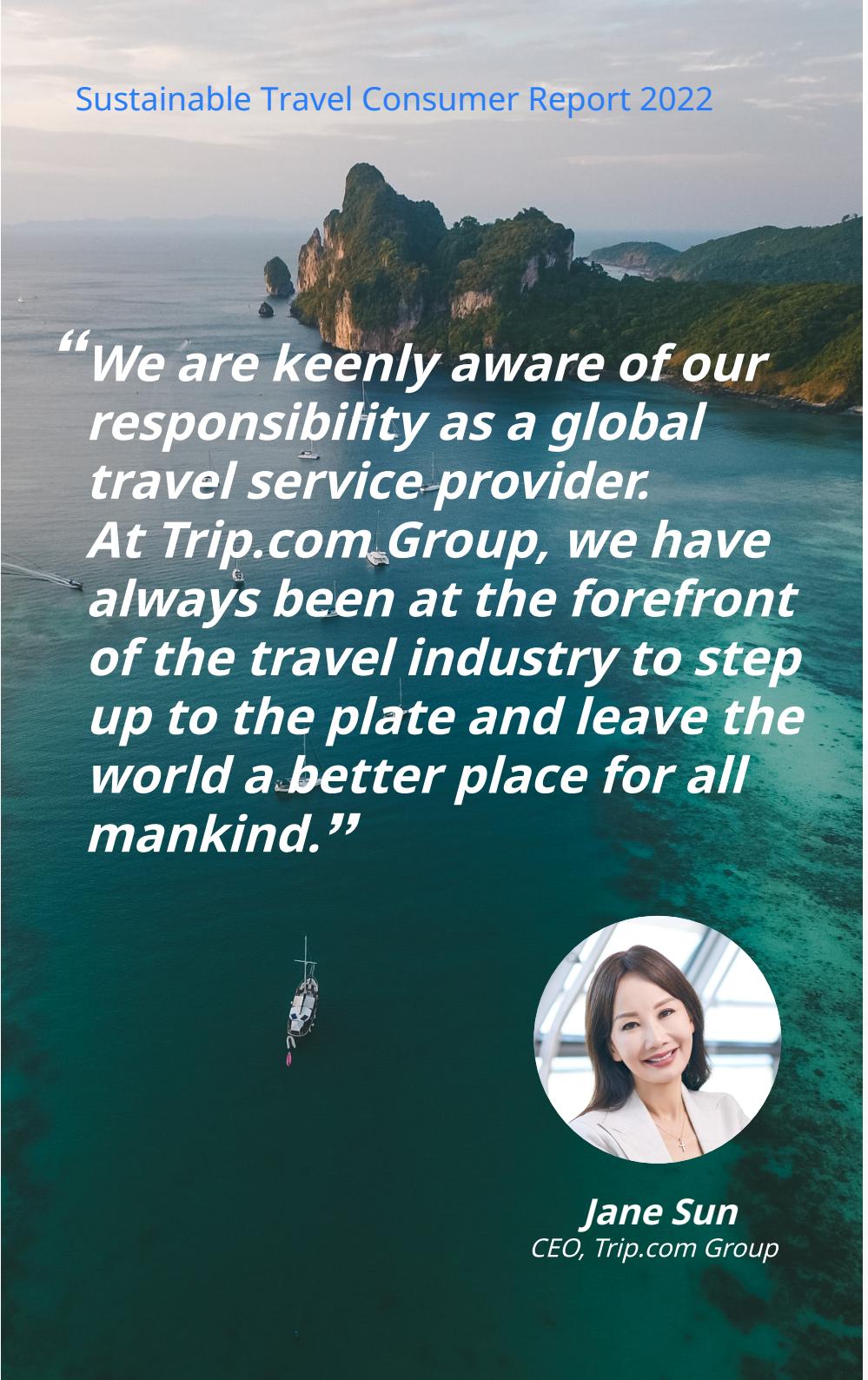




# Sustainable Travel Consumer Report 2022



**“We are keenly aware of our responsibility as a global travel service provider. At Trip.com Group, we have always been at the forefront of the travel industry to step up to the plate and leave the world a better place for all mankind.”**



**Jane Sun**  
CEO, Trip.com Group

## Foreword

We are excited to share Trip.com Group's first sustainable travel report that features insights based on extensive surveys conducted among our global users and travellers.

