

Journeys for All

An Expedia Group Study
on Inclusion in Travel

Produced by APCO



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An invitation to action

At Expedia Group, we operate with a core belief: travel is a force for good. We believe everyone should be able to experience the joy of travel and its unique ability to strengthen connections, broaden horizons, and bridge divides.

In 2022, we launched Expedia Group's Open World™ social impact and sustainability strategy to begin addressing inequities across the travel industry and democratizing access for all travelers. Our journey toward a more inclusive travel industry is the focus for this study.

This original research seeks to identify shared travel challenges of underserved groups, including Black, Latino, LGBTQIA+, and travelers with disabilities. By examining the planning and experience of their journeys, we've identified persistent pain points that need immediate attention and action. We've also included recommendations for how to address those pain points, based directly on these firsthand insights.

What we learn in this study invites us as an industry to create more inclusive travel experiences together. Not only is it the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do. This study demonstrates what we've long known to be true: embedding inclusive practices across our products and services does more than enhance brand appeal and loyalty. It creates significant growth opportunities by meeting the needs of more travelers. Companies and partners that take the time to meet these needs stand to gain the most.

Addressing these issues not only helps those directly affected; it benefits everyone by facilitating a better understanding among people across backgrounds and cultures. These challenges require a unified industry effort to ensure travel is enabled, encouraged, and championed for everyone, everywhere. And they present the opportunity for us and our partners, in alignment with our Open World™ framework, to innovate across the travel sector.

We invite you to discover how we can drive this change together by visiting <https://www.expediagroup.com/travel-with-us>. As an industry, we can create a more inclusive and accessible global travel ecosystem.

Thank you for joining us on this journey toward a more open world.



Greg Schulze
Chief Commercial Officer and President,
Travel Partnerships and Media, Expedia Group



Overview



Introduction

The travel industry has long been a driver of economic growth and cultural exchange, connecting people from diverse backgrounds and fostering a sense of joy and community. However, not all people have equal access to the benefits of travel. These underserved travelers are individuals or groups who face significant barriers to accessing products or services due to a variety of factors including race, ethnicity, gender and sexual identity, disability, economic status, and geographic location. These barriers often intersect and can result from systemic inequalities, discriminatory practices, economic constraints, and insufficient or inadequately designed infrastructure.

Although underserved travelers are already exploring the world, the travel industry must recognize the immense potential in enabling more inclusive travel experiences. By addressing the barriers that hinder many from fully participating in travel, the industry can unlock a wealth of opportunities — not only in enhancing their journeys but also in expanding the traveler base. As underserved populations continue to grow, companies that prioritize making travel more accessible, welcoming, and enjoyable for these groups will cultivate lasting loyalty and reap the rewards of a more diverse travel ecosystem.

Recognizing this opportunity, as well as gaps in the research especially in understanding the experiences of travelers with intersectional identities, Expedia Group undertook a comprehensive study to examine the needs, preferences, and challenges of underserved travelers and to elevate their perspectives.

With a focus on barriers facing multiple population segments, we sought perspectives from four communities of underserved travelers: Black travelers, Latino travelers, LGBTQIA+ travelers, and travelers with disabilities. We also sought to understand the experiences of individuals with intersectional identities, examining race and ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability status to understand how these overlapping identities affect travel experiences.

Finally, this report includes recommendations for the industry based on these insights.

Approach

To achieve these goals and objectives, Expedia Group partnered with APCO Insight, an independent global opinion research and data advisory firm, to employ a multi-stage qualitative and quantitative study.

- 1. Background research:** Landscape analysis revealed that intersectional identities are an under-explored area in travel research, with information about different traveler groups often being siloed.
- 2. Focus groups:** APCO conducted focus groups between February and March 2024 with underserved travelers, focusing on Black, Latino, LGBTQIA+, and travelers with disabilities.
- 3. In-depth interviews:** APCO interviewed travel industry leaders to identify barriers and potential solutions for improving experiences for underserved communities and how to facilitate greater action and collaboration across the industry.

4. Large-scale survey: APCO administered an online survey between March and April 2024, among 2,811 respondents to gather data on travel behaviors, preferences, challenges, and perceptions of inclusion, focusing on the United States for this initial study.

- This included 2,000 respondents from the general population, selected to reflect the U.S. population according to the U.S. Census based on characteristics such as age, gender and sexual identity, and race and ethnicity.
- To deepen understanding of underserved groups, respondents also included Black travelers, Latino travelers, LGBTQIA+ travelers, and travelers with disabilities. To gauge how travel experiences differ for underserved travelers, APCO compared their results to that of the general U.S. population (which is referred to as “general population” in this report).
- The survey was available in both English and Spanish, and data were weighted to be representative of the U.S. adult population.
- Eligible respondents were between 18 and 64 years of age, resided in the United States and had taken a leisure trip within the past 12 months where they were the primary decision-maker or shared in the decision-making process for travel arrangements.

Definitions

Code-switching: Involves adjusting one's style of speech, appearance, behavior, and expression in ways that will optimize the comfort of others in exchange for fair treatment, quality service, and employment opportunities.

Gender-expansive: An umbrella term for those who do not follow gender stereotypes or who expand ideas of gender expression or gender identity. People of any gender identity can be gender expansive.

General population: Refers to a sample of survey respondents that is representative of the demographic composition of the U.S. population.

Diversity: Representing travelers of all abilities, ages, bodies, gender identities, races, religions, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic status.

Inclusion: The practice of allowing diversity and local cultures and communities to thrive, while ensuring equitable access to travel for all. Inclusion also reflects an understanding of the role of intersectional identities, recognizing all people as complex individuals with unique experiences.

Inclusive booking features: Refers to a set of functionalities within travel booking platforms that enhance accessibility and personalization for diverse user groups. These features are designed to reflect and address the varied needs and preferences of travelers from different backgrounds, ensuring that everyone can navigate and utilize these services effectively.

Intersectionality: A concept that examines how overlapping social identities, such as race and ethnicity, gender identity, economic status, and sexual orientation interact to create distinct experiences of privilege and discrimination. An intersectional approach helps in understanding the multifaceted experiences of individuals belonging to multiple underserved groups.

Underserved travelers: Individuals or groups who face significant barriers to accessing products or services due to a variety of factors including, but not limited to, their race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, economic status, or geographic location. These barriers can result from systemic inequalities, discriminatory practices, economic constraints, and insufficient or inadequately designed infrastructure.



Executive Summary

Key Highlights

86%

of underserved travelers prioritize finding destinations where they feel safe

80%

of underserved travelers prioritize destinations where they feel welcomed

70%

of underserved travelers are more likely to plan trips when they see themselves in travel ads and promotions

15%

of underserved travelers feel very well represented in travel ads and promotions

68%

of underserved travelers want advanced filters for accessibility features when booking online



Underserved communities represent a growing segment of the U.S. population, yet they face issues that make it more difficult for them to reap the benefits of travel.

These travelers plan leisure trips for the same reasons as the general population, sharing the need for rejuvenation and enjoyment through travel. However, these travelers too often encounter challenges that negatively impact their travel experiences. These challenges are augmented among travelers with intersectional identities and include very real concerns about finding safe and accepting travel environments.

This study examines the experiences of Black, Latino, and LGBTQIA+ travelers as well as travelers with disabilities. Though each group has some needs that are specific to their identities, this study identifies a set of common priorities for underserved travelers as a whole:

Safety and belonging: Underserved travelers prioritize finding destinations where they feel safe and welcomed and want to choose travel companies whose employees treat them fairly and with respect.

Authentic representation: Underserved travelers are more likely to plan trips when they are authentically represented in travel ads, yet only a minority currently feel well represented; they also seek diversity among the travel industry employees with whom they interact.

Accessibility: While essential for travelers with disabilities, accessibility in terms of physical structures and robust and accurate informative content is also highly sought after by other underserved travelers.

Co-create with the community: Engage underserved travelers from the start to integrate their insights to shape meaningful solutions.

Embrace universal design to benefit everyone: Design inclusive products that meet diverse needs, thereby raising the bar for accessibility and enhancing the experience for all travelers.

Mirror customer diversity: Build diverse teams to better understand and serve the broad spectrum of customers.

Ensure representation and resonance: Produce content that fosters a sense of connection and understanding among travelers of all backgrounds.

This research highlights a noticeable demand among these communities for greater inclusion throughout stages of their travel, from pre-travel planning to in-person interactions at their destinations. Underserved travelers demonstrate a strong preference for brands that publicly support diversity and inclusion, showing favor toward such brands, higher likelihood of repeat bookings, and loyalty program participation.

The principles outlined in this paper are a starting point to provide data-informed guidance for the industry to work together in providing a universally welcoming travel experience.

By integrating an inclusive focus throughout their operations, travel companies can enhance their brand appeal, deepen customer loyalty, and unlock new growth opportunities among these valuable customer segments.

To create meaningful and sustainable change that improves experiences for all travelers requires a collective effort from all corners of the travel industry. This intersectional study, with firsthand insights and actionable recommendations, invites the industry as a whole to address these barriers so more people can experience more joy in travel.

Chapter 1:

Insights Into Underserved Travelers' Journeys

Key Statistics

42%

of underserved travelers feel limited because of their identity when selecting destinations or activities

5+

hours extra time spent by underserved travelers on researching to ensure services and destinations are safe, welcoming, and accessible

70%

of underserved travelers are more likely to plan trips when they see themselves reflected in travel ads and promotions

73%

of underserved travelers are more likely to book repeatedly with companies that demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion

71%

of underserved travelers say it is important that travel company staff are trained in diversity and inclusion

Inclusion Is Good Economics

Embracing inclusion is not just best practice — it's smart business.

Underserved travelers make up a larger share of annual travelers and buying power. By 2040, the underserved population in the United States is projected to increase markedly¹ — with a correlating increase in their travel market impact:

- The Black population in the U.S. is projected to reach 50 million by 2040.
- The Latino population in the U.S. is projected to reach 81.6 million by 2040.
- The LGBTQIA+ 18+ population in the U.S. is projected to reach 64.4 million by 2040.²
- The U.S. 18+ population living with disabilities increased to 73.4 million in 2022.

“Diverse groups actually make up the average traveler demographic — more than people realize. These travelers are very much part of our core customer base.”

Lethabo-Thabo Royds, Head of Content & Programme, World Travel & Tourism Council

¹ All demographic data presented here refers to the United States population and is based on projections and characteristics sourced from the U.S. Census, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Human Rights Campaign.

² Population segment growth is attributed to multiple factors, including improved methods of data collection and increased visibility and acceptance for queer identities, leading to more young people openly identifying as LGBTQIA+.

Despite these projections, the travel industry is not keeping pace, and it's affecting the experience of underserved travelers. Evolving business strategies to enable more welcoming, inclusive travel experiences will help companies tap into an expanding market, build loyalty, and differentiate themselves in a competitive landscape. The result is improved traveler satisfaction and retention, increased market share, and future-proofed business.

