



Global Travel Trends for 2024

A deep dive into emerging trends, segments, and habits among worldwide travelers.

Visa Latin America and the Caribbean
Perspective Paper





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Travel is back

Three years after the World Health Organization designated COVID-19 a global pandemic, a full recovery is finally in sight for the global travel and tourism industry—the sector of the economy hit earliest and hardest by shutdowns.

With consumers facing hard budget decisions with prices increases at their fastest rate in decades, they are still putting travel as one of their priorities. Demand for travel, globally has steadily increased with nearly **500 million people staying overnight on an international trip during the first half of 2023.**¹

Global travel demand by our estimates has

reached 91%

of its 2019 levels, and mark a near complete recovery from its pandemic-lows with enough momentum to ensure a strong showing for the full 12 months of this year.¹

This is especially true among **affluent travelers** who can overlook rising costs and **Gen Z travelers** whose comfort in a globalized, always-online world is driving them to seek new experiences abroad. Corporate travel is also back, even more strongly than was initially expected, and is especially robust for events such as conventions that can't take place using remote connectivity.

As cross-border travel continues to climb, **digital payment methods are leading the way** for travelers who want to avoid currency exchanges or ATMs. Online booking and digital wallets in-country are growing increasingly common and enabling travelers to plan and execute trips with more confidence, autonomy, and flexibility than ever before.

This Visa Latin America and the Caribbean perspective paper was created to provide you with insights on emerging travel trends, consumers expectations, motivations, and habits worldwide.

Global travel landscape

Resurgence in leisure trips post Covid

With Covid fading from people's list of concerns, demand in the travel sector is bouncing back and shows no signs of slowing over the next year. Even as prices rise due to inflation, people around the world are traveling more than they have in the last several years. They are prioritizing travel, likely cutting back on other expenses to take the trips they were dreaming about while in pandemic lockdown.



Mexicans are making

2

leisure trips per year²



Single travelers from
Spain are making

25%

more trips²



80%

Brazilian travelers
acknowledge that costs
are rising²



Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal

are some of preferred destinations²



Gen Z

is leading the leisure
trips, despite their
comparatively low income³

Top Latin America and the Caribbean destinations and travel motivations²

Latin America's popularity as an attractive destination for international travelers has grown in recent years, offering a diverse range of cultures, landscapes, and experiences. Latin Americans most often seek to travel to United States and Europe considering these destinations are associated with a high social status in the region.



Mexico

Travel from U.S. to Mexico has been strong in the last several years for a few reasons: Mexico's relatively lax pandemic-era travel restrictions, the strength of the U.S. dollar, and proximity and ease of access.



Dominican Republic

This destination has become one of the preferred for international tourists.



Colombia

Colombia is one of the top destinations for travelers, who enjoy exploring local and regional culture.



Argentina

With a low Argentinian peso against the U.S. dollar, this destination becomes very attractive to international travelers.

Top traveling motivations⁴

28% want to enjoy new and **exotic experiences** not available in their local environment.

27% long to create exciting **memories** together with family or trip companions.

25% want to **recharge** their energy by challenging themselves out of their comfort zone and into new adventures.



Europe is one of the favorite overseas destinations, with the added benefit of being associated with a high social status.

Affluent and younger segments

Affluent and younger travelers are broadly exposed and inspired to travel experiences through social media. Rising costs are less of a concern for affluent travelers, who are taking long-delayed trips even though they may be more expensive than in the pre-pandemic past.

Affluent consumers and younger generations are leading the way back into travel.



37%

of affluent Brazilians took 37% more leisure trips than the average traveler.²



52%

of American Gen Z adults are frequent travelers.⁵

76%

of respondents aged 18 to 39 made multiple travel purchases in the past year.⁶

57%

of affluent consumers aged 40 years and older made multiple travel purchases.⁶

Younger travelers

—generally members of Gen Z—grew up in a global environment, communicating online with people around the world, and are eager to get out and experience far-flung places as they build their adult lives after lockdown.

62% of adult Gen Zs

said they use technology to help them save money on travel.³ Their decision is not only impacting their own trips but influencing the family vacations too.

