

Travel Proud Research 2026

Booking.com



Travel
Proud



Introduction

Booking.com's most expansive and cross-cutting survey to date, focused exclusively on the attitudes, actions and perceptions of LGBTQ+ travelers. With insights from 13,300 LGBTQ+ travelers across 19 countries, the research highlights the broad range of experiences across different parts of the community.



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Closet-cationers

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Closet-cationers

Travelers who are 'not out' are the least likely to have had a negative experience related to their sexuality on a trip in the last twelve months (34% compared to 62% of all LGBTQ+ travelers globally, rising to 73% for LGBTQ+ travelers who identify as trans).

It's a stark reminder that the "safest" LGBTQ+ travelers are often the ones who are most effectively able to hide parts of who they are.



31%

Less than 1/3 of LGBTQ+ travelers globally say they are 'out' when traveling



40%

40% of LGBTQ+ travelers globally are willing to hide their identity to experience a bucket list destination

53%

Closeted travelers are the only LGBTQ+ travelers where a majority don't feel anxious when traveling

Compared to:

30%

of all LGBTQ+ travelers globally

20%

of polyamorous travelers

34%

Closeted travelers are least likely to have had negative experiences related to their sexuality when traveling

Compared to:

62%

of LGBTQ+ travelers globally

73%

of trans travelers



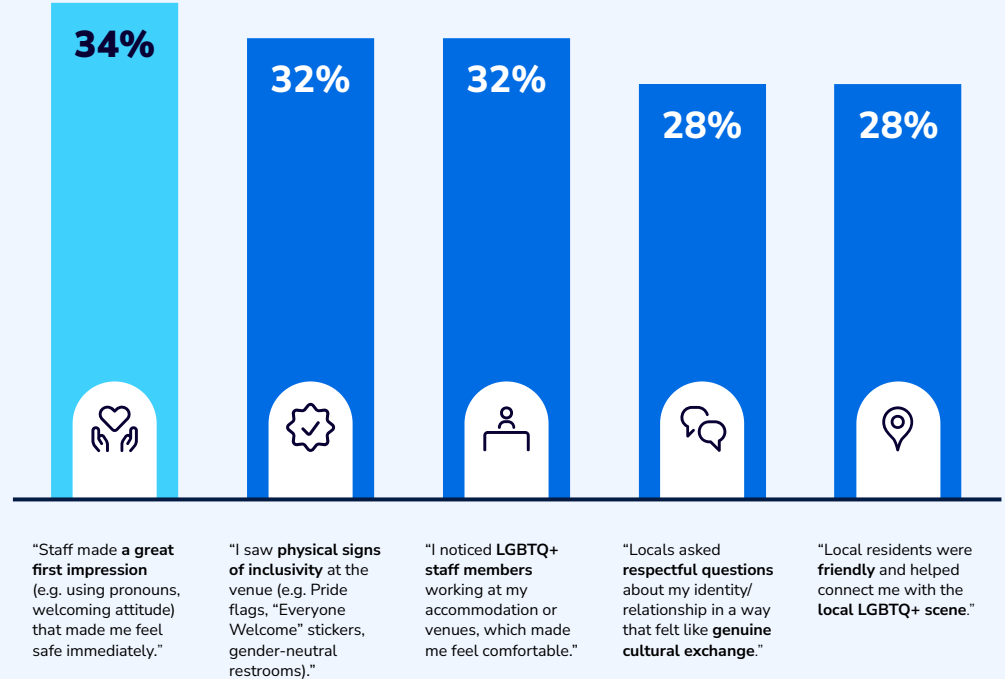
02

Positive & Negative Experiences

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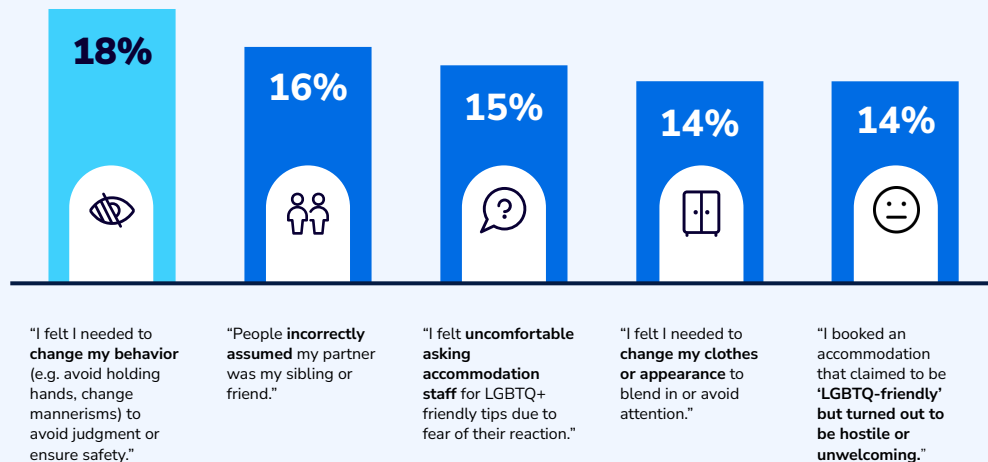
Encouragingly LGBTQ+ travelers report far more positive experiences than negative ones globally, with **82% sharing at least one positive experience** specific to their gender or sexual identity when traveling in the last year.

Top 5 Positive Experiences



However, **58% of respondents** also reported at least one **negative experience specific to their gender or sexual identity** when traveling in the last year.

Top 5 Negative Experiences





03

Five Snapshots of the LGBTQ+ Travel Experience

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A photograph of a man with short hair and a beard, wearing dark sunglasses and a black tank top, smiling and holding a baby. The baby is wearing a blue t-shirt with a graphic. They are outdoors, likely on a beach, with a sunset or sunrise in the background. The scene is warm and intimate. A blue rounded rectangle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing text.

Five Snapshots for Five Years of Travel Proud

