

# TRAVEL TRENDS IN ASIA FOR 2026

TOP REASONS FOR ASIANS TO TRAVEL IN 2026

**62%**  
Relaxation

**31%**  
Culinary experience

**25%**  
Cultural exploration

The dynamics of travel across Asia are undergoing a significant transformation, driven by structural and socioeconomic shifts. A rising middle-class with greater disposable income is fuelling demand for international leisure travel and diversified experiences. At the same time, streamlined visa regimes and the introduction of digital application systems are reducing barriers to mobility, resulting in more spontaneous and short-haul trips.

In addition, the expansion of regional flight networks — particularly through low-cost carriers and secondary airport connectivity — has broadened access to destinations that were previously underserved. This enhanced connectivity is reshaping travel choices, with consumers increasingly seeking an alternative to traditional tourism hubs.

As a result, travellers are looking beyond familiar hotspots to explore secondary cities, cultural centres and eco-tourism destinations. This shift reflects a growing preference for experience-driven tourism, encompassing wellness retreats, culinary journeys, adventure travel and sustainable lodging options.

Recent Agoda data shows searches for accommodation in secondary Asian cities have grown 15% faster than in traditional tourism hubs over the last two years. Secondary destinations accounted for 34% of total accommodation searches on Agoda in the first half of 2025. Forty-three per cent of travellers cited lower costs as their top reason to explore these destinations, while unique local culture, special promotions and outdoor activities were also key motivations.

Live music is a key driver. When Lady Gaga's exclusive Singapore concert in May was announced, Agoda recorded a 358% spike in accommodation searches. BLACKPINK's Bangkok concert series in October saw accommodation searches from Vietnam and Malaysia grow 266% and 107% respectively.

The report, conducted in October, draws on a survey of 3,353 Agoda customers from nine key Asia-Pacific markets (India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam). The data indicates a clear trend towards cost-conscious, experience-driven travel, with secondary cities emerging as strong contenders to traditional hubs. This shift presents opportunities for hospitality operators, tourism boards and investors to capture demand by enhancing infrastructure, promoting cultural assets and tailoring offerings to value-seeking travellers.

The survey found that almost half of Malaysian travellers plan to travel more domestically than internationally, which bodes well for Visit Malaysia 2026. The top three travel motivations are relaxation, culinary experience and shopping. Aside from that, Malaysians are AI-friendly, with 59% likely to use AI to plan their next trip. Interestingly, Malaysians are the biggest deal-seekers for accommodation in Asia, with plans to take trips lasting from four to seven days.

The following is a snapshot of the report.

## KEY INSIGHTS:

### 1 Price remains key

When it comes to choosing an accommodation, price remains the deciding factor. As travellers become more discount-savvy, great deals are opening the door to more experiences, more destinations and more memories made along the way.

### 3 Experiential travel becomes mainstream

From concerts to food trips, travellers today are seeking immersive experiences that create lasting memories instead of simply ticking off destinations.

### 5 AI innovation and the convergence of travel services

The lines between searching, planning and booking are blurring. Travellers increasingly expect a single platform to handle accommodations, flights, activities and ground transportation, and AI is making that convergence possible.

### 2 Secondary destinations are on the rise

No longer fringe options, secondary destinations are rapidly emerging as preferred choices for travellers seeking authenticity and immersive cultural experiences.

### 4 Friction continues to be removed in Asia's travel landscape

In Asia, there appears to be a conscious reduction of friction across air travel infrastructure, visa policy and digital finance — paving the way for intra-regional and international tourism to reap the rewards in 2026 and beyond.

## ACCESSIBILITY DRIVES DISCOVERY

How visa-free access could reshape travel choices

**61%**

I would consider visiting new destinations that currently require a visa

**27%**

I would plan to visit the same destinations

**12%**

I'm not sure



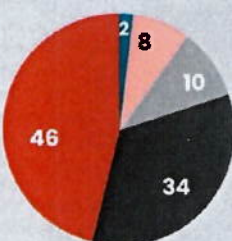
## TOP FACTORS INFLUENCING CHOICE OF SECONDARY DESTINATIONS

1 Lower costs

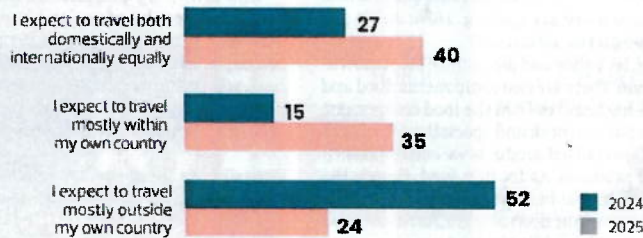
2 Unique cultural experiences

- Special promotions or discounts
- Nature and outdoor activities

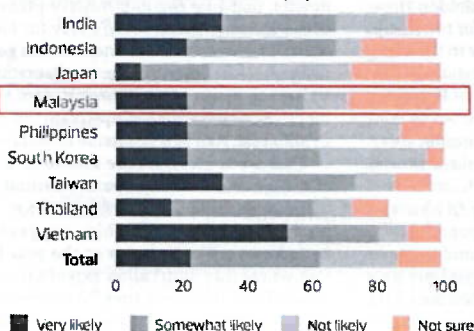
## LEVEL OF TRUST IN AI-GENERATED INFORMATION (%)



## DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL APPETITE AMONG ASIAN TRAVELLERS (%)



## HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO USE AI TO PLAN YOUR NEXT TRIP? (%)



## THE MALAYSIAN TRAVELLER IN 2026

47% of Malaysian travellers plan to travel more domestically than internationally

### MALAYSIA

The Visit Malaysia 2026 campaign exemplifies targeted efforts to improve accessibility, infrastructure and marketing support for emerging cities

Malaysian travellers who are AI-savvy (59%) are likely to use AI to plan their next trip

Malaysian travellers are the biggest deal-seekers for accommodation in Asia. 64% plan to spend up to US\$50 per night.

The average Malaysian traveller plans to take trips lasting four to seven days, primarily with family (59%) or with a spouse or partner (28%)

