



# COPENHAGEN TRAVEL STUDY WITH CHINESE STUDENTS

MARCH 2020



# THE CHINESE TRAVELER TO COPENHAGEN

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# KEY FINDINGS

This section highlights the key findings from the analysis. For a more in-depth discussion of the findings, please see the corresponding section later in the report.

## **Half of respondents were studying for a master's degree abroad**

50% of the students were in the UK studying for a master's degree, while 41% were studying for a bachelor's degree, 6% were studying for a Ph.D. and the remaining 2% were taking university preparatory courses.

## **September was the most popular month to start / stop studying abroad**

Almost three fourths of the students (68%) started their studies in the UK in the month of September, with the months of June (9%) and July (8%) being the second and third most popular months.

In terms of when the respondents were planning to complete their studies in the UK, the months of September (40%), June (29%) and July (10%) were also the most common.

Furthermore, 49% of the respondents started their studies abroad in 2019, with another 23% starting their studies in the UK in 2018 and 12% starting them in 2017.

57% were planning to complete their studies in the UK by 2020, while 21% were planning to complete them by 2021 and 13% were planning to complete them by 2022.

## **About a third had studied abroad before**

While all of the respondents were currently in the UK studying abroad, 36% of them said that they had previously studied abroad, meaning that their time spent studying in the UK was at least the second time they had gone abroad to study.

This could indicate that the remaining 64% who were studying abroad for the first time in their life, could be interested in going abroad to study again later in their education.

## **The majority of the respondents were staying in the UK for a year**

36% of the respondents were planning to study in the UK for a year, while 19% were planning to stay in the UK for two years and 16% were planning to stay for 3 years. The remaining 29% were planning to spend 4 or more years studying in the UK, with 5% planning to study abroad for 7-8 years.

## **The reputation of the university was a deciding factor for respondents' choice to study abroad**

69% said that the reputation of the university was important to their decision to study abroad, however, the increased job prospects from studying abroad (43%) and the low language barrier in the UK (39%) were also important factors for the respondents' decision to study in the UK.

# KEY FINDINGS

## **60% of respondents received visitors from China during their stay in the UK**

Just 40% said that they had not received any visitors from China during their stay, with the remaining 60% having received visits from either family and / or friends. This indicates that the tourism industry would not only benefit from the international students studying in a given country, but that attracting Chinese students to a country is likely to also attract other visitors in terms of those students' friends and family.

## **Most students had a monthly disposable income of £1,700 or less**

Specifically, 78% of the respondents said that they had a monthly disposable income below 15,000 RMB (~£1,700) after subtracting costs for rent and tuition fees.

In terms of the respondents priorities for spending their disposable income, travelling abroad was chosen as their 4-5<sup>th</sup> highest priority, lagging behind less costly activities such as going to restaurants, paying for entertainment / leisure activities and shopping for clothing.

## **More than half of the respondents had been on a city break abroad before**

Specifically, 34% said that they had been on a city break abroad during their time studying in the UK, with another 25% saying that they had both been on a city break during their stay and were planning to go on another city break abroad during the remainder of their time in the UK. 37% said that they had not yet been on a city break abroad, during their time studying in the UK, but that they were planning to go one at some point during the remainder of their stay in the country.

This indicates that there is a possibility of attraction Chinese students in the UK to Copenhagen as city break visitors. However, Copenhagen was not a top priority destination amongst the students. 13% said that they had previously been on a city break to Copenhagen during their time studying in the UK, while another 31% said that they were planning to go on a city break to Copenhagen during the remainder of their time in the UK.

Other cities such as Paris, Rome, Venice, Amsterdam and Barcelona were all higher on the respondents' list of desired travel destinations, than Copenhagen. This indicates that, while there was interest for a city break vacation in Copenhagen, it might require some effort to increase the interest amongst the Chinese students for going to Copenhagen instead of other travel destinations.

Of the students who had already been on a city break abroad, the average number of past city breaks in other countries was 3, with as many as 20% of the respondents saying that they had already been on 6 or more city breaks abroad and 50% saying that they had currently been on 1-2 prior city breaks.

As for the length of stay during these city breaks, the average length of stay for the respondents' latest city break was 6.2 nights, while the average planned length of stay for the respondents' next city break was 4.9 nights.

All in all, this indicates quite a significant potential for attracting Chinese students abroad to Copenhagen as city break visitors.

# KEY FINDINGS

## 8% had been to Copenhagen on a prior city break

While another 77% said that they had heard about Copenhagen, but had not been on a city break to the city and just 15% said that they had not heard about the city of Copenhagen before.

## The majority of respondents were travelling with friends

67% of the respondents who had already been on a city break abroad said that they had been travelling with friends, while 78% of the respondents who were planning a city break abroad were planning to go with friends. The second most common group composition consisted of respondents traveling with a significant other (20% / 32%) and respondents choosing to travel alone (12% / 18%).

On average, respondents had travelled with 2.3 other people on their last city break and were planning to travel with 2.4 other people on their next city break.

In terms of the time of year when respondents preferred to travel abroad, 26% said that April was their most preferred month, which correlates with the university's Easter holiday. December and June (15%) were tied for the second most commonly chose months, correlating with the Christmas and summer holidays, respectively.

## Most respondents would classify themselves as FIT travelers

Specifically, 71% of respondents said that they would classify themselves as a FIT traveler, with just 24% classifying themselves as a semi-independent traveler and 5% classifying themselves as a group traveler.

## Traveling to experience food

71% of the respondents said that experiencing the local cuisine was one of their top five priorities when choosing a travel destination, with the cultural offerings (69%) and experiencing how the locals live (62%) being the second and third most highly prioritized travel motivations.

## Many sources of inspiration

While Weibo was the most common source of inspiration and tips when planning their city breaks abroad, many respondents also said that they used Mafengwo, family / friends, WeChat and quite a few other sources of inspiration. This indicates that it might be necessary for a travel destination to be present on a wide variety of channels in order to properly capture the interest of the Chinese students.

When asked how they chose their previous city break destination and how they will choose their next city break destination, searching for inspiration on websites like Qyer and Mafengwo as well as choosing destinations based on interests (history, culture etc.) were the two main priorities amongst the respondents.

# INTRODUCTION

The number of Chinese students studying abroad has risen from 179.800 in 2008 to 662.100 in 2018 (source: Statista), signifying an average, annual growth of 13.9% over the last ten years.

As a result Chinese students who choose to study abroad is a large potential market segment that could potentially be converted to visitors in Copenhagen.

For reference, Copenhagen had a total of 141,052 bed nights from Chinese visitors in 2018. Using recent estimates of length of stay for Chinese visitors in Copenhagen at 4.3 nights, this equals a total of 32,802 Chinese travelers in Copenhagen in 2018, of which about 7% can be assumed to be students, based on a recent survey conducted by Wonderful Copenhagen.

As such, it can be estimated that roughly 2,300 Chinese students came to Copenhagen to study in 2018, which would signify a 0.35% share of the total number of Chinese students studying abroad that year.

This report outlines the findings of an analysis with the objective to identify the travel patterns of Chinese students studying abroad and how Copenhagen might be able to attract more of these students, either as students abroad in Copenhagen or simply as leisure visitors while they are studying in another European country.



# METHODOLOGY

In order to meet the objective of the analysis, a survey was designed in both English and Chinese and distributed amongst student communities on Facebook, WeChat, QQ and Weibo, with the permission of the universities in charge of managing these SoMe student communities.

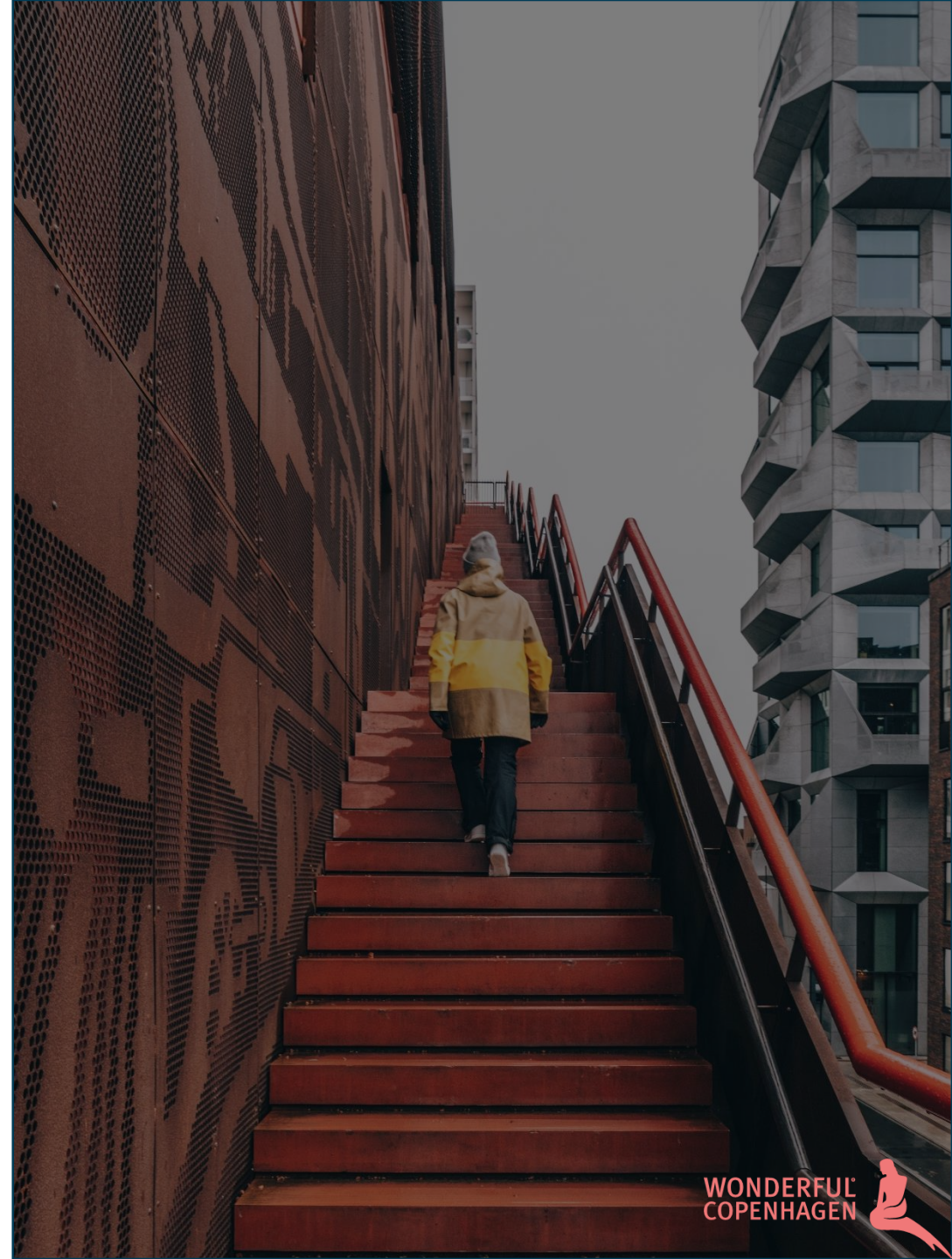
To make the results as representative as possible, the survey was distributed in cooperation with universities from the cities of London, Liverpool, Manchester and Sussex, ensuring a reasonable geographic spread amongst respondents and avoiding potential biases from travel motivations amongst Chinese students in any given single English university.

