HALAL MEDIA JAPAN   SURVEY ON TRAVEL INTENTIONS

Travel Intentions and Perceived Barriers Among Malaysian Muslim Visitors to Japan

A survey-based analysis | n = 544 | Sample: Malaysian residents expressing interest in travel to Japan

Research presentation materials

September 2026, Food Diversity Inc.

AGENDA

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Travel Intent Is High, but Accommodation of Religious Needs Remains the Primary Barrier

97.8%

wish to visit Japan
(only 2.2% report no plans to do so)

75.6%

plan to visit within two years

52.4%

cite halal food or prayer space as their biggest concern

56.8%

would pay for personalised recommendation services

Key finding: Concerns over halal food (40.1%) and prayer space availability (12.1%) together account for 52.4% of responses. When the lack of reliable information (9.6%) is included, this figure rises to 61.9%, indicating that gaps in the receiving environment and in information provision — rather than the appeal of tourism resources themselves — constitute the principal barrier to travel.

Survey Overview

Conducted by	Halal Media Japan
Survey population	Malaysian residents expressing interest in travel to Japan
Valid responses	544
Survey method	In-person questionnaire administered at MATTA FAIR 2026 (Malaysia's largest travel exhibition, Kuala Lumpur); 13 items in total, including one open-ended question
Analytical method	Descriptive frequency analysis; cross-tabulation by number of prior visits, age, and gender; thematic coding of open-ended responses

01 Survey Overview

Survey Administration

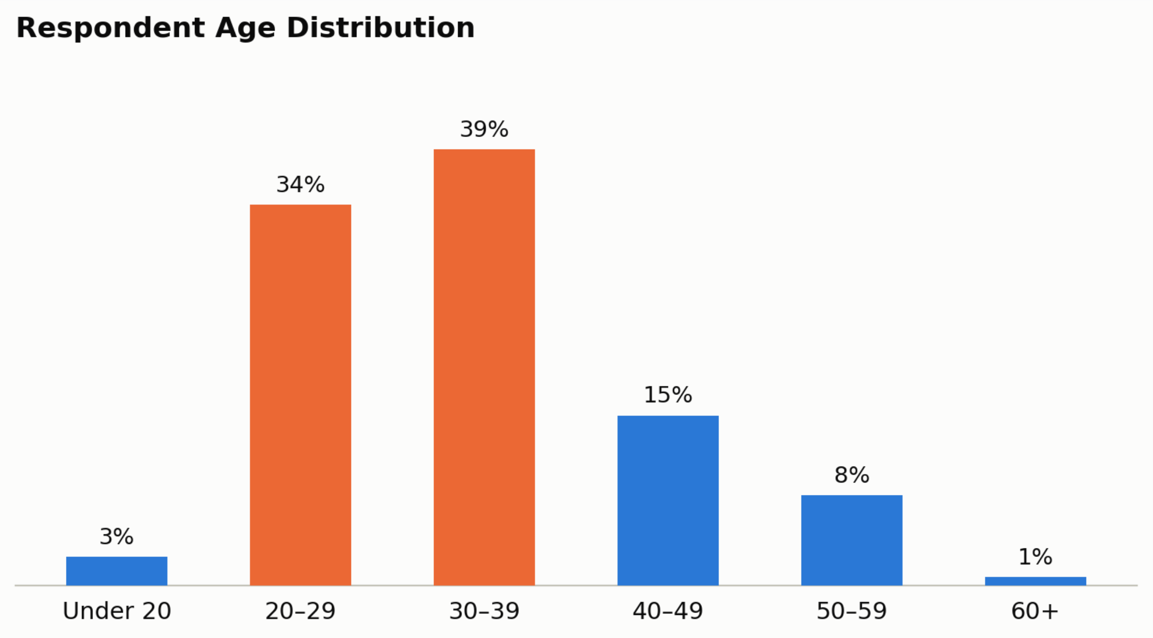
MATTA FAIR 2026 Autumn

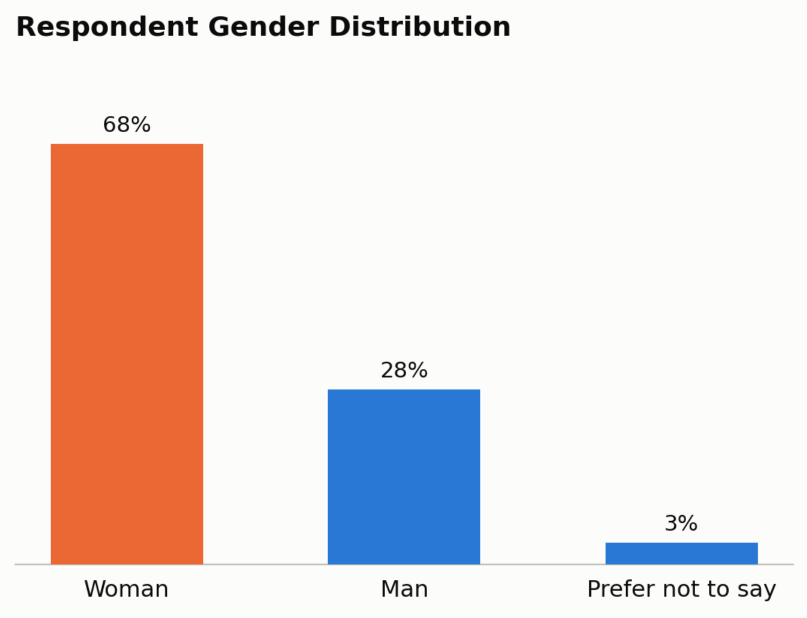
September 4–6, 2026 | Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Venue: Malaysian International Trade & Exhibition Centre (MITEC) | Total attendance: approx. 180,000

The questionnaire survey on travel to Japan was administered on-site at MATTA FAIR 2026 Autumn.

