

How has Covid-19 changed the behaviour of Saudi Travellers?

A customer sentiment study by Almosafer



About Almosafer



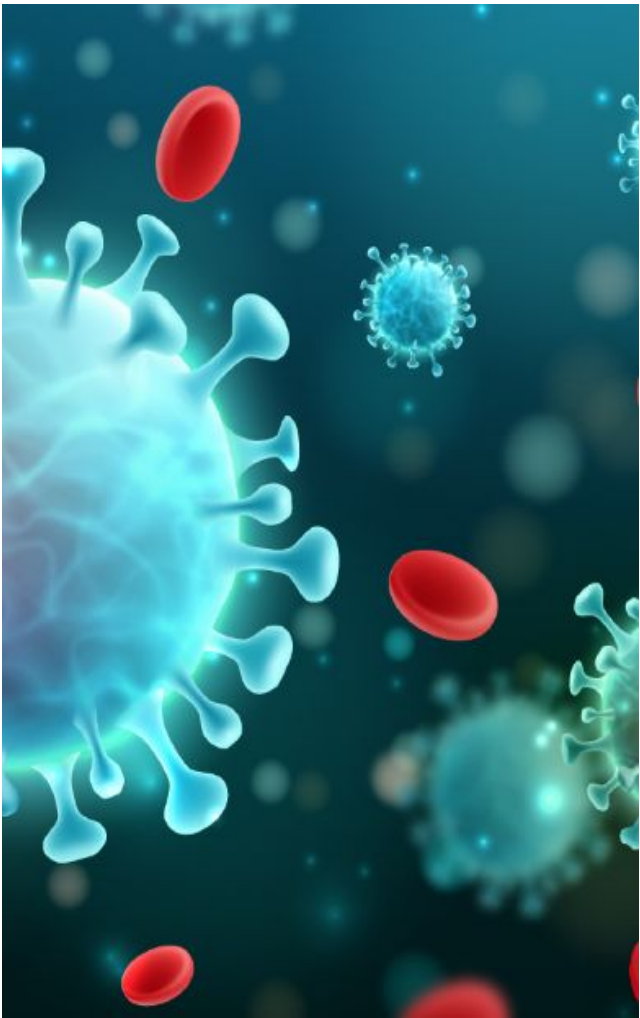
المسافر
Almosafer

**Connecting today's travelers to their world
with smart and seamless travel booking
solutions.**

Almosafer is the flagship brand of Seera Group's Consumer Travel Business Unit, catering to the discerned needs of travellers from Saudi Arabia and beyond. Originated in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Almosafer has transformed from the most successful online travel agency in KSA to a fully-fledged omni-channel travel services provider that offers a seamless user experience for travel bookings across state-of-the-art online platforms, call centres and retail locations.



Overview



The COVID-19 pandemic has, without a doubt, had a drastic impact on the travel industry, but not less so on the way people feel about travel in general.

With restrictions around domestic and international travel in effect over the past few weeks, lockdowns in place and curfews part of our daily lives, safeguarding the health of every individual has become our utmost priority as a society.

As a result of the pandemic, mindsets have shifted, new concerns have arisen and the way we approach planning a trip has changed.

We have conducted a survey to understand how Saudi nationals will travel post Covid-19, in an effort to fully understand their needs. Most importantly, we took a data-driven approach to analyse what would support them in their travel arrangements in what is yet to be established as the new normal.

Set up as an online questionnaire which was distributed through various communication channels, the **first-ever Saudi-focused survey around travel post pandemic** gathered over **3000** respondents from all across the Kingdom.

Executive Summary



1

The passion for travel amongst Saudi nationals is remarkably resilient.

2

There is a need for in-depth information and guidance on safety regulations and restrictions in place via travel providers (airlines, hotels) as well as in-destination.

