

# Travel industry SEO report



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# Travel industry statistics

## £286bn

The UK travel and tourism sector is forecast to generate £286bn by the end of 2022 (10.1% GDP), overtaking pre-pandemic figures for the first time. [Source](#)

[Source](#)

## +16.6%

UK cardholders are spending 16.6% more on hotels, resorts and accommodation despite cutting back on other non-essentials in the cost-of-living crisis. [Source](#)

[Source](#)

## 39%

Are more likely to book a domestic trip than overseas due to concerns about delays/cancellations, expenses and other uncertainties. [Source](#)

[Source](#)

## 78%

Of overseas travellers say regulated package holidays are either essential or important to their booking decisions. [Source](#)

[Source](#)



# Travel industry search insights

## 86% of travel searches for UK locations happen in the UK

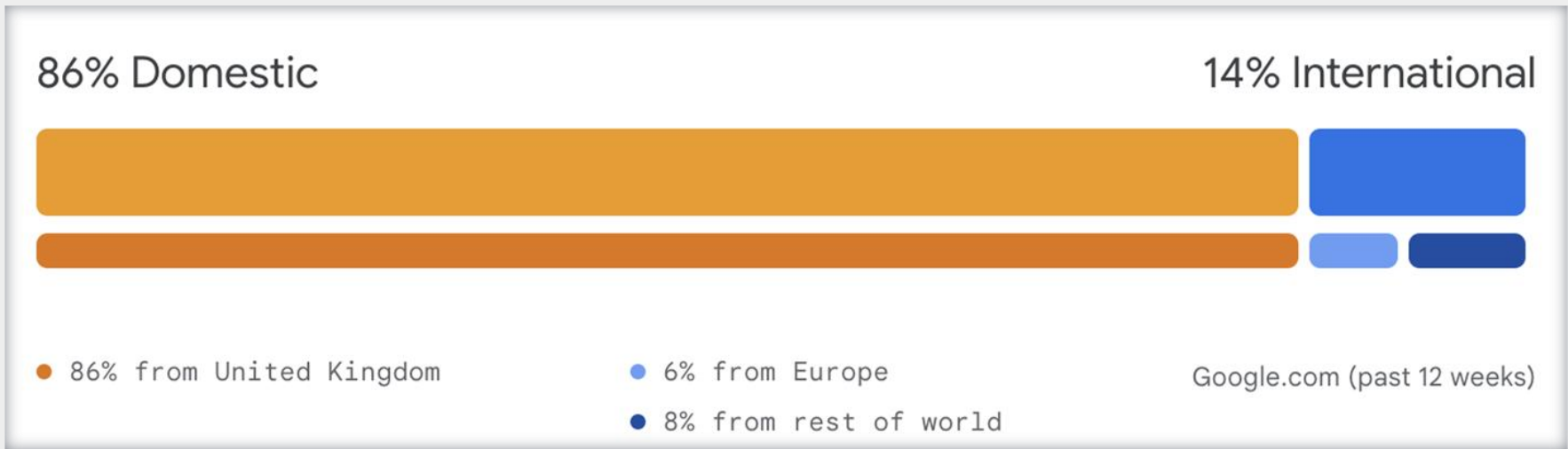
Google data from the past 12 weeks shows the vast majority of UK travel interest is domestic, up from just 11% in April 2020.

## 14% of UK search interest is international

The latest Google data shows 14% of UK travel interest is from overseas - 6% from EU nations and 8% from “rest of world” with the US being the biggest source of international interest (3%).

## Covid & other issues driving domestic interest

Covid drove domestic search interest and minimised international interest but new factors, including the cost-of-living crisis and travel disruption mean domestic interest remains high.



# Top domestic cities

## London is the top UK city for domestic travel

Google Trends data shows London is the most attractive destination for UK domestic travellers.

## Interest in domestic city breaks returning to pre-Covid levels

If we look at historical data, we can see that domestic interest in UK travel has more-or-less returned to pre-Covid levels. [Source](#)

## Interest in city breaks consistently higher than outdoor getaways

Even if we take the top-five cities out of comparisons, interest in city breaks has remained higher than the top outdoor getaway locations, such as the Lake District. [Source](#)

	City	Relative interest
1	London	100
2	Edinburgh	28
3	Manchester	23
4	Glasgow	19
5	Belfast	18
6	Birmingham	11
7	Liverpool	10
8	Bristol	10
9	Newquay	9
10	Cardiff	8

# International destinations

## Spain is the top country for international searches

Search data for flights and accommodation to international countries shows Spain and the US are the top destinations for UK travellers - by quite a margin.

## Dubai is the city UK travellers research the most

At the city level, interest is more evenly distributed with Dubai topping the list of search volumes, followed by Dublin, New York and Amsterdam.

## City searches demonstrate higher booking intent

Once travellers pinpoint specific cities of interest, they're more likely to take action and respond to the right offer.

	Country	Rel	City	Rel
1	Spain	100	Dubai	100
2	United States	78	Dublin	90
3	France	43	New York	84
4	Italy	42	Amsterdam	82
5	Ireland	34	Paris	78
6	United Arab Emirates	32	Alicante	53
7	Greece	31	Barcelona	52
8	Portugal	30	Lisbon	51
9	Turkey	29	Rome	39
10	Netherlands	25	Istanbul	34

# Top flight destinations

## Domestic flights are important to UK travellers

UK travellers search for domestic flights more than 2x any international destination.

## London is the top city for flight searches

London tops the list of flights searches for UK travellers with Edinburgh and Belfast also in the top 10.

## Domestic travel demand remains high

Search data shows demand for domestic travel is outlasting the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

	Country	Rel	City	Rel
1	United Kingdom	100	London	100
2	Spain	46	Dublin	69
3	United States	44	Dubai	68
4	France	25	Amsterdam	64
5	Italy	25	New York	61
6	Ireland	20	Edinburgh	59
7	Portugal	17	Paris	56
8	United Arab Emirates	17	Alicante	46
9	Netherlands	15	Belfast	43
10	Germany	13	Lisbon	42

# Top hotel destinations

## The vast majority of hotel searches are domestic

If we look at data for accommodation searches, the overwhelming majority are looking to stay in the United Kingdom.

