 35-44-year-olds).

In the survey, the top destinations UK travellers are most keen to visit **in the next five years** are Japan, Thailand and the Maldives.



JAPAN



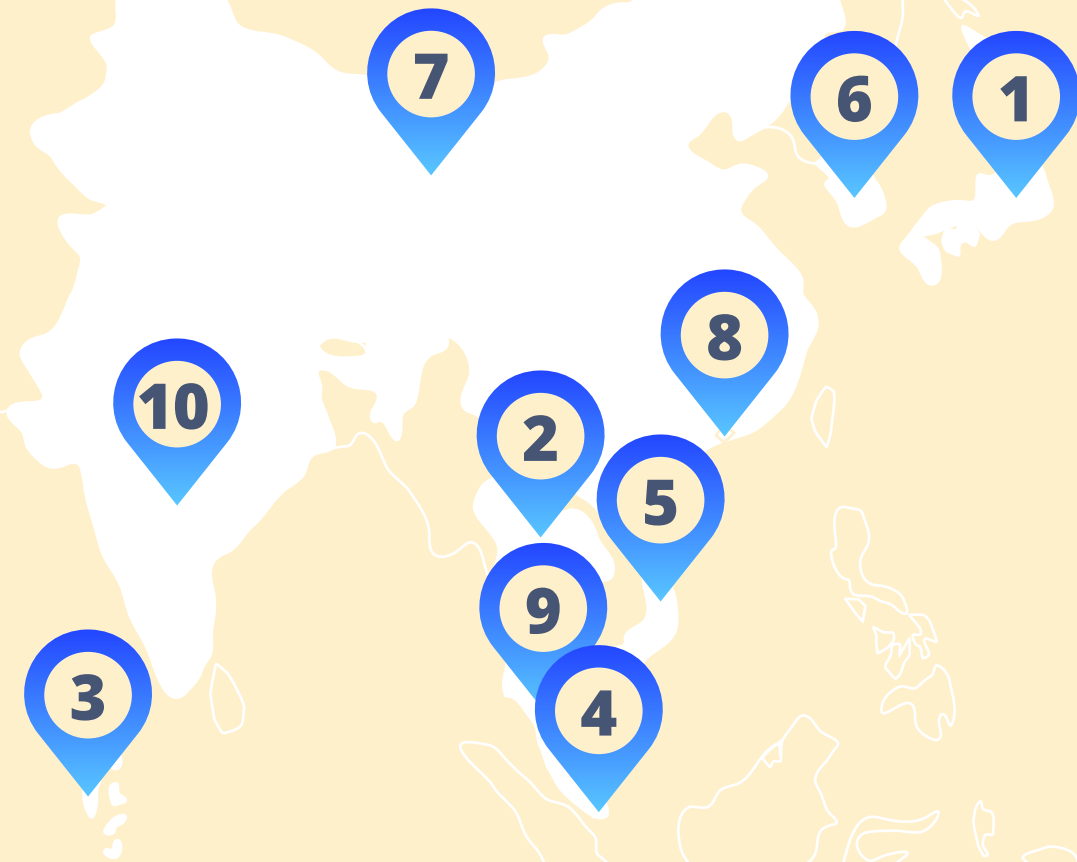
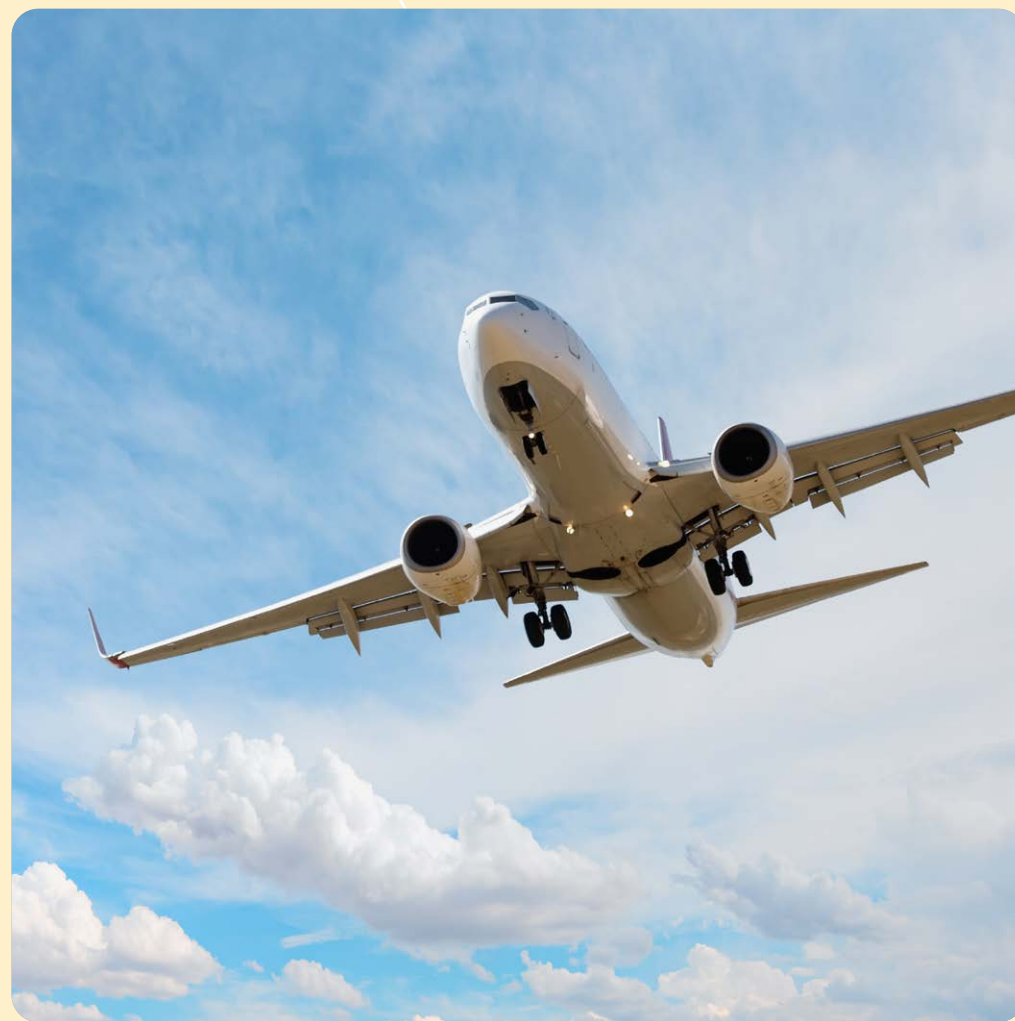
THAILAND



MALDIVES

Top 10 Asian countries/regions Brits would realistically consider travelling to in the next five years

1	Japan	35%	6	South Korea	15%
2	Thailand	24%	7	Mainland China	15%
3	Maldives	20%	8	Hong Kong	15%
4	Singapore	19%	9	Malaysia	12%
5	Vietnam	15%	10	India	11%



Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January 2026, n=2,000 nationally representative UK adults. This was a multi-select question.


Top Asian destinations Brits would like to visit





Trip.com booking behaviour adds a useful reality check. While **Japan** leads future aspiration, the most-booked Asia destination cities by UK travellers in FY2025 were **Bangkok, Hong Kong, Beijing, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore** — showing that current demand still leans strongly towards major regional gateways and well-connected hub cities.

Top 5 Asia destination cities booked by UK travellers

-   **Bangkok** 
-   **Hong Kong** 
-   **Beijing** 
-   **Kuala Lumpur** 
-   **Singapore** 

Source: Trip.com booking data;
Points of Sale: United Kingdom (FY2025)

Section summary

Europe-wide takeaways

Cities leading booking growth across “the five European markets”¹

 Beijing

 Tokyo

 Hong Kong

 Shanghai

Gen Z and Millennials are leading demand²

1 Gen Z **68%**

2 Millennials **61%**

3 Gen X **44%**

4 Boomer **26%**

5 Silent **17%**

41-53%

of European travellers are likely to visit Asia in the next five years²

9-14%

of European travellers hold firm travel plans to Asia in place²

¹ Source: Trip.com booking/search data; Points of Sale: The five European markets (FY2024 vs FY2025)

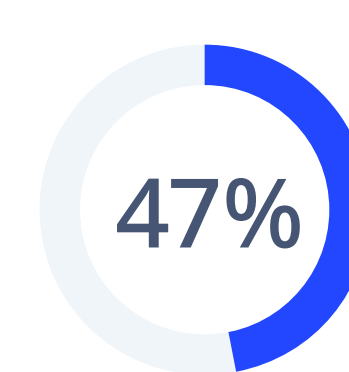
² Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January, n=6,000 nationally representative adults across the five European markets

UK Snapshot

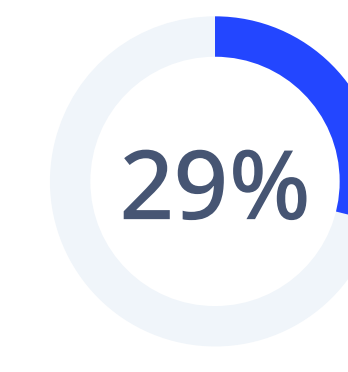
Asia combines strong aspiration with real momentum among British travellers.

