



JAPAN KEY FINDINGS 2022

Exploring barriers to travel
among disabled people





Credit: © Tokyo Convention & Visitors Bureau

BOOKING AND PLANNING TRIPS

Two in five feel that they shouldn't have to use specialist travel agents or providers.

A third of disabled Japanese holidaymakers (34%) use both a travel agent and provider when booking their holiday, making this more common than just using a travel agent (30%) or just the travel provider (24%).

Very few (6%) say they solely use travel agents or providers that specialise in holidays for disabled people when booking their holiday. Seven in ten (71%) say they use travel agents or providers that do not specialise in holidays for disabled people and the remaining quarter (23%) use both.





Booking and Planning Trips

The reasons for not using disabled specialist agents or providers are more likely to be due to not feeling like they should have to, rather than anything to do with the service they offer.

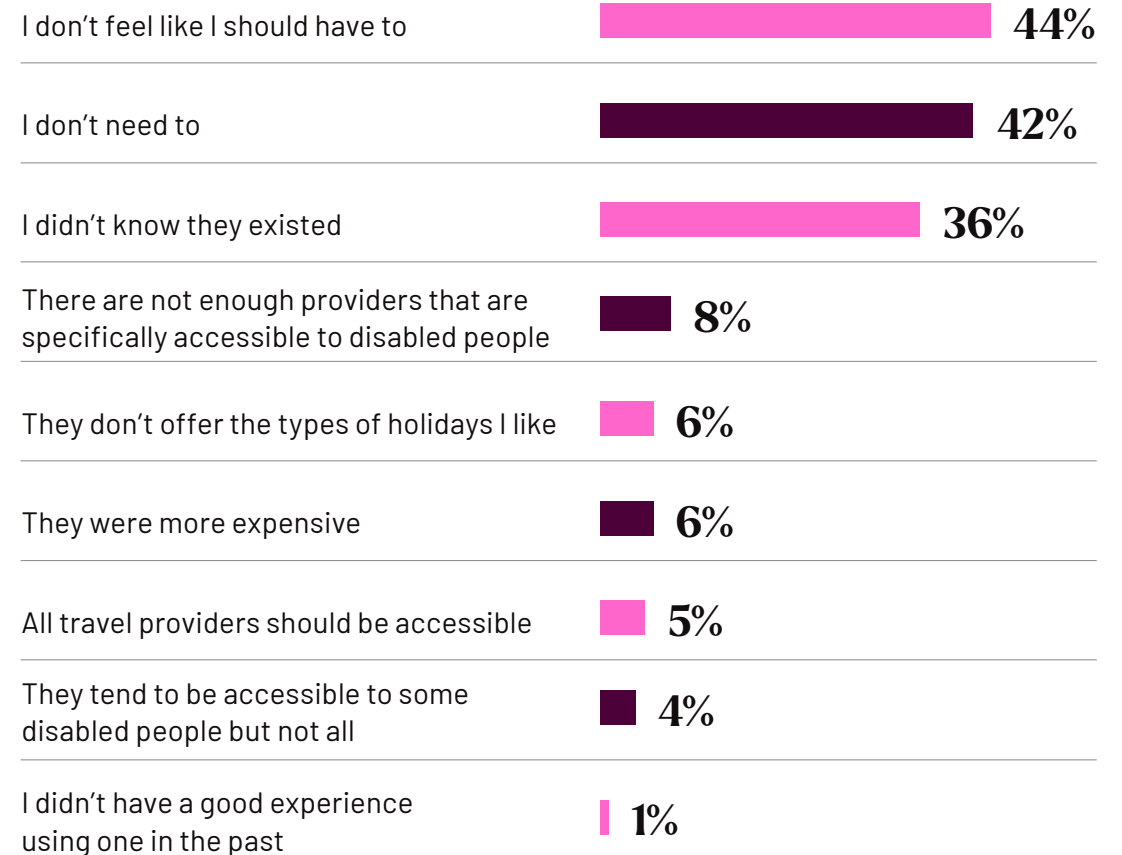
Of those who don't use specialist agents or providers, over two in five (44%) say they don't feel like they should have to.

Additionally, two in five (42%) say they don't need to use specialist travel agents or providers, and over a third (36%) didn't know they existed.

Just under one in ten (8%) said there are not enough specifically accessible providers, and one in fifteen said that the providers don't offer the types of holidays they like and are more expensive (6% both).

The reasons for not using disabled specialist agents or providers are more likely to be due to not feeling like they should have to, rather than anything to do with the service they offer.

Reasons for not using travel agents or providers that specialise in holidays for disabled people, among those who don't use them.





