

# MALDIVES VISITOR SURVEY

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## Local Experiences

DECEMBER 2021



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Republic of Maldives



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the survey findings from the Maldives Visitor Survey, (MVS), an in-depth survey conducted in December 2021 by Ministry of Tourism, Government of the Maldives. The 2021 in-depth survey captured the local experiences by visitors to the Maldives.

The survey was carried out at the International Departure Terminal of Velana International Airport in Hulhulé. The survey was conducted between 15th December 2021 and 28th December 2021.

The total survey findings comprise of 578 responses from various nationalities, and in-depth nationality analysis consists of 7 markets with adequate data for analysis. They are India, United Kingdom, Russia, Germany, France, Italy, and America, who were also amongst the top ten markets to the Maldives during the survey period. Chinese visitors have not started their international holiday travels to Maldives due to their border closure following the global Covid-19 pandemic and hence, Chinese visitors were not part of the respondents during this survey.

## 2. KEY FINDINGS

International visitors to Maldives stated nature and wildlife is the most appealing element while travelling overseas. An overwhelming 80% said the most appealing element when travelling overseas was nature and wildlife. This was followed by food and wine and local experience. Other elements included luxury, romance, sports, arts & entertainment, cultural celebrations, music, and family events.

Respondents staying at guesthouses were more likely to visit the Maldives for the local experience than those staying at resorts.

One in every 5 respondents used 'visitmaldives' to source information about the Maldives, with the website ([www.visitmaldives.com](http://www.visitmaldives.com)) being more commonly used than the Instagram channel.

34% of the respondents said they were well exposed or exposed to local experiences. Italian tourists had the most exposure to local experiences with 84% saying that they were well exposed, exposed or somewhat exposed to local experiences. Russian tourists were the least exposed, with 43% saying they were not exposed.

As part of the local experiences in the Maldives, 37% of visited a local island, 13% visited Male', 8% went whale shark watching, 5% visited Hanifaru Bay, 4% visited surf spots and 1% visited cultural and heritage sites.

About 8 out of every 10 respondents participated in some local activity and some engaged in multiple activities. Activities included experiencing local food, staying in a local island, interacting with local people, experiencing local music, going on a local island tour or purchasing local art, craft, and souvenirs.

Visitors also took part in seeing local art, craft, souvenirs, fishing with local fishermen on a local fishing vessel, local cultural performances, local celebrations, or festivals, visited cultural centers or museums, learnt to cook a local meal and a few also stayed with a local family.

Stay in local island received the best ratings, with 88% rating it as excellent or very good. Visitors also enjoyed interacting with locals, going on a local island tour, going fishing with local fishermen and local music and dance performances.

About 19% said they did not take part in any local activity. Of them, majority of respondents did not take part as they did not have information about it.

Respondents stated snorkeling as the most memorable local experience. Other memorable local experiences included beach, diving, island, nature, people, and blue azure waters of Maldives.

Aspects about the airport and culture were stated most by the visitors as the most missing elements in the Maldives.

80% of respondents said that their holiday expectations were exceeded and a further 15% said it was about-as exceeded.

British tourists were the happiest with their holiday experience with 73% saying it exceeded their expectations.

Respondents staying at resorts were more satisfied with their holiday experience with 61% staying in resorts stating their holiday exceeded expectations compared to 41% who stayed in guesthouses.

### 3. RESPONDENT PROFILE

#### 3.1. Gender

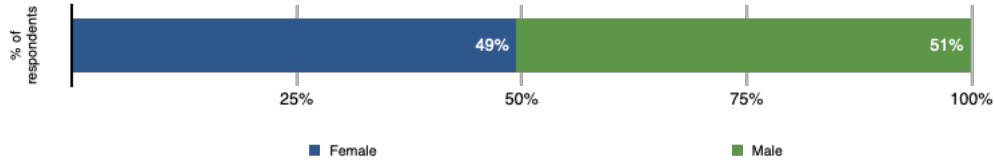


Figure 1. Respondents by Gender (n=545)

51% of respondents were male while 49% were females.

#### 3.2. Visitor Nationality

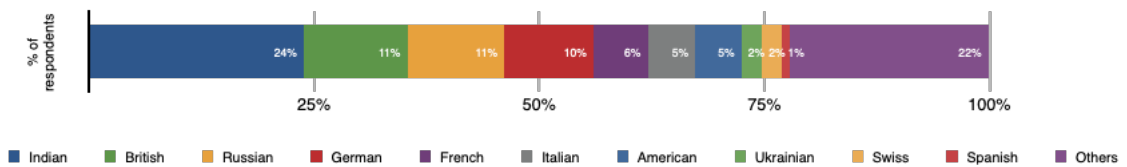


Figure 2. Visitor Nationalities (n=561)

Majority of respondents were Indians (24%), followed by British (11%), Russian (11%), German (10%) and French (11%), Italian (5%) and American (5%). Amongst others, most respondents were Ukrainian and Swiss with 11 respondents each.