Japan leads the UK wish list, but actual Trip.com bookings still skew towards established gateway cities such as Bangkok, Hong Kong and Beijing.

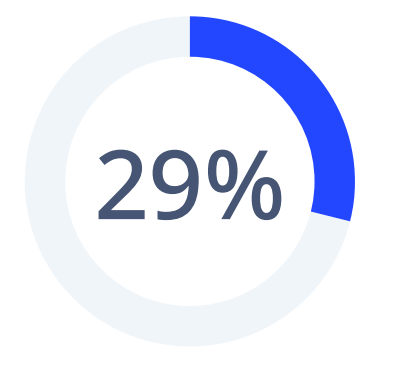
Top 3 Asian destinations on Brits’ travel wish list³



Japan



Maldives



Thailand

UK bookings to Asia rose +51% YoY, with Mainland China showing even stronger momentum at +97% — supported by the introduction of visa-free entry for UK nationals in February 2026.¹



Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January 2026, n=2,000 nationally representative UK adults

³ Notes: Asian destinations that are top of Brits’ wish list is separate to destinations Brits’ would realistically consider travelling to over the next five years

Favourite Asian destinations

Past, future and dream trips

European travellers are open to a wide range of destinations across Asia, but the pattern of demand is evolving.

02



Survey findings show that preferences span beach escapes, cultural experiences and more ambitious long-haul itineraries. Looking back, Thailand (23%) is the most visited Asian destination among respondents who have visited Asia in the last five years, ahead of Japan (17%), China (13%), the Maldives (11%) and Vietnam (11%). Looking ahead, the ranking changes: **Japan** becomes the destination Europeans most want to visit in the next five years, followed by **Thailand, the Maldives, China and Singapore**. This shift suggests a clear distinction between tried-and-tested favourites and the destinations now rising fastest on travellers' wish lists.

Wish list vs bookings: where intent is translating into travel (across the five European markets)

What travellers say

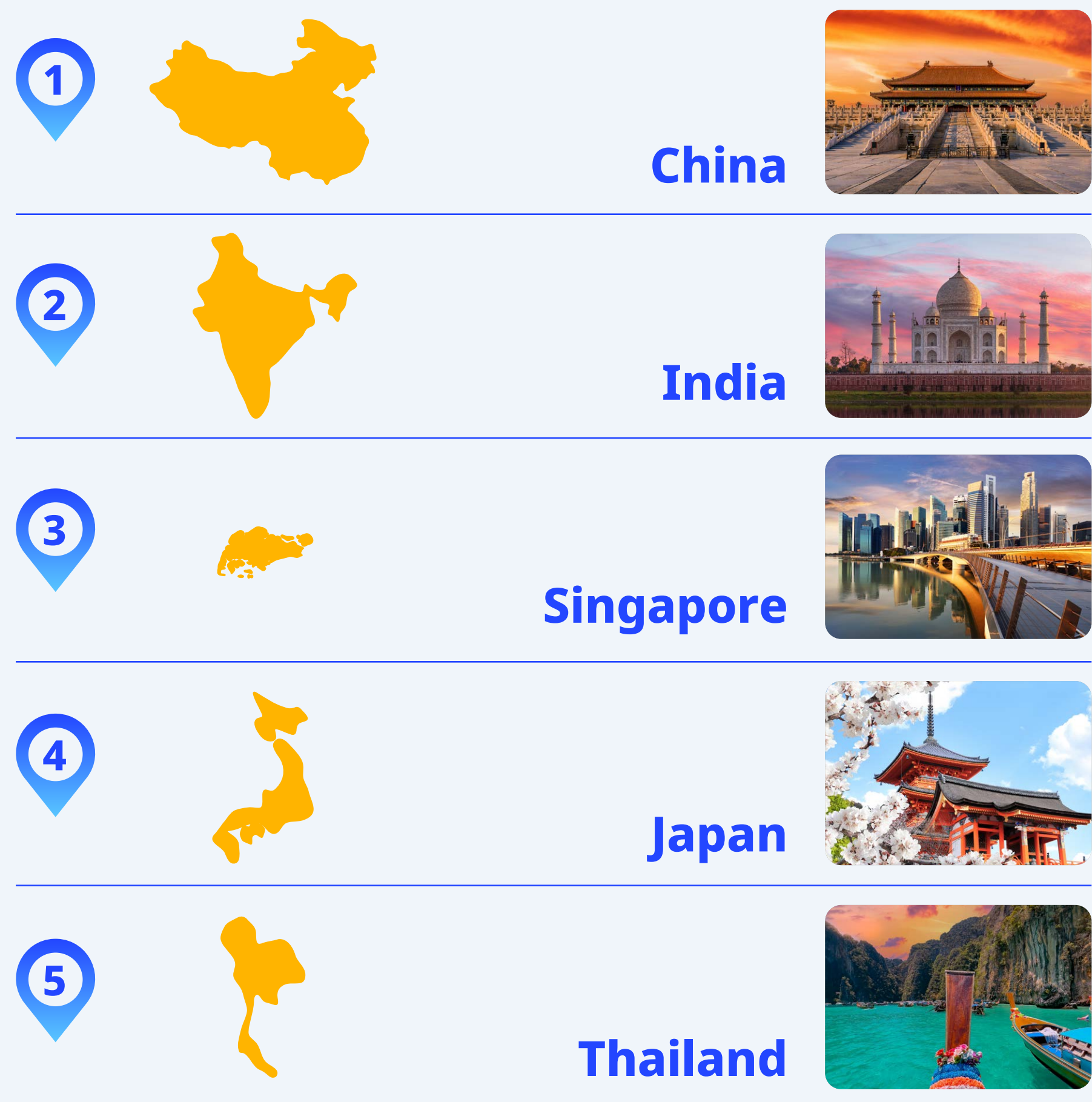
Destinations travellers would realistically consider travelling to in the next five years



Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January, n=6,000 nationally representative adults across the five European markets