“It’s critical to understand that creating a more equitable and inclusive industry can’t be viewed as ‘one more thing to do’ but, rather, as a foundational through line that informs everything we do as an industry. It’s our fundamental responsibility as leaders and good for business.”

Adam Burke, President and Chief Executive Officer, Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board

The Impact of Identity on Travel Experience

Regardless of identity, all travelers share similar goals for leisure travel. For both the general population and underserved travelers, the top three goals of leisure travel are relaxation, family bonding, and adventure.

They’re also seeking the same feelings and experiences in travel:

- **Escape:** Getting a change of scenery and away from day-to-day life
- **Cheerful:** Feeling happy and having fun
- **Rested:** Unplugging from the daily grind to recharge completely

However, 42% of underserved travelers say their identity impacts what travel options they choose and where they feel comfortable traveling, compared to 34% of the general population.

42% of underserved travelers say their identity impacts their travel options and where they feel comfortable traveling

Half of underserved travelers say their identity greatly influences their choice of destinations, compared to less than half (44%) of the general population. While identity significantly influences destination choice for underserved travelers, it carries much more weight among those with intersectional identities. At least half of Black (70%), Latino (68%), and LGBTQIA+ (50%) travelers with disabilities note their identity shapes their destination choices a lot.

We compared underserved travelers to the general population to identify meaningful differences in their experiences. The general population refers to a group of respondents who reflect the U.S. population in terms of age, gender, race, and ethnicity.

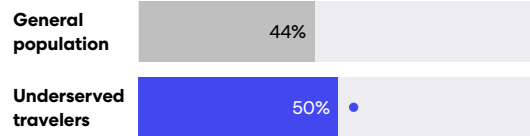
Likewise, with where to stay, nearly half (48%) of underserved travelers say their identity influences their choice of accommodations, compared to 42% of the general population. Again, this impact is compounded by intersectional identities, with 69% of Black and 67% of Latino travelers with disabilities feeling their identity impacts where they feel comfortable traveling or their choice of accommodations.

Identity also shapes how travelers move. At least two in five underserved travelers say their identity influences how they get to and travel around their destination.

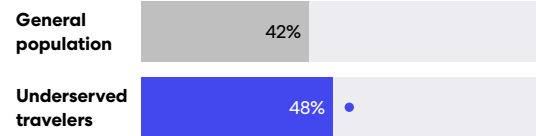
Influence of Identity on Travel Decisions

Percentage of travelers who say their identity influences their choices a lot.

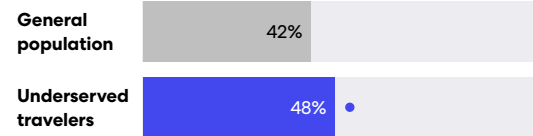
Destinations



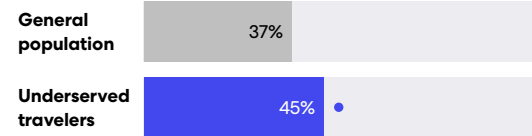
Activities and Experiences



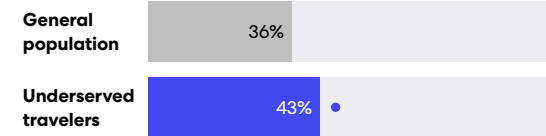
Accommodations



Transit to and From Destination



Transit at Destination



● Indicates underserved travelers are significantly more likely than the general population

Promoting Diverse and Inclusive Solutions

What a company publicly commits to can mean a lot to people. In fact, travelers prefer — and are more likely to stay engaged with — brands that champion diversity and inclusion.

It starts with brand preference. A majority (71%) of underserved travelers state a preference for brands that support diversity and inclusion initiatives, compared to 62% of the general population.

“You need to be in the spaces travelers are in. Work with the organizations they look to for inspiration. Work with community organizations. Look at social media and prominent voices in travel. That helps a lot because then you’re in front of the audience that you want to be in front of.”

Lethabo-Thabo Royds, Head of Content & Programme, World Travel & Tourism Council

Brand preference leads to repeat business. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of underserved travelers are more likely to book again with brands that promote diversity, and so is 62% of the general population.

Taken together, higher brand preference and repeat business result in higher engagement in loyalty programs. In fact, two-thirds (67%) of underserved travelers are more likely to participate in a loyalty program if the company actively promotes diversity and inclusion, as compared to 61% of the general population.

“Providing all who come through our doors with an authentic, warm welcome is at the heart of who we are. Our culture fosters an inclusive environment and a shared sense of belonging. To do good things externally, it’s important to have diverse representation internally. We strive to mirror the diversity of the world we serve, recognizing and celebrating differences to create an inclusive atmosphere for our guests—and for one another.”

Apoorva Gandhi, SVP, Multicultural Affairs, Social Impact and Business Councils, Marriott International

Impact of Promoting Diversity and Inclusion on Traveler Behavior



● Indicates underserved travelers are much more likely than the general population

What Commitment Means to Travelers

Through traveler focus groups, we gathered insights into what brand commitments to diversity and inclusion should look like. Underserved travelers — especially Black and LGBTQIA+ travelers — advocate for more people of color in key decision-making roles. Underserved travelers also call for enhanced diversity training with a focus on eliminating bias and zero-tolerance policies for service workers that engage in discriminatory behavior. For LGBTQIA+ travelers, this means equal treatment and a sense of safety and protection through all aspects of their journey, especially in feeling welcomed and respected.

“Solutions start with training, having the understanding of ‘let me try to learn from what that culture is experiencing. Let me try to learn the different nuances about them or the bad experience so I can avoid having a prejudged mentality about that individual.’ It starts with training and diversity.”

Focus Group Participant (Black, Straight Man)

“Just seeing more people of color, people who are LGBTQIA+, people in the industry as customer service people, more people we can hire into these places that are more representative can help.”

Focus Group Participant (Native American, White, LGBTQIA+ Person With a Disability)

Industry Recommendation

Examine each consumer touchpoint within your brand — from product features and marketing campaigns to community partnerships — and ensure they consistently reflect your commitment to diversity and inclusion. Actively demonstrate this commitment by showcasing how diverse staffing directly enhances the products and services you offer. Embrace every opportunity to forge authentic, resonant connections with underserved travelers, moving beyond mere transactions to create meaningful, loyalty-building interactions that genuinely reflect the values of these communities.





Desire for Authentic Representation in Travel Ads

Representation matters. And for underserved travelers, it can be the difference between traveling or staying home.

Underserved travelers (76%) are more likely than the general population (69%) to say it's important for travel ads to represent people like them. This affects the bottom line. Most underserved (70%) and general population (66%) travelers are more likely to plan a trip if they see themselves reflected in travel ads. However, only 16% of travelers — both underserved and general population — feel that travel promotions represent them very well. This shows an opportunity to improve representation in ads for all travelers.

This chasm deepens among travelers with intersectional identities. Even though LGBTQIA+ travelers with disabilities say seeing themselves represented in promotions makes them more likely to travel (76%), one in five (20%) say travel ads do not represent them at all.

“I usually try to [follow influencers] who are the same gender, around the same age. That way, I know maybe we'll have some things in common. Maybe I'll feel the same way that they feel.”

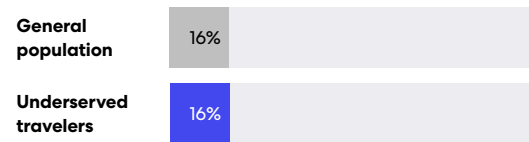
Focus Group Participant (Latina, Straight Person)

Representation in Travel Ads

When researching potential destinations, it is important travel ads and promotions reflect people like me



Travel ads and promotions represent me very well



Representation in travel ads and promotions make me more likely to plan a trip



● Indicates underserved travelers are much more likely than the general population

While 76% of underserved travelers find it important that travel ads and promotions reflect people like them, only 16% feel that ads represent them very well.

Industry Recommendation

Feature underserved travelers in advertising and promotions more frequently — and authentically. Audiences not only want to see people like them represented in content, but also want these depictions to match how they see themselves. All underserved traveler identity groups say that more and better representation will increase their likelihood of planning a trip. That means visibility not only fosters a sense of belonging and validation but will also help boost business.

Time Burden of Research and Planning

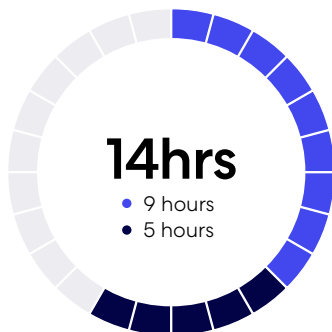
Time Burden

While both the general population and underserved travelers spend a similar amount of time on travel research and planning — nine hours on average — underserved travelers spend, on average, an additional five hours ensuring their destinations are safe, welcoming, and accommodating.

This extended investment is even more pronounced for those with intersectional identities. LGBTQIA+ Latino travelers invest 11 hours in planning, plus an extra nine to ensure destinations are welcoming. Similarly, LGBTQIA+ women typically spend 14 hours planning, with an additional eight hours vetting welcoming conditions.

Average time spent by underserved researching and planning for a trip

- Time spent researching and planning for a trip
- Extra time spent researching to ensure services and destinations are safe, welcoming, and accessible for people with your identity



This burden also extends to the logistics of accommodating disabilities. Black travelers with disabilities spend roughly 10 hours planning, with an additional eight hours for safety and accessibility checks. LGBTQIA+ travelers with disabilities dedicate around 16 hours to planning and another eight hours ensuring travel arrangements are safe, welcoming and accessible. This underscores the urgent need for inclusion in the collection and presentation of travel information to better meet traveler needs.

Priorities

When it comes to travel planning, the importance of specific information can significantly differ between groups, reflecting the nuanced needs of underserved travelers.

Across all demographics, travelers routinely turn to family and friends, search engines, and online booking platforms as their primary sources of information. Yet, underserved populations place a premium on contributions from their community.

Both general population and underserved travelers identify safety, value, and a welcoming atmosphere as their top priorities when researching and planning travel. However, the extent to which these factors are prioritized varies considerably. While safety is the top concern across traveler groups, the emphasis on being welcomed is particularly strong among underserved travelers (80%) when compared to the general population (75%). This is even more pronounced for those with intersectional identities, with 86% of Latina travelers and 96% of Black travelers with disabilities indicating feeling welcomed is important.



The distinct information needs of underserved travelers also extend to the type of content they value. For instance, more than half (56%) of underserved travelers say it is important to access reviews and recommendations from individuals who share their identity, an opinion that less than half (49%) of the general population shares.