#### 3.3. Place of Residence of Visitors by Nationality

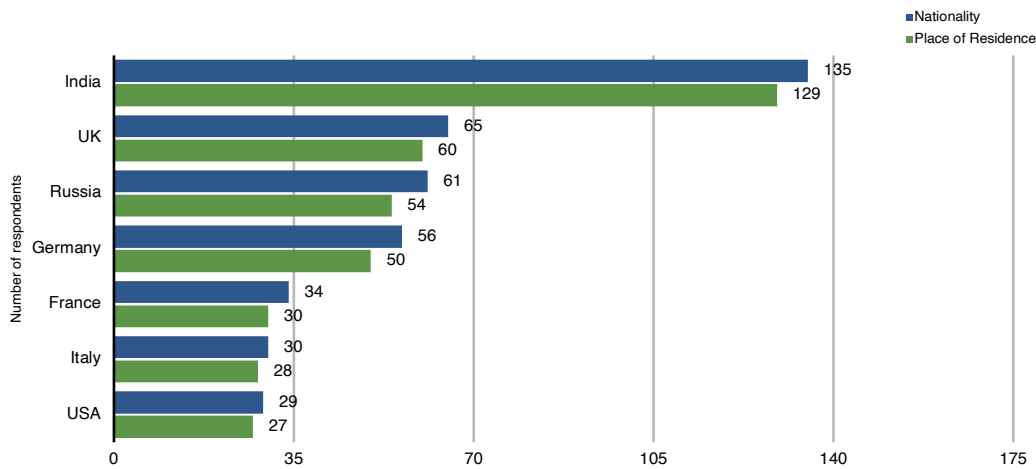


Figure 3. Place of residence of Visitor Nationalities (n=410)

Respondents mostly resided in the same countries as that of their nationality.

### 3.4. Age Group

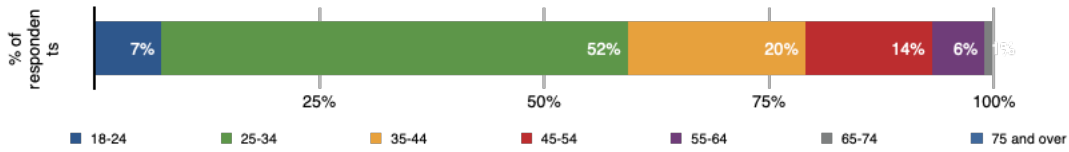


Figure 4. Age Group (n=562)

Majority of respondents were aged between 25-34 (52%). The next most common age groups of visitors were 35-44 years (20%) and 45-54 years (14%), consistent with trends over the years.

### 3.5. Place of Stay

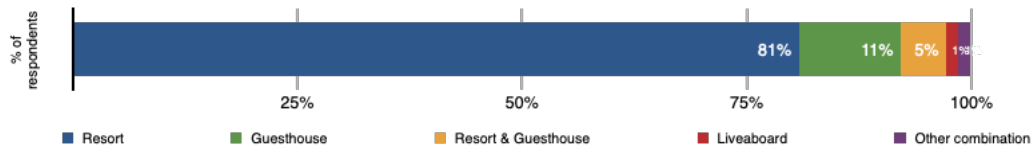


Figure 5. Place of stay (n=556)

Most respondents had stayed at resorts, (81%), with 13% staying in guesthouses, 5% staying in both resorts and guesthouses, 1% staying in liveaboards, and 1% staying in other combinations. Other combinations included combinations of resort, guesthouse and liveaboards, resort and liveaboards and guesthouses and liveaboards.

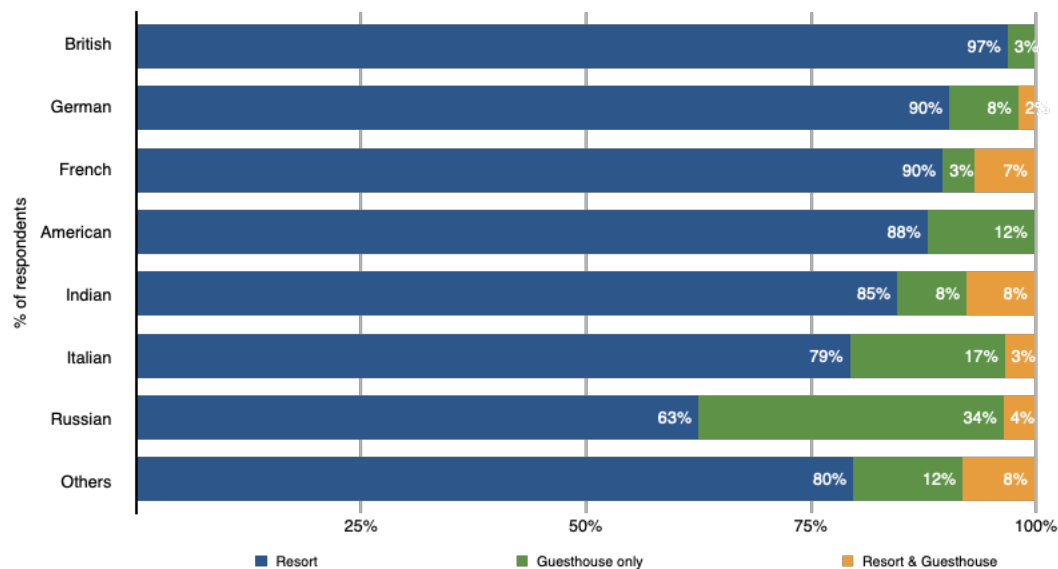


Figure 6. Place of stay by nationality (n=471)

Most respondents of all nationalities chose to stay in resorts. British (97%), German (90%) and French (90%) respondents were more likely to stay in resorts only. Respondents from Russia (34%), Italians (17%) and American (12%) were more likely to stay in guesthouses.

### 3.6. Duration of Stay

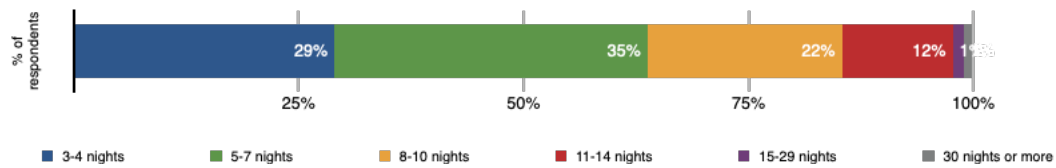


Figure 7. Duration of stay (n=508)

35% of respondents stayed for 5-7 nights while, 29% stayed for 3-4 nights and 22% stayed for 8-10 nights.