Through this process, we have better understood our customers' views on sustainable travel, and how they see our role as a travel provider. The results show resounding demand for more sustainable travel options and the need for providers to better explain and label sustainable travel products. For us, this is a very positive and actionable message to receive.

The results reaffirm our vision to educate travellers better and provide a greater volume and variety of reliable, sustainable travel options. Our findings are a clarion call to ourselves as to our allies in the travel sector.

Our mission, "to pursue the perfect trip for a better world", embodies our ceaseless and unending drive to impact society and the world positively. At a time when we all know the need for a more sustainable world, we at Trip.com Group are committed to doing more.

We are eager to share the results of our research and hope it drives change in our sector. In the future, we will join hands with partners, travellers and other stakeholders to venture towards a more sustainable world.

# Executive Summary



Drawing on more than 7,700 survey samples from eleven markets in Asia and Europe, Trip.com Group's Sustainable Travel Consumer Report 2022 aims to offer insights into how travellers perceive and engage with sustainable travel, and how their habits and expectations evolve as sustainability concerns grow. From this we highlight areas where actions are needed from various stakeholders.

From reducing consumption of single-use products and cutting food waste, to celebrating biodiversity and creating local employment, travellers are discovering and to some extent redefining sustainable travel.

In the report we highlight cases to help readers understand the role businesses and organisations can play in accelerating this impact.

For travel service provider Trip.com and

other booking platforms, this report points out where the opportunity lies. Advocates of sustainable travel can benefit by working to increase the supply of sustainable options and make them more visible, connecting users to more responsible travel products.

Finally, in the course of preparing this report, we are grateful to Google for helping distribute the survey. Of the respondents, 70% accessed the survey on Trip.com and Ctrip while the remainder of participants completed the survey via Google. We also acknowledge the contribution of World Wide Fund for Nature Beijing Office, which provided content support and suggestions.



**7,705** Survey samples  
**11** Countries/regions

# The Rise of Sustainable Travel

From being on the periphery of travel considerations a few years ago, sustainable travel has come a long way and is now at the forefront of the minds of a vast number of world travellers. Some 78.7% of respondents agree that sustainable travel is vital, as opposed to only 3.7% who downplay or negate its importance. Our survey results suggest a strong desire to practise sustainable travel across various segments of society, and forecast this trend is here to stay.



## Who should shoulder the most responsibility?

*Travellers believe the obligation to reduce the impact of travel is shared more or less evenly among individuals, governments, the industry, etc.\**



Individuals



Shared obligation



Governments

However, we note a marked regional variation in the understanding of responsibility between respondents in Asia and Europe. We'll get to that on page 13.

## Actions speak louder than words

*The majority of respondents believe they fulfil or tend to fulfil their commitments to sustainable travel*



Always or occasionally look for sustainable travel options



Have practised some form of sustainable travel in recent years



Are likely to book sustainable travel options in the future

\*Note: In some instances, respondents were able to choose up to three answers therefore percentages may not always add up to 100%.

# Motivations for Embracing Sustainable Travel

Motivations vary among people who opt for sustainable travel, but the reasons are broadly twofold. One group of respondents cite the positive impact they may have on the world by travelling sustainably. The other camp appears to be acting in line with public expectations or conforming to social norms. Whatever their motives, the need for sustainable tourism is an emerging consensus and will only gain currency over time.

## Sustainability lies in the eye of the beholder

*People opt for sustainable travel for a myriad of reasons*



**50.5%**

Care about the impact of travelling and future generations



**26.8%**

It improves their travel experience



**13.2%**

To follow the trend of travelling sustainably



**8.4%**

Due to peer or societal pressure

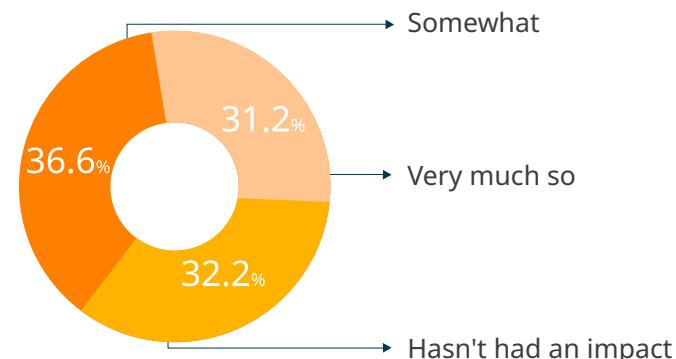
# The Pandemic — The Game Changer

There is no doubt the pandemic impacted our lives in more ways than anticipated. Despite the toll it took on the world and the economy, it compelled people and industries to reflect on their impact on nature and society. Our survey finds that the increasing awareness and popularity of sustainable travel is in large part thanks to the pandemic.