Additionally, finding transit and accommodations that are accessible is important for underserved travelers, with nearly three-quarters (73%) indicating as much. The proportion of those who place importance on accessible transportation and accommodations continues to increase among travelers with intersectional identities. In fact, nearly nine in ten (89%) Latino travelers with disabilities say it's important.

Safety, belonging, and community support are particularly important among women, especially Black women and women with disabilities, indicating cross-sectional emphasis on ensuring environments are both safe and identity-affirming. This highlights a critical need for the travel industry to adapt and respond not only to generic preferences but also to the deeply ingrained necessities that vary across community intersections.

“I would really love to be connected to LGBTQIA+ centers in the areas that I’m traveling to because they are actually going to know all the answers.”

Focus Group Participant
(White, LGBTQIA+ Person With a Disability)

Importance of Each of the Following When Researching and Planning Travel

Finding a destination where you know you’ll be safe



Getting a good deal



Finding a destination where you know you’ll be welcome



Finding transit and accommodations that are accessible



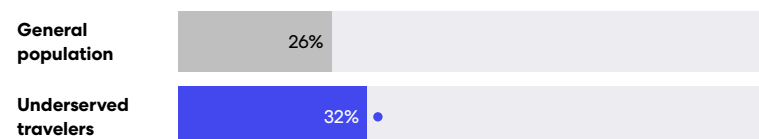
Choosing travel providers who you know will respect your identity



Getting reviews and recommendations from people who share your identity



Finding minority-owned businesses



• Indicates underserved travelers are much more likely than the general population

Industry Recommendation

To optimize research and planning for underserved travelers, develop user-friendly resources that address the key concerns of safety, belonging, and accessibility. Make these resources easy to find, navigate, and apply to help minimize the extensive time burden faced by underserved travelers. Strengthen travel search platforms by offering more comprehensive information relevant to underserved travelers, including reviews and recommendations from similar demographic profiles and ensuring content on accessibility is accurate.



Diversity and Inclusion on the Ground

Challenges Throughout the Journey

Underserved travelers face challenges beyond the typical travel stressors when transitioning to or from a destination and while at their destinations.

Latino travelers, more so than other travelers, face long wait times to speak to customer service during transit and when at the destination. More than one in three Latino travelers (35%) say they experience long wait times to speak to customer service when problems arise during transit, and more than one in five Latinos (23%) face long wait times when problems arise while at their destination. This issue is most common among Spanish-speaking Latinos.

Travelers with disabilities also face significant challenges throughout their journey. One in four (23%) say they encounter accessibility issues when traveling to and from their destination. Additionally, nearly one in five (17%) report travel providers' lack of awareness of their rights as a common obstacle — something that can significantly impact the travel experience and make these travelers particularly vulnerable to inequity in transit.

What These Obstacles Mean for Travelers

Through focus group discussions, travelers shed some light on the challenges they face. Underserved travelers recounted instances of feeling stereotyped and incurring unexpected financial burdens due to lack of industry awareness around disability rights and laws. Specific examples include undue intense security screenings and incorrect charges for service animals.

“I felt I was singled out one time at the airport. They brought me to the side and because of that, when I got to the hotel — I have a little goatee — I shaved. I shaved and tried to look like everybody else.”

Focus Group Participant (Latino, Straight Man)

“I get hassled every single time I check in with my service dog. And sometimes I’ll get extra billed because they put the animal on the bill and then I have to go back and be like, ‘It’s a service dog. You’re not supposed to bill me for that!’”

Focus Group Participant
(Asian, LGBTQIA+ Man With a Disability)

Authentic Expression and Safety

For many within the LGBTQIA+ community, the experience of traveling is overshadowed by the uncertainty of whether they can safely express their identity. Only 50% of LGBTQIA+ individuals feel consistently safe to be themselves at travel destinations, a stark contrast to the general population (78%).

The discrepancy highlights significant issues concerning honesty in destination marketing: Merely claiming to be open and welcoming without adopting and implementing inclusive policies and practices undermines the credibility of destination marketing. Inclusion must extend beyond surface-level assurances and be reflected in tangible actions and policies. Misrepresentation can lead to disillusionment and safety concerns among travelers who rely on these messages to guide their decisions.

Visible markers of safety and validation are also essential to pre-travel research and during the journey itself. Signs that indicate an environment is safe and inclusive can greatly reassure travelers, affecting their decision-making, from research to destination arrival.

“Safety and representation are crucial factors that the underrepresented traveler groups prioritize when researching and planning their experiences. They want to know if the destinations they consider will make them feel secure and if they’ll see others who resemble them. Additionally, they look for indicators of a welcoming environment, whether it’s through a website, reviews, or referrals.”

Sophia Hyder Hock, Chief Inclusion Officer,
Destinations International

Employee Diversity and Inclusion Training

Across all traveler demographics, respect and feeling welcomed are universally valued. However, underserved travelers notably emphasize the importance of fairness, non-discriminatory treatment, and interactions with well-trained, inclusive-minded employees. While most of the general population (73%) believes it is important not to be discriminated against based on their identity, this sentiment is even more pronounced among underserved travelers, with 79% emphasizing its importance. The importance of not being discriminated against is especially high among Black women travelers (87%), Latina travelers (85%) and Latino travelers with disabilities (94%).

More than half (58%) of the general population appreciates staff who are well-trained on diversity and inclusion, but the expectation is higher among underserved travelers, with 71% emphasizing its importance. This importance is even greater among Black (85%) and Latino travelers with disabilities (85%), underscoring an urgent need for comprehensive diversity and inclusion training. This training should not only focus on sensitivity but also on actionable knowledge and practices that support inclusion.

“I definitely think [treatment from staff] is totally dependent on your looks, and possibly how you sound.”

Focus Group Participant (Black, Straight Woman)

The desire for representation among staff differs significantly between the general population and underserved travelers. Only 41% of general population travelers see the importance of encountering employees who share their identity, compared to over half (53%) of underserved travelers.

What Employee Training Means for Travelers

Feedback from focus groups illustrates the challenges faced by underserved travelers due to insufficient employee training and awareness. Black travelers, who often have to be prepared for potential negative treatment, long for empathy and genuine communication without feeling the need to code-switch.

Travelers with disabilities frequently encounter obstacles, such as feeling as though they are treated as a burden, that stem from a lack of disability knowledge among employees. Despite giving service providers advance notice, these travelers often find providers unprepared, leading to significant inconvenience and unplanned expenses, such as when mobility aids are damaged.

“But you reach a point where you don’t want to be that guy who’s like, ‘Hey, that’s against the law,’ you start to make a scene and whatever. But I have had to do that.”

Focus Group Participant (Asian, LGBTQIA+ Man With a Disability)

Industry Recommendation

To enhance safety and belonging, particularly for those with disabilities and from the LGBTQIA+ community, adopt strategies that include rigorous staff training to heighten awareness of the rights and needs of diverse travelers. Recruit a workforce that reflects traveler diversity and may be more likely to better understand their needs. Enforce strict policies that ensure respect and equity and actively support local organizations that advocate for inclusive practices and underserved communities.

Expedia Group’s Inclusion Principles in Travel

Expedia Group is guided by a purpose to strengthen connections, broaden horizons, and bridge divides for our employees, partners, customers, and communities. We believe everyone should have a safe, welcoming, and joyful travel experience, no matter who they are or where they come from.

Four principles guide how we work both internally and beyond:

- 1. Co-create with the community:** Incorporate insights from underserved travelers at the outset of the planning process to design positive experiences and mitigate previous challenges.
- 2. Universal design benefits everyone:** Design products and experiences that genuinely reflect the lived experiences of underserved travelers to not only meet their specific needs but also enhance the experience for all travelers by setting higher standards of inclusion and accessibility.

3. Mirror customer diversity: Ensure team diversity mirrors customer diversity. Teams that bring together varying perspectives are better equipped to identify and mitigate unconscious bias, thereby reaching a broader audience and enhancing service delivery.

4. Ensure representation and resonance: Develop content that showcases diverse cultures and experiences. This helps travelers from all backgrounds feel connected and understood.

Chapter 2:

Black Travelers



Key Statistics

85%

believe finding destinations where they know they will be welcomed is a very important aspect of research and planning

71%

are more likely to plan a trip when they see themselves reflected in travel ads and promotions

70%

are more likely to prefer brands that publicly promote diversity and inclusion

84%

believe user reviews from people like them are an important booking feature

The travel experience for Black travelers is heavily shaped by how the industry and society respond to their identity. It influences everything from the selection of travel companies to the importance of representation as they pursue the joyful memories travel brings.

The Impact of Identity on Travel Experience

Black travelers say their identity both restricts their travel options and affects all aspects of their travel planning and experience — in selecting a destination, accommodations, and transportation.

They report facing challenges related to their identity in the planning phase, most notably in finding information. Nearly three-quarters (73%) agree that finding information necessary for planning travel should be easier. Plus, nearly half (41%) feel their identity limits their travel options and comfort in certain destinations, and nearly a third (31%) believe their identity prevents them from planning travel more frequently.

Furthermore, identity has a big impact on the decisions they make. More than half of Black travelers say their identity significantly influences their destinations (54%) and accommodations (52%). In addition, nearly half say it affects their choice of activities and experiences (49%) and means of transportation (44%) once at their destination.

73%

agree that finding information necessary for planning travel should be easier

41%

feel their identity limits their travel options and comfort in certain destinations

31%

believe their identity prevents them from planning travel more frequently



Promoting Diverse and Inclusive Solutions

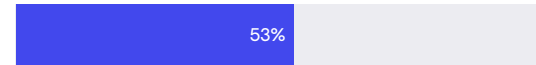
When it comes to travel loyalty, diversity and inclusion mean a lot. Black travelers demonstrate a pronounced preference for — and loyalty to — travel brands that explicitly support and promote diversity and inclusion. That brand preference translates into repeat bookings and higher engagement in loyalty programs.

More than two-thirds (70%) of Black travelers prefer companies that publicly support diversity and inclusion, while two-thirds are more likely to join or participate in their loyalty programs (67%) and book with them again (66%).