## Demand for hotels in London is highest

Similarly, London is by far the top city of interest with Edinburgh, Manchester, Blackpool and Liverpool making up the top five. Only two international cities make the top 10: Dubai and New York.

## Spain and the US top the list of international hotel searches

Once again, we see Spain and the United States top the list of international countries of interest.

	Country	Rel	City	Rel
1	United Kingdom	100	London	100
2	Spain	9	Edinburgh	17
3	United States	4	Manchester	16
4	Greece	3	Blackpool	13
5	Turkey	2	Liverpool	12
6	France	2	Dubai	10
7	United Arab Emirates	2	Glasgow	10
8	Italy	1	Birmingham	10
9	Ireland	1	York	8
10	Portugal	1	New York	6

Rel = Relative interest

# What inspires UK travellers?



# Top queries including “things to do in”

## “Things to do in” keyword opportunity

With high search volumes and relatively low keyword difficulties, “things to do in” searches are an important keyword and content marketing opportunity.

## Top locations for “things to do in” queries

The table shows that the top 10 "things to do in" queries all include UK domestic locations but a longer table would show the top 23 queries specify domestic locations - before Amsterdam appears as the first international destination.

## Location targeting pinpoints travel planning

You can use location targeting to exclude the locations included in “things to do in” keywords to pinpoint audiences planning potential trips.

	Keyword	Volume	KD %
1	Things to do in London	110,000	75%
2	Things to do in Edinburgh	49,500	63%
3	Things to do in Manchester	40,500	57%
4	Things to do in York	40,500	61%
5	Things to do in Bath	33,100	55%
6	Things to do in Liverpool	27,100	53%
7	Things to do in Birmingham	22,200	59%
8	Things to do in Brighton	22,200	47%
9	Things to do in Bristol	22,200	53%
10	Things to do in Oxford	22,200	55%

# Related keywords for “holiday”

## High search volumes for major brands

Search volumes for major brands are significantly higher than location searches, such as “dubai holiday” or “dubai flights”.

## Upward trend in travel brand searches

Overall, we’ve seen an upward trend in search volumes for major travel brands over the past two years.

## Brand awareness & trust are crucial

Travel search data reveals how important brand awareness and trust are amid increasing uncertainty.

	Keyword	Volume
1	Tui holidays	673,000
2	Jet2 holidays	550,000
3	Love holidays	450,000
4	Jet 2 holidays	301,000
5	EasyJet holidays	246,000
6	Holiday Inn	246,000
7	Virgin holidays	246,000
8	Haven holidays	201,000
9	Holiday Inn Express	165,000
10	British Airways holidays	110,000

# Location keywords for “holiday”

## UK travellers look further afield when they think “holiday”

Although the top location “holiday” keyword is still domestic, the majority relate to international destinations with a clear emphasis on sand and sea.

## Relatively low search volumes

The relatively low search volumes for location-specific “holiday” queries illustrates the importance of inspiration in the early stages of the booking journey - and the potential to influence.

## High commercial intent for location “holiday” searches

By the time travellers are searching for holidays in specific locations, purchase intent is at its peak.

	Keyword	Volume
1	Cornwall holidays	49,500
2	Dubai holidays	49,500
3	Tenerife holidays	49,500
4	Maldives holidays	40,500
5	Cape Verde holidays	33,100
6	Greece holidays	27,100
7	Portugal holidays	22,200
8	Benidorm holidays	22,200
9	Santorini holidays	22,200
10	Caribbean holidays	18,100

# Commercial intent keywords for “holiday”

## Flexibility still important for travellers

Commercial intent keywords show flexibility remains a priority for UK travellers.

## Price increasingly important

Price is always a factor, but cost-of-living concerns and travel uncertainty appear to be pushing search volumes for “cheap holidays”, and “last minute” can also be an indicator of price sensitivity.

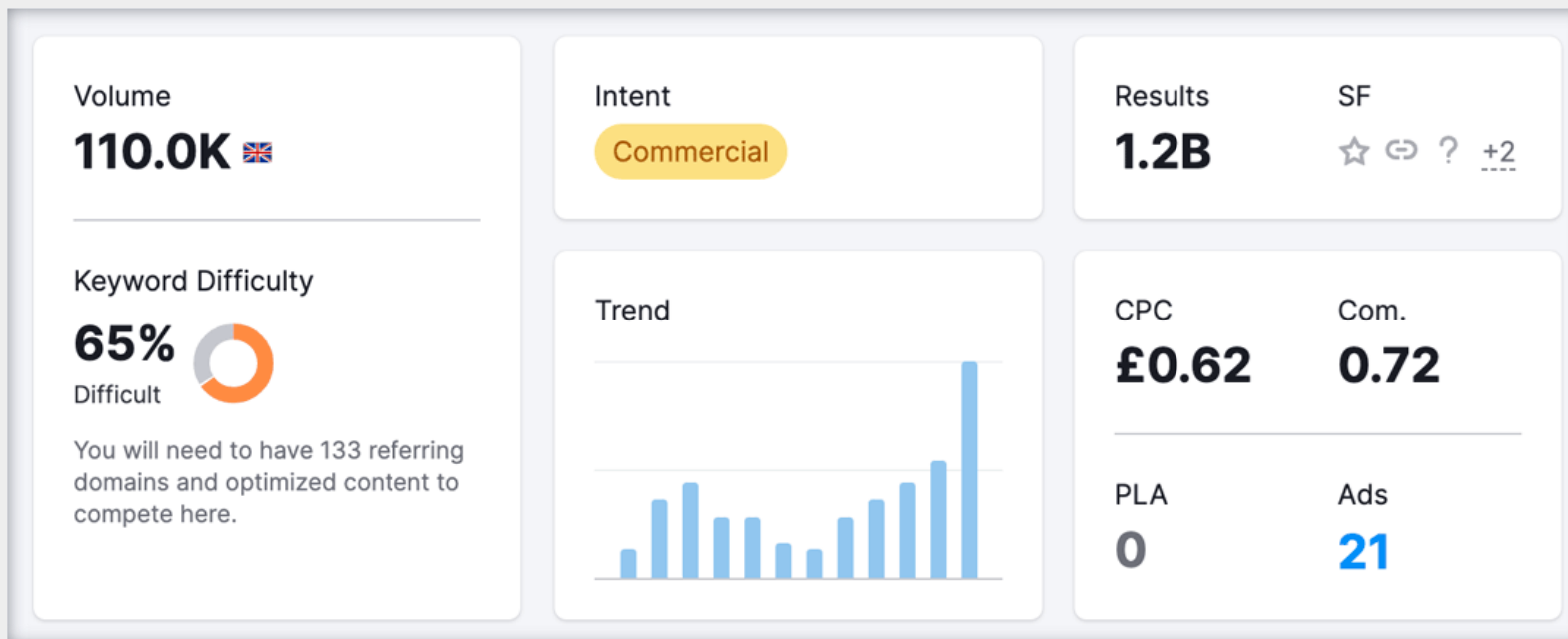
## Travellers placing more trust in package holidays