## A shift in mentality

We asked respondents to what extent the pandemic made them want to travel more sustainably



## New notions of travel in the age of Covid

Travellers name ways the pandemic has stimulated their desire to travel more sustainably

55.1%



Feel human activities can have far-reaching effects on nature and society

38.3%



Agree travel restrictions increased their appreciation for nature

33.6%



Believe their behaviour affects communities and people around them

30.4%



State they want to visit more local destinations

# Understanding Sustainable Travel

Sustainable travel is an overarching term spanning a variety of domains. The World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) defines it as "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts". Our survey finds that travellers now consider a more holistic approach to sustainable travel.

## Convergence in the midst of divergence

*Respondents point to the aspects of sustainable travel they care about the most*

55.2% 

Highlight the **environmental aspects**

38.0% 

Emphasise the **biodiversity aspects**

29.9% 

Value the **cultural aspects**

24.9% 

Note the **economic aspects**

## Breakdown of sustainable practices by category

*What is considered a sustainable travel practice for travellers?*

### Environmental

Most respondents chose practices that fall into the environmental category, with about **half** of respondents considering reducing single-use products as an act of sustainable travel.

### Biodiversity

A sizable chunk of travellers' attention is given to preserving biodiversity. **24.7%** of those surveyed believe participation in wildlife conservation activities is a crucial component of sustainable travel.

### Economic

About **30%** of respondents recognise the benefit of supporting local businesses and livelihoods. Their support comes in various forms. Visiting local attractions and staying with local accommodation providers are among some common forms of bolstering local travel.

### Cultural

Respecting the culture and heritage of a local destination used to be way down the list of concerns for many tourists, but this aspect is now accorded elevated status as a striking **43%** of travellers claim it is a form of sustainable travel.

# Giving Back to Local Destinations

Although people place more emphasis on the environmental aspects of sustainable travel, the concept has diversified in recent years to take on new meaning. A number of cases illustrate our deeper understanding, starting with tourism's contribution to local businesses and livelihoods.

## Case in focus

### Trip.com Group's Country Retreats

For Jingfang Zhang, the journey to a better life starts at home. "I earn upwards of 4,000 yuan (\$575) a month, more than when I used to work as a migrant worker away from home," said Zhang, 46, who is now on the team of chefs at Trip.com Group's Country Retreat in Jinzhai County, a tourist destination in eastern China's Anhui Province.

Zhang used to work in metropolitan cities to support her family back home. "The retreat tremendously boosted my household income. Working here is fun whilst also allowing me to take care of my family."

She is a beneficiary of the Country Retreats project that started in March 2021, when Trip.com Group unveiled a plan to construct high-end vacation homes in rural locations across mainland China, and build them into an exemplar of "rural revitalisation".

The Group aims to construct ten public welfare properties and empower 100 tourism villages within five years (2021- 2025). As of September 2022, the Group has opened 10 for-profit and non-profit retreats.

With the goal of training tourism

professionals and upskilling local people, this drive underscores the role tourism can play in providing an extra source of employment and income for underdeveloped regions.

One year after the project launched, it has led a rebound of tourism in several Covid-battered destinations. In Jinzhai, where the first Country Retreat was built, tourism revenue jumped 40% YoY in H1 2022. These properties have also become a big employer where they operate, enabling former economic migrants like Zhang to be employed closer to home.

# In Search of a Greener Trip

Travellers are increasingly conscious of their carbon footprint. Using greener modes of transport comes as the top choice for these responsible travellers. But alternatives are emerging, notably taking short-haul journeys and offsetting Co2 emissions.