Respondent Profile



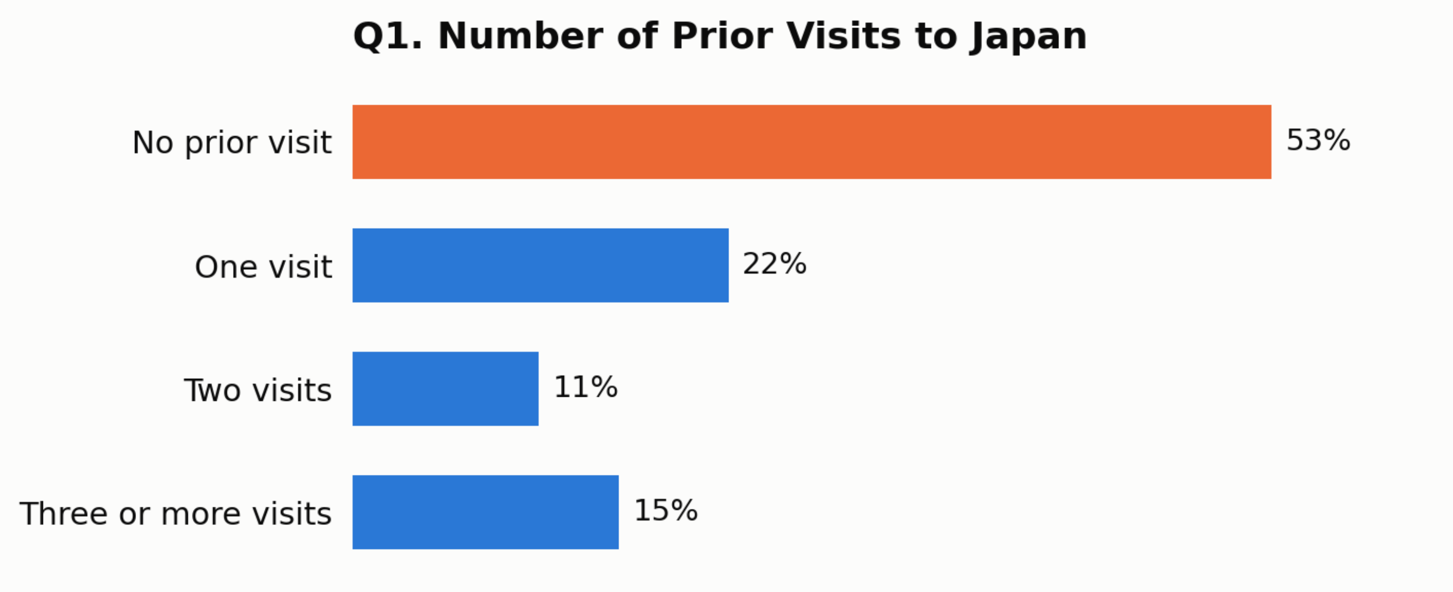


Respondents in their 30s (39.2%) and 20s (34.2%) together account for 73.3% of the sample, and women constitute a majority (68.2%). The sample is thus centred on a demographic for whom hijab-compliant attire and prayer accommodation are salient, suggesting outreach should be tailored to young, digitally engaged women.

Source: Q10 (age group) and Q11 (gender), n = 544

Number of Prior Visits to Japan

Q1. How many times have you visited Japan?



47.4%

have visited Japan at least once (15.3% three or more times)

