



**WISHTRIP**  
Enterprise

**Insights into the Attitudes  
and Expectations  
of Visitors and Travelers  
During COVID-19**



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## Introduction

During the height of the Coronavirus pandemic, WishTrip conducted a study to assess people's attitudes about travel and leisure activities. The survey was conducted over a two week period in late April – early May. Although at the time, most countries around the world were in various stages of lockdown and international air travel had all but ceased, it was clear that eventually, restrictions would ease.

Around 10% of the world population works in the travel industry or in a field connected to it and this sector has been especially hard-hit by the pandemic. At some point, we can expect Governments to ease lockdown restrictions and permit destinations and attractions to reopen – perhaps under specific conditions. However even once it is permitted to operate, the industry will still have to work hard to convince the public that it is actually safe for them to return.

This survey aimed to get a snapshot into public attitudes towards returning to travel and leisure after the immediate threat of COVID-19 has receded in order that destinations and attractions can begin to plan strategies to build public confidence and entice visitors back. We believe that the data in this report will help destinations and attractions to more effectively plan for their reopening by better understanding their market and planning their marketing campaigns around it.



## Methodology

The survey was conducted online. It was distributed via email to users of the WishTrip app, promoted via WishTrip's social media accounts and publicized on Facebook via paid advertising.

The survey took 4-7 minutes to complete and the completion rate was 37%. The results in the following report reflect only those participants who completed the survey.