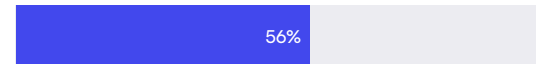
Impact of Promoting Diversity and Inclusion on Traveler Behavior

Transit Provider

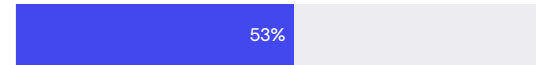
Book with them repeatedly



Prefer their brand over others

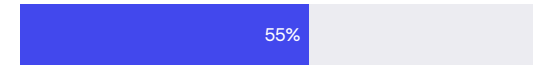


Join or stay active in their loyalty program

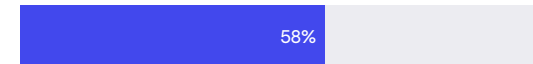


Accommodation Provider

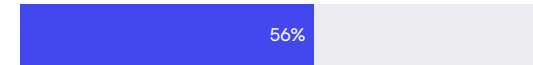
Book with them repeatedly



Prefer their brand over others

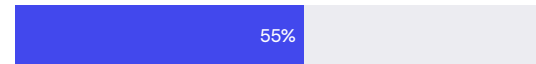


Join or stay active in their loyalty program

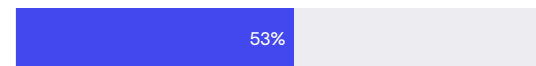


Experience Provider

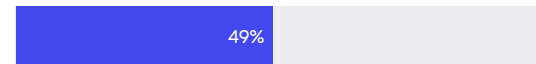
Book with them repeatedly



Prefer their brand over others

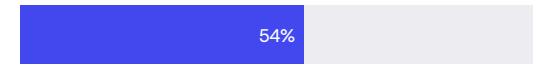


Join or stay active in their loyalty program

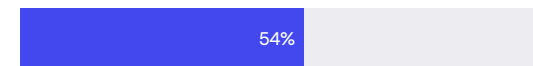


Online Travel Agency Provider

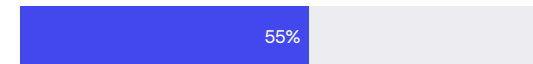
Book with them repeatedly



Prefer their brand over others



Join or stay active in their loyalty program



66%

book with them repeatedly

70%

prefer their brand over others

67%

join or stay active in their loyalty program



82%

of Black travelers say it is important that travel ads are reflective of people who share their identities

18%

feel that travel ads represent them very well

71%

are more likely to plan a trip if they see themselves represented in travel ads and promotions

Desire for Authentic Representation in Travel Ads

When researching potential destinations, more than four out of five (82%) Black travelers say it is important that travel ads are reflective of people who share their identities. However, fewer than one in five (18%) feel that travel ads represent them very well.

A [2023 Nielsen report](#) reveals that many Black audiences view the portrayals of their identities as one-dimensional. From skin tone and language to urban or rural settings, Black travelers are looking for content that reflects their own experiences. This affects the bottom line — nearly three-quarters (71%) of Black travelers are more likely to plan a trip if they see themselves represented in travel ads and promotions.

Time Burden of Research and Planning

Black travelers invest significant time and effort into planning their trips, focusing on ensuring destinations are safe and welcoming. They prioritize safety and feeling connected to their heritage. While many of these travelers report some information is hard to find — such as locating minority-owned businesses — they are closing this information gap themselves by taking to social media.

Time Burden

On average, Black travelers spend about eight hours researching and planning their trips, with an additional six hours spent ensuring their travel destinations are safe, welcoming, and accessible for people with their identity.

For Black travelers with intersectional identities, this investment is even greater. For example, Black women spend nine hours researching and planning their trips and six hours checking that destinations are safe, welcoming, and accessible. Meanwhile, Black travelers with disabilities spend 10 hours researching and eight hours confirming safety and accessibility.

Priorities

For Black travelers, going to a place where they will feel safe (89%), feel welcome (85%), and get a good deal (80%) are the most important considerations. A safe destination is especially emphasized among Black women travelers, where 92% believe this is important.

Other priorities include:

- **Respect:** 71% prioritize travel providers that will respect their identity.
- **Accessibility:** 69% believe finding accessible transit and accommodations is important.
- **Representation in reviews:** 61% want reviews and recommendations from people who share their identity.
- **Minority-owned businesses:** 39% say it is important to find minority-owned businesses when planning travel.

Looking at the Intersections

9

hours spent by Black women researching and planning for a trip

10

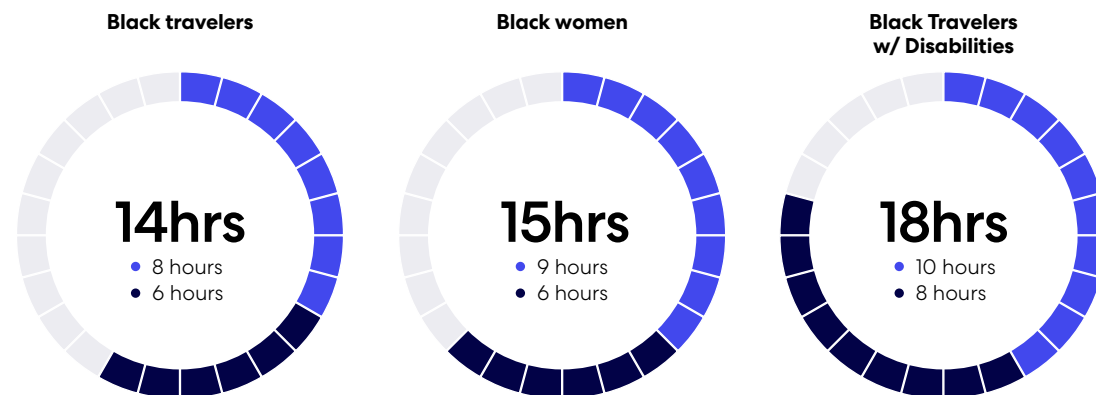
hours spent by Black travelers with disabilities researching and planning for a trip and eight additional hours spent researching to ensure services are safe, welcoming and accessible

92%

of Black women travelers emphasize a safe location is important

Average time spent researching and planning for a trip

- Time spent researching and planning for a trip
- Extra time spent researching to ensure services and destinations are safe, welcoming, and accessible for people with your identity



Beyond finding a destination where they feel welcome, Black travelers are seeking affiliation. In focus group discussions, Black travelers shared that they research and prioritize destinations where they are likely to find connections to Black culture and heritage. In addition, 59% of Black travelers consider identity-specific guides or signs important when planning their travel.

They want other information to be more easily accessible, too. Finding minority-owned businesses is identified as a challenge, with 38% of Black travelers reporting difficulty in locating this type of information. One in five (19%) Black travelers find it difficult to access reviews from people who share their identity.

They are working to fill this information gap themselves by using social media — 73% of Black travelers share positive travel experiences on social media and 56% share negative experiences.

“Especially with TikTok, it’s really easy to find anecdotes of, ‘Don’t go here if you look a certain way, you’re going to get treated a certain way if owners of certain businesses aren’t doing the right thing.’”

Focus Group Participant
(Black, Straight Man)

Booking Features

Inclusive booking features are important to Black travelers and travel platforms should pay attention. By integrating inclusive elements into their booking processes, travel platforms can better engage Black travelers.

User reviews are the most important, with 84% of Black travelers reporting they value reviews from people like them when booking travel.

Additionally, inclusive booking features such as language options, accessibility search functions, and seeing themselves represented in imagery are important for most Black travelers. These features are designed to reflect and address the varied needs and preferences of travelers from

different backgrounds, ensuring that everyone can navigate and use these services effectively. Almost three-quarters (74%) of Black travelers value advanced filters for assistive technology compatibility and 56% found gender-inclusive filters important.

“What motivates me is just being able to feel comfortable. Wherever I am, being able to feel some type of safety.”

Focus Group Participant
(Black, LGBTQIA+ Woman With a Disability)

“I don’t want to spend money that I work really hard for to go to a place where I’m not even wanted. That just wouldn’t be good for me mentally or emotionally.”

Focus Group Participant
(Black, Straight Woman)

Importance of Inclusive Booking Features

User reviews from people like me



Language options that match my preferences



Advanced filters for accessibility features



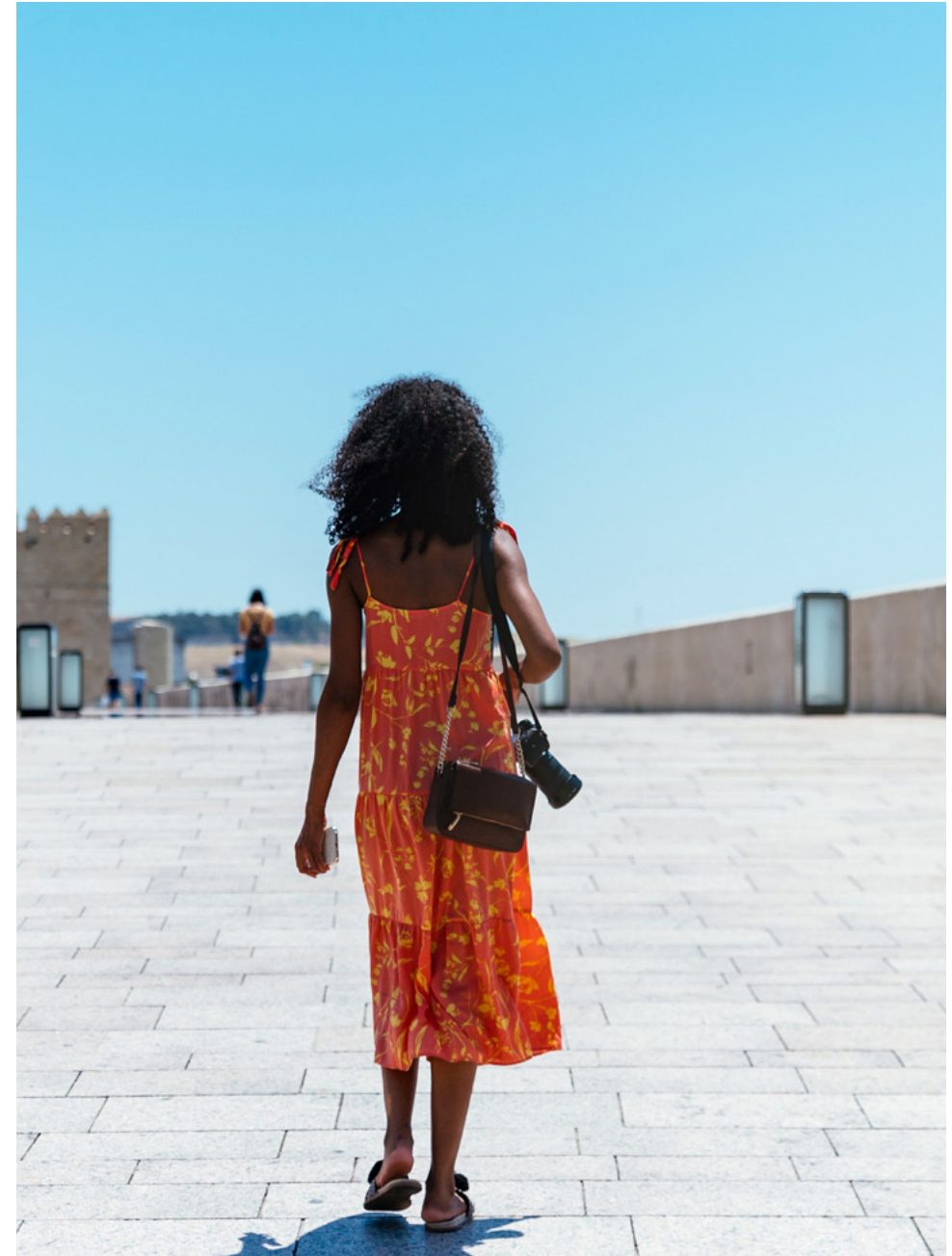
Imagery/pictures depicting people like me