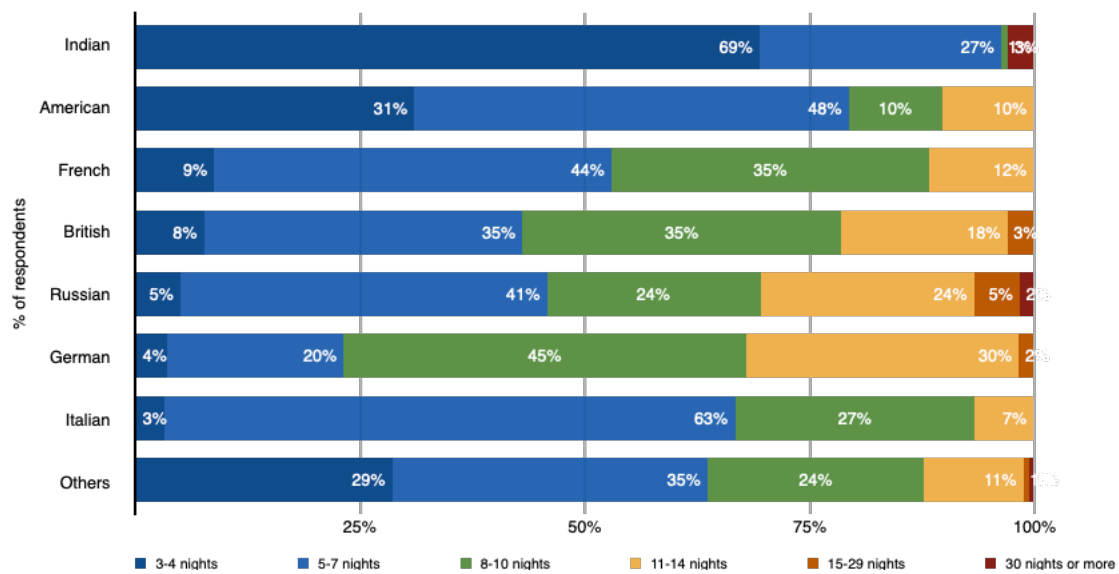


Figure 8. Duration of stay by Nationality (n=561)

Majority of Indian respondents (69%) stayed 3-4 nights in the Maldives. German respondents stayed the longest with 45% of them staying for 8-10 nights, 30% of them staying for 11-14 nights and 2% staying for 15-29 nights.

### 3.7. Repeat Visitors

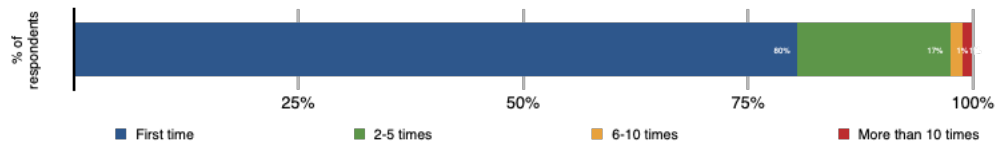


Figure 9. Repeat visitors (n=576)

20% of respondents were repeat visitors to the Maldives, with 17% having visited 2-5 times, 2% having visited 6-10 times and 1% having visited more than 10 times.

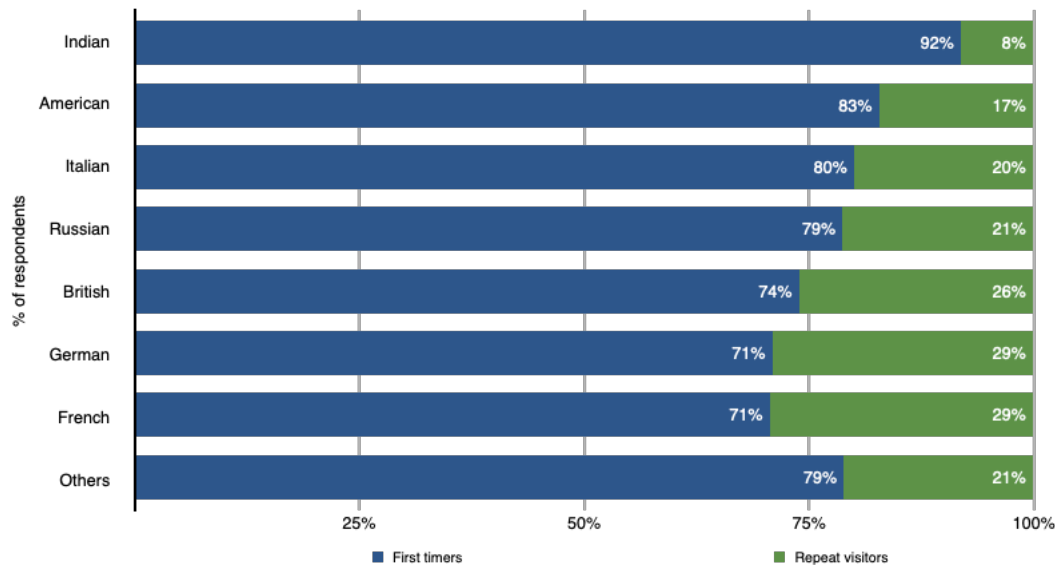


Figure 10. Repeat visitors by nationality (n=565)

Visitors from most nationalities were first time visitors, with most first timers being from India (92%), the United States (83%) and Italy (80%). Repeat visitors were highest amongst respondents from Germany (29%) and France (29%). Likewise, 26% of British respondents and 21% of Russian respondents and 20% of Italian respondents were also repeat visitors.