In total, 548 completed surveys were collected split between:

- 169 respondents from universities in London
- 161 respondents from universities in Liverpool
- 114 respondents from universities in Manchester
- 103 respondents from universities in Sussex

The data collection, report draft and initial analysis was completed by a third party bureau, however, both the report and the analysis was expanded and finalized by Wonderful Copenhagen.

Lastly, incentives were given to complete the survey, in the form of 8 gift certificates for Amazon with a value of £200 each. Winners of these gift certificates were randomly drawn from the pool of respondents.





# DEMOGRAPHICS

A long, narrow outdoor dining table is set up on a paved area in a park-like setting. The table is covered with white tablecloths and is filled with people, mostly young adults, who are eating and talking. The table is set with white plates, glasses, and bottles. In the background, there are trees, a brick building, and colorful balloons (red, green, yellow, orange) hanging from the sky. A man in a white shirt is standing near the table, possibly a waiter. The scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a pleasant outdoor event.

# DEMOGRAPHICS

**Over 70% of respondents are female and just under 20% live in Beijing**

Most of the respondents live in the big cities on China's east coast. The highest number of respondents live in Beijing (19%) followed by Shanghai (14%).

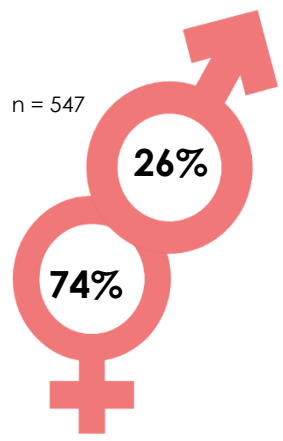
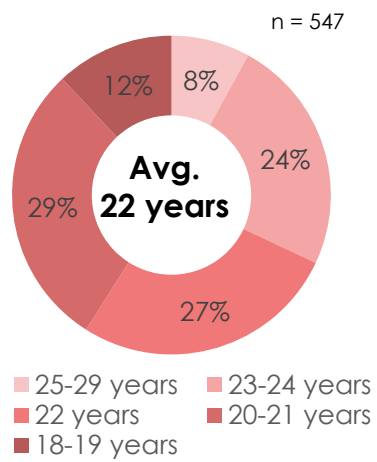
There is a lot of spread throughout China with small percentages of respondents in the towns and cities.

The gender split is dominated by females with the split at 74% female and 26% male.

The average age for respondents is 22 years of age.



Beijing	19%
Shanghai	14%
Hangzhou	12%
Zhejiang	12%
Nanjing	9%
Jiangsu	9%
Guangzhou	8%
Sichuan	6%
Chengdu	6%
Tianjin	5%
Shenzhen	4%
Chong Qing	4%
Hong Kong	3%
Shandong	3%
Xi'an	2%
Wuhan	2%
Anhui	2%
Shanxi	2%
Fujian	1%
Hunan	1%
Zhengzhou	1%
Hubei	1%
Henan	1%



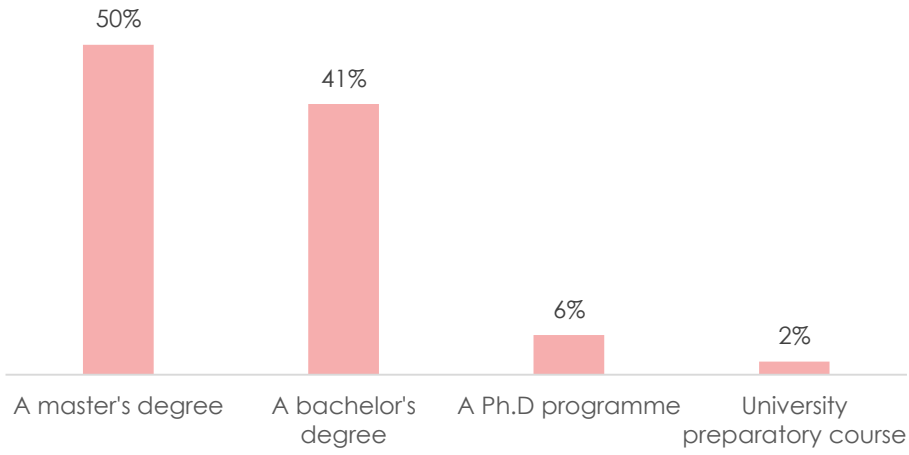
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# EDUCATION

Half of the respondents were studying a masters degree and 41% were studying for a bachelor's degree. 6% were studying for a Ph.D. program and 2% were enrolled in a university preparatory course.

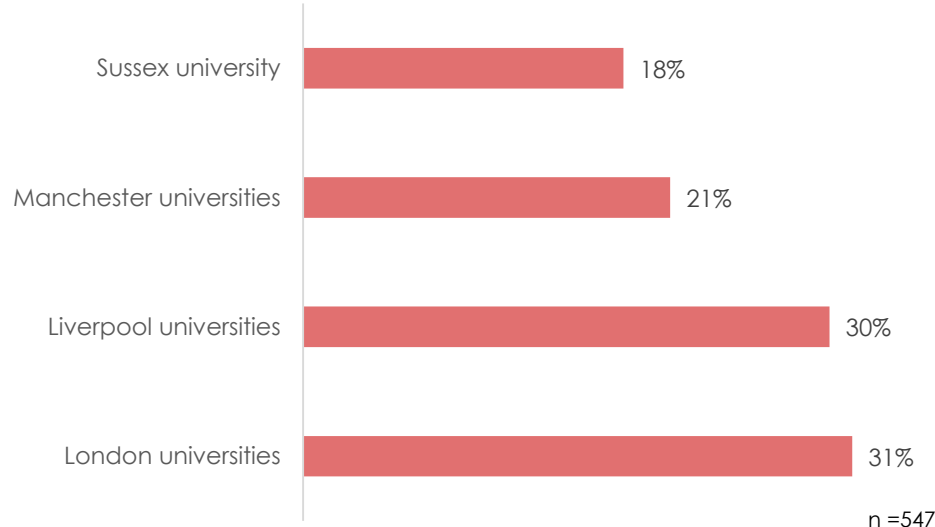
The respondents were studying at one of four different universities in the UK. 31% of respondents were attending a London University, whilst 30% were attending a university in Liverpool, 21% of respondents were attending a Manchester university and the remaining 18% were attending the University of Sussex. The split of UK universities attended was relatively even, with the highest percentage of respondents attending a university in London.

**How long did you spend/are planning to spend abroad on your next international city break? What type of further education are you currently studying?**



n = 547

**Which university do you go to?**



n = 547

# STUDIES IN THE UK

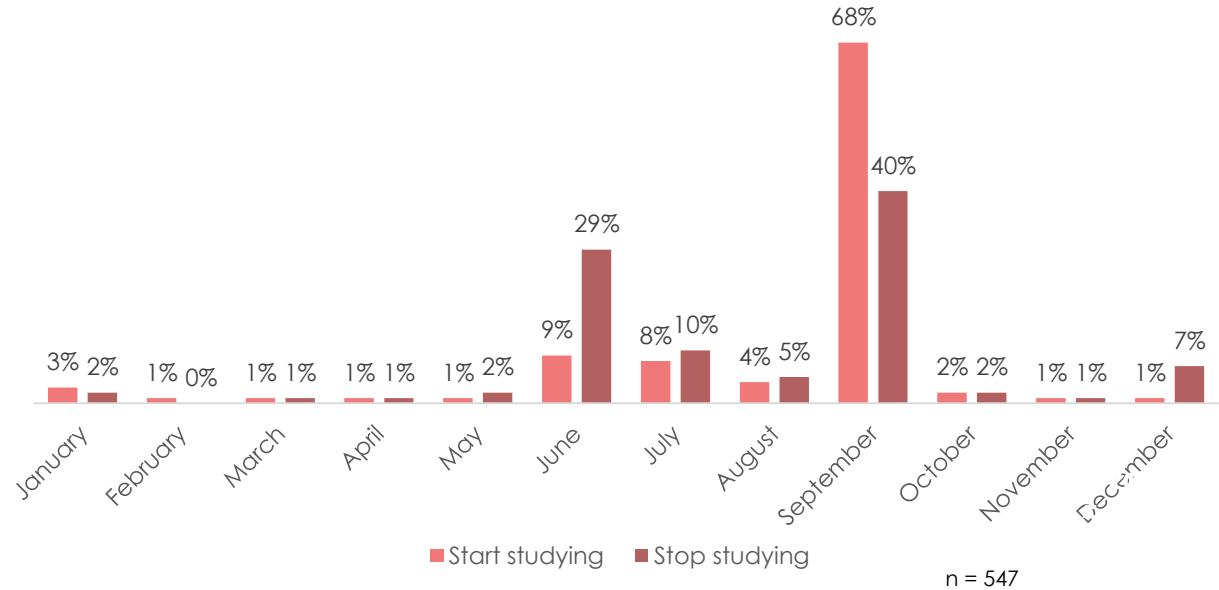
September was the most popular month for commencing, and completing, studies in the UK at 68% and 40% respectively.

