



The New Zealand Seniors Series: The Grey Nomads Report 2024

FEBRUARY 2024

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About the report

The Grey Nomads Report 2024 forms part of the New Zealand Seniors Research Series. In its latest instalment, this study explores the importance of an active travel lifestyle for New Zealanders aged over 50 including their goals and motivations. It also explores key travel preferences and special considerations made around budgeting, estate planning, health and safety.

The report is compiled based on research commissioned by New Zealand Seniors and conducted by MYMAVINS between 30th October to 13th November 2023.

The research was conducted via a quantitative online survey, gathering 510 responses from New Zealanders aged 50 and above who are nomadic or active travellers.

To qualify as an 'active traveller' for this study respondents need to typically travel multiple times per year or for extended periods (more than 2 weeks). Around 1 in 7 (14%) of the respondents identify themselves as a nomadic traveller, regularly travelling or living away from home for very extended periods (more than 4 weeks each year) and often on the move.

The sample is representative of the general population of individuals over 50 in New Zealand in terms of age, gender, wealth, and region.

Important things to observe about the charts and figures

- Footnotes directly underneath the charts mainly refer to the sampling involved per question. This is to differentiate who was asked that particular question in the survey.
- Charts without a specific note represent questions that were asked to all respondents.
- The types of questions asked are also noted. For instance, 'Multiple responses allowed' appears when the question called for more than one response from the respondent.
- Some charts and figures may not be equal to 100% due to rounding differences. This is also true for summed up figures.
- Figures were determined from self-reported estimates provided by respondents.
- Certain figures have had outlier responses removed and where applicable this will be accompanied with a specific note.



Key findings

Regular travel is an important part of life

- Around 2 in 3 (67%) active travellers view regular travel as a very or extremely important part of their lives.
- On average, active travellers estimate travelling for 5.5 weeks out of the year.
- While a full-time travel lifestyle is not for everyone, just over 1 in 4 (26%) have given strong or some consideration to this since turning 50 years old and just as many (27%) would possibly consider this in the future.

Travel brings joy and families together

- The greatest motivation for travelling is seeking overall happiness (65%) followed by quality family time (54%) and stress relief/relaxation (51%).

The cost of travel is top-of-mind for most

- The most common consideration when travelling is cost (82%) followed by safety (61%) and accommodation preferences (61%).
- More than 4 in 5 (82%) report value for money is a must-have when making travel decisions, followed by safety and security (68%).

Beyond expenses there are logistics, safety and overdevelopment to navigate

- Top travelling pet peeves include high travel expenses (58%) and tourist traps (45%).
- Just over 1 in 2 (51%) feel that financial constraint is the top obstacle they face to their travel ambitions.

Travel booking principles – convenient, cost effective and comfortable

- The top preferences when booking travel are booking directly through an airline website (27%), booking through travel agencies (25%) and booking through online travel agencies (24%).
- The most common reasons for these preferred booking method is convenience and ease (65%) followed by cost effectiveness (53%), saving time (42%), being trustworthy (41%) and offering a variety of options (39%).
- Comfort (64%) is the most important factor for choosing preferred accommodations followed by cost-effectiveness (55%), cleanliness (55%), location (53%), amenities (41%) and safety (41%).

Local travel is high on the bucket list for many

- Almost 3 in 5 indicate that their top travel destinations would include another region of New Zealand (58%) or Australia (57%). This is followed by Western Europe (45%), Southeast Asia (37%) and North America (37%).

Holiday experiences and locations are diverse

- Close to 7 in 10 (68%) prefer a scenic holiday, historical or cultural encounters (57%), and catching up with friends (54%).
- Around 3 in 5 (60%) prefer road trips destinations, closely followed by beach holidays (53%).

Travel budgets vary widely

- Over 1 in 3 (34%) say their holiday spending has increased compared to 5 years ago.
- The majority (59%) spend \$10,000 or less on travel each year, while 1 in 7 (14%) spend more than \$20,000 a year.

A well-defined budget is key

- The most common method to fund travel is using personal savings (87%), followed by superannuation (17%).
- More than 1 in 2 (52%) have a well-defined budget and almost 1 in 3 (31%) have researched and chosen affordable travel destinations to help maintain financial stability throughout their retirement travel plans.

The cost of living is impacting travel plans

- Around 3 in 5 (62%) feel they have enough money to travel in the comfort and style they prefer. However, only 2 in 5 (43%) feel they can travel as frequently as they would like, and only 1 in 2 (48%) feel they can travel as long as they like.
- More than 1 in 2 (54%) say that the cost of living/inflation has at least moderately impacted their travel plans.
- Over 1 in 2 (53%) feel concerns about having sufficient retirement savings are clouding their retirement travel plans with uncertainty.

Most have no issue spending the kids' inheritance but keen to have their financial affairs in order

- Around 7 in 10 (71%) express comfort funding their holidays with their children's potential inheritance money.
- 1 in 2 (50%) prepare their estate by creating a will before travelling. Only around 1 in 10 (13%) do not make any plans at all for managing their estate in the event of death or incapacity while travelling.

Unexpected medical costs and adequate insurance coverage top health and safety concerns

- The top health and safety concerns around travel include unexpected medical costs (50%), adequate travel insurance (48%) and being hospitalised or needing local medical services (48%).
- More than 4 in 5 (84%) have prepared in some way for their health before travelling.

COVID-19 is in the past for most travellers

- For 2 in 3 (63%), COVID-19 no longer impacts their travel plans.
- However, around 2 in 5 (42%) say that world events do moderately or significantly impact holiday travel plans.

Travel insurance is a popular source of peace of mind

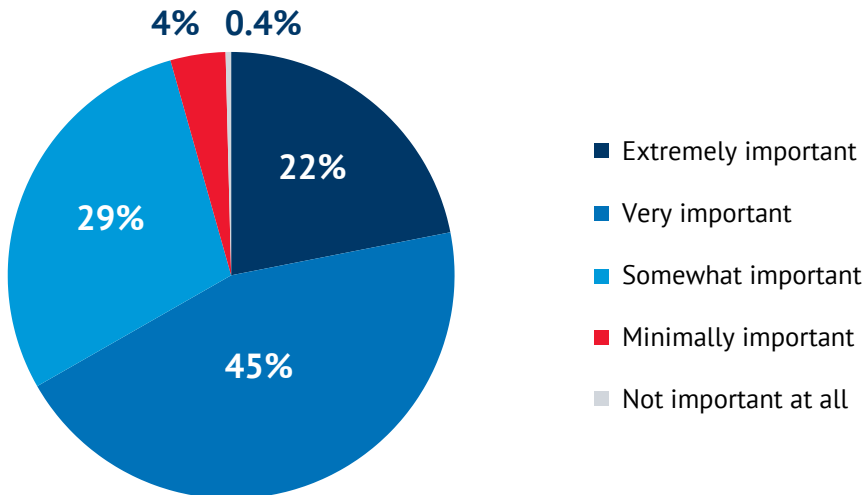
- More than 1 in 2 (56%) plan to cover medical expenses using comprehensive travel insurance. The second most popular option is putting it on the credit card (45%).
- However, only just over 3 in 5 (62%) who get travel insurance are very or extremely confident about having adequate cover.
- Medical benefits (83%) and peace of mind (78%) are top reasons for purchasing travel insurance.