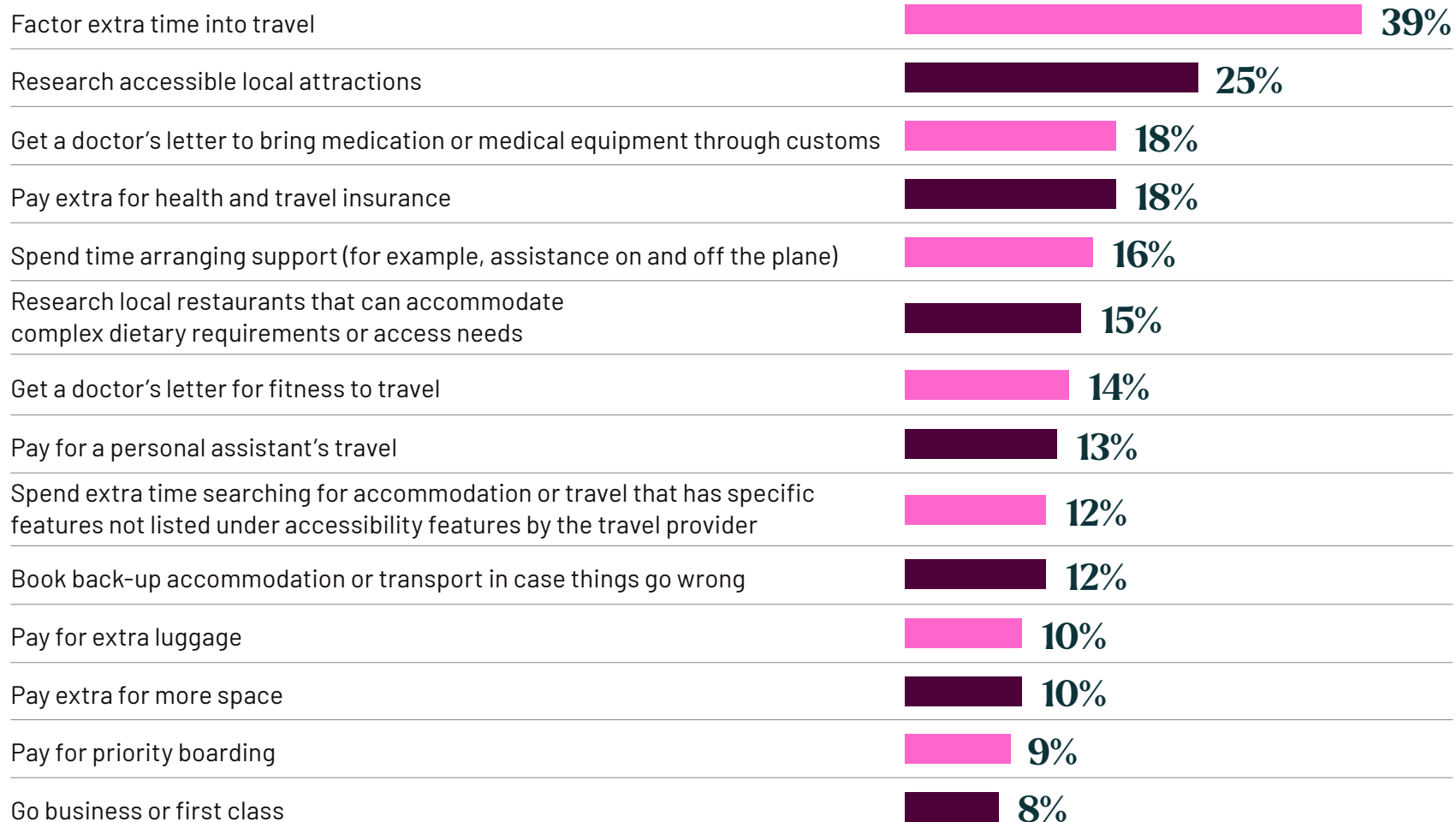
Booking and Planning Trips

One in six find booking a holiday over the phone difficult.

Japanese disabled holidaymakers find it generally easy to book their holidays, with bookings made over the phone scoring the highest level of difficulty at 17%. Booking online using a computer is difficult for 16%, while just 15% find booking holidays on their smartphone or in person challenging.

A fifth have to pay extra for health and travel insurance, amounting to nearly ¥25k.

Extra steps taken to ensure trips are as accessible.





Booking and Planning Trips

Nearly three in four (72%) disabled people in Japan said they have to do extra planning before a holiday to make sure it is accessible for them.

For disabled people, this most commonly involves having to factor extra costs and extra time into their trip.