Compatibility with assistive technology



Advanced filters for gender-inclusive features



Chapter 3:

Latino Travelers

Key Statistics

82%

believe finding destinations where they know they will be welcomed is a very important aspect of research and planning

78%

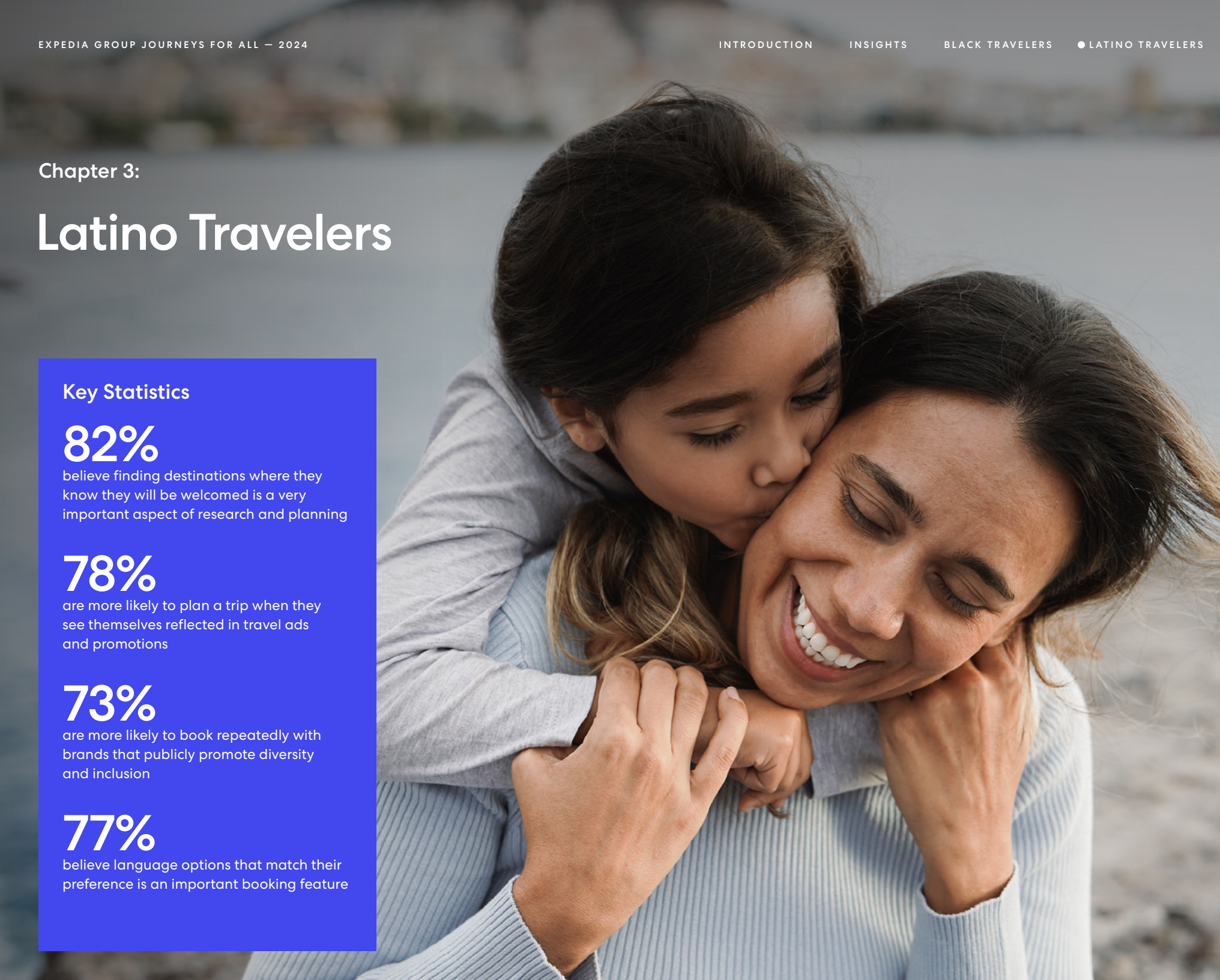
are more likely to plan a trip when they see themselves reflected in travel ads and promotions

73%

are more likely to book repeatedly with brands that publicly promote diversity and inclusion

77%

believe language options that match their preference is an important booking feature

A photograph of a woman and a young girl hugging on a beach. The woman is smiling broadly, and the girl is leaning her head against her. They are both wearing light blue clothing. The background is a blurred beach scene with water and sand.

Travel — and the relaxation, beauty, and happiness it can bring — is something everyone should be able to experience. However, for the Latino community, identity is something that significantly shapes their experience, from where they travel to how easy it is to find relevant planning information.

The Impact of Identity on Travel Experience

For more than half of Latino travelers, identity affects choices around destination, accommodations, transportation, and activities. They also report finding travel planning information difficult to access, and how big of a factor language and content relevance plays into this inaccessibility is a potential area for future exploration.

Three-quarters (74%) of Latino travelers agree that finding travel planning information should be easier, while two in five (41%) feel their identity limits their options and comfort in certain destinations. Two-thirds (34%) of Latino travelers also feel their identity prevents them from traveling more often.

74%

agree that finding travel planning information should be easier

41%

feel their identity limits their options and comfort in certain destinations

34%

feel their identity prevents them from traveling more often



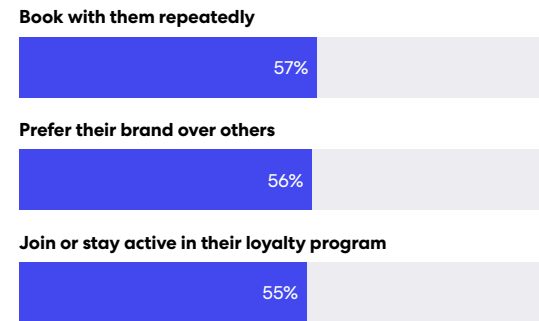
Promoting Diverse and Inclusive Solutions

A company’s public promotion of diversity and inclusion goes a long way in building loyalty among Latino travelers. Nearly three-quarters (71%) of Latino travelers prefer travel service providers that explicitly support diversity and inclusion. This preference spans the sectors of transit, accommodations, experiences, and online travel agencies, with over half expressing a preference for companies that uphold diversity and inclusion principles.

The same is true for both brand preference and repeat bookings. Around three-quarters of Latino travelers express a preference for – and are more likely to book again with – travel service providers that support diversity and inclusion.

Impact of Promoting Diversity and Inclusion on Traveler Behavior

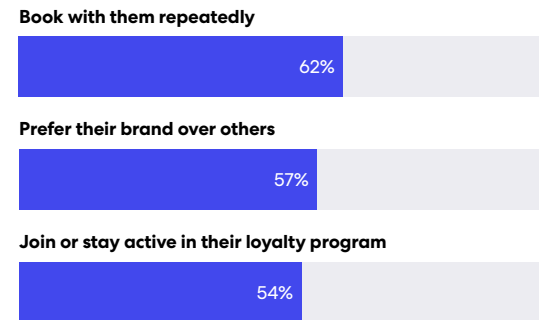
Transit Provider



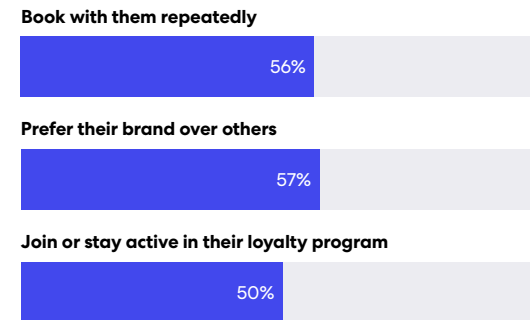
Accommodation Provider



Experience Provider



Online Travel Agency Provider



73%

book with them repeatedly

71%

prefer their brand over others

67%

join or stay active in their loyalty program





Desire for Authentic Representation in Travel Ads

While four in five (81%) Latino travelers say it is important to see themselves in travel ads, only one in five (21%) feel they are actually well represented. However, our findings show that, among Latino travelers, representation can make all the difference in travel choices. In fact, 78% of Latino travelers are more inclined to consider planning a trip when they see individuals like themselves featured in travel promotions.

81%
say that it is important that travel ads reflect people like them when researching potential destinations

21%
feel that travel ads and promotions represent them very well

78%
are more likely to plan a trip if they see people like them in travel ads and promotions

Time Burden of Research and Planning

Latino travelers, especially those with intersectional identities, consider their identity through all aspects of travel planning, from ensuring destinations are safe and welcoming to prioritizing accessibility and supporting minority-owned businesses. They also believe in paying it forward, sharing their travel experiences on social media to support other Latino travelers in finding the right options for them.

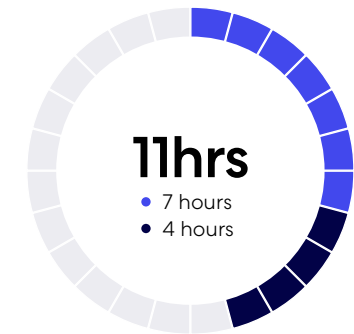
Time Burden

Latino travelers typically spend around seven hours planning trips, with an additional four hours researching safety, accessibility, and how welcoming their destination is. Bilingual Spanish speakers tend to invest more time in research, averaging around seven hours, compared to Latino non-Spanish speakers who spend about five hours on average. Latino travelers with intersectional identities spend even more time planning. LGBTQIA+ Latino travelers spend an average of 11 hours researching their trip, plus nine additional hours ensuring their destinations are safe, welcoming and accessible to them — that's 20 hours in total.

Average time spent researching and planning for a trip

- Time spent researching and planning for a trip
- Extra time spent researching to ensure services and destinations are safe, welcoming, and accessible for people with your identity

Latino travelers



LGBTQIA+ Latino travelers



Priorities

When it comes to what’s important for Latino travelers, safety is at the top of the list (88%) — particularly among Latina women (92%). This is followed by getting a good deal (88%) and finding a welcoming destination (82%).

Other priorities include:

- **Accessibility:** 82% feel finding accessible transit and accommodations is important.
- **Respect:** 73% prioritize choosing travel providers that will respect their identity.
- **Representation in reviews:** 61% find it vital to get reviews and recommendations from people who share their identity.
- **Minority-owned businesses:** 34% say it is important to find minority-owned businesses when planning travel.