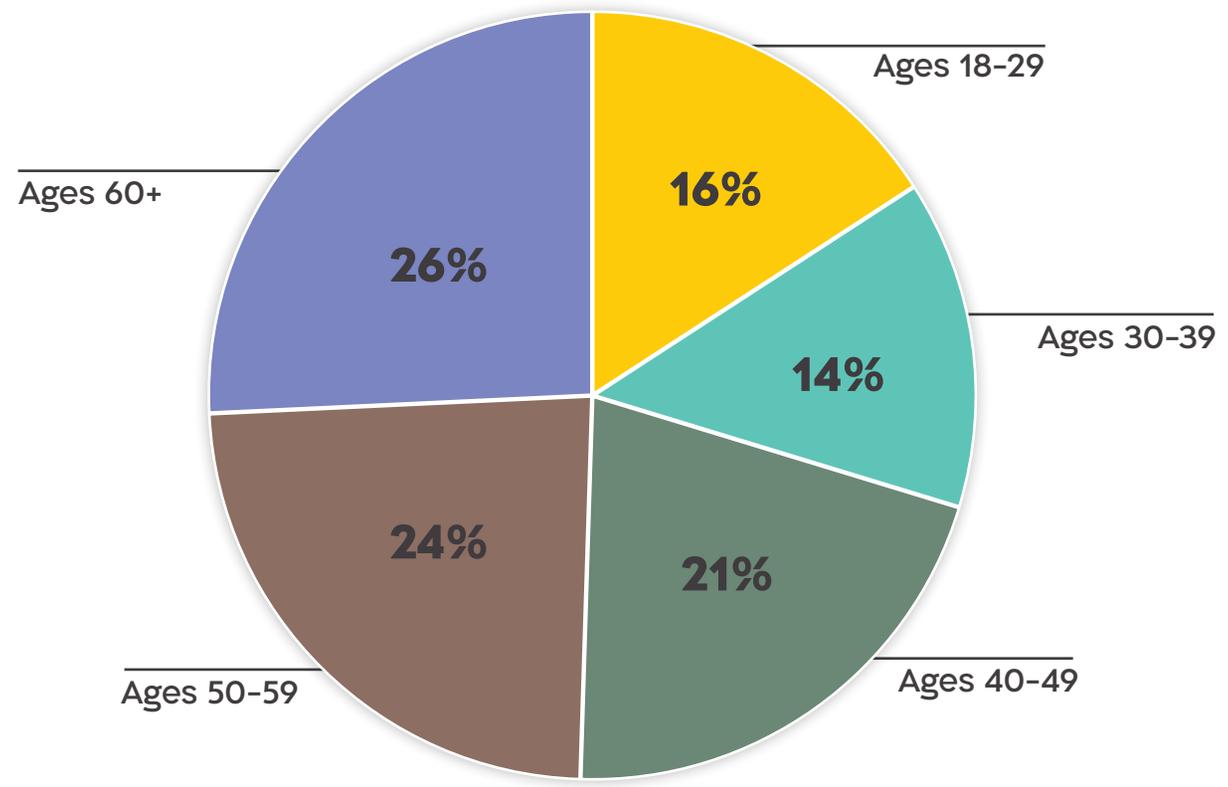


# About the Respondents



476 people completed the survey. They came from 58 different countries, spread over all continents and regions of the world. The largest number of respondents came from Israel and Canada.

Respondents were fairly evenly spread across age groups with a slightly higher rate of