Nearly one in five (18%) said they have to pay extra for health and travel insurance, paying on average ¥24,736 to ensure they're covered. The same proportion (18%) also have to arrange a doctor's letter to bring medication or medical equipment through customs.

Two in five (39%) said they have to factor extra time into travel and a quarter (25%) spend time researching accessible local attractions before their trip.

A holiday costs a disabled person ¥63,365.

A disabled person in Japan spends on average ¥63,365 on a single trip. Disabled travellers aged 55+ tend to spend slightly more, with an average of ¥66,964, than those aged 18-34 who spend just ¥51,410.

Those who self-describe their disability as impacting their day-to-day life a lot spend even more on holidays, with an average of ¥72,342, as compared to those whose disability impacts them a little (¥61,596).

72%

of disabled people in Japan said they have to do extra planning before a holiday to make sure it is accessible for them.

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I think the first thing is to prepare a variety of options so that we can respond to various people with disabilities.



Booking and Planning Trips

Tokyo considered the most accessible city.

Of those who have visited the most travelled cities in the world, disabled people in Japan said that Tokyo was the most accessible.

Of those who selected Tokyo, 74% said this is because it has accessible transport links, while 47% said it has a wide variety of accessible accommodation. Nearly half (46%) said that Tokyo is accessible because the accommodation is close to cultural attractions, shops, and restaurants. Over two in five (44%) said information is easily accessible, and just over a quarter (28%) said it's because the signage is displayed clearly.

However, as it's known for its bustling city life, visitors to Tokyo visitors can't avoid city crowds, as only 1% of the respondents said they think it's accessible because it has fewer crowds than other cities, and just 2% said it's because there are quiet areas around the city.

The top five accessible cities, as voted by the survey participants of Japan are listed below.

- Tokyo (Japan) - 63%
- Singapore - 4%
- New York City, NY (USA) - 3%
- Paris (France) - 3%
- London (UK) - 3%

Credit: © Tokyo Convention & Visitors Bureau



Cities voted the most accessible:

Tokyo
(Japan)
63%

Singapore
4%

New York City
(USA)
3%

Paris
(France)
3%

London
(UK)
3%



Booking and Planning Trips

Two in five have been left in a difficult situation while travelling, causing stress and discomfort

Two in five (43%) listed at least one challenge they faced while travelling due to the agent or provider they were using not being accessible to disabled people.

A fifth (19%) recall getting lost, while a similar proportion (17%) ended up stuck on transport.

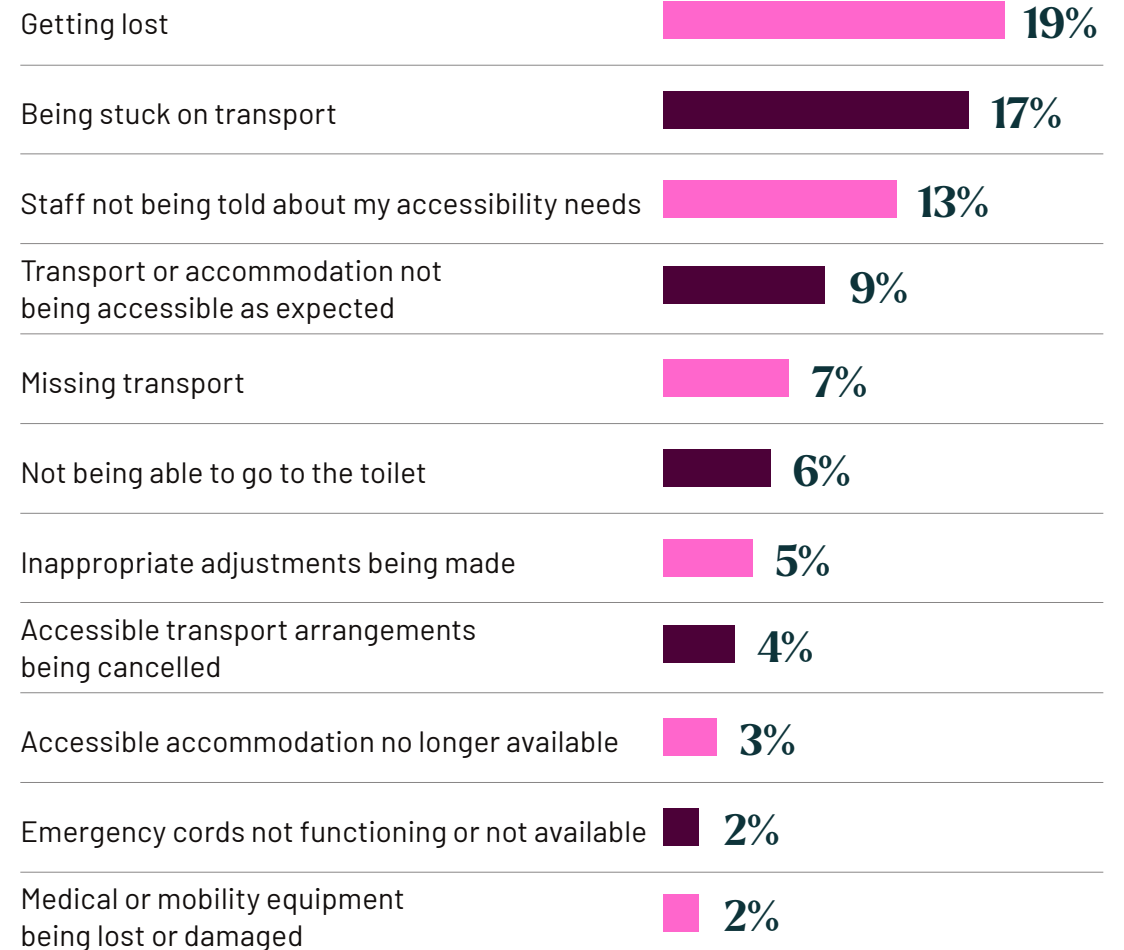
Over one in ten (13%) said they've ended up in a situation while on holiday where staff have not been told about their accessibility needs. Similarly, 9% said transport or accommodation was not as accessible as expected.