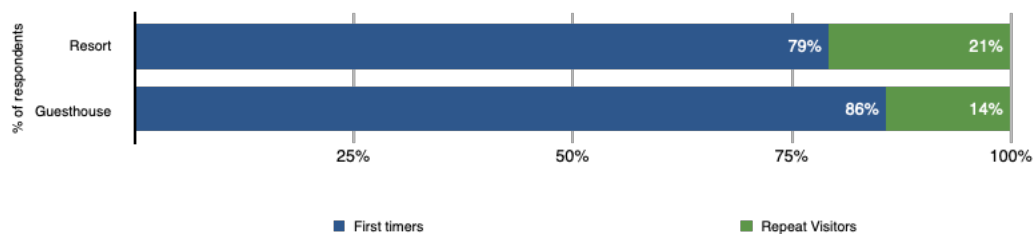


Figure 11. Repeat visitors by Place of Stay (n Total = 510, N Guesthouses = 63, N resorts = 447),

Majority of respondents who stayed at guesthouses (86%) were first timers as well as those who stayed in resorts (79%).

### 3.8. Use of 'visitmaldives'

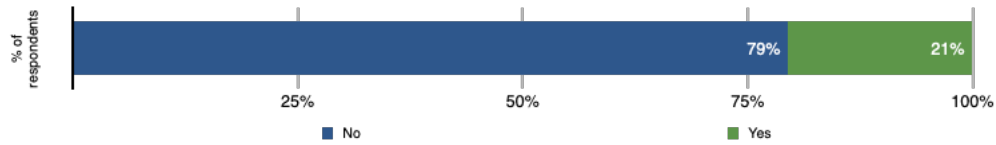


Figure 12. Use of VisitMaldives (n=578)

Of the total respondents, 21% used 'visitmaldives' to source information about the Maldives.

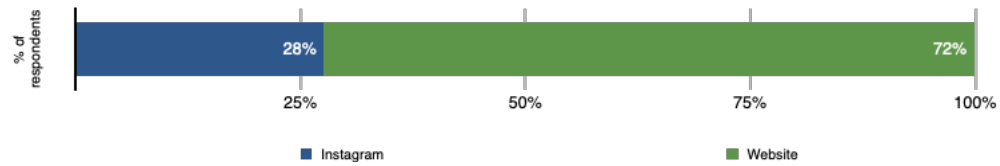


Figure 13. Visitmaldives platforms used (n=116)

Out of the 21% (116 respondents) who had specified the 'visitmaldives' platform they used, 72% used the 'visitmaldives' website and 28% used the 'visitmaldives' Instagram.

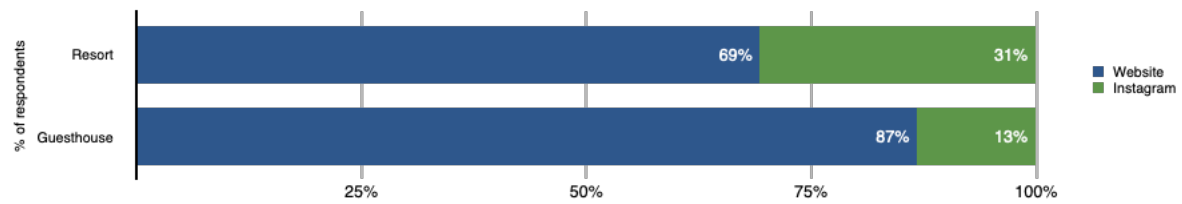


Figure 14. visitmaldives Platforms by Place of Stay (n=106)

Of those who said they used 'visitmaldives' website and Instagram, 31% of respondents who stayed at resorts used Instagram, while 69% used the website. Similarly, 13% of respondents who stayed at guesthouses used Instagram, while 87% used the website.

# 4. APPEALING ELEMENTS WHEN TRAVELLING OVERSEAS

## 4.1. Appealing Elements

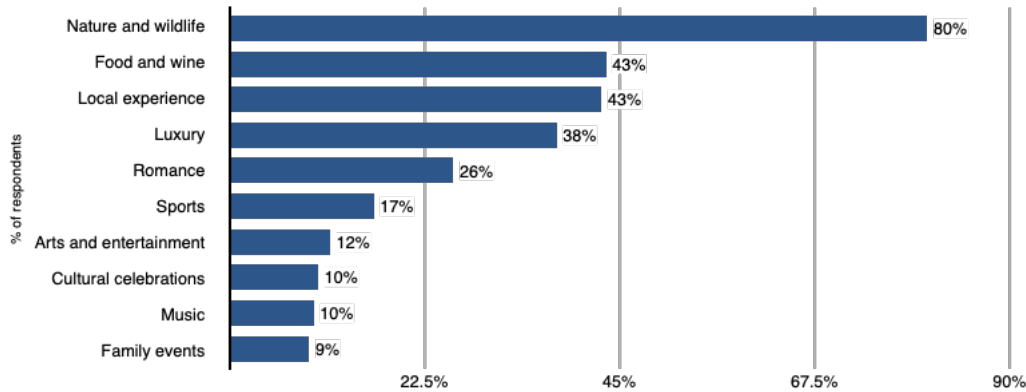


Figure 15. Appealing elements when travelling overseas, (n=1662), \*Multiple Choice Question 571 respondents answered this question

Nature and wildlife was said to be the most appealing element (80%) while travelling overseas, followed by food and wine (43%) and local experience (43%). Other elements included luxury (38%), romance (26%), sports (17%), arts & entertainment (12%), cultural celebrations (10%), music (10%) and family events (9%).

Nature and wildlife was the main appealing element while travelling overseas by nationality, place of stay, age groups and travel companion. Respondents staying at guesthouses were more likely to come for the local experience than those staying at resorts. (Figure 16 - 19).