response among older age groups (Gen X and Boomers)





**80%**

**traveled internationally and 84% domestically at least once per year if not more often. Only 10% said they traveled rarely.**

**74%**

**described themselves as frequent travelers.**

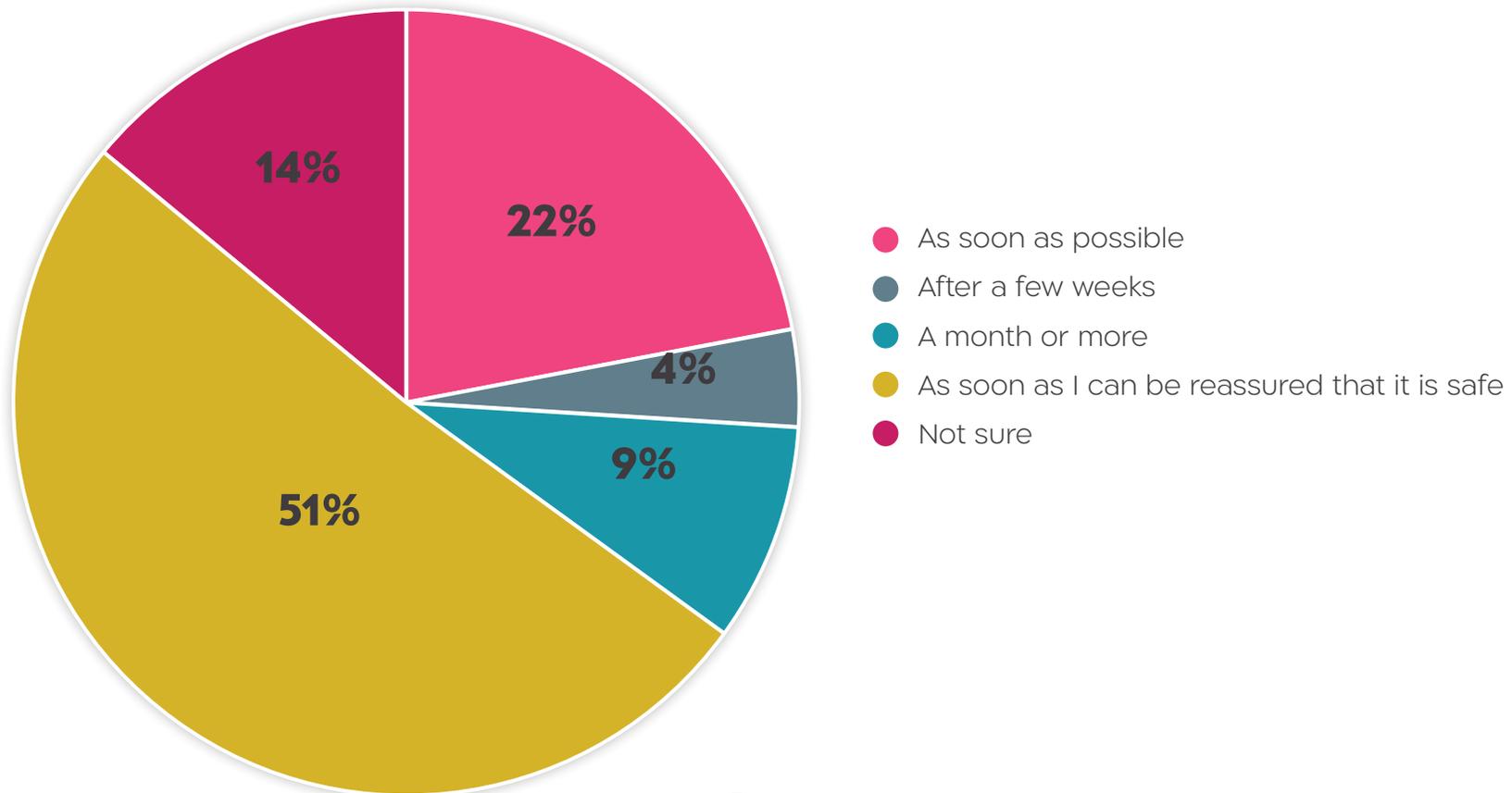
# Resuming travel – what kind of timeline can we expect?