Travel uncertainty is boosting package holidays with trusted names and protections for cancellations and other disruptions.

	Keyword	Volume	KD %
1	Holidays	135,000	85%
2	Last minute holidays	110,000	65%
3	Cheap holidays	90,500	70%
4	Holiday	90,500	88%
5	All inclusive holidays	74,000	72%
6	Caravan holidays	74,000	60%
7	Holiday insurance	60,500	80%
8	Holiday park	33,100	71%
9	Package holidays	27,100	72%
10	Ski holidays	22,200	64%

# Keyword opportunity: “last minute holidays”

- 110k avg. monthly searches for “last minute holidays” in the UK
- Keyword difficulty: 65%
- Intent: Commercial - the user is searching for potential purchases
- Average cost-per-click of £0.62 in Google Ads



# Flight booking sites by search volume

## Skyscanner is the top site for flight searches

Based on branded searches, Skyscanner is the top website for flight searches in the UK.

## Many UK travellers book directly with airlines

With the exception of Skyscanner, major airlines win the branded search race although comparison platforms (Skyscanner, Google Flights, Expedia, Kayak, etc.) are also important.

## High volume of branded airline queries

High search volumes for major travel brands indicates people turn to these companies for inspiration, prices, availability and other key info.

	Keyword	Volume
1	Skyscanner	2.7M
2	Ryanair	2.2M
3	EasyJet	1.8M
4	TUI	1.8M
5	British Airways	1.5M
6	Jet2	550,000
7	Google flights	450,000
8	Emirates	301,000
9	Expedia	301,00
10	Kayak	201,000

# Travel agents by search volume

## Upward trend in branded searches for travel agents

UK travellers place increasing trust in travel agents and companies that can help them feel more confident about booking.

## TUI is the top name in UK travel agencies

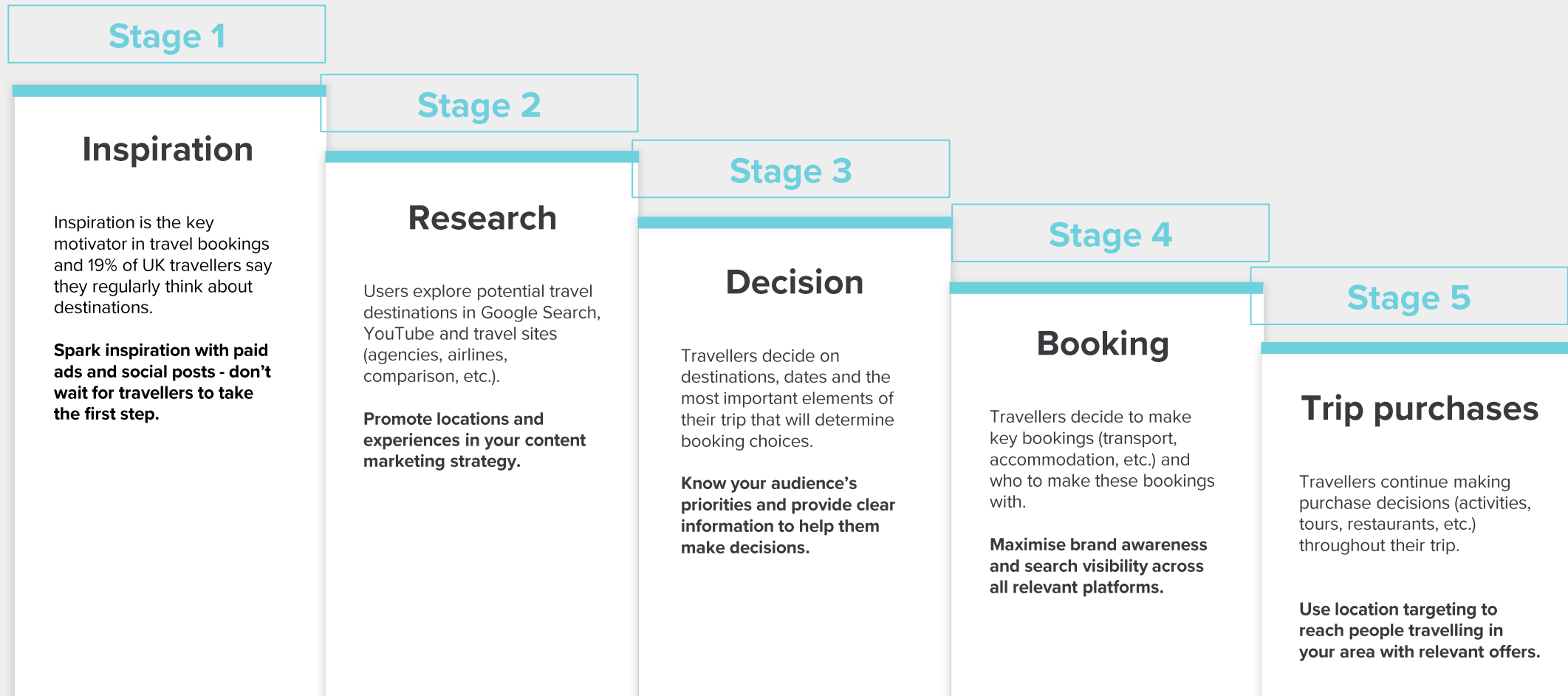
Branded search data shows TUI is the top name UK travellers think of when looking for a travel agent.