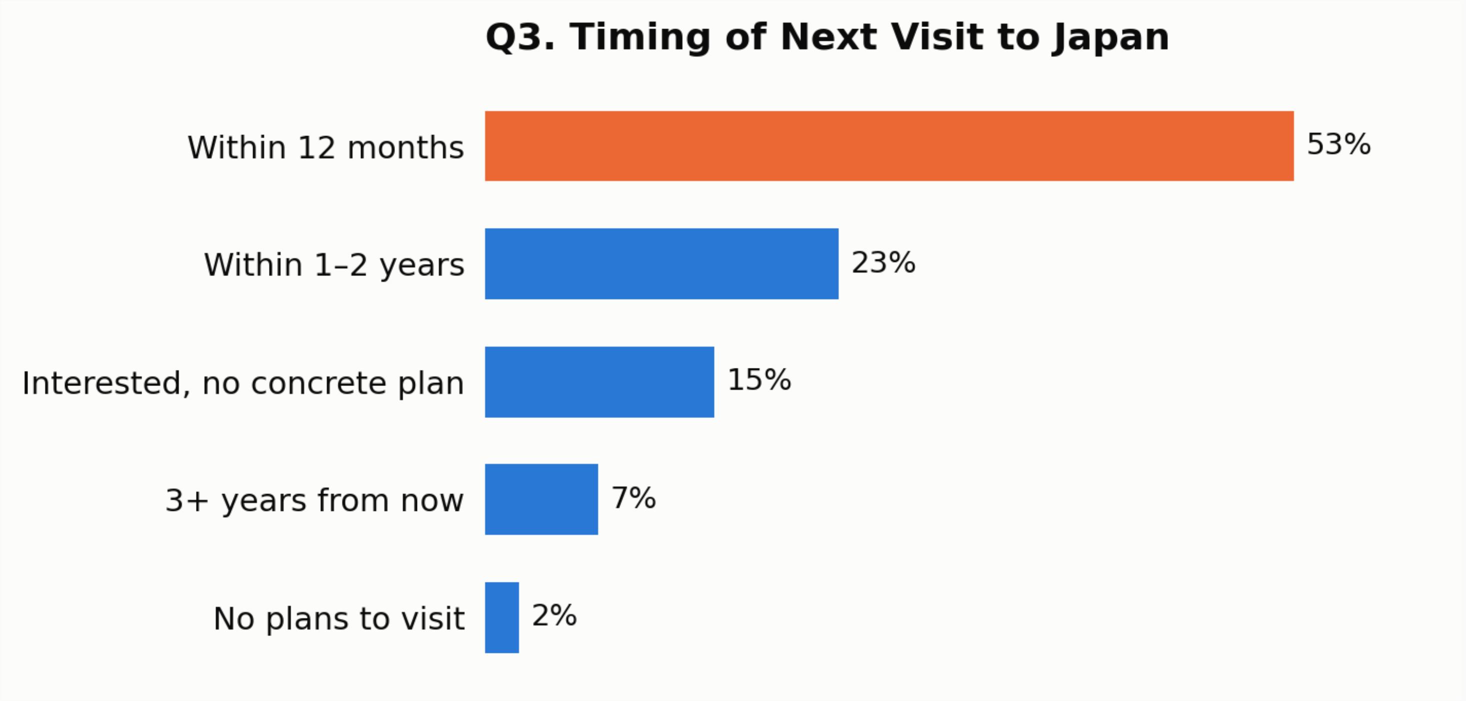
An Established Core of Repeat Visitors

Although 52.6% of respondents have not yet visited Japan, 15.3% report three or more visits, indicating that a core segment of repeat visitors has already formed. This suggests that distinct engagement strategies are warranted for first-time and repeat visitors.

Source: Q1 (number of prior visits), n = 544

Timing of Next Visit: 97.8% Intend to Travel to Japan

Q3. When are you likely to visit Japan next?



75.6%

plan to visit within the next two years

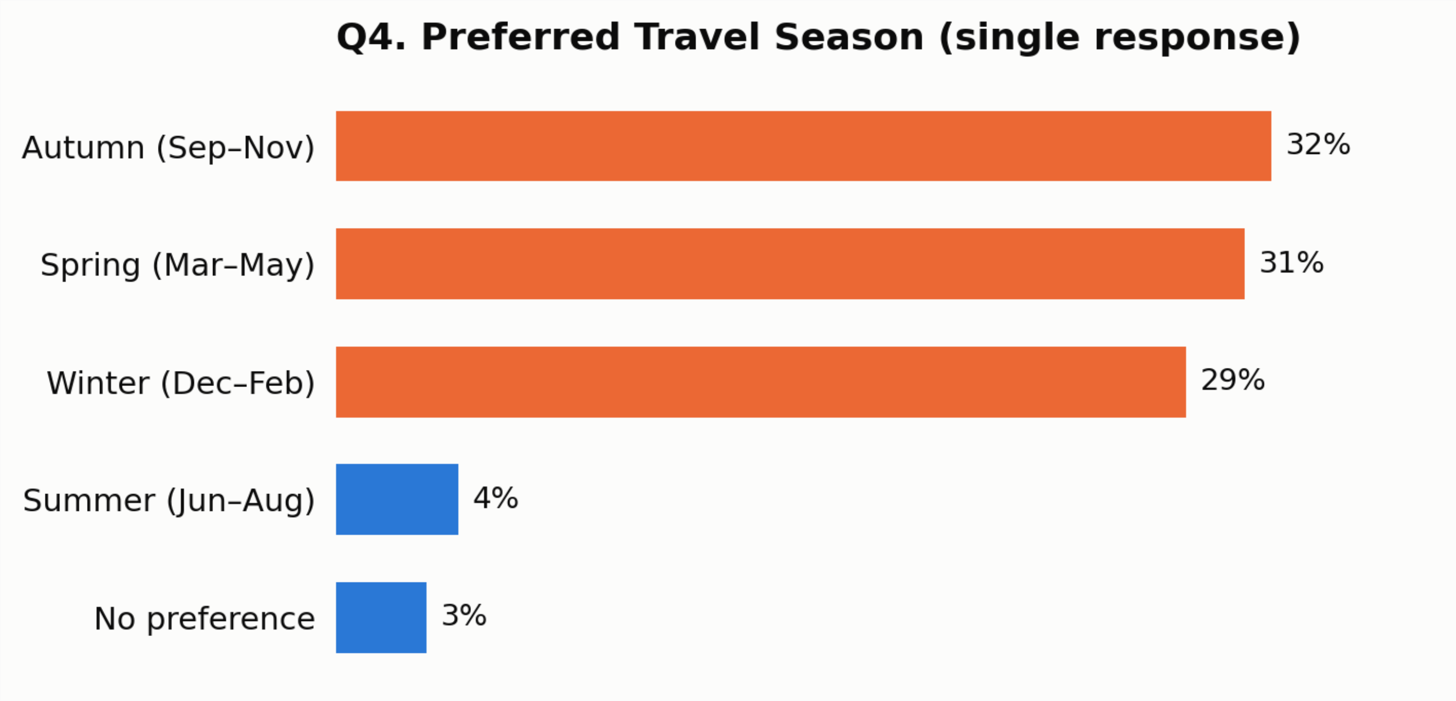
A Market Requiring Immediate Attention

Only 2.2% of respondents report no plans to visit Japan; 52.6% expect to travel within 12 months and a further 23.0% within one to two years. Among repeat visitors (three or more prior visits), 74.7% expect to travel within 12 months, indicating a shortening return-visit cycle.