## Case in focus

### Trip.com x CHOOOSE Co2 offsetting analysis

Since June 2022, Trip.com has teamed up with climate-tech company CHOOOSE to offer Co2 emissions offsetting options across almost all flight inventory. Data show 71% of Trip.com users who purchased emissions offsetting did so for short-haul trips, compared to 16% who purchased for mid-haul flights and 13% who purchased for a long-haul trip. On average, Trip.com users paid 4% of the original airfare for the emissions offsetting product.

The contributions made by these Trip.com users go towards four major sustainability programmes around the world. CHOOOSE commented on the collaboration, "Through our partnership with Trip.com, we've been able to provide travellers with the opportunity to address the carbon footprint of their journey by directly supporting some of the most impactful climate solutions available today."

## The many ways to go green

*Respondents list their efforts to cut Co2 emissions when travelling*



38.3%

Used "greener" modes of transport



29.1%

Taken short-haul travel



22.6%

Offset their carbon footprint

## Would you pay for carbon offsetting?

*Views are divided on whether travellers would be willing to pay to offset their carbon footprint when booking a trip*

47.5%

Would consider if the price were right

20.4%

Not willing to afford extra expense

13.0%

Have never been offered this option

11.7%

Always pay to offset Co2 emissions

7.4%

Have no knowledge of Co2 offsetting

# Travelling in Harmony with Wildlife

One key aspect of sustainable travel is to know that humans are in a sense "intruders" roaming the lands inhabited by wildlife. Therefore, we have an inherent responsibility to promote biodiversity and protect the fauna and flora in destinations. This awareness is clearly shown in the survey results. A fair portion of respondents have dedicated their trips in one way or another to wildlife preservation.



## The many faces of wildlife protection

*Travellers cite the sustainable practices related to wildlife preservation they have adopted*

32.6% \$

Mindful of the sale of illegal or endangered wildlife products

17.6% 🐘

Participated in wildlife conservation activities



### Case in focus



As one of the world's biggest environmental NGOs, WWF has been committed to preserving biodiversity, ensuring the recycling of renewable resources, fighting pollution and curbing wasteful consumption.

Travel is a key aspect of human activities as well as an important occasion for promoting the conservation of wildlife and natural resources. Since 2019, based on a memorandum of understanding, WWF Beijing Office and Trip.com Group have undertaken a series of non-profit programs. These include awareness campaigns such as #TravelIvoryFree, and seminars catering to Laotian tour guides that educated them on the risks of ivory trading and how to reduce ivory purchases. During the pandemic, WWF Beijing Office and Trip.com Group also held live-streamed workshops to educate travel operators about sustainable travel, share experiences in battling wildlife trafficking, and advance biodiversity preservation among travel industry practitioners.

# Expanding Access to Sustainable Options

Close to 70% of the respondents have either seen sustainable travel options or actively look for them when booking online. Conversely, they also report insufficient availability and accessibility of sustainable options. This highlights the need to plug the shortfall. Our survey results show other constraints exist, such as the perception of sustainable travel or carbon offsetting as unattractive or too expensive.



## A question of visibility and price

20% of travellers didn't report any barrier to travelling sustainably while the rest encountered various problems



State there is a lack of sustainable options



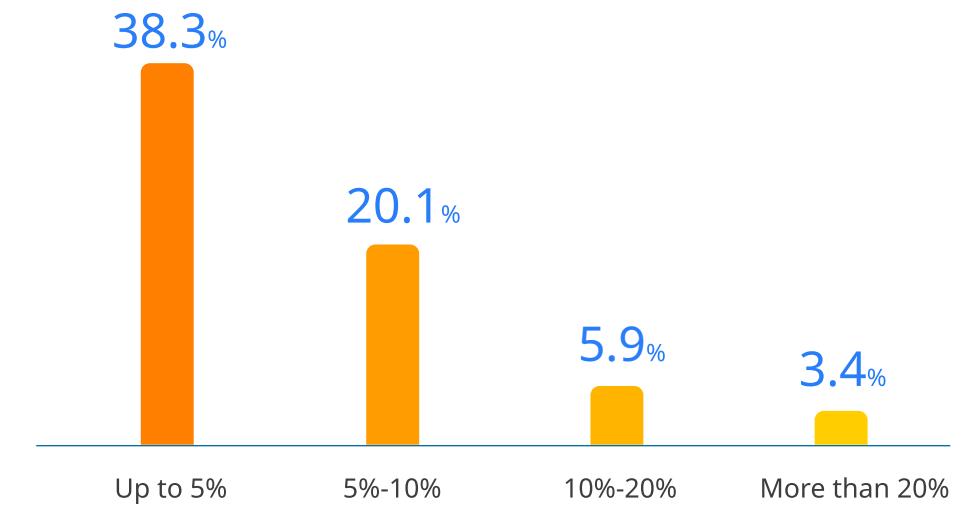
Say sustainable travel options aren't clearly labelled