## Reputation is crucial during uncertain times

With ongoing difficulties in the travel industries, brands have to manage expectations, provide clear information and support customers to maintain their reputation.

	Keyword	Volume
1	TUI	1.8M
2	Jet2holidays	550,000
3	On the beach	550,000
4	Love holidays	450,000
5	Expedia	301,000
6	Virgin holidays	246,000
7	Last minute	201,000
8	First choice	165,000
9	Hays travel	165,000
10	Secret escapes	165,000

# The 5 stages of the travel booking cycle





**What Google wants...**

# Top ranking websites for flights

## Skyscanner impresses across the board

With an Authority Score of 85 (Semrush), 3 million backlinks, six thousand targeted keywords and 3.1 million monthly users, Skyscanner is the champion of flight searches - reinforced by the 2.7 million brand searches discussed earlier.

## 92% keyword difficulty for “flights”

The keyword “flights” is rated at 92% difficulty in Semrush, making it one of the hardest keywords to rank for.

## Branded searches & comparison sites provide opportunities

Major airlines and travel agencies don’t necessarily need to rank for “flights” if they have high volumes of brand searches while comparison sites like Skyscanner and Google Flights also provide opportunities.

	AS	Backlinks	Keywords	Organic traffic
skyscanner.net	85	3M	6K	3.1M
Google.co.uk/travel/flights	49	144	1.3K	90.5K
Easyjet.com	71	15.1K	13.7K	2.3M
Cheapflights.co.uk	67	8.1K	2.8K	319.3K
Tripadvisor.co.uk/cheapflightshome	31	224	669	17.8K
Travelsupermarket.com	49	950	1.2K	39.6K
Kayak.co.uk/flights	62	2.3K	2.2K	79.3K
Expedia.co.uk/flights	55	1.1K	1.3K	40.4K
Google.com/travel/flights	76	371.3K	18.3K	179.6K
Flightradar24.com	82	1.3M	3.7K	690.5K

# Top ranking websites for hotels

## Brand names win searches for “hotels”

Hotels.com tops the ranking for this but Premier Inn receives the most traffic - a case of brand name matching the keyword?

## Branded searches driving traffic for Premier Inn & Travelodge

Premier Inn generates 93.2% of its traffic from branded searches and Travelodge drives a slightly higher proportion of 94.9%.

## 97% keyword difficulty for “hotels”

With a 97% keyword difficulty rating, “hotels” is even more competitive than “flights”.

	AS	Backlinks	Keywords	Organic traffic
uk.hotels.com	73	710.6K	3.5K	419.5K
travelodge.co.uk	71	17.1K	37.2K	1.3M
ihg.com/hotels	67	11.7K	6.0K	99.1K
premierinn.com	76	22.3K	52.1K	2.4M
expedia.co.uk/hotels	57	1.1K	915	25.5K
booking.com	68	131.0K	5.3K	451.4K
hilton.com	84	684.5K	32.8K	187.7K
all.accor.com	78	9.1K	1.5K	34.4K
village-hotels.co.uk	66	4.2K	2.5K	160.1K
radissonhotels.com	68	16.7K	4.5K	41.0K

# Top ranking websites for holiday packages

## Jet2holidays winning the most traffic from “holiday packages”

While easyJet takes the top spot in the rankings for this keyword, Jet2holidays is winning the most traffic from lower down the page.

## Relatively low authority scores

With the exceptions of Onthebeach.com and Jet2holdays.com, the authority scores in the top 10 results for “package holidays” are low.

## SEO & content marketing opportunity

With searches for package holidays increasing, this keyword presents an opportunity for building authority.

	AS	Backlinks	Keywords	Organic traffic
easyjet.com	67	2.3K	18.9K	346.9K
loveholidays.com	26	546	96	11.9K
thomascook.com	36	2.7K	95	6.3K
onthebeach.co.uk	72	8.4K	3.0K	655.5K
secretescapes.com	34	12	83	2.8K
tui.co.uk/holidays	55	812	2.5K	115.3K
jet2holidays.com	77	46.1K	16.8K	1.3M
travelsupermarket.com	47	952	1.2K	20.1K
firstchoice.co.uk	13	81	45	1.2K
holidaypirates.com	29	2.1K	1.6K	3.4K

# Top ranking websites for staycation

## Low authority scores

Low authority scores and a lot of changing positions in the top results suggests a lack of quality pages.

## Low volume of backlinks

The relatively low volume of backlinks across the top 10 results suggests a lack of quality content for the keyword “staycation”.

## Content marketing opportunity

Many of the top 10 results and related keywords are informational, presenting a content marketing opportunity for “staycation” - a buzzword in the post-Covid era.