Emerging trends & future travel intentions



Democratization of travel

Travelers have more tools and resources to plan travel than ever before. **Travel planning and booking has increasingly gone digital** in recent years, with ongoing advances in generative AI adding an exciting new itinerary-planning tool to travelers' toolkit.

Additionally, online transacting for everything from plane tickets to popsicles became more common during the pandemic, with more consumers finding a growing level of confidence and comfort with buying even big-ticket items online.

Travelers can now research, plan, and book the elements of a trip more efficiently and independently.

Combining business and leisure travel

With many professionals working remotely and enjoying more flexible work arrangements, **travelers are increasingly combining business and leisure travel**. Many business travelers are adding on extra days in a destination to see the sights while working full or partial days from their accommodations. Those traveling for leisure can now more often extend their trips by working remotely on some days while at their destination.

This is opening up new opportunities for how, when, and how long to travel.



Media-inspired destinations

Social media, movies, television, and music stars have become **influencers inspiring travelers** to pursue their next destination. The industry term for travel prompted by media is "set-jetting"—as in, jet-setting inspired by a TV or movie set.

But the phenomenon goes beyond traditional media.



Planning and booking behavior

Most preferred travel benefits

The most preferred travel benefits are offerings that make travelers feel secure and protected should anything go wrong while they're away from home.⁷

1

International emergency medical services

2

Cellphone protection

3

Compensation for travel expenses and accommodation
(up to \$3,000)

4

Purchase fraud protection

5

Baggage loss

6

Visa Airport Companion

7

Baggage delay

8

Benefits at hotels

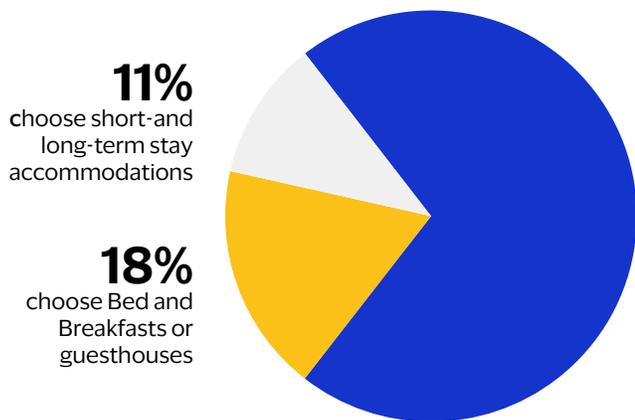
(such as breakfast, Wi-Fi, and late check-out)





Choice of accommodation and drivers

Hotels remain travelers' top choice of accommodation for global travelers.²



71%
of travelers
choose hotels

Of those who stay in hotels, **40% select one rated 4 stars** or above, which reflects the general affluence of today's travelers.²

Accommodation priorities for travelers²



Safety



Price point/value



Location



Cleanliness

Amenities in their accommodations are very important to many travelers, more so than flexibility²:

38%

say **amenities** are very important

32%

say **free Wi-Fi** is very important

19%

say **free cancellation** is very important

Experiences in destination

Travelers are longing for excitement and in-person experiences are setting out to get just that. While many travelers still seek relaxation when they leave home, many more are intent on pursuing new or adventurous experiences.



60%

of Gen Z has a strong urge to travel the world⁸



46%

of Mexicans travel for relaxation²



22%

of Brazilian choose travel experiences highlighted by influencers²



Shopping

in U.S. still stands out as a top appeal factor²



**Latin American
and Caribbean**

affluent travelers rely more on travel review sites²



Putting a premium on gaining new experiences and seeking adventure can influence which destinations travelers seek out. **One notable travel trend is people looking for experiences related to influencers, stars, or media they follow online.** For instance, recent years have seen **travelers requesting tours that include K-drama (Korean series) filming locations⁹ or K-pop concerts.¹⁰** Over the U.S. summer, travelers went far afield to attend **concerts of major American stars like Taylor Swift and Beyoncé.¹¹**



Personalized trips are here

Travelers are looking for control and independence as they emerge from forced isolation. The result is an emphasis on flexibility and personalization in travel planning.