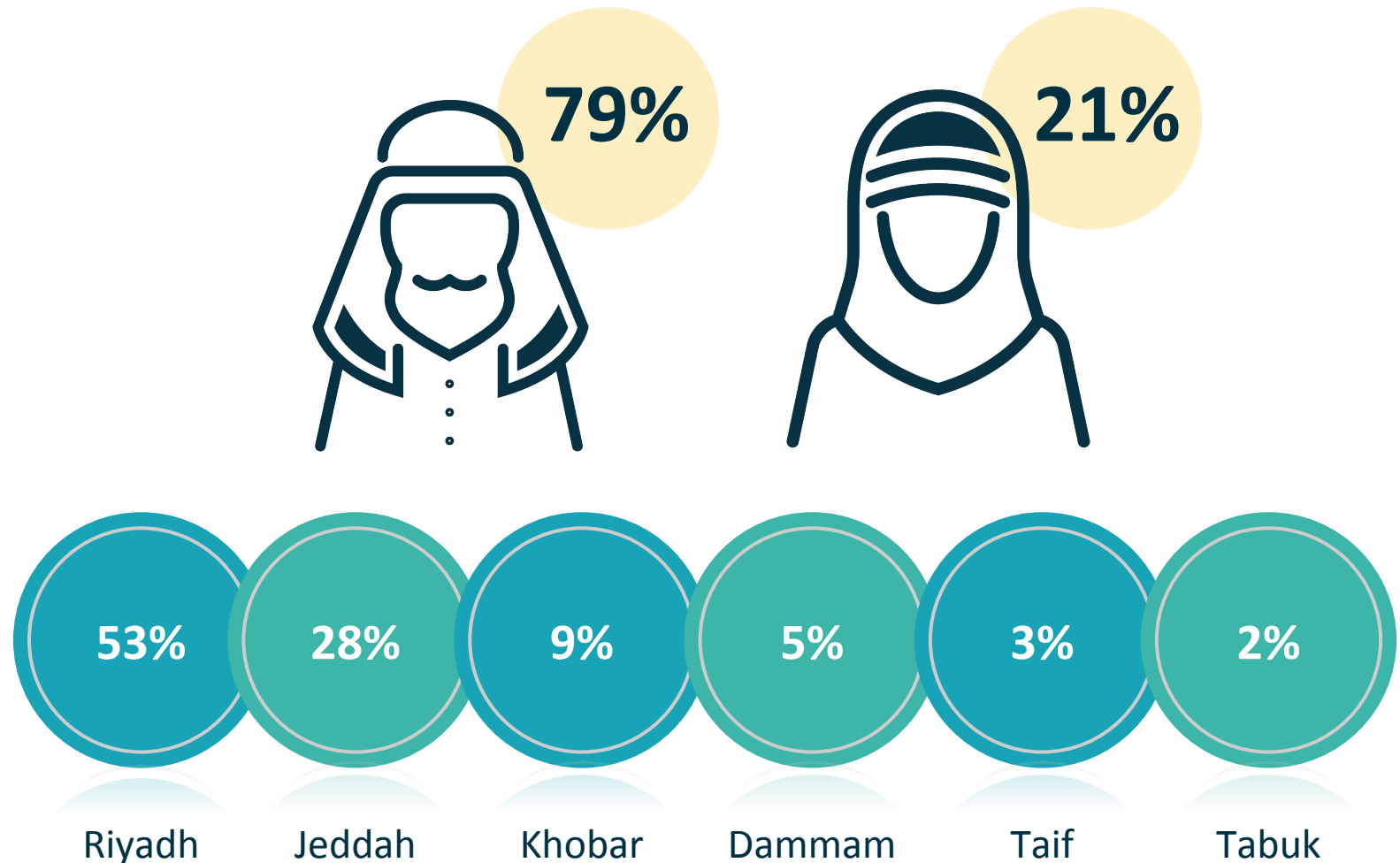
3

Domestic travel is of high interest post pandemic, which will support the accelerated development of domestic tourism in the Kingdom.

Demographics



The 3000+ respondents of the online survey comprised of predominantly Saudi nationals, with the majority living across Riyadh, Jeddah and Khobar.