Over two in five (41%) of those who experienced something happening to them due to the travel agent or provider not being accessible, said this caused them stress. Near half (48%) said the situation made them feel uncomfortable, and a quarter (25%) felt burdensome.

Concerningly, one in ten (11%) reported feeling unsafe and 9% scared.

Positive emotions such as feeling relieved, reassured, or relaxed were only felt by 7% who went through the experience of travelling.

Situations that have occurred due to travel agents or providers not being accessible to disabled people





Booking and Planning Trips

Half of those caught in a negative experience had to get out of the situation on their own.

A half (49%) of those who had a bad experience had to get out of the situation on their own, while one in five (18%) had to call upon a friend or family member to help. A similar proportion said that someone travelling with them helped them out of the situation (19%). However, for one in seven (15%), a stranger helped them.

Of those who said they experienced something due to a provider or agent not being accessible 10% said it was not resolved. A quarter (22%) said it was resolved, albeit slowly, and only 14% said it was resolved quickly. Furthermore, three in ten (30%) of those who said the situation was resolved, said they were unhappy with the outcome, including 5% who were very unhappy.

One in seven (14%) complained to the provider directly. Of those that did not, the main reasons were because they thought that the provider wasn't likely to change (32%) or thought that the incident wasn't worth complaining about (31%).

49%

of those who had a bad experience had to get out of the situation on their own, while one in five (18%) had to call upon a friend or family member to help.



These findings suggest a clear need for travel providers and agents to make improvements to not only resolve but also prevent situations occurring that cause stress and discomfort to disabled people.

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This is ever more important given that three in ten (29%) of those who've had bad experiences with travel agents or providers have told other people about their experiences, and 31% have stopped using the provider altogether.



MAKING IMPROVEMENTS

Being treated with respect is the most important consideration for disabled people, but they also expect travel agents and providers to improve accessibility.

While accessibility factors, such as having a range accessible transport or accommodation, or an accessible website, are important to a half of disabled people when choosing a travel agent or provider (49% for both), the most important factors influencing choice are more centred around how they're treated.

Three in five (59%) of disabled people say they choose a travel agent or provider based on whether they treat disabled people with kindness and respect. Furthermore, two-fifths (43%) say they choose based on whether they understand their needs.



Making Improvements

However, while these factors are important when choosing a travel agent or provider, they're not necessarily the areas travel agents need to improve on the most. While 59% said they choose a provider based on whether the staff treat them with kindness and respect, only 35% said they need to improve on this.