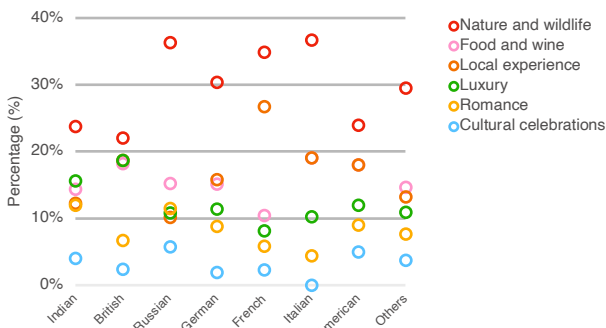


Figure 16. Appealing elements by nationality (n=1625)



Figure 17. Appealing elements by Place of stay (n=1486)

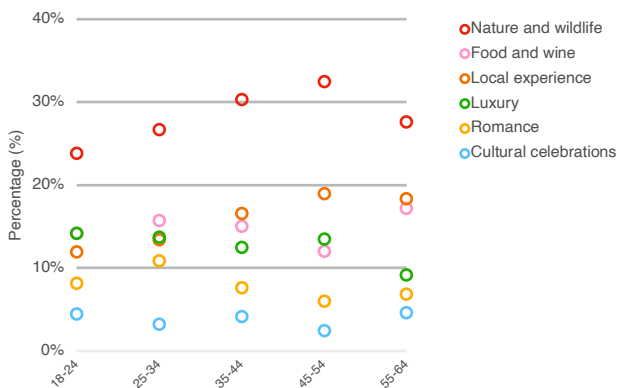


Figure 18. Appealing elements by Age group (n=1606)

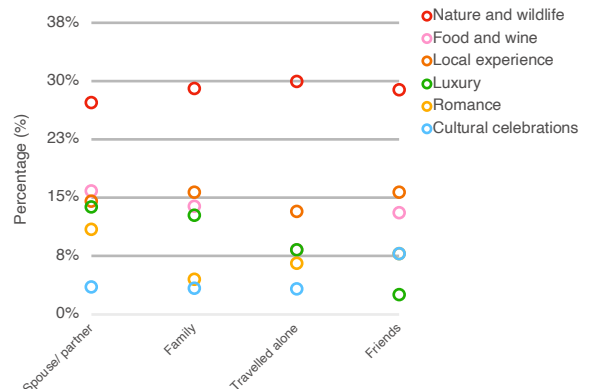


Figure 19. Appealing elements by Travel Companion (n=1634)

## 5. LOCAL EXPERIENCES

### 5.1. Exposure to Local Experiences

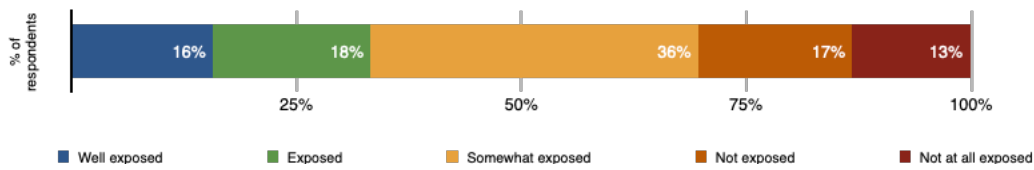


Figure 20. Exposure to local experiences (n=553)

34% of respondents said they were well exposed (16%) or exposed (18%) to local experiences. Majority of respondents (36%) stated that they were somewhat exposed to local experiences. 30% of respondents said they were not exposed to local experiences. Out of these, 13% of respondents said they were not at all exposed to local experiences.

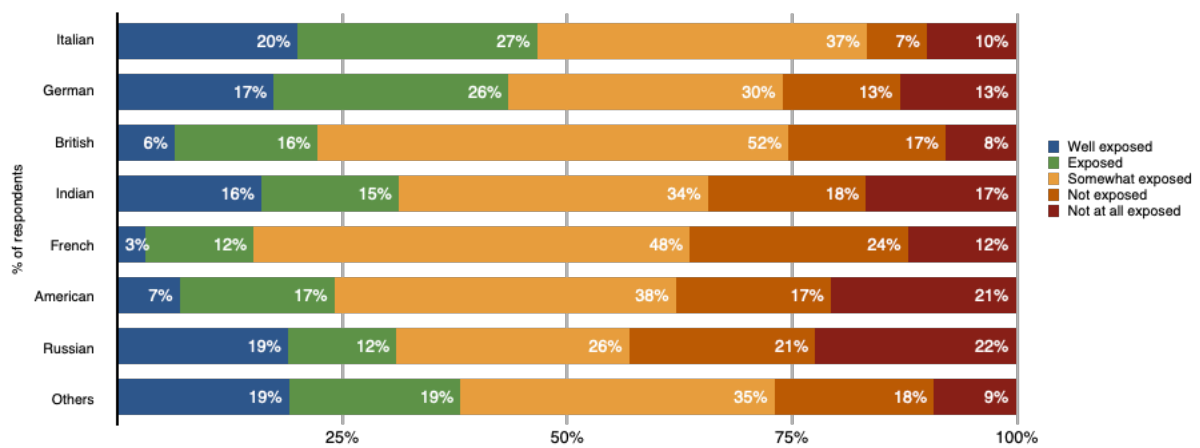


Figure 21. Exposure to local experiences by nationality (n=542)

Italian tourists had the most exposure to local experiences with 84% saying that they were well exposed, exposed or somewhat exposed to local experiences. Similarly, 74% of British and 73% of German respondents also said the same. Russian tourists were the least exposed, with 43% saying they were not exposed. Out of these 22% said they were not at all exposed. 38% of Germans, 36% of French and 35% of Indians also said they were not exposed or not at all exposed.