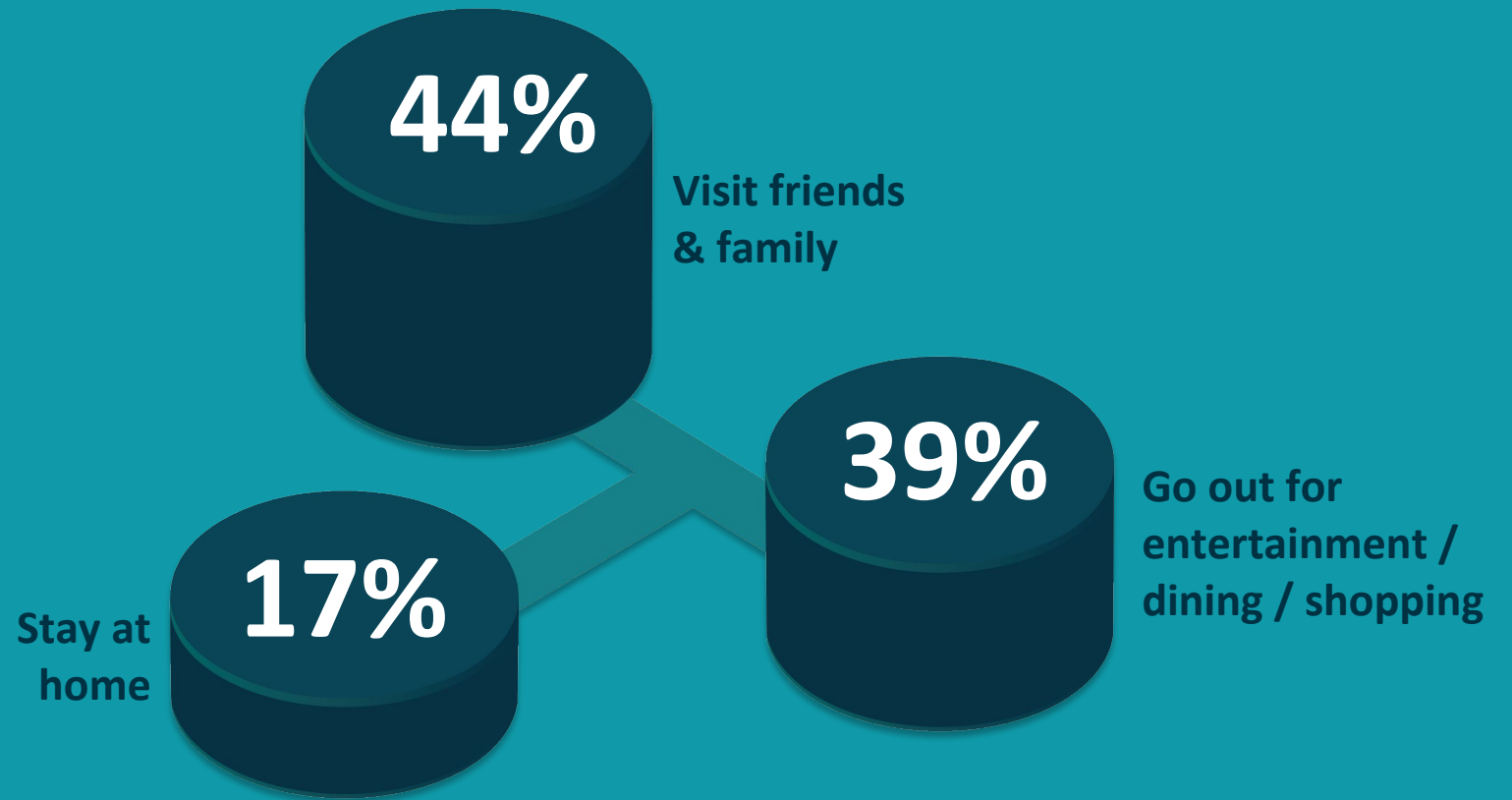
Social Life

What will Saudi travellers do first, when mobility restrictions and curfews are lifted?



Overall, people are looking forward to having a 'normal social life' with **83% inclined to leave their house for socializing and entertainment.**

17% percent of respondents would still be cautious once restrictions ease and would rather stay in the safety of their own homes.



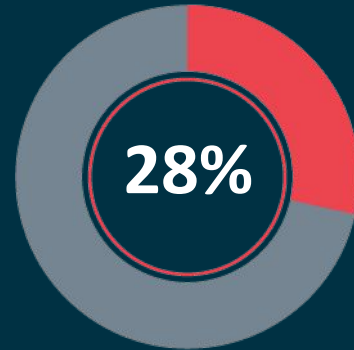
CONFIDENCE IN TRAVEL

How high is the level of confidence of Saudi Nationals when it comes to travel post pandemic?

