

PROOF WINS: THE CONVERGENCE OF SPORTS, TRAVEL, AND FAITH 2026

BEHAVIOURS, BOOKING TRIGGERS,
AND INCLUSION STANDARDS

JUNE 2026

Mastercard–CrescentRating | Muslim-Friendly Sports Tourism Report 2026





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FOREWORD

WHY PROOF WINS IN SPORTS TOURISM

A FOREWORD FROM CRESCENTRATING'S CEO



Fazal Bahardeen
CEO
CrescentRating & Halaltrip



Sportstourismisreshapingtravel.Majorsportingeventsinspirefamilytrips,spontaneouscityvisits,andmemorablebusinesstravel.Travelersincreasingly value community, identity, and shared experiences alongside the sport itself.

This shift is significant for Muslim travelers, many of whom are young, digitally engaged, and well connected. However, enthusiasm alone does not guarantee attendance. In sports tourism, proof wins. Muslim travelers require clear, reliable information on essentials such as Halal food and prayer spaces, as well as on tickets, logistics, and payment details. Meeting these needs builds confidence and increases bookings. Without this assurance, destinations risk missing a vibrant and growing audience.

This report examines the sports tourism journey for Muslim travelers, from inspiration to planning, booking, and event participation. Drawing on survey results, we offer practical insights into the factors shaping their decisions. While the event is central, elements such as transportation, accommodation, venue design, staff readiness, and accessible digital resources are also critical.

Our findings indicate that Muslim-friendly services are not merely special requests but are smart inclusion standards that strengthen the experience for everyone. These services support families, seniors, women, and individuals with accessibility needs, making venues more appealing and respected. Features such as clear directions, respectful spaces, reliable information, and inclusive facilities benefit every guest. They not only support Muslim travelers but also improve the quality, safety, and comfort of all events.

We are entering a new era of large-scale events and innovative formats. From major tournaments in OIC countries to the growth of esports among young travelers, sports tourism is evolving rapidly. The winners will be those who embed genuine inclusion into the experience, and make the supporting proof visible before the booking is made, not after the traveler arrives.

At CrescentRating, in partnership with Mastercard, we aim to help the travel industry better understand Muslim travelers and apply this knowledge to develop practical, scalable solutions. We encourage all stakeholders to use these insights and take action to design sports tourism experiences that are future-ready, globally competitive, and welcoming to all.

FOREWORD **MASTERCARD**



Aisha Islam
Senior Vice President, Customer Solutions
Center, Southeast Asia
Mastercard



Sports tourism is entering a new phase of global growth, shaped by younger, digital-first travelers who connect sport with culture, community and shared experience. Within this shift, Muslim travelers represent one of the most important and fastest-expanding segments. Their interest is strong, but their decision to attend is determined by confidence, not intent alone.

That is the central insight emerging from this report. The findings show that the booking moment rests on a defined set of essentials: credible Halal assurance, accessible prayer spaces, trusted ticket pathways, clear transport guidance and secure payment options. When these needs are addressed early, participation and in-venue spending increase significantly. When they are uncertain, travelers step back long before the event begins, even when the proposition is compelling.

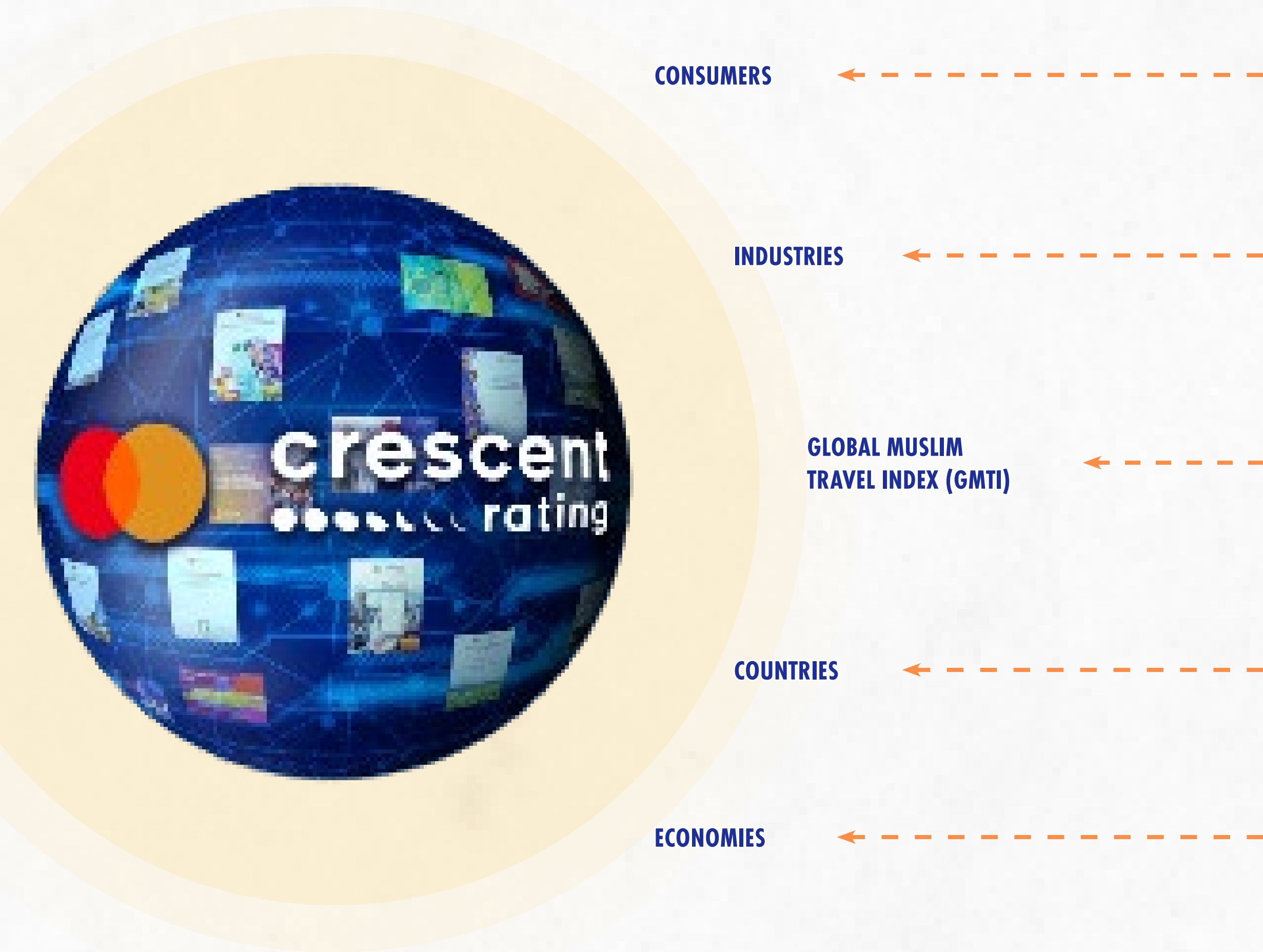
This carries a broader implication. Muslim-friendly readiness is not a specialized layer; it is a quality standard that elevates the experience for all visitors. Reliable wayfinding, accessible routes, respectful environments, informed staff and consistent digital information reduce friction for families, seniors, women and international guests. When inclusion is embedded in operations, both experience and commercial outcomes improve.

The wider environment is also evolving. Mega events, emerging sports communities and rapid digitalization are changing how fans discover, assess and commit. Decisions are made faster, and expectations are higher. Destinations and event owners that meet these expectations with coherent information and operational readiness will be best placed to capture the growing demand.

Mastercard’s role is to enable this confidence. Through secure payments, digital capabilities and deep consumer insight, we support partners in designing journeys where trust is reinforced at every stage. This report reflects that commitment. It provides a clear framework for translating expectations into practical action across venues, destinations and event ecosystems.

The opportunity ahead is substantial. With the right proof points in place, it becomes fully achievable. We hope this publication supports industry leaders in moving with clarity, strengthening their competitiveness and realizing the full potential of Muslim-friendly sports tourism.

MASTERCARD & CRESCENTRATING INSIGHTS INTO THE MUSLIM LIFESTYLE MARKET



- Muslim Women In Travel 2026
- Indonesia Muslim Brand Engagement 2025
- Malaysia Muslim Brand Engagement 2025
- Muslim Gen Z Travel 2023
- Muslim Women In Travel 2019
- Digital Muslim Travel 2018
- Muslim Millennial Travel 2017
- Muslim Business Traveler 2016

- Muslim-Friendly Sports Tourism 2026
- Muslim-Friendly Cruise 2024
- Halal Food Lifestyle Indonesia 2021
- Halal Food Lifestyle Singapore 2021
- Muslim Travel Shopping Index 2015

- GMTI 2025
- GMTI 2024
- GMTI 2023
- GMTI 2022
- GMTI 2021
- GMTI 2019
- GMTI 2018
- GMTI 2017
- GMTI 2016
- GMTI 2015

- Indonesia Muslim Travel Index 2025
- Indonesia Muslim Travel Index 2023
- Indonesia Muslim Travel Index 2019
- Indonesia Muslim Travel Index 2018
- Japan Muslim Travel Index 2017

- Halal Travel Trends 2026
- Halal Travel Trends 2025
- Ramadan & Eid Lifestyle 2022
- Travel Readiness 2020
- Halal Travel Frontier 2020
- Halal Travel Frontier 2019
- Halal Travel Frontier 2018
- Ramadan Travel 2016

Dive into the wealth of insightful reports from Mastercard and Crescentrating. These reports offer a detailed look at the thriving Muslim travel market, packed with global trends and consumer insights. Each publication gives you an in-depth understanding of this market segment and the unique needs of Muslim travelers. This collection reflects our deep commitment to serving Muslim communities around the world, helping travel brands create inclusive, innovative experiences tailored for them. Whether you're looking to tap into new markets or enhance your existing Muslim travel offerings, these reports are an invaluable resource.



Download the Report here

STRATEGIC BRIEF:

WHAT MUSLIM-FRIENDLY READINESS UNLOCKS FOR SPORTS EVENTS & VENUES

Muslim sports-event travel is a measurable opportunity, but conversion still leaks when essentials are unclear or inconsistent. This report shows what drives confidence for Muslim fans (and families), why “proof at booking” matters as much as on-ground delivery, and how venues and event organizers can operationalize Muslim-friendly readiness as a scalable performance advantage.

Key Findings

- **Confidence is the real currency.** Muslim travelers have a higher conversion when Halal food, prayer, and respectful environment signals are visible early, not discovered after arrival.
- **Families amplify the upside.** When venues reduce friction (wayfinding, calm/family zones, accessible facilities), attendance broadens beyond “hardcore fans.”
- **Halal assurance.** Variety helps, but trust (labeling, vendor assurance, staff readiness) is what unlocks spend.
- **The digital front door is a make-or-break moment.** If essentials aren’t on official pages, many travelers assume they don’t exist.
- **Operational delivery beats intention.** Staff training, signage, and prayer-flow planning determine whether Muslim-friendly claims hold under peak match pressure.

Quantified Opportunity

This report indicates a clear growth pathway: with rising Muslim international arrivals, the sports-event travel spend pool can move **from around USD 11B in 2025 to USD 21B** by 2030 if destinations, organizers, and venues accelerate Muslim-friendly amenity delivery and make confidence visible at booking. The most immediate on-site impact comes from at-event spend, driven by strong Halal food options and assurance that takes away the uncertainty.

IMPACT FOR EVENTS & VENUES (WHAT TO DO + WHAT YOU GET)

What to implement (organizers + venues):

1. Publish a **Muslim-friendly Proof Pack**: Halal options, prayer info, venue map, support contact, plus key policies (entry/re-entry, timings).
2. Design matchday operations and communications around **prayer-time awareness** and peak crowd moments.
3. Raise concession readiness: **Halal food variety + trusted assurance**, with clear labeling, defined assurance method, and staff briefing.
4. Make prayer spaces **easy to find and use**: strong signage + crowd-flow planning.
5. Add **confidence service**: a visible helpdesk + escalation SOP for Halal food/prayer queries and incident handling.
6. Broaden participation through **family-friendly and alcohol-free zones** (as an option), and standardize wayfinding/accessibility essentials (multi-language icons, QR maps, calm zones).



Outcome: higher conversion from key source markets, longer dwell time and stronger in-venue spend (F&B/merch), fewer complaints and incidents, improved guest sentiment, stronger sponsor confidence, and better repeat attendance. while reducing reputational risk.

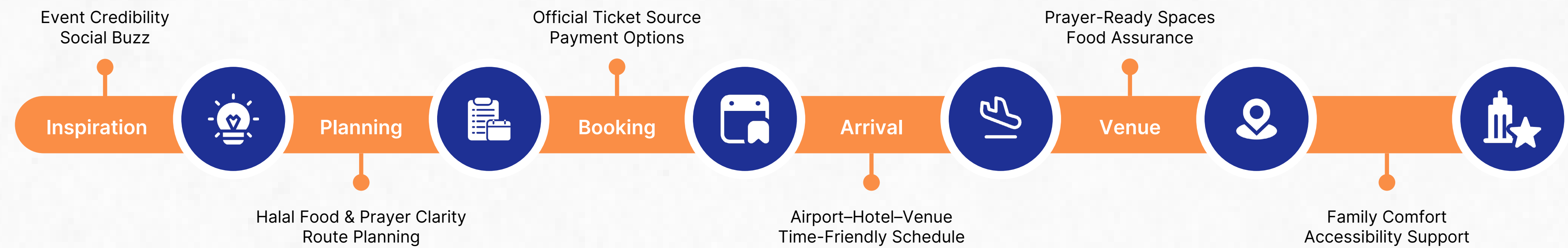


02

**SPORTS TOURISM NOW:
WHAT'S CHANGING AND WHY
IT MATTERS**

THE CONVERGENCE: SPORTS TOURISM MEETS MUSLIM TRAVEL DEMAND

IN SPORTS TOURISM, EXCITEMENT CREATES INTENT, BUT PROOF CREATES BOOKINGS



Sports tourism is no longer defined only by mega tournaments. It now includes endurance and lifestyle travel, marathons, surfing, hiking, skiing, diving, and destination-based experiences shaped by local culture, climate, and community.

In parallel, Muslim travel continues to expand as a high-growth segment of global tourism, supported by a global Muslim population exceeding 2 billion. GMTI 2025 report estimates indicate strong year-on-year growth in Muslim travel activity in 2023/2024, alongside rising interest in sports-led travel, from global event spectatorship to active and adventure participation.

But in sports tourism, enthusiasm alone doesn't convert. The booking moment is won by proof: trusted clarity on faith essentials (Halal dining and prayer access) and practical essentials (tickets, schedules, transport connectivity, logistics, and payment options). When proof is visible and reliable, confidence rises, and bookings follow. When it isn't, demand drops off early, long before the traveler reaches the venue.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR DESTINATIONS & EVENT ECOSYSTEMS

- Make proof easy to find — before booking (not only on-site).
- Design inclusion across the full journey (airport → hotel → venue).
- Standardize “readiness signals” so travelers can trust, decide, and act fast.

MARKET MOMENTUM: INCLUSION THAT CONVERTS

THE OPPORTUNITY ISN'T ONLY HOSTING EVENTS, IT'S ENGINEERING CONFIDENCE ACROSS THE JOURNEY

SPORTS TOURISM SCALE

- US\$609B market value (2023)
- Projected to US\$2.3T by 2032

UN Tourism (sports tourism)

Global growth is accelerating fast-growing, experience-led travel.

Sports tourism is expanding quickly as travellers prioritise experiences, community, and identity, not just the event itself.



Within this broader expansion, Muslim sports tourism represents a substantial growth opportunity, particularly as younger, digitally led travellers extend trips beyond the event and travel in groups and families.

For destinations, the upside is not limited to hosting. The real win is conversion: reducing uncertainty early and making readiness visible at the point of decision. Where baseline faith-enabled infrastructure already exists, it reduces friction and lifts confidence. Where it does not, purposeful inclusion sends a powerful signal: this destination is prepared, welcoming, and future-ready.

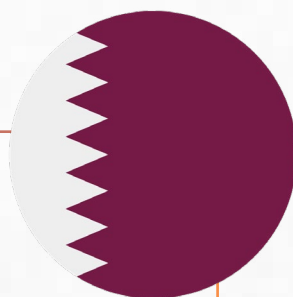
Mega events create destination halo, lift visibility, and boosts arrivals.

Major events drive attention, accelerate infrastructure upgrades, and trigger “extended stays” and repeat visits, if the journey is friction-free.



Qatar’s post-World Cup momentum

4M visitors (2023)
+157% YoY visitor increase (Qatar Tourism)



INCLUSION THAT CONVERTS (THE “PROOF” DESTINATIONS MUST SHOW)

Faith essentials

- Halal food assurance that is easy to verify (not vague “availability”)
- Prayer-ready access (clear location, hours, wudhu support where possible)

Booking essentials

- Official ticket pathways + trust cues to reduce fraud anxiety
- Clear transport plan (airport → hotel → venue → last mile)
- Payment readiness (reliable digital payments and clear pricing)

On-ground essentials

- Wayfinding + respectful spaces (signage that removes uncertainty)
- Staff readiness (simple service scripts + escalation support)
- Accessibility support (families, seniors, and guests with mobility needs)

POTENTIAL IMPACT: WHEN INCLUSION IS DESIGNED IN HOSTING MATTERS

READINESS CONVERTS, WHEN PROOF IS VISIBLE BEFORE BOOKING AND RELIABLE ON THE GROUND



Infrastructure&Readiness: Large-scale sporting events accelerate investment in venues, accommodation, transport, and public amenities. When upgrades are designed for both volume and inclusion, they strengthen competitiveness beyond the event cycle.
Proof signal: Prayer-ready venue access + accessible routes + clear wayfinding.



Arrival Growth & Diversification: Major events can lift arrivals and amplify destination visibility. Connectivity improvements and visitor-ready services support repeat visitation and help reduce seasonality.
Proof signal: Airport–hotel–venue connectivity shown clearly + time-friendly travel planning info.



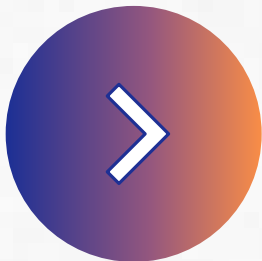
Branding&CulturalExchange: Global sport is a platform to showcase identity, traditions, and hospitality. For destinations targeting Muslim audiences, it’s also a chance to demonstrate values-led welcome through inclusive services that support faith and comfort.
Proof signal: Halal food assurance that is easy to verify + respectful spaces communicated upfront.



Community Engagement & Empowerment: Sports tourism mobilizes local participation through volunteering, cultural showcases, and fan programs — building pride, youth engagement, and social cohesion when communities share in the benefits.
Proof signal: Visible local experiences + family-friendly zones + safe, well-managed crowd experience.



Sustainability&PolicyInnovation: Event-led development can accelerate sustainability through efficient venues, circular operations, and greener transport, aligned to global goals. Paired with inclusive design and accessibility standards, these investments lift long-term quality.
Proof signal: Clear accessibility standards + responsible operations communicated.



What Muslim travelers do next : the behaviours, triggers, and proof points that shape booking decisions.

2030 MARKET UPLIFT: THE BUSINESS CASE FOR MUSLIM-FRIENDLY SPORTS EVENTS

A MEASURABLE TRAVEL + VENUE REVENUE POOL—
MADE LARGER WHEN EVENTS BECOME TRULY MUSLIM-FRIENDLY

Muslim sports-event travel is a measurable opportunity, but conversion still leaks when essentials are unclear or inconsistent. This report shows what drives confidence for Muslim fans (and families), why “proof at booking” matters as much as on-ground delivery, and how venues and event organizers can operationalize Muslim-friendly readiness as a scalable performance advantage, not a marketing claim.

Base Market Size:

- Muslim international arrivals:
186M (2025) → 245M (2030)*
- Avg spend per arrival:
\$1,000 (2025) → \$1,150 (2030)*
- % attending sports events while travelling:
6% (baseline participation)**

Total Sports-Event Travel Spend
(Trip-level):

2025 —————→ 11B

2030 → 17B → 21B

Where the money goes - the main Categories

-  Air/land travel
-  Accommodation
-  At-event spend
(tickets + in-venue F&B + merch)

Scope Note:

This model projects the economic impact of international Muslim arrivals only (based on 6% trip incidence). It excludes the substantial domestic market, where broader sports tourism affinity reaches 75%. Consequently, these figures are conservative; activating this latent domestic demand would unlock a significantly larger revenue upside, particularly for non-OIC destinations.

*Mastercard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel Index 2025
** CrescentRating estimates

Uplift Case: If Events Become Muslim-Friendly

Muslim-friendly readiness creates upside through two measurable levers:

Lever 1 — Attendance uplift

More Muslim travelers choose to attend when essentials are visible at booking and reliable on matchday.
Assumption used: +25% uplift in Muslim sports-event participation.