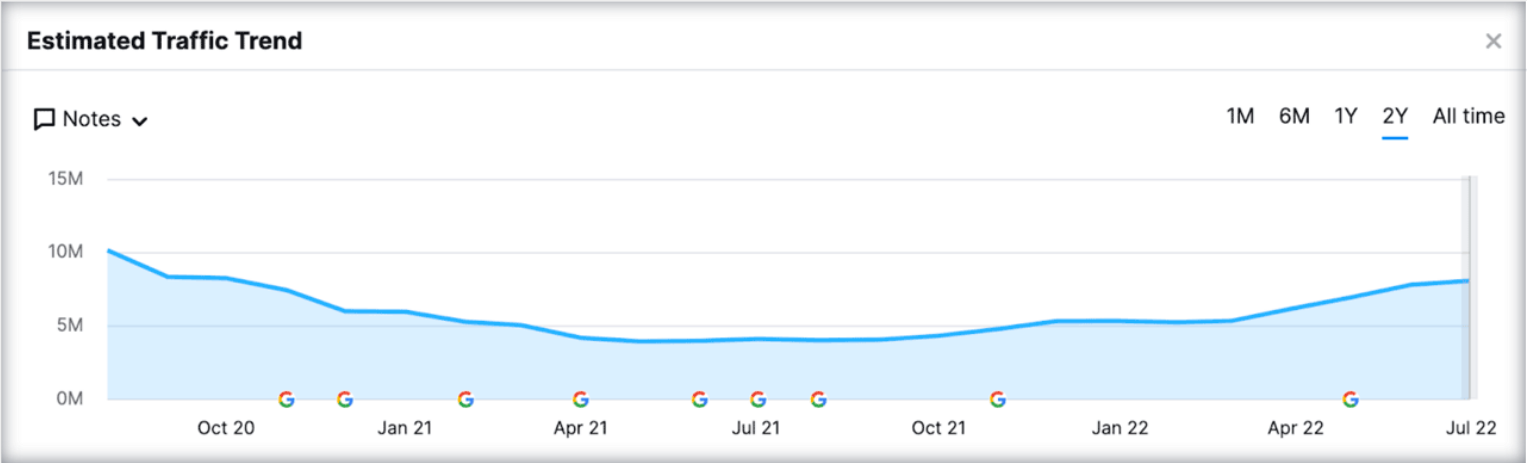
	AS	Backlinks	Keywords	Organic traffic
wikipedia.org	59	2.3K	52	4.8K
staycations-uk.co.uk	31	77	98	7.8K
lastminute.com/holidays/staycation	50	187	113	4.1K
staycation.co	46	24	63	1.4K
goodhousekeeping.com	23	118	157	4.6K
holidaypirates.com	10	53	677	4.9K
merriam-webster.com/dictionary	53	177	22	827
www.staycationholidays.co.uk	34	132	403	1.8K
parkdeanresorts.co.uk	9	31	103	2.2K
dictionary.cambridge.org	55	89	23	1.7K

# Analysis: Skyscanner

Skyscanner generates most of its traffic from brand queries - its brand name is searched 2.7 million times every month with close variations adding almost another million branded queries.

It ranks in position #1 for the top-level keyword “flights” and also for destination queries like “flights to dubai” that demonstrate commercial intent.

Top Organic Keywords 294,896					
Keyword	Intent	Pos.	Volume	CPC (G...	Traffi...
skyscanner >>	N	1	2,740,000	0.22	27.06
sky scanner >>	N	1	550,000	0.22	5.43
skyscanner uk >>	N T	1	368,000	0.20	3.63
flights >>	C I	1	301,000	0.27	0.92
skyscanner f... >>	N	1	60,500	0.17	0.59

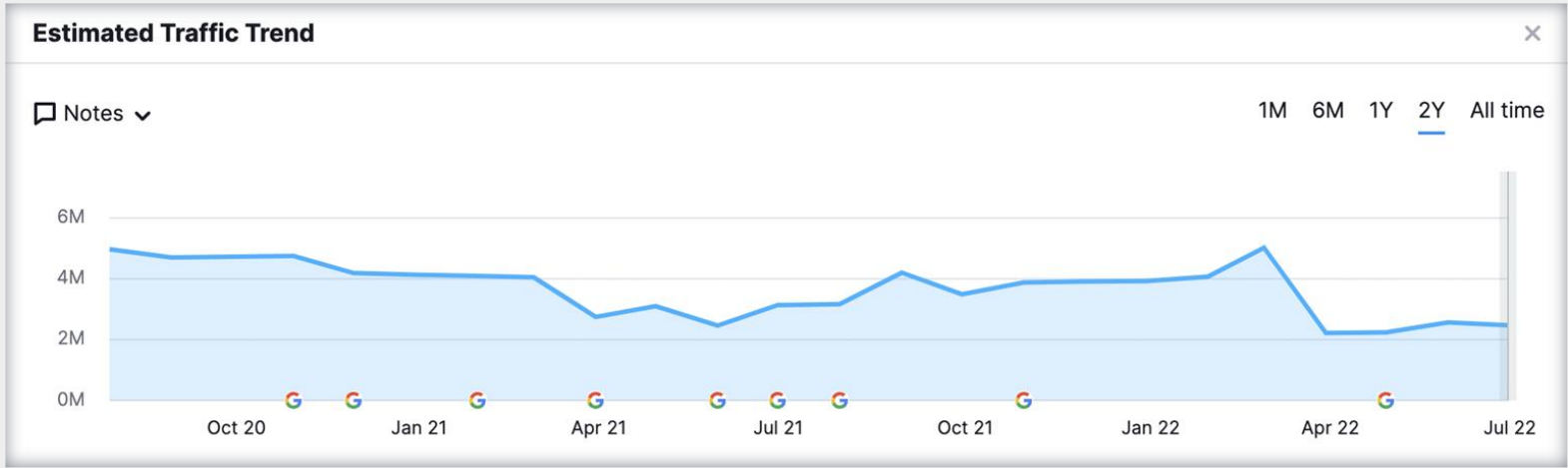


# Analysis: Hotels.com

Hotels.com generates more traffic from “hotels” than any other keyword. Almost 10% of its traffic comes from “hotels,” for which it ranks in position #1. The company’s brand name legitimately allows for an exact match domain for the most competitive keywords in its niche.

Hotels.com faces competition from Google’s own hotel search system (which normally shows above organic results) and stronger brand names like Airbnb and Booking.com.