58%

of people book **everything separately**²

16%

of travelers prefer **all-inclusive** trips²

65%

of Brazilian travelers prefer **completely or partially independent** travel over packaged tours²

40%

of Mexican travelers will pay more for **flexibility to accommodate** changes in their plans²

More than half of travelers are booking the elements of their trips separately,

while far less than a quarter of them are opting for all-inclusive trips.²



Payments behaviors across the travel journey

Shifting from cash to cards

Travelers are using less cash while away from home in recent months. **Cash now represents just under one-quarter of trip spend.**² Digital payments are a non-starter for most Latin American and the Caribbean travelers. **Travelers are using cash most often for small expenses** such as trinkets and street food, often to accommodate local vendors who do not accept cards.¹

Across all trip-payment needs —ranging from flights and lodging to local trips— credit cards are used more than any other payment method, before, during and after the trip. **41% of Latin American travelers opt to use credit cards as their main payment method** due to convenience, earn rewards points, and secure interest-free payments.⁴ **32% of Latin American travelers** get cash at their destination.⁴



One major reason travelers are moving more toward digital payments is that **40% of travelers experience some problem with cash** while traveling.² The issues faced by Mexican travelers illustrate this well²:

 **22%**

find currency conversion a barrier to using cash

 **18%**

worry about loss or theft of their cash

 **20%**

worry about finding an ATM to make a cash withdrawal

 **15%**

worry about managing local bills and coins correctly

Cross-border and the travelers journey

Demand for cross-border travel is commonly measured in the number of arrivals or the dollars spent, but what enables either of these to happen is households budgeting time and funds to take trips abroad. At this most fundamental level, cross-border travel is showing signs of recovery. The pool of households that can potentially travel cross border is set to grow as countries around the world relaxed their restrictions on border crossing.

The traveler’s journey is typically conceived as comprising 5 stages:

DREAMING



BOOKING



SHARING



PLANNING

EXPERIENCING

Each of these phases, especially planning and booking, are typically accompanied by changes in a soon-to-be traveler’s purchasing behavior. For example, someone planning a backpacking trip may begin buying gear from an outdoor store. A beachgoer heading to the Caribbean may buy swimsuits, hats, and sandals.



Payments services providers can design targeted messaging, marketing, and communications relevant to those cardholders or clients. **Including travel influencers to the social media strategy has become a powerful way to reach the youngest generations.** This type of outreach can go much farther than offering appropriate discounts or installment payment plans. The goal is to let the client know that the provider can serve as a support during each stage of the journey.

Travelers like benefits such as **trip insurance, access to travel agencies** or other **planning resources**, and **apps that help them connect all elements of their travel journey**. But assistance and support shouldn’t stop when the trip is over. Service providers can help cardholders get out of debt quickly or manage debt sustainably so they can more easily start thinking about the next trip they’d like to book.



Air travel fraud prevention

Airline travel is expected to continue to rebound this year following a three-year slump. That is good news for the travel industry, but it comes with a major caution: **While customers have returned to the skies, so have fraudsters.**



These are some new emerging threats post-recovery:

Dark travel agencies promising inflation proof discounts

Airlines started to offer gift cards, and these are being bought fraudulently

Loyalty fraud abuse from dormant accounts not used since the pandemic

False account credits claims/professional refunds

Fictitious reservations used for card testing

Friendly fraud from cancelled flights

Moving forward, airlines should be advised to take steps to accommodate the rise in mobile payments, from embracing tokenization, to more readily adopting new payment methods and exploring new validation tools, including biometric indicators. Fingerprint readers and facial recognition are already making inroads in other aspects of air travel and are increasingly available features in mid- and high-end smartphones, making them a natural fit for mobile payments.

Recommendations for airline travel

- 01 Account for the rise in friendly fraud from travel disruption.
- 02 Reconcile false compensation claims with original bookings.
- 03 Establish a long-term approach to last minute bookings.
- 04 Monitor the usage of vouchers redemption.
- 05 Account for the influx of fake travel agencies offering return to travel related discounts.
- 06 Protect customer accounts for lapsed flyers.
- 07 Focus on loyalty points targeted by fraudsters for new business lines.



Best practices for travelers to ensure secure and protected transactions



Phishing Scams

Avoid clicking on suspicious email links or SMS messages regarding your Airline or loyalty accounts.



Fake travel agencies

Take time to verify the authenticity of travel vendors or websites before making payments.