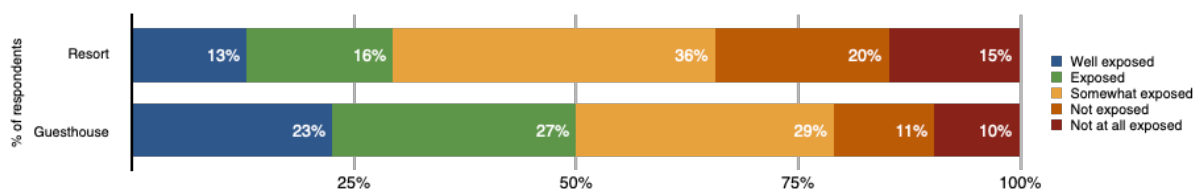


Figure 22. Exposure to local experiences by Place of stay (n=487)

Respondents who stayed at guesthouses said they had more exposure to local experiences compared to those who stayed at resorts. Out of the tourists who stayed at guesthouses, 50% visitors said they were well exposed (23%) or exposed (27%). This contrasts with the 29% of respondents who stayed at resorts and stated they were exposed, 13% of them stating they were well exposed and 16% stating they were exposed to local experiences.

# 6. PLACES VISITED WHILE IN THE MALDIVES

## 6.1. Places Visited

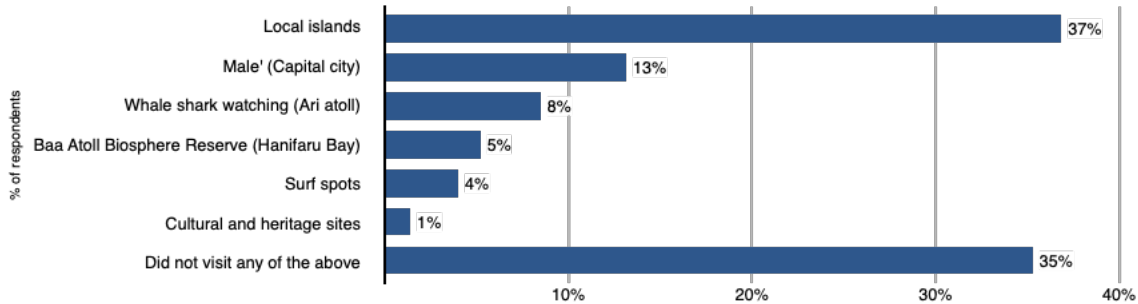


Figure 23. Places visited while in the Maldives, (n=603), \*Multiple Choice Question

37% of respondents visited a local island, while 13% visited Male', 8% went whale shark watching, 5% visited Hanifaru Bay, 4% visited surf spots and 1% visited cultural and heritage sites. 35% of respondents said they did not visit any of these places while in the Maldives.

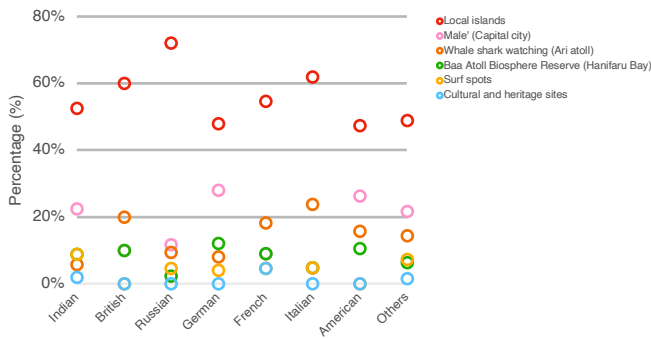


Figure 24. Places visited by Nationality (n=388)



Figure 25. Places visited by Place of Stay (n=317)

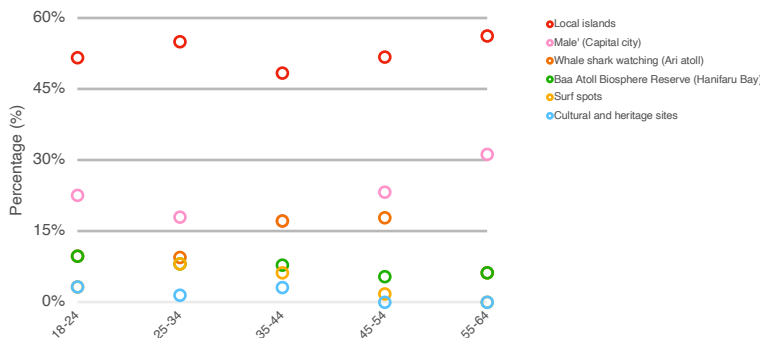


Figure 26. Places visited by Age group (n=378)

The trend of local islands as the main place visited was the same by all nationalities, age groups and places of stay (Figures 24-26). The second most visited was whale shark watching for British, French and Italians, while it was visiting Male' for Indians, Germans and Americans. No British respondents mentioned visiting Male'.

# 7. PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL ACTIVITIES

## 7.1. Local Activity Participation

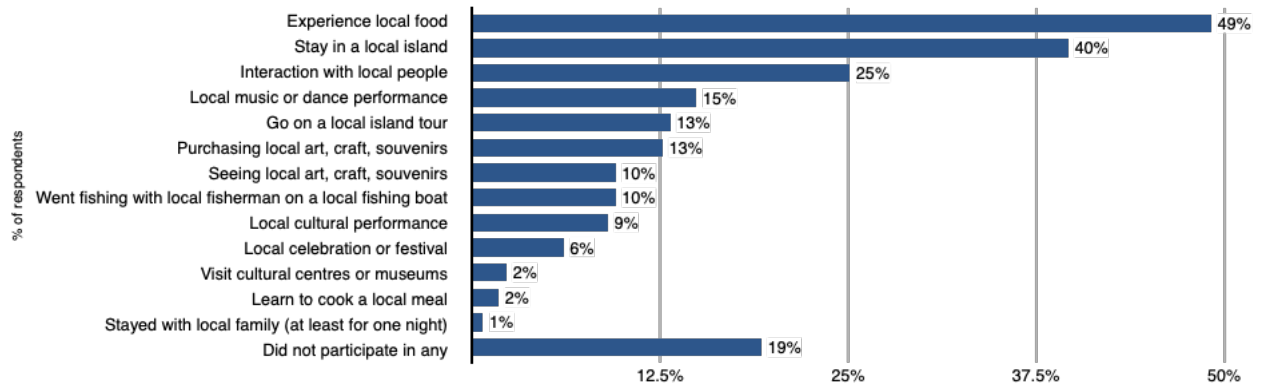


Figure 27. Participation in local Activities (n=1228 responses)  
538 respondents answered the question