The seasoned traveller

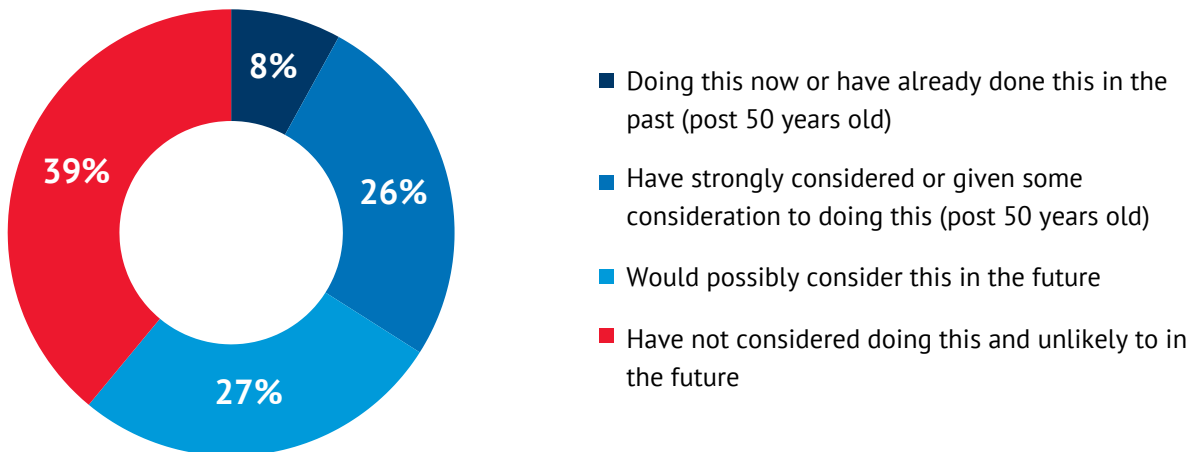
The importance of travel

How important is regular travel in your life these days?



Around 2 in 3 (67%) active travellers feel that regular travel continues to be very or extremely important to them.

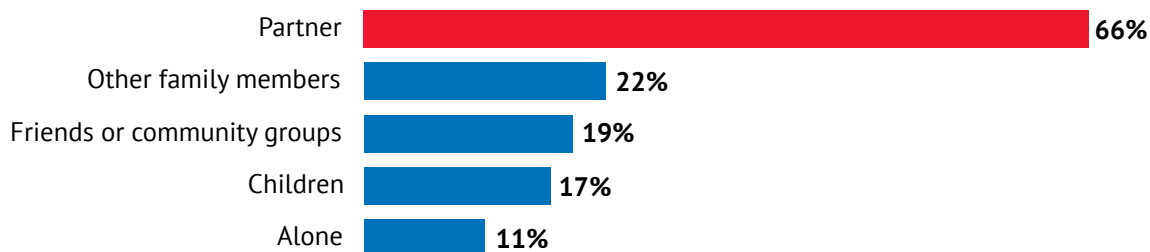
Have you ever considered a lifestyle of full-time travel?



While full-time travel is not for everyone, around 1 in 4 (26%) have given strong or some consideration to this since turning 50 and just as many (27%) would possibly consider this in the future.

Travel motivators

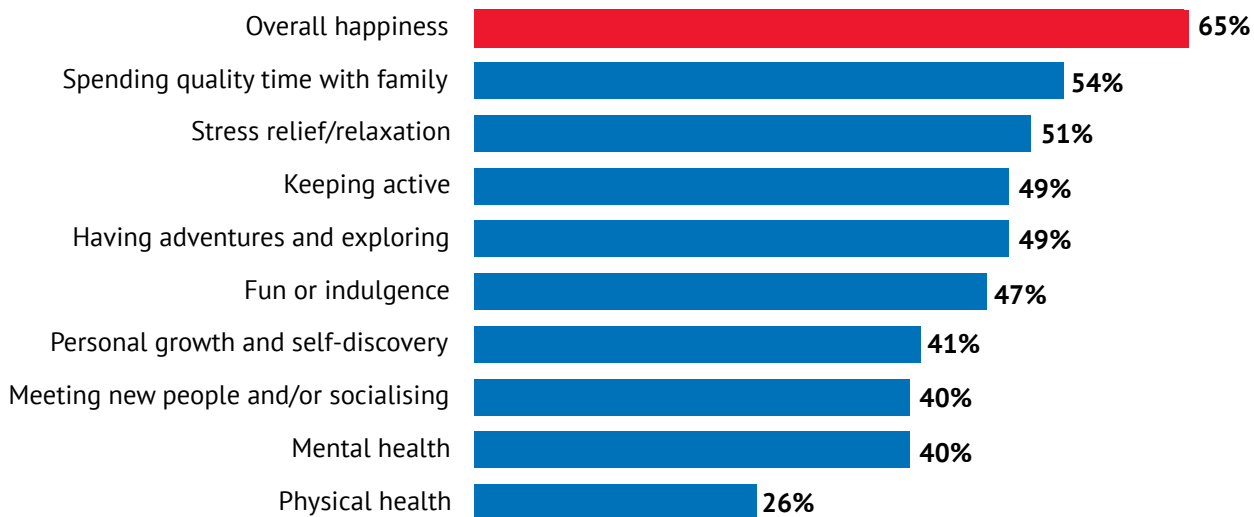
Who do you usually prefer to travel with?



*Multiple responses allowed. Top 5 responses only.

The most common preference is to travel with a partner (66%), or with family members (22%) with only few preferring to travel alone (11%).

Think about what you really get out of travelling. Which of the following reasons tend to motivate you most?



*Multiple responses allowed. Top 10 responses only.

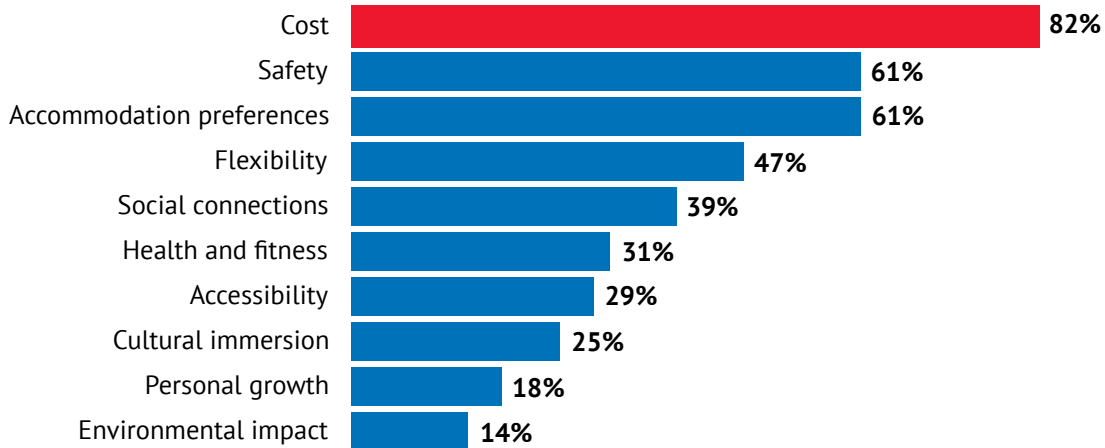
The greatest motivation for travelling is seeking overall happiness (65%), followed by quality family time (54%) and stress relief/relaxation (51%).