More than half (58%) of Latino travelers prioritize identity-specific guides or signs in their travel planning. Yet, many find it challenging to access such information. Nearly a third (32%) struggle to find details on minority-owned businesses and one in five (20%) have difficulty locating reviews from individuals who share their identity.

In focus groups, Latino travelers shared that they don’t rely on traditional travel resources like guidebooks and tourism board websites to find information. Instead, they rely on multiple

platforms to locate difficult-to-find details, bouncing between Google, social media, and elsewhere to piece together what they need. Latino travelers are also acting proactively to close the information gap, with most sharing their experiences on social media, whether positive (79%) or (62%) negative. Other Latino travelers perceive these reviews as credible and rely on them for valuable information.

Booking Features

Inclusive booking features, such as advanced filters, are highly valued among Latino travelers. Across the board, more than half of Latino travelers report that tools such as user reviews, representative imagery, assistive technology compatibility, and gender-inclusive features are important to them. Language options that match their preferences were particularly valued by Latino travelers (77%).

“It’s just really specific things that aren’t as available. But between Google and social media and other websites like Reddit, you’re able to find, for the most part, a starting point from which to build on. I look for things that I can identify with, and now, with social media, you can see people that look like you or kind of fit the bill. That also helps to figure out what to stay away from or what to look out for.”

Focus Group Participant
(Latino, Straight Woman)

Importance of Inclusive Booking Features

User reviews from people like me



Language options that match my preferences



Advanced filters for accessibility features



Imagery/pictures depicting people like me



Compatibility with assistive technology



Advanced filters for gender-inclusive features



Chapter 4:

LGBTQIA+ Travelers

Key Statistics

84%

believe finding destinations where they know they will be safe is a very important aspect of research and planning

73%

are more likely to plan a trip when they see themselves reflected in travel ads and promotions

83%

are more likely to book repeatedly with brands that publicly promote diversity and inclusion

80%

believe user reviews from people like them is an important booking feature



LGBTQIA+ travelers seek comprehensive information and resources to help them plan unforgettable trips. Their identity profoundly influences decisions across all aspects, from selecting destinations and accommodations to planning activities and transportation.

The Impact of Identity on Travel Experience

Nearly three-quarters (71%) of LGBTQIA+ travelers express frustration with finding essential travel information. Almost half (45%) believe their identity limits travel options, while nearly a third (30%) feel it prevents them from traveling more frequently.

Identity strongly shapes the travel decision-making process, too. Half of LGBTQIA+ travelers note their identity affects where they choose to travel, and nearly half say it affects how they choose accommodations, activities and experiences. This extends to transportation and transit decisions, too, with around two in five LGBTQIA+ travelers reporting their identity affects both how they get to a destination and how they travel within it. This is felt even more acutely by those with intersectional identities, with two-thirds of LGBTQIA+ Latino travelers saying their identity affects where they go, and nearly three-quarters saying it affects what they do once they get there.

71%

think finding the necessary information for planning travel should be easier

45%

think identity limits their travel options and comfort in certain destinations

30%

think identity prevents them from planning travel more frequently





Promoting Diverse and Inclusive Solutions

A company's public support of diversity and inclusion wins big with the LGBTQIA+ community. From the booking process to ongoing engagement via loyalty programs, LGBTQIA+ travelers actively seek out brands that demonstrate a strong commitment to these values.

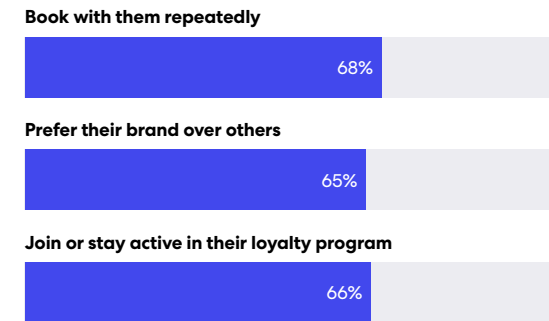
Nearly four in five LGBTQIA+ travelers choose providers that champion diversity and inclusion. This holds true across sectors, with a strong majority favoring companies in transit, accommodations, experiences, and booking that show public commitment. A similar proportion of LGBTQIA+ travelers are also more likely to book again with these companies while over three-quarters are more likely to participate in a loyalty program with a company that shows diversity and inclusion values.

Impact of Promoting Diversity and Inclusion on Traveler Behavior

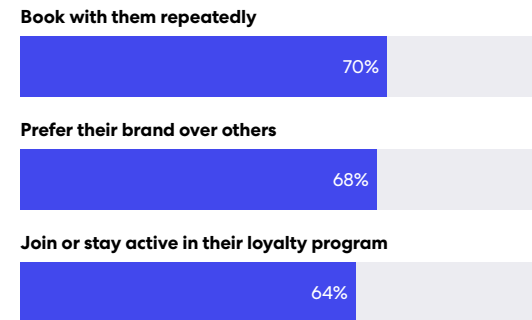
Transit Provider



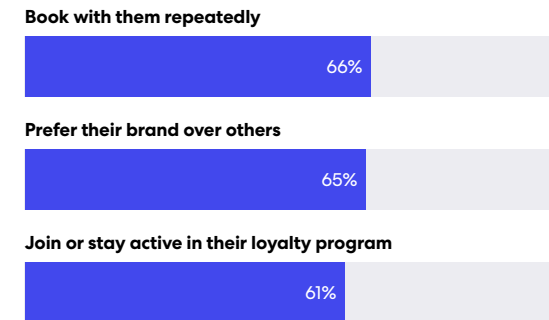
Accommodation Provider



Experience Provider



Online Travel Agency Provider



83%
book with them repeatedly

78%
prefer their brand over others

76%
join or stay active in their loyalty program

70%

say it is important to see themselves represented in travel ads when researching potential destinations

11%

feel that travel ads and promotions represent them very well

73%

are more likely to plan a trip if they see people like them in travel ads and promotions

Desire for Authentic Representation in Travel Ads

Representation means a lot to LGBTQIA+ travelers but, currently, it is lacking. More than two-thirds (70%) of LGBTQIA+ travelers say it is important to see themselves represented in travel ads. Yet only a fraction of LGBTQIA+ travelers — one in ten (11%) — feel they are currently well represented.

For many, the gap can prevent them from making travel plans, with nearly three-quarters (73%) of LGBTQIA+ travelers reporting they are more likely to plan a trip when they see themselves in travel ads. This gap is even wider among LGBTQIA+ travelers spending a lot on their trip. Of those spending at least \$7,000 annually, 88% are more inclined to plan a trip when they see their community represented in ads. This holds true for 71% of those spending between \$3,000 and \$6,000, and 65% of those spending less than \$3,000 annually.

Time Burden of Research and Planning

LGBTQIA+ travelers, particularly those with intersectional identities, invest significant time in travel planning, more so than any other group.

LGBTQIA+ travelers prioritize inclusive booking features that highlight LGBTQIA+-friendly destinations, including filters for reviews from the LGBTQIA+ community. The LGBTQIA+ traveler community actively contributes to these features by sharing their experiences through online reviews.

Time Burden

Planning is a substantial investment for LGBTQIA+ travelers, as they spend an average of 12 hours researching travel and an additional six ensuring their destinations are safe, welcoming, and accessible. This investment is even greater among LGBTQIA+ travelers with intersectional identities.

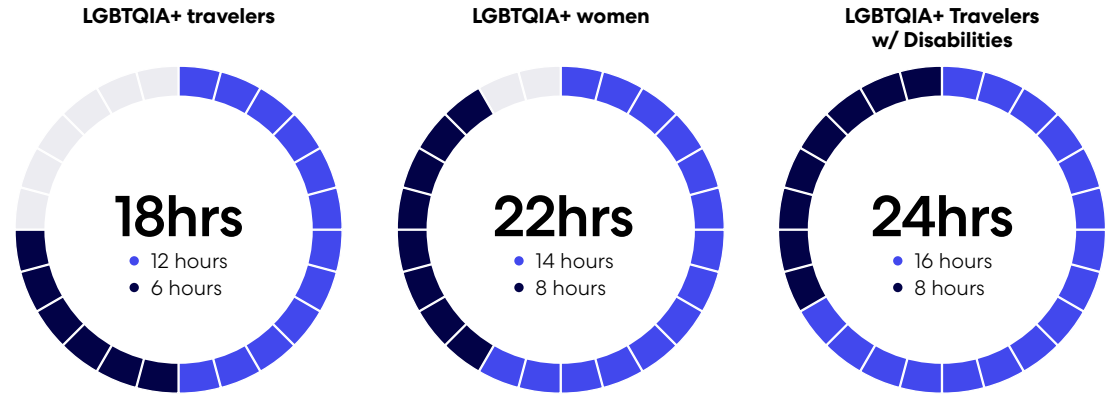
LGBTQIA+ focus group participants shared that, in particular, they take time to familiarize themselves with local customs and laws, so they understand whether they need to conceal aspects of their identity for safety.

“One thing I try to do is look at if the country or place has any rules or regulations or things I might be aware of. Especially maybe if it’s not a place that isn’t considered as friendly.”

Focus Group Participant
(Black, LGBTQIA+ Woman)

Average time spent researching and planning for a trip

- Time spent researching and planning for a trip
- Extra time spent researching to ensure services and destinations are safe, welcoming, and accessible for people with your identity





Priorities

What matters most to LGBTQIA+ travelers is safety, belonging and respect. In fact, 84% of LGBTQIA+ travelers rank safety among their top priorities, and nearly as many said finding a welcoming destination (80%) and getting a good deal (80%) are important, too.

Other priorities include:

- **Accessibility:** 70% believe finding accessible transit and accommodations is important.
- **Respect:** 68% prioritize choosing travel providers that will respect their identity.
- **Representation in reviews:** 55% find it vital to get reviews and recommendations from people who share their identity.
- **Minority-owned businesses:** 32% say it is important to find minority-owned businesses when planning travel.

Safety, feeling welcome and respect are primary concerns for good reason — LGBTQIA+ travelers conduct extensive research in these areas to understand where their identity might not be accepted in order to mitigate risks of violence, harassment and surveillance. Additionally, LGBTQIA+ travelers may alter their presentation — from code-switching to modifying their appearance — to avoid discrimination and feeling unsafe while traveling. Perhaps as a result, 73% of LGBTQIA+ travelers believe identity-specific guides that identify LGBTQIA+ hosts or businesses, as well as signs showing LGBTQIA+ people are welcome, are important travel planning tools.

Nearly half (45%) of LGBTQIA+ travelers find it difficult to find information on minority-owned businesses while nearly a quarter (23%) have trouble finding reviews from individuals who share their identity. This challenge is heightened among gender-expansive LGBTQIA+ travelers, with nearly half (48%) experiencing difficulty finding reviews from peers who share their identity.