Source: Q3 (timing of next visit), n = 544

Preferred Travel Season: A Pronounced Aversion to Summer

Q4. If you could choose only one season for your next trip to Japan, which would you most prefer?



4.2%

prefer summer (June–August)

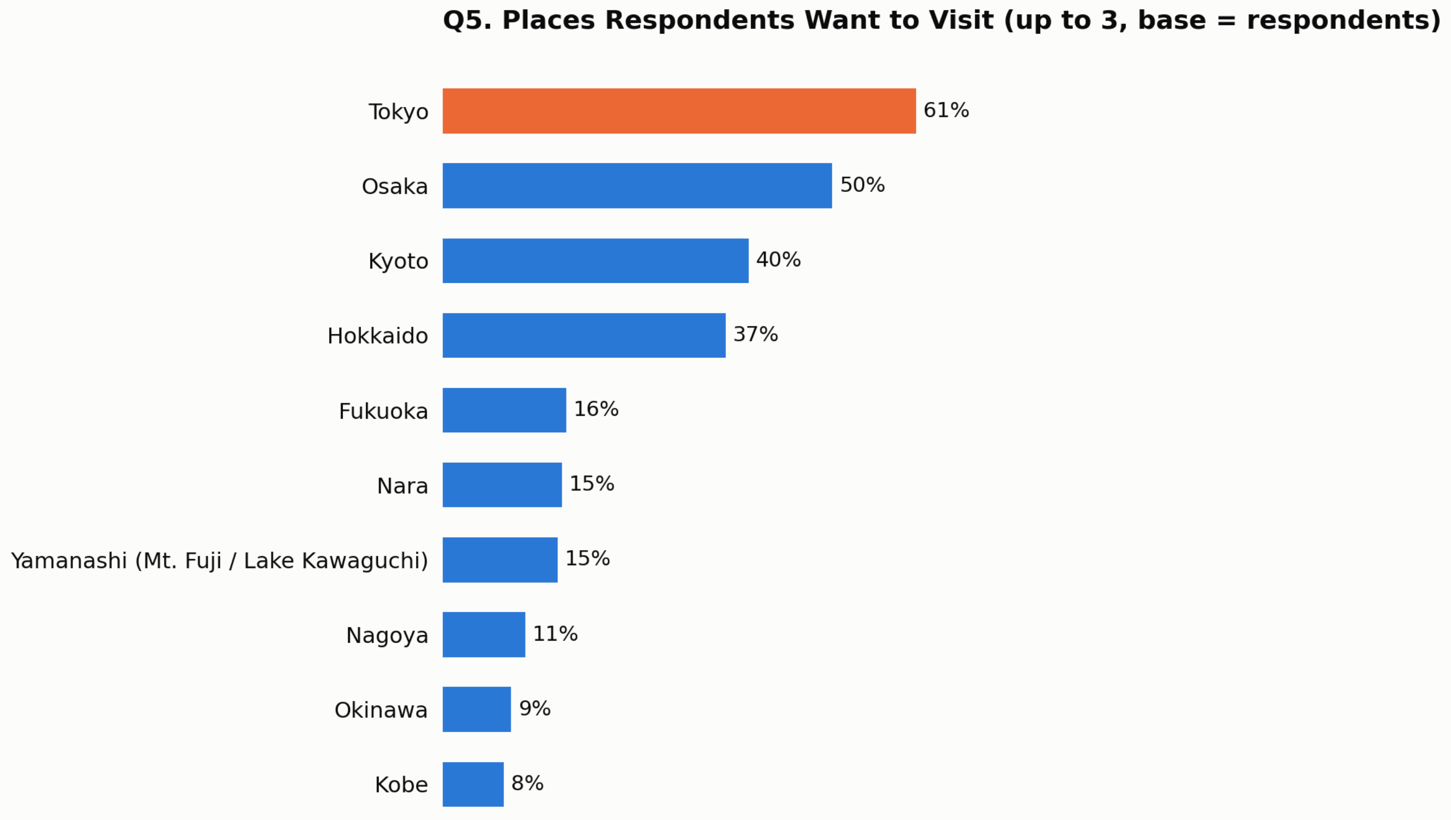
92.6% Favour the Three Non-Summer Seasons

Autumn (32.2%), spring (31.2%), and winter (29.2%) receive broadly comparable support, while summer attracts only 4.2%. This pattern may reflect the burden that Japan's hot, humid summers place on hijab-compliant dress, prayer, and mobility, and is consistent with the high interest in seasonal scenery reported under Q7 (51.1%).