Travel planning

Key considerations

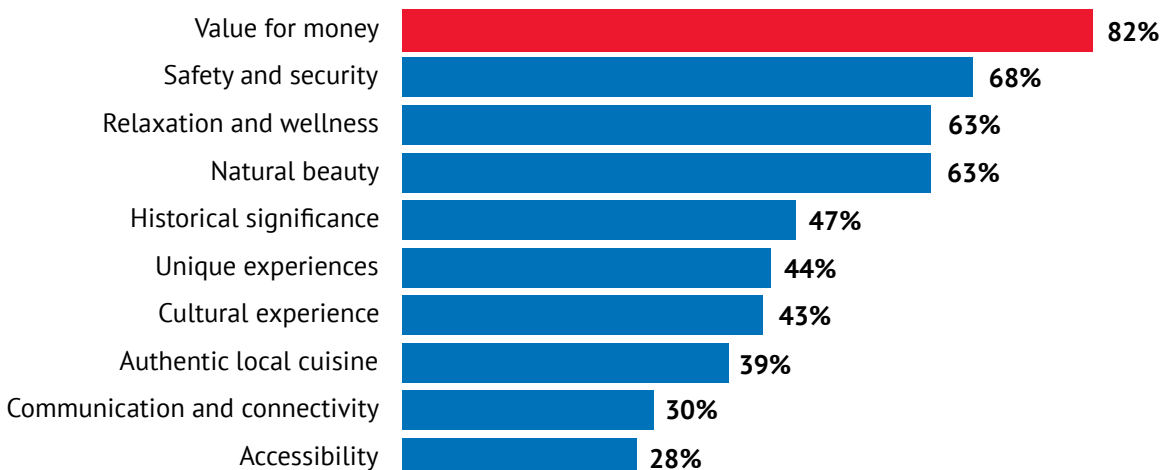
What are your biggest considerations when deciding on an active travel/nomadic lifestyle?



*Multiple responses allowed. Top 10 responses only.

Cost is clearly top-of-mind as the most common travelling consideration (82%), followed by safety (61%) and accommodation preferences (61%).

What boxes need to be ticked when it comes to the type of travel or destination you choose?

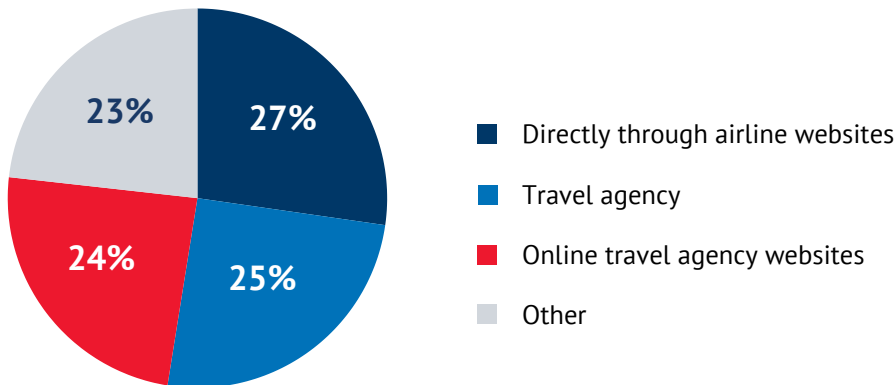


*Multiple responses allowed. Top 10 responses only.

More than 4 in 5 (82%) report value for money is a must-have when making travel decisions. Safety and security (68%) and relaxation and wellness are also must-haves.

Booking preferences

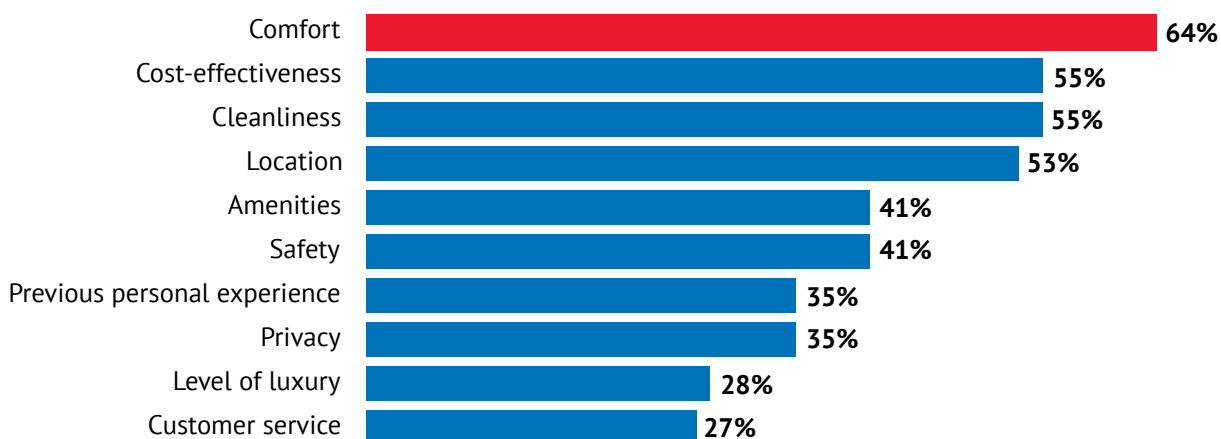
How do you most prefer to book your travel?



Preferences for booking are quite evenly spread. Other ways of booking travel include using mobile apps, through a friend or family member, travel comparison websites, social media or group travel tours. Even though cost is a huge consideration for travel, the most common reason for the preferred booking method is convenience and ease (65%), followed by cost effectiveness (53%), saving time (42%), being trustworthy (41%) and offering a variety of options (39%).

If forced to choose, around 1 in 4 (25%) would most prefer to stay in a hotel, followed by motels (17%) and then resorts (10%).

Why is this your most preferred accommodation when travelling?

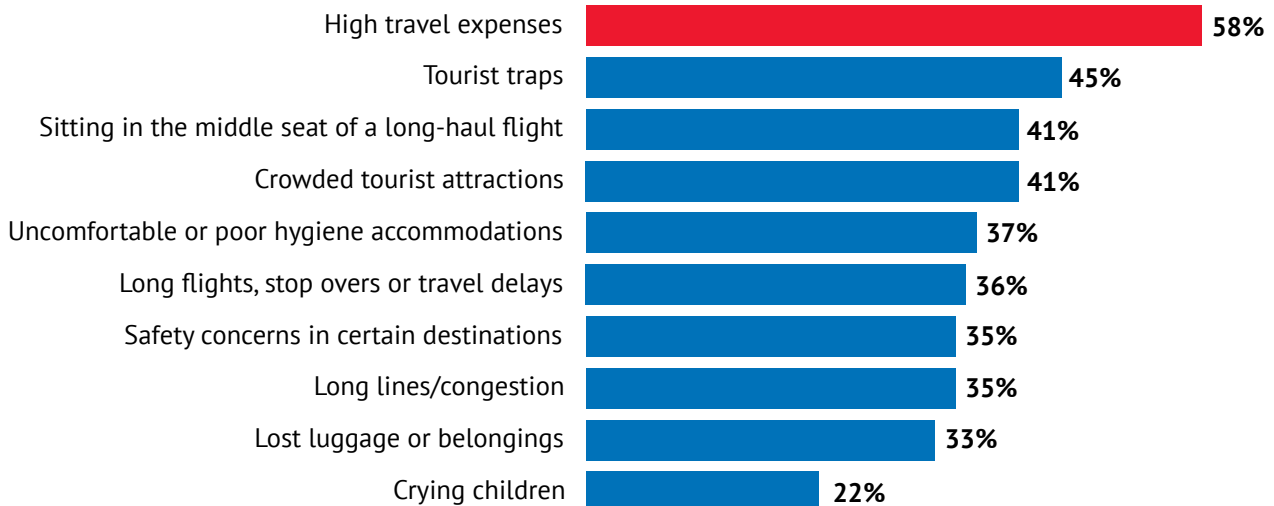


*Multiple responses allowed. Top 10 responses only

Comfort (64%) is the most important factor for choosing accommodation, followed by cost-effectiveness (55%), and cleanliness (55%).