Likewise, 21% of LGBTQIA+ travelers find it challenging to identify destinations where they feel welcome. This difficulty is more pronounced among gender-expansive LGBTQIA+ travelers, with over half (54%) reporting struggles. Respect from the travel provider is an issue, too, as 19% of LGBTQIA+ travelers — and 56% of genderqueer LGBTQIA+ travelers — find it difficult to choose travel providers they know will respect their identity.

The LGBTQIA+ community is remedying these challenges themselves, using social media to make information easier to find. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of LGBTQIA+ travelers will share their positive experiences, and 60% their negative experiences, on social media.

“I used to be much more gender queer presenting ... And so when I traveled during that time period, I would be more careful about where I was going and how I dressed. I have been assaulted on the street in certain places because of the way I was dressed and presenting.”

Asian, LGBTQIA+ Person

“I stay almost exclusively at hostels, so when I’m in a dorm and somebody lets everybody know they’re queer, then you get to find that unity together and get to have that little layer of safety. It makes the experience much more enjoyable because I don’t have to keep the wall up and I don’t have to be on the lookout 24/7 and I get to be myself around those people and not be as fearful anymore.”

Focus Group Participant (Middle Eastern/ North African, White, LGBTQIA+ Woman)

Booking Features

An inclusive booking experience is a strong preference among LGBTQIA+ travelers, with four in five particularly valuing language options and user reviews. Representative imagery, assistive technology compatibility, and advanced filters for accessibility and gender

inclusivity also rank as important features for most LGBTQIA+ travelers. Specifically, 69% of gender-expansive LGBTQIA+ travelers find gender-inclusive filters important.

Importance of Inclusive Booking Features

User reviews from people like me



Language options that match my preferences



Advanced filters for accessibility features



Imagery/pictures depicting people like me



Compatibility with assistive technology



Advanced filters for gender-inclusive features



Chapter 5:

Travelers With Disabilities

Key Statistics

72%

emphasize the importance of finding transit and accommodations that are accessible

83%

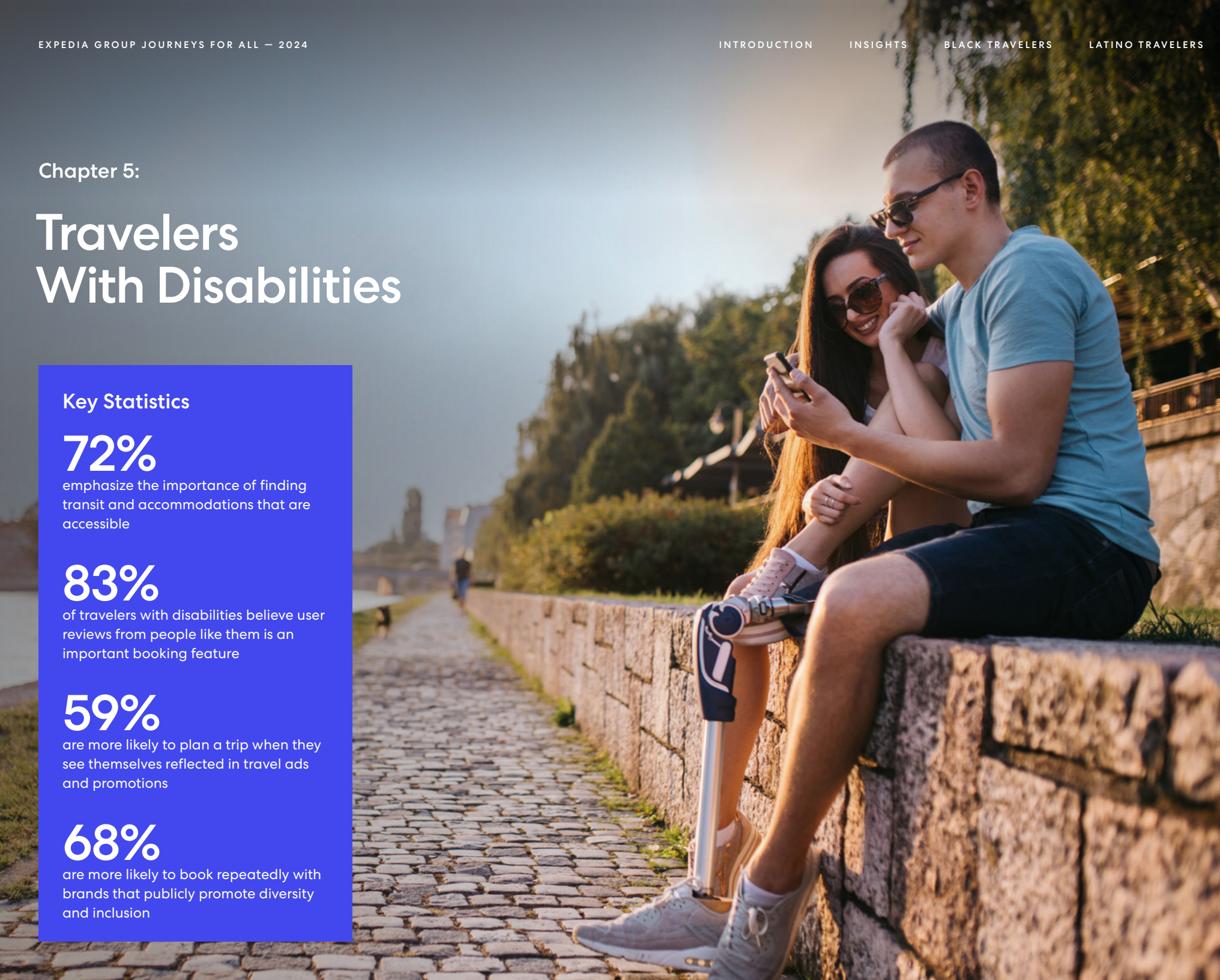
of travelers with disabilities believe user reviews from people like them is an important booking feature

59%

are more likely to plan a trip when they see themselves reflected in travel ads and promotions

68%

are more likely to book repeatedly with brands that publicly promote diversity and inclusion



About 73.4 million adults are estimated to have a disability in 2022 according to the [CDC](#), representing a considerable proportion of the population. Travelers with disabilities — especially those with intersectional identities — face added and unexpected costs in time and money, such as increased expenses for ground transport and airport gratuities. Nevertheless, they continue to plan trips, explore global destinations, and build communities along the way.

67%

think finding the necessary information for planning travel should be easier

41%

think identity limits their travel options and comfort in certain destination

28%

think identity prevents them from planning travel more frequently

The Impact of Identity on Travel Experience

For travelers with disabilities — particularly those with intersectional identities — identity shows up in every travel decision, particularly around ensuring accessibility. Despite obstacles, travelers with disabilities seek inclusion, while their companions actively seek solutions to facilitate shared memorable experiences. Half (50%) of travelers with disabilities travel with family, and 58% travel with their spouse or partner.

Two-thirds (67%) of travelers with disabilities believe it should be easier to access necessary information, and 28% agree their identity hinders them from traveling more frequently. While less than half report that their identity restricts their travel decisions, those with intersectional identities do find it to be a limiting factor, with 72% of Latino travelers with disabilities feeling restricted by their identity when planning trips.

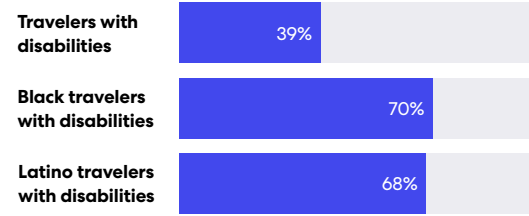
More than two-thirds of Black and Latino travelers with disabilities report that their identity influences their choices of destinations, accommodations, activities, and experiences. More than half report it also affects their transportation and transit decisions, both in travel to their destination and once they arrive.

“A lot of my travel is shaded because I’m an individual with a disability, so a lot of my plans and trips are always coordinated around accessibility and knowing what’s available for me to do and get to.”

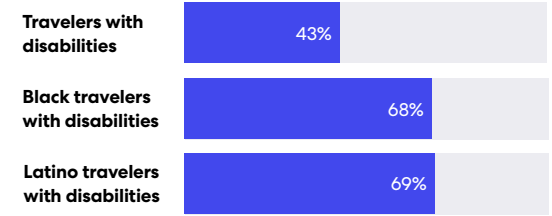
Focus Group Participant
(Black, Straight Man With a Disability)

The Influence of Identity on Travel Decisions

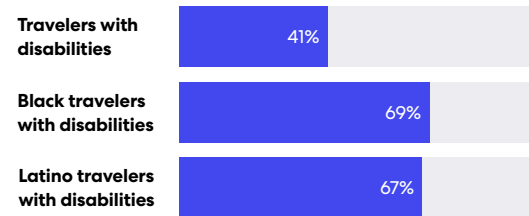
Destinations



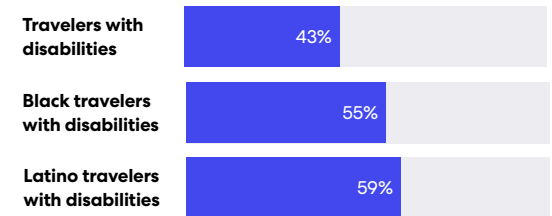
Activities or Experiences at Destinations



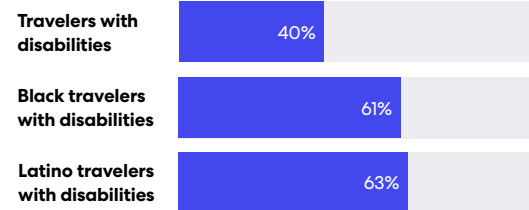
Accommodations



Transit/Transportation When at Destination



Transit/Transportation to and From Destination



Promoting Diverse and Inclusive Solutions

Travelers with disabilities notice a company’s public position on diversity and inclusion — and they exercise their buying power accordingly. Two-thirds (65%) of travelers with disabilities prefer travel providers that publicly support diversity and inclusion; around half state this preference across each type of provider, including transit, accommodations, experiences, and online booking companies.

This preference translates into repeat business, with 68% of travelers with disabilities more likely to rebook with companies that showcase diversity and inclusion. Around half prefer this across transit, accommodations, experiences, and online booking companies.

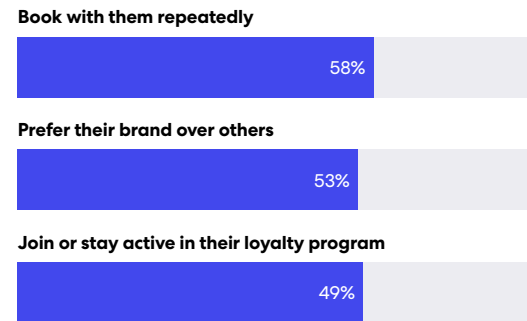
For more than half of travelers with disabilities, a provider’s public promotion of diversity and inclusion could also earn them a loyal customer, with 58% saying they are more likely to engage in a company’s loyalty program.