We asked participants when they expected to resume travel domestically and internationally. We also asked when they planned to take flights and when they anticipated undertaking local day-trips. The majority of participants were responding to this question while they were in a full or partial lockdown.



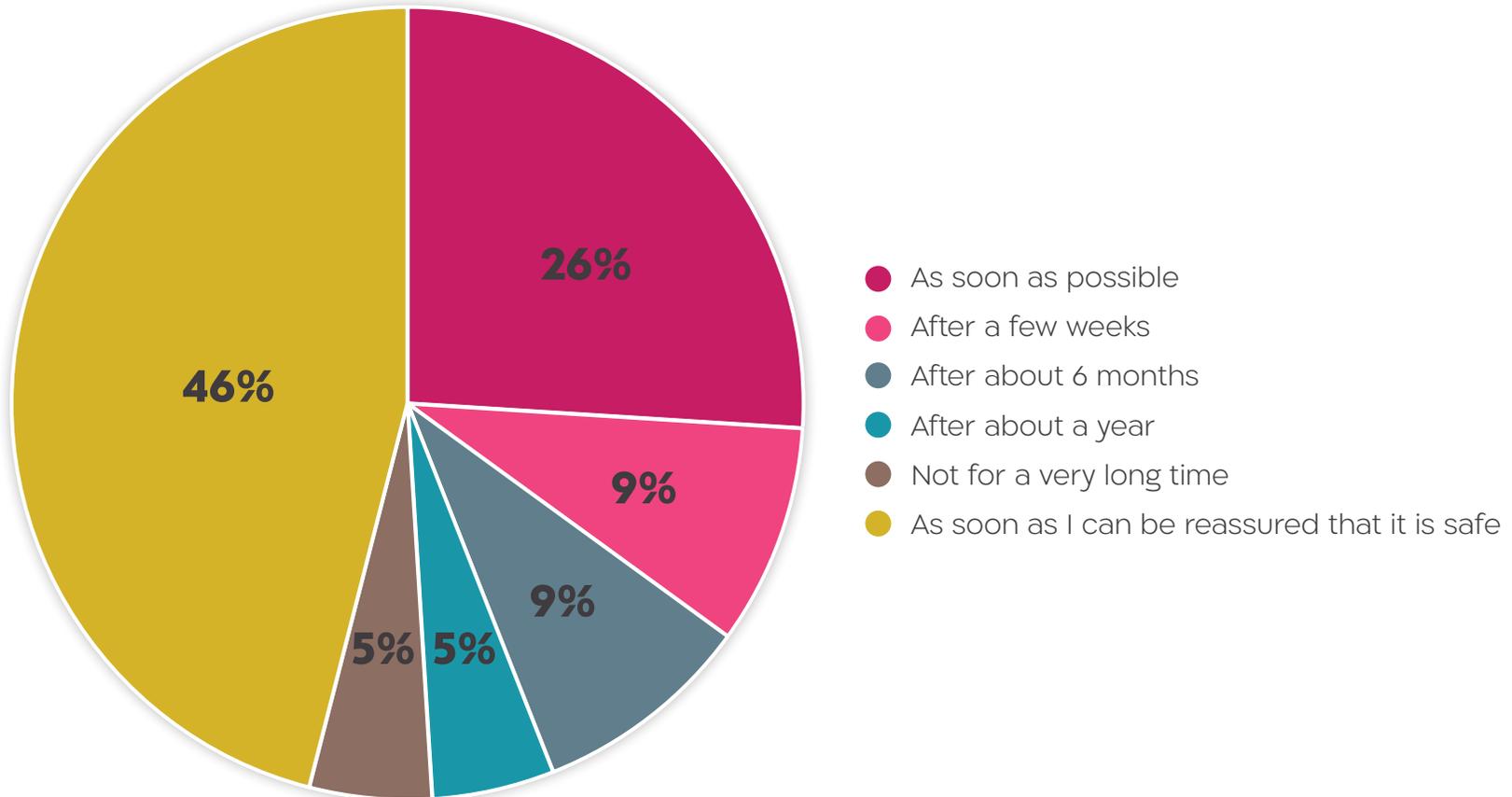
## When do you plan on taking your first outing once restrictions have been lifted?