Pet peeves and obstacles

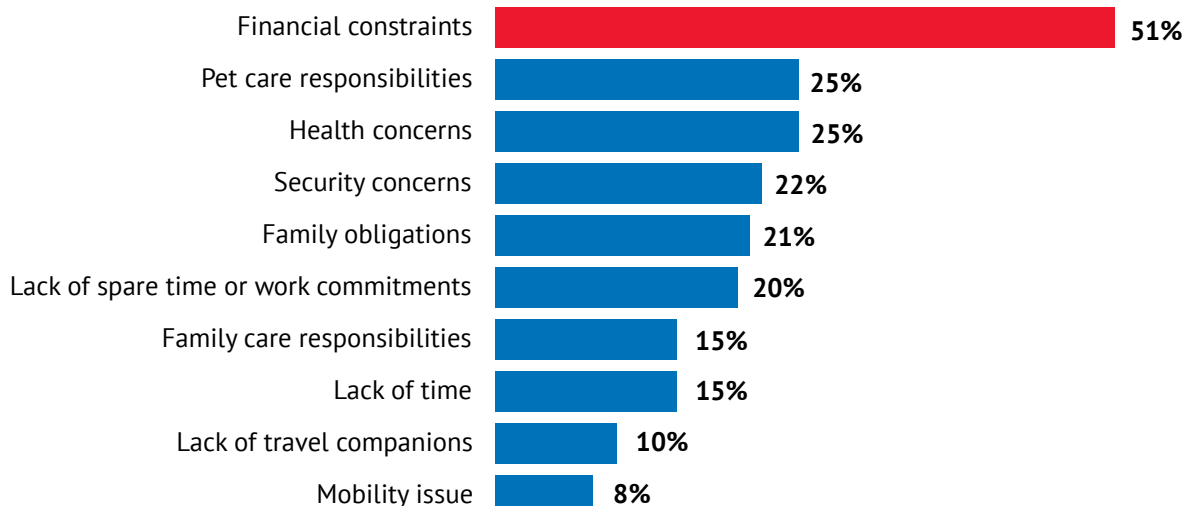
What are your top pet peeves about travelling?



*Multiple responses allowed. Top 10 responses only.

High travel expenses (58%), tourist traps (45%) and sitting in the middle seat of a long-haul flight (41%) top the list of travel pet peeves.

What are your top obstacles to travelling at this stage in your life?



*Multiple responses allowed. Top 10 responses only.

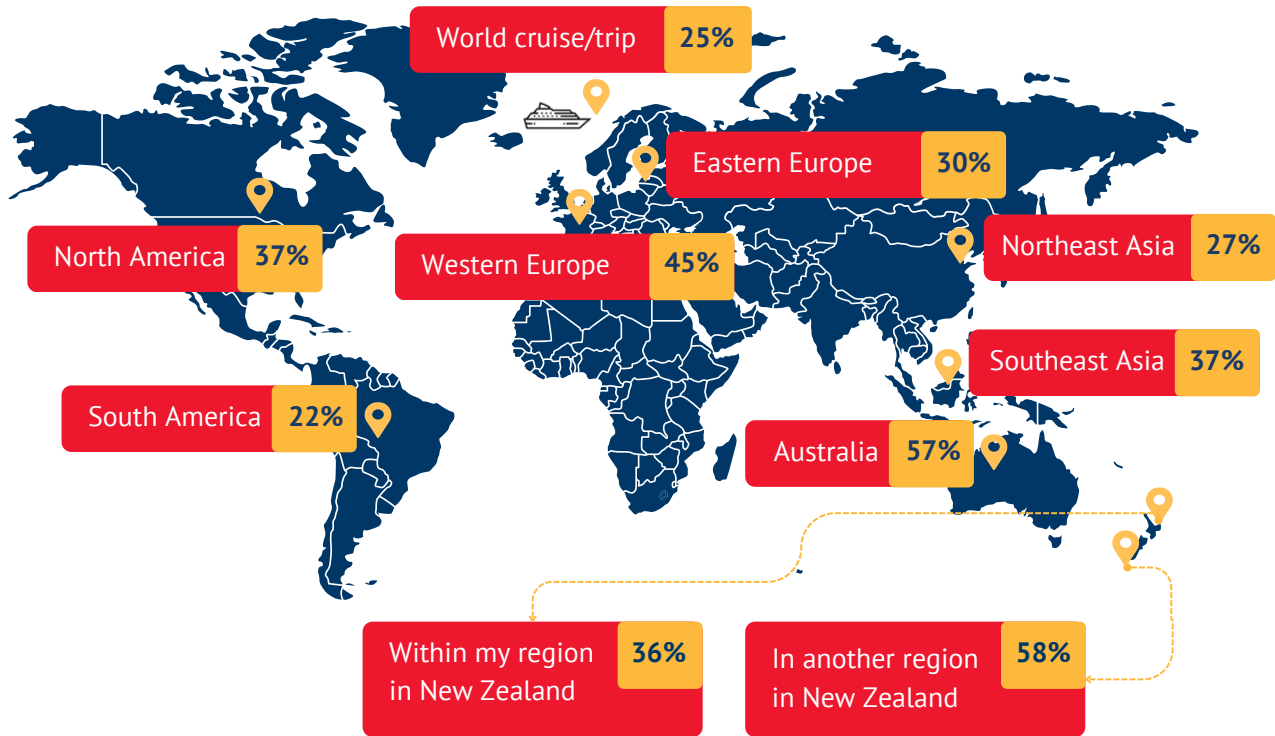
Just over 1 in 2 (51%) feel that financial constraints are the top obstacles they face to their travel ambitions.



**Travel destinations
and experiences**

Travel bucket list

What are the top travel destinations on your bucket list?



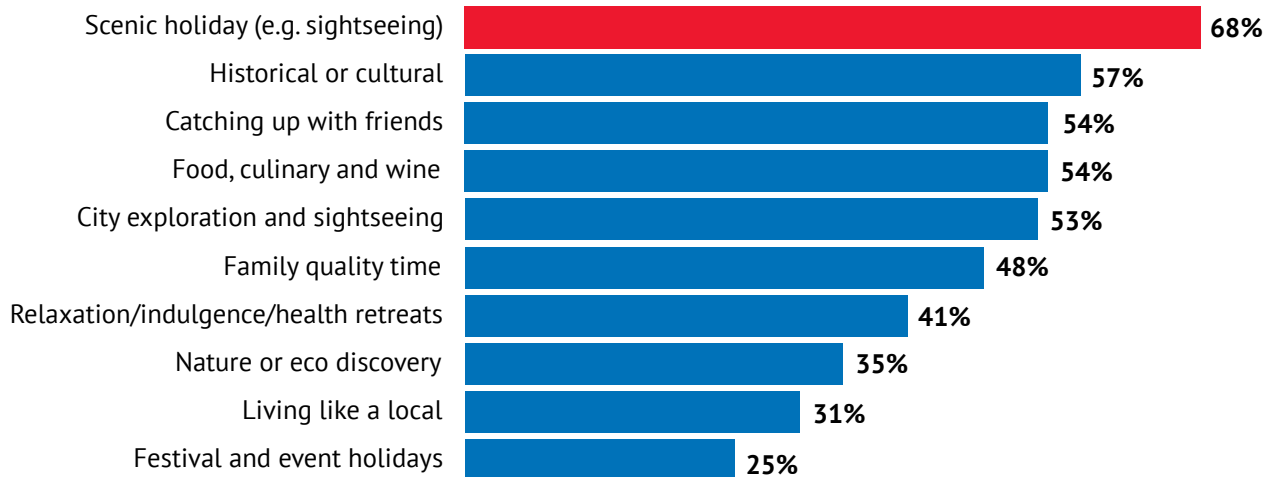
*Multiple responses allowed. Top 10 responses only.