Source: Q4 (preferred travel season), n = 544, single response

Desired Destinations: Untapped Potential in Regional Areas

Q5. Which places would you most like to visit on your next trip to Japan? (Select up to three)



36.6%

want to visit Hokkaido, vs. 18.6% who have already done so

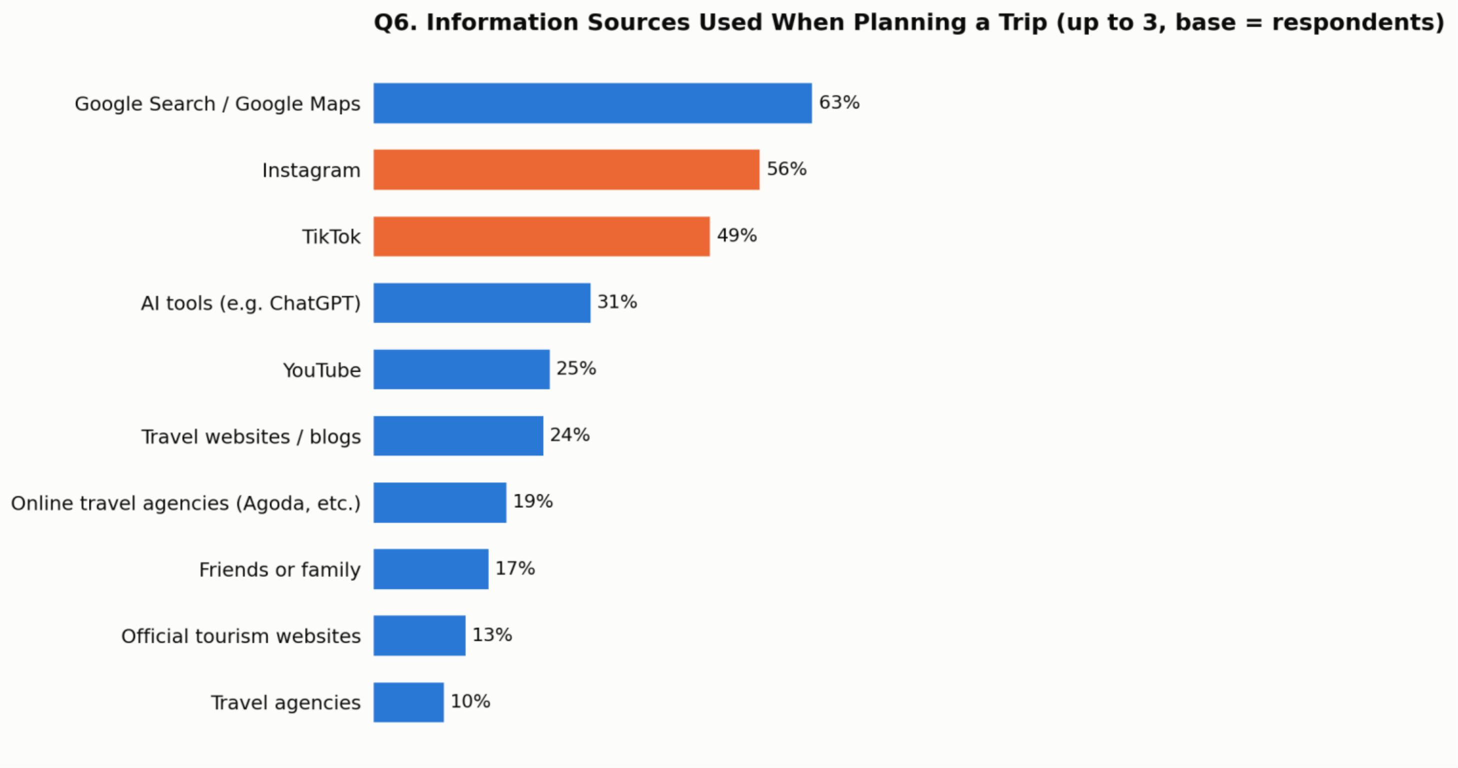
The Golden Route, and Beyond

Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto remain the most popular destinations, but Hokkaido and Fukuoka show a substantial gap between stated interest and actual visitation. Destinations beyond the conventional Golden Route stand to gain a first-mover advantage from improved halal-related information.

Source: Q5 (desired destinations), up to 3 selections, base = respondents, n = 544

Information Sources: Social Media as the Dominant Channel

Q6. Which sources do you usually use when researching or planning a trip to Japan? (Select up to three)