9% of respondents started their studies in the UK in June, while 29% will finish their studies in the UK in the month of June.

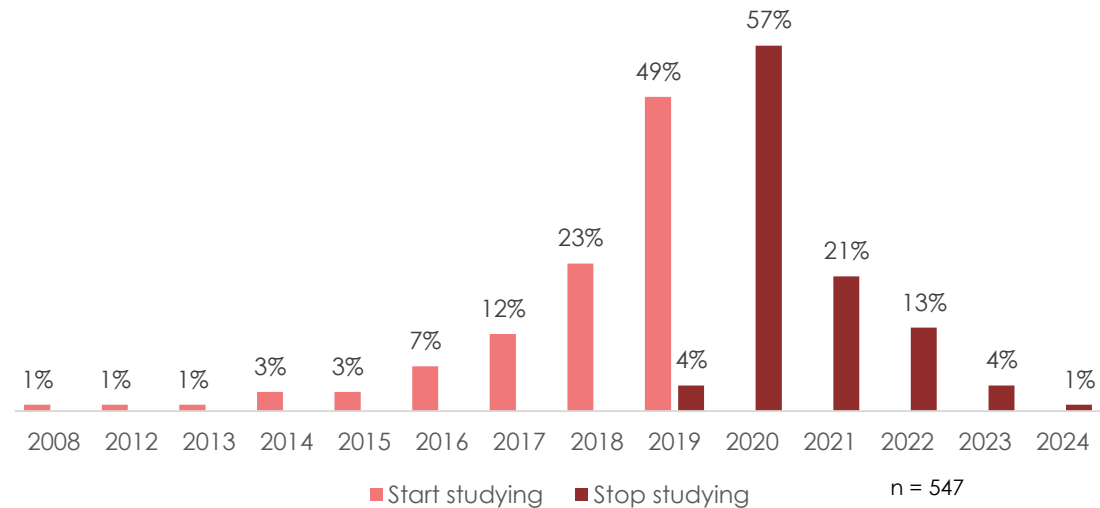
Just under half of the respondents started their studies in the UK in 2019, with another 23% starting their studies in 2018 and 12% starting their studies in 2017.

57% of respondents will finish their studies in 2020, while 21% will finish them in 2021. 13% are planning on completing their studies in the UK in 2022.

When do you plan to start/stop studying in the UK? (month)



When do you plan to start/stop studying in the UK? (years)



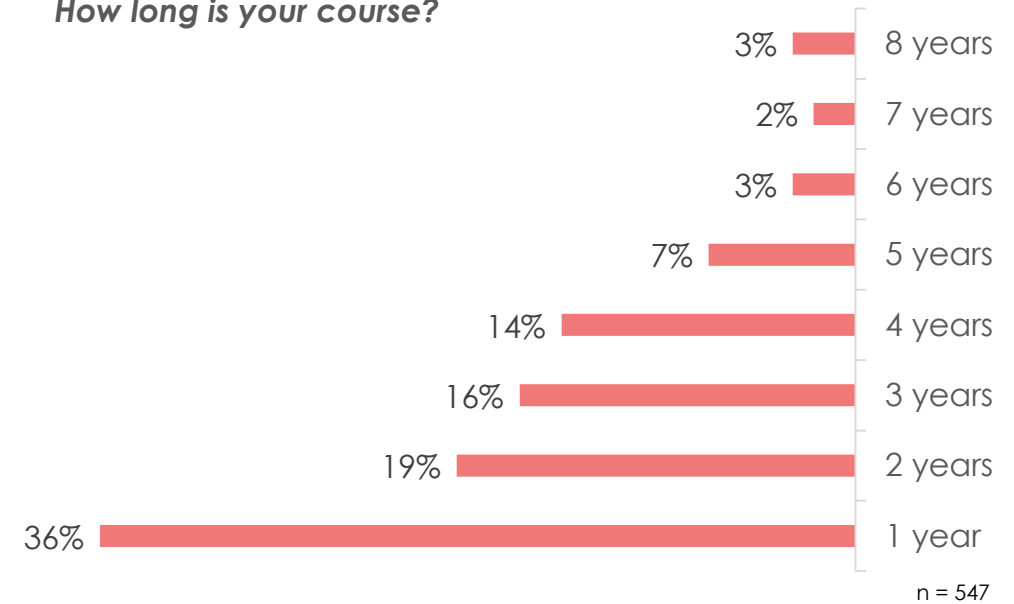
# STUDIES IN THE UK

Half of respondents were in their first year of study, while one in five were on their second year and one in ten was on their third year.

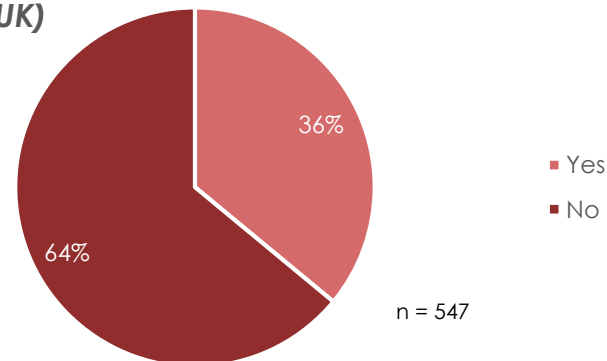
One out of three of the respondents were taking a one year course in the UK, while 19% were completing 2 year course and 16% were attending a 3 year course. 31% of respondents were attending a course that lasts 4 years or more.

Just over one third of respondents had studied abroad (outside of China) before studying in the UK.

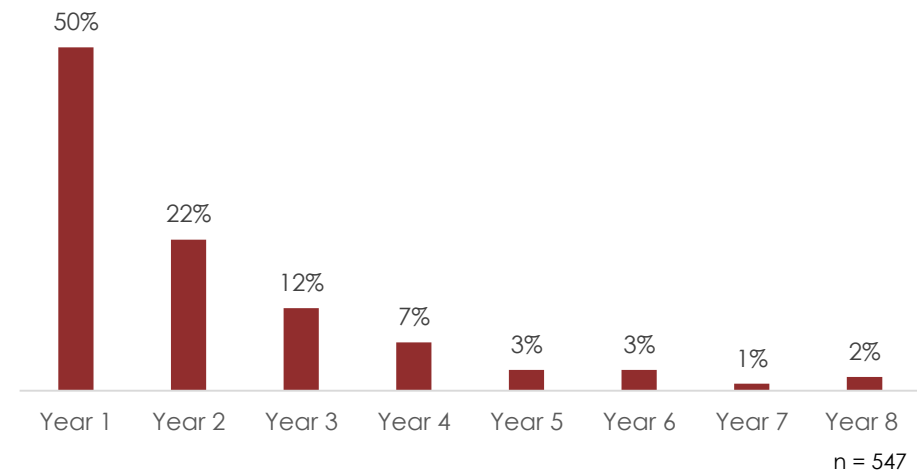
How long is your course?



Have you ever studied abroad, besides your current stay in the UK? (Including other programs that you have been enrolled in before in the UK)



What year are you in?