Almost 3 in 5 indicate that their top travel destinations would include another region of New Zealand (58%) or Australia (57%).

This is followed by Western Europe (45%), Southeast Asia (37%) and North America (37%).

Preferred experiences and locations

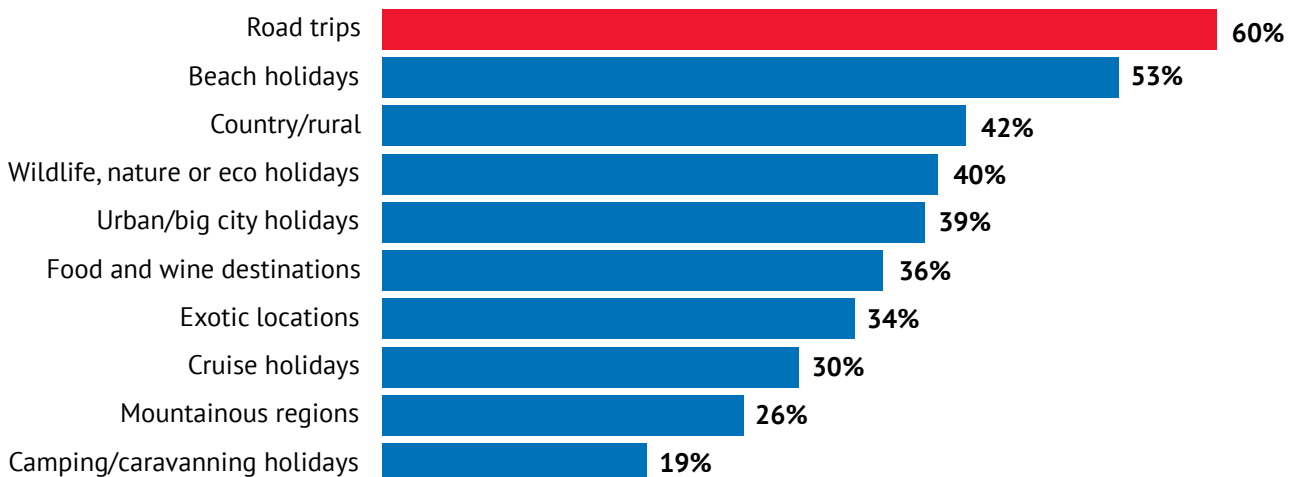
What kind of experiences do you usually prefer to have on your holidays?



*Multiple responses allowed. Top 10 responses only.

Close to 7 in 10 (68%) prefer a scenic holiday, followed by historical or cultural encounters (57%), catching up with friends (54%), food, culinary and wine experiences (54%) and city exploration (53%).

What type of holiday locations do you usually prefer?



*Multiple responses allowed. Top 10 responses only.

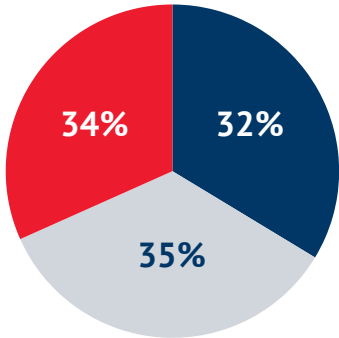
Around 3 in 5 (60%) prefer road trips, closely followed by beach holidays locations (53%). Around 2 in 5 prefer country/rural (42%), locations, wildlife/nature/eco holidays (40%) and urban/big city trips (39%).



Travel expenses

Travel spend

How much has your current holiday spending changed compared to 5 years ago?



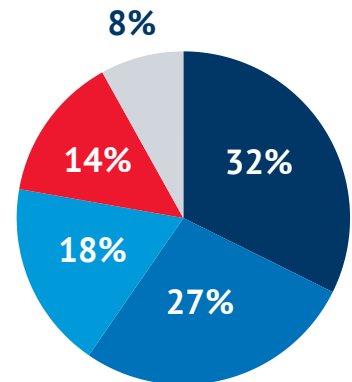
■ Increased ■ Stayed the same ■ Decreased

Over 1 in 3 (34%) say their holiday spending has increased when compared to 5 years ago, while about the same (35%) say it has stayed the same or has decreased (32%).

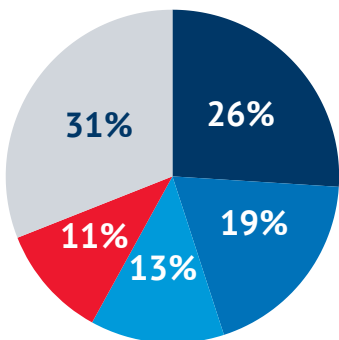
How much money do you typically spend on travel each year?

The majority (59%) spend \$10,000 or less on travel each year. Around 1 in 3 (32%) spend \$5,000 or less on travel each year, while 1 in 7 (14%) spend more than \$20,000 a year.

■ \$5,000 or less
 ■ \$5,001 - \$10,000
 ■ \$10,001 - \$20,000
 ■ More than \$20,000
 ■ Prefer not to say



How much money have you set aside or do you intend to spend on travelling during retirement?

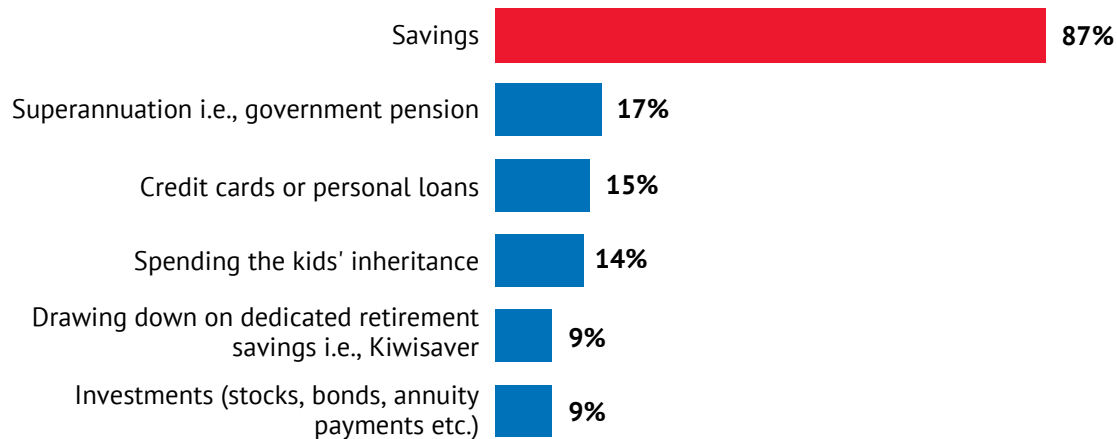


■ \$25,000 or less
 ■ \$25,001 - \$75,000
 ■ \$75,001 - \$150,000
 ■ More than \$150,000
 ■ Unsure

Around 1 in 4 (26%) have set aside \$25,000 or less for their retirement travel plans. However, almost 1 in 3 (31%) are unsure how much to set aside.

