



2026 Travel Trends Report



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Celebrating 40 Years

As Brightsun Travel celebrates 40 years – from its beginnings in a small Soho office in 1986 to receiving the King's Award for Enterprise in 2025 – we look back at how travel has evolved and what continues to inspire UK holidaymakers today.

This report explores the journeys that shaped us: the nostalgia of 1980s family holidays, the rise of modern wellness and adventure travel, the destinations topping wishlists for 2026, and the planning habits that define today's traveller.

In celebration of Brightsun Travel's 40th anniversary, we invited travellers to reflect on how journeys have evolved over the past forty years. Their responses offered fascinating insights – and for those old enough to remember plenty of nostalgic moments to look back on!

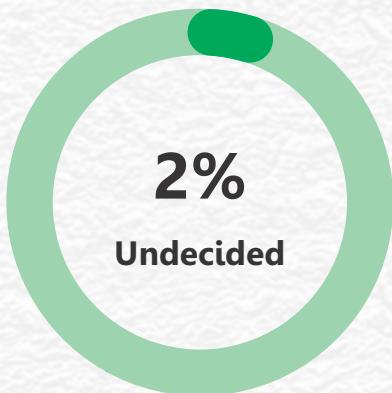
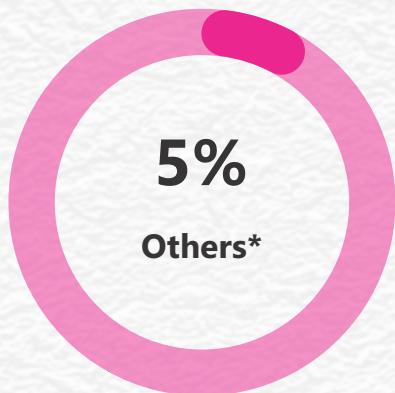
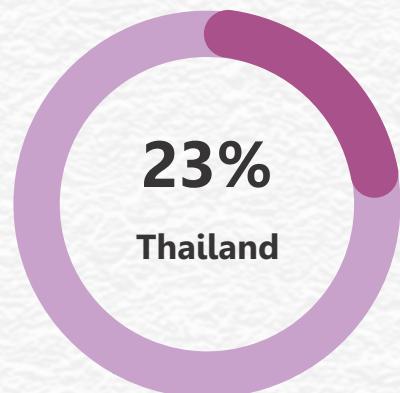
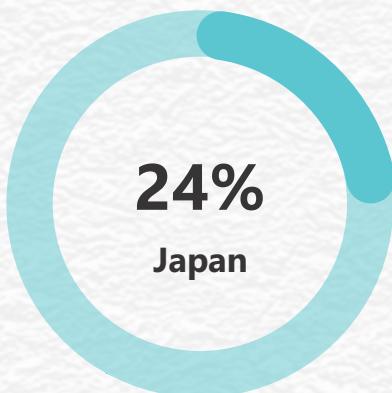


*Survey of 2,750 UK travellers, conducted in 2025 via Censuswide.
Data are rounded and visualisations highlight the most frequently selected / highest response options answered.*

2026 Hotlist: The Destinations Topping Traveller Wishlists

Greece leads the way, followed by Japan and Thailand as rising favourites.

**What destination would you
most consider booking a trip to in 2026?**



**Others includes India, Saudi Arabia and Albania*

Key Insights:

- Greece tops the list for sunshine, simplicity, and value.
- Demand for culturally rich long-haul destinations including Japan and Thailand is surging.
- Brightsun's travel experts can help match undecided travellers with the perfect destination.



What Types of Holidays We Choose Today

All-inclusive stays lead the way, with adventure, wellness, and sustainable travel gaining momentum.

What types of holiday have you been on in the last year?