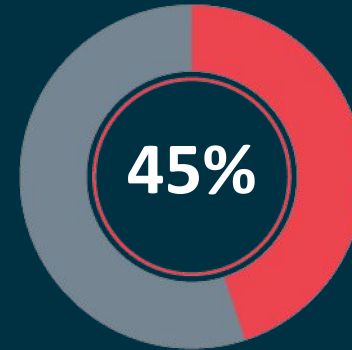


Overall confidence levels are unexpectedly high. A positive outlook on travel and the passion for exploration has not diminished over the past few months and generally, people are not scared of traveling again.

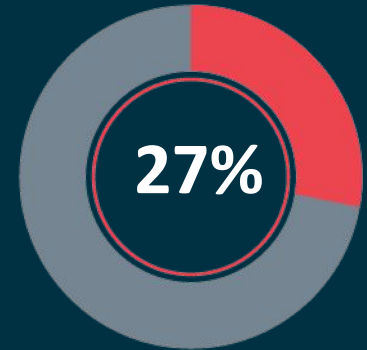
73% are somewhat confident or fully confident to travel as soon as restrictions are lifted, whereas 27% are hesitant and will not travel immediately.



Very
confident



Somewhat
confident



Not
confident

KEY DECISION DRIVERS

What are the most important factors behind a travel decision?



The majority of Saudi travellers questioned opted for social distancing and PPE rules as one of the main drivers behind making a travel decision (60%).

Clarity on safety measures taken by airlines & hotels is also considered critical for 55% of travellers to help build confidence.

Travel advisory will furthermore play a key role in building additional confidence on destination level with close to 36% of Saudis choosing this as one of their key decision drivers.



60%

Social distancing and PPE (personal protective equipment) rules implemented by your destination of choice



55%

Precautionary measures showcased by airports, airlines and hotels



36%

Expert recommendations on safe destinations



33%

Medical record for you and every fellow traveller (COVID-19 negative proof)