# Resuming travel - what kind of timeline can we expect?



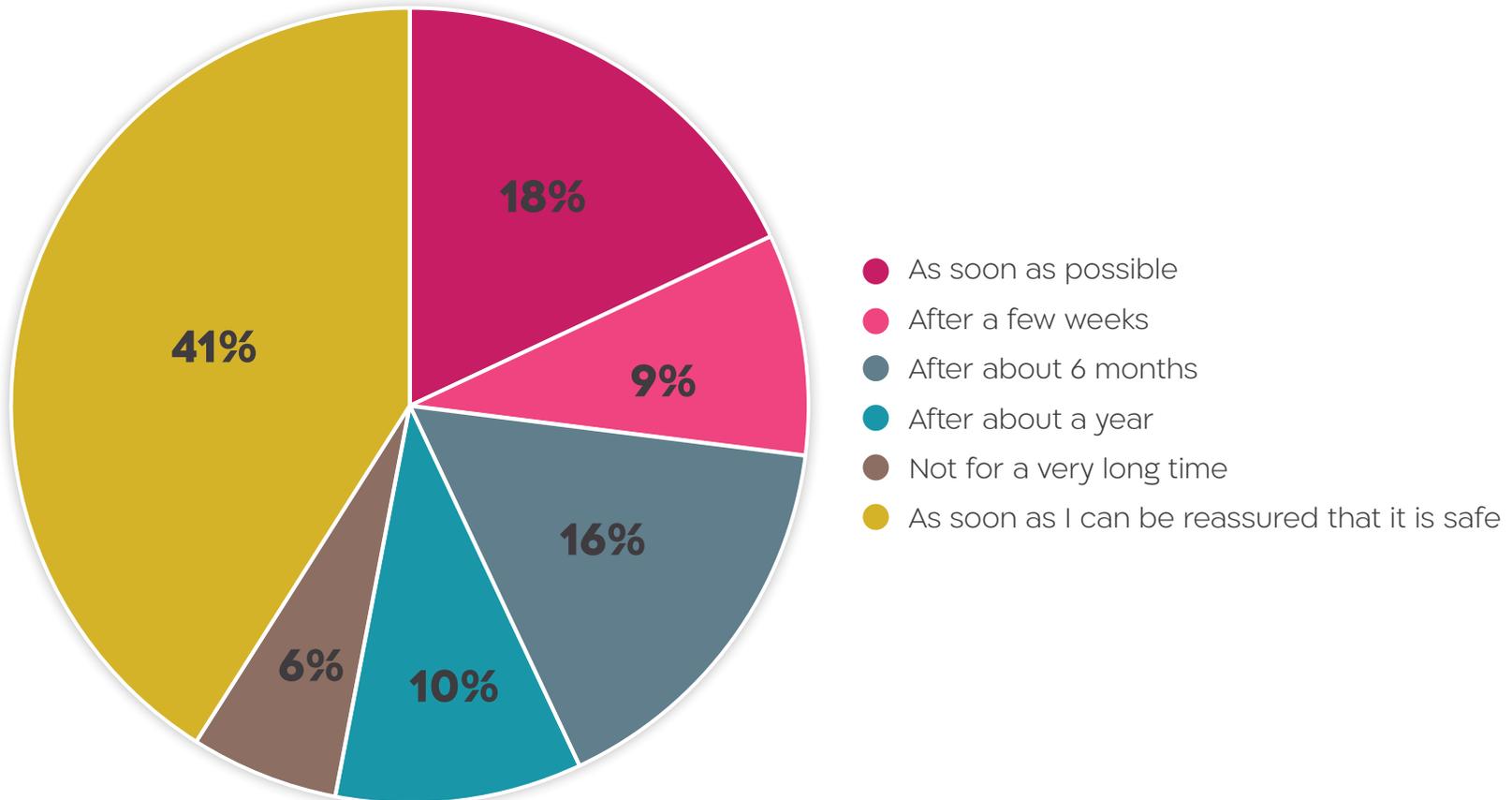
## When is the next time you plan on taking an overnight trip in-country?