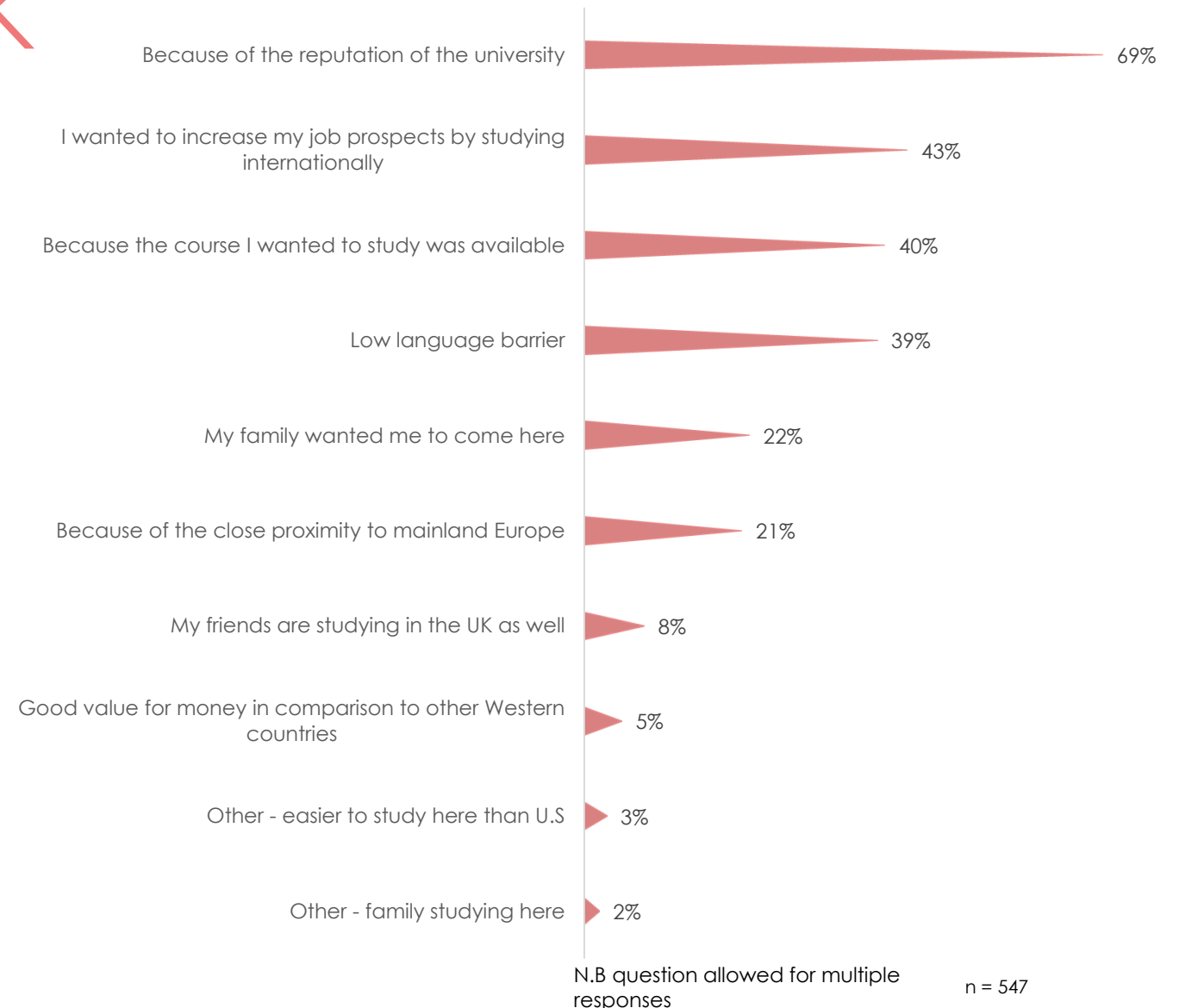
# STUDIES IN THE UK

The majority of the respondents chose to study in the UK due to the reputation of the university.

Another popular reason for choosing to study in the UK was that an international study would increase their job prospect, which was the reason for 43% of the respondents' choice to study in the UK, while 40% chose to study in the UK because of the selection of courses available to them.

The low language barrier was another popular reason for choosing to study in UK.

**Why did you choose to study in the UK?**



# INCOME AND VISITS

## Income

17% indicated that the average income was between 10,001 and 20,000 RMB (£1,123 - £2,227) and for 15% the average income was between 20,001 and 30,000 RMB (£2,227 - £3,340)

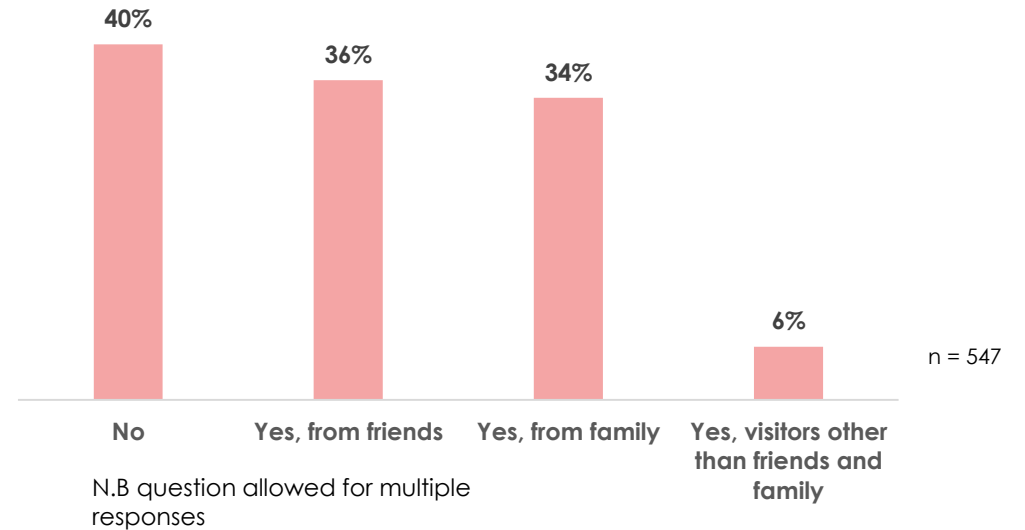
9% had a family income that was more than 100,000 RMB a month (£11,135)

## Visits

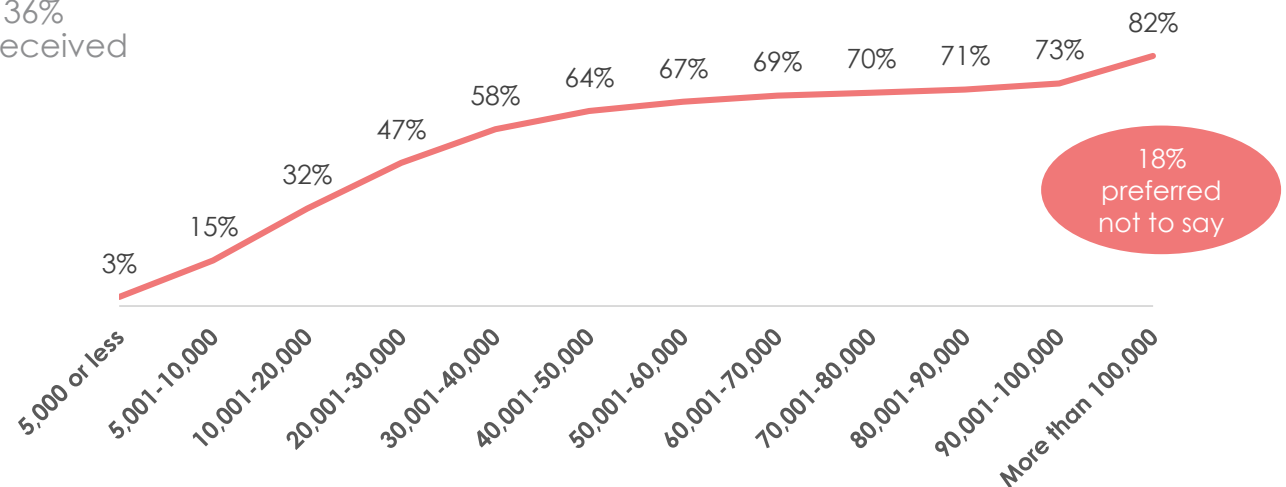
The majority of the respondents (60%) had received visits from China while studying in UK, both from friends and family. This indicates an opportunity to market Copenhagen to an even larger market, given that Chinese students abroad could potentially go on city breaks with their friends and/or family from China. 40% of respondents had not received visitors while they were studying abroad.

The split between visits from friends and family was almost even at 36% and 34%, respectively. 6% of the respondents indicated that they received visitors that were neither friends nor family.

Do you ever receive visitors from China while you are studying abroad



Monthly family income in RMB



n = 547

# SPENDING IN THE UK

20% of the respondents had a disposable income of 5,000 RMB or less a month (£557), while another 40% indicated that their disposable income was between 5,000 and 10,000 RMB (£557 - £1113) a month.

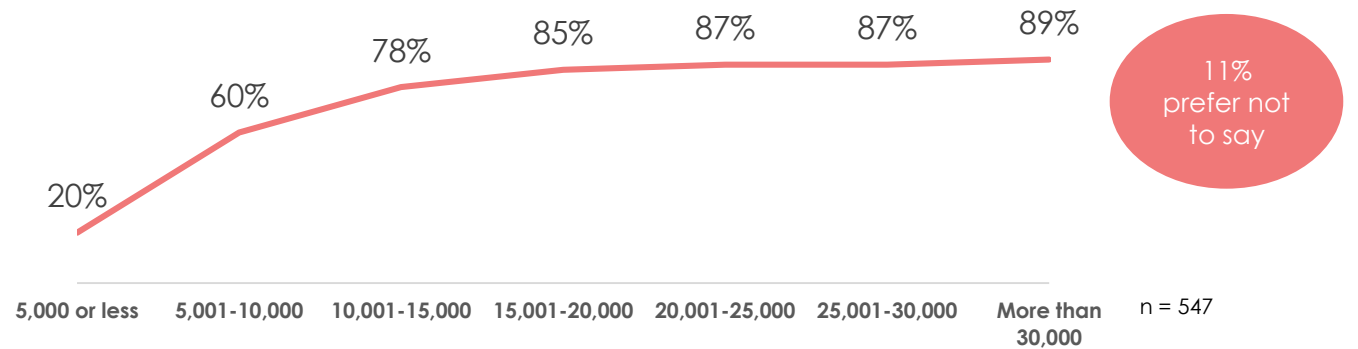
For males the top three aspects that they spend their disposable income on are going out, entertainment and leisure and then clothes and cosmetics.

For females, the top three aspects that disposable income is spent on is clothes and cosmetics, going out and then entertainment.

41% of the total sample had 'travelling round the UK' as either a priority (ranked either 1, 2 or 3) and 42% had 'travelling outside of the UK' as a priority option (ranked 1, 2 or 3)

Women are more likely than men to travel abroad than in the UK.