Impact of Promoting Diversity and Inclusion on Traveler Behavior

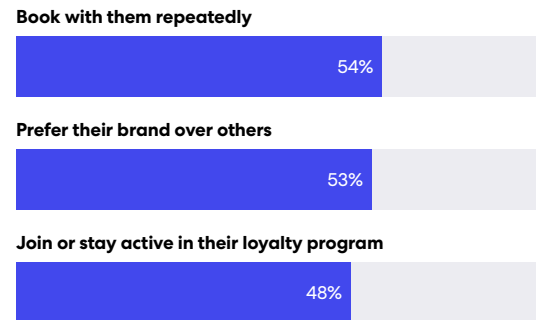
Transit Provider



Accommodation Provider



Experience Provider



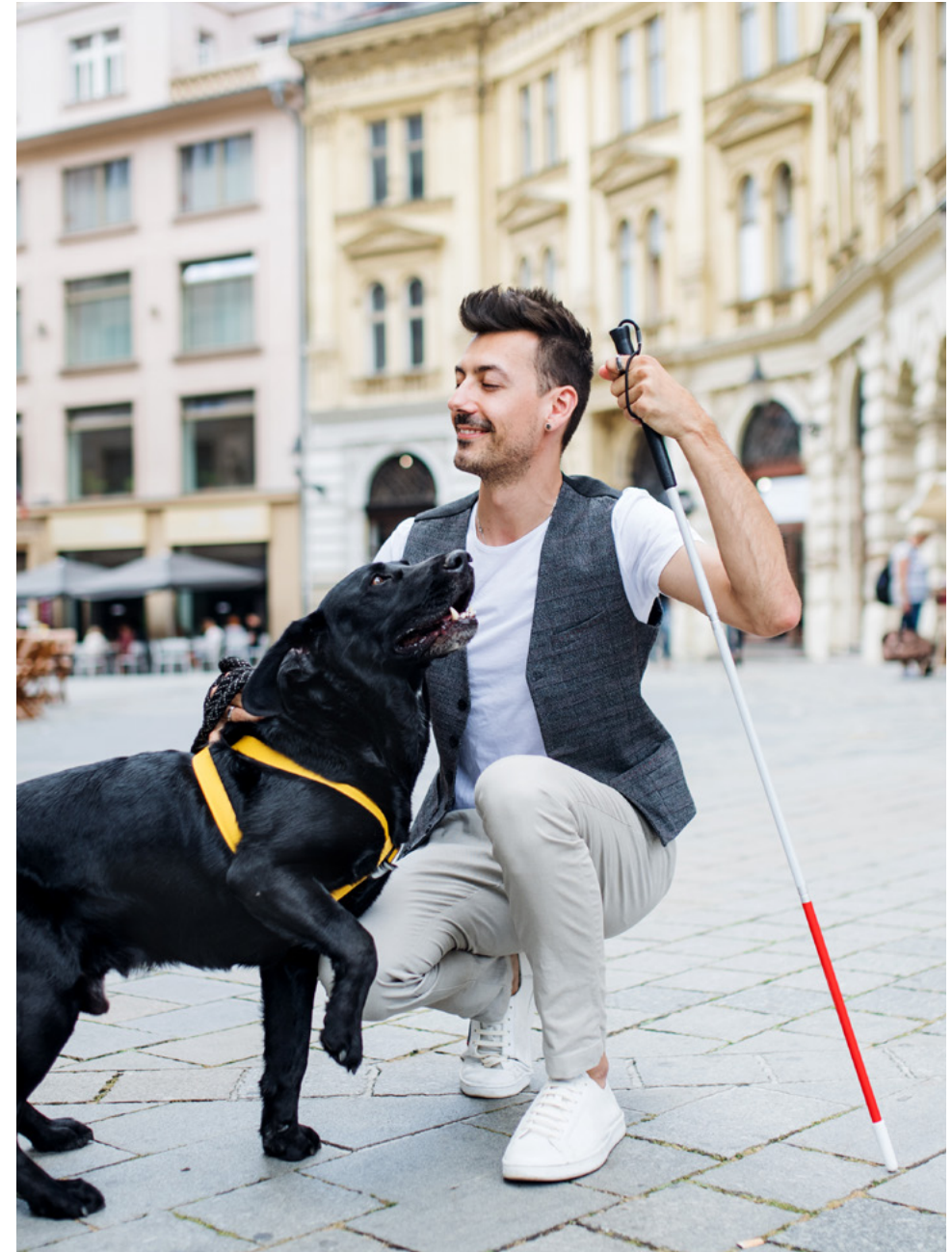
Online Travel Agency Provider



68%
book with them repeatedly

65%
prefer their brand over others

58%
join or stay active in their loyalty program



71%

say it is important that travel ads reflect people like them when researching potential destinations

12%

feel that travel ads and promotions represent them very well

59%

are more likely to plan a trip if they see people like them in travel ads and promotions

Desire for Authentic Representation in Travel Ads

Improving representation in travel ads can inspire travelers with disabilities to plan more trips. Nearly three-quarters (71%) of travelers with disabilities say it is important that travel ads reflect people like them. Among Latino travelers with disabilities, this sentiment is even stronger, with 93% agreeing. However, just 12% of travelers with disabilities feel ads represent them well.

Insufficient representation in travel ads significantly impacts the industry. Over half (59%) of travelers with disabilities, and 61% of Latino travelers with disabilities, are more likely to plan trips when they see themselves represented in promotions.

Time Burden of Research and Planning

Time Burden

For travelers with disabilities, travel is complex, requiring comprehensive research, trusted sources, and contingency plans. They seek firsthand insights into accessibility of accommodations and avoid services that previously overlooked their needs.

Travelers with disabilities spend, on average, nine hours planning their travel, plus an additional four ensuring destinations are safe, welcoming, and accessible. LGBTQIA+ travelers with disabilities invest even more time, averaging 16 hours on research and an additional eight hours verifying safety, accessibility, and inclusivity.

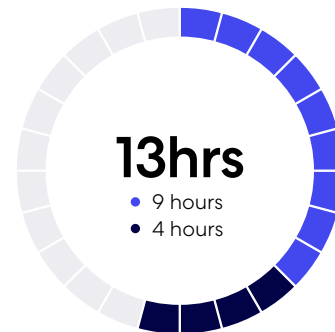
“I have back and nerve problems, so [...] I can walk for maybe five, 10 minutes. I did a lot of research with how the cruise lines will help you access everything.”

Focus Group Participant (White, Straight Man With a Disability)

Average time spent researching and planning for a trip

- Time spent researching and planning for a trip
- Extra time spent researching to ensure services and destinations are safe, welcoming, and accessible for people with your identity

Travelers with disabilities



LGBTQIA+ travelers with disabilities



Cost Burden

Inaccessibility doesn't just limit options and complicate trip planning, it also results in higher costs for travelers with disabilities, such as increased fees for ground transportation when they can't use traditional ride-sharing services, pay extra gratuities for additional assistance, and/or incur surprise charges for service animals.

“We expect that plan A is not going to work and that we're going to have to go to our guaranteed plan B because it's happened before. We have ended up without a place to stay, for instance. Or travel providers are like, 'We're going to charge you an exorbitant amount for the service dog,' stuff like that. I always have a plan B whenever I do anything or plan to go anywhere.”

Focus Group Participant (Asian, LGBTQIA+ Man With a Disability)

“I've found solutions for problems I've encountered while at my destination, but it has cost more money and was not refunded back. It cost me money to rent a car and drive eight hours to get home, stuff like that. It always costs more money.”

Focus Group Participant (Black, Straight Woman With a Disability)

Priorities

Travelers with disabilities' top three priorities are getting a good deal (86%), ensuring safety (82%), and feeling welcome at a location (74%).

Other priorities include:

- **Accessibility:** 72% believe finding accessible transit and accommodations is important.
- **Respect:** 68% prioritize choosing travel providers that will respect their identity.
- **Representation in reviews:** 46% find it vital to get reviews and recommendations from people who share their identity.

Travelers with disabilities do not feel it is important to find minority-owned businesses when planning travel, with only 23% indicating this is a priority.

Among travelers with disabilities and intersectional identities, priorities varied. For example, 89% of Latino travelers with disabilities said finding accessible transit and accommodations is essential or very important. Female travelers with disabilities are more likely than their male counterparts to say it is essential or very important to find a destination

that is safe (93% versus 70%) and welcome (85% versus 62%). Nearly all Black travelers with disabilities (96%) say it is essential or very important to find a destination where they will be welcome.

Identity-specific guides and signs are important to about half of travelers with disabilities, and more so for Black, Latino, and LGBTQIA+ travelers with disabilities (72% of Black, 79% of Latino, and 82% of LGBTQIA+ travelers with disabilities prioritize them). Additionally, two in five (42%) find it difficult to locate information on minority-owned businesses, while one in five (21%) struggle to find reviews from people who share their identity.

Travelers with disabilities are bridging information gaps by sharing their experiences. 68% share positive experiences on social media, and over half (54%) share negative ones. Latino travelers with disabilities are particularly active, with 93% sharing positive experiences and 75% sharing negative ones.

“For me, I’d go to my friends that travel as much as I do, and I ask their opinions because a lot of times they’ve stayed there already. What they’ve seen and observed, stuff like that. But even with that, you cannot get a full picture because it might not occur when they were there.”

Black, Straight Woman With a Disability

Booking Features

Inclusive booking features go a long way for travelers with disabilities, with our insights underscoring just how important it is for the travel industry to incorporate them. Compared to other inclusive booking features, travelers with disabilities rely most heavily upon user reviews, with 83% saying these are important. Travelers with disabilities also value language options, with more than three-quarters (77%) indicating they value content in a range of languages.

Accessibility features and assistive technology compatibility are important to about two-thirds of travelers with disabilities. Around half also value representative imagery and gender-inclusive features.

Intersectionality influences how travelers with disabilities prioritize inclusive booking features. While 75% of men value user reviews from people like them, nearly 90% of women do. Likewise, 84% of Latino travelers with disabilities consider compatibility with assistive technology important.

In addition to inclusive booking features, travelers with disabilities rely heavily on accurate and specific information in the planning phase. This includes access to live customer service representatives and up-to-date, high-quality photos to make informed decisions about their travel arrangements.

“I think the sites that we do use to book through, I feel like they should at least maybe check into the properties for an update or just make sure policies are up to date, or make sure events are accurate and phone numbers haven’t changed.”

Focus Group Participant
(Asian, LGBTQIA+ Man With a Disability)

Importance of Inclusive Booking Features

User reviews from people like me



Language options that match my preferences



Advanced filters for accessibility features



Imagery/pictures depicting people like me



Compatibility with assistive technology



Advanced filters for gender-inclusive features



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