# Resuming travel – what kind of timeline can we expect?

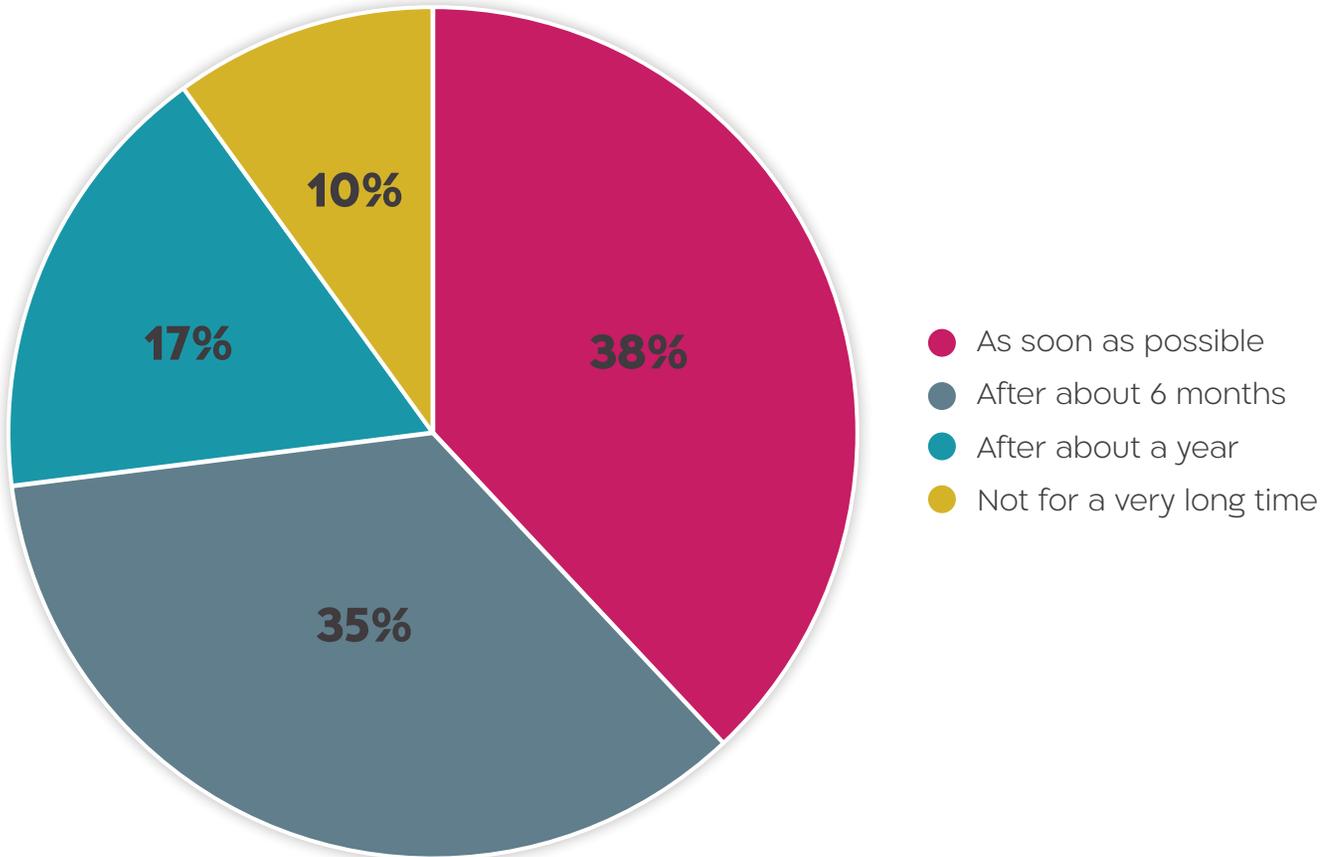


## How soon after borders reopen do you anticipate traveling abroad?





## When is the next time you intend to take a flight?





From people's responses, it was clear that they are **reserving judgment and looking for reassurance**. This suggests that this population is **persuadable**. With **strong education campaigns and social media messaging** outlining the measures they are taking to protect visitors, destinations and attractions can **rebuild confidence and entice their visitors back**.

There is a certain percentage of the population that is especially anxious to return to their normal travel habits at the **earliest opportunity**. This vanguard can be used to convince other, more wary travelers, that **it is safe**.

Despite all the public anxiety, the percentage of travelers who have been put off traveling for the foreseeable future is actually very small. In general, only **5-6%** said they don't anticipate returning to travel for a very long time (10% for air travel). **Most people expect to be traveling again within a year if not sooner**. Despite the absolute devastation in the travel industry, this may suggest that **recovery could actually be faster than many anticipate**. This would be consistent with experiences from previous, more localized, epidemics like SARS.

# What kind of destinations and attractions are people looking to visit in the future?



We asked people if they were more or less likely to visit certain kinds of destinations and attractions in the future. Many of the results were predictable. Only 24% of people planned to visit indoor attractions after lockdown restrictions were lifted, which leaves an obvious opportunity for outdoor attractions such as National Parks and Nature Reserves.

When asked if they were more or less likely to visit certain kinds of attractions, parks and reserves, beaches, archeological and historical sites, city destinations and hotel resorts had net positive responses. Whereas museums, theme parks, zoos, cruises and ski resorts had net negative responses. Cruises were the destination that people most wished to avoid which is unsurprising given all the negative publicity around the transmission of COVID-19 on cruise ships.

Overall, however,  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of respondents said that they anticipated no change in choosing the destinations or attractions they would visit as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.



# What kind of destinations and attractions are people looking to visit in the future?



|   | <b>% more likely</b> | <b>% less likely</b> | <b>% no change</b> |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Cruises</b>                            | 18                   | 52                   | 30                 |
| <b>Ski resorts</b>                        | 14                   | 49                   | 37                 |
| <b>Zoos</b>                               | 17                   | 40                   | 42                 |
| <b>Theme Parks</b>                        | 26                   | 38                   | 36                 |
| <b>Museums</b>                            | 20                   | 29                   | 51                 |
| <b>Hotel resorts</b>                      | 33                   | 27                   | 40                 |
| <b>City Tourism</b>                       | 37                   | 23                   | 40                 |
| <b>Beaches</b>                            | 44                   | 20                   | 36                 |
| <b>Archeological and Historical Sites</b> | 32                   | 20                   | 48                 |
| <b>Parks and Reserves</b>                 | 53                   | 9                    | 38                 |