What travellers do

Most popular destinations booked



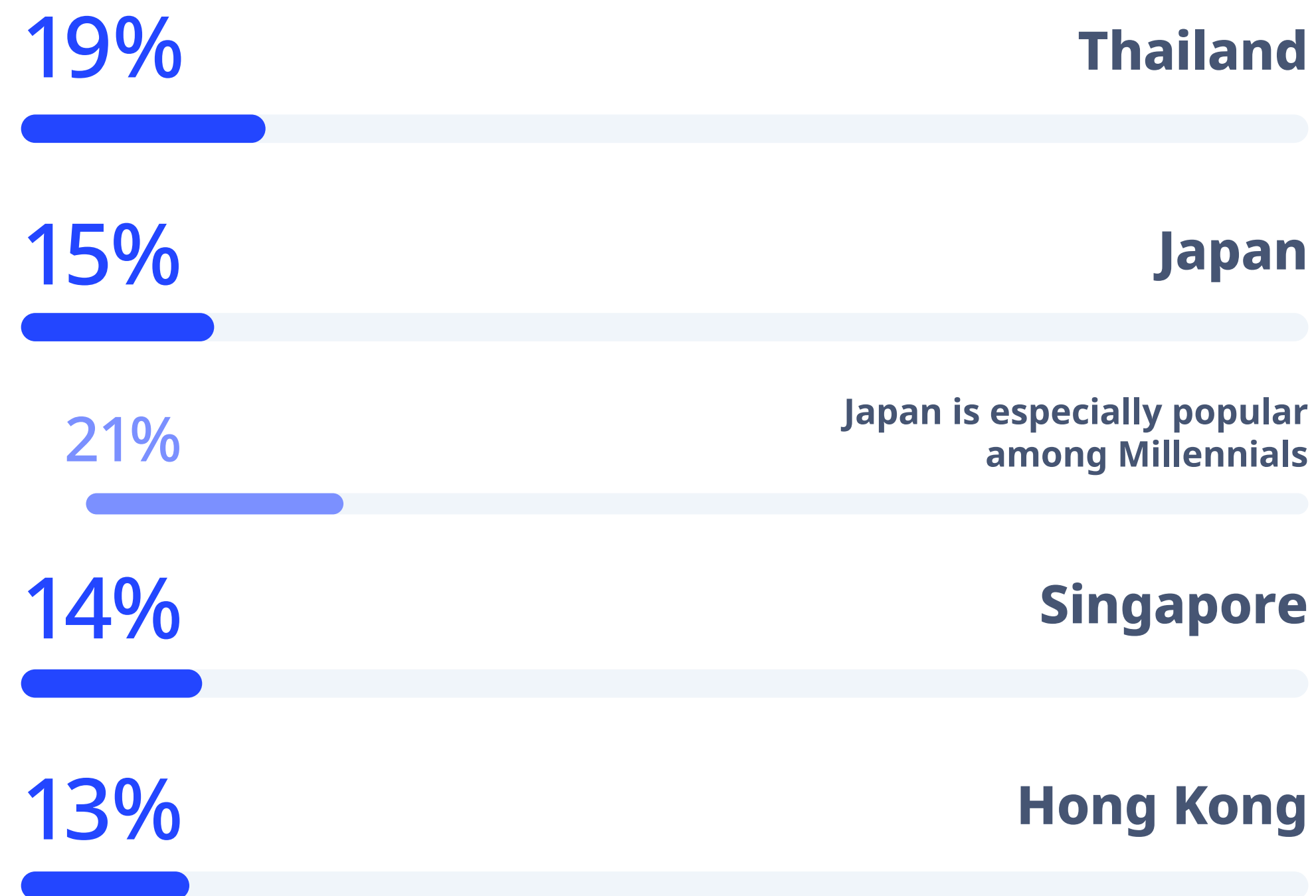
Source: Trip.com booking data;
Points of Sale: The five European markets (UK, FR, DE, ES, IT)
Booking ranking taken from the "Europe to Asia" Top destination countries by total trip volume table (FY2025)

Comparing survey findings with Trip.com booking data helps show where aspiration and actual booking behaviour diverge.

Japan clearly led future desire across European markets, while Mainland China remained the top booked destination based on Trip.com booking data for FY2025. Thailand performed strongly on both measures, suggesting it combines familiarity with continued appeal. Singapore also appeared in both sets, pointing to its role as a practical and attractive long-haul choice. India's position as the second most-booked destination is a notable finding — reflecting strong established demand that is not yet reflected in aspiration rankings. More broadly, Trip.com booking data showed that, while aspiration broadened across a wide range of destinations, actual booking behaviour continued to favour well-connected, high-volume gateway cities.

What appeals to the British

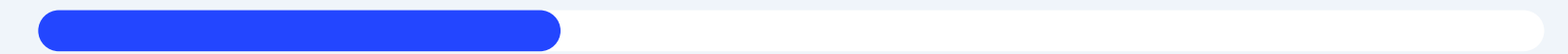
Top Asian countries Brits have visited in the last five years



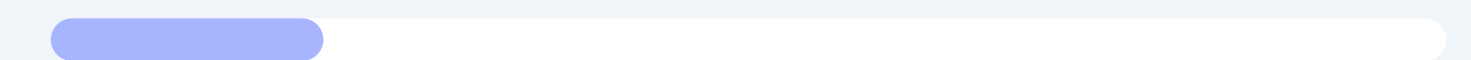
Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January 2026
n=2,000 nationally representative UK adults



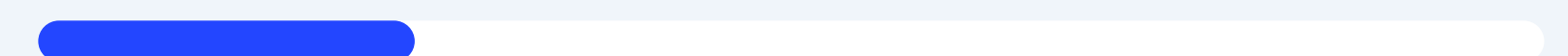
35% of Brits open to travelling to the region in the next five years express a desire to visit Japan



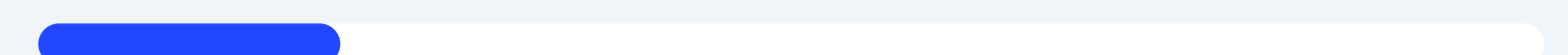
20% Among Boomers, interest in Japan is lower



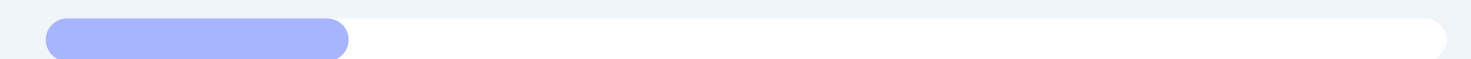
24% followed by Thailand



20% and the Maldives



23% The Maldives is particularly popular among women



This suggests Japan stands out as the leading future destination choice among UK travellers, while Thailand retains its position as a tried-and-tested favourite.

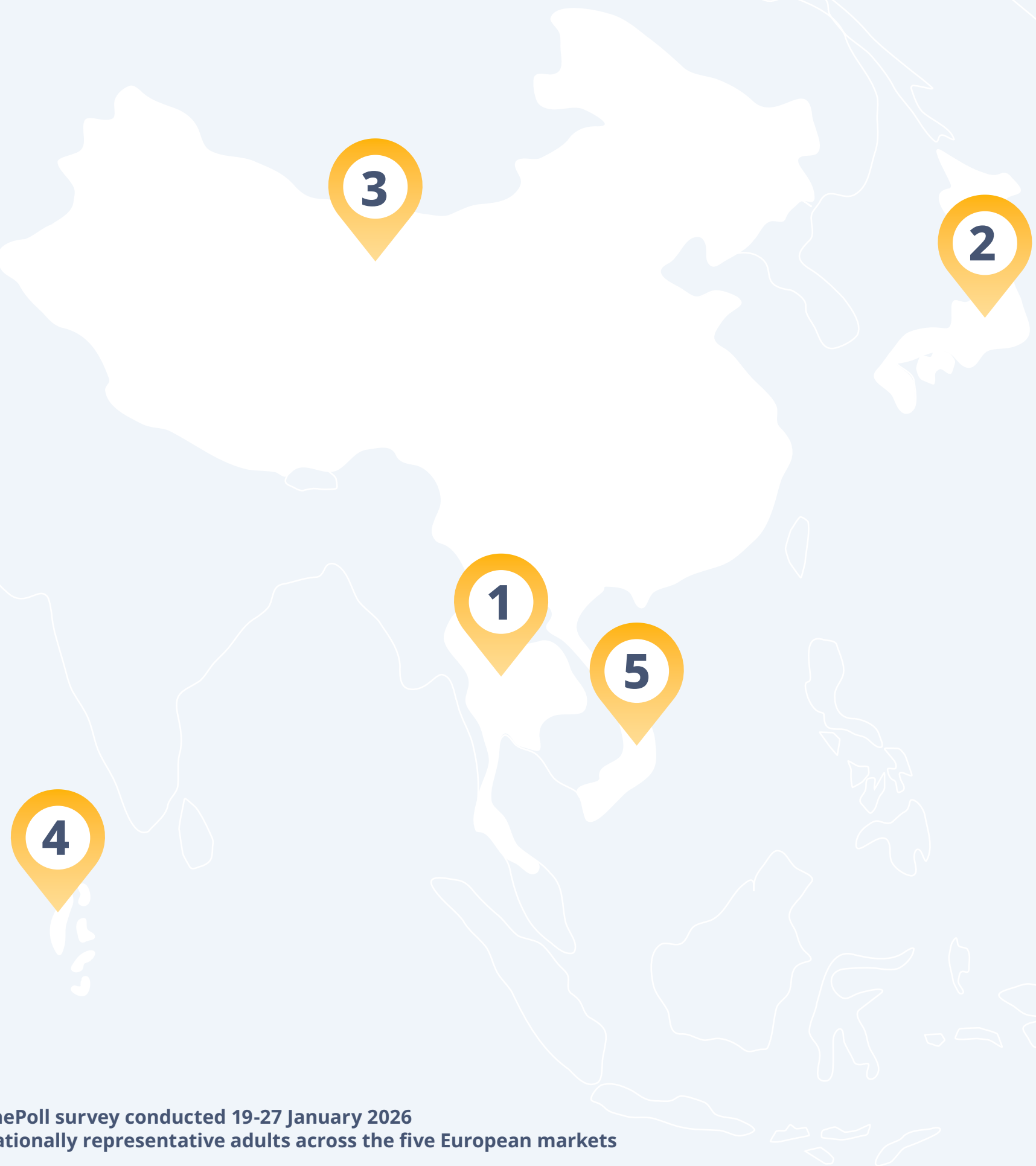
Top 5 Asian destinations Europeans would realistically consider visiting in the next five years