Avoid sharing sensitive information online

Be careful not to overshare on social media about travel plans to help protect your home from criminals.



Social media scams

Beware of 'Too-Good-To-Be-True' flight. There are a number of 'travel' accounts offering significant discounts for travel bookings.



Buyer Protection

It is safer to use a credit card than a debit card for flight bookings, as the credit card generally provides more buyer protection.



Two-factor authentication

Many Airlines are starting to offer two-factor authentication for accounts, adding an extra layer of security.



Create strong passwords

Using strong, unique passwords for every Airline or Loyalty account.

Eco-savvy traveling is hot

Travelers are increasingly opting for eco-friendly travel due to growing awareness of environmental issues and their desire to minimize their impact. They feel they are helping conserve natural resources, protect the ecosystem, and reduce carbon emissions.

These patterns hold worldwide:

86%

of **Mexican** travelers will choose eco-travel options if they cost as much or less than alternative options.²

71%

of **Brazilian** travelers are keenly interested in eco-friendly options.²

49%

of travelers from **Spain** opt for eco-friendly travel.²



Top ways to engage in eco-friendly travel:

- Choose **sustainable accommodations** that prioritize eco-friendly practices.
- Use **public transportation** to reduce carbon emissions and traffic congestion.
- **Pack light** to reduce fuel consumption during transportation.
- **Reduce plastic usage** with reusable water bottles and avoiding items with excessive packaging.
- **Purchase locally made products** to reduce the carbon footprint of importing goods.
- Practice **water and energy conservation** in accommodations.
- Adhere to **wildlife protection** guidelines to avoid disrupting the ecosystem.
- Dispose of waste properly following **local recycling** and waste disposal guidelines.
- Opt for **digital documentation** to reduce paper consumption.

Latin American travelers associations with eco-friendly travel:

- Sustainability measures in accommodation
- Avoiding single-use plastic while traveling
- Energy-efficient modes of transportation
- Flights that emit less carbon
- Visiting destinations where nature is prominent

Travel opportunities



For financial institutions

- **Understand the traveler's journey** to engage with them supportively at every stage of their travel cycle.
- **Make it easy** for travelers to **pay down travel expenses** and free up enough credit to plan their next trip.
- Penetrate cash spend proving strong product value proposition and timely **targeting high-potential cardholders**.
- Offer payment solutions that can **shift cash to cards**. Focus on promoting online payments Card-not-Present transactions previous to traveling, and 'buy-now-pay-later' to drive overseas card usage.
- Build **customer loyalty** ensuring optimal authorization levels, delivering brand promise, and educating cardholders.
- **Grow payment volume** as cardholders with successful cross-border transactions, not only improved their international, but also their domestic spend.
- Invest in signage in main corridors to **drive cross-border transactions**.
- Work with merchants and payment gateways to **enable network tokenization (Visa Token Services)**, eliminating the need to store sensitive consumer card data, offering greater security, and offering a frictionless experience to the consumer, maintaining their information always updated throughout the lifecycle of the network token which in turn can help increase authorization levels.



For merchants

- Penetrate cash spend by **promoting existing acceptance**, leveraging Visa brand, and educating merchants.
- **Grow cross-border acceptance** ensuring relevant merchants visited by travelers and online shoppers are part of the network.
- **Increase usage of tap-to-phone technology** to allow more travelers to use their phones as a payment method.
- **Enable network tokenization (Visa Token Services)** that offers greater security, increases authorization levels, and allows a frictionless consumer experience.

Visa is here to help you

Contact your Visa account executive to learn how we can help you understand the consumer behavioral shift and identify opportunities to maximize your portfolios with our Consulting and Marketing services (analytics, managed services, credit lifecycle, digital roadmaps, etc.), and our Innovation & Design services (to co-create/ co-design new consumer payment and commerce experiences).

About Visa

Visa (NYSE: V) is a world leader in digital payments, facilitating payments transactions between consumers, merchants, financial institutions, and government entities across more than 200 countries and territories. Our mission is to connect the world through the most innovative, convenient, reliable, and secure payments network, enabling individuals, businesses, and economies to thrive. We believe that economies that include everyone everywhere, uplift everyone everywhere and see access as foundational to the future of money movement.

Learn more at [Visa.com](https://www.visa.com)

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