# National Parks, Nature Reserves and Historical Sites



Unsurprisingly these destinations are likely to have the easiest time attracting back visitors. They may even actually benefit from the restrictions and the anxiety with so many people suffering from cabin fever after a prolonged lockdown but also looking to avoid indoor or crowded attractions. Since parks, nature reserves and historical sites are typically large open low-touch spaces they are likely to have an easier time implementing required distancing and hygiene measures.

Recommendations:

- Aggressively market yourself as a venue for safe travel experiences
- Target local residents looking to get outdoors following lockdown.





One of the more surprising results was how many people (40%) considered themselves less likely to visit zoos following the lockdown. On the one hand, zoos are generally large outdoor low-touch spaces. On the other hand, they are often crowded which may be putting people off.

Recommendations:

- Target local families in your outreach efforts. Perhaps market special offers to locals.
- Launch an education campaign to explain why you are a safe venue. Emphasize the open spaces and the crowd control measures you are implementing.



# Theme parks



Like Zoos, theme-parks are suffering from negative attitudes from potential visitors. Theme parks are often crowded, high-touch locations and are designed around lengthy queue times. Implementing safety measures is more complicated here than almost any other attraction.

Recommendations:

- Working together with other theme parks will be most effective for everyone. Coordinate your safety measures and share ideas for implementing social distancing. Pool resources and launch joint social media and marketing campaigns to convince the public that it is safe to return.
- Theme parks have some of the most loyal visitors. Target these 'regulars' with loyalty bonuses to draw them back in. They will then attract other visitors.



# Urban travel



**37%** of people consider themselves more likely to visit urban destinations than before the pandemic. Urban destinations usually combine indoor and outdoor activities for visitors. **79%** of people say they are more likely to travel independently than book a group trip. Urban destinations are particularly well suited for independent travelers.

Recommendations:

- Since it may take a long time until international borders open, focus your attention on local residents. When was the last time a Venetian visited St. Mark's Square or a New Yorker went to the Empire State Building? Remind people what they may have forgotten about their own city or show them a side of it that they never knew. In all likelihood, people may think they already know their own city so help them see that even they have something new to see and experience. For especially popular tourist cities you can appeal to people's civic pride and responsibility (support your local tourist industry) and offer a rare opportunity for them to experience their own city without all the tourists that are usually there.



# Urban travel



- Focus on bringing more of the city outside. Project light-shows onto famous buildings, have museums bring their collections outdoors for temporary exhibitions, close off streets to traffic during evening hours and allow restaurants to place their tables in the street so people can eat outdoors. Be creative.
- Getting buy-in is critical. Work together with local businesses to share ideas and support each other.