	Average	European split				
1	Japan 36%	UK 35%	France 30%	Germany 29%	Spain 44%	Italy 46%
2	Thailand 27%	UK 24%	France 28%	Germany 30%	Spain 26%	Italy 31%
3	Maldives 20%	UK 20%	France 12%	Germany 22%	Spain 16%	Italy 33%
4	China 16%	UK 15%	France 11%	Germany 13%	Spain 22%	Italy 22%
5	Singapore 14%	UK 19%	France 9%	Germany 14%	Spain 10%	Italy 15%

Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January, n=6,000 nationally representative adults across the five European markets

Top 5 Asian destinations Europeans have visited in the last five years



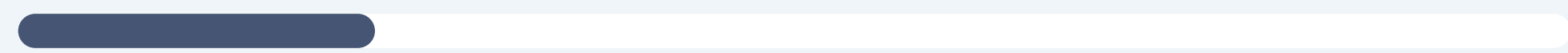
	Average	European split				
1	Thailand 23%	UK 19%	France 30%	Germany 37%	Spain 22%	Italy 20%
2	Japan 17%	UK 15%	France 19%	Germany 17%	Spain 21%	Italy 17%
3	China 13%	UK 12%	France 13%	Germany 12%	Spain 14%	Italy 13%
4	Maldives 11%	UK 7%	France 10%	Germany 13%	Spain 10%	Italy 17%
5	Vietnam 11%	UK 10%	France 14%	Germany 11%	Spain 7%	Italy 12%

Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January 2026
n=6,000 nationally representative adults across the five European markets

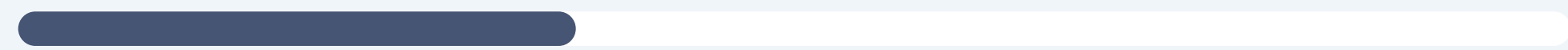
Europe-wide takeaways

While Thailand has been the most visited Asian country among respondents in recent years, Japan emerges as a leading destination for future trips.

23% of European travellers have previously visited Thailand



36% of European travellers would consider visiting Japan in the next five years



There is a clear gap between future destination interest and actual booking behaviour. Japan leads aspiration, while China remains the top booked destination in the five-market aggregate.

Japan leads aspiration



While China remains the top booked destination in the five-market aggregate⁴



⁴Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January, n=6,000 nationally representative adults across the five European markets

⁴Source: Trip.com booking data; Points of Sale: The five European markets (UK, FR, DE, ES, IT) Booking ranking taken from the "Europe to Asia" Top destination countries by total trip volume table (FY2025)

Section summary

UK Snapshot

Japan leads future destination consideration among UK travellers, especially younger audiences, while Thailand remains a strong "tried and tested" choice based on recent travel.

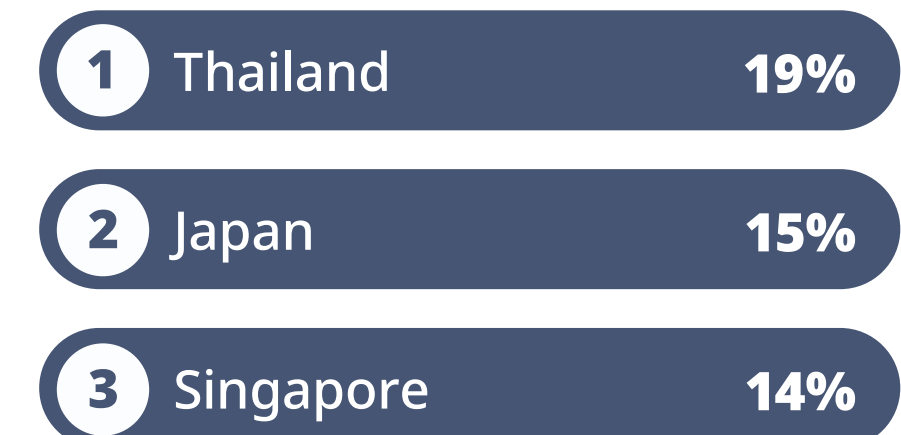
Brits wanting to travel to Japan in the next five years



35%
total

48%
among Gen Z

Of the Brits who have travelled to Asia, almost a fifth have chosen Thailand in the last five years.



Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January 2026, n=2,000 nationally representative UK adults

What's fuelling the Asia buzz?

03

Travel decisions are shaped by a range of influences, but several clear cultural and lifestyle trends are increasing Asia's visibility among European audiences.

A spate of high-profile TV shows and movies set in Asia is one driver. Another is the growing choice of major attractions, with Trip.com's search and booking data suggesting rising demand for these. Fandom, from manga to K-pop, adds another contemporary twist.

These influences sit alongside more traditional motivations, including dramatic landscapes, wildlife, rich history, distinctive traditions, regional cuisine and major sporting or cultural events. Together, they are helping to move Asia from passive interest to active consideration.



Screen appeal

Popular TV series, travel programmes and internationally acclaimed films set in Asia have increased the region's visibility among European audiences. Survey responses suggest screen-led inspiration is linked with higher travel interest; this is reflected in higher overall search activity for related destinations and experiences.

Why screen content inspires Brits to visit Asia

Almost half of these UK consumers say the beautiful scenery and destinations showcased by TV shows and films make them more inclined to plan a trip. Unique cultural traditions, historical landmarks and delicious food also rated highly for appeal.