13%

rely on official tourism websites

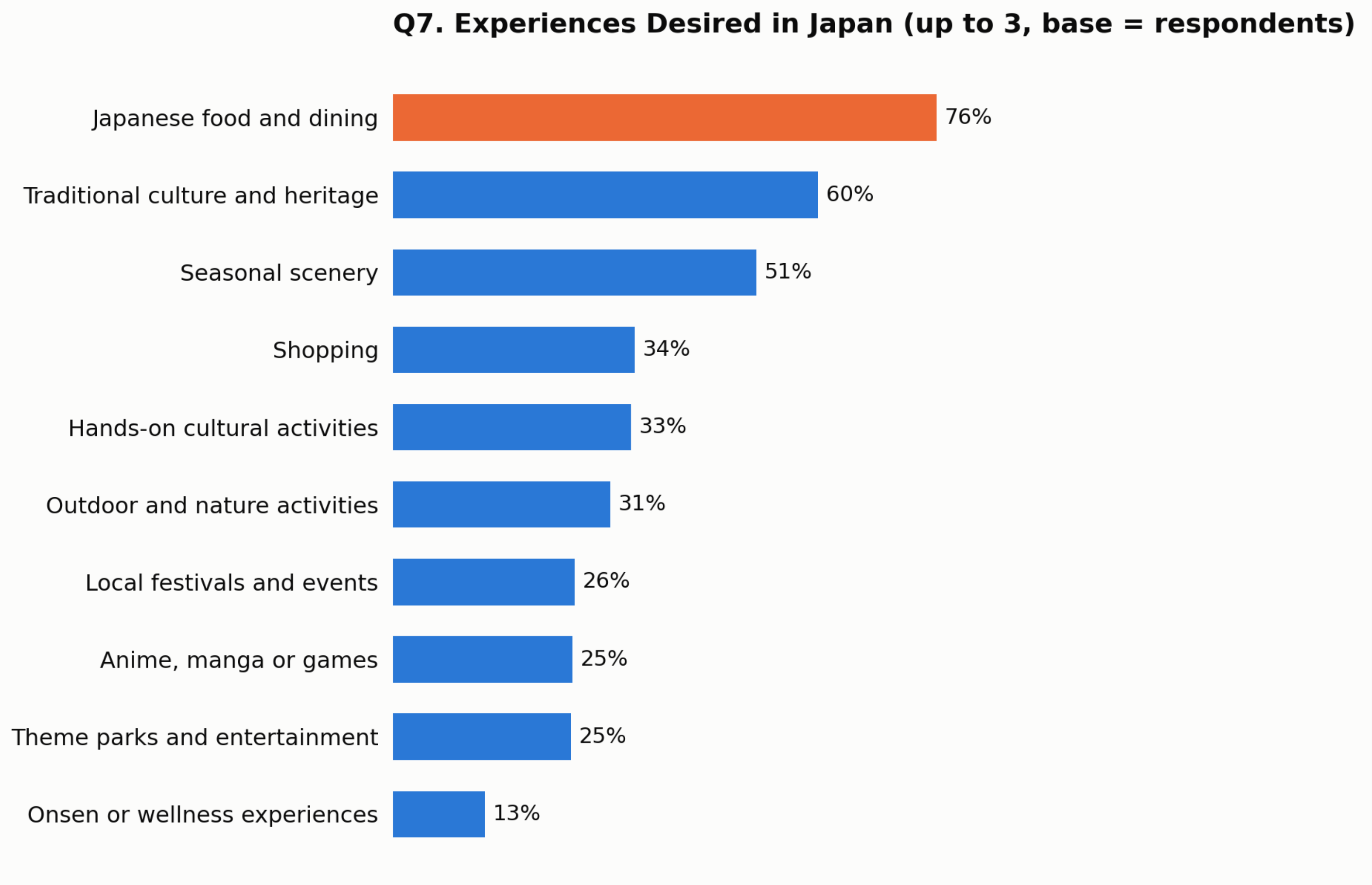
The Limited Reach of Official Channels

Google (63.2%), Instagram (55.7%), and TikTok (48.5%) are the leading sources, while official tourism websites (13.2%) and travel agencies (10.1%) exert comparatively limited influence. This points to the importance of visually oriented content and optimisation for AI-based search tools (used by 31.2% of respondents).

Source: Q6 (information sources), up to 3 selections, base = respondents, n = 544

Desired Experiences: A Marked Interest in Japanese Cuisine

Q7. Which experiences would you most like to have in Japan? (Select up to three)



76.5%

selected Japanese food and dining

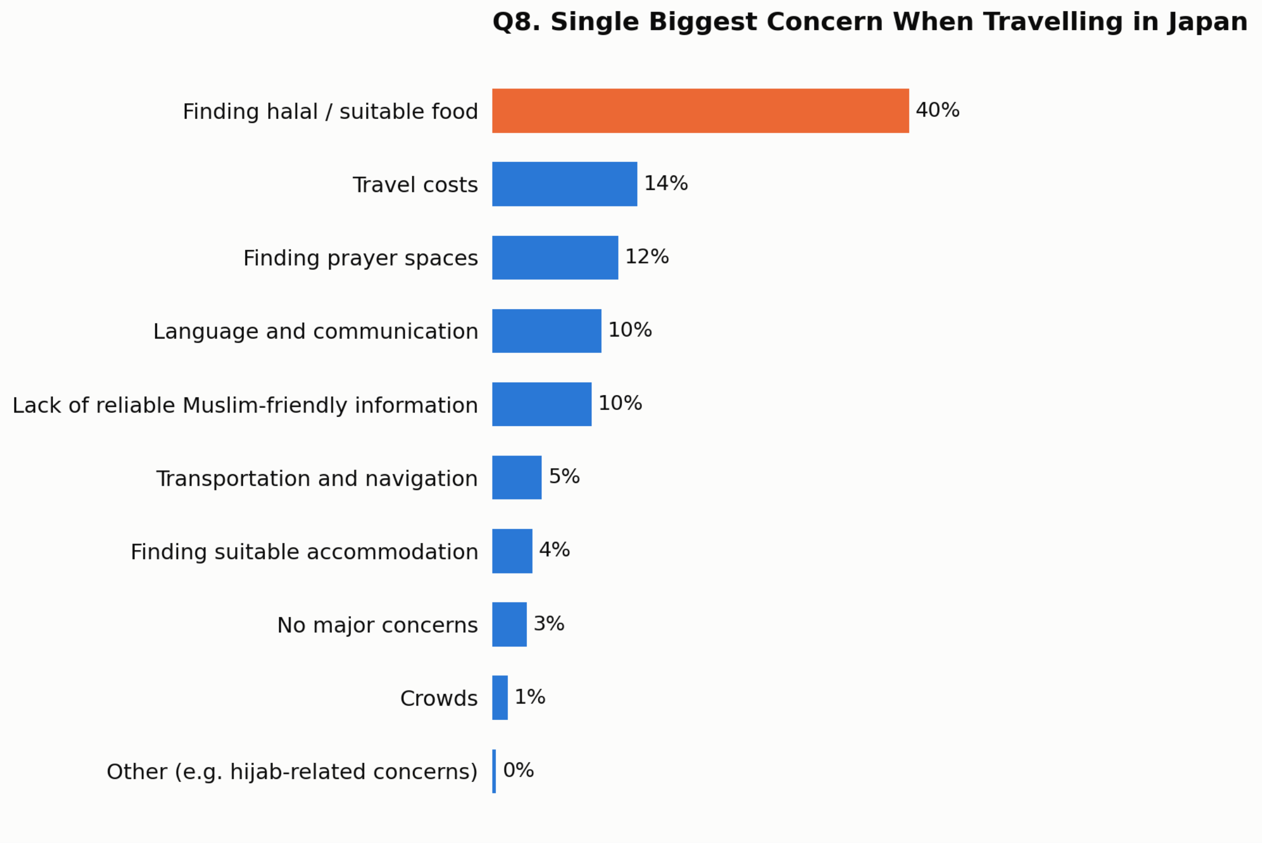
Culinary Interest as a Proxy for Halal Demand