Top Organic Keywords					
Keyword	Pos.		Diff.	Volume	Traffic %
hotels >>	1	→ 1	0	301K	9.74
hotels.com >>	1	→ 1	0	74K	2.39
hotel >>	1	→ 1	0	201K	2.01
hotels.com uk >>	1	→ 1	0	27.1K	0.87
hoteles >>	1	→ 1	0	18.1K	0.58
hotels com uk >>	1	→ 1	0	14.8K	0.47



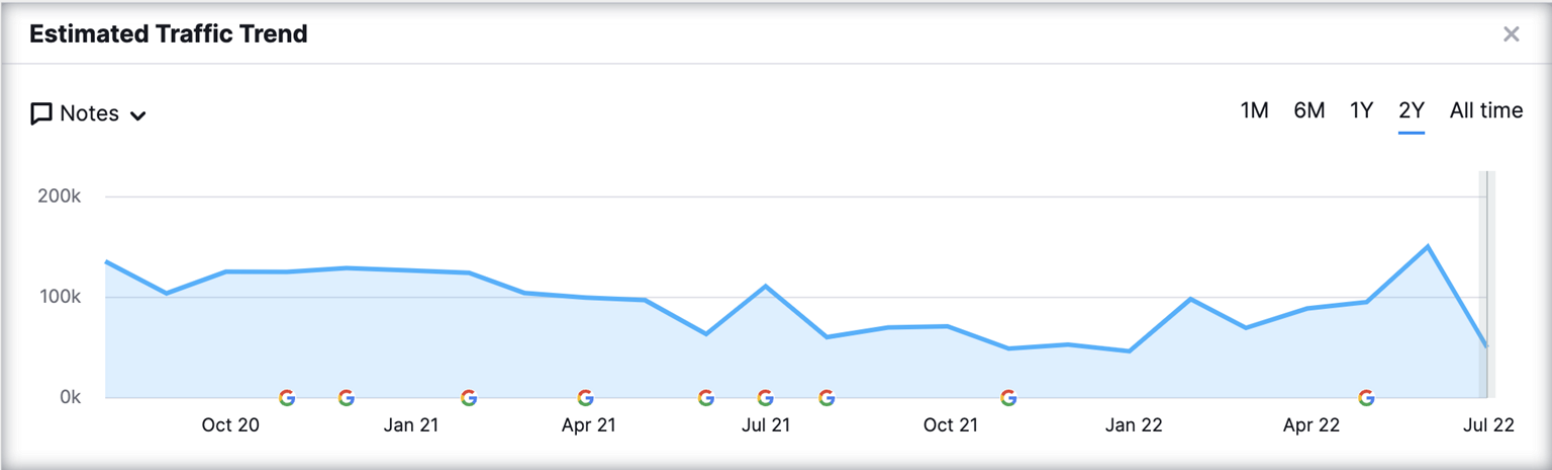
# Analysis: Airbnb.com

Airbnb generates 85% of its traffic directly ie. from users typing the URL directly into the search engine or opening the mobile app - no search required.

Airbnb has become synonymous with holiday rentals. Like Skyscanner with flights, Airbnb has built its brand to become the go-to option for independent accommodation bookings.

Airbnb is one of the most talked about brands in travel and the startup industry, constantly earning press coverage and valuable links.

Top Organic Keywords					
Keyword	Pos.	Diff.	Volume	Traffic %	
air b and b >>	• → 2	new	135K	7	
air b and b >>	• → 3	new	135K	4.84	
airbnb.com >>	1 → 1	0	2.9K	4.62	
air bnb uk >>	2 → 2	0	40.5K	2.1	
air b & b >>	2 → 2	0	33.1K	1.71	
air bnb uk >>	• → 3	new	40.5K	1.45	

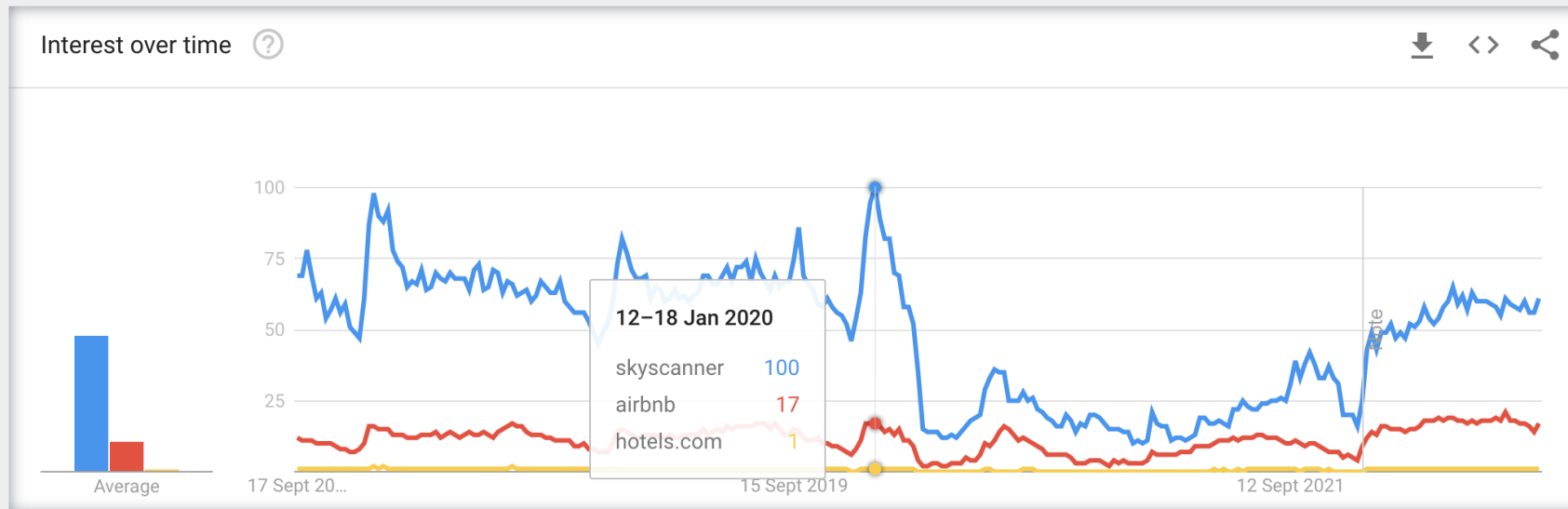


# Brand searches: Skyscanner vs. Airbnb vs. Hotels.com

All three sites benefit from strong brand names, but Skyscanner and Airbnb surpass Hotel.com's exact match domain - even for a keyword as competitive as "hotels".