Funding travel

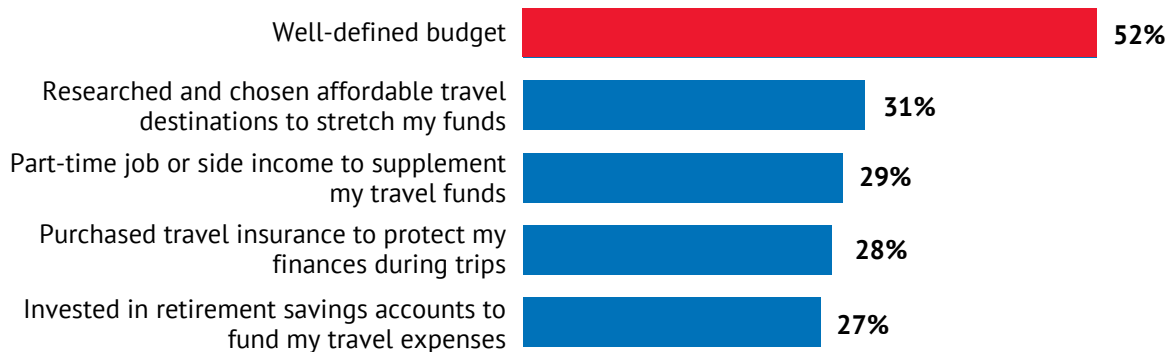
How do you tend to fund your holidays?



*Multiple responses allowed. Top 6 responses only.

The most common method to fund travel by far is using personal savings (87%), followed by superannuation, but that is only used by less than 1 in 5 (17%).

What plans do you have in place to maintain financial stability throughout your retirement travel plans?



*Multiple responses allowed. Top 5 responses only.

More than 1 in 2 (52%) have a well-defined budget and almost 1 in 3 (31%) have researched and chosen affordable travel destinations to help maintain financial stability throughout their retirement travel plans.

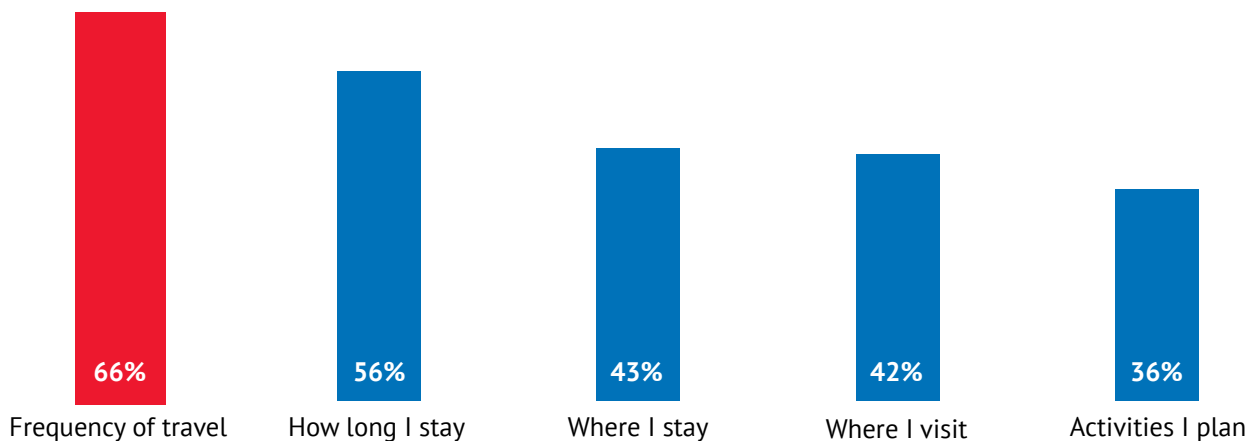
The cost of living

Around 2 in 3 (62%) feel they have enough money to travel in the comfort and style they prefer or to the destinations they prefer (67%).

However, only 2 in 5 (43%) feel they can travel as frequently as they would like, and only 1 in 2 (48%) feel they can travel as long as they like.

More than 1 in 2 (54%) say that the cost of living/inflation has moderately (34%) or significantly (20%) impacted their travel plans.

What kind of impacts are the rising cost of living having on your travel savings/plans?



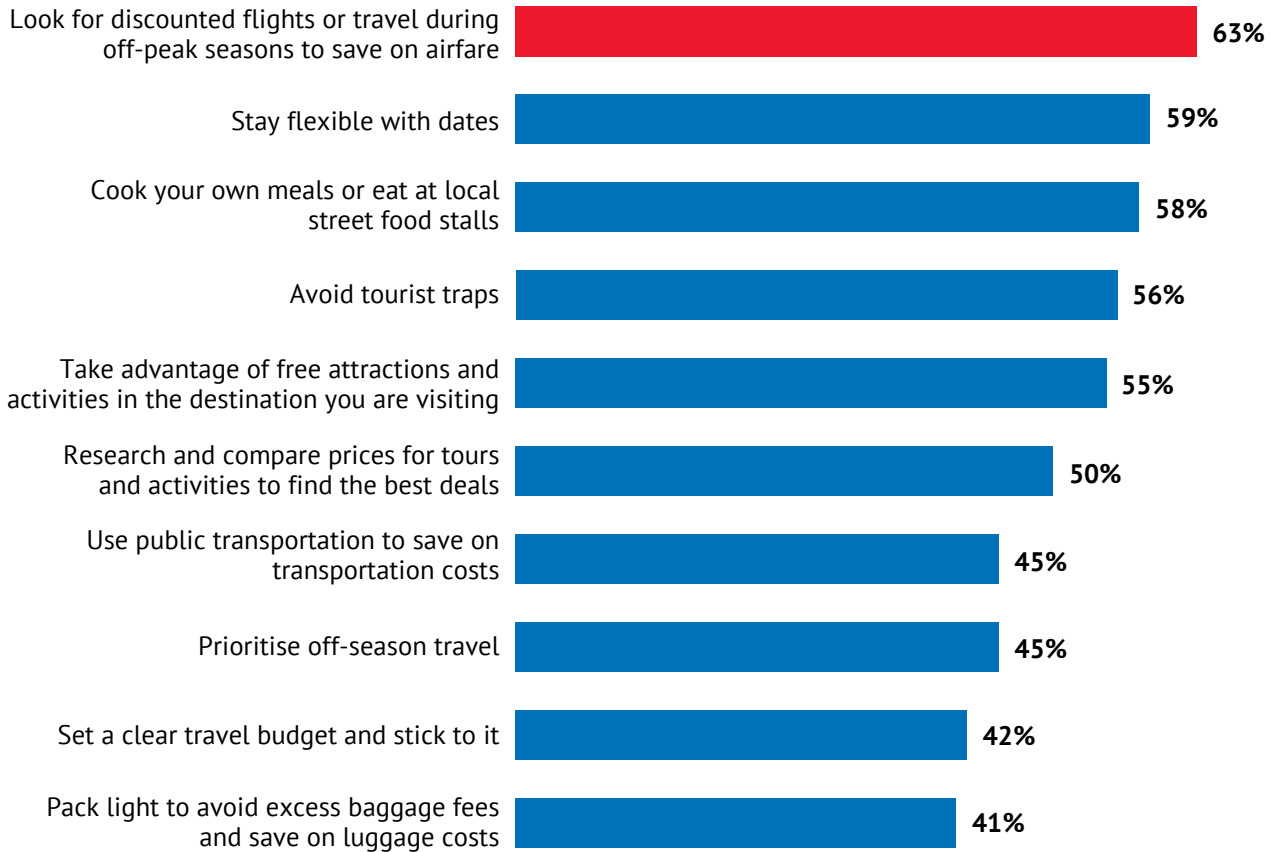
*Multiple responses allowed. Top 5 responses only. n=439 travel savings / plans impacted by cost of living.