Claim sustainable travel options are too expensive

## Varying levels of price sensitivity

The percentage of travellers willing to pay for a sustainable option





## Making Sustainability Less of a Burden

Contrary to popular wisdom, sustainable travel does not necessarily require choosing between a no-frills trip and a quality experience. Still, old stereotypes that sustainability comes at the cost of comfort and ease continue to dominate the decision-making of some people. They hold them back from committing wholeheartedly to travelling sustainably. To counter the scepticism, practitioners must explore why sustainable travel is seen unfavourably in some quarters.

### A tough trade-off

*Around 5% of respondents believe sustainable travel could negatively affect their travel experience, and the reasons are as follows*



43.7%

Prefer carefree travel



39.1%

Say it could take the fun out of travel



36.8%

Reply it's inconvenient



29.9%

Note it prevents them from enjoying luxury, high-end travel

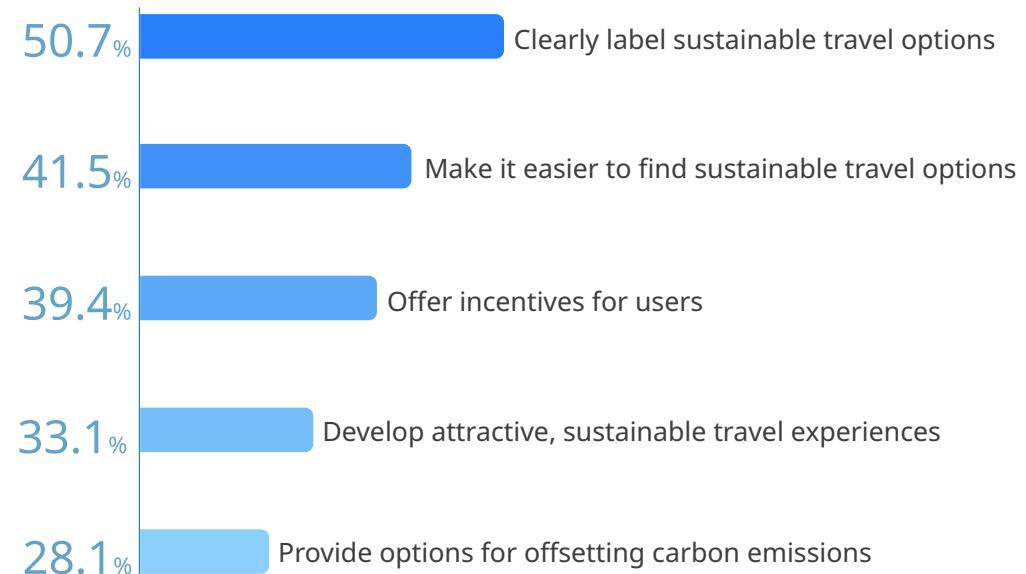


## Paving the Way for a Sustainable Future

Given the difficulty faced by respondents in practising sustainable travel, online travel agencies (OTAs), booking platforms and other operators can meet their demand by helping to identify and recommend certified suppliers and partners. This also indicates an opportunity for these players to join hands and filter information for travellers with a sustainable mindset.