To mark five years of the Travel Proud program, Booking.com shares five snapshots of LGBTQ+ travelers to highlight the diversity of experiences globally.

1 Global Perspectives

The 2026 data reveals a wide variety of experiences and attitudes when it comes to being 'out' when traveling across the 19 markets surveyed.

It also showed that while globally most LGBTQ+ travelers feel acceptance has improved, in some instances this has gone hand in hand with increased anxiety.

Encouragingly, all the Latin American countries surveyed reported a higher rate of feeling more relaxed in recent years than the global average.

From Completely Closeted to Being Out: A Global Divide in LGBTQ+ Travel

41%



of travelers from Japan

39%



of travelers from Italy

Completely closeted at home and when traveling

36%



of travelers from Taiwan

Out when traveling. The only nation surveyed more likely to be out when traveling than to close friends

57%



of travelers from Spain

Out when traveling. The only nation where this was the majority

Singapore: Seeking Escape

Traveling to distance themselves from LGBTQ+ restrictions at home

38%

Singaporean Travelers

18%

Global

Acceptance Is Rising But So Is Anxiety

LGBTQ+ travelers feeling acceptance has improved

Thailand

93%

India

74%

Global

58%



At the same time India and Thailand are among the LGBTQ+ travelers with the highest levels of anxiety

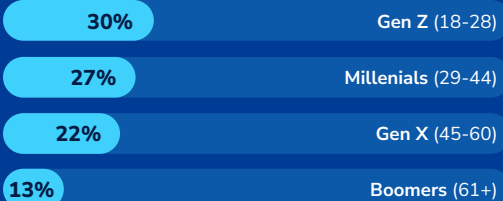
2 Generational Differences

Older travelers are less likely to highlight the importance of being able to 'be themselves' when travelling.

Unlike younger travelers they say they avoid public displays of affection (PDAs) out of respect for local norms rather than personal safety.

While Boomers mention fewer negative experiences and are more relaxed when traveling; they are much more likely to be closeted when traveling.

Influence of the Rise of Anti-LGBTQ+ Legislation on Travel Plans



48% of LGBTQ+ travelers constantly scan their surroundings to check if it is safe before initiating affection

Motivations for avoiding public displays of affection (PDAs)



Boomers:
Local norms



Gen Z:
Personal safety

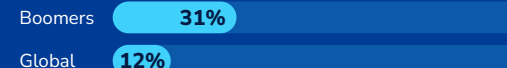
LGBTQ+ Boomers (61+): Travel Experience & Visibility

While LGBTQ+ Boomers are much less likely to report a negative experience relating to their sexuality while traveling this also correlates with significantly higher rates of being in the closet.

No negative experiences while traveling



Being closeted while traveling



3 Trans Travelers 1/2

The 2026 data also highlights the particular challenges faced by trans travelers.

They are the only group of travelers where the percentage who have become more anxious about travel outpaces their peers who've become more relaxed in recent years.