Around 1 in 4 (25%) have even gone to the lengths of avoiding international travel and 1 in 8 have postponed their travel plans (16%) and almost 1 in 10 (8%) have cancelled plans entirely.

Over 1 in 2 (53%) feel concerns about having enough retirement savings put aside are clouding their retirement travel plans and just over 1 in 5 (21%) have concerns about paying off a mortgage clouding their travel plans.

Tips for travelling on a budget

What are your saving tips for travelling on a budget?



*Multiple responses allowed. Top 10 responses only.

Active travellers have a variety of tips for travelling on a budget, with looking for discounted flights or travelling off peak (63%), staying flexible with dates (59%) and avoiding expensive restaurants (58%) being the most common.

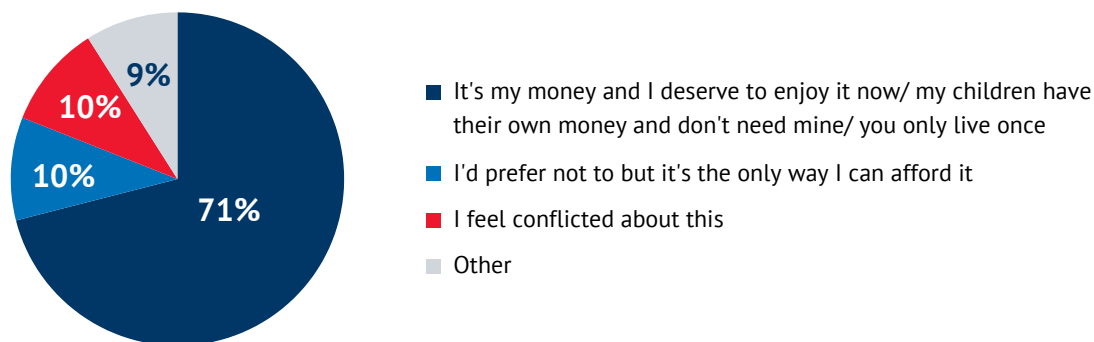
To generate income to support their travel, around 2 in 5 plan to use savings and investments made during working years (42%), nearly as many will continue working part-time or remotely (39%) and just over 1 in 3 will be relying on regular payments from their pension or retirement fund (35%).



Estate planning

Travel vs kids' inheritance

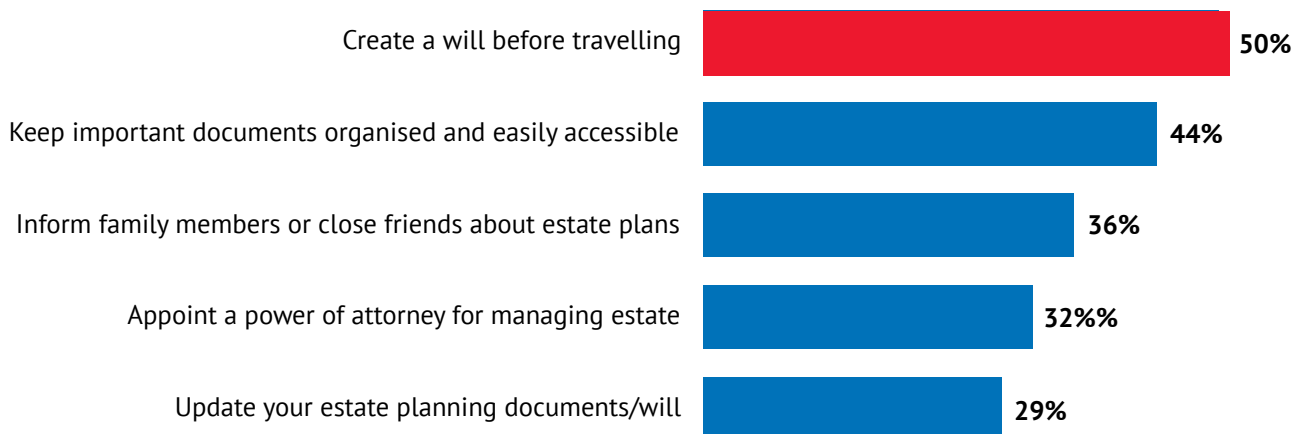
How do you feel about funding your holidays with money that could be passed on to the kids?



Around 7 in 10 (71%) express comfort funding their holidays with inheritance money.

Only about 1 in 10 (10%) feel they have no choice but to fund holidays with it, and similarly 1 in 10 (10%) feel conflicted about it.

What are your plans for managing your estate in the event of death or incapacity while travelling?



*Multiple responses allowed. Top 5 responses only.

Only around 1 in 10 (13%) do not make any plans at all for managing their estate in the event of death or incapacity while travelling.

However 1 in 2 are preparing their estate by creating a will before travelling (50%).