### Put sustainable options before users

*A list of actions OTAs can do to encourage sustainable travel*



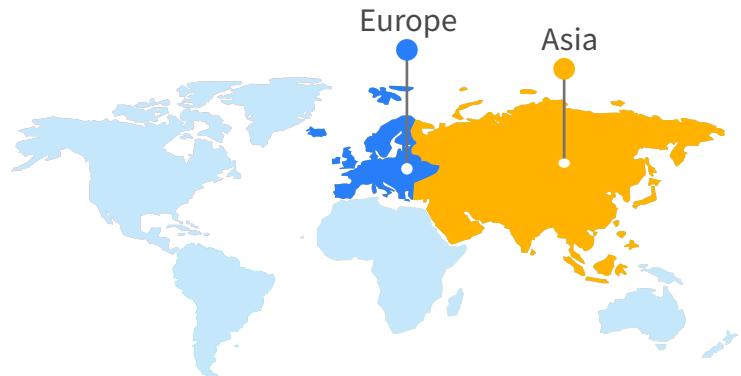
### A harbinger of a promising trend

*How travellers react to using OTAs that offer sustainable options*

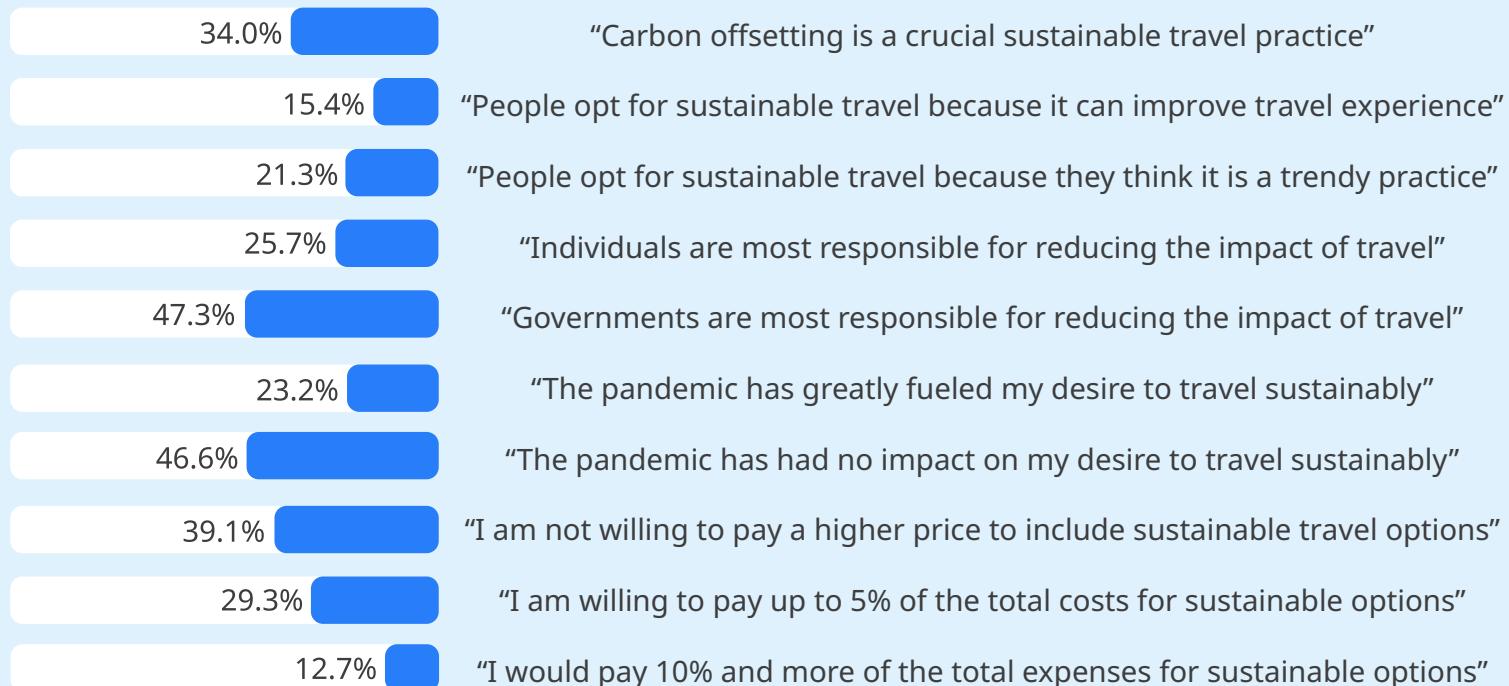


# Regional Disparities

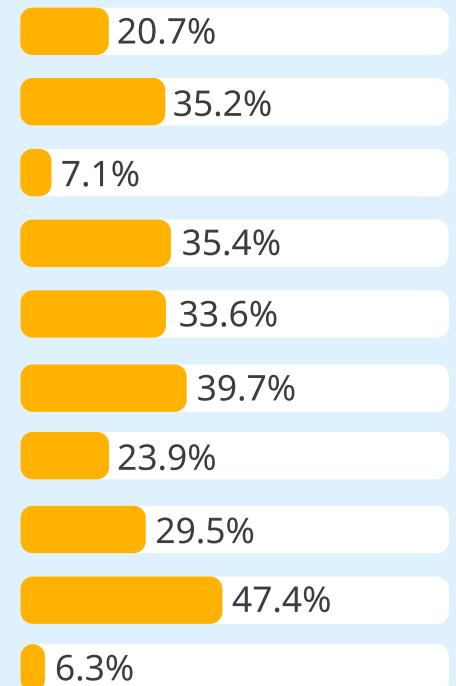
One of the highlights of our survey is the regional disparities between Asia and Europe. Respondents on both continents show commonalities in their answers to some questions but at the same time differ vastly in specific areas. It is interesting to spotlight some of the discrepancies, for they tell us a lot about the different attitudes towards sustainable travel among travellers in the two regions.



## Europe



## Asia



# Our Respondents

Although the survey questionnaire was distributed in eleven tourism markets across two regions, and the results reveal patterns as disparate as the regions per se, the respondents also have many shared traits, as reflected in the following figures.



## Case in focus

### GreenTripChallenge

As sustainable travel began to take hold among online travel agencies and travellers, travel platforms are leveraging social media and other channels to engage with users, encouraging them to practise sustainable travel during their trips and in doing so, rethink and rediscover its meaning and benefits, especially in the context of the pandemic.

In 2022, Trip.com launched a user-generated content campaign named #GreenTripChallenge in its Singapore, Korea and Hong Kong sites. Users have stepped forward to share their eco-friendly experiences and tips about #Green Stay, #Green Travel, and #Green Living on Trip.com's content hub TripMoments and other social media channels. Trip.com launched this campaign in collaboration with PARKROYAL COLLECTION Marina Bay Singapore and Eaton HK.



Credit to @letitfly.aki



Credit to @猪仔包の開心日常



Credit to @jurr.look

# Building a Sustainable Future Together

*How to travel more responsibly with Trip.com Group*

The survey clearly shows a demand, as well as an expectation, for more sustainable travel options. Travellers want to travel more responsibly and can only do so if given greater consumer choice.