Monthly disposal while studying in the UK RMB. (Except tuition fees, rent)



Thinking of your disposable income, what are the top three things that you spend your money on? Please rank in order of priority

Males	Overall rank	Females	Overall rank
Going out to restaurants/bars	1	Clothes and cosmetics	1
Entertainment and leisure	2	Going out to restaurants/bars	2
Clothes and cosmetics	3	Entertainment and leisure	3
Travelling around UK	4	Travelling abroad	4
Travelling abroad	5	Travelling around UK	5
Books	6	Books	6

n = 547



# INTERNATIONAL CITY BREAK



# CITY BREAKS

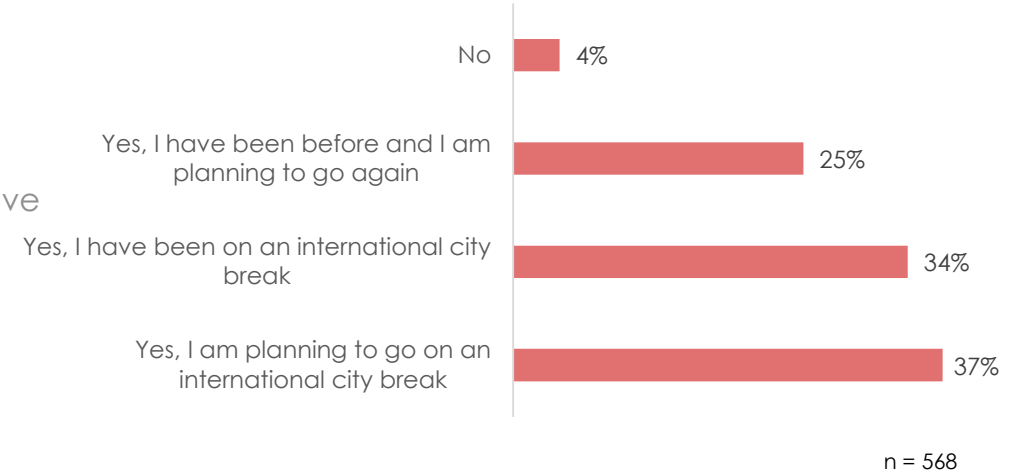
The Chinese students were asked about their plans for, and experience with, city breaks during their study in the UK. Only 4% of the respondents answered that they have not, and were not planning to, travel on a city break during their study.

37% of respondents were planning an international city break, whilst 34% had already been on an international break while studying in the UK.

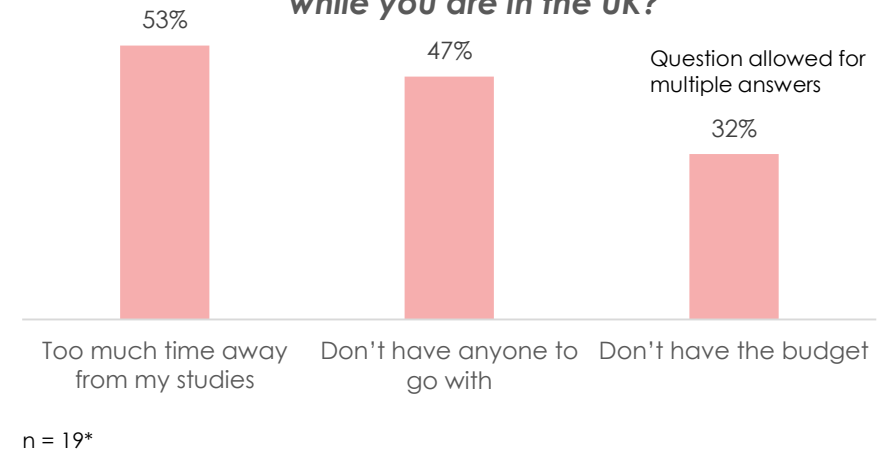
25% had already been on an international city break and were planning to go on another international city break before their studies in the UK were over.

4% had not been and were not planning to travel on a city break as part of their studies in the UK. As an explanation for this, 53% of them mentioned it was because it would be too much time away from their studies, whilst 47% did not have anyone to go with. 32% indicated that they did not have the budget to travel. These respondents were excluded from the survey at this point.

**Have you or are you planning to travel on a city break in or outside of the UK as part of your time studying here in the UK?**



**Why have you not/will you not travel on a city break while you are in the UK?**



\*Given the small sample sizes, the results should be considered indications rather than generalizable facts

# CITY BREAKS

For those that have travelled since being in the UK, the average number of city breaks they had been on was three

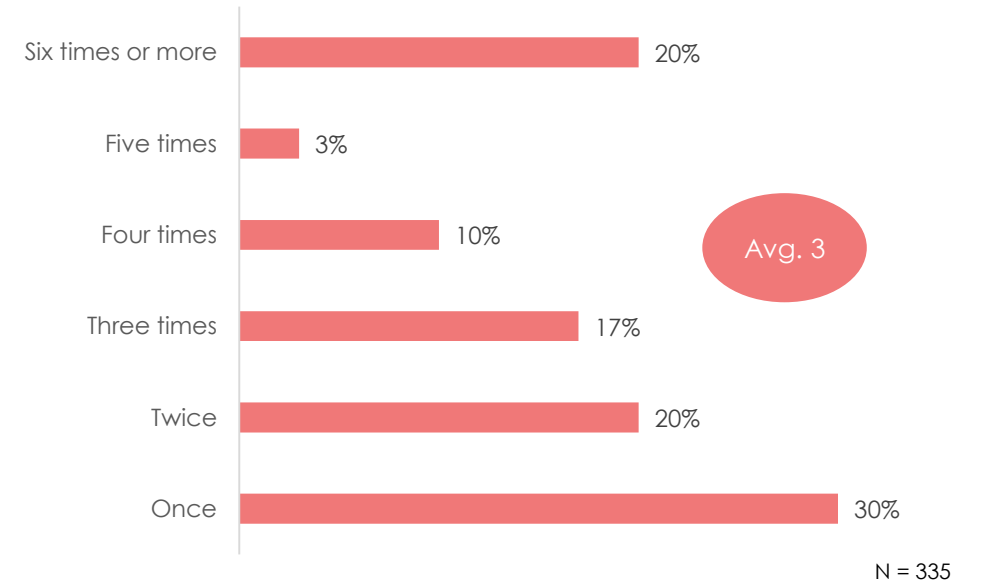
The results for the cities that to the students had traveled to, or were planning to travel to, can be seen in the graph on the next page.

For the 61% who had travelled before, Paris was the most popular destination, with 63% having visited the city. Paris was also the most popular destination for the 73% of respondents who were planning to go on a city break.

Rome was the second most popular destination for those that had already been on a city break during their time studying in the UK.

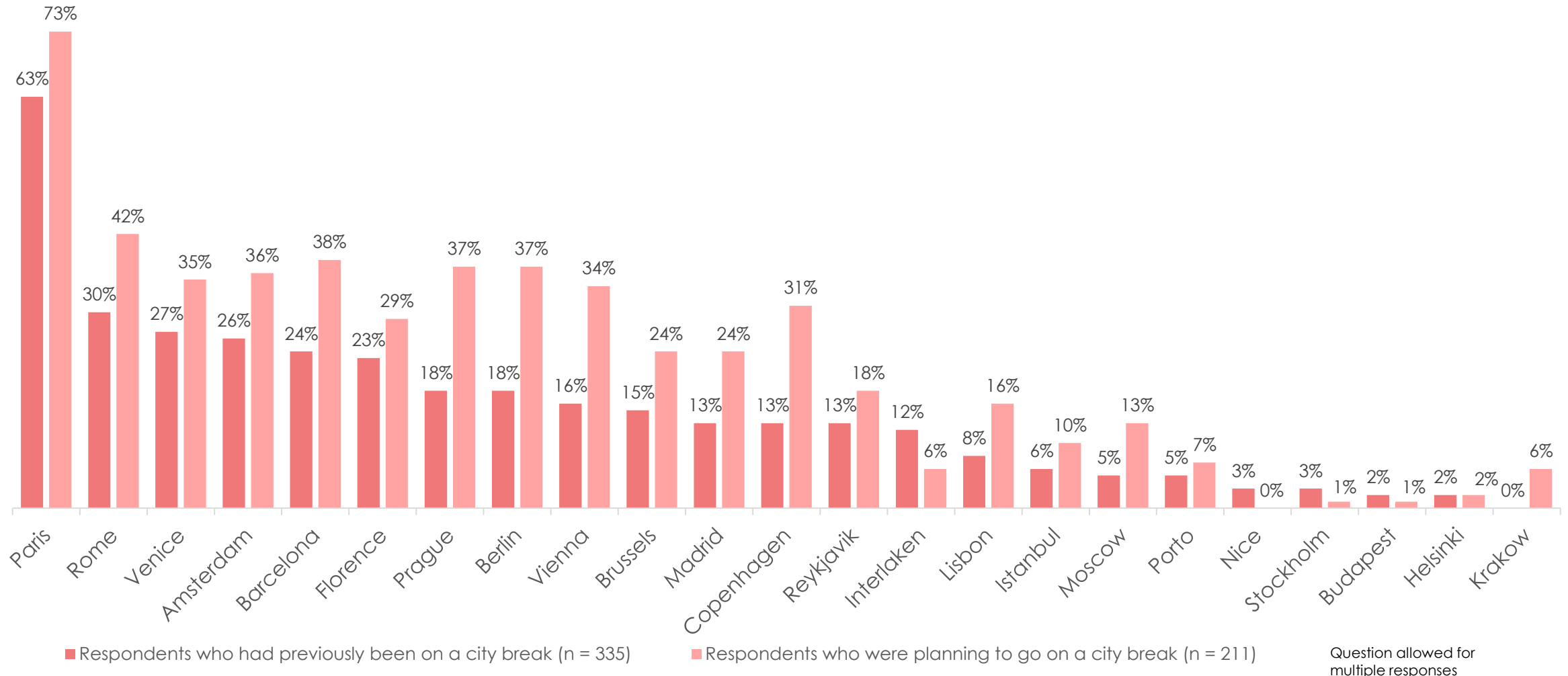
13% had been to Copenhagen and 31% were planning to visit Copenhagen on a future city break.

**How many times have you been on an international city break since you have been studying in the UK?**



# VISITED CITIES

Where have you been/are you planning to go on your international city break(s)?



# LENGTH OF CITY BREAK

The group of respondents who had previously been on a city break had, on average, spend 6.2 nights abroad, in comparison those who were planning a trip abroad, who were, on average, planning to spend 4.9 nights abroad.

Three nights was the most popular amount of time to spend abroad for both groups.