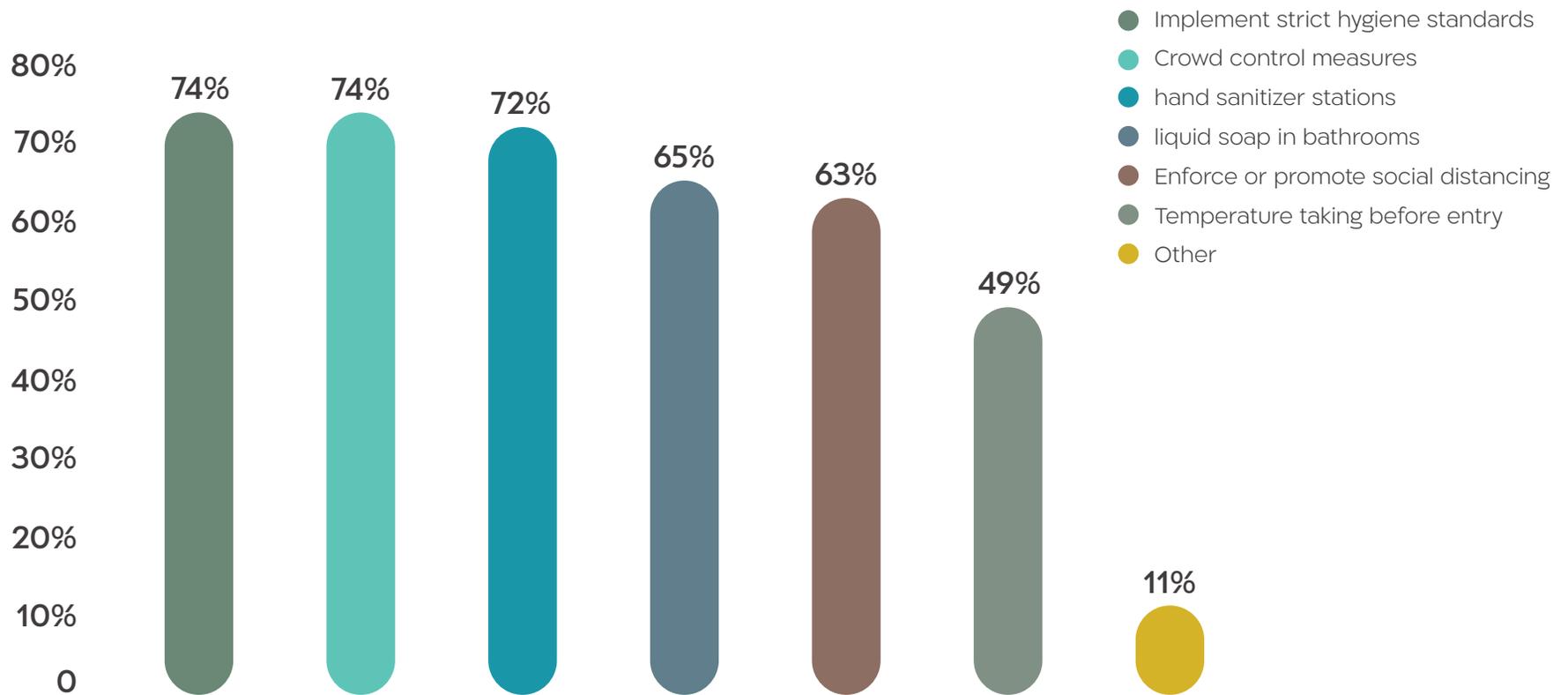


# Opportunities



People are looking to travel and get out but expect destinations to make changes to hygiene and social distancing practices.

## What safety and health precautions do you expect destinations to take on reopening after lockdown? (Check all that apply)





**41% of people expect to resume international travel, and 51% say they will begin to visit local destinations 'as soon as they can be reassured it is safe to do so'.** This represents a huge opportunity as it suggests that people are persuadable, perhaps even looking to be convinced. This means that drawing visitors back is not outside the control of individual destinations or industry groups. The implementation of serious social distancing, crowd control and hygiene measures combined with educational campaigns around these can reap dividends.

**22% intend to visit local destinations and attractions and 18% intend to travel abroad at the earliest opportunity.** The enthusiasm of this group can be leveraged to persuade more cautious people that it is time to return to travel destinations and attractions. Social media campaigns that make use of user-generated-content are likely to be especially effective in this regard as they will feel more authentic than paid and scripted advertising. News coverage can also spread this message.



## Conclusion

It is important to remember that while Governments may lift lockdown restrictions and permit destinations to reopen, they can not make people venture outdoors. After weeks and months of fear and anxiety, there will be considerable work to do to persuade people that the world is safe for them. The challenge is as much a psychological one as a logistical one.

While this has been an unprecedentedly difficult time for the travel and leisure industry worldwide, this report shows reasons to be optimistic. The industry has proved itself to be remarkably resilient in the past and there is every reason to believe that it will be so again.