45%

Beautiful scenery and destinations



41%

Historical landmarks and heritage sites



41%

Unique cultural traditions

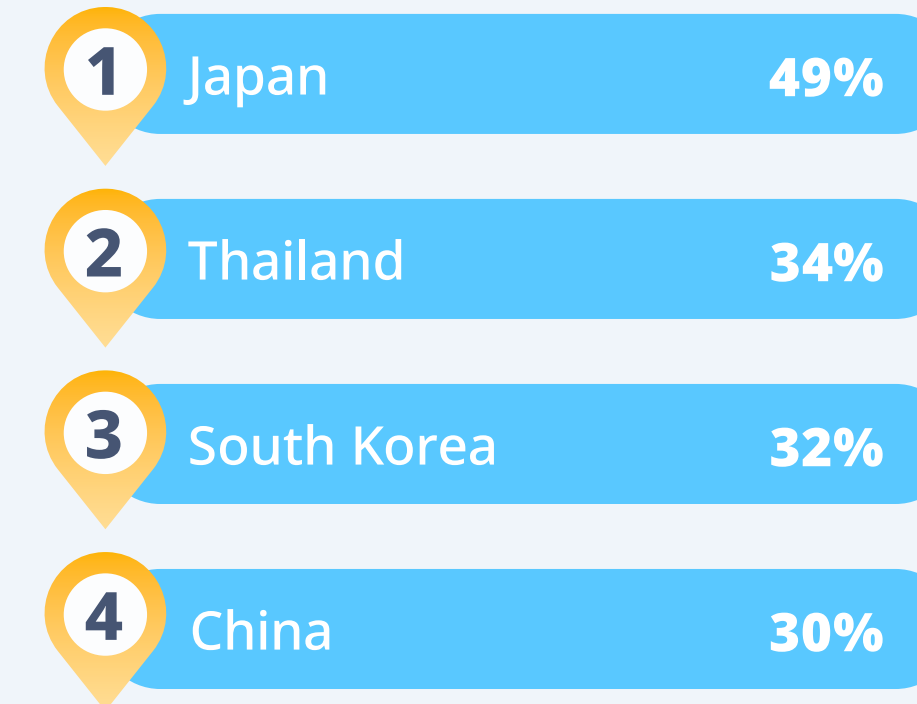


41%

Delicious food and dining experiences

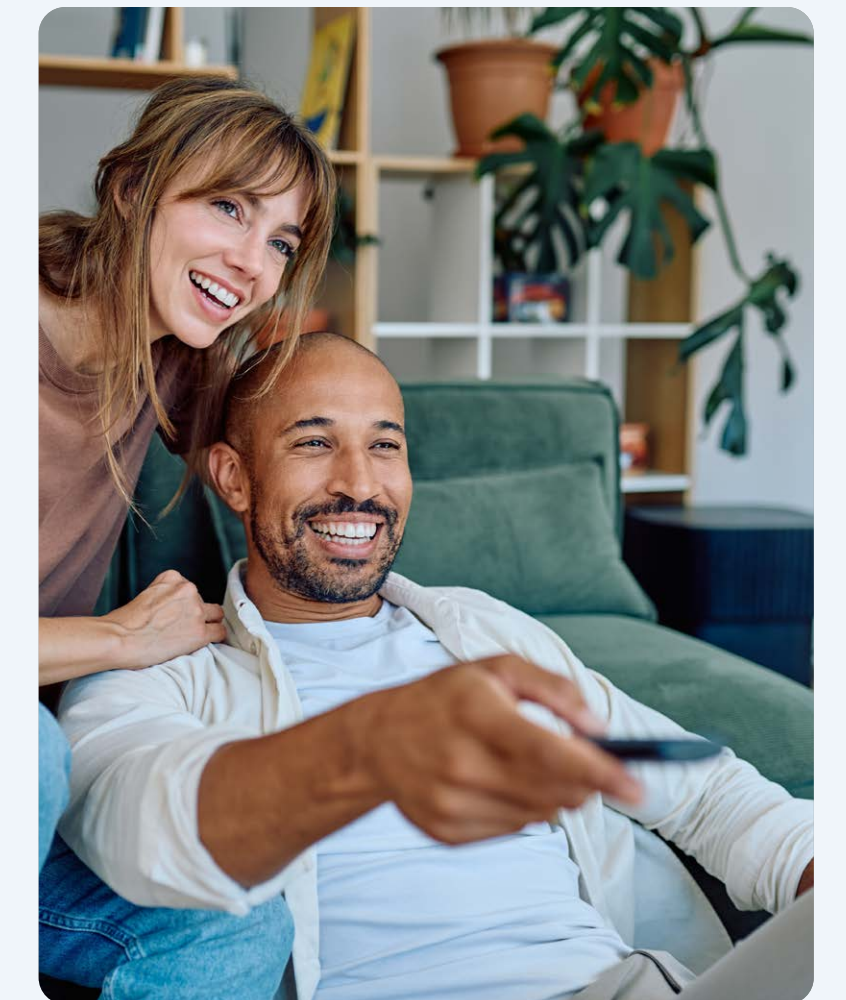
Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January 2026
n=2,000 nationally representative UK adults

Asian destinations inspired by screen content



Interest in South Korea is notably stronger among Gen Z audiences.

TV shows driving interest in Asia



Screen appeal drives intent across all European markets

	Average	UK	France	Germany	Spain	Italy
1 Squid Game	28%	24%	29%	26%	34%	31%
2 Spirited Away	21%	17%	28%	8%	23%	31%
3 Alice in Borderland	20%	16%	21%	19%	23%	26%
4 Shōgun	18%	17%	24%	19%	18%	16%
5 The White Lotus	17%	23%	14%	15%	13%	12%
6 Street Food Series - Asia	16%	19%	19%	12%	11%	17%
7 KPop Demon Hunters	15.2%	18%	15%	13%	17%	9%
8 Slumdog Millionaire	14.6%	14%	15%	14%	8%	21%
9 Race Across the World	14.1%	24%	5%	6%	8%	16%
10 Parasite	14%	12%	10%	16%	21%	14%

Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January, n=6,000 nationally representative adults across the five European markets



Food, fun and fandom

New and established attractions continue to expand Asia's leisure offering. For example, **PokéPark KANTO** — the first permanent outdoor Pokémon attraction — opened at Tokyo's Yomiuriland in February 2026, adding to the region's growing portfolio of themed experiences.



Shanghai Disney Resort ranked as the top leisure attraction in the booking data

15%

of Brits say theme parks may influence their decision to travel to Asia

Theme parks are particularly popular among...

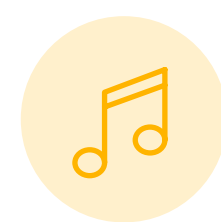
26%

Millennials

17%

and women

Concerts and international sporting events also contribute to interest



10%

say concerts may influence their decision to visit Asia

Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January, n=6,000 nationally representative adults across the five European markets

Culinary tourism is another clear driver.

Trip.com search data shows a 700% YoY increase in searches for "food tour," suggesting rising interest in experience-led travel centred around cuisine.



Food tour

+700%

Source: Trip.com search data; Points of Sale: All European markets (FY2024 vs FY2025)

Top Asian cuisines Brits would like to try when visiting Asia:

- 1 Japanese 30%
- 2 Chinese 28%
- 3 Thai 28%
- 4 Korean 25%
- 5 Indian 20%



37%

Japanese food raises significant interest among Millennials



13%

Korean cuisine has lower appeal among Boomers



Booked experiences in Asia seeing the strongest YoY growth

	YoY growth
1 Shanghai Disney Resort	>1000%
2 Mutianyu Great Wall	>1000%
3 Universal Beijing Resort	>1000%
4 Universal Studios Japan	+200-500%
5 Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding	+500-1000%
6 Andamanda Phuket Waterpark	+200-500%
7 Emperor Qinshihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum	+500-1000%
8 Tianmen Mountain National Forest Park	>1000%
9 Shanghai Tower	+500-1000%
10 Zhangjiajie National Forest Park	>1000%

What's trending in Asia on Trip.com

Event-led travel intent is rising, led by Formula 1-related searches.

Formula 1-related searches rose by over 3,000% YoY. Survey findings also indicate Grand Prix racing can be a driver of travel consideration to Asia.

The following search terms saw particularly strong growth:

🔍 Formula 1	+3,000%
🔍 Beach club	+1,600%
🔍 Food tour	+700%
🔍 Tax free shopping	+400%

Search growth also points to fandom and experience-led planning

🔍 Anime/Manga
🔍 Pokémon
🔍 Kpop Demon Hunters
🔍 High-End Food Experience

While search activity reflects interest rather than confirmed bookings, the scale of growth highlights increasing engagement with event-led and lifestyle-driven travel themes.

Source: Trip.com search data;
Points of Sale: All European markets (FY2024 vs FY2025)



Section summary

Europe-wide takeaways



Popular TV shows and movies set in Asia have sparked greater interest in the region.

Food is an important consideration for many. Trip.com's survey findings point to high levels of interest in different kinds of Asian cuisine.

While Trip.com search data shows a significant 700% YoY rise in searches relating to food tours

 Food tour **+700%**

There has been an even bigger rise in searches connected with Formula 1

 Formula 1 **+3,000%⁵**

Trip.com booking data reveals a big YoY upswing in booking experiences such as:



Theme parks

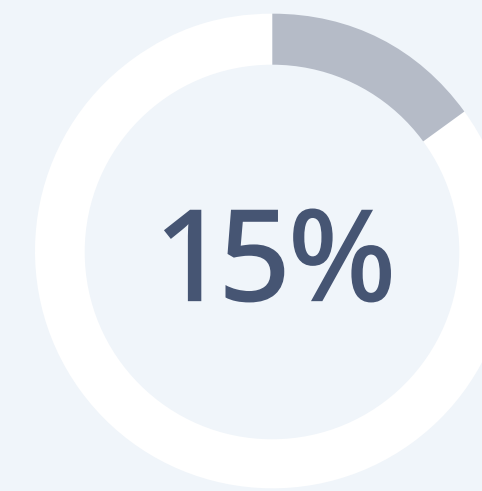


Cultural attractions

Source: Trip.com booking/search data; Points of Sale: All European markets (FY2024 vs FY2025)

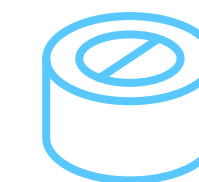
⁵Reflects a very low 2024 search base.

UK Snapshot



For a minority, theme parks may influence the decision to travel to Asia

Traditional regional cuisine exerts a big pull and many Brits have an appetite to try genuine Japanese dishes as part of a broader cultural experience.



30%

would be most excited to try Japanese food

Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January 2026, n=2,000 nationally representative UK adults

From wish-lists to reality

What's holding Europeans back?