Consumers were asked to select all that apply

Key Insights:

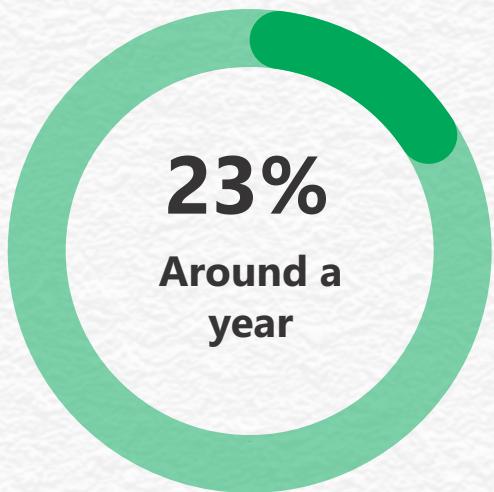
- All-inclusive is the preferred choice for convenience and value.
- Destination dupes are rising in popularity as people seek alternatives to a famous hotspot, often an attractive way to avoid over-tourism while still getting a comparable, and more affordable experience.



How Far Ahead Do We Book?

Most travellers plan ahead - but not too far in advance.

When booking a holiday, how far in advance do you usually book your trip?



Key Insights:

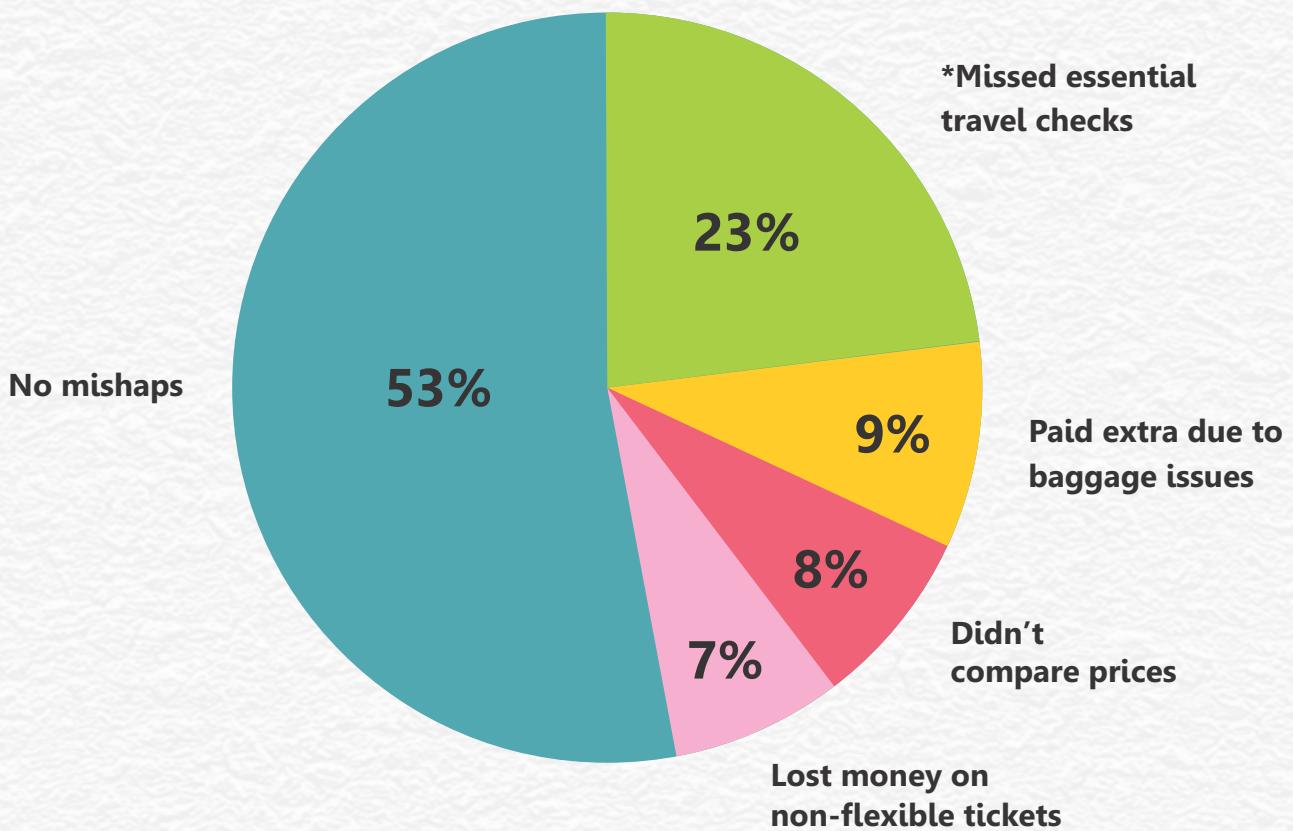
- 1–6 months ahead is the preferred planning window.
- Last-minute bookings remain low.
- A quarter surveyed like to book a year in advance, showing appetite exists for early bird deals.