Airbnb doesn't need to compete with Hotels.com for the "hotels" keyword because its brand name is almost synonymous with travel accommodation.

All three were hit by Covid-19 but the brand names of Skyscanner and Airbnb are driving post-pandemic recovery.



# What travellers want

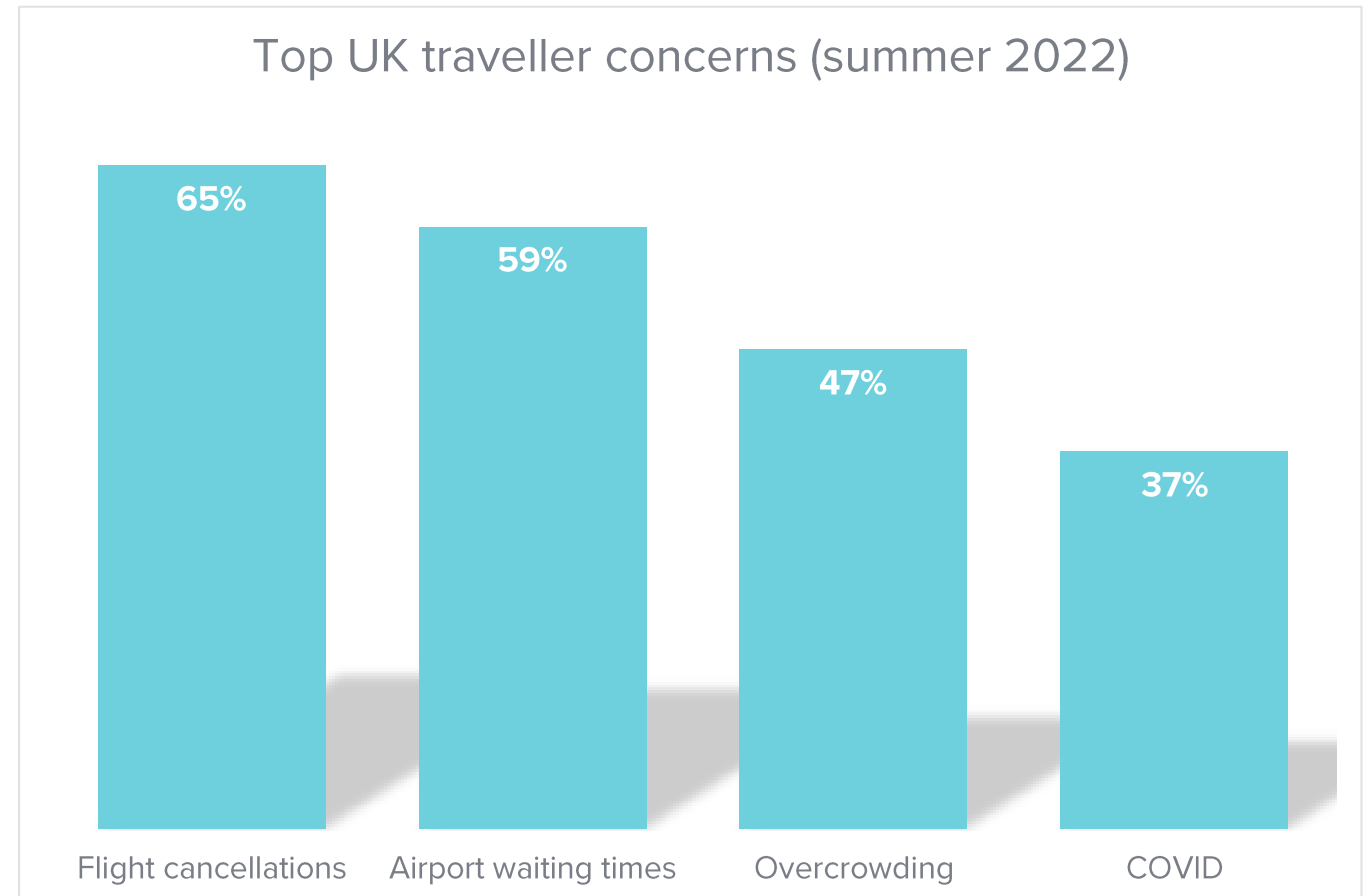


# COVID is no longer the top concern for UK travellers

According to a YouGov survey, carried out on behalf of Hudgell Solicitors, UK travellers are most concerned about flight cancellations (65%), airport waiting times (59%) and airport overcrowding (47%) although Covid-19 remains a factor for 37%.




































As a result, 55% say they're more likely to book a package holiday that offers protection against travel disruption and 24% say they'll aim to travel by road.

The survey also revealed key differences between age groups with 46% of 18 to 24-year-olds intending to travel at least once every six months and 46% over 55 describing holidays as "not very important" amid disruption, cost-of-living concerns and the ongoing pandemic.





















































# UK travellers changing priorities

- Queries related to Covid-19 declining but search volume for travel restrictions still relatively high - for now.
- New priorities, such as passport delays, travel disruption and cost-of-living concerns are rising.
- Searches for “travel insurance” significantly rising, reflecting ongoing uncertainties and demand for protections.
- Demand for package holidays also increasing as travellers find value in trusted names and inclusive protections.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyword 	Intent	Volume 	Trend	KD % 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 <a href="#">travel insurance</a>		301.0K		83 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 <a href="#">passport</a>		74.0K		87 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 <a href="#">travel restrictions</a>		40.5K		89 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 <a href="#">package holidays</a>		27.1K		72 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 <a href="#">staycation</a>		14.8K		56 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 <a href="#">cheap holiday</a>		6.6K		66 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 <a href="#">flight cancellations</a>		2.9K		70 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 <a href="#">flexible ticket</a>		170		33 