Lever 2 — At-event spend uplift

When Halal food options are abundant, well-labeled, and trusted, more attendees buy, and spend more.
Assumption used: +20% uplift in at-event basket value.

2030 uplift (if Muslim-friendly):

the Muslim sports-event travel spend pool grows from \$17B to \$21B — an increase of +\$4B (+23.5%).
Note: The at-event uplift applies to in-venue spend (tickets/F&B/merch). Total trip spend increases mainly through higher attendance.





03

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HOW MUSLIM TRAVELERS CHOOSE SPORTS TRIPS

WHAT SHAPES THE ITINERARY: FROM INTENT TO ATTENDANCE

A LOOK INTO MUSLIM SPORTS TRAVELERS

HOW MUSLIM TRAVELERS DECIDE, BOOK, AND EXPERIENCE SPORTS TOURISM, AND WHAT THAT MEANS FOR DESTINATIONS



THE DEMOGRAPHIC ENGINE BEHIND MUSLIM SPORTS TOURISM

YOUNGER. DIGITAL-FIRST. RISING WOMEN AND SENIOR SEGMENTS.
PROOF CONVERTS INTENT INTO ATTENDANCE.

Global Muslim population (2025 → 2035)

2.19B → 2.54B

Muslims are projected to represent **50% of global population growth** (2025–2035).

Muslims under 40 (2025)

70%

Still **67% by 2035**, a sustained youth advantage.

Muslim Gen Z population

612M

27.9% of the global Muslim population (**~1 in 4 are Gen Z**).

Muslim women travelers

80M

45% of global Muslim visitor arrivals.

Median age (Muslim population)

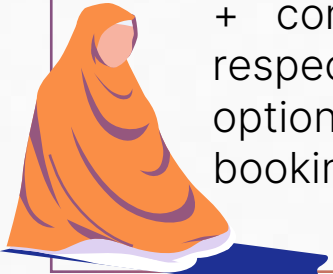
25

A market built around life-stage energy and frequent trip-taking.

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR SPORTS TOURISM



Younger majority → digital-first journeys: ticketing, wayfinding, and venue info must be mobile-native and instantly clear.



Women's market weight → safety + comfort signals: prayer access, respectful spaces, and reliable Halal options should be visible before booking.



Gen Z scale → social-to-booking compression: short-form inspiration needs immediate “can I do this?” answers (Halal food prayer, payments, transport).



Growth trajectory → competition intensifies: destinations that operationalize assurance (not slogans) will capture share as arrivals rise.

Muslim international travel outlook

245M arrivals by 2030

Forecast expenditure: USD 235B by 2030

Data Source: Mastercard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel Index 2024 & 2025



Design implication:

Inclusion features built for Muslim travelers also elevate experience for families, seniors, and accessibility-needs guests, and reduce operational friction.

FOUR SEGMENTS POWERING MUSLIM SPORTS TOURISM BOOKINGS

BEHAVIOURS + BOOKING TRIGGERS — AND THE PROOF DESTINATIONS

MUST SHOW BEFORE PURCHASE

Digitally Native Young Adults

Book short, high-energy event trips fast, driven by social buzz and group travel.

Need proof: official ticket links, frictionless payments, and venue basics (prayer/Halal food shown instantly).

612M Muslim Gen Z (27.9% of Muslim population)



Balanced Urbanites

Plan “event + city break” trips for couples/families — balancing value, convenience, and comfort.

Need proof: clear schedules, airport–hotel–venue transport plan, and nearby Halal food/prayer essentials.

70% of Muslims are under 40 (2025) (sustained youth advantage)



Values-Driven Professionals

Choose premium, well-managed experiences — prioritising trust, dignity, safety, and service quality.

Need proof: credible Halal food assurance, respectful spaces, and service readiness communicated upfront.

Muslim women: 45% of arrivals (80M women travelers)



Faith-Guided Active Seniors

Travel with extended family — comfort and accessibility determine feasibility.

Need proof: step-free access, seating/rest points, prayer-ready facilities, and simple wayfinding.

Muslim 50+ population: 347M (2025) → 474M (2035F)



FROM INTEREST TO ATTENDANCE

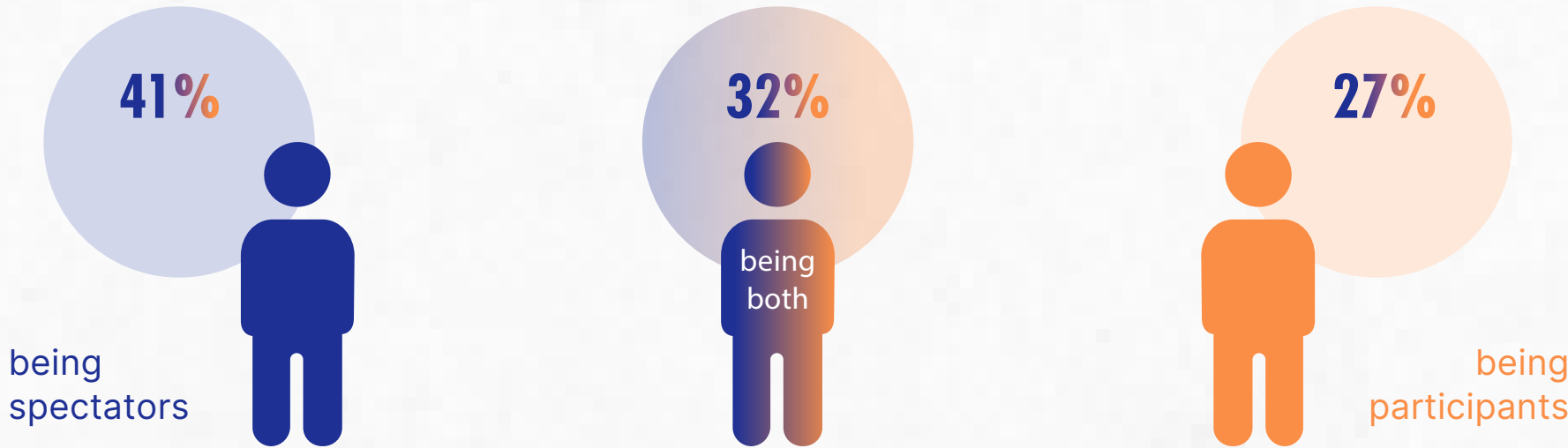
THE TOP DECISION TRIGGERS — AND THE PROOF THAT TURNS INTENT INTO BOOKINGS

75%

have participated in sports tourism (domestic & international combined), signalling strong adoption among Muslim travelers.

However, currently only 6% of international trips include a sports event. This gap highlights a latent opportunity to convert domestic sports fans into international sports tourists.

THESE TRAVELERS VARY AS:



Implication: Experiences must serve both event spectators and active participants, with different proof needs.

FIRST-TIME SPORTS TOURISM POTENTIAL

Among those who have never done sports tourism before, interest is strongest for spectator-led trips (33%), followed by participant-led trips (9%).

42% plan to travel to a sporting event.

When deciding whether to attend a sports event, Muslim travelers weigh a small set of high-impact considerations.



Affordability & Value: Travelers decide based on total trip cost — including tickets, transport, and accommodation.

Proof cue: upfront pricing, payment options, and value bundles.



Halal food & Prayer Readiness Faith essentials shape feasibility and confidence, especially for families and groups.

Proof cue: Halal food assurance + prayer access shown clearly before booking.

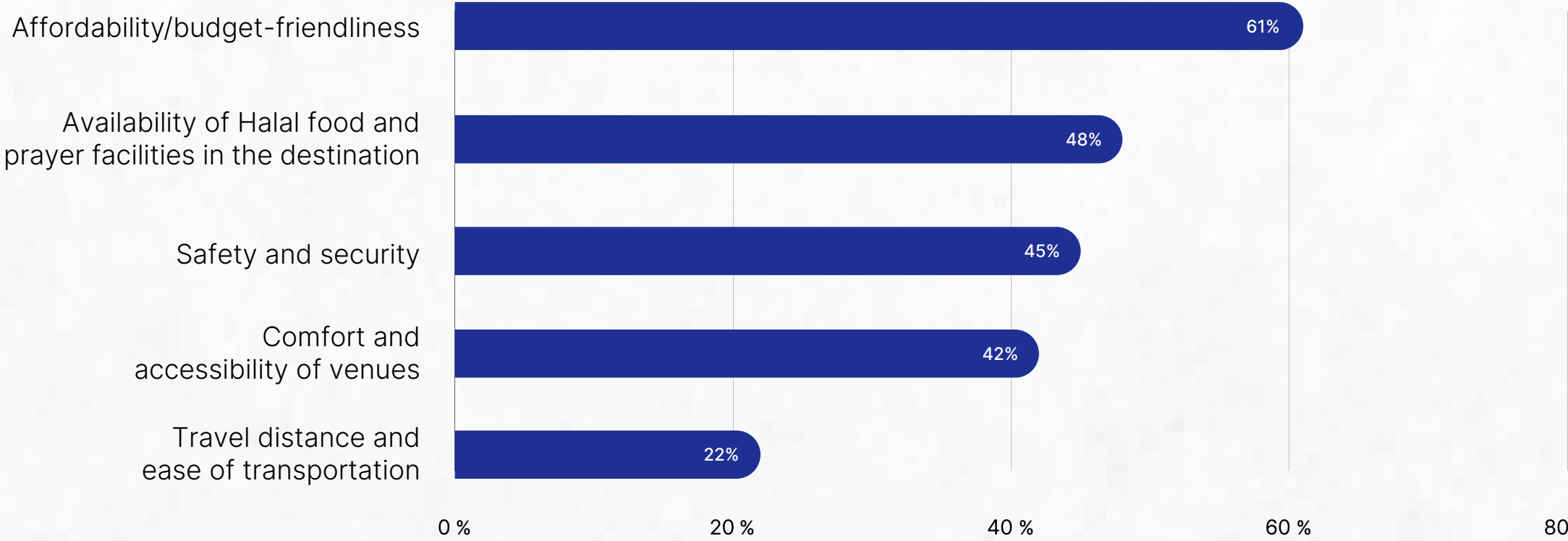


Safety & Crowd Confidence Safety signals affect willingness to attend, particularly for women, seniors, and families.

Proof cue: crowd management info, security visibility, and emergency readiness.

Other factors matter too (comfort, accessibility, distance) — but these three most often decide whether the trip happens at all.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPORTS TRAVEL



When these factors rank high, destinations should make them visible at booking (not buried in FAQs).

FROM DISCOVERY TO BOOKING: KEY PREFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

KEY BEHAVIOURS AND BOOKING TRIGGERS SHAPING MUSLIM SPORTS TOURISM

72%

Discover sports tourism experiences through social media.

Implication: Make proof shareable, then link directly to official ticket and trip planning.

Travelers prioritise affordable trips and prefer paying via e-wallets.

Implication: Price transparency + seamless digital payments reduce drop-off.

Halal-assured dining and prayer-ready access are essential requirements.

Implication: These must be easy to verify before booking, not only on-site.

Participants are driven by health, personal goals, and achievement. Spectators are driven by team loyalty and the live atmosphere.

Implication: Participants need facility readiness proof; spectators need ticket + schedule + venue logistics proof.

Official event websites are the most trusted ticket-purchasing channel.

Implication: Connect social discovery → official ticket pathways (with clear trust cues).

TOP 3 GLOBAL SPORTS

- SOCCER
- CRICKET
- BASKETBALL

Most attend sports events with friends, often in mixed groups.

Implication: Design for group convenience (transport, seating, meeting points).

Short, convenient trips are favored, mostly within the city or domestically, for 2-3 days

Faith alignment is highly valued: travelers rate the importance of faith-compatible experiences at

4.2

out of 5

Implication: Signal inclusion clearly in the itinerary and venue information.

WHAT TO SHOW AT BOOKING (MINIMUM PROOF)

- > Official tickets
- > Transport plan
- > Halal food assurance
- > Prayer access
- > Payment options
- > Venue wayfinding
- > Accessibility basics



04

**UNDERSTANDING WHAT CONVERTS
BEHAVIOURS AND BOOKING TRIGGERS
SHAPING MUSLIM SPORTS TOURISM**

THE 4CS: WHAT DRIVES MUSLIM SPORTS TOURISM BEHAVIOUR

A PRACTICAL LENS FOR DESIGNING JOURNEYS THAT CONVERT INTENT INTO ATTENDANCE

Sports tourism among Muslim travelers is shaped more by friction, trust, and inclusion signals. The 4Cs Framework translates the survey patterns into four practical levers destinations, event owners, and operators can design around, from discovery and ticketing to on-ground experience.

CONVENIENCE

What it means: The ease of getting there, moving around, and navigating the event experience.

What the survey signals: Booking confidence rises when logistics are clear and low-effort (transport, distances, entry flow, timing).

What to design for:

- Clear “how to get there” transport guidance, last-mile options, and time estimates
- Venue navigation, entry/exit flow, and prayer-friendly scheduling cues
- Digital-first wayfinding and updated event-day information

COMMUNITY

What it means: Social discovery, group influence, and shared motivation to attend.

What the survey signals: Discovery is strongly social-led (72%), and group dynamics shape trip length and add-ons (friends, mixed groups, families).

What to design for:

- Social-first storytelling (short reels, creator partnerships, fan communities)
- Group booking prompts (bundles, shared itineraries, “bring your circle” hooks)
- Content that makes planning easy to share (maps, checklists, “what to expect” cards)



THE 4CS: WHAT DRIVES MUSLIM SPORTS TOURISM BEHAVIOUR

A PRACTICAL LENS FOR DESIGNING JOURNEYS THAT CONVERT INTENT INTO ATTENDANCE

COMFORTABILITY

What it means: Inclusion, dignity, and Muslim-friendly readiness across the full journey.

What the survey signals: “Halal food/prayer + comfort/ accessibility + safety” repeatedly shows up as the deal-maker , especially for families, women, and seniors.

What to design for:

- Prayer access near venues + clear guidance (spaces, directions, peak times)
- Halal food availability you can trust (not vague labels but verifiable assurance)
- Safety readiness and respectful environment cues (especially for women/families)
- Accessibility routing and low-friction pacing options

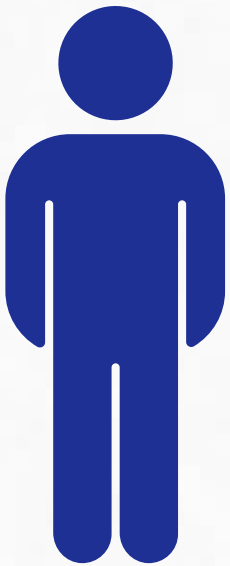
COST-EFFICIENCY

What it means: Value, affordability, and confidence that the spend is worth it.

What the survey signals: Travelers respond to value-packed combinations and extend trips when the overall proposition is strong (e.g., event + city break).

What to design for:

- Bundle clarity (tickets + transport + hotel + dining) and transparent pricing
- Tiered packages for different budgets without compromising inclusion needs
- Digital payment readiness (e-wallets / frictionless checkout)



Spectators



Participant

Within the 4Cs, CrescentRating differentiates sports spectators and sports participants, both central to sports tourism, but driven by different proof needs:



Spectators: seek ticket trust, crowd comfort, logistics clarity, and inclusion access



Participants: require event operations readiness (registration flow, equipment guidance, recovery needs, performance-friendly food options, and reliable on-ground support)



Design implication: Same city. Same event. Different expectations , so proof must be tailored.

FROM BEHAVIOUR TO DELIVERY: THE FRAMEWORK STACK

4CS EXPLAIN WHAT DRIVES DECISIONS-OUR FRAMEWORKS SHOW HOW TO DESIGN,
DELIVER, AND PROVE READINESS.



4Cs — BEHAVIOUR LENS

Identifies what travelers prioritise and where drop-off happens

Identifies what travelers prioritise and where drop-off happens.

Behaviour drivers:

Convenience • Community • Comfortability • Cost-Efficiency



RIDA — EXPERIENCE DESIGN COMPASS

Translates needs into future-ready experience design

Translates needs into future-ready experience design

Strategic design priorities: Responsible • Immersive • Digital • Assured



ACES + ATF — DELIVERY & INCLUSION STANDARD

Converts design into operational standards and audits

Converts design into operational standards and audits

Checklists + minimum requirements:

ACES: Access • Communications • Environment • Services

ATF: Accessible Travel Framework (mobility, sensory, senior/family support)



TRUST — PROOF AT BOOKING

Makes readiness visible and credible at the decision moment

Validates readiness claims to convert intent into bookings

Drivers: Transparency • Relevance • User Experience • . Social Connection • Thoughtful Rewards

UNDERSTAND (4Cs) > DESIGN (RIDA) > DELIVER (ACES + ATF) > PROVE (TRUST)

HOW STAKEHOLDERS SHOULD USE THIS

- 1 Start with the 4Cs to prioritise what matters most to travellers.
- 2 Apply RIDA to shape the end-to-end journey experience.
- 3 Use ACES + ATF to define minimum standards for venues and destinations.
- 4 Apply TRUST to ensure proof is clear, credible, and visible at booking.

CONVENIENCE: FACILITIES & ACCESSIBLE MOBILITY

WHEN ACCESS IS EASY, ATTENDANCE RISES, ESPECIALLY FOR FAMILIES AND SENIORS



Convenience is a decisive factor in sports tourism. Travelers favour destinations where the end-to-end journey is simple, from airport to accommodation to venue, supported by clear navigation, reliable infrastructure, and streamlined digital systems.

Mobility is central to this experience. **87% of respondents** consider having public transportation to and from the venue an important factor, reducing logistical stress and making event attendance more feasible.

However, convenience breaks down when venues are not inclusive. 36% of respondents have faced accessibility issues at sports locations, reinforcing the need for facilities that support a wider range of needs, including families with strollers, older travelers, and guests with mobility or sensory requirements.

What this means: Accessible design is not a niche add-on. It is a core component of convenience, and a visible signal of destination readiness.

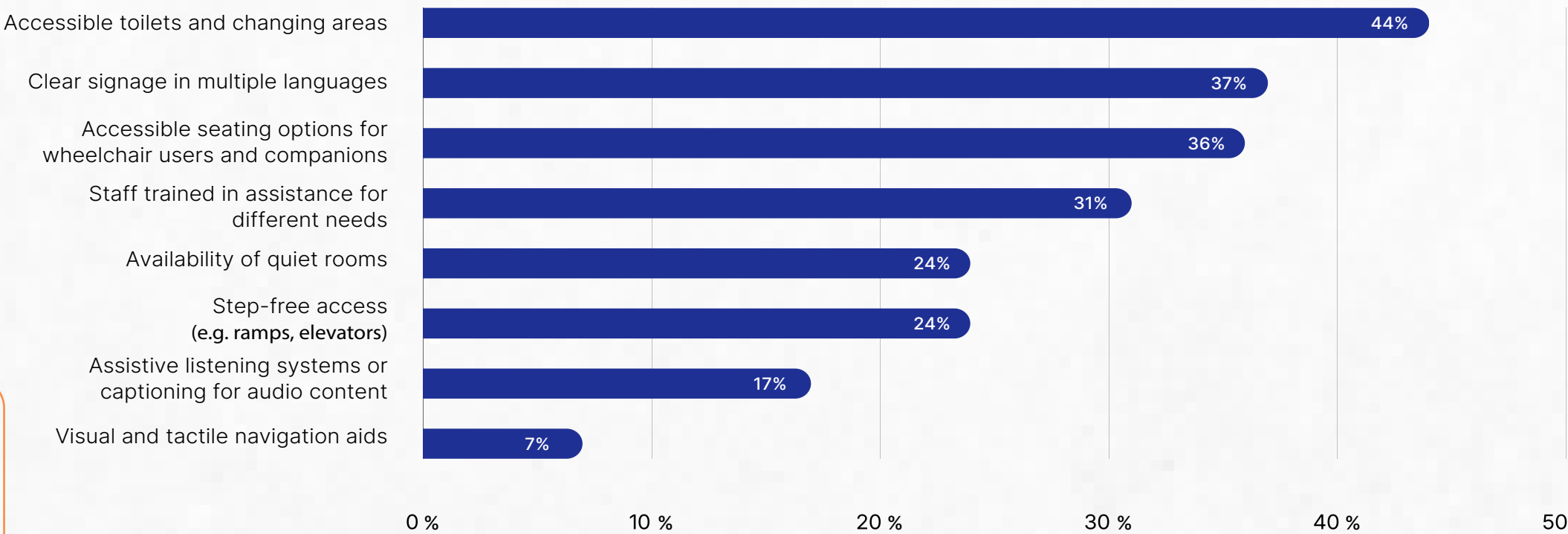
PROOF TO SHOW BEFORE BOOKING

- > Step-free routes
- > Accessible seating & toilets
Venue maps
- > Public transport routes
Assistance points
- > Quiet/rest areas

36% Have faced accessibility issues at the sports location

TOP VENUE FEATURES THAT IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY

TOP FEATURES REQUESTED AT VENUES (MULTIPLE RESPONSES)



Survey question:
“Which facilities matter most for accessibility at sports venues?”