The Travel Mistakes Costing People Money

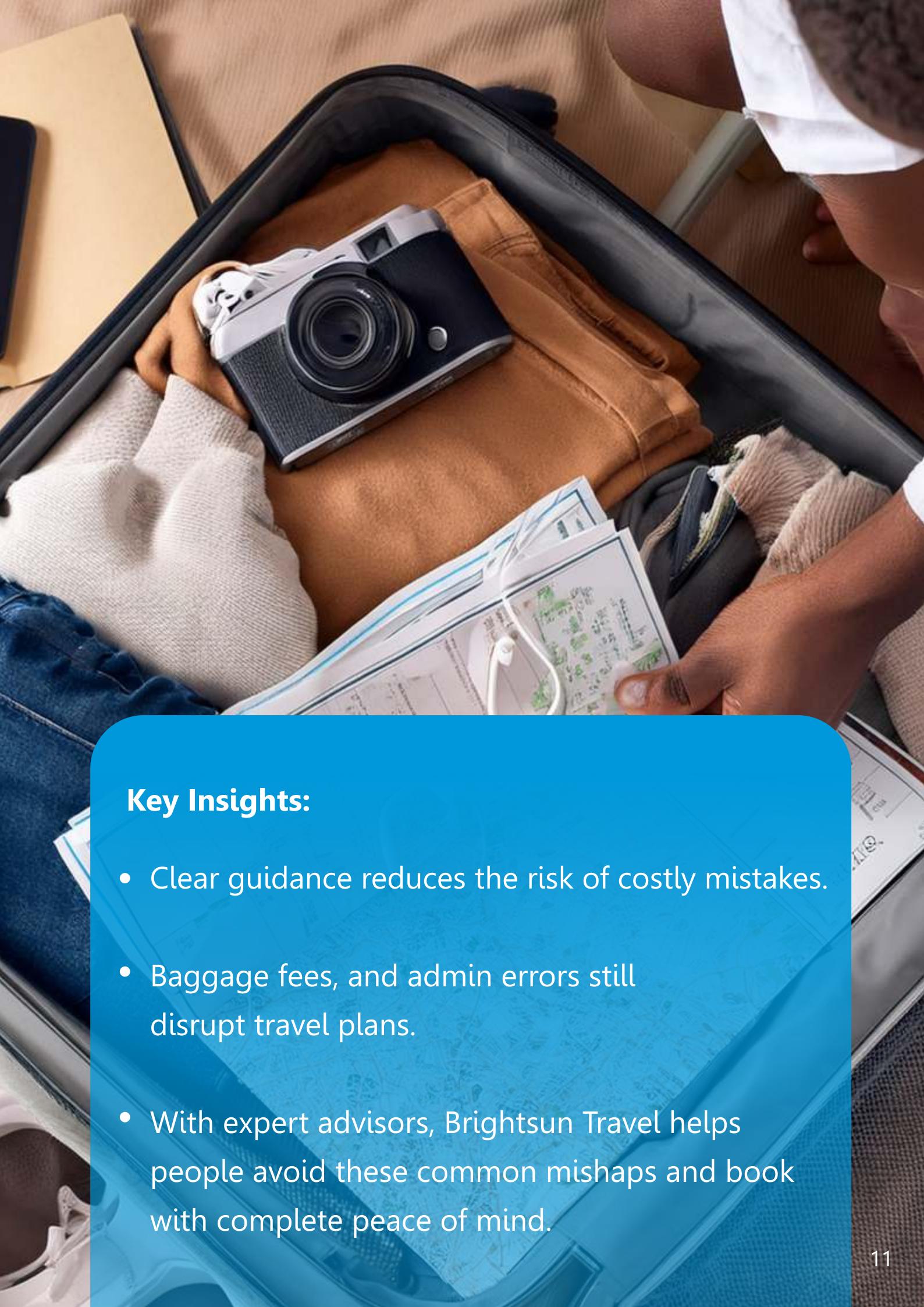
The most common trip-planning mistakes - and how expert guidance prevents them.