In response to a question about participation in local activities, respondents stated that they generally engaged in multiple local activities. 49% of respondents experienced local food, while 40% stayed in a local island, 25% interacted with local people, 15% of respondents participated in local music, 13% went on a local island tour or purchased local art, craft and souvenirs. Other activities that they took part in were seeing local art, craft, souvenirs (10%), fishing with local fishermen on a local fishing vessel (10%), local cultural performance (9%), local celebration or festival (6%), visit cultural centers or museums (2%), learn to cook a local meal (2%) and stay with a local family (1%).

19% of respondents did not participate in any local activities.

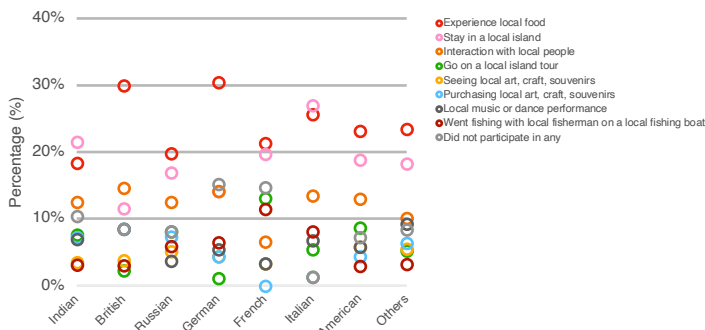


Figure 28. Local Activities by nationality (n=1195)  
(n=1048)



Figure 29. Local Activities by Place of stay

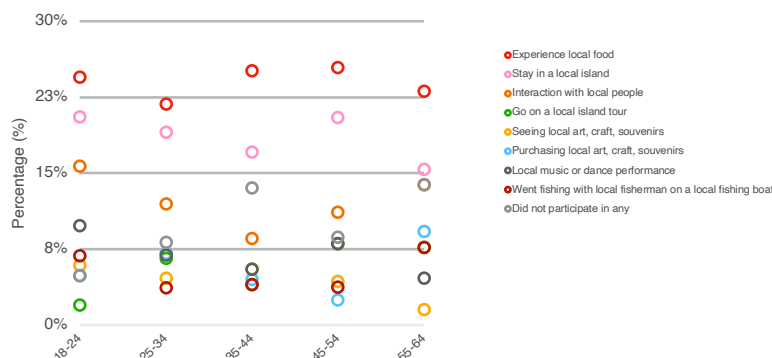


Figure 30. Local Activities by Age group (n=1177)

The trend of experiencing local food and stay in a local island as the main local activities participated in was consistent within most nationalities, age groups and those who stayed in resorts. Indian and Italian respondents were most likely to stay in local islands, while those staying at guesthouses were also the ones looking for stay in a local island. (Figures 28-30).

## 7.2. Local Activity Ratings

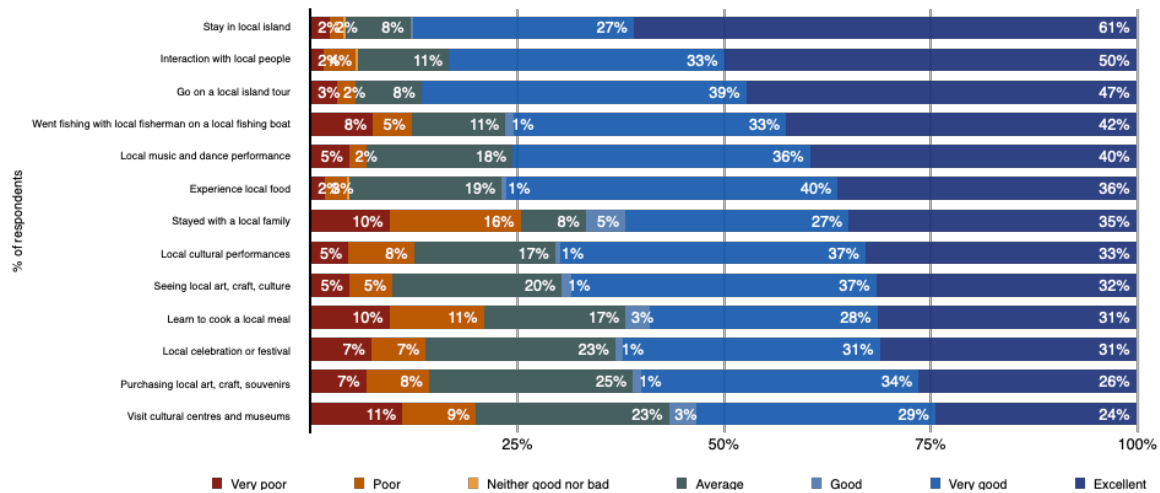


Figure 31. Local activity ratings (n=1731 responses), \*Multiple Choice Question

Stay in local island received the best ratings, with 88% rating it as very good (27%) or excellent (61%). Visitors also enjoyed interacting with locals, going on a local island tour, going fishing with local fishermen and local music and dance performances, with excellent or very good ratings over 75%. Visit to cultural centers and museums and purchasing local art, craft, souvenirs was rated as lowest.