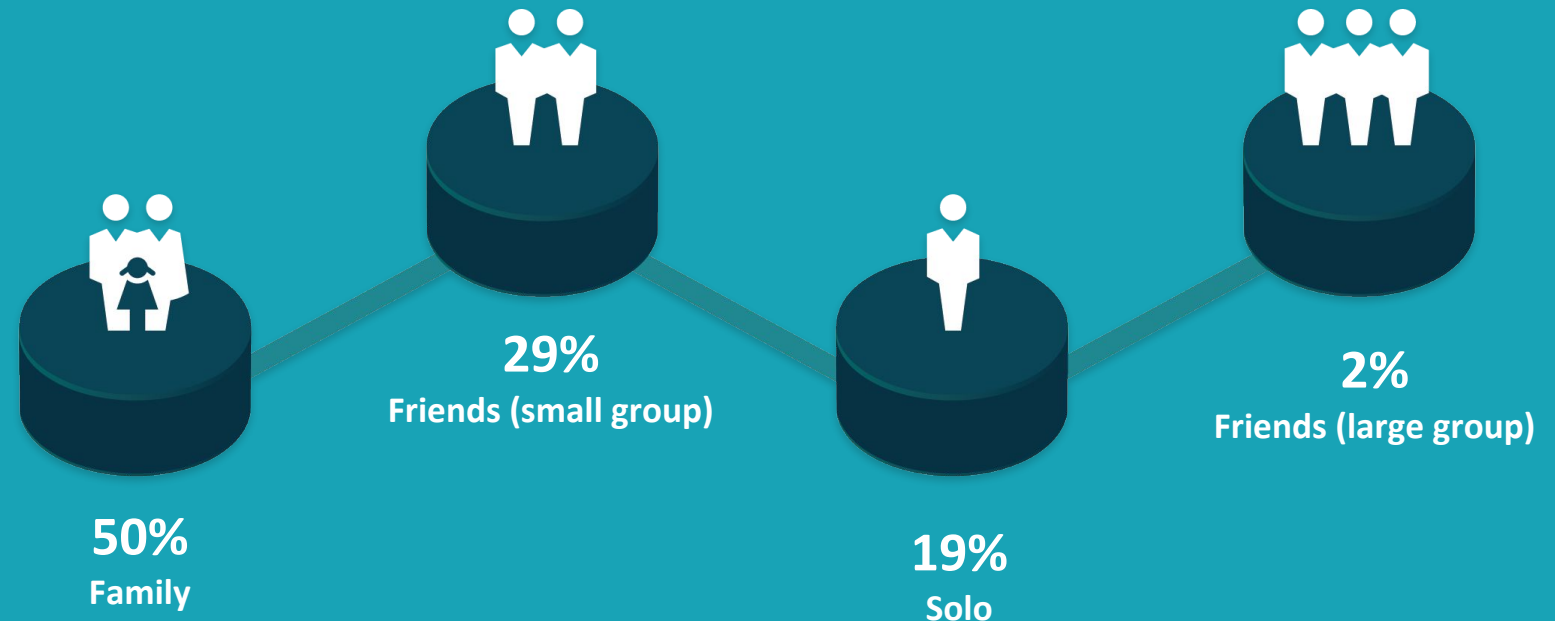
TRAVEL COMPANIONS

Who would Saudi
Nationals travel
with?



The majority of Saudi travellers, especially females, wants to travel with their family and provide their loved ones with a much-needed escape.

29% of Saudis would travel with friends in smaller groups, which goes hand in hand with the continuous mindset of social distancing. Adventure travel will be on the rise, with over 19% of Saudi respondents opting to travel solo.



FLYING vs. DRIVING

How would Saudi travellers get from A to B on their first trip post COVID-19?



48% of respondents opted for a car as the transportation method of choice, which makes staycations and domestic explorations interesting for more than half of the local population.

However; Saudi travellers are not opposed to air travel, whereas short haul flights would be a preferred option for them (40%).



48%

By Car



40%

Short-haul flight
(1 to 3 hours)



28%

Medium-haul flight
(From 3 to 6 hours)



19%

Long-haul flight
(6+ Hours)

DESTINATION FOCUS

What are the preferred destinations for Saudi travellers post pandemic?



Many of our respondents indicated that travel within the GCC is going to be their first 'venture' out of KSA (38%). As for destinations further afield, Asia was considered a clear favourite amongst Saudi travellers (38%).

Domestic Travel is now a preferred leisure choice for 35% of the respondents. From cultural explorations, to adventure travel, the Kingdom has lots to offer and people are now, more than ever, keen on discovering destinations within KSA.

Other popular choices were destinations in Europe (26%) and remote island getaways (22%).



38%

Within GCC



38%

Asia



35%

Domestic
within KSA



26%

Europe



22%

Remote islands
(such as Maldives
or Seychelles)



13%

Africa

DOMESTIC FOCUS

What are the domestic destinations Saudis are waiting to discover?

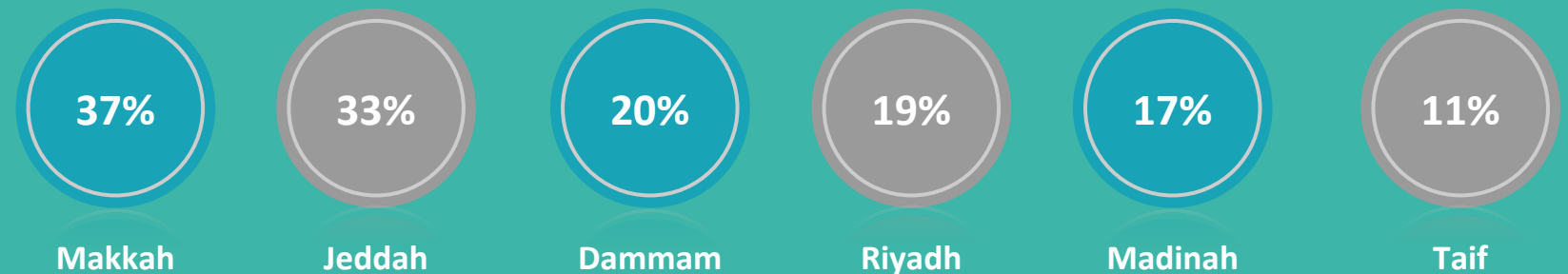


Religious tourism is of high priority amongst Saudis as Makkah is the top choice within KSA.