ACCESSIBILITY AS CONVENIENCE

THE ATF LENS FOR INCLUSIVE SPORTS TOURISM EXPERIENCES



People travel with different levels of mobility, sensory, cognitive, and accessibility needs, and sports tourism amplifies these demands through crowds, long walking distances, queues, and time-sensitive schedules. In this context, accessibility is not only a social goal; it is a convenience multiplier that reduces friction for everyone.

CrescentRating’s Accessible Travel Framework (ATF) applies universal design principles to help venues and destinations create environments that are intuitive, flexible, and usable regardless of ability or age. Key elements include step-free routes, accessible seating and washrooms, multilingual and tactile wayfinding, sensory-friendly provisions (e.g., quiet rooms), and digitally accessible information.

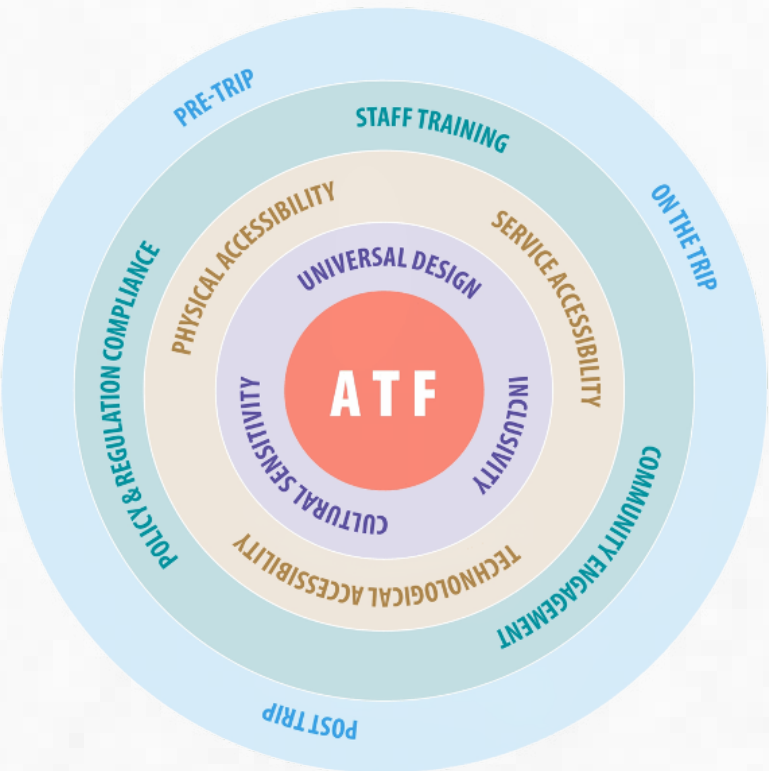
In sports tourism, these improvements benefit not only travelers with disabilities, but also older visitors, families with young children, and travelers carrying sport equipment. When accessibility is embedded into venue layouts and operations, supported by trained staff, destinations strengthen readiness, elevate visitor experience, and reinforce inclusive growth.

MINIMUM ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD

Step-free access • Accessible seating & toilets • Clear wayfinding • Staff assistance points • Digital accessibility

PROOF TO SHOW BEFORE BOOKING

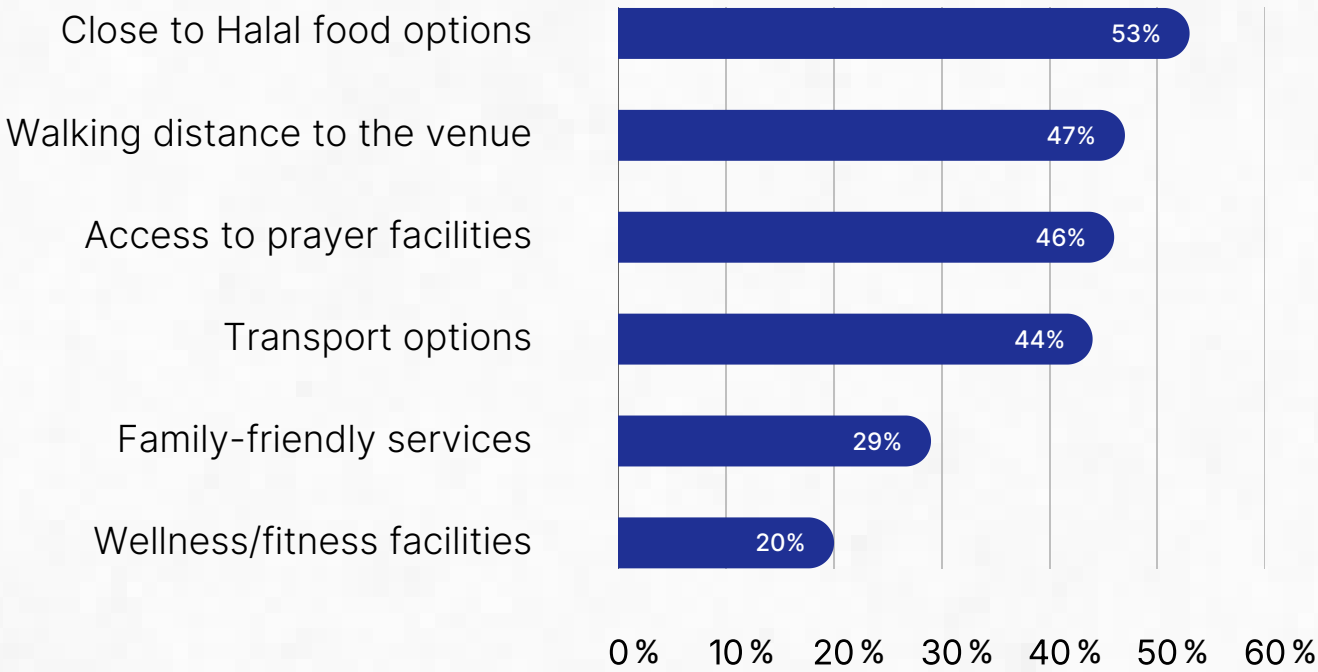
Step-free routes map • Accessible seating/toilets info • Assistance points • Quiet/rest areas • Venue accessibility guide



CONVENIENCE: BOOKING & STAY CHOICES

WHERE TRAVELERS BOOK TICKETS, WHERE THEY STAY, AND WHAT THEY NEED NEARBY TO COMMIT

TOP ACCOMMODATION PRIORITIES
(NEAR EVENT VENUES)

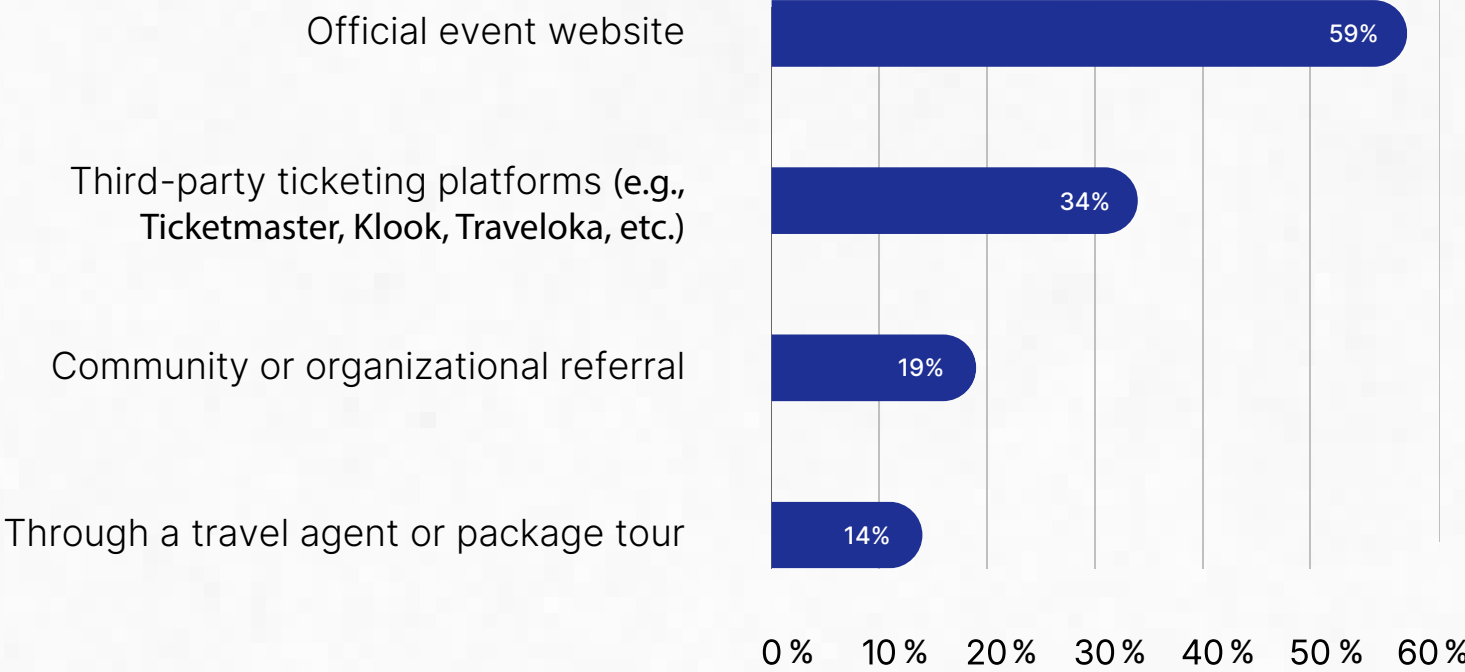


Muslim-friendly isn't optional in lodging choice.

Ticket purchasing must be straightforward and reliable. Most respondents prefer buying through official event websites, which are perceived as the most trusted source of ticket access and accurate event information. Reputable third-party platforms also play a role for convenience and availability, while community or organisational referrals help guide decisions through trusted networks.

Accommodation decisions are driven by proximity and reduced friction. Travelers prioritise staying near the venue and transport links to minimise travel time and fatigue, enabling them to focus on the event itself. For Muslim travelers, convenience is strengthened when accommodation also supports easy access to Halal dining and prayer facilities, making the trip feel feasible before booking.

PREFERRED TICKET CHANNELS
(TRUST & CONVENIENCE)



Trust beats convenience at ticketing.

PROOF TO SHOW BEFORE BOOKING

- Official ticket link
- Seating/entry rules
- Hotel-to-venue travel time
- Nearby Halal options
- Prayer access map
- Payment options

SO WHAT FOR DESTINATIONS



Link social discovery to official ticket pathways



Package stays around walkability + transport



Make Halal food/prayer info visible on hotel and event pages

Proximity is the decision driver

82% of sports travelers say staying near the event is very important.

ACCOMMODATION CHOICES



57%

57% choose hotels (mid/upscale)



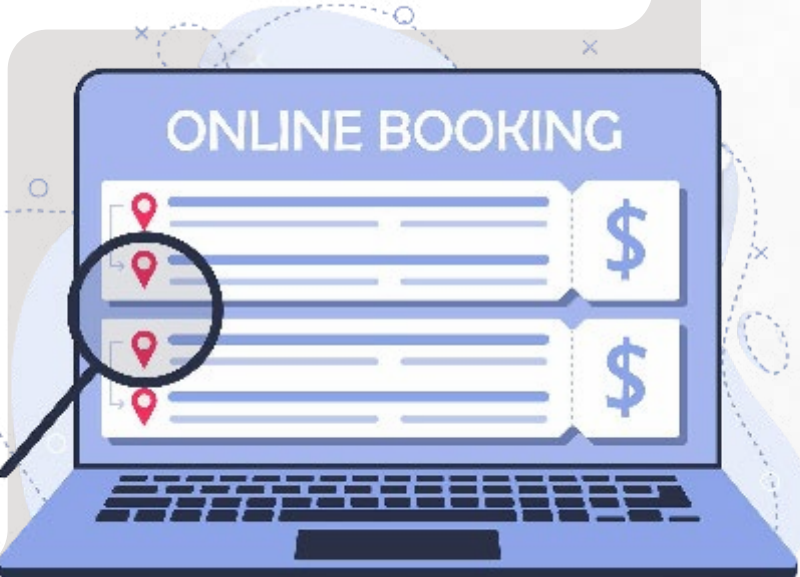
36%

choose budget hotels



20%

choose rental apartments



COST-EFFICIENCY DISTANCE & DURATION PREFERENCES

SPORTS TRIPS ARE SHORT, LOCAL-FIRST, AND BUDGET-CONSCIOUS, DESIGN FOR QUICK CONVERSION

Cost-efficiency plays a central role in how travelers decide on sport tourism. Most respondents weigh affordability against the desire to attend an event, making value-for-money a key driver of participation.

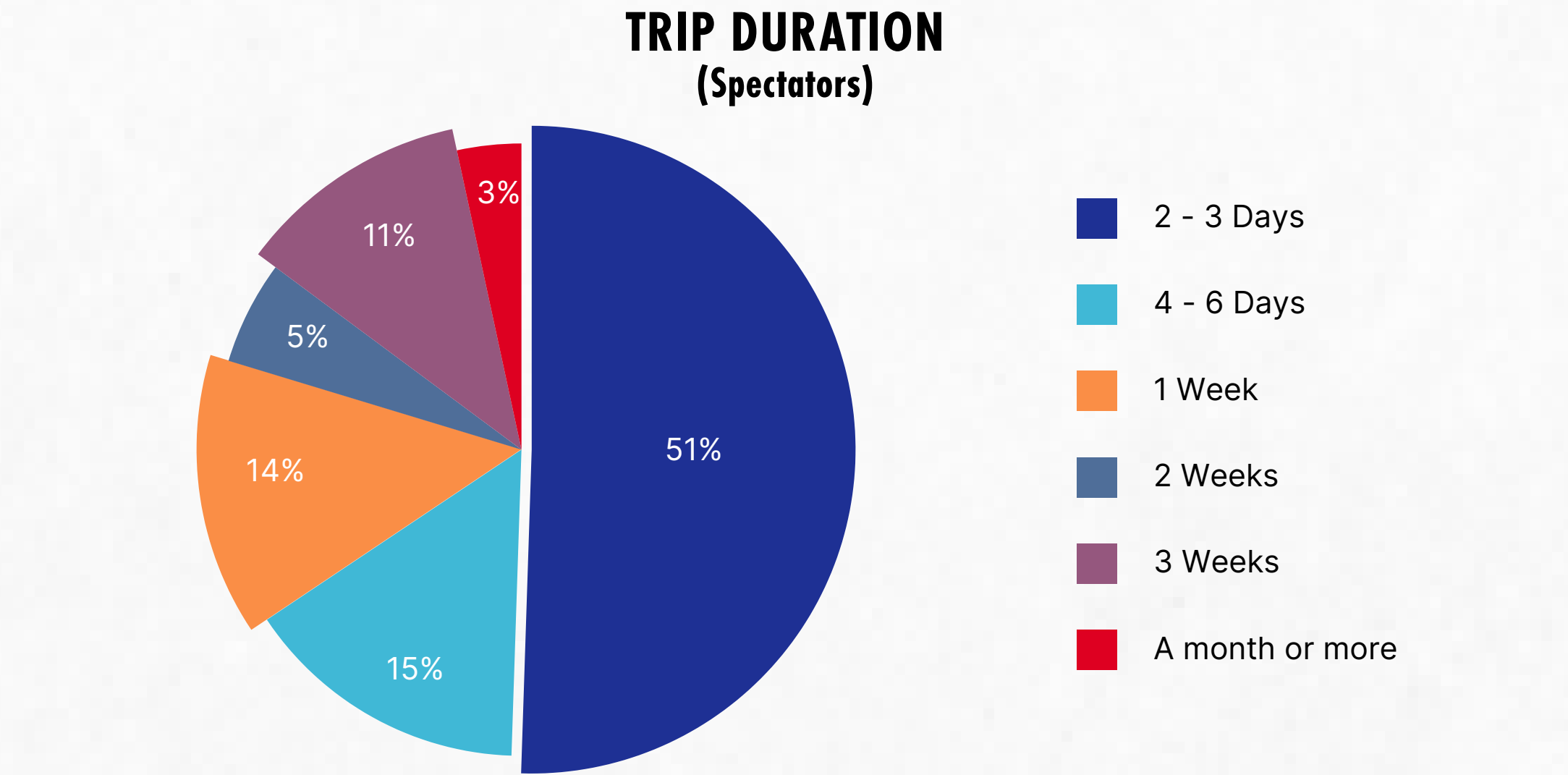
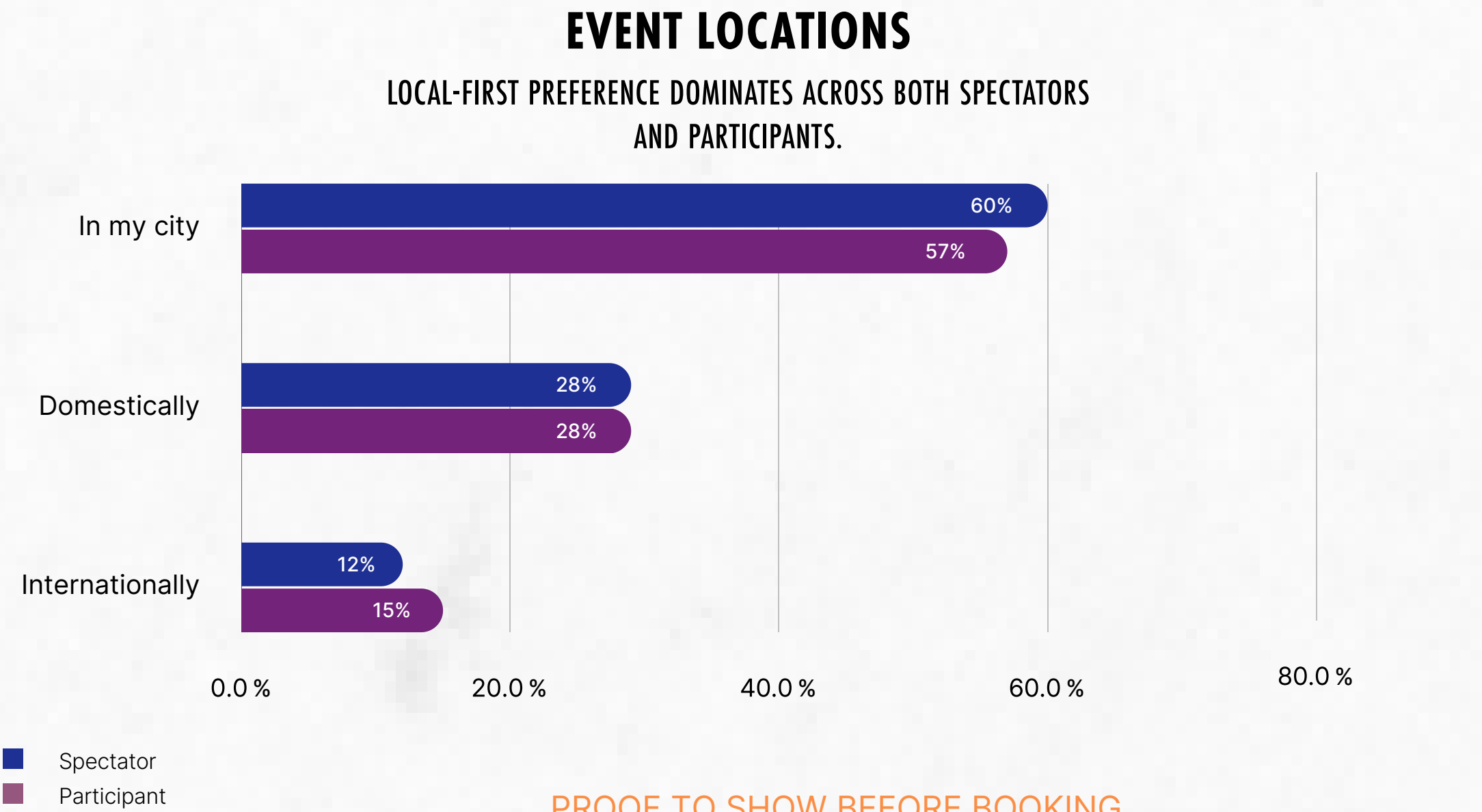
The data shows a clear proximity preference: travelers overwhelmingly choose events within their city, followed by domestic travel. International travel is a smaller share, and is more commonly associated with spectator-led trips, where the event itself justifies the higher cost.