Asia may feature on many Europeans' wish lists, but planning a trip can feel more involved than a short-haul break. Higher flight costs and longer journey times, alongside health and safety concerns and unfamiliar languages and customs, can all play a role in shaping travel decisions.

04




Price, distance and planning barriers

Survey findings show consumers are more cautious about travelling long-haul to Asia than about booking trips within Europe.

Among those open to visiting Asia in the next five years, many say they would spend more time planning than they would for a European trip — including...

 **45%**
in Germany

 **38%**
in the UK

Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January, n=6,000 nationally representative adults across the five European markets

For Brits, the most common deterrent to travelling to Asia is the cost of flights.

39%

of Brits say it has put them off in the past

45%

of Gen X say flight costs have put them off travelling to Asia in the past

Cost of air travel is also seen as a drawback in the rest of the five European markets, though at between 31-35% not quite to the same extent.

31-35%

of Europeans say it has put them off in the past

Distance and flight duration can also be off-putting.

36%

of Brits say it has put them off in the past

Value also plays a major role in how British travellers narrow down their options. When asked what would affect choice of destination...

70% say cost of living affects it

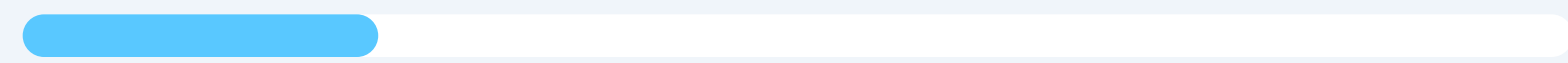
60% currency exchange rate affects it

29% affects it a lot

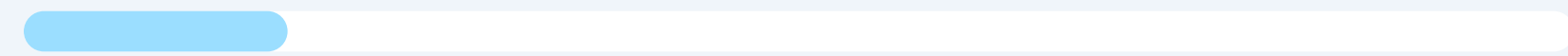
16% affects it a lot

Cultural differences

23% of Brits say language barriers have dissuaded them from travelling to Asia in the past



17% Among Boomers, only 17% say language barriers have dissuaded them from travelling to Asia



Language is judged to be the most challenging cultural difference to navigate



41%
Language barrier



22%
Social norms



19%
Food & dining customs

Only 37% of Brits say they feel confident travelling somewhere with cultural differences, while political uncertainty is cited by under a quarter of Brits as a possible dealbreaker.



37%
23%

■ cultural differences
■ political uncertainty

Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January 2026, n=2,000 nationally representative UK adults





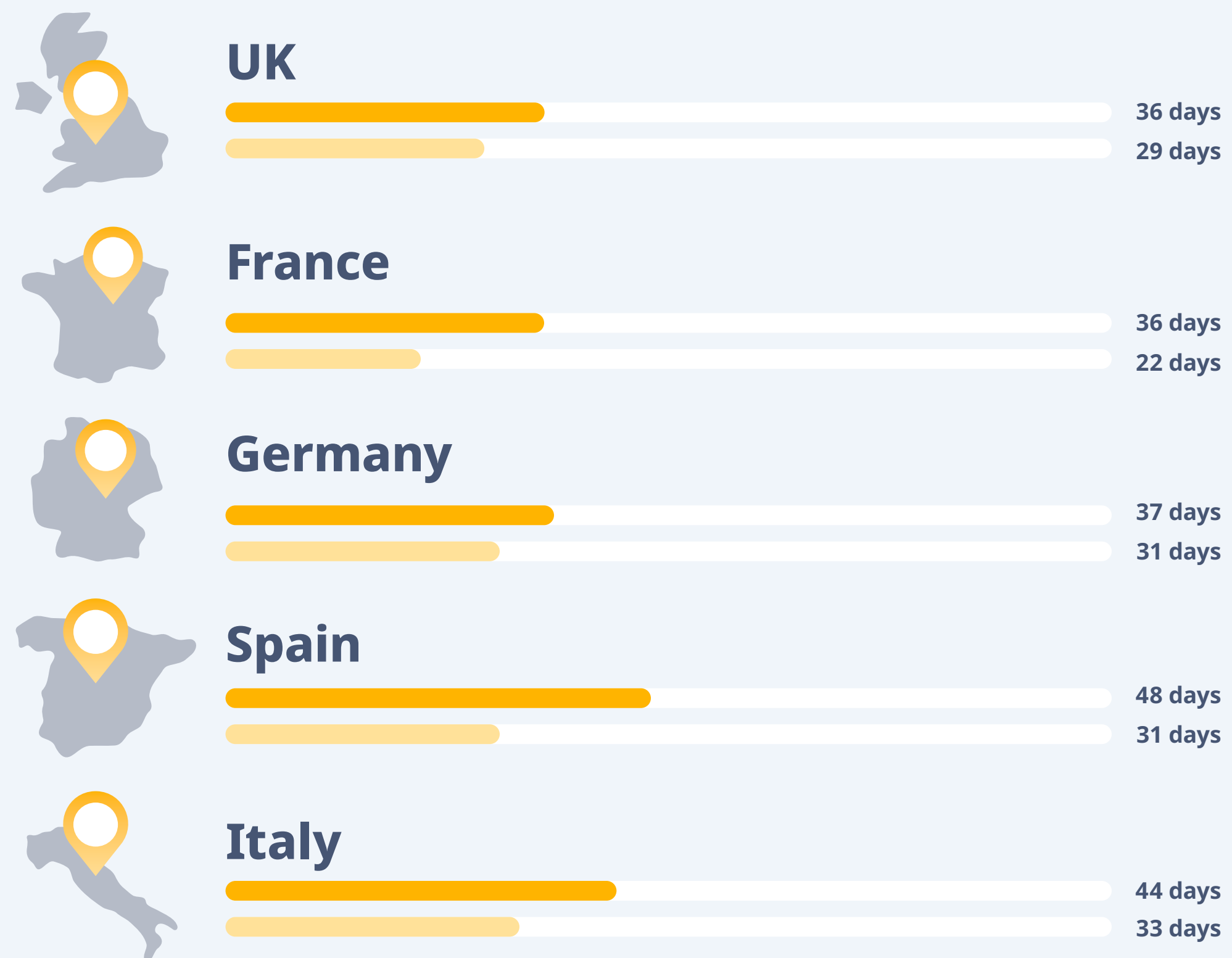
Top barriers to travelling to Asia across European markets

	Average	UK	France	Germany	Spain	Italy
1 Cost of Flights	35%	39%	32%	33%	35%	31%
2 Long distance/flight time	28%	36%	19%	27%	26%	21%
3 Language barrier	21%	23%	24%	19%	21%	18%
4 Health concerns	18%	22%	14%	17%	19%	13%
5 Safety concerns	17%	23%	12%	17%	16%	10%
6 Cost of accommodation	16%	16%	16%	16%	17%	14%
7 Food Hygiene/dietary restrictions	15%	20%	12%	12%	16%	14%
8 Political instability	15%	20%	9%	16%	14%	14%
9 Natural disaster concerns	14.2%	17%	12%	12%	16%	11%
10 Visa requirements/paperwork	13.5%	16%	11%	13%	14%	11%

Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January, n=6,000 nationally representative adults across the five European markets

Trip.com planning proxy: Average booking window per market⁶

■ Asia average ■ Mainland China average



Trip.com booking-window data suggests travellers are typically booking Asia trips around five to seven weeks in advance, with the shortest lead time in France and the longest in Spain.

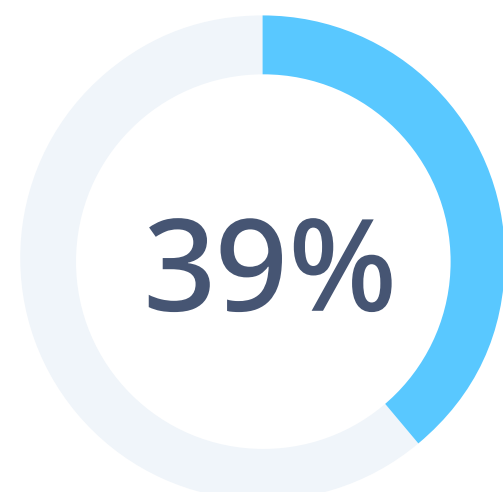
⁶Longer booking lead times may reflect trip complexity, advance fare pricing, or earlier commitment to long-haul travel.

Source: Trip.com booking data;
Points of Sale: All European markets



Europe-wide takeaways

While appetite for travel to Asia is clearly present, practical barriers such as cost and distance – combined with concerns around health and safety along with language and cultural unfamiliarity – continue to temper confidence.