What travel mishaps have you made in the run-up to or during a trip in the last year?



***Missed essential travel checks includes:**

- Not checking transit requirements
- Not confirming flight times or connections
- Overlooking passport validity or expiry
- Not checking visa requirements
- Not checking FCDO travel advice
- Other related issues



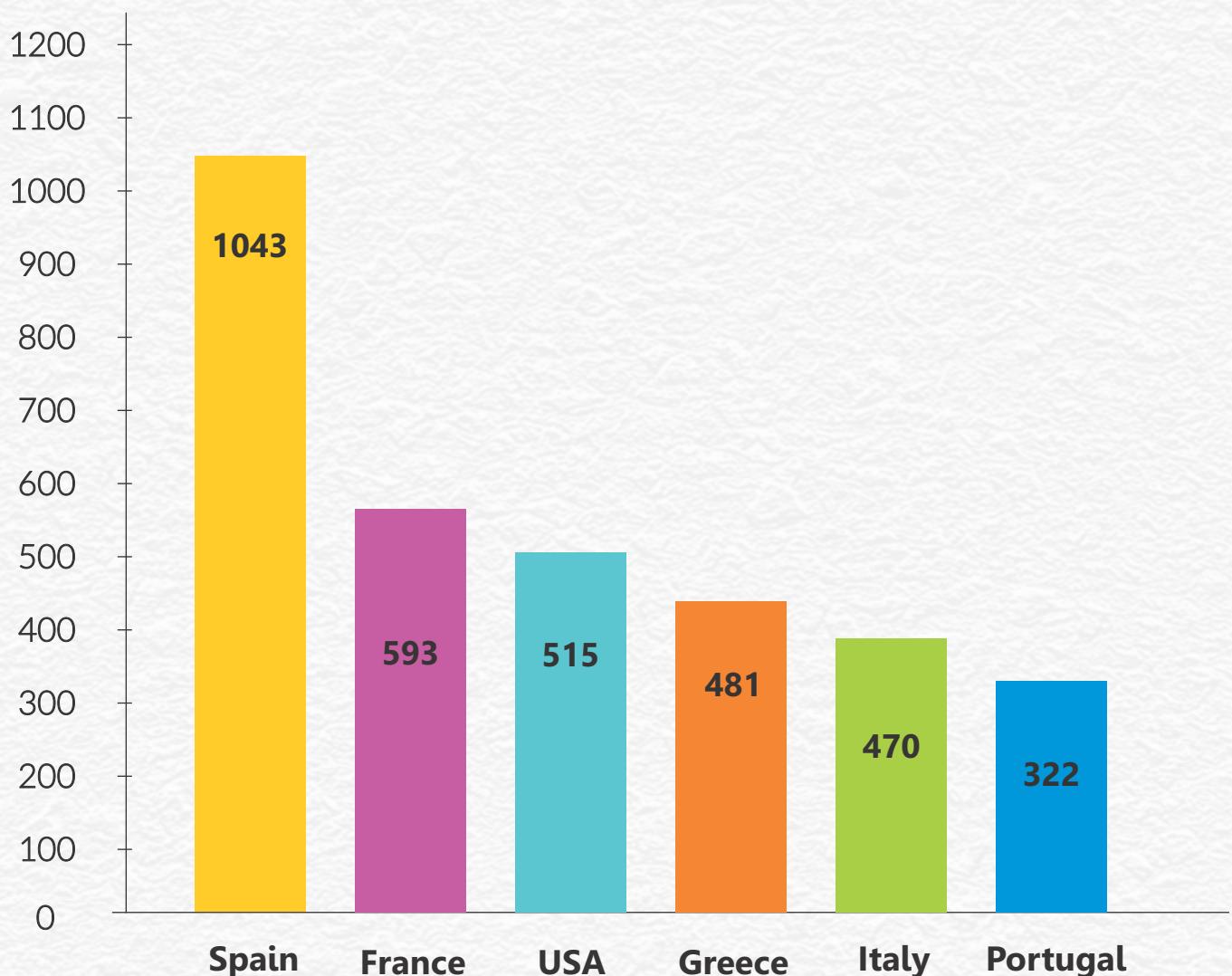
Key Insights:

- Clear guidance reduces the risk of costly mistakes.
- Baggage fees, and admin errors still disrupt travel plans.
- With expert advisors, Brightsun Travel helps people avoid these common mishaps and book with complete peace of mind.

Repeat Destinations: Where We Return to Again and Again

Spain and France lead as the most revisited destinations over the past decade.

In the last 10 years, have you been to any country more than three times?



Consumers were asked to select all that apply

Key Insights:

- Spain remains a timeless favourite!
- Warm culture and great value keep travellers coming back.
- Familiarity and comfort create a true "home away from home."



What Travellers Miss Most About 1980s Holidays

Brightsun Travel opened its first office in 1986 – let's look back at the trends that defined that decade.

24%

Fewer crowds,
calmer places

19%

Family time &
togetherness

18%

Less stress,
simpler travel

16%

Old-school
travel charm

14%

Slower pace,
simple joys

9%

Kids' freedom
& fun & other

Key Insights:

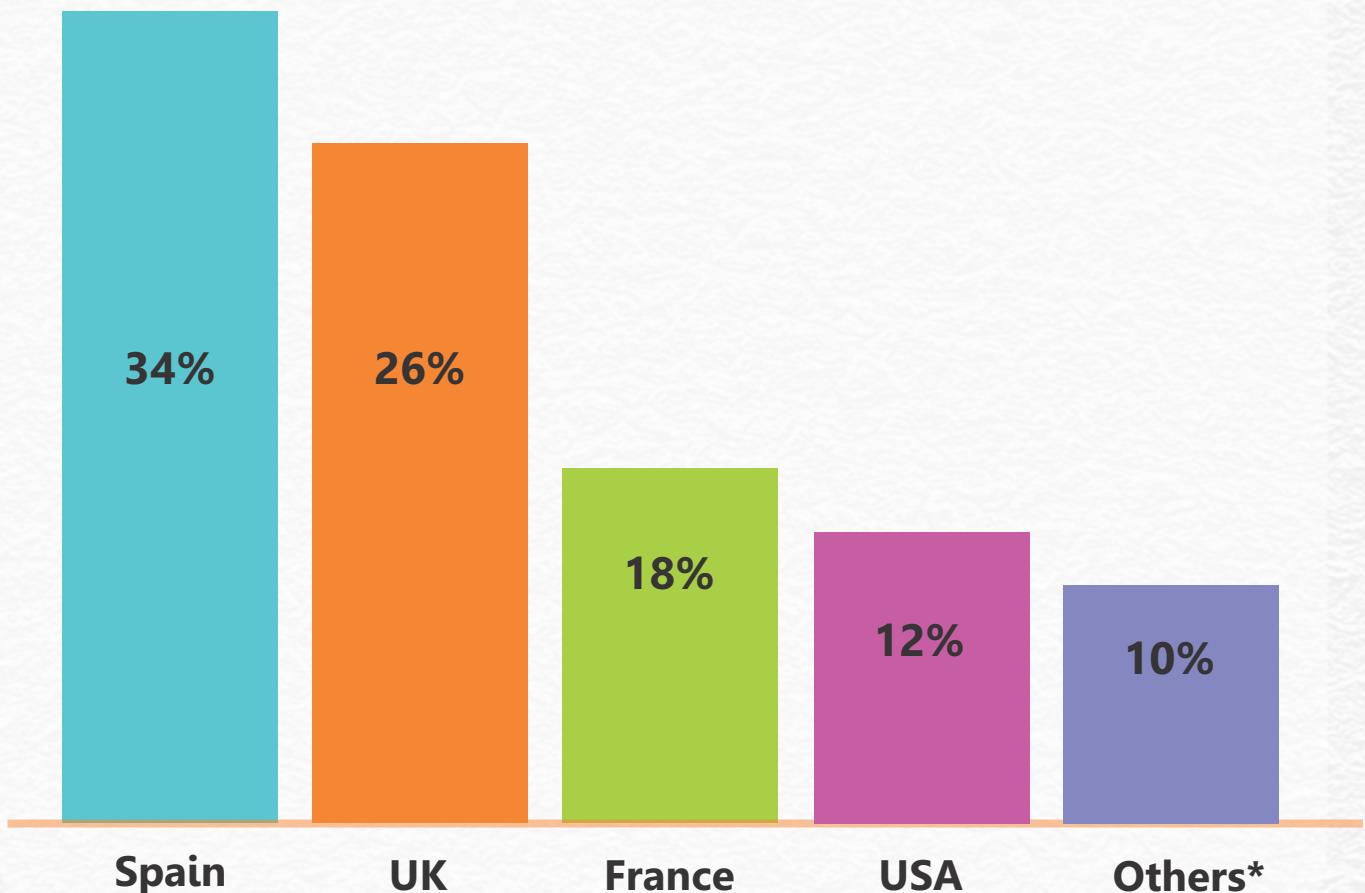
- Travellers crave authentic, less pressured holiday experiences.
- People are rediscovering joy in unhurried, mindful travel.
- Family-focused trips remain emotionally powerful decades later.
- A strong sense of nostalgia for simpler, slower, less commercialised getaways.