KEY TAKEAWAY: Sports travel is local-first and short-stay — value is driven by proximity and time efficiency.

Trip duration reinforces the same pattern. Sports tourism is typically short and event-focused, with 51% willing to travel for 2–3 days, and far fewer considering extended stays. This means destinations win when they offer low-friction, high-clarity packages that fit a short window.

WHAT DESTINATIONS SHOULD DO

- Build 2–3 day itineraries**
(event + city highlights)
designed for quick planning
- Enable last-mile convenience** (venue
transport, walkability, clear
maps)
- Offer value bundles** (tickets
+ transport + nearby stay)
with transparent pricing
- For international
spectators: provide
confidence packs** (visas,
payment options, Halal/
prayer info)



PROOF TO SHOW BEFORE BOOKING

Total trip cost • 2–3 day suggested itinerary
• Venue access time • Ticket + transport bundle • Payment options

COST-EFFICIENCY: VALUE-FOR-MONEY PERCEPTIONS AND BUDGETING BEHAVIOUR

MOST TRIPS ARE UNDER USD 500, AND PAYMENT FLEXIBILITY IS A CONVERSION LEVER.

Spending patterns confirm a cost-conscious market. Nearly 60% of respondents are willing to spend below USD 500 for a sports event trip (including tickets, transport, and accommodation). This makes affordability and clear value a primary driver of attendance.

Payment behaviour reinforces the shift toward frictionless transactions. E-wallets and credit/debit cards lead as preferred methods, while QR payments also show some usage, especially across parts of Asia. Together, these signals highlight a simple truth: pricing and payment experience are not “back-end details”; they directly influence booking confidence.

What this means: Destinations and event ecosystems win when they offer transparent pricing, flexible payment options, and value-oriented bundles designed for short, event-focused trips.

WHAT DESTINATIONS SHOULD DO



Build under-USD 500 trip bundles (tickets + transport + stay options)

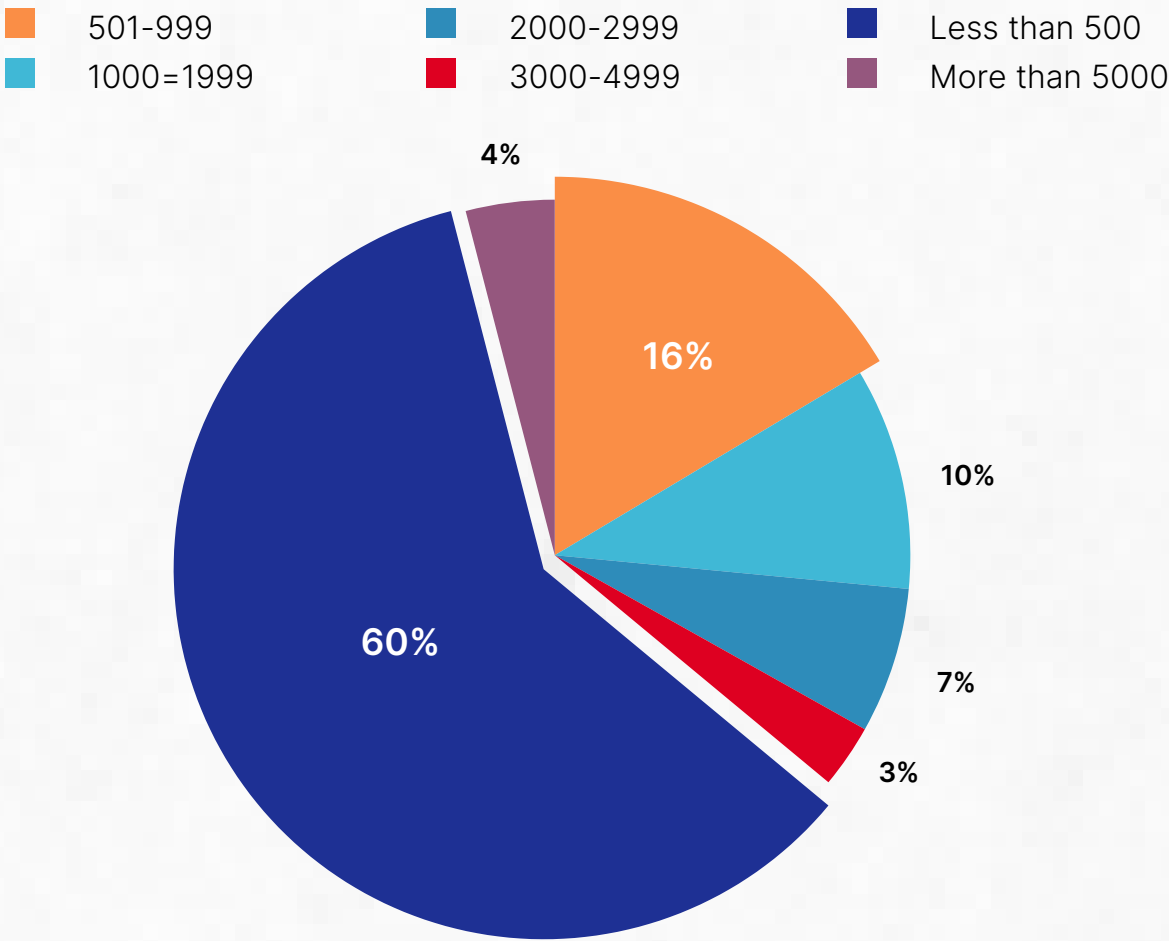


Offer multiple payment rails (e-wallets, cards, QR where relevant)



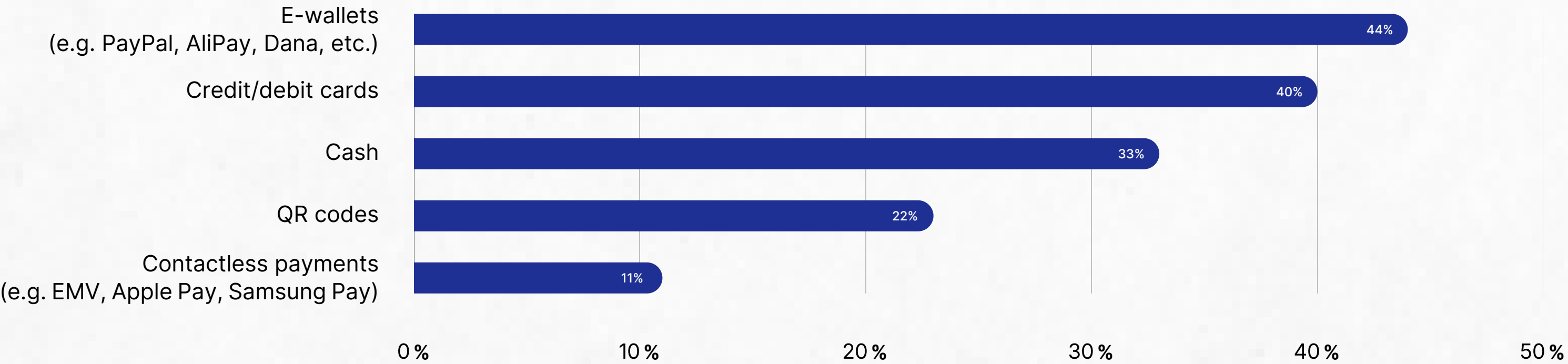
Make fees transparent (no surprise add-ons at checkout)

SPENDING (IN USD)



Total trip spend (tickets + transport + accommodation)

PAYMENT METHOD



PROOF TO SHOW BEFORE BOOKING

Total trip cost • What’s included • Payment options available • Refund policy • Any extra fees

COMMUNITY: DISCOVERY CHANNELS & SOCIAL PROOF

FROM SOCIAL BUZZ TO TRUSTED BOOKING PATHWAYS

Community shapes sports tourism because it influences discovery, credibility, and momentum. Whether traveling as spectators or participants, many Muslim travelers are guided by social proof, what they see, who they trust, and how clearly the trip feels feasible.

The Discovery:

Most travelers first hear about sports events through social media, making it the strongest driver of initial awareness. Trust is then reinforced through official event platforms and word-of-mouth from friends, family, and community networks.

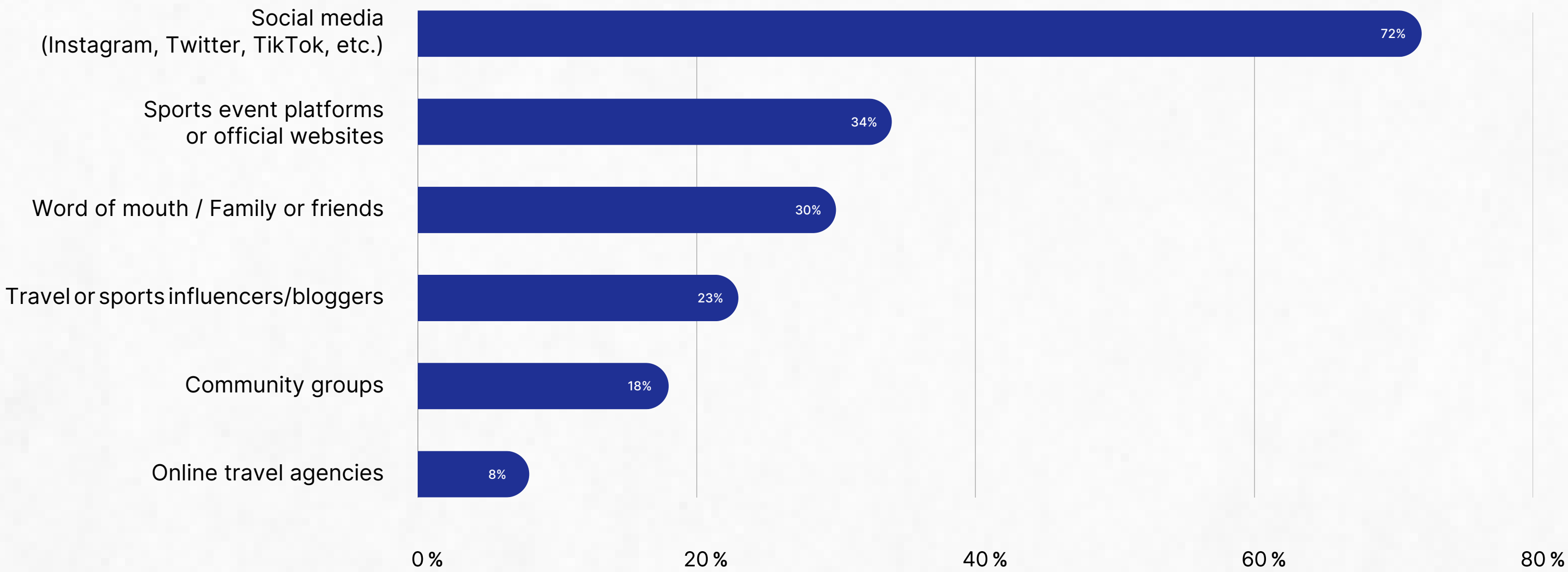
What this means: discovery is fast, but conversion depends on whether the next click provides credible details, schedules, ticket pathways, venue access, and Muslim-friendly essentials.

CONVERSION ACTION



Link social discovery to official ticket pathways and a single “event readiness” page (Halal food/prayer, transport, venue map, payment options).

TOP DISCOVERY CHANNELS



PROOF TO SHOW BEFORE BOOKING

- Official ticket link
- Event schedule
- Venue access map
- Halal food/prayer info
- Transport guidance
- Payment options

COMMUNITY: MOTIVATION & SOCIAL TRAVEL PATTERNS

WHY THEY ATTEND, AND WHO THEY TRAVEL WITH

The Motivation

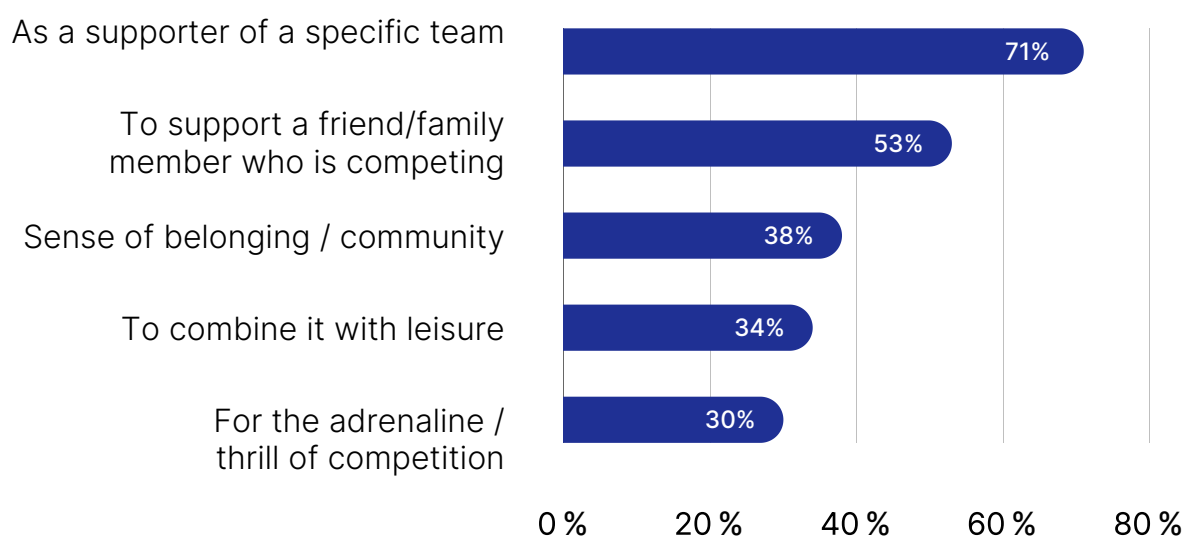
After discovery, travelers decide why the trip is worth it, and motivations differ by role. Participants are primarily driven by health, fitness, and personal achievement. Spectators are primarily driven by team loyalty and support for others, followed by the shared atmosphere.

Implication: Package and communicate experiences differently, participants need readiness for performance and recovery; spectators need confidence in tickets, schedules, and venue logistics.

PARTICIPANTS: WHY THEY JOIN



SPECTATORS: WHY THEY ATTEND

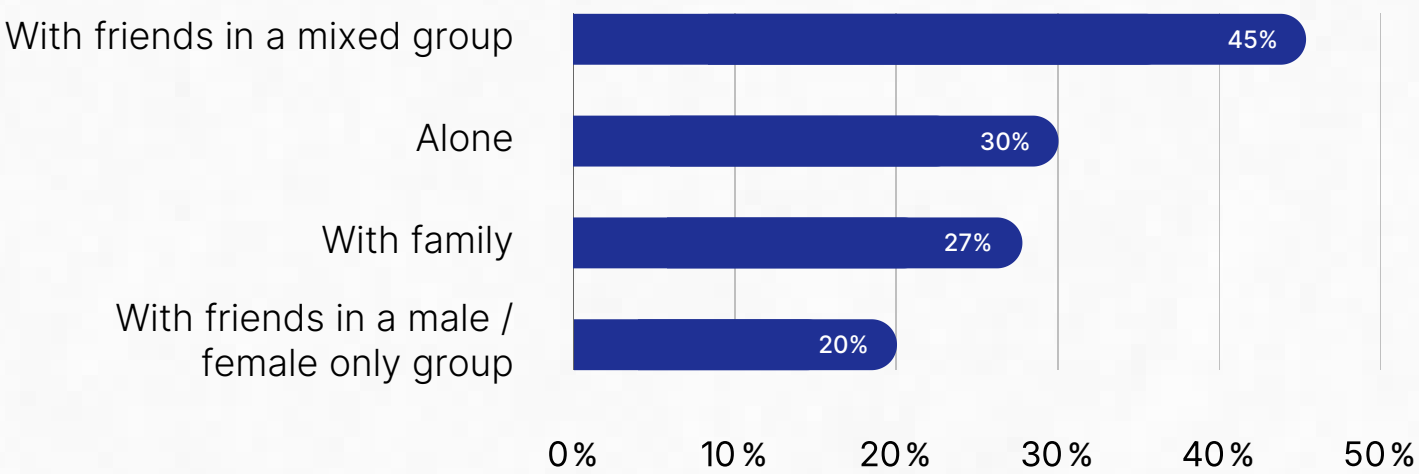


The Decision:

Most sports trips are social. Travelers commonly attend with friends in mixed groups, while solo travel also happens and should not be ignored. Family travel remains important, reinforcing the need for convenience and inclusive facilities.

Implication: Group-friendly planning tools (meeting points, seating guidance, transport coordination) directly reduce friction.

WHO THEY TRAVEL WITH



Stakeholders should align marketing and delivery to these drivers, using the right platforms, and making key proof points visible before booking.

PROOF TO SHOW BEFORE BOOKING

- Group seating info
- Meeting points
- Venue rules
- Transport plan
- Halal food/prayer access
- Safety & crowd readiness

Why this works: motivations create intent; proof removes friction.

COMFORTABILITY: FAITH-READY VENUE ESSENTIALS

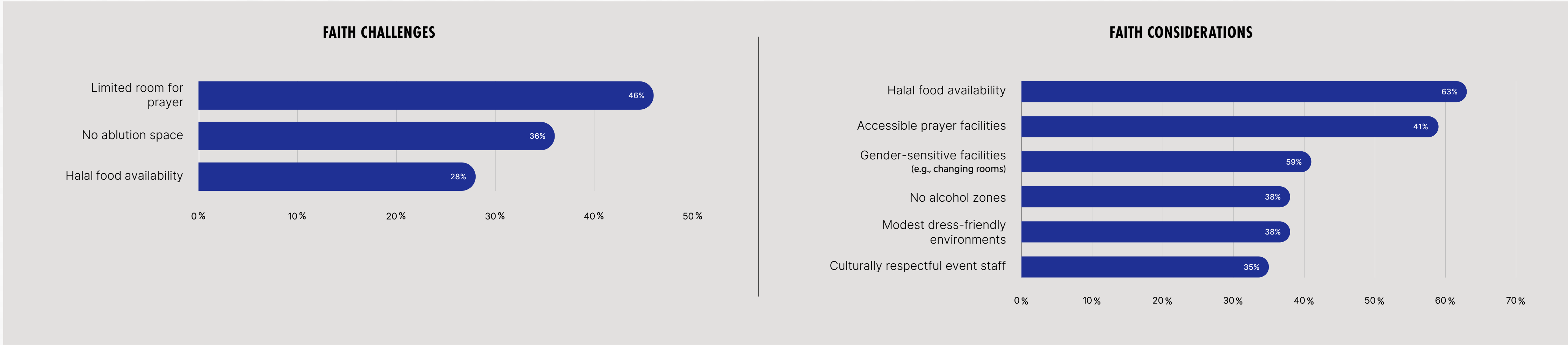
WHAT MUSLIM TRAVELERS NEED TO FEEL CONFIDENT, RESPECTED, AND ABLE TO PARTICIPATE

Comfortability is about enabling Muslim travelers to attend sports events without compromise, through faith-ready facilities, respectful environments, and clear assurance. The survey highlights strong importance placed on faith-aligned needs, shaping what travelers look for before committing to a sports trip.

In this segment, some main challenges they have faced includes lack of prayer rooms, Halal food, and a place for ablution. These three factors also encompass major considerations for Muslim-friendly tourism. With a more specific perspective of sports tourism, there’s quite a high demand for an environment that allows Muslims to dress modestly, a crucial part of making Muslims feel welcome at the sports venue. Having separated gender-specific facilities, no alcohol zones, and staff that are culturally aware is an added plus for Muslim sports travelers.

Temur Mirzaev, Tourism Expert & PhD Student

“Providing Muslim-friendly infrastructure is a must-have... simple provisions like Halal food options, prayer rooms... can make or break a traveler’s decision to attend an event.”