Japanese food and dining (76.5%), traditional culture and heritage (59.7%), and seasonal scenery (51.1%) rank highest. This pronounced culinary interest implies a correspondingly strong latent demand for information on halal-certified restaurants and ingredients.

Source: Q7 (desired experiences), up to 3 selections, base = respondents, n = 544

Principal Concerns When Travelling in Japan

Q8. What is your single biggest concern when travelling in Japan?



Source: Q8 (single biggest concern), n = 544, single response

52.4%

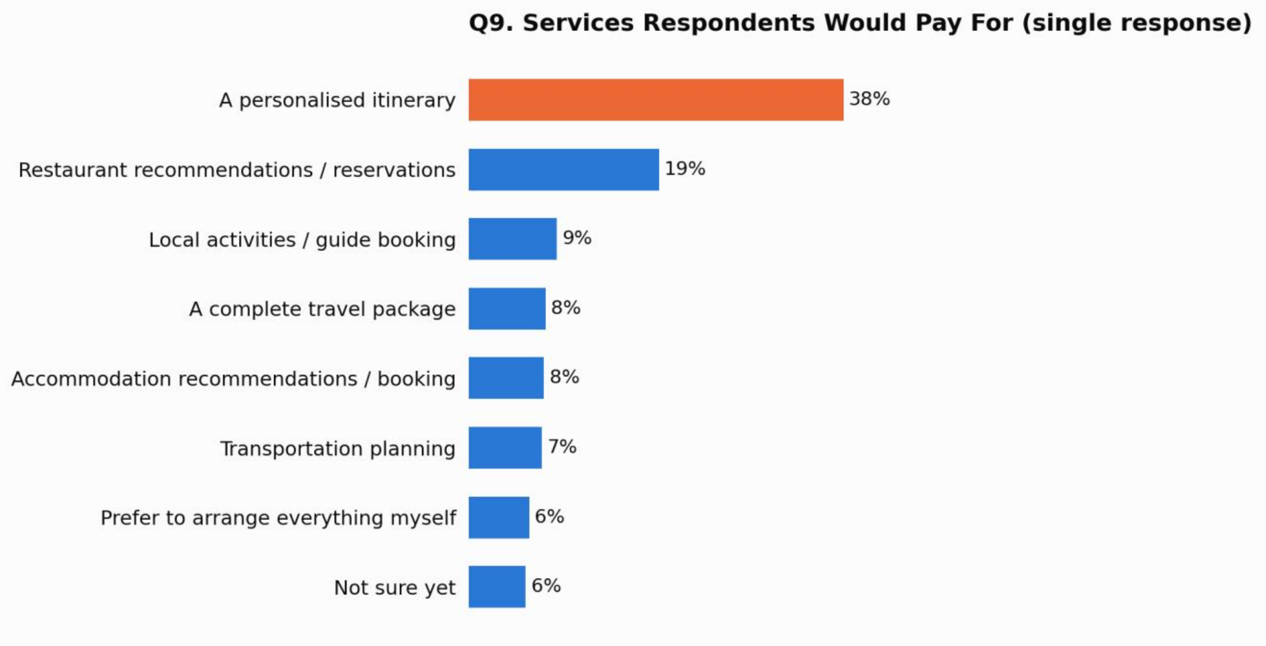
identify halal food or prayer space access as their single biggest concern

A Barrier of Environment and Information, Not of Appeal

Halal food (40.1%) and prayer space (12.1%) jointly account for 52.4% of responses; including the lack of reliable information (9.6%) raises this to 61.9%. First-time visitors' concerns centre on halal food (44.1%), while repeat visitors (3+ visits) increasingly cite prayer space (18.1%).

Willingness to Pay: A Preference for Personalised Services

Q9. If Halal Media Japan offered travel services, which one would you be most likely to pay for?