Among UK respondents open to travelling to Asia, 39% say they would spend significantly more time planning an Asian trip than a European one

For many potential travellers, Asia remains a destination that requires more planning and reassurance than closer-to-home alternatives.

But travelling to Asia need not be as daunting as some fear

Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January, n=6,000 nationally representative adults across the five European markets

Section summary

UK Snapshot

37%

of Brits say they feel confident travelling somewhere with cultural differences

Value is also an important filter for British travellers

 with day-to-day costs

 and exchange rates shaping destination choice

Brits are among the most concerned of the five European markets over flight costs and distance/flight time

39%
Flight Cost

36%
Distance/Flight time

Brits are slightly less concerned about the language barrier than the French

41% Brits concerned about language barrier

43% French concerned about language barrier

Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January 2026, n=2,000 nationally representative UK adults

What's making travel to Asia feel easier?

Asia may still feel far away, but for many travellers it no longer feels out of reach

Digital tools, price comparison sites and online booking platforms have simplified trip planning, making it easier to research destinations, compare options, organise itineraries and book multiple parts of a journey in one place. Flights, hotels, rail, attractions and local transport can now be planned with greater visibility and convenience than in the past, helping reduce some of the complexity traditionally associated with long-haul travel.

A further recent development is China's introduction of visa-free entry for UK nationals travelling to Mainland China for up to 30 days, effective from 17 February 2026. This arrangement is currently due to remain in place until the end of the year. For travellers, removing the need to apply for a visa makes planning a trip simpler, faster and potentially more affordable, particularly for first-time visitors, while also increasing confidence at the point of booking.

05



Visa-free travel can be a strong catalyst for demand, particularly for long-haul routes and first-time travellers. This was evident after China’s late-2023 visa-free policy announcement for several European countries. Trip.com Group analysis shows search interest in Mainland China rose 74% in the five weeks following the announcement across Germany, France, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands⁷ — and was 88% higher over the following 12 months. Over the same period, Trip.com Group flight bookings to Mainland China from these markets were 50% higher, suggesting that reduced friction can help travellers move more quickly from inspiration to booking.

Practical connectivity has also helped make future travel choices feel more achievable. In Japan, for example, Trip.com’s partnerships with JR companies make it easier for travellers to book Shinkansen journeys between cities, supporting the kind of multi-stop itineraries that go beyond a single-city stay.

⁷ The 2023 analysis covered a broader set of European markets including the Netherlands, in addition to the four markets featured in this report.

The positive power of tech

Online booking platforms now play a central role in managing travel plans

As digital travel tools continue to remove everyday barriers, travellers can approach long-haul trips with greater confidence by leaning on practical “enablers” such as...



Translation apps



Mobile payments



Navigation



Clearer organisation of bookings and documents



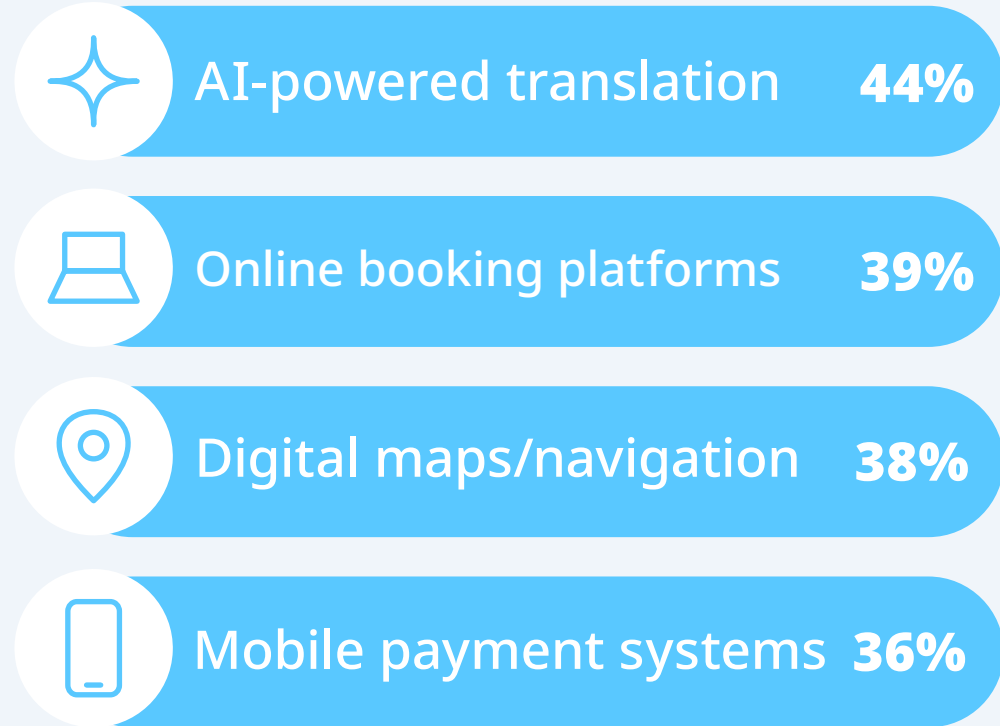
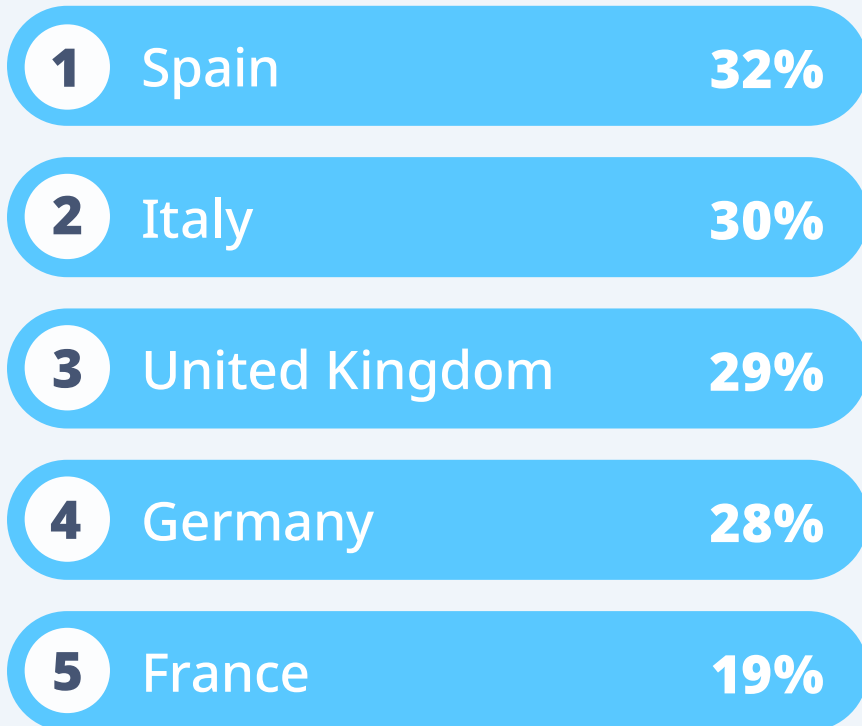
Trip.com’s AI-enabled tools — **TripGenie**, introduced in 2023, and **Trip.Planner**, launched in 2025 — provide insight into how European travellers are using technology to plan long-haul trips. Aggregated and anonymised patterns suggest many users treat AI as a verification layer, checking practical details such as baggage rules, visa eligibility and booking policies rather than using it purely for inspiration.