PROOF TO SHOW BEFORE BOOKING

- Halal food assurance (what & where)
- Prayer space location & hours
- Ablution-ready wash area
- Venue policies (alcohol/modesty)
- Staff support points

MINIMUM STANDARD (NON-NEGOTIABLES)

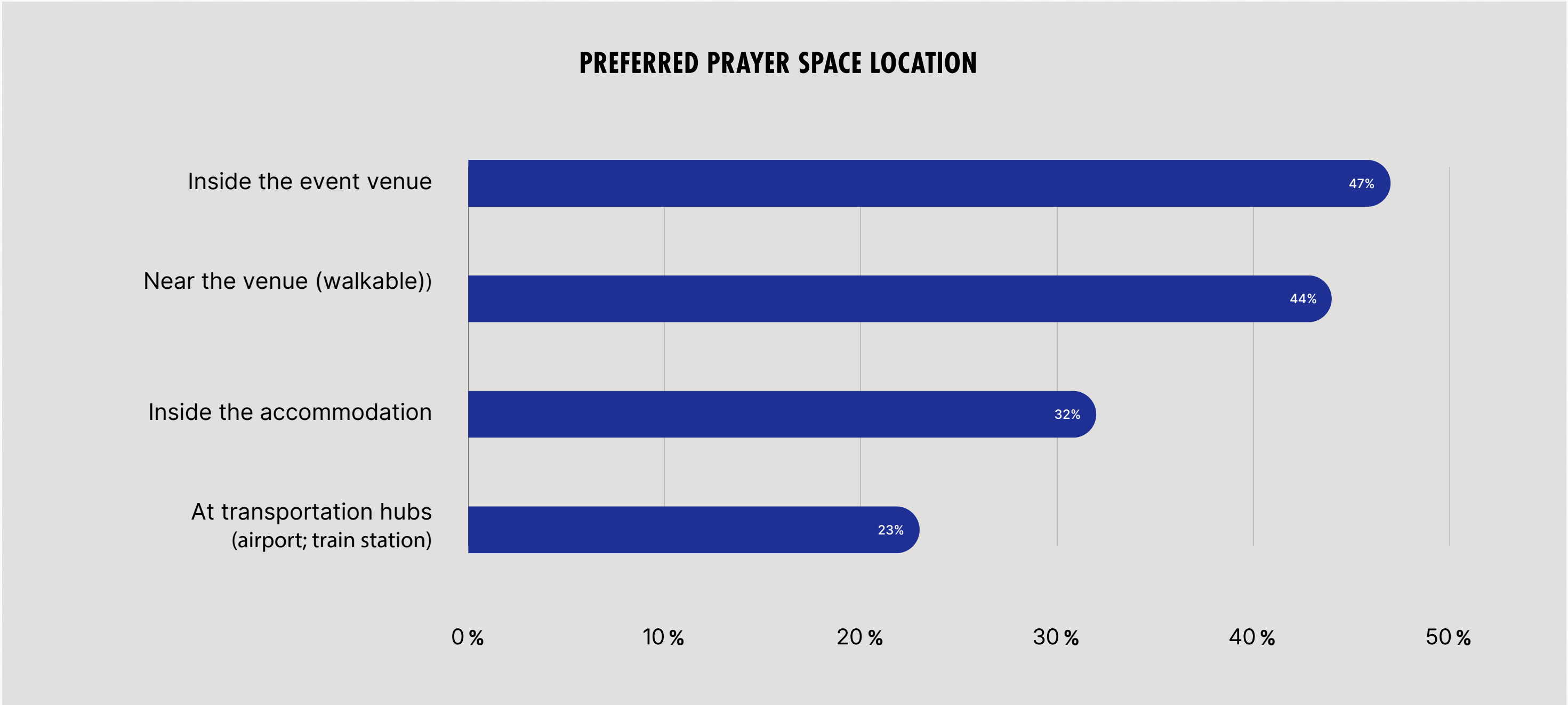
- Halal options
- Prayer space
- Ablution-friendly wash access
- Clear wayfinding

COMFORTABILITY: PRAYER-READY VENUES

EVENTS ARE LONG. PRAYER TIMING IS PREDICTABLE. READINESS SHOULD BE TOO

Sports events often overlap with mandatory prayer times. As a result, prayer readiness is not a “nice-to-have”, it determines whether Muslim travelers can attend with confidence. 87% of respondents consider prayer flexibility important when choosing sports events.

The preference is clear: travelers want prayer spaces inside the venue where possible, with nearby alternatives used as a secondary option. When venues cannot provide internal prayer rooms, clear guidance to nearby spaces (including within walking distance) becomes essential.



Rahmi, Sports Spectator

“Sports venues should have a proper prayer space and nearby wash facilities. When this isn’t available, people are forced to improvise, sometimes bringing their own prayer mats. Clear information and Halal food access also matter.”

MINIMUM PRAYER-READY STANDARD

- Dedicated prayer room • Clear signage • Nearby wash access
- Capacity planning for peak prayer times

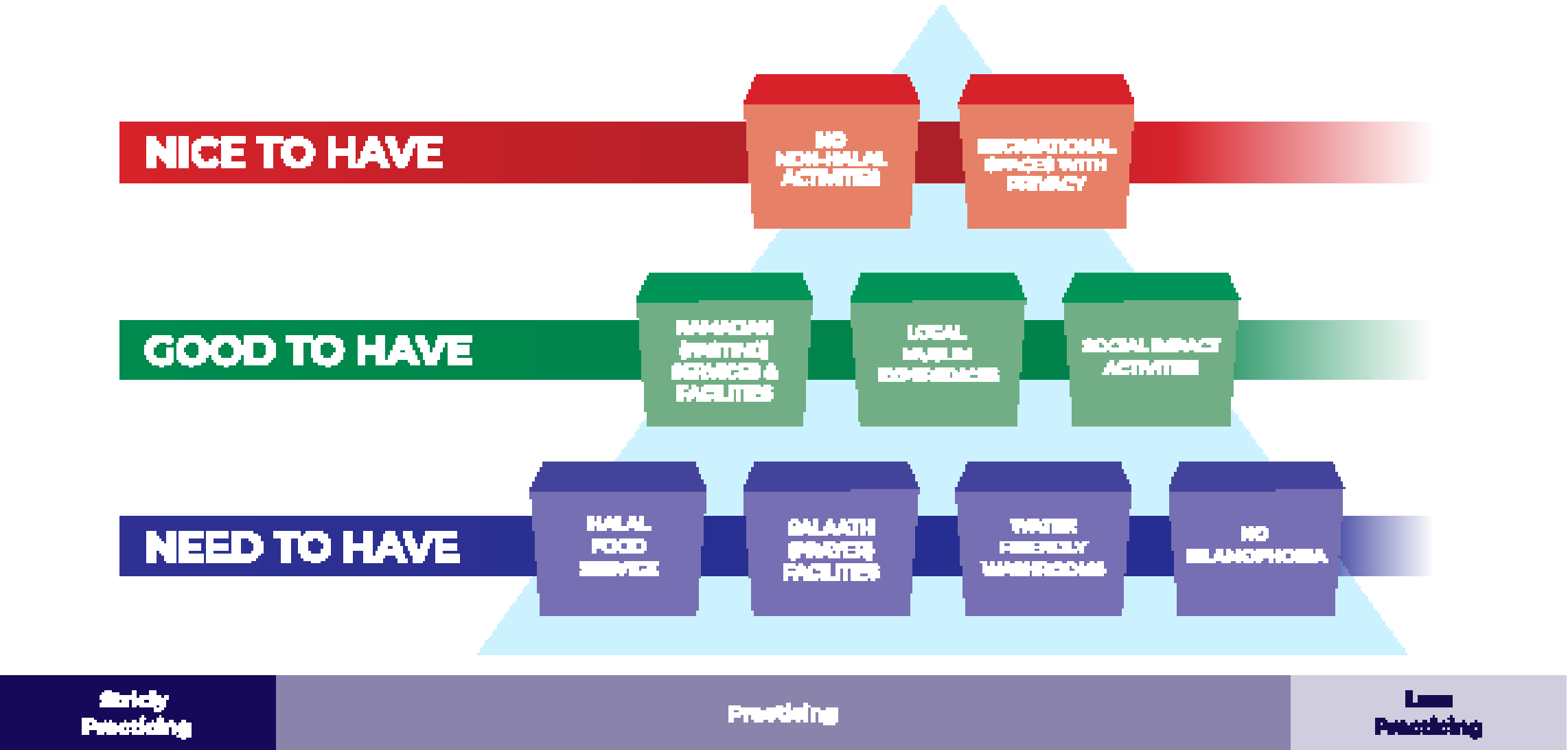
FAITH-BASED NEEDS IN SPORTS TOURISM-SAME MODEL

SPORTS-SPECIFIC EMPHASIS FOR SPECTATORS VS PARTICIPANTS

Sports Relevance Lens (S = Spectator | P = Participant)

CATEGORY	REQUIREMENT	S	P	REASON
NEED TO HAVE	Halal food service	●●●	●●●	Long event hours + on-site food dependency
	Salaath (prayer) facilities	●●●	●●●	Events overlap prayer times
	Water-friendly washrooms	●●●	●●●	Ablution readiness
	No Islamophobia	●●●	●●●	Safety + dignity across the event ecosystem
GOOD TO HAVE	Ramadan (fasting) services & facilities	●●	●●	Seasonal, but high impact when relevant
	Local Muslim experiences	●●	●	Spectators extend into city; participants have tighter schedules
	Social impact activities	●	●	Nice enhancer, not a blocker
NICE TO HAVE	No non-Halal activities	●●	●	More relevant in leisure-heavy packages
	Recreational spaces with privacy	●●	●●	Families/women/seniors; participants also value recovery privacy

Faith-Based Services Needs of Muslim Travelers



Nimrah Riaz, Founder, Siraat Strategies

“The most important thing is having proper prayer spaces... It’s something crucial and people really rely on. The second is Halal food options... inclusivity not only improves the experience but also drives repeat visits.”



05

**SPOTLIGHT: MEGA EVENTS & EMERGING
SPORTS TRAVEL TRENDS**

WHERE DEMAND IS ACCELERATING — AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR DESTINATIONS.

MEGA EVENT CASE: FIFA WORLD CUP QATAR 2022

WHAT THE WORLD SAW AND WHAT MUSLIM TRAVELERS NEEDED TO SEE TO COMMIT



WHAT MADE IT MUSLIM-INCLUSIVE

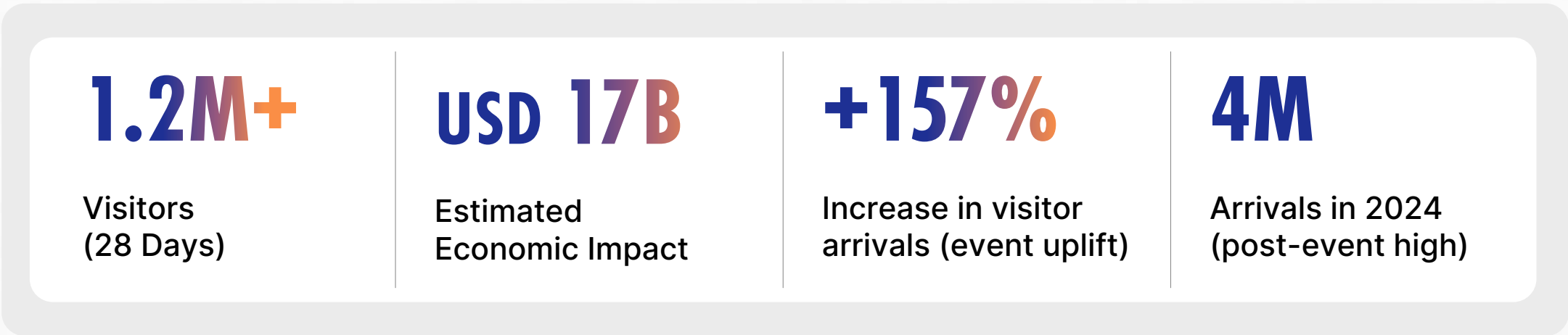
- Halal-aligned F&B standards
- Alcohol controlled via licensed venues
- Prayer integrated into the journey (calls to prayer + designated spaces)
- Modesty-respectful hospitality (spectator comfort)

A BENCHMARK FOR MUSLIM-INCLUSIVE MEGA EVENTS: FAITH-ALIGNED DELIVERY WITH GLOBAL APPEAL

Qatar hosted the FIFA World Cup 2022, welcoming over 1.2 million visitors across 28 days. The tournament generated an estimated USD 17 billion and delivered a 157% uplift in visitor arrivals, strengthening Qatar’s position as a global sports destination. Momentum continued beyond the event, with arrivals reaching an all-time high of 4 million in 2024, supported by sustained investment in infrastructure, accommodation, and hospitality.

Beyond scale, Qatar demonstrated that a mega event can be globally compelling and culturally aligned. Food and beverage offerings complied with national health and Halal standards, while alcohol availability was managed through licensed venues. Muslim-friendly elements were integrated into the spectator journey, including calls to prayer, designated prayer areas, and modesty-respectful hospitality arrangements.

Qatar’s benchmark lesson: Muslim-inclusive design works when it is built into the operating model, and when proof is visible, consistent, and easy to trust.



WHAT DESTINATIONS CAN COPY

- Make faith essentials visible before booking (Halal food, prayer and venue policies)
- Design inclusion into venue operations (not as PR)
- Treat cultural authenticity as a brand asset, not a constraint

MEGA EVENT CASE: SINGAPORE GRAND PRIX (F1 NIGHT RACE)

A GLOBAL FLAGSHIP EVENT, AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN INCLUSION



Singapore has hosted the Formula One Singapore Grand Prix at the Marina Bay Circuit since 2008, a flagship mega event and the world’s first F1 night race. With around 250,000 attendees annually across the three-day weekend, the event has generated over USD 1.6 billion in tourism receipts from 2008–2024, with strong spillovers to local industries through Singapore-based suppliers and subcontractors. The Grand Prix week also anchors high-value business events clustered around the race period.

From a Muslim-friendly lens, prayer options exist in nearby facilities outside the venue, and Halal dining is available in surrounding areas. However, Halal options within the venue could be further expanded. Given that half of attendees are locals and Muslims are a significant segment of Singapore’s population, future editions can strengthen inclusion by establishing prayer access and ensuring expanded Halal availability within the venue, making the experience smoother for domestic and international Muslim visitors.

MUSLIM-FRIENDLY READINESS

What exists today

- Prayer options available nearby (outside venue)
- Halal dining available around Marina Bay area



Where proof breaks

- Inside-venue Halal food availability is limited vs demand
- “Nearby prayer” creates friction during tight event schedule



WHAT DESTINATIONS CAN COPY



Prayer-ready access inside (or immediately at) the venue + clear wayfinding



Expanded Halal food options within the venue (not only outside) with simple assurance cues



One official “Muslim-friendly event guide” (Halalfood/prayer map, transport, schedules, payment options)

Since 2008 — Marina Bay Circuit (first F1 night race)

~250,000

attendees annually (3-day weekend)

USD 1.6B+

tourism receipts (2008–2024)

High-value spillover to local suppliers + business events



crescent rating

FOREWORD

SPORTS TOURISM NOW

HOW MUSLIM TRAVELERS CHOOSE SPORT TRIPS

UNDERSTANDING WHAT CONVERTS

MEGA EVENTS & EMERGING SPORT TRAVEL TRENDS

EXPERT INSIGHTS

THE DELIVERY PLAYBOOK

METHODOLOGY & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SOCCER + CRICKET: THE TWO HIGHEST-RETURN PLAYS

THE TWO SPORTS WITH THE FASTEST COMMERCIAL IMPACT FROM MUSLIM-FRIENDLY READINESS

CRICKET

Cricket is widely popular and has a strong association with with large Muslim populations particularly South Asia, such as India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

Key Drivers:

- Multi-hour format: Matches last several hours or multiple sessions.
- Family attendance: typically attended by families.
- Food & Beverages Intensity: Extended match duration increases food and beverage consumption.

The combination of these key drivers significantly increase per-capita and per-visit spending, making cricket one of the highest-value spectator sport for muslim tourism.

SOCCER

Soccer has been the world’s most popular sport for over a century, and its global reach and cultural influence make it a major draw for international travel among diverse communities, including Muslim travellers.

Key Drivers:

- Global accessibility: Soccer is played and watched worldwide.
- Diaspora identity: Fans often support clubs linked to their roots.
- Club loyalty program: Structured fan memberships and rewards.
- Frequent fixtures: Matches are held regularly throughout the year.

The combination of these key drivers shape Muslim travel behaviour, positioning soccer as a highly popular sport and a key driver of repeatable travel.



Alcohol Free Stand - The Ashes in Australia

During major cricket events, such as The Ashes in Australia, selected venues offer a designated alcohol-free seating area. These dry sections enhance inclusivity by allowing Muslim travellers and families to attend matches comfortably while accommodating faith-sensitive consideration.



Ramadan Iftar Practice - English Premier League

Since 2021, the English Premier League (EPL) has implemented an agreement allowing Muslim players and match officials to break their fast (Iftar) during games at a natural pause in play. This practice reflects a growing inclusivity and wider cultural awareness, reinforcing the league’s commitment to accommodate faith-based needs for players, staff, and travelling spectators.

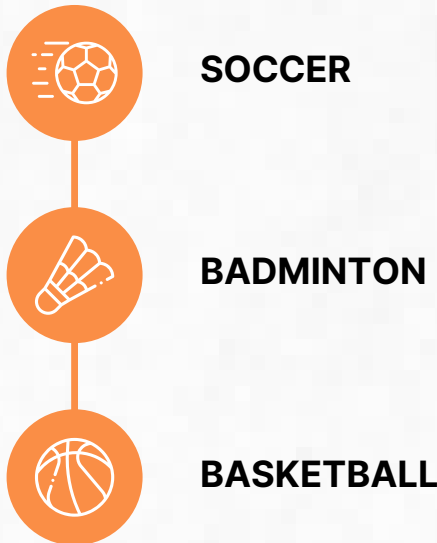


UNDERSTANDING SPORTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

A LOOK INTO TRENDS AND NEWS WITHIN THE REGION

TOP 3 SPECTATORS SPORTS

IN OUR SAMPLE RESPONDANTS



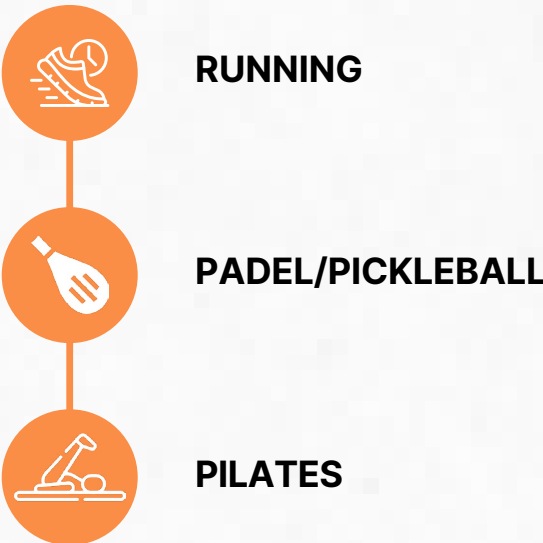
TOP 3 PARTICIPANTS SPORTS

IN OUR SAMPLE RESPONDANTS



POPULAR TRENDS

IN OUR SAMPLE RESPONDANTS



Southeast Asia is home to the largest Muslim population in the world, at around 280 million. Muslim-friendly accommodation is adequate due to high regional tourism demands, but there is room for improvement in sports travel.

Southeast Asia has been long-standing avid fan of racket sports, the most popular being badminton. The relative simplicity of the equipment and players needed along with the abundance/availability of playing fields contribute to the large following of fans who enjoy both playing and watching the sport. Similarly, this trend has also translated into current hot topic racket sports such as padel, tennis, and pickleball.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 45th Asian Cycling Confederation, 25-31 March 2026, Philippines
- AIA HYROX Singapore, 3-5 April 2026, Singapore
- 2026 ASEAN Championship, 24 July - 26 August
- Singapore Grand Prix 2026, 9-11 October 2026, Singapore
- Standard Chartered Marathon, October - December, Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore
- Amazing Thailand Marathon, November 2026, Thailand
- SEA Plus Youth Games, kick-off in late 2027 to early 2028, Philippines

MUSLIM-FRIENDLY HIGHLIGHTS

- Official partner hotels included dedicated Halal-certified food stations and prayer corners to support Muslim athletes during SEA Games 2022 in Hanoi, Vietnam.
- Jakarta International Marathon (JAKIM) 2025 paused race timings and provided makeshift tents beside the road course to allow Muslim participants to perform obligatory prayers.
- Malaysian sports venues are built with Halal food access, prayer rooms, and ablution facilities, making the destination ready to host for events like the Islamic Solidarity Championships (ISC) 2029.

EMERGING TREND: THE RISE OF ESPORTS TOURISM

A YOUTH-LED, DIGITAL-FIRST SPORTS TRAVEL ENGINE, WHERE PROOF IS MOSTLY ONLINE



Why esports drives travel

- Event “weekends” + fan meetups create travel peaks
- Hybrid attendance (in-person + digital) expands reach
- Strong clustering with city experiences and nightlife economies



Destination readiness priorities

- Purpose-built venues + reliable connectivity
- Seamless digital ticketing + payment options
- Crowd flow, security, and operational excellence



Muslim-friendly relevance in esports

- Clear Halal food options (especially for long sessions)
- Prayer-ready access (on-site or walkable) with clear guidance



Esports may not be rooted in physical athletics, but it mirrors the competitive structure, fan culture, and global reach of traditional sports, and it is increasingly driving event-led travel. What began as niche gaming has scaled into a global phenomenon, powered by the wider gaming economy and professionalized leagues. Industry estimates point to 3.4 billion gamers worldwide and 577.2 million esports spectators in 2024, with global games revenue projected to reach \$188 billion in 2025.