Avg. length of city break among those who have been on city break

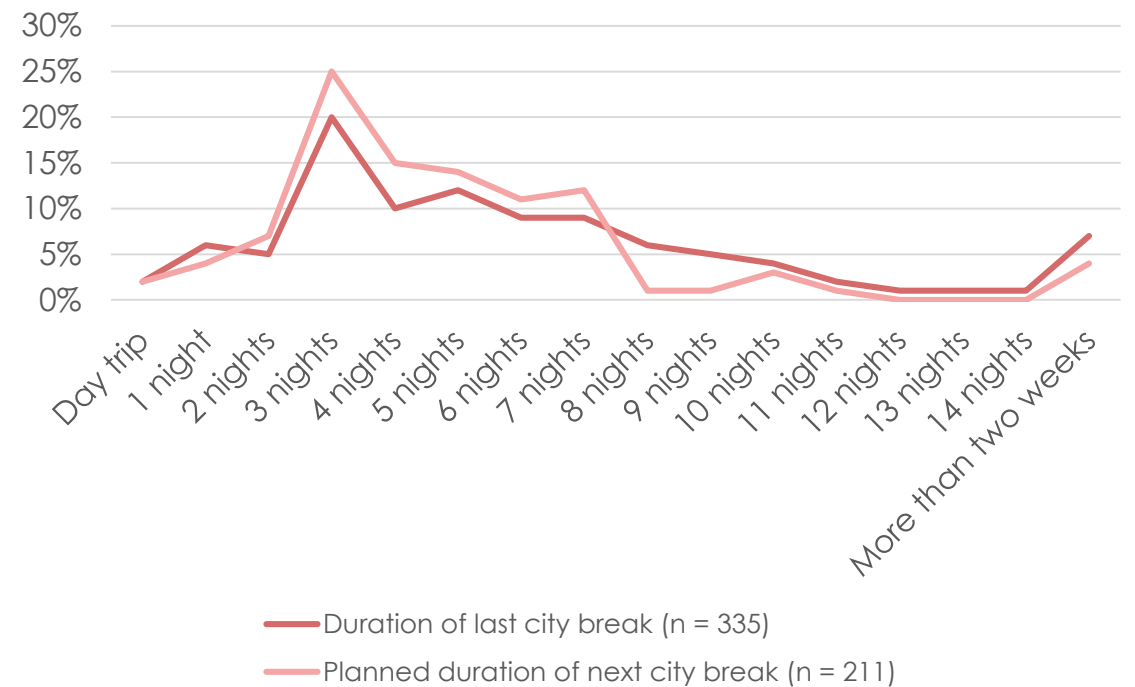
**6.2 nights**



Avg. length of city break among those who are planning a city break

**4.9 nights**

**How long did you spend/are planning to spend abroad on your last/next international city break?**



# TIME TO TRAVEL AND TRAVEL PARTNER

April was the most popular time of year to travel internationally, while the least popular months to travel in are February, September, October and November.

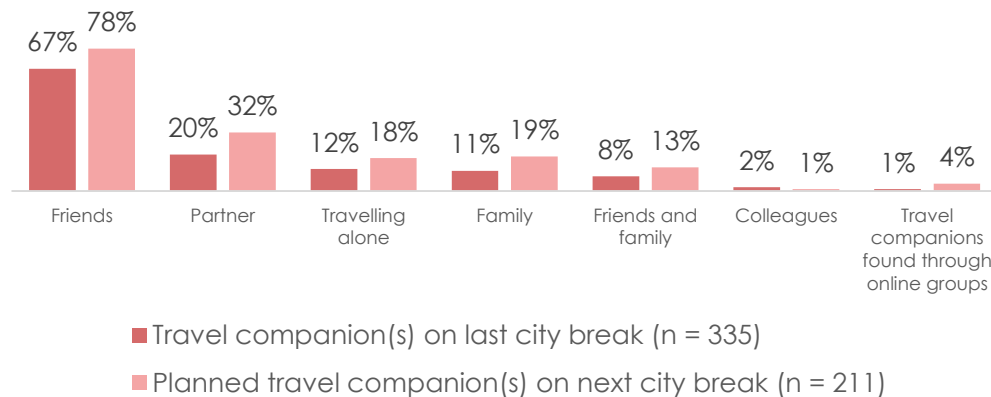
This aligns with university holidays, which has an Easter break in March/April and a winter break in December/January. The summer break is from around mid June to mid September.

Most respondents who had been on a city break previously travelled with their friends on their last international city break, while 78% planned to travel with their friends on their next international city break.

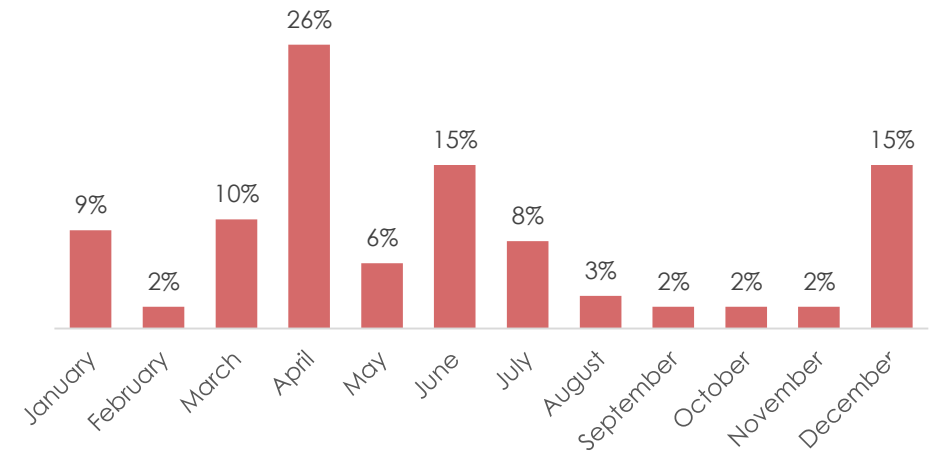
One fifth travelled with their partner on their last city break and 32% planned to travel with their partner on their next international city break.

12% were solo travelers on their last international city break and 18% planned to travel alone on their next international city break.

**Who did you/will you travel with on your last/next international city break?**



**What time of year do you prefer to travel internationally?**



n = 547

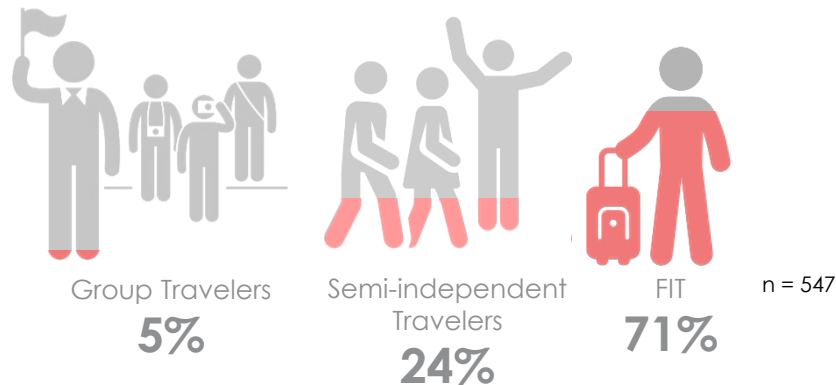
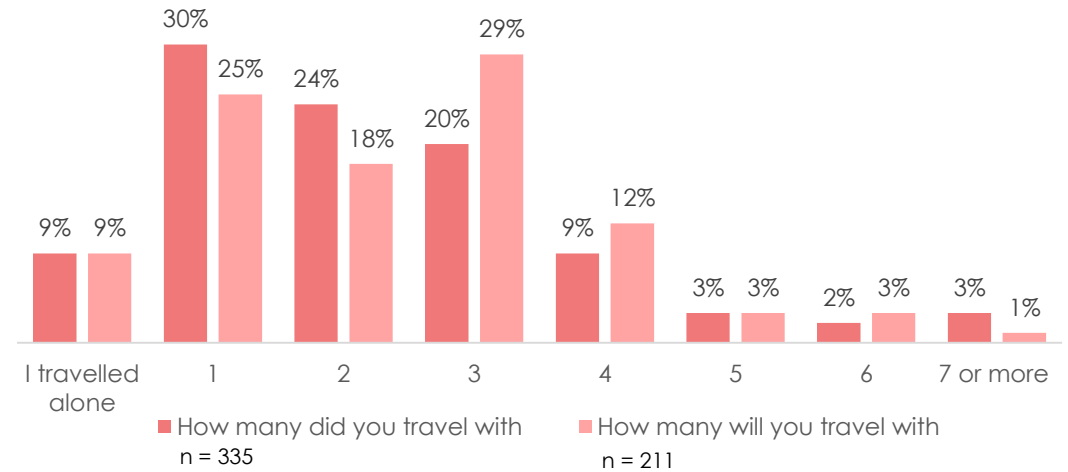
N.B question allowed for multiple answers

# TRAVEL GROUP

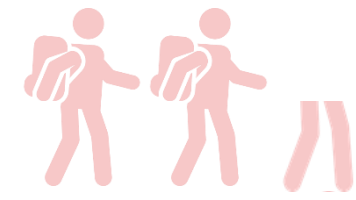
## In average the respondents travel with two people

- 30% of respondents travelled with one other person on their last international city break and 25% planned to travel with one other person.
- 29% of respondents planned to travel with 3 other people on their next international city break, whereas 19% traveled with 3 people on their last international city break.
- For those that have travelled, 17% had travelled in a group of four or more people, in comparison to 19% of the ones who were planning a trip.
- 71% would define themselves as an independent traveler, while 24% would define themselves as a semi-independent traveler. Only 5% would consider themselves to be a group traveler.

## How many people (excluding you self) did you travel with on your last international city break/will you travel with on your next city break?