56.8%

would pay for personalised recommendation or information services

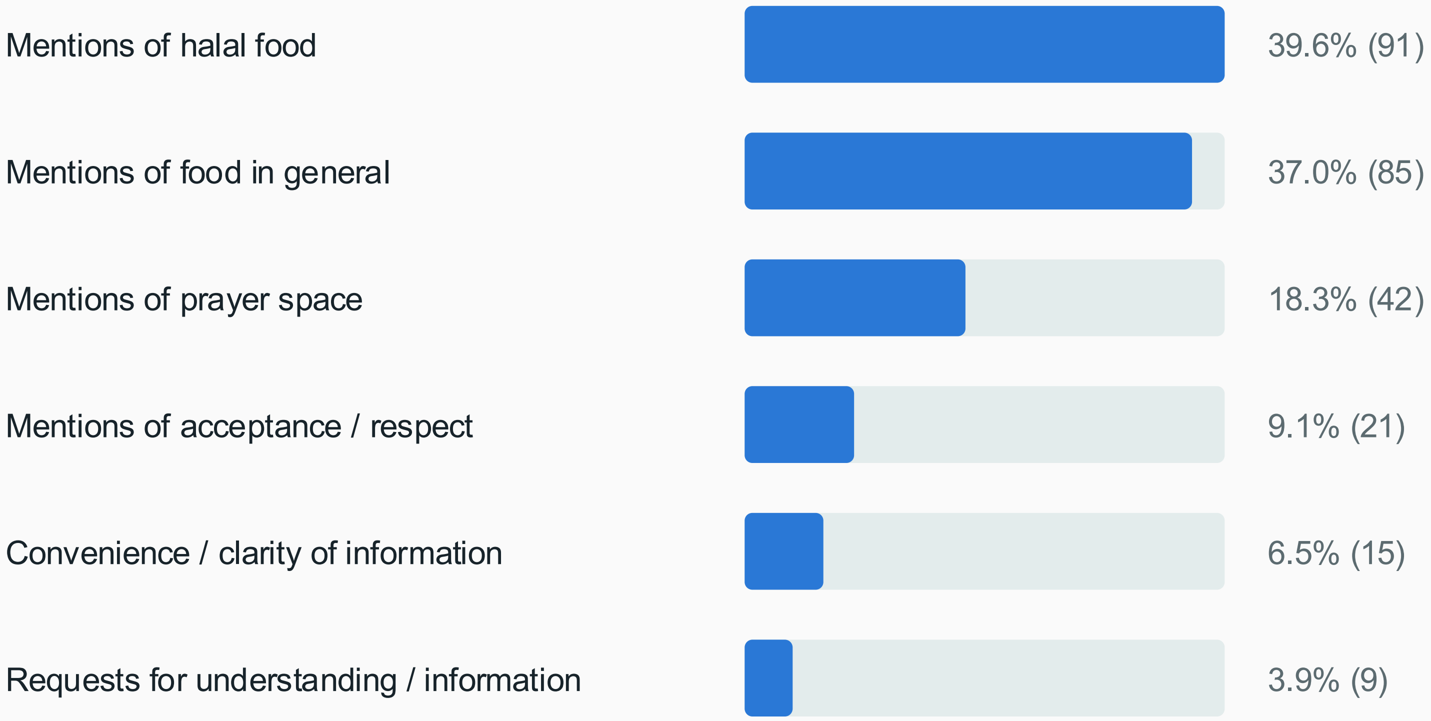
Curation Over Standardised Packages

Personalised itinerary planning (37.7%) and restaurant recommendations with reservation support (19.1%) together account for 56.8% of responses, whereas a complete travel package attracts only 7.7% and self-arrangement 6.1%. Demand favours curated services over standardised offerings.

Source: Q9 (willingness to pay for services), n = 544, single response

Thematic Classification of Open-Ended Responses (230 valid responses)

Q12. In one short sentence, what is the one thing you want Japan's tourism businesses to understand about Muslim travellers?



Strong Consistency with the Quantitative Findings

In response to the open-ended question on what tourism businesses should understand about Muslim travellers (253 of 544 respondents answered), references to halal food and prayer space again predominate.

Several respondents nonetheless commented “please do not care about us” (treat us without special fuss) and “we are flexible within halal limits,” suggesting that many seek accurate information and a range of options rather than elaborate special accommodation.

Implications 1–3

1

Prioritise the Visibility of Halal Food and Prayer Space Information

This is the foremost concern, accounting for 52.4% of responses. Registering certification and prayer-space information on Google Maps, stating it clearly on booking platforms and business websites, and providing basic staff training are measures likely to yield rapid returns.

2

Strengthen Visual Communication Through Instagram and TikTok

The principal information channels are Google (63.2%), Instagram (55.7%), and TikTok (48.5%). Photographic evidence of halal certification and prayer facilities, together with review videos from Muslim travellers, are likely to be particularly effective.

3

Invest in Personalised Recommendation Services Rather Than Standardised Packages

56.8% of respondents' willingness to pay concentrates on personalised itinerary planning and restaurant recommendations. Concierge-style services that account for halal compliance represent a promising revenue opportunity.

Implications 4–6

4 Capitalise on Untapped Demand Beyond the Golden Route

Hokkaido (36.6% intent vs. 18.6% actual visitation) and Fukuoka (16.0% intent vs. 11.6% actual visitation) show a substantial gap between interest and realised travel, indicating promising potential for regional tourism growth.

5 Distribute Seasonal Promotion Across Autumn, Spring, and Winter

Preference for summer (June–August) travel stands at only 4.2%, suggesting limited appeal for summer-weighted campaigns. Seasonal experiences — autumn foliage, cherry blossoms, and snow — should instead be promoted in a balanced manner throughout the year.

6 Tailor Information Provision to Visitors' Level of Prior Experience

First-time visitors benefit most from reassurance that halal food can reliably be found, whereas repeat visitors are better served by comprehensive information on everyday prayer facilities. Communication should be differentiated by stage of engagement.

Malaysian Muslim travellers represent one of the most promising growth markets for Japanese tourism.

Improvements in the receiving environment and in information provision will determine the pace of future growth.