Major tournaments now generate stadium-sized audiences alongside online viewership comparable to leading sports broadcasts. Events such as the Esports World Cup 2025 in Riyadh reportedly drew 3 million attendees over seven weeks, signaling the emergence of esports as a serious tourism catalyst. Sponsors, broadcasters, and organizers are deepening investment, while regions including the Middle East, Asia, and North America are building esports hubs to support national tourism growth. Saudi Arabia’s National Gaming and Esports Strategy reflects this ambition, positioning the country to host the world’s most-watched esports events by 2030.

For destinations, esports is a strategic pathway to attract digitally native, youth-driven travel markets. Success depends on more than venues and bandwidth: it requires a well-managed, inclusive event environment and clear, credible information that reduces friction in planning and attendance.

Market Momentum (big-number tiles)



PADEL & PICKLEBALL: THE NEW SPORTS TOURISM FLYWHEEL

LOW BARRIER, HIGH COMMUNITY ENERGY, FAST-GROWING EVENT FORMATS



Padel and pickleball are emerging as two of the most travel-friendly sports formats. They require minimal equipment, have a low learning curve, and are naturally social, making them ideal for weekend breaks, group travel, and destination-led leagues and festivals. Unlike mega events that peak once, these sports create repeatable demand through frequent tournaments, clubs, and community-driven participation.

WHAT DESTINATIONS CAN DO NEXT



Host signature weekend tournaments (padel/pickleball festival format)



Bundle “Play + Stay” packages (hotel + court time + transport + Halal guide)



Build community flywheels (leagues, women’s sessions, corporate games, influencer-friendly content)

Why They’re Taking Off

- Low barrier to entry: beginner-friendly and fast to pick up
- Social by design: doubles formats drive group participation
- Urban-friendly: fits into cities, resorts, and mixed-use developments
- Event-ready: easy to host clinics, leagues, corporate games, and festivals

How They Generate Travel

- Weekend tournament travel: short, purpose-driven trips (2–3 days)
- Club-to-club travel: friendly matches, ladders, and intercity leagues
- Resort + sport bundles: training sessions + leisure extensions
- Multi-generational appeal: youth, couples, families, and active seniors

Muslim-Friendly Relevance

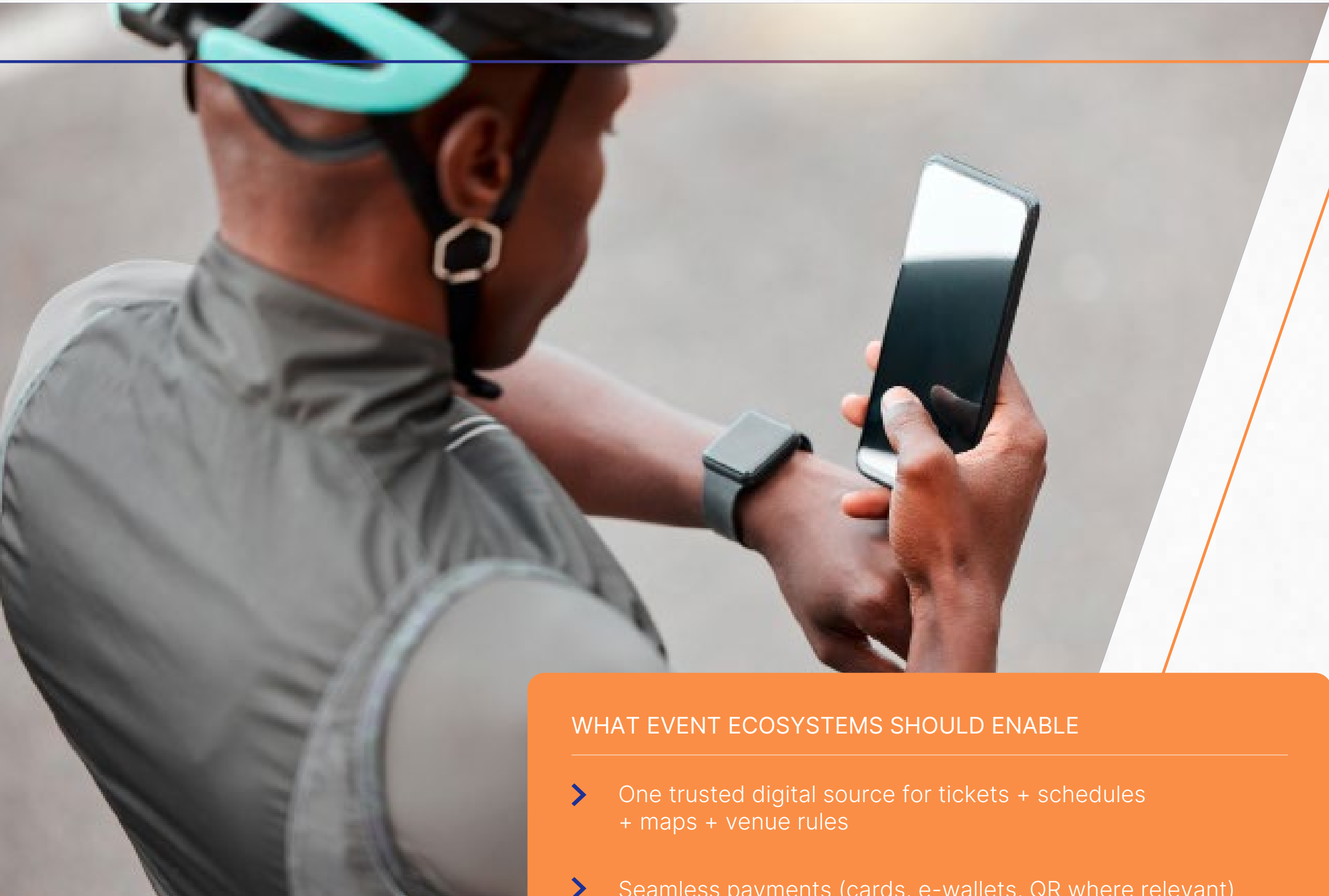
- Comfort & modesty: privacy-respectful changing areas, clear facility guidance
- Prayer-ready scheduling: info on nearby prayer spaces + time-friendly breaks
- Halal food availability: on-site or walkable options for long play days
- Women’s participation: female-friendly sessions, safe environments, inclusive coaching

PROOF TO SHOW BEFORE BOOKING

- Court access & schedule • Tournament format • Coaching availability
- Prayer access map • Halal food options nearby/on-site • Changing facilities • Payment options

TREND: THE “SUPER APP” EVENT EXPERIENCE

WHEN TICKETING, MOBILITY, PAYMENTS, AND PROOF LIVE IN ONE PLACE, BOOKINGS RISE



Digital tools are reshaping how travelers plan and experience sports tourism, especially for mega events where complexity can easily turn into friction. Integrated mobile platforms are becoming the new standard, combining multiple touchpoints into a single interface. Examples include the Olympic Games app (ticketing, mobility guidance, venue navigation, real-time updates), the Formula 1 app (circuit maps, highlights, fan zone information), and Qatar’s Hayya platform for the 2022 World Cup, which extended into e-visa processing, accommodation support, SIM connectivity, and transport access.

Beyond logistics, digital engagement is also changing how sports communities form. Fans, athletes, and creators interact beyond the event itself, turning tournaments into shared cultural moments driven by identity, belonging, and participation — amplified through social platforms and real-time content.

For destinations and organizers, the message is simple: digital is not an add-on. Integrated apps, trusted payment rails, and reliable online information collectively reduce uncertainty and increase confidence, helping convert intent into attendance.

WHAT EVENT ECOSYSTEMS SHOULD ENABLE

- > One trusted digital source for tickets + schedules + maps + venue rules
- > Seamless payments (cards, e-wallets, QR where relevant)
- > “Proof points” embedded in the flow (Halal food prayer access, accessibility, safety guidance)

Faras Ghani, Editor, Al Jazeera

“Technology has contributed significantly in shaping modern sport tourism... For example, in Qatar, the Hayya app was used as a one-stop shop for visas, match tickets, and others. It’s a convenient one-stop system that travelers rely on.”



06

|

EXPERTS INSIGHTS



NIMRAH RIAZ

Founder, CEO of Siraat Strategies

Based in Texas, USA, Nimrah has spent the past few years working with major sports organizations like NBA, NFL, MLS, and FIFA to create more Muslim-friendly spaces at games. She focuses on bridging sports and the Muslim community, improving inclusivity through initiatives such as access to prayer areas, Halal food, and community events.

How do you see the growth of sports tourism in the Americas compared to other regions?

Sports tourism is definitely growing, especially in Muslim-majority environments. The experiences are improving, and with more Muslim athletes becoming visible, there’s a stronger pull for people to come and support them. In places like the U.S., they also recognize the value of using sports to bring people in and after major events like FIFA, many of these regions now see sports tourism as a rising trend.



What trends do you think will shape the sports tourism industry over the next 5–10 years?

FIFA will continue to play a major role. They’re running more youth clinics and pushing initiatives to introduce the sport and the momentum is only growing. In the Muslim community, golf is also becoming more popular, particularly among Muslim women, since it does not require special attire. While baseball isn’t big among Muslim travelers yet, they will gain more traction over the next decade.



Have you noticed any shift in how sports events are positioned as entertainment and lifestyle experiences rather than purely athletics competitions?

Definitely. Sports are increasingly functioning as celebrity-driven platforms where fans connect with athletes beyond the sport itself. Athletes influence social conversations, from charity to social issues, which shapes fan engagement and adds emotional depth outside just the event.



What role does technology play in shaping modern sports tourism?

Social media plays a big part in how people discover and get excited about events. Once a post goes up, it creates excitement and people share it quickly with their networks. Professional teams and athletes are using these platforms to promote community events, showing a shift where Muslim audiences are more visible and actively considered in sports-related outreach.



How important is inclusivity, particularly Muslim-friendly infrastructure, in sustaining sports tourism growth?

It’s very important. Muslims have always attended major sports events, but creating Muslim-friendly spaces makes a big difference. It raises awareness, encourages friends and families to join, and ensures people have a good time. When they feel comfortable, they’re more likely to come back, spend more, and even buy merchandise. Inclusivity not only improves the experience but also drives repeat visits and wider participation.



Which elements matter most for creating an inclusive experience?

The most important thing is having proper prayer spaces, especially during evening or long-duration games. It’s something crucial and people really rely on. The second is Halal food options, allowing fans a proper meal during the games without compromising their religious needs.



Are there particular challenges faced by Muslim athletes and sports spectators in the U.S.?

At the professional level, most male athletes face few barriers. At the collegiate level, there is increasing acceptance for hijab-wearing athletes. For spectators coming to the U.S., strict border controls can make it difficult for international Muslim visitors to attend events, and without policy changes, this may discourage global visitors.

What has the Muslim community been advocating for in sports, whether as spectators or athletes?

From what I've seen, the Muslim community has been asking for more visibility and awareness. Representation also matters as more diversity across teams and leagues helps people feel seen. For example, the NBA recognizes Asian America, Hispanic, and Filipino heritage months, but there weren't anything yet for Muslims, so I helped introduce that. At the top level, it's about recognizing the value of this community and building more responsibility to create more diverse teams across diverse leagues.

Are there particular challenges faced by Muslim athletes and sports spectators in the U.S.?

As Muslims in a non-Muslim country, we are open to any space that feels welcoming. When they have an environment where they feel accepted, whether it's physical space or the overall atmosphere, they're more likely to get involved. That sense of inclusion is what helps build a stronger identity and belonging within these sports communities.

In what ways do you think the Americas can position themselves as leaders in sports tourism while addressing the needs of Muslim travelers?

A few years ago, I would've said the U.S. had strong potential, but recent conditions have made travel less straightforward for many visitors. Even so, Americans enjoy attending sports events. For international Muslim travelers, clearer and more welcoming policies would help. With FIFA coming up, I'm interested to see how things develop and how the region adapts to support global audiences.





FARAS GHANI

Editor and Media Trainer - Al Jazeera Media Network

Based in Qatar, he has spent two decades shaping global news coverage while helping strengthen the bridge between journalism, communities and digital storytelling. As a Digital News Editor at Al Jazeera English, he leads teams covering global news and events.

How do you see the growth of sports tourism in the Middle East?

Sport tourism in the Middle East has grown significantly, especially in the lead up to the Qatar World Cup. The region now hosts numerous sport events, such as boxing, football, tennis, Formula One, MMA, and more. Over the last 6-8 years, it has invested heavily in infrastructure, ranging from venues, hotels, malls, highways; and now relies on continued major sporting events to utilize these facilities. Therefore, in terms of economy, there has been a shift from oil dependence toward tourism diversification, which has attracted visitors especially from Asia in general and Southeast Asia. Moreover, the growing number of major sport events held in the Middle East has helped increase global cultural awareness, allowing visitors to better understand the region’s traditions, religions, and overall way of life.



What trends do you think will shape the sports tourism industry over the next 5–10 years?

Sports tourism is expanding globally and contributes around 10% of tourism according to a recent report, and is growing 8% annually. Regional investments, sponsorships, and major events support this growth. Traditionally, the global sports landscape has been dominated by Western countries, and major events were often associated with Western culture and norms. However, with destinations like UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and even Oman, hosting international tournaments, the industry is becoming more diversified. These events show that sports can be experienced and celebrated through many cultural lenses. Countries across the Middle East are now investing in sports infrastructure and major events, positioning themselves for a long-term role in global sports.



Have you noticed any shift in how sports events are positioned as entertainment and lifestyle experiences rather than purely athletics competitions?

Yes. Organisers are offering an experience-based event instead of just event-based. Fans no longer attend just for the match, they came for the whole experience. For example, in Abu Dhabi, events like Formula 1 are packaged as multi-day experiences. Other countries too add on events, such as concerts, cultural venues, food festivals, fireworks, and leisure attractions around the venue. This extends visitor stays, boosts spending, and encourages repeat visits. The shift also benefits the host countries by enhancing economic impact and creating fuller, more memorable visitor experiences. So this means that, offering more than just the sport helps destinations build loyalty and appeal to wider audiences.



What role does technology play in shaping modern sports tourism?

Technology has contributed significantly in shaping modern sport tourism, especially in terms of convenience and publicity. For example, in Qatar, there is an app called Hayya, which has been used a one-stop shop for visas, match tickets, and others. Other apps and websites’ visitor experience also includes stadium seat views, entertainment options, and even 360° visuals into one platform in just one application. With this, travelers, no longer rely on travel agents, or to juggle between apps and platform. It’s a convenient one-stop system. The role of Influencers and digital media also helps promote the events globally.



How important is inclusivity, particularly Muslim-friendly infrastructure, in sustaining sports tourism growth?

It is very important. Inclusivity is growing, even if slowly. Many venues around the world, including the United Kingdom, have prayer rooms, though the implementation is still a bit inconsistent. You also see iftar breaks in the middle of matches, something that is very recent and very much welcomed. Awareness about Muslim practices is also increasing worldwide, improving the overall experience in many sectors. And this has also not impacted the Muslim community only, but also good for the businesses side to introduce a more faith-aligned options. So in general, inclusive environments not only support Muslim travelers but also contribute to the whole sport tourism industry in general.

Do you think inclusive sports tourism experiences matter for Muslims when choosing to attend events?

Definitely. Especially when Muslims are now expressing their religion more; a lot of travelers also prioritize spaces where they can comfortably practice their religion (e.g: with praying areas, Halal-food, etc). The impact of this is for example, women from across the world now attend sport events comfortably. There is a greater awareness of the Muslim community than there was 15 years ago and this has improved the overall experiences of Muslim travelers on a sport events.

Do you think accessibility for people with disabilities has improved?

As for now, efforts toward this exist but remain insufficient. Organizers and facilitators tend to focus mainly on physical access but overlook other issues such as noise level and crowds. Not to mention, practical barriers remain, such as distant parking, access to disabled toilets, queuing up for refreshments, and more. Improving these aspects wouldn't just support individuals with disabilities, it would also benefit organizers, as better accessibility can increase overall participation.

How do we improve sports tourism, for Muslims and the general public?

It's the whole package. A successful sport tourism event offers full convenient and inclusive experience. For example, Qatar's World Cup was successful because the stadiums were close together, and people didn't have to spend extra costs for transportation or to book another hotel. Other things to provide are also safer environment for everyone (e.g: for solo-travelers, women travelers, the staff, and more); religious-friendly facilities, not only for Muslims but also for other religions; and to accommodate the needs of people who aren't interested in sport as well when sports events are happening (e.g: leisure activities, tourism spots, and more). Overall, creating a more inclusive and accommodating environment would benefit the sport tourism industry as it will attract more diverse attendants from around the world.





TEMUR MIRZAEV

Tourism Expert, PhD student in communication focusing on Sport and Tourism diplomacy

Based in Uzbekistan, he is the CEO of TourismLab and a PhD student in Communication, specializing in sport and tourism diplomacy. With expertise in marketing, promotion, and sports events, his work focuses on leveraging tourism as a strategic tool for international engagement, destination branding, and cross-cultural collaboration.

What trends do you think will shape the sports tourism industry over the next 5–10 years?

Several key trends are poised to shape sports tourism in the coming decade, including the blurring of lines between sports, entertainment, and travel, where sports events are increasingly packaged with festivals, concerts, and cultural experiences. There are more emerging markets bidding for big events as hosting sports tournaments is now a proven way to boost a nation’s profile and tourism. Additionally, technology-driven fan engagement will shape how people choose which events to attend. Finally, inclusivity and customized experiences will be important, as destinations that cater to diverse groups will have an edge in repeat travelers over the next 5–10 years.

Have you noticed any shift in how sports events are positioned as entertainment and lifestyle experiences rather than purely athletic competitions?

There’s a clear shift toward presenting sports events as full-fledged entertainment and lifestyle experiences, where attending a big sports event isn’t just about watching a game but also includes concerts, fan festivals, celebrity appearances, and cultural exhibitions. In the Middle East, especially, sporting events are being bundled with leisure activities to appeal to a broader audience. In my own work, I embraced this trend by designing the Strongmen Games in Khiva, Uzbekistan, not only as an athletic competition but also as a cultural celebration, creating a unique sport-culture tourism experience. This evolution is largely positive as it enhances the spectator experience, attracts wider audiences, maximizes tourism revenue, and boosts global exposure, as long as the integrity of the sport remains the centerpiece.

What role does technology play in shaping modern sports tourism?

Digital media and social platforms have essentially globalized local sporting events, sparking interest in new destinations through real-time sharing. Streaming technology also inspires viewers to travel for in-person experiences, while smart stadiums and mobile apps enhance the on-site visitor experience. In short, technology amplifies events to global audiences and makes attending sports events more convenient and engaging than ever before.

Are there any emerging innovations or digital trends that could redefine how audiences engage with sports events?

Digital innovation is revolutionizing sports fan engagement, blending on-site spectacle with global interactivity. For example, the Las Vegas Sphere - with a twin venue planned in Abu Dhabi by 2030 – demonstrates how cutting-edge arenas equipped with massive wraparound LED screens and multi-sensory technology can turn games into immersive spectacles . In stadiums, this wow-factor is complemented by drone cameras soaring over the field and body cameras on athletes, delivering adrenaline-pumping, first-person angles that make viewers feel like part of the game . At the same time, virtual and augmented reality are dissolving the boundary between live and remote spectators, enabling fans to step into digital stadiums or overlay real-time stats and replays on the action for an engaging hybrid experience. The meteoric rise of esports is further expanding fan engagement into the digital realm, filling virtual arenas with global audiences and turning competitive gaming into mainstream spectator entertainment. All these experiences are amplified by social media innovations that let fans worldwide participate in real time, share their reactions, and even influence content - creating interactive communities around events. From a tourism and marketing perspective, these emerging trends are practical tools that enrich the fan experience. A recent example is sports-entertainment influencer, gamer known as IShowSpeed, whose livestreamed travel around China in 2025 and Cristiano Ronaldo promoting AL Ula and national costume of Saudi Arabia during National Day, demonstrated how sport-driven content can act as informal tourism promotion, reaching millions of young, digitally native audiences.

From your point of view, how important is inclusivity (i.e., Muslim-friendly infrastructure, amenities) and diversity in sustaining sports tourism growth in the long run?

Inclusivity and cultural sensitivity are critical for sustaining long-term growth in sports tourism, especially in regions with diverse and faith-oriented audiences. Providing Muslim-friendly infrastructure is a must-have if you want to welcome visitors from Muslim-majority countries, simple provisions like Halal food options, prayer rooms at stadiums and hotels, gender-segregated facilities where appropriate, and respecting local customs can make or break a traveler's decision to attend an event. For example, Uzbekistan recently invested in a new winter resort (Amirsoy) and made sure to include full prayer facilities and Halal dining on site. Likewise, the Humo Arena ice rink in Tashkent to the Futsal Arena in Andijan, now by default incorporate prayer spaces and Halal-certified concessions.