## 7.3. Visitors Who Did Not Take Part in Local Activities

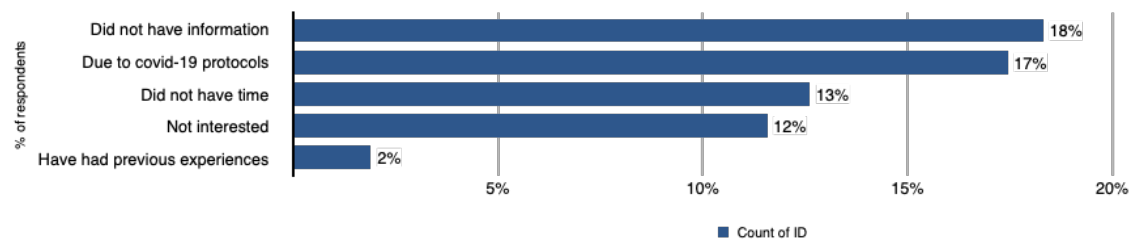


Figure 32. Why no local activities (n=358 Responses), \*multiple choice question 319 respondents answered this question

Of those who said they did not take part in any local activities, majority of respondents (18%) did not take part as they did not have information about it. This was followed by due to Covid-19 protocols (17%), did not have time (13%), not interested (12%) and have had previous experiences (2%).





# 10. HOLIDAY EXPECTATIONS

## 10.1 Meeting Holiday Expectations

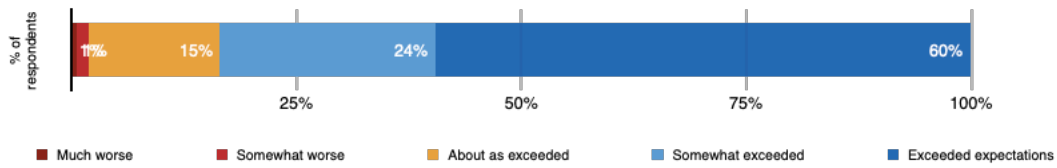


Figure 35. Did holiday meet expectations (n=557)

80% of respondents said that their holiday expectations were exceeded. Out of this, 60% of respondents said their holiday exceeded expectations while 24% said it somewhat exceeded. In addition, 15% said it about-as exceeded. 1% said their holiday was much worse than expected.

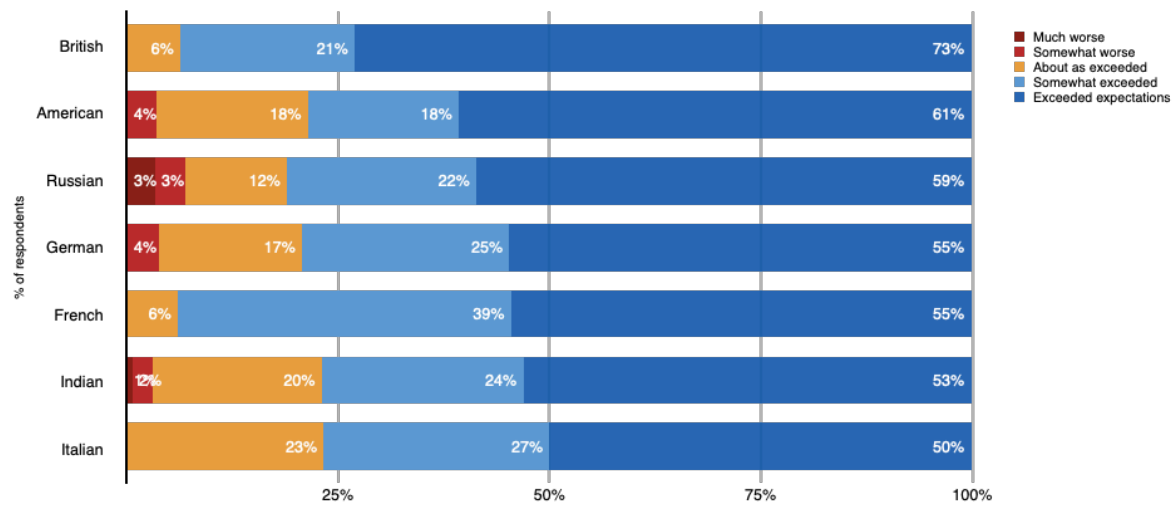


Figure 36. Did holiday meet expectations by nationality (n=546)

British tourists were the happiest with their holiday experience with 73% saying it exceeded their expectations. Russian tourists were the least happy with 3% of Russians saying their holiday was much worse than expected.

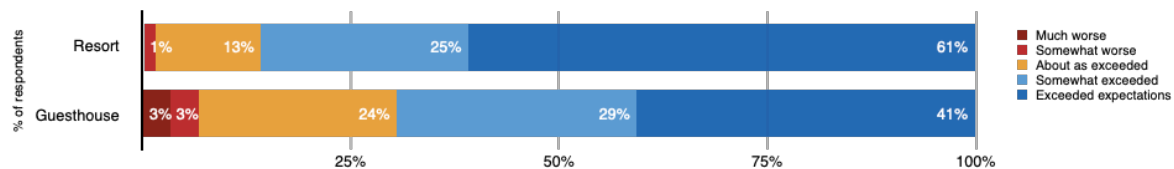


Figure 37. Did holiday meet expectations by place of stay (n=494)

In general, respondents staying at resort were more satisfied with their holiday experience with 61% saying their holiday exceeded expectations. In contrast, only 41% of respondents staying at guesthouses said their holiday exceeded expectations.