They also have different anxiety points to other LGBTQ+ travelers; with using gendered facilities scoring higher than being out in public late or after dark (the top ranked moment globally).

43%

report feeling more anxious about travel the last few years

27%

vs Global



Their Number One Anxiety Trigger



24%

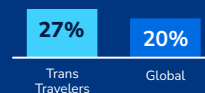
report using gendered facilities (bathrooms, changing rooms) is the number one anxiety trigger

A travel experience which other groups do not face with the same intensity

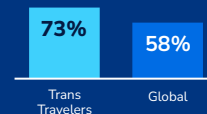
**Code-switching: changing their voice, clothing or mannerisms to pass as [cisgender](#) or straight.*

Taking More Precautions, Still Facing More Challenges

Higher rates of code-switching* while traveling



Highest rates of negative travel experiences



3 Trans Travelers 2/2

Trans Travelers are more likely to take digital safety precautions while traveling than other LGBTQ+ travelers.

They are also more likely to use AI to plan their trips, with many seeing the technology as a way to quickly check safety levels or legal rights for LGBTQ+ people in a destination.

77%



have taken some form of digital safety precaution while traveling

62% vs Global

Forms of Safety Precautions Being Taken

Turning off location sharing or “Show Distance” features on apps to avoid being tracked

27%

Not bringing LGBTQ+ themed items (books, clothing, accessories) into certain countries

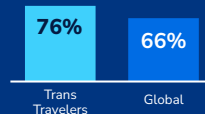
27%

Using a VPN specifically to disguise internet activity or access blocked sites

27%

Trans Travelers Are Leading in Using AI to Plan Trips

Highest level of AI use to plan trips



Their top cited reason

43%

use AI to quickly check safety levels or legal rights for LGBTQ+ people in a destination

4

'Polydays': Travelers in Open and Polyamorous Relationships

In a first for 2026, the survey explores the travel experiences of LGBTQ+ people who identify as being in [open or non-monogamous relationships](#).

These travelers are more likely than the global average to see travel as an opportunity to meet new partners or make romantic connections.

They have also become more anxious travelers in recent years and are 10% more likely to scan their surroundings before initiating a PDA.

*28% vs 17% poly vs global average
**41% v 30% poly vs global average

Queer Community as a Travel Compass



LGBTQ+ travelers in open, poly or other relationship styles are much more likely to be involved in the LGBTQ+ community and this is reflected in the sources they trust for travel advice.

Being involved in the LGBTQ+ community



Trusting accommodation reviews from other LGBTQ+ travelers more than general reviews



Travel as a Path to Connection

+11%

more likely to travel to meet dating app connections*

+11%

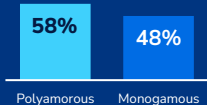
more likely to see Pride as an opportunity to meet partners**

Navigating Safety While Traveling

+15%

more anxious about travel in the last few years than monogamous travelers

Scanning surroundings before initiating affection



5 LGBTQ+ Family Travel

The insights shared by those travelling as a rainbow family highlight fragmented legal protections that make international travel a moment of anxiety, alongside worries that their children will be treated differently than others once at their destination.

Top 3 Travel Concerns for LGBTQ+ Families

Fear of children being treated differently by staff or other kids

32%

Facing awkward questions about family composition

30%

Encountering forms that force selection of "Mother" or "Father"

27%

x2



Fear of children being treated differently is more than double the global average in **Latin America**

Asian LGBTQ+ Families

Anxiety regarding border control and legal documents

34%

Asian Travelers

22%

Global

Polyamorous Travelers With Kids

Experiencing awkward questions about family composition

43%

Polyamorous Travelers

30%

Global

Hiding relationship to avoid drawing unwanted attention to children

41%

Polyamorous Travelers

22%

Global

04

Business Travel

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LGBTQ+ Business Travelers

Research highlights a gap between growing business travel demand and LGBTQ+ traveler confidence.

LGBTQ+ Business Travel

The global business travel market is projected to reach \$2.4 trillion by 2031*. While many LGBTQ+ employees are expected to travel for work, they lack the autonomy to choose where they travel, potentially exposing them to environments where they may not feel safe or supported.