Where We Went Then: The 80s Most Loved Destinations

More than one in three people feel nostalgic for sunny 80s Spain.

**In the 1980s, did you go to any
country more than twice on holiday?**



**Others includes Italy and Portugal. This list includes the most visited countries more than twice in the 1980s.*

Key Insights:

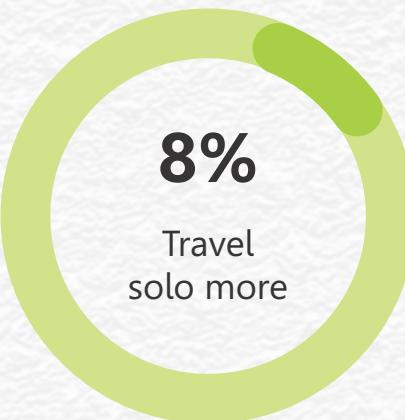
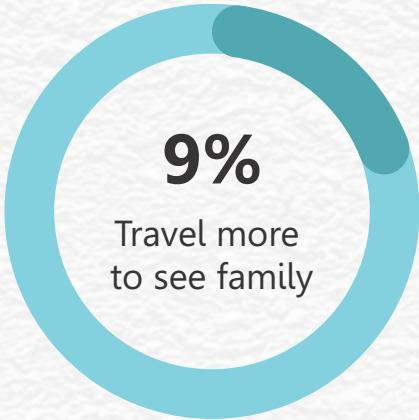
- Spain and the UK dominated as the favourite holiday spots of the decade.
- Overseas travel was still considered a luxury for many households.
- The 1980s cemented Spain as a long-standing favourite for British travellers.



How Our Holiday Habits Are Changing

Modern travellers are spending more, packing less, and prioritising wellbeing.

How have your holiday habits changed since your first ever holiday abroad?



Key Insights:

- Travellers are willing to invest more into higher-quality, meaningful experiences.
- “Pack light, travel smart” is becoming the norm.
- Growing interest in lesser-known destinations signals a shift away from overcrowded hotspots.





Looking Ahead: The Travel Landscape for 2026

In the year ahead, travellers will be prioritising value, wellbeing, sunshine, and culturally rich experiences.

With four decades of expertise, Brightsun Travel continues to provide trusted advice, exceptional customer care, and bespoke holiday planning.

Want to join the celebration of our 40th anniversary in 2026?

Win exciting prizes and enjoy exclusive savings on your next holiday!

[brightsun.co.uk /40](http://brightsun.co.uk/40)

brightsun.co.uk/win

Ready for your next unforgettable adventure?
Call 0208 819 0531 and let our experts find
your perfect destination.