Makkah has always been one of the main domestic destinations for Saudis locally and especially during the month of Ramadan due to its religious importance.

This year, unfortunately, the city has been closed off, so Makkah bookings are expected to rise instantly, once the city opens up.

The three metropolitan cities (Jeddah, Riyadh, Dammam) were amongst the other top choices for domestic travel.



DESTINATION DRIVERS

What questions do Saudi travellers ask when deciding on a destination?



The key driver behind the travel decision for destinations will be the information on existing quarantine periods (60%). Overall, Saudi travellers will want to have an all-encompassing view of the destination they will choose.

From sightseeing, to availability of in-destination dining and shopping options, Saudis want to know as much as possible prior to making a decision.



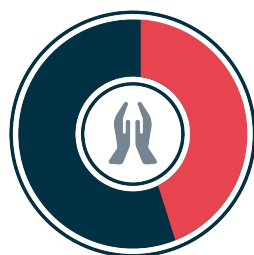
TRIP TYPES

What is the purpose
of travel for the first
trip post pandemic



Religious Travel for Saudis remains important, with 42% mentioning it as the purpose for their first trip post pandemic.

Beach vacations and city escapes would be the first and second choice for leisure trips.



42%

Religious
travel



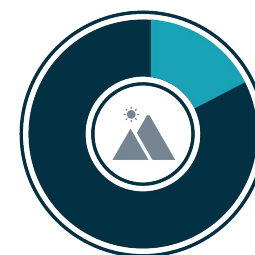
19%

Beach
vacation



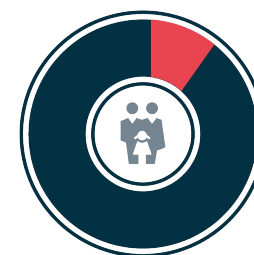
17%

City
escape



14%

Adventure
travel



8%

Family
visit

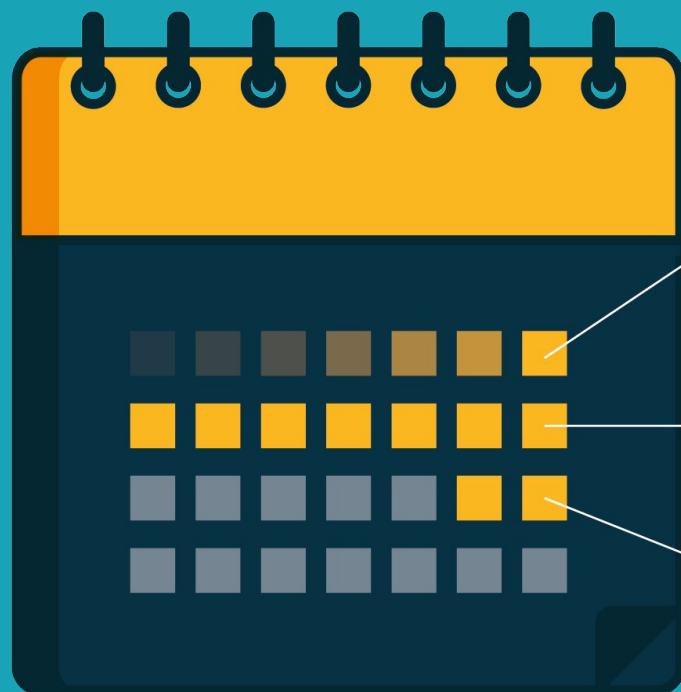
TRIP DURATIONS

What would be the length of the first trip post pandemic?



58% of Saudi travellers would opt for trips shorter than 7 days.

But overall, there is also a large appetite for trips that exceed the duration of a weekend getaway with 42% of respondents opting for trips longer than 7 days.



43% - 3-7 days

42% - 7+ days

15% - Weekend getaway

BOOKING CHANNELS

How would Saudis approach their next travel booking?



Booking Online is the channel of choice for the first trip post pandemic with 78% opting for booking channels across web, app and WhatsApp.



78%

Book online on app or website



8%

Contact the call centre of a travel agency by phone.



8%

Speak to a travel advisor through WhatsApp



6%

Visit a travel agency retail branch