[*Allied Market Research](#)

Business Travel Carries Unease for Many LGBTQ+ Employees

Only

50%

say they feel relaxed when traveling for work

While

23%

say they feel anxious when traveling for work



45%

have hidden their identity on work trips to ensure their safety

Only

52%

would feel comfortable declining a business trip to a high-risk country without fear of hurting their career



LGBTQ+ Employees Are Making Career Trade-Offs



58%

say their decision to work for a company would be influenced by whether it offers strong LGBTQ+ travel protections

44%

have turned down or avoided applying for jobs entirely at companies that lack clear LGBTQ+ travel protections

42%

have turned down a lucrative business opportunity due to safety concerns or lack of employer support

Employees Need More Than Policies Alone

55%

say their direct manager is supportive of their concerns

49%

say their company does not clearly communicate relevant travel policies and resources

46%

do not feel adequately briefed on local LGBTQ+ laws before traveling to a new destination

42%

do not feel comfortable discussing their concerns at all

A photograph of two young women with long dark hair lying on a bed in a hotel room. They are both smiling and looking at a smartphone held by the woman on the right. The room has a wooden headboard, white pillows, and a lamp in the background. A large blue semi-circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the number '05' and the text 'Tech & Travel'.

05

Tech & Travel

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Tech & Travel

Technology plays a dual role for LGBTQ+ travelers; seen both as a way to find non-judgmental travel guidance and an area where caution must be taken to protect privacy and personal safety.



Precautions

44%



of LGBTQ+ travelers take more precautions than they were a few years ago

25%

Share live locations with trusted contacts to manage anxiety

17%

Delete dating apps before border crossings

19%

Use VPNs to disguise activity or access blocked sites

18%

Carry burner phones

Tools for Safe Exploration

Digital tools are seen by LGBTQ+ travelers as ways to search for impartial information, connect with members of the community in destinations, and find reassurance about a hotel or attraction.

66%

of LGBTQ+ travelers used AI to plan a trip in the last year

30%

would find an inclusion of 'LGBTQ+ friendly' filter useful when booking travel online

37%

feel safer asking AI sensitive questions about the local LGBTQ+ scene than asking a human

39%



believe AI is efficient at finding niche LGBTQ+ friendly spots which are hard to find via standard search

43%



trust AI to provide objective, non-judgemental travel advice regarding their identity



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Conclusion

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“ Conclusion

This year's research shows why our Travel Proud program continues to be as important as ever. We're encouraged by how the program has grown in the five years since it launched in 2021 and how enthusiastically it has been embraced by so many of our partners around the world. Training is now available in 11 languages and has been completed by more than 142,000 properties, allowing travelers to filter for LGBTQ+ friendly properties in over 20,000 cities and destinations across the globe.

*Despite the challenges, and the increased precautions LGBTQ+ travelers are taking in order to feel safe, we are inspired by the 66% globally who prioritize trips where they can be 100% themselves; and who continue to fiercely and authentically **Travel Proud**.*



Matthias Schmid

SVP of Accommodations, Booking.com

Methodology

Research commissioned by Booking.com and independently conducted among a sample of 13,331 respondents across 19 Markets: 222 from Argentina, 1,041 from Australia, 1,021 from Brazil, 839 from Canada, 527 from Colombia, 1,031 from France, 1,035 from Germany, 1,010 from India, 1,044 from Italy, 521 from Japan, 525 from Mexico, 508 from Netherlands, 218 from New Zealand, 219 from Singapore, 1,088 from Spain, 216 from Taiwan, 208 from Thailand, 1,019 from UK, 1,039 from US.

To participate respondents had to be 18 years old or older, must have taken a personal trip that included an overnight stay in the last 12 months, either be involved or the primary decision maker about booking and planning travel, and identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. The survey was carried out between February and March 2026.

Definitions

Genders

- **Cisgender:** Identifying with a gender that aligns with the sex you were assigned at birth.
- **Transgender:** Identifying with a gender that differs from the sex you were assigned at birth.
- **Non-binary:** Identifying with a gender that exists outside the strict traditional categories of exclusively male or female.

Relationship Styles

Respondents were able to select a range of relationship preferences including: open, polyamorous, queerplatonic, relationship anarchy or other self-defined preferences.

- **Open:** Where partners agree they can have sexual or romantic connections with others.
- **Polyamory:** Consensually having multiple romantic relationships at the same time.
- **Queerplatonic:** A committed, intimate partnership that is deeper than friendship but not romantic or sexual in the traditional sense.
- **Anarchy:** Rejecting standard relationship rules or hierarchies (like prioritizing romance over friendship) to define each connection individually.



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