In avg. 2.3 people  
for those who have  
been on a city break



In avg. 2.4 people  
for those who are  
planning a city break

# CHOICE OF DESTINATION

**Local cuisine, cultural offerings and experiencing how the locals live were the top three reasons for choosing a destination**

The local cuisine of the area was perceived to be the most popular reason for choosing where to go on an international city break for 71%

69% perceived the cultural offerings of the area to be a priority for choosing where to go and 62% choose the location because they wanted to experience how the locals live.

Method of travel was an important priority for 49% of respondents and the architecture of the city was important for 44% of the respondents.

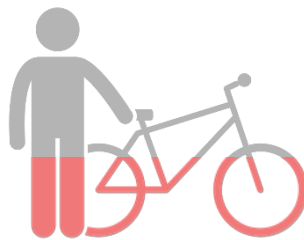
## Priorities when choosing international city break destination



**71%**  
Local cuisine

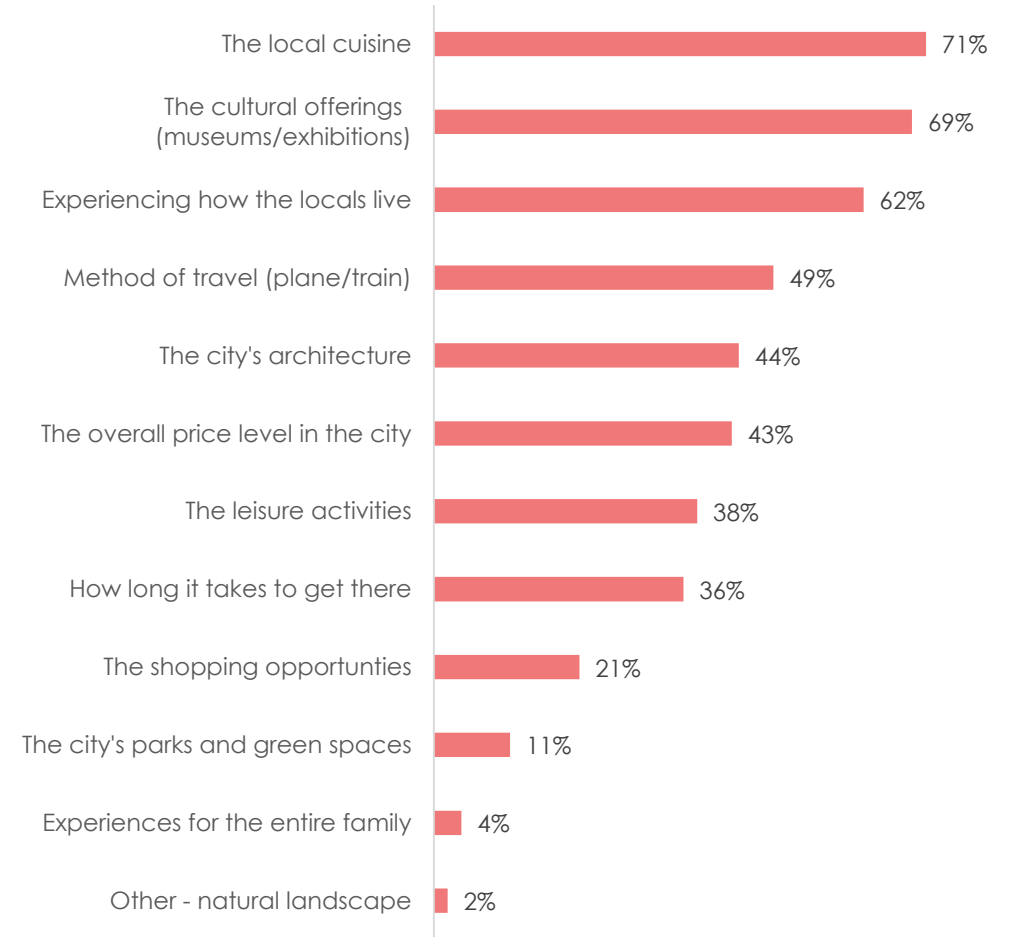


**69%**  
The city's cultural offerings



**62%**  
Experience how locals lives

## What are your top five priorities when choosing where to go on an international city break?



n = 547 N.B the question allowed for multiple responses

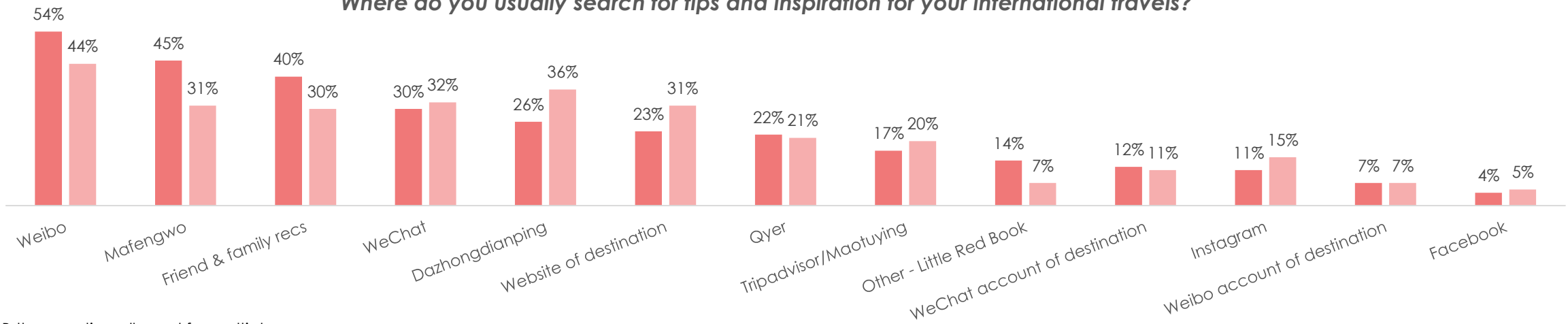


# INSPIRATION

## Weibo was most popular place to look for tips and inspiration for their travels

- 54% used Weibo for tips and inspiration regarding their international city break and 44% planned to use Weibo. 45% used Mafengwo for their previous city break and 31% planned to use Mafengwo to look for tips and inspiration for their next city break.
- 40% used recommendations from friends and family members for their last international trip and 30% planned to use friend and family recommendations as tips and inspiration for their next international city break.
- 23% used the official website of the destination and 31% planned to use it on their next international trip.
- 15% used Instagram/Facebook on their previous trip and 20% planned to use these on their next trip.

Where do you usually search for tips and inspiration for your international travels?



N.B the question allowed for multiple responses

■ Those that have travelled n = 335    ■ Those that are planning to travel n = 212

# EXPECTATIONS

## Qyer and Mafengwo were the most popular ways to choose a destination

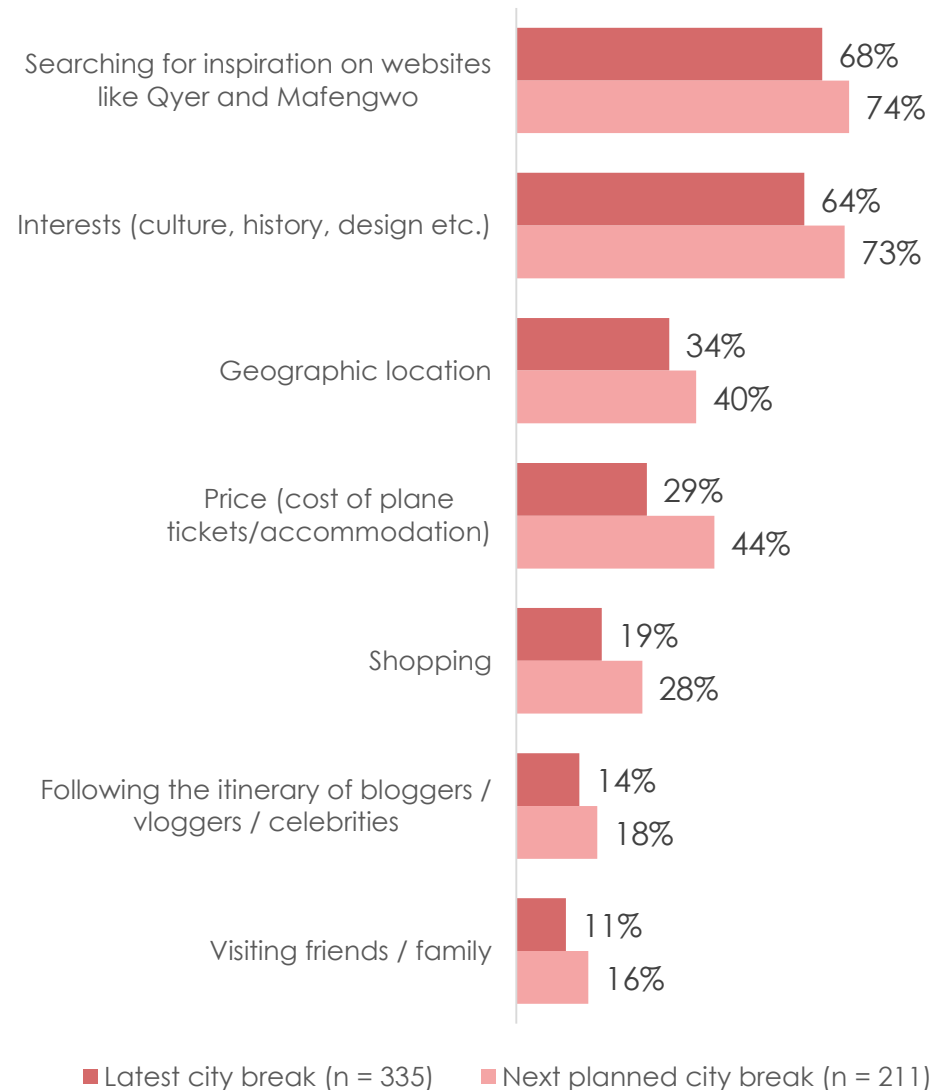
68% of respondents who have travelled chose their destination through looking at sites such as Qyer and Mafengwo and 74% indicated that this was how they would plan to choose where to go on their next city break.