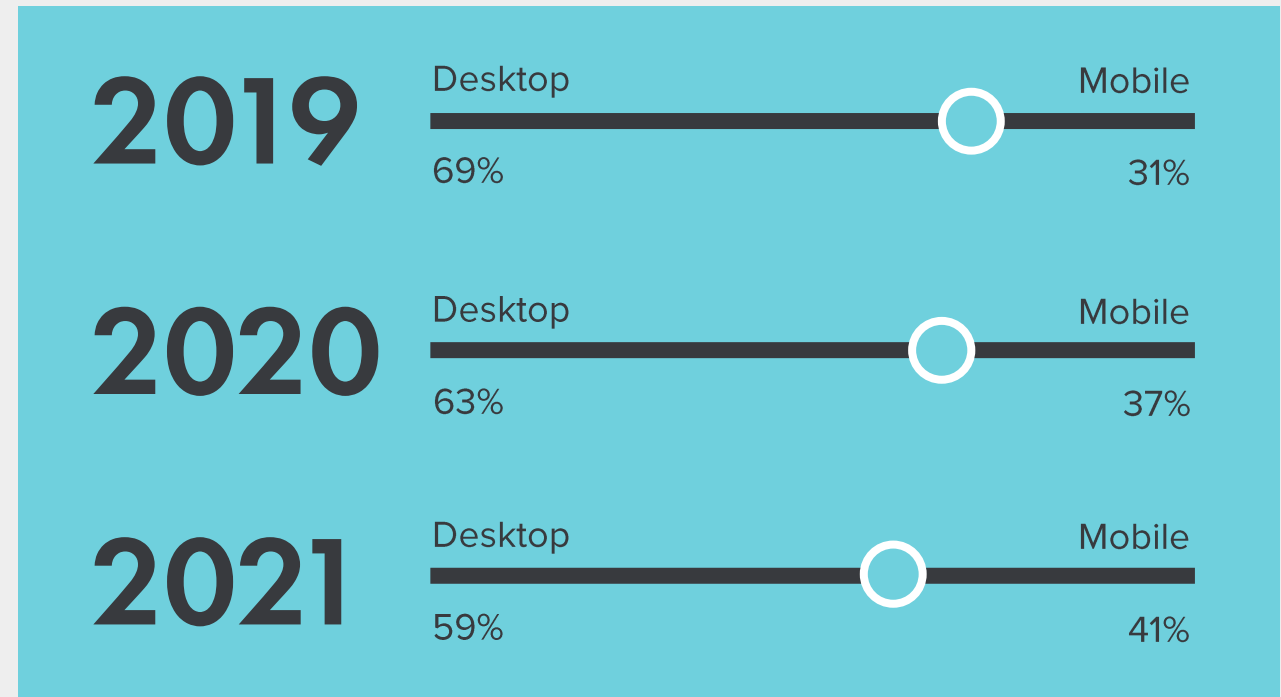
# Domestic vs. international location searches

- Changing demands and concerns reflected in search volumes for popular domestic and international locations.
- Covid-19 boosted domestic travel, but ongoing description means more travellers are prioritising trips in the UK, even as pandemic concerns dwindle.
- London is the most-searched location but the likes of Edinburgh, the Lake District, Cornwall and Snowdonia still generate more interest than the top international destinations like Tenerife and New York.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyword 	Intent	Volume 	Trend 	KD % 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 edinburgh	 	301.0K		96 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 lake district		201.0K		69 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 cornwall	 	165.0K		84 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 snowdonia		135.0K		70 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 tenerife	 	135.0K		70 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 new york	 	110.0K		100 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 peak district		110.0K		61 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 paris	 	90.5K		96 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 dublin		60.5K		82 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 alicante	 	40.5K		61 

# Desktop vs. mobile bookings 2019-2021

- Travellers want cross-platform experiences.
- Travellers are completing more bookings on mobile every year.
- As apps like Airbnb and Skyscanner become staple travel tools and mobile experiences improve, travel brands need to support cross-platform planning and booking.

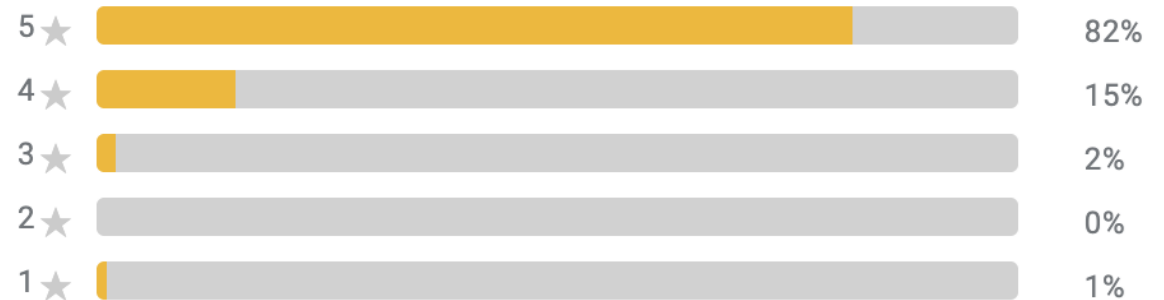


# 96% of travellers read reviews before booking hotels

- According to insights from Revinate, 96% of travellers consider reviews when choosing hotels.
- 79% read between 6-12 reviews before making a booking decision.
- Travellers want to book with confidence and social signals are crucial if they're making their own bookings (not through an agent).

## Google review summary

Reviews aren't verified ⓘ



Rooms  
4.0

Location  
4.4

Service  
4.7

# Next steps for travel companies

## Inspire

Use paid social and retargeting campaigns to spark travel inspiration.

## Brand awareness

Brand names count in travel marketing so build awareness across search and social.

## Search coverage

Maximise visibility in Google Search and other relevant products (YouTube, Google Maps, Google Flights, etc.) as well as third-party systems like Skyscanner.

## Influence bookings

Travellers are open to influence so use content marketing and ad campaigns to turn inspiration into bookings.

## Boost confidence

Confident travellers are happy travellers so boost confidence across the customer journey through reviews and protection policies.

## Search data

Use search data to understand what consumers really care about. You can also pick up on early trends to gain visibility before your competitors.

**If you need help getting more bookings,  
contact us today!**

**You can also learn more about our [travel expertise](#) here.**