

# INCREASING INTEREST IN TRAVEL TO EUROPE FROM LONG-DISTANCE MARKETS



A recent European Travel Commission (ETC) study found that travelers traveling long distances are still very interested in exploring European destinations this fall. The study surveyed travelers from China, Japan, Australia, the United States, Canada, and Brazil. It found that travel intentions were holding steady or increasing compared to last year.

The study found that China saw the most significant increase in interest in traveling to Europe, with 74% of respondents intending to visit a European destination between September and December 2023. This represents a 10 % increase compared to 2022 and a nine-point increase compared to 2019.

Australia and Brazil, however, recorded a slight decrease in travel intentions to Europe compared to last year. Australia saw a three-point decline, which could be due to increased interest in exploring other destinations and the southern hemisphere summer season, which makes domestic travel more attractive. Meanwhile, Brazil also recorded a three-point drop, but sentiment remains strong, with over half (52%) of respondents expressing a desire to travel to Europe.

The USA and Canada also saw a decrease in European travel intentions. This was due to three and two percentage points decreases compared to the same period in the previous year. However, these numbers still exceed pre-pandemic figures. 41% of Americans intend to travel to Europe, while Canadians have a 38% preference for Europe.

Finally, Japanese respondents showed a significant increase in their intention to travel to Europe, up 12 percentage points from the same period in 2022. However, they remain the most reserved among all markets surveyed, with only 25% intending to visit Europe in the coming months.

## **The main obstacle to long-distance travel to Europe is inflation**

Although the desire to travel to Europe is solid, high prices are a significant obstacle for prospective travelers in all six markets. In particular, Brazil and Australia have the highest percentage of travelers, 45% and 40%, who are discouraged from European vacations due to high costs.

To cope with rising travel costs, tourists adopt new strategies to maximize their experience while staying within budget. The most popular method is to reduce shopping expenses (35%), especially among respondents from Canada, Australia, and Japan.

ETC observes new spending patterns, including loyalty programs and affordable all-inclusive packages. 30% of market respondents consider these options especially popular in Brazil and China.

## **Culture and History Attract European Travelers**

Culture and history are considered Europe's most prominent tourist attractions in the five markets surveyed. The only exception is China, where travelers are more interested in gastronomic and urban experiences than culture and history.

This fall, iconic European landmarks are popular with long-haul travelers. Compared to last year,

more respondents (+6%) expressed interest in visiting destinations home to such milestones.

The ETC report suggests favorable weather conditions are another essential factor in choosing a destination. Chinese tourists (39%) consider weather conditions the most important factor, followed by Australians and Brazilians (34%).

### **Favorite Transport Modes**

It's interesting to note that Australian travelers have recently shifted their preferred modes of transport when traveling between European destinations. Although air travel remains the most popular choice, there has been an increase of 8% in interest in rail passes and a slight uptick of 2% in bus travel.

For Canadian tourists, rail travel is still the preferred mode of transportation. About 34% of respondents are inclined to purchase a rail pass, and 32% are interested in at least a single rail ticket. U.S. travelers, who historically preferred air travel, are also attracted to rail travel and efficiency.

While rail remains a strong option, low-cost flights are the most popular mode of transportation. Brazilians have traditionally preferred rail travel, but the popularity of air travel is growing. Interest in low-cost flights has increased by 13% in the Brazilian market. The same trend can be seen in the Canadian market, where low-cost flights have increased by 9%. Australian travelers have shown a significant shift in their preferred modes of transport between destinations. While air travel remains the predominant choice, rail passes have notably increased (+8%). In addition, there has been a slight uptick in bus travel (+2%).

For Canadian tourists, rail remains the preferred mode of transportation. 34% of respondents were inclined to purchase a rail pass, and 32% were interested in at least a single rail ticket. U.S. travelers are also attracted to rail travel and the efficiency of travel times despite having traditionally preferred air travel.

Although rail holds a strong position, low-cost flights are the most popular. For Brazilians, rail has traditionally been the preferred option, but air travel is gaining popularity, with interest in low-cost flights increasing by 13% in the Brazilian market. The same trend is seen in the Canadian market, where the popularity of low-cost flights increased by 9%.

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