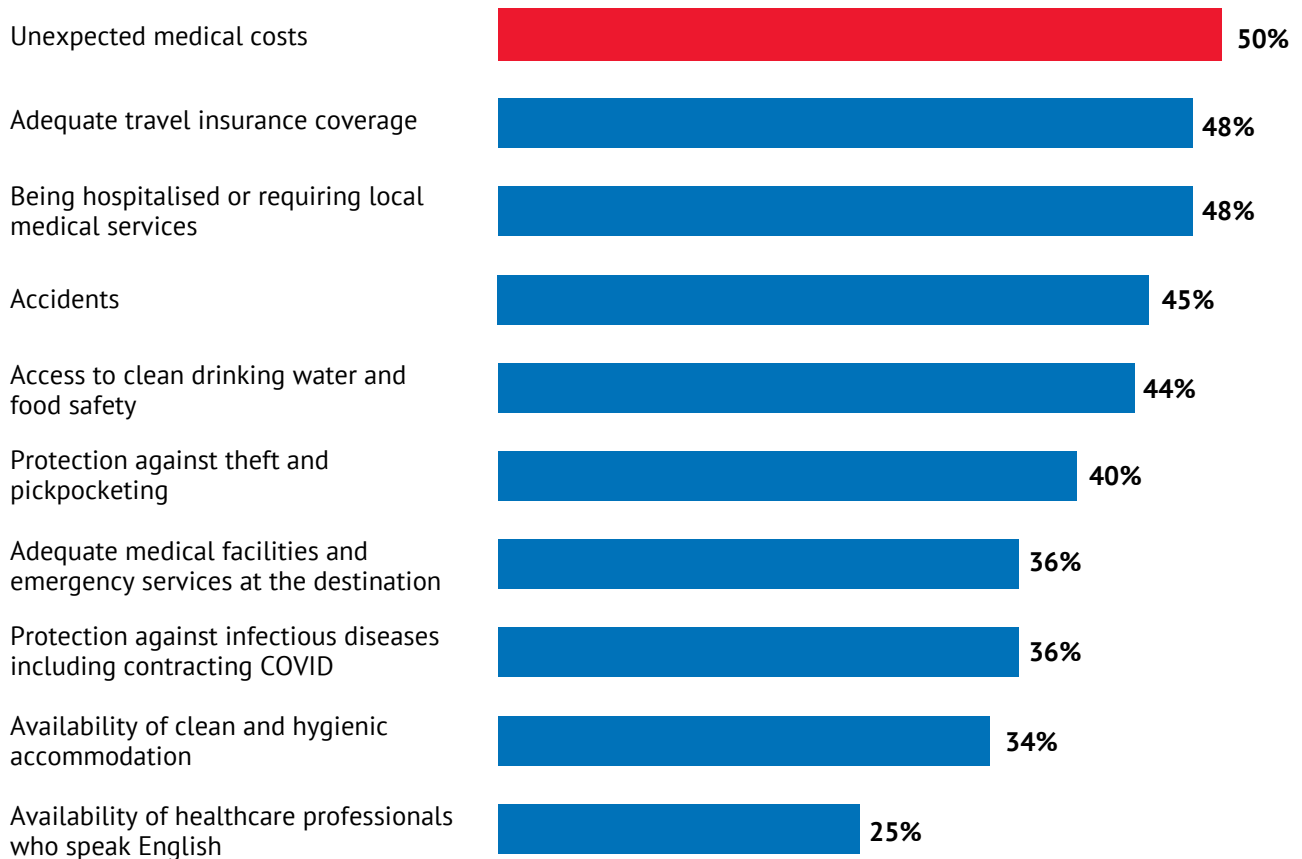


**Health and safety
considerations**

Greatest health and safety concerns

Only around 1 in 10 (12%) admit to being extremely or very concerned for their health when planning holidays. Just over 1 in 3 (34%) are somewhat concerned and over 1 in 2 (54%) are only minimally concerned or not concerned at all.

What are your top health and safety concerns around travel?

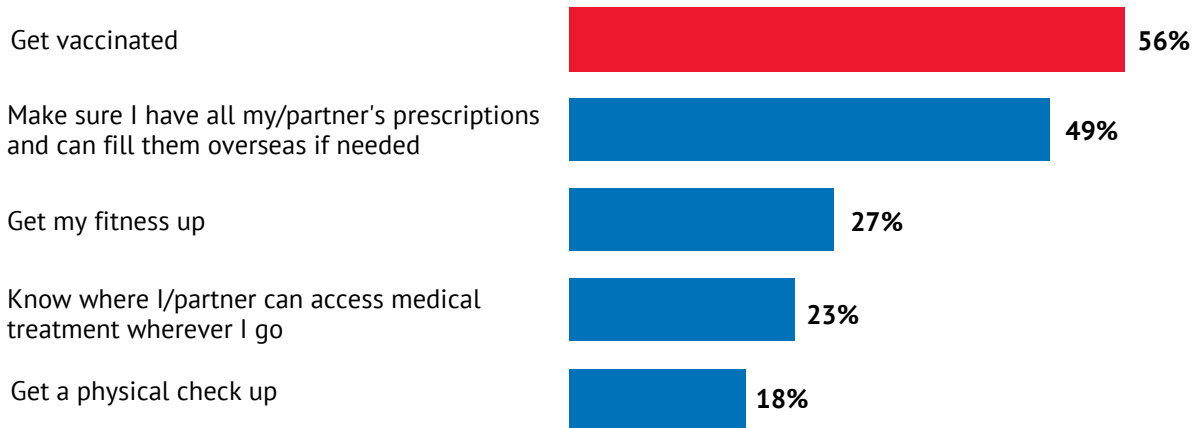


*Multiple responses allowed. Top 10 responses only.

The top concerns around health and safety when travelling include unexpected medical costs (50%), adequate travel insurance (48%) and being hospitalised or needing local medical services (48%).

Health preparations

What kind of preparation do you typically make for your health before travelling?



*Multiple responses allowed. Top 5 responses only.

More than 4 in 5 (84%) have prepared in some way for their health before travelling - most commonly getting vaccinated (56%) and making sure prescriptions are filled (49%).

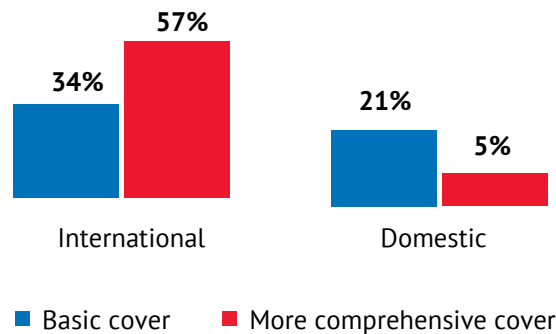
For two thirds of people (63%), COVID-19 does not have any impact on their travel plans.

Around 2 in 5 (42%) say that world events do moderately or significantly impact holiday travel plans.

The role of travel insurance

More than 1 in 2 (56%) say they plan to cover medical expenses using comprehensive travel insurance. The second most popular option is putting it on the credit card (45%).

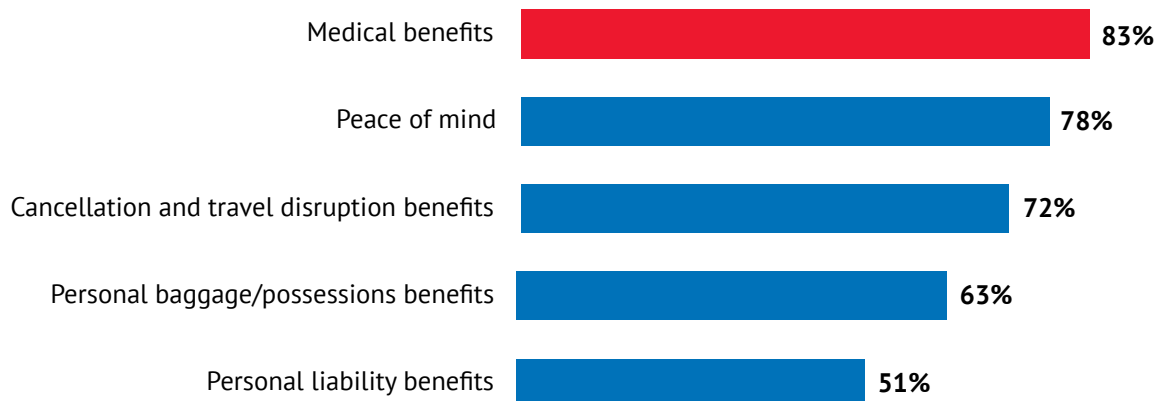
When travelling, do you get travel insurance?



Around 9 in 10 (91%) opt for international travel insurance while only 1 in 4 (25%) opt for domestic travel insurance.

For those that get travel insurance, only just over 3 in 5 (62%) are very or extremely confident about having adequate cover.

What are your greatest reasons for getting travel insurance?



*Multiple responses allowed. Top 5 responses only. n=468 who opt for travel insurance

Medical benefits (83%), peace of mind (78%) as well as cancellation and travel disruption (72%) are the top reasons for opting into travel insurance.



*More of the
New Zealand Seniors
Series coming soon...*

About New Zealand Seniors

New Zealand Seniors offers cost-effective financial products that help people protect what's most important to them. We place our customers at the heart of everything we do by providing trusted products that are simple to use and understand.

We are committed to identifying and developing services and products we believe protect and improve the wellbeing of all senior New Zealanders.