Among Brits who say they are more interested in travelling to Asia now than they were five years ago, high-speed internet and global connectivity stand out as the most influential enablers, cited by more than four in ten

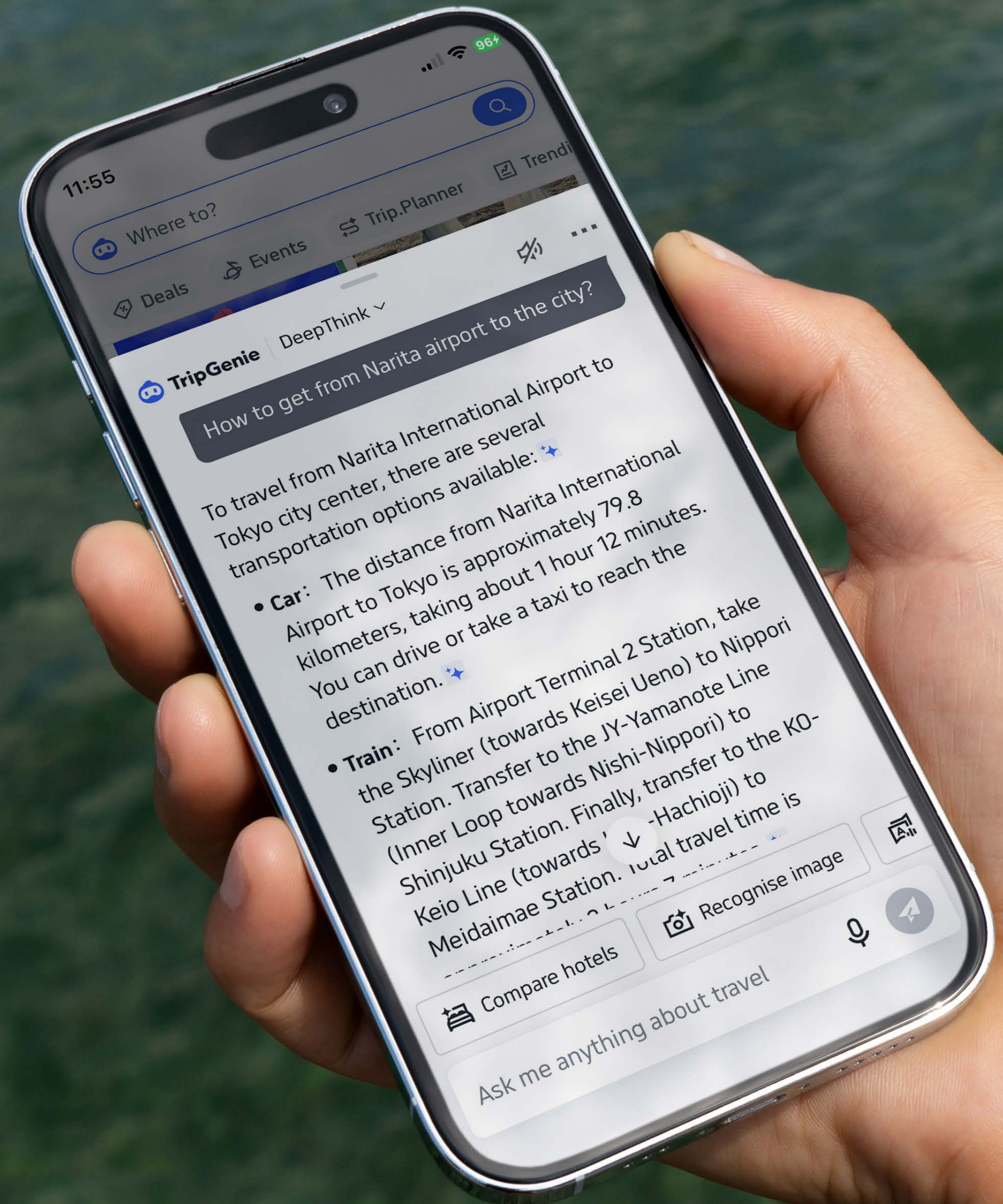


“Technological advancements make me feel safer when travelling to the region”

Top technical advances encouraging Spanish travellers to visit Asia:



Source: OnePoll survey conducted 19-27 January, n=6,000 nationally representative adults across the five European markets



Forward Bookings Signal

06

2026 Travel Snapshot

Early forward-booking signals suggest that momentum in Europe-to-Asia travel is carrying into 2026. Based on bookings already on hand for 2026 travel dates, and compared with the same point last year, forward bookings are ahead across all five European markets.

Notes: In this section, 'bookings' refers to aggregated flight and/or hotel bookings (and 'total trip' where stated). Market coverage varies due to minimum volume thresholds.



Italy currently shows the strongest uplift (+130%), followed by France (+124%) and Germany (+122%), with Spain also posting strong growth (+96%). YoY growth in the UK is more moderate than in the other four markets, but forward bookings remain positive at +50%.



Italy
+130%



France
+124%



Germany
+122%



Spain
+96%



UK
+50%

Notes: These figures should be read as directional signals rather than a forecast, as they compare bookings already on hand for 2026 travel dates with the same extraction point last year.

Source: Trip.com booking data; Points of Sale: All European markets



Top 10 destination countries by total trip bookings for Asian destinations only

At destination level, the picture is also evolving. Mainland China, Thailand and Vietnam currently rank as the top three Asian destination countries by total forward-booked trip volume. Among the top 10 destinations, the strongest YoY growth is being recorded by Singapore (+286%), Mainland China (+275%), Vietnam (+231%), Japan (+205%) and South Korea (+175%)

Rank by total trip volume



Rank by YoY growth

1	Singapore	+286%
2	China	+275%
3	Vietnam	+231%
4	Japan	+205%
5	South Korea	+175%
6	Thailand	+138%
7	Philippines	+100%
8	Malaysia	+80%
9	Sri Lanka	+75%
10	India	+34%

Notes: Figures based on bookings already on hand as of 5 March 2026

Source: Trip.com booking data; Points of Sale: All European markets

Section summary

Early forward-booking signals suggest that Europe-to-Asia demand is continuing into 2026, with particularly strong growth in Italy, France, Germany and Spain, and positive momentum also evident in the UK. China, Thailand and Vietnam currently lead by total forward-booked trip volume across the five European markets, while particularly strong YoY growth in Singapore, China, Vietnam, Japan and South Korea points to a widening spread of interest across Asia. These figures should be read as directional signals rather than a full-year forecast.



Conclusion

From interest to itinerary

Asia remains an increasingly attractive long-haul choice for travellers across Europe and the UK, particularly among younger audiences and those already open to travel. Survey findings show strong intent to visit in the coming years, while Trip.com search and booking behaviour indicates that interest is translating into bookings — with demand spreading across a wider set of destinations and a growing focus on experiences.

At the same time, the report highlights persistent barriers, including cost, distance and perceived complexity. Digital tools — from translation and navigation to itinerary planning and end-to-end booking platforms — are helping to reduce friction and give travellers more confidence to plan further ahead. **Taken together, the findings suggest that Asia is becoming more accessible to European travellers, as they move more quickly from inspiration to booking.**

Methodology

This report combines independent survey research with aggregated and anonymised behavioural insights from Trip.com, including search, booking and experience-booking activity.

Survey research:

Fieldwork was conducted by OnePoll between 19–27 January 2026 across nationally representative samples in five European markets: the UK (n=2,000), France, Germany, Italy and Spain (n=1,000 per market). Where European averages are referenced, results are calculated using the combined five-market sample.

Trip.com behavioural data:

Trip.com insights are based on aggregated and anonymised activity from points of sale in the same five markets, unless otherwise stated. Where market coverage differs across datasets, this reflects minimum data thresholds and availability for specific destinations, products or time windows.

How to read the data

Survey findings reflect what travellers say and feel, while Trip.com data shows observed search and booking behaviour.



Terminology and timeframes

“The five European markets” refers to the UK, France, Germany, Italy and Spain.

“POS in the five European markets” refers to Trip.com aggregated search and booking data from these same five markets.

Unless otherwise stated, YoY comparisons refer to **FY2025 vs FY2024**.

“Asia” in this report refers to the destinations included within the scope of this research: Japan, South Korea, Mainland China, India, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

“Europe POS” is used only where Trip.com data includes European points of sale beyond the five survey markets.

TripGenie insights are based on aggregated and anonymised question patterns raised during trip planning. They are used as behavioural context, not as destination-intent signals on their own.

About this study

This report combines an independent consumer survey with Trip.com behavioural insights to understand Asia travel demand from the UK and Europe — pairing what travellers say they want with what they are searching and booking on the platform. Together, these inputs help trace the path from inspiration to booking and show where practical considerations shape destination choice.

About Trip.com

Trip.com is a global online travel platform founded in Asia, serving millions of travellers worldwide, with local teams and a presence across key European markets. It brings flights, accommodation, rail and experiences into one place, supported by AI-enabled planning tools and 24/7 customer service.

Its travel tools, including TripGenie and Trip.Planner, are designed to help travellers research, compare and organise more complex journeys, from trip inspiration through to booking and in-destination support.

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Trip.com is the international travel booking platform of Trip.com Group. Trip.com Group was founded in 1999 and is headquartered in Shanghai, while the Trip.com brand is headquartered in Singapore.





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