What has the Muslim community been advocating for in sports, and how do such communities contribute to shaping destination reputation or influencing travel decisions among Muslim travelers?

The Muslim community has been advocating for a more inclusive and accommodating environment in the sports world. As spectators, Muslim travelers often look for environments where they can comfortably enjoy the event. On the athletes' side, many of them have advocated for accommodations to practice their faith, such as wearing hijab in competition or adjusting training schedules during Ramadan. I've seen top Uzbek footballers like Eldor Shomurodov and Abbos Fayzullayev choose to continue their careers in Turkey, partly because the lifestyle and faith-related comfort factors are better. High-profile examples on the global stage include Karim Benzema moving to a Saudi club. It's about being in a culture that aligns with their faith and family needs. These communities have a big influence on destination reputation and travel decisions, and word spreads quickly through community networks and social media.

What is your view on the growing trend in sports communities, and what factors do you think are driving the stronger sense of identity and belonging among these groups?

There's undeniably a growing sense of identity and belonging among sports fans today, driven by a combination of digital connectivity, cultural visibility, and values-based representation. For traditional sports fans, loyalty to a team has always created a strong tribal identity, but the internet culture have amplified this. For Esports supporters, the community aspect is arguably even stronger and more organic, since it grew from internet culture. We're even seeing crossover between these worlds: traditional sports organizations are investing in Esports teams, and Esports tournaments are now held in stadiums. In Saudi Arabia, for example, the Gamers8 festival has become one of the biggest Esports events globally, drawing fans from all over the world

In what ways do you think that Muslim-majority countries can position themselves as global leaders in sports tourism while catering to the growing Muslim population and sports enthusiasts?

Muslim-majority countries can position themselves as global leaders in sports tourism by combining scale, values, and digital creativity into a coherent strategy. First, hosting and co-hosting mega-events remains essential, as seen when Qatar staged the FIFA World Cup or Saudi Arabia brought world-class boxing and motorsport to global audiences, instantly elevating their tourism profiles. Building on this, OIC-initiated and OIC-branded sporting events can create shared visibility and structured sharing models for global sports competitions, rotating hosting rights and benefits across member states. At the same time, these countries should go beyond physical events by investing in digital ecosystems, including e-games inspired by Islamic history and heritage, and by integrating historic cities, pilgrimage routes, and cultural landmarks into existing popular video games and interactive maps, allowing younger audiences to discover destinations virtually before traveling.





07

**FROM STANDARDS TO STRATEGY:
THE DELIVERY PLAYBOOK**

**HOW TO DESIGN, DELIVER, AND COMMUNICATE MUSLIM-FRIENDLY SPORTS
TOURISM EXPERIENCES THAT CONVERT**

HOW TO USE THIS PLAYBOOK

FROM STANDARDS TO STRATEGY — TURNING INCLUSION INTO ATTENDANCE



Sports tourism is high-intent travel , but intent does not convert when key needs are uncertain. For Muslim travelers, confidence is built when essentials such as Halal food, prayer access, safety, and ease of movement are **clearly defined and easy to verify before booking**. That's **why proof wins**: if information is missing, unclear, or inconsistent, destinations lose bookings even when demand is strong.

This playbook helps destinations, venues, event organizers, and partners translate inclusion standards into **operational delivery** and **clear proof points** across the journey. Use it to prioritize what to build, what to publish, and who must own delivery , so Muslim-friendly sports tourism becomes repeatable, scalable, and competitive.

DESIGNED FOR:

- > Destination managers
- > Hotels
- > Venue operators
- > Transport
- > Event organizers
- > Payments & ticketing partners

THE PROOF WINS CHECKLIST

IF IT'S NOT VISIBLE ONLINE, IT DOESN'T EXIST



R — RESPONSIBLE BY DESIGN

MAKE PRAYER, HALAL FOOD, AND DIGNITY EFFORTLESS — AND VISIBLE BEFORE BOOKING

MUSLIM-READY ON-GROUND STANDARDS

Prayer-Ready Crowd & Time Management



- Prayer spaces that can handle peak volumes (especially Maghrib/Isha overlaps)
- Clear wudu access or guidance to nearest facilities
- Wayfinding to prayer spaces from seating/concourses
- Stewarding that supports quick return to seats without friction

PROOF TO SHOW BEFORE BOOKING

Prayer location map • photos • opening hours • wudu guidance • peak-time plan

Halal Assurance in the Venue Environment:



- Halal food options inside the venue
- Clear labelling and assurance statement
- Non-Halal separation guidance where relevant
- Fast options for long event hours (snacks/meals)

ACCESSIBILITY AS RESPONSIBLE INCLUSION



Accessibility is Muslim-friendly too, because it supports multi-gen travel.

- Step-free paths to seats + prayer areas + toilets
- Accessible toilets + clear signage (multi-language where possible)
- Assistance points for seniors, families, and wheelchair users
- Quiet/calm spaces (helpful for sensory needs and family travel)

PROOF TO SHOW BEFORE BOOKING

Step-free route map • accessible seating details • toilet locations
• assistance request flow

MINIMUM PROOF PACK

Prayer • Halal Food • Family Zones • Venue Rules • Accessibility
• Help/Assistance • Safety Info • Safety Info

I — IMMERSIVE COMMUNITY & BELONGING

SHARED CULTURE AND CONNECTION DRIVE OPTIMISED VISITS AND REPEAT INTEREST

VISIBLE COMMUNITY & INCLUSIVITY

- Amplify Muslim crowds & capture community moments
- Spotlight faith-friendly attractions (on-site and near-site)
- Feature local stories and volunteer efforts



LOCAL MUSLIM EXPERIENCES

- Suggest Halal dining and activities
- Host local mosque guides or city walking tours
- Combine sports and local community time in the itinerary



CULTURALLY CONNECTED CONTENT

- Mark special times (Ramadan, Eid) with local events
- Feature diverse Muslim perspectives in social content



MINIMUM PROOF PACK

Community Visibility • Ramadan + Eid Guidance • Local Muslim Experience • Cultural Content

D — DIGITAL JOURNEY ENABLEMENT

WHERE “PROOF WINS” BECOMES CLICKABLE:

PLAN, PAY, AND ENTER WITH CONFIDENCE

THE SUPER-APP OR LANDING PAGE STANDARD

For most travelers, the event app or official landing page is where confidence is built, decisions are made, and journeys are coordinated. The best platforms integrate ticketing, wayfinding, mobility guidance, and real-time updates into one interface. For Muslim travelers, it must also prove readiness: Halal, prayer, accessibility, and payment clarity.

VISIBLE BEFORE BOOKING

- > **Tickets & Entry** — buy/verify, gate info, rules, hours, refund terms
- > **Maps & Wayfinding** — venue map with entrances + key services pinned
- > **Payments & Pricing** — accepted methods, fees, currency clarity, refunds
- > **Halal Proof** — Halal food options, assurance cues, locations, hours
- > **Prayer Proof** — prayer space locations, wudu guidance, peak-time plan
- > **Accessibility Proof** — step-free routes, accessible seating/toilets, assistance request flow
- > **Safety Updates (optional)** — advisories, emergency contacts, family zones

If it's not visible online, it doesn't exist.

MINIMUM PROOF PACK

Verified ticket links • Secure Checkout • Fee Transparency
• Refund Policy • Support Contact

TRUSTED TICKETS + SEAMLESS PAYMENTS

Muslim sports travelers prefer official sources because accuracy and trust matter. Building a secure, transparent checkout experience reduces fraud risk, increases conversion, and strengthens confidence, especially for international travel.

Trusted Channels
Official platform first • verified resellers listed
• “avoid fraud” guidance

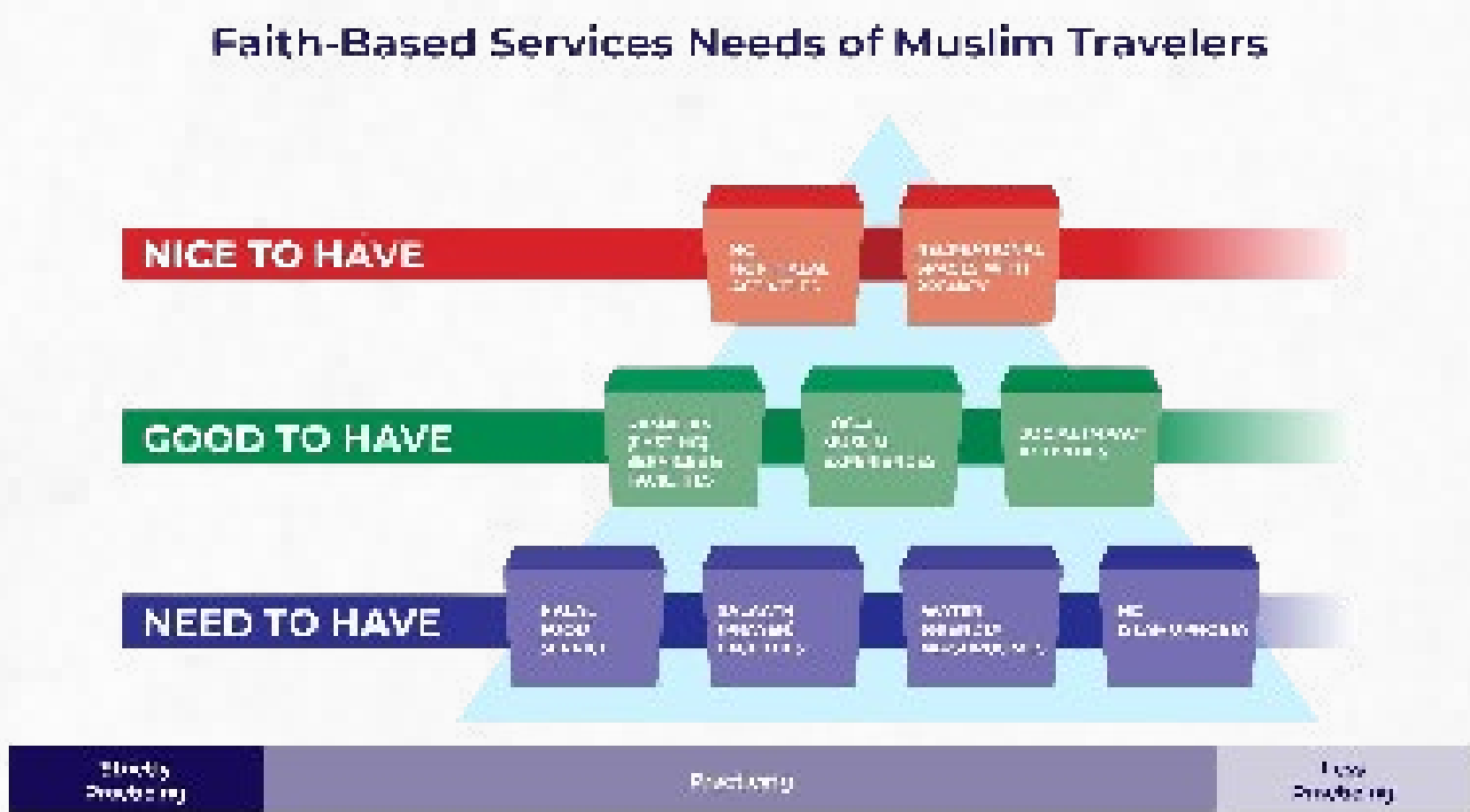
Fraud & Safety Cues
Secure payment indicators • verification steps
• customer support escalation path

Payment Clarity
Multiple payment options • total cost transparency (fees/taxes)
• refund rules upfront

A — ASSURED MUSLIM-FRIENDLY STANDARDS

STANDARDS ARE ONLY REAL WHEN THEY'RE DELIVERED
ON-GROUND AND PROVEN ONLINE

FAITH-BASED NEEDS OF MUSLIM TRAVELERS



THIS MODEL STAYS CONSISTENT ACROSS SCENARIOS.
THE DIFFERENCE IS NOT THE NEED, BUT THE PROOF AND
DELIVERY REQUIRED IN EACH JOURNEY.

ASSURANCE IN PRACTICE: Deliver + Publish + Own

Muslim-friendly readiness is a system. These are the two non-negotiables that protect confidence and increase bookings.

PRAYER FACILITIES

Minimum standard (on-ground):

- Clearly designated prayer space(s) within venue or in immediate proximity
- Practical guidance for peak-time flow (Maghrib/Isha overlaps)
- Ablution (wudu) access or clear guidance to nearby facilities
- Basic cues: qibla direction, cleanliness, respectful environment

Proof required (online):

- Map pin + photo of prayer space
- Opening hours / access rules
- Wudu guidance (on-site or nearest)
- “During event peak times” guidance note
- Owner: Venue + Organizer (Destination supports wayfinding & listings)

HALAL FOOD

Minimum standard (on-ground):

- Halal food options available inside venue or clearly within event footprint
- Clear labeling + staff awareness of Halal options
- Practical options for long event hours (snacks/meals)
- Separation/handling cues where relevant

Proof required (online):

- Halal food vendor list + locations + operating hours
- Assurance statement (how Halal is assured / recognized)
- Menu labeling guidance + alternative dietary options
- Owner: Venue + Concessionaires (Organizer publishes; Destination supports ecosystem supply)

If prayer and Halal food aren’t visible before booking, they don’t count as delivered.
Publish the proof. Build the confidence.

VENUE MANAGEMENT PLAYBOOK

WHAT TO DELIVER, WHAT TO PUBLISH,
AND WHO OWNS IT SO READINESS IS REAL

MINIMUM STANDARD (ON-GROUND)



PRAYER-READY FACILITIES

- Designated prayer space(s) + clear wayfinding
- Peak-time flow plan (Maghrib/Isha overlaps)
- Wudu access or guidance to nearest facilities



HALAL FOOD AVAILABILITY & LABELLING

- Halal options inside venue (not only nearby)
- Clear labeling + staff awareness



RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENT

- Code of conduct displayed + reporting channel
- Family-friendly / calmer zones where possible
- Alcohol zoning clarity where relevant



OPERATIONAL READINESS

- Staff briefed on Muslim-friendly essentials
- Escalation paths for issues and incidents
- Cleanliness checks for prayer/wash areas



WAYFINDING & INFORMATION

- Clear signage (multi-language where possible)
- Help desks / roaming support teams
- Step-free routes to seats, toilets, prayer areas
- Accessible seating + toilets clearly signed

PROOF TO SHOW BEFORE BOOKING

Publish on: official event site/app + venue site + partner pages.

- Prayer space map + photo + opening hours
- Wudu guidance (on-site / nearest) + walking time
- Halal food vendor list + locations + operating hours + assurance note
- Accessibility guide: step-free routes, seating, toilets, assistance request flow
- Venue rules: conduct, family zones, alcohol zoning (if applicable)
- Help & support: contact points, multilingual FAQs, on-site assistance counters

OPERATIONAL OWNER (WHO DELIVERS)

- Venue Ops: facilities readiness, signage, cleanliness, staff deployment
- F&B / Concessionaires: Halal availability, labeling, assurance, staff briefing
- Security Lead: respectful environment, reporting pathway, crowd readiness
- Accessibility Lead: step-free routes, seating, toilets, assistance services
- Customer Support: info accuracy across channels + escalation handling
- Event Organizer (partner): publishes proof + aligns messaging across platforms

VENUE PROOF PACK

Prayer • Halal Availability • Accessibility • Venue Map • Rules & Conduct • Help Points • Safety Info

EVENT ORGANIZER PLAYBOOK

OWN THE JOURNEY: TRUSTED TICKETS, CLEAR PROOF, COORDINATED PARTNERS, ZERO CONFUSION



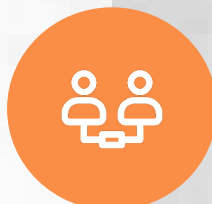
TRUSTED TICKET PATHWAYS

- Official ticket link as the primary source
- Verified resellers listed (if any) + anti-fraud guidance
- Refund/resale policy stated clearly upfront



OFFICIAL DIGITAL FRONT DOOR (APP / LANDING PAGE)

- One official page/app that consolidates the journey
- Real-time updates, schedules, gates, and maps
- Essentials pinned: Halal food, prayer, accessibility, help points



PARTNER ALIGNMENT & CONSISTENCY

- Align venue, transport, hotels, and sponsors on the same info
- Standardized wording for Halal food/prayer/accessibility claims
- One source of truth updated across all channels



PROGRAMMING THAT ENABLES INCLUSION

- Schedule planning that acknowledges prayer timing realities
- Clear break windows and guidance for long event days
- Family-friendly guidance (zones, entry, movement cues)

ORGANIZER PROOF PACK

Tickets • Official App/Page • Maps • Transport • Payments • Halal • Prayer • Accessibility • Rules • Help

Service Readiness & Escalation

- > Helpdesk + multilingual support (on-site and online)
- > Clear escalation path for incidents and sensitive needs
- > Post-event feedback capture and issue resolution

PROOF TO SHOW BEFORE BOOKING

Publish on: official event website/app + ticketing pages + partner listings.

- Official ticket link + verified reseller list (if applicable)
- Venue map with gates + prayer/Halal/accessibility pins
- Transport guidance + last-mile options + key walking times
- Payment options + cashless guidance + fee transparency
- Refund/resale policy + support contact + dispute pathway
- “Muslim-friendly essentials” guide (prayer/Halal/accessibility in one place)
- Venue rules + code of conduct + reporting channel
- Schedule highlights + “plan your day” guide (for long event formats)

Transparency that Prevents Drop-Off

- > Full price clarity (fees/taxes) before checkout
- > Payment methods clearly stated (cards/e-wallet/QR)
- > Entry rules, prohibited items, and venue policies published early

OPERATIONAL OWNER (WHO DELIVERS)

- Organizer Ops Lead: source of truth, partner coordination, readiness checks
- Digital/Product Team: app/landing page, live updates, pinned proof points
- Ticketing Partner: secure checkout, verification cues, refund execution
- Customer Support: multilingual helpdesk, FAQs, escalation management
- Venue + Security: on-ground delivery alignment, incident response
- Transport/City Partners: last-mile readiness, signage, crowd coordination



DESTINATION + HOSPITALITY + TRANSPORT PLAYBOOK

MAKE THE CITY EVENT-READY: BUNDLES, WAYFINDING, AND PROOF THAT EXTENDS BEYOND THE VENUE

MINIMUM STANDARD (ECOSYSTEM DELIVERY)



DESTINATION READINESS GUIDE (CITY-WIDE)

- One official “Muslim-friendly event guide” for the city
- Halal food clusters, mosques/prayer spaces, accessible routes mapped
- Visitor FAQs: etiquette, key areas, emergency info



HOTELS & ACCOMMODATION ALIGNMENT

- Standardized Muslim-friendly info at property level
- Prayer cues (qibla info / prayer space guidance) + Halal breakfast options where possible
- Group handling readiness for event peaks (families, teams, delegations)



TRANSPORT & LAST-MILE READINESS

- Clear last-mile options to venue (rail/bus/shuttle/walk)
- Accessible routes and assistance points published



EXPERIENCE LAYER (BEYOND THE EVENT)

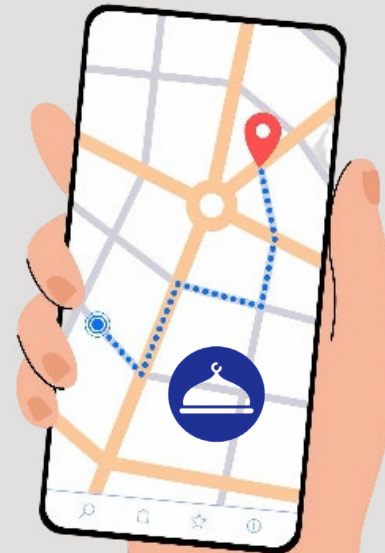
- Curated local Muslim experiences (food, heritage, family activities)
- Easy-to-book “event + city” itinerary templates (2–3 days)
- Community partnerships (local mosques, Halal merchants, guides)

PROOF TO SHOW BEFORE BOOKING

Publish across: destination site, event site/app, hotel listings, transport pages.

- City-wide “Muslim-friendly event guide” (downloadable + mobile-friendly)
- Halal food map: restaurants near venue + key visitor areas + operating hours
- Prayer map: mosques/prayer spaces + walking times + peak-time guidance
- Accessible transport routes + step-free navigation notes
- Hotel “event-ready” bundles: proximity, transport, Halal/prayer cues
- 2–3 day itinerary templates: event + dining + culture + family options

The venue experience starts in the city — and bookings start with proof.