At Trip.com Group, we have committed to expanding on our offering to ensure we have options to respond to evolving traveller demand. For Trip.com users booking flights on our platform, there is our CHOOSE flight Co2 offsetting option detailed above, where users can contribute to offset the Co2 emissions of their journey by donating directly to gold standard certified projects. Trip.com is also a

Founding Partner of the Travalyst Coalition. We are working with leading sector peers to build industry-wide collaboration on promoting and delivering sustainable travel options to travellers around the world.

In mainland China, Trip.com Group's sub-brand Ctrip, has been working with suppliers to offer a wide variety of eco-friendly travel products, such as zero waste camping and eco-hiking. Trip.Biz, a corporate travel brand of the Group, has recently conducted a campaign to promote "Green Hotels" and "Green Flights" in mainland China.

This year, we announced our long-term goal to build green tourism, covering three key areas: working with partners to launch over 10,000 low-carbon travel products; promoting sustainable travel concepts and engaging 100 million travellers in low-carbon practices; and, aiming to reduce carbon emissions across our operations further.

Going forward, Trip.com Group will continue to explore sustainable travel and strive towards a more sustainable and desirable future in collaboration with citizens of the world.



*The Sustainable Travel Consumer Report 2022 was guided by the ESG Committee of Trip.com Group.*

## Acknowledgements

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## About Trip.com Group

Trip.com Group is a leading global travel service provider comprising of Trip.com, Ctrip, Skyscanner, and Qunar with the mission "to pursue the perfect trip for a better world". Across its platforms, Trip.com Group helps travellers around the world make informed and cost-effective bookings for travel products and services. Trip.com Group technology enables partners to connect their offerings with users through the aggregation of comprehensive travel-related content and resources, and an advanced transaction platform consisting of apps, websites and 24/7 customer service centers. Founded in 1999 and listed on NASDAQ in 2003 and HKEX in 2021, Trip.com Group has become one of the best-known travel groups in the world, with the vision "to be the world's leading and most trusted family of online travel brands that aspires to deliver the perfect trip at the best price for every traveler".