64% chose their destination because it related to their interests (history, culture etc.), while 73% planned to choose their next destination based on its relevance to their interests.

Only 11% chose their previous city break due to visiting family or friends, while this would be a factor for 16% on their next international city break.

The largest gap between previous and planned city breaks was pricing, where price was perceived to be an important factor for just under 50% when planning a city break, but just 29% chose it as a motivation for choosing their travel destination on their last city break.

## How did you choose/will you choose where to go on your next international city break?

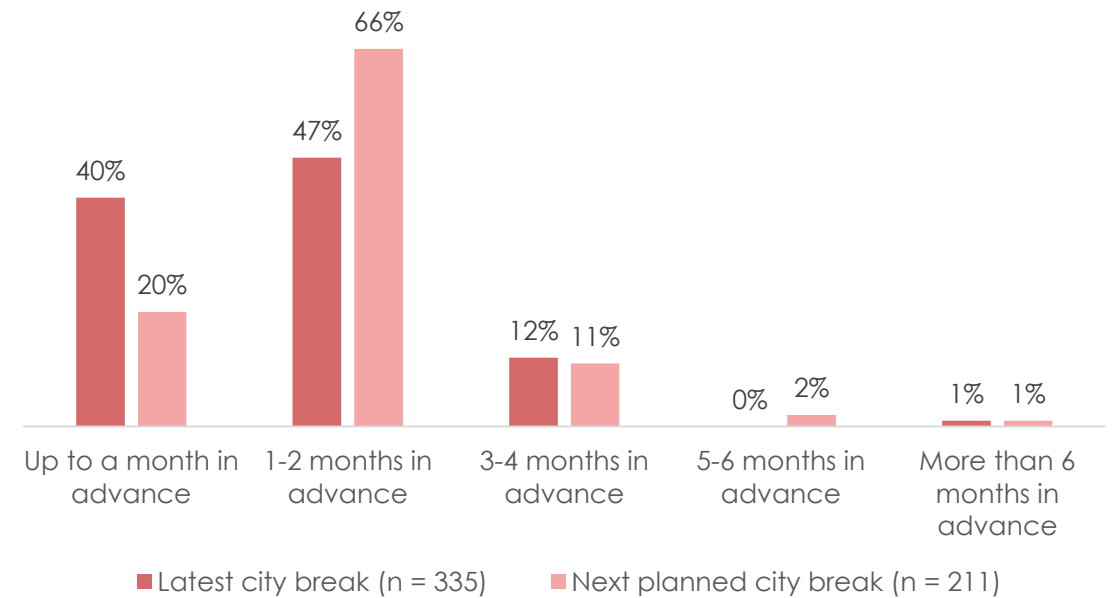


# BOOKING CITY BREAKS AHEAD OF TIME

Those that are planning to travel, plan to book their trip more in advance than those who have travelled previously:

47% booked their last city break 1-2 months in advance, compared to 67% of the respondents who were planning their upcoming city break.

*How far in advance did you book your last/will you book your next international city break?*



# PERCEPTIONS OF COPENHAGEN



# KNOWLEDGE OF COPENHAGEN

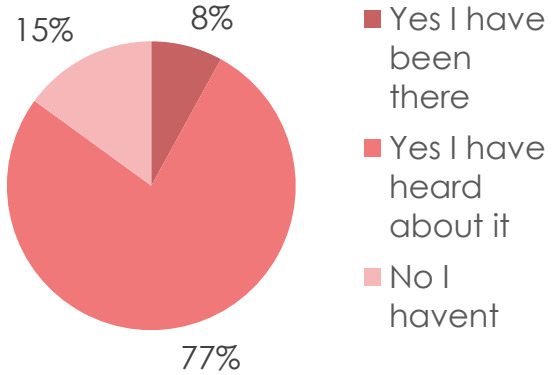
## 85% of respondents are aware of Copenhagen

77% of respondents have heard of Copenhagen, while 8% have visited Copenhagen and the remaining 15% have not heard of Copenhagen.

This demonstrates a high awareness of Copenhagen but a low rate of visiting which provides an excellent opportunity to market Copenhagen to these respondents.

The word cloud is what the respondents associate with Copenhagen

### Have you heard of Copenhagen?



N=547



n = 43\*

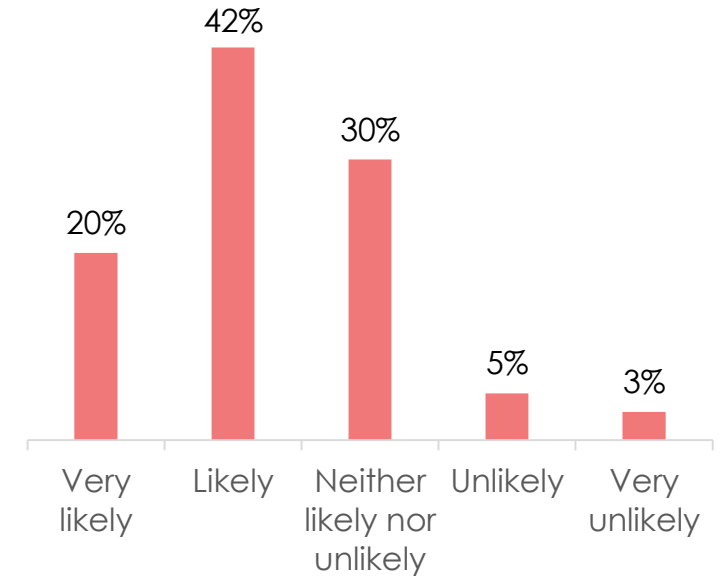
\*Please note that the sample size for the word cloud is very small and the results should, therefore, only be used as indications of associations.

# LIKELINESS TO VISIT

For those that had heard of, but not visited Copenhagen, 20% responded that they would be very likely to visit Copenhagen in the future, while another 42% indicated that they would be likely to visit the city. 30% were ambivalent about visiting, indicating that they would be neither likely nor unlikely to visit, while 8% would be either unlikely or very unlikely to visit.

For those that would be unlikely to visit Copenhagen the top three reasons for not doing so are a lack of awareness, perceived expense of Copenhagen and that Copenhagen is too far away.

How likely is it that you will visit Copenhagen on a future international city break?



N=442



Of those who are unlikely or very unlikely to visit **49% find the lack of awareness of Copenhagen a barrier to visit Copenhagen**



Of those who are unlikely or very unlikely to visit **14% find the expenses a barrier to visit Copenhagen**



Of those who are unlikely or very unlikely to visit **11% find the distance a barrier to visit Copenhagen**

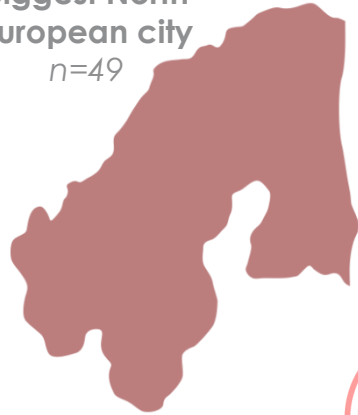
# PERCEPTIONS OF COPENHAGEN

What have you heard about Copenhagen?  
(N=418)



Location for the Global Climate Change Conference n= 85

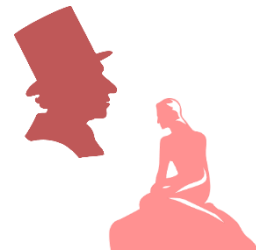
Biggest North European city n=49



Beautiful/amazing architecture n= 30



Capital of Denmark n= 80

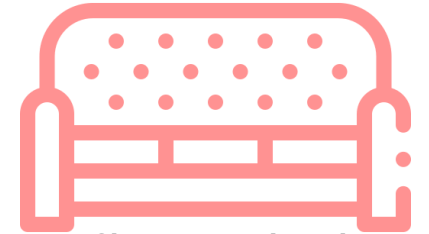


Fairy tales/Hans Christian Andersen/The Little Mermaid n= 71

What makes Copenhagen different from other cities that you have visited (N=43)



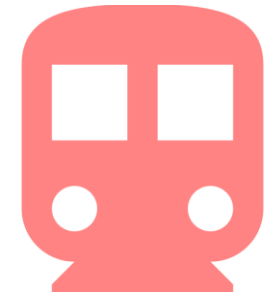
Architecturally very beautiful n= 6



Slow paced and relaxing n=8



Very clean and organized n=5



Transportation system is one of the best n=7



The fairy tale element n=5

# QUOTES ABOUT COPENHAGEN FROM RESPONDENTS WHO HAD VISITED THE CITY

“  
*Compared to the European cities I have previously been to, such as Berlin, Munich, Paris, Warsaw etc. Copenhagen has a slower pace, it's a good place for tourists to relax and enjoy their holiday. Besides that, the culture and atmosphere of Copenhagen is rich, After all, in Denmark, the fairy tale element makes people feel closer and more interested. It's different from the historical elements of Germany, which are very heavy and the art in France, which is not so easy for everyone to understand*

”

“  
*The Copenhagen Global Climate Change Conference is all I know about Copenhagen*

”

“  
*The capital of Denmark, the biggest harbour city and the biggest city in North Europe. The most suitable city for living in the world. The Grundtvig Church took 20 years to be completed, it's referred to as the most beautiful church of the 20th century*

”

“  
*Very modern architecture compared to the other European cities/the expense in Copenhagen is higher, but very cosy and clean city for holiday*

”



A public square in Copenhagen, Denmark, featuring cherry blossom trees in full bloom. In the background, a large brick building with many windows is visible. The foreground shows modern, white, curved benches and a paved area with white lines. People are seen walking and sitting on the benches. The sky is overcast.

FOR INQUIRIES ABOUT THIS REPORT, PLEASE  
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