OPERATIONAL OWNER (WHO DELIVERS)

- Destination Marketing Org / Tourism Board: city guide, maps, partner alignment
- Hotel Partners: standardized listing info, Halal/prayer readiness, group handling
- Transport Authority/Operators: last-mile capacity, accessibility, event-day coordination
- Local Business Ecosystem: Halal clusters, extended hours during event peaks
- Community Partners (where relevant): mosque guidance, cultural welcome, volunteer support
- Event Organizer: links the ecosystem proof into the official app/landing page

ORGANIZER PROOF PACK

City Guide • Halal Map • Prayer Map • Accessible Routes • Hotel Bundles

OPERATIONALIZING TRUST: THE SPORTS VENUE RATING

To bridge the gap between intent and attendance, CrescentRating has developed the Sports Venue Rating, a dedicated framework that transforms Muslim-friendly amenities from a generic claim into verified proof. By auditing facilities against global standards, this system provides the third-party verification required to satisfy the ‘Transparency’ driver of the TRUST framework, converting traveler hesitation into confidence.

The framework rates the operational readiness of stadiums and sports complexes on a tiered scale from Bronze to Gold, with Gold representing the highest level of service excellence. This standardized signaling system removes friction at the decision-making stage, allowing fans to book with certainty while encouraging venues to elevate their inclusion standards for a diverse global audience.



EXTENDING TRUST TO THE “EVENT ZONE”: THE HOTEL RATING

True readiness extends beyond the stadium. Accommodation providers within the venue’s radius act as the fan’s “base camp,” facing unique demand surges that test operational elasticity. Muslim-friendly readiness here means managing Halal breakfast volumes at scale, accommodating prayer facility loads during pre-match windows, and servicing group bookings efficiently.

The established CrescentRating Hotel Rating benchmarks properties against these specific capabilities. By auditing a hotel’s ability to deliver these essentials under pressure, the rating acts as a vital companion to the Sports Venue Rating.





09

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METHODOLOGY & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection and Sources

The data used in CrescentRating's Muslim-Friendly Sports Tourism Report 2026 is derived in several ways:

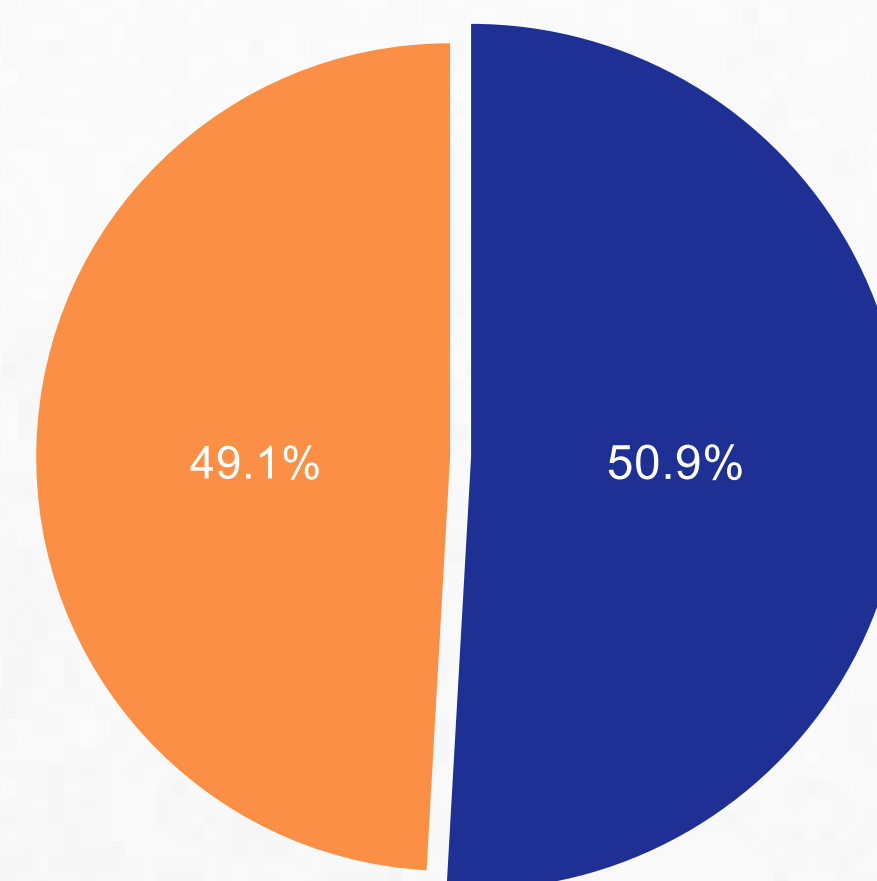
- Data collected from the survey of Muslim travelers worldwide on the topic of sports tourism
- Previous survey data collected by CrescentRating relevant to the report
- Extensive research carried out by CrescentRating's dedicated team
- Data from CrescentRating's CR MAPS data platform
- Data from CrescentRating and HalaTrip's existing studies
- CrescentRating's data extraction models are employed to derive specific insights from the collected data
- Small number of data sets based on trusted third-party data & indices. They include United Nations (UN), World Bank, United Nations Tourism, etc.
- Utilized expert panel opinions from destinations covered in the report to gain their perspective regarding the availability of Muslim-friendly facilities within the destination

TOP RESPONDENTS ARE FROM:

 **INDONESIA**
 **QATAR**
 **MALAYSIA**
 **AUSTRALIA**
 **SOUTH AFRICA**

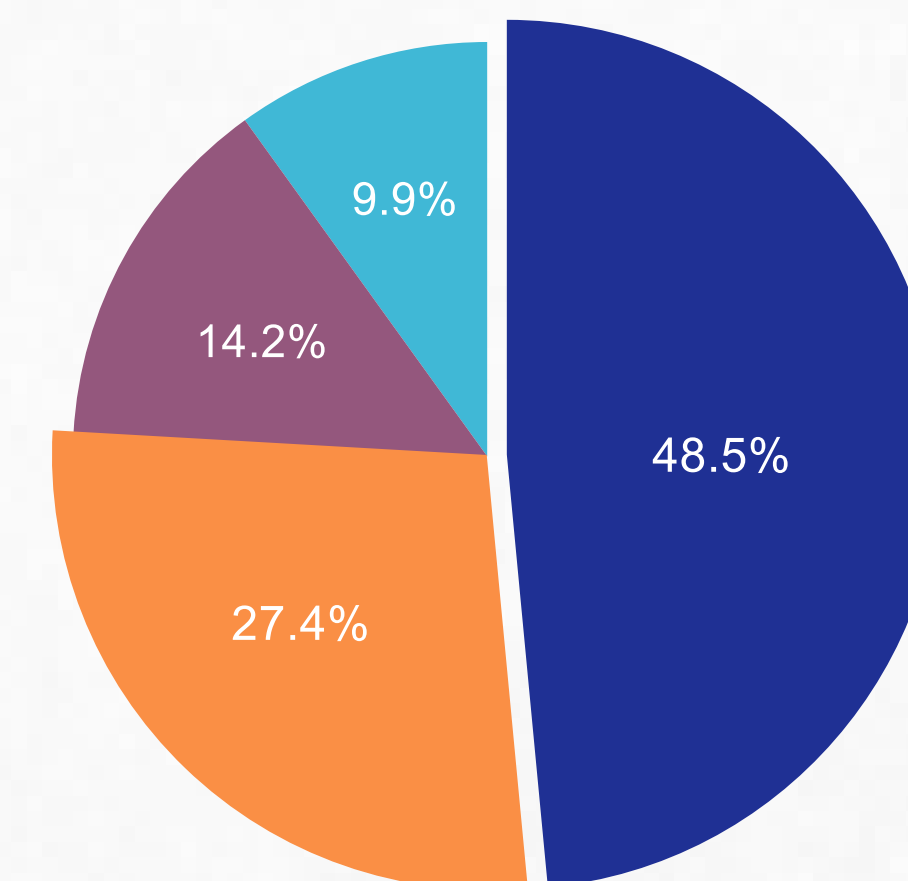
AGE

 Female
  Male



GENDER

 17 - 25
  26 - 35
 36 - 49
  50 years and older



Research Team



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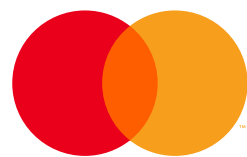


Rista Trisanti
Data Analyst
CrescentRating



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Report Page





Mastercard powers economies and empowers people in 200+ countries and territories worldwide. Together with our customers, we're building a sustainable economy where everyone can prosper. We support a wide range of digital payments choices, making transactions secure, simple, smart and accessible. Our technology and innovation, partnerships and networks combine to deliver a unique set of products and services that help people, businesses and governments realize their greatest potential.



CrescentRating is the world's leading authority on Halal-friendly travel. The company's vision is to lead, innovate and drive this segment through practical and deliverable solutions in what is regarded today as one of the fastest growing segments in the tourism sector.

The company uses insight, industry intelligence, lifestyle, behavior and research on the needs of the Muslim traveler to deliver authoritative guidance on all aspects of Halal-friendly travel to organizations across the globe.



HalalTrip's vision is to be the trusted global online platform, catering for Muslim travelers to make inspired and educated travel choices. It is the most comprehensive and innovative platform with its next generation mobile app.

It aims to make destination discovery and trip planning fun and more intuitive for those looking for a Halal-friendly travel experience.

Halal In Travel Global Summit

June 2026



Attend the most influential event in the Halal Tourism space.
The industry stakeholders will set the stage for building a
resilient and sustainable future Muslim/Halal Tourism Market.

The 2-day event will also see the launch of the Mastercard
- CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel Index 2026, Halal In
Travel Awards 2026 and, HalalTrip People Awards 2026.



Contact info@crescentrating.com
for sponsorship and speaking
opportunities



Halal In Travel Awards

June 2026

Mastercard-CrescentRating GMTI Awards
Muslim-Friendly Service Provider Awards
Halal Travel Personalities of the Year
HalalTrip Travelers Choice Awards

Halal In Travel Awards is a celebration of the travel industry players' efforts to make Halal travel a seamless experience. These awards recognize destinations, organizations, companies, and individuals who have made a considerable impact on the Muslim lifestyle travel segment spanning different categories..

Nominate organizations or individuals for 2026 awards

To nominate, visit
<https://www.crescentrating.com/hit-awards.html>





halaltrip

crescent
traveling



HalalTrip Gastronomy Awards 2026

Nominations for 2026 will open soon. Stay tuned.

halaltrip.com/halaltrip-gastronomy-awards

CR MAPS

CrescentRating Market Analytics Performance Solutions

Explore exclusive insights into the Muslim market and empower your organization to make faster, more impactful business decisions.

A comprehensive database features the latest worldwide trends and developments in the global Muslim market.

Gain access into our extensive database to explore and obtain insights from a multitude of information about the Muslim market at a global, regional and country level.

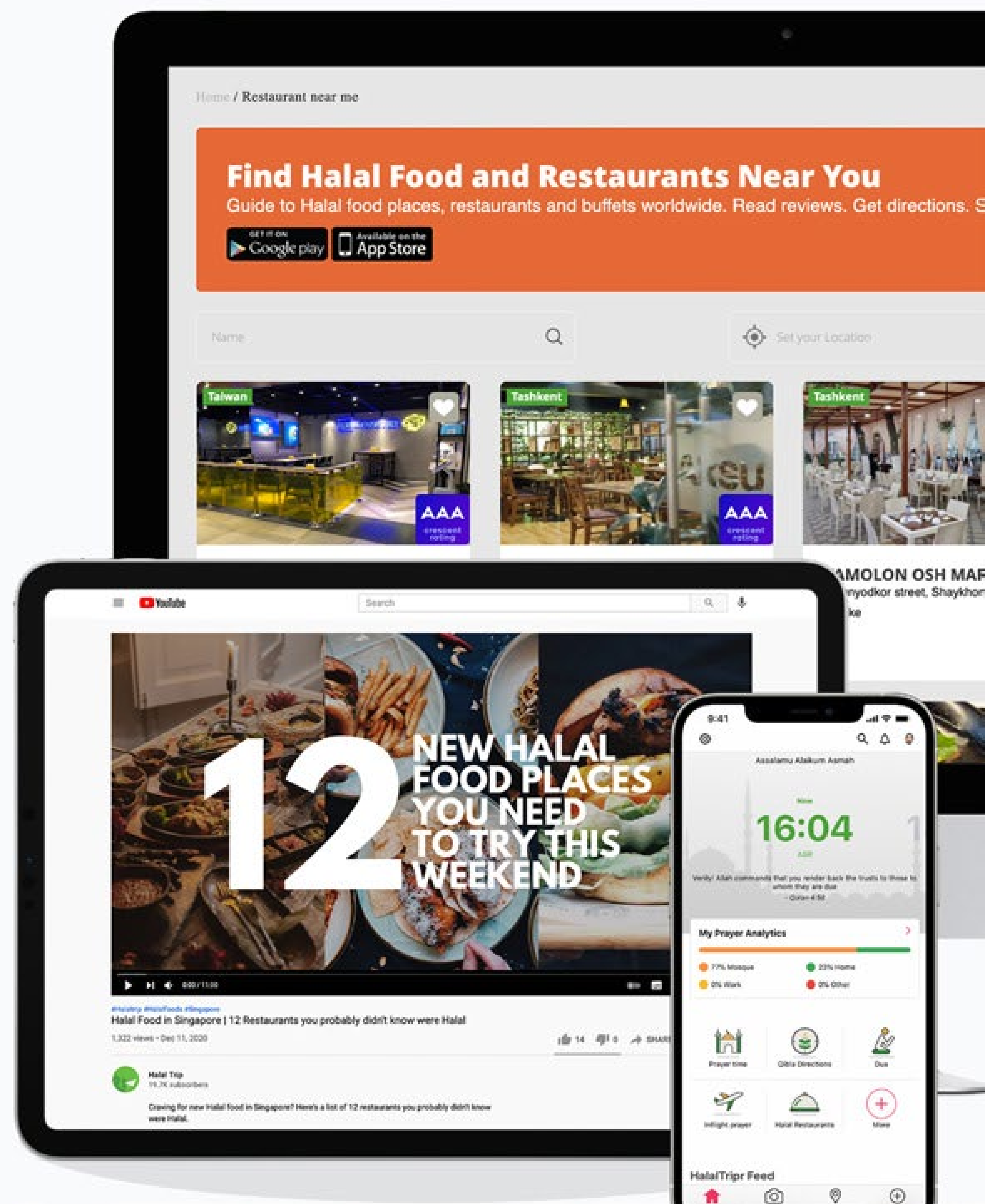


Contact us at info@crescentrating.com for more information



Maximize your Halal restaurant's visibility with HalalTrip & CrescentRating

www.halaltrip.com/advertise-with-us

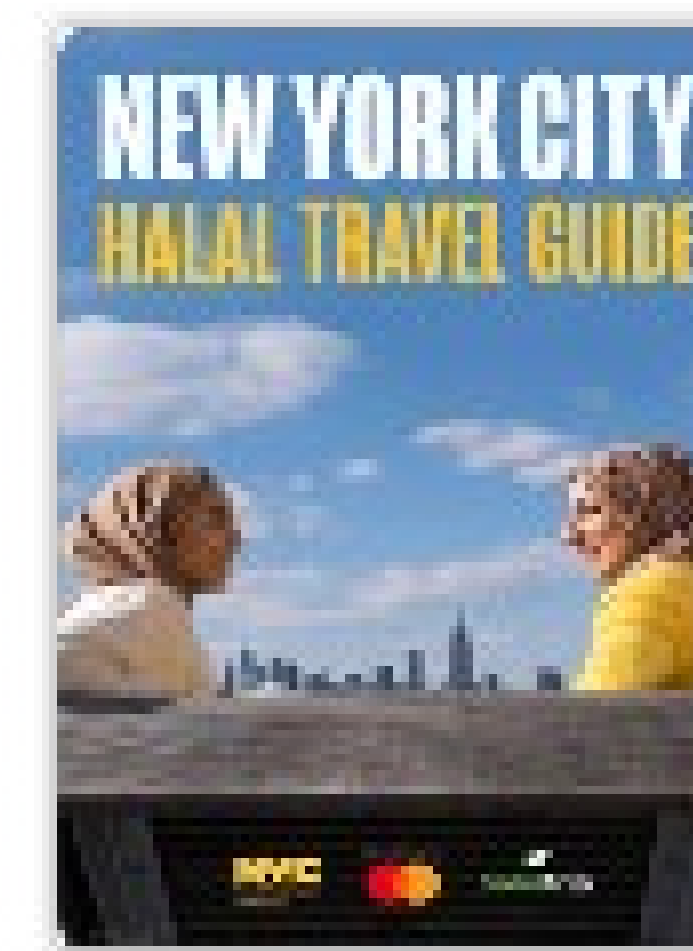
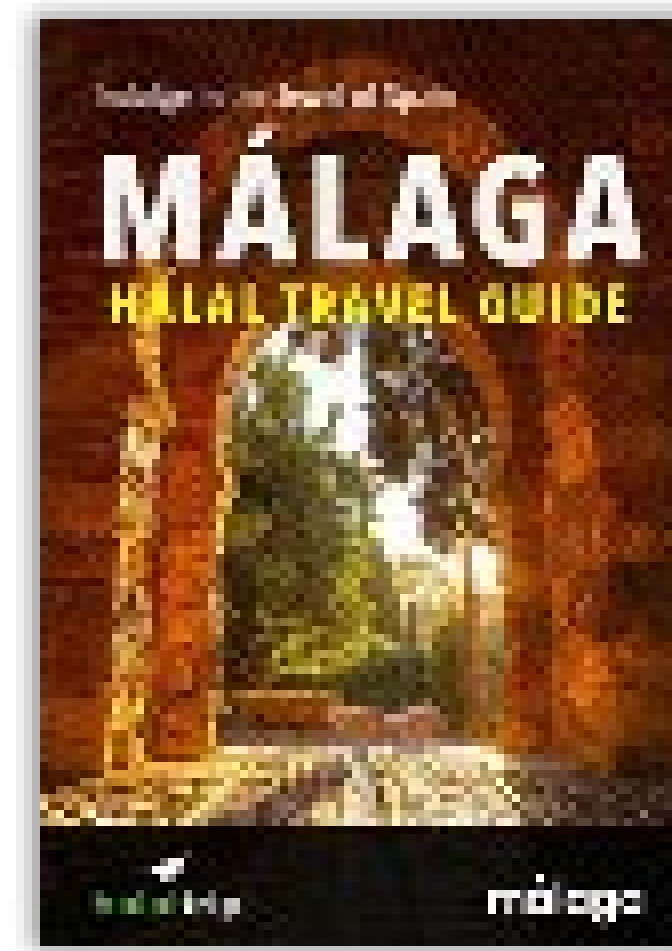
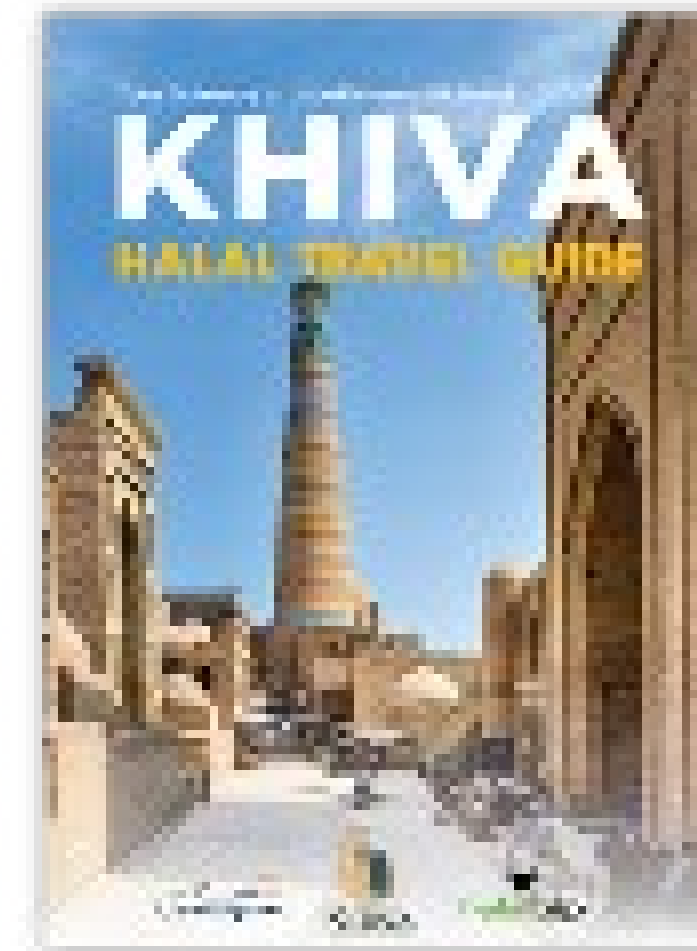