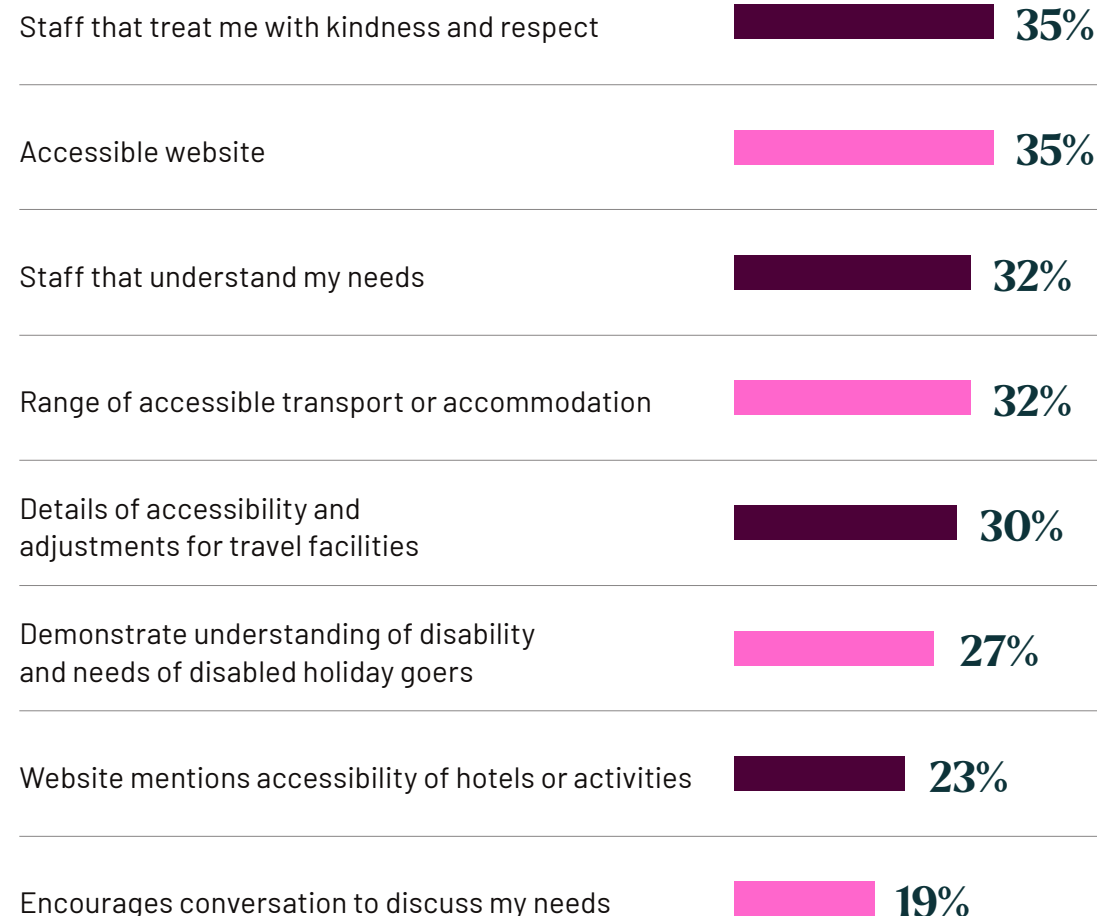
Respondents were equally concerned with travel agents and providers having an accessible website (35%) and staff that understand their needs (32%). A similar proportion also said they need to improve on having range of accessible transport or accommodation (32%) and details of accessibility and adjustments for travel facilities (30%).

43%

say they choose a travel agent or provider based on whether they understand their needs.

I would be happy if there was a company that would thoroughly provide one-to-one service.

Factors travel agencies and providers need to improve on.





Making Improvements

Travel providers need to provide better accessibility contact information on their websites.

While disabled people found accessing websites on their computer the easiest platform for booking a holiday (60% said it was easy) it's important that adjustments are made to ensure the process is accessible for all.

Of those who said it was difficult booking a holiday online, 38% said this was due to there being limited or no contact options to ask questions. The same proportion (38%) said that complex or confusing language on information pages makes the process difficult for them.

A further three in ten (31%) said that not being able to share access needs with the booking provider is a barrier, while over a quarter (26%) said there was a lack of clear instructions on how to book or reserve the trip. One in eight (13%) said they were being directed to accessibility helplines that are not in use.

84%

of disabled people think that accommodation providers need to improve on at least one feature to be more accessible to disabled people.



“
For the sake of the company, the pursuit of profit comes second, isn't it important to have a spirit of consideration for others first?”

Accommodation providers need provide accessible public transport links.

Over four in five (84%) disabled people think that accommodation providers need to improve on at least one feature to be more accessible to disabled people.

This most commonly included improving accessible public transport links (28%), which was closely followed by a quarter (24%) that said accommodation providers need to improve on medical support available locally. A similar proportion (22%) said that travel providers need to improve on mobility equipment, such as hoists, ramps, or fixed grab rails.



Making Improvements

Features accommodation providers need to improve on to be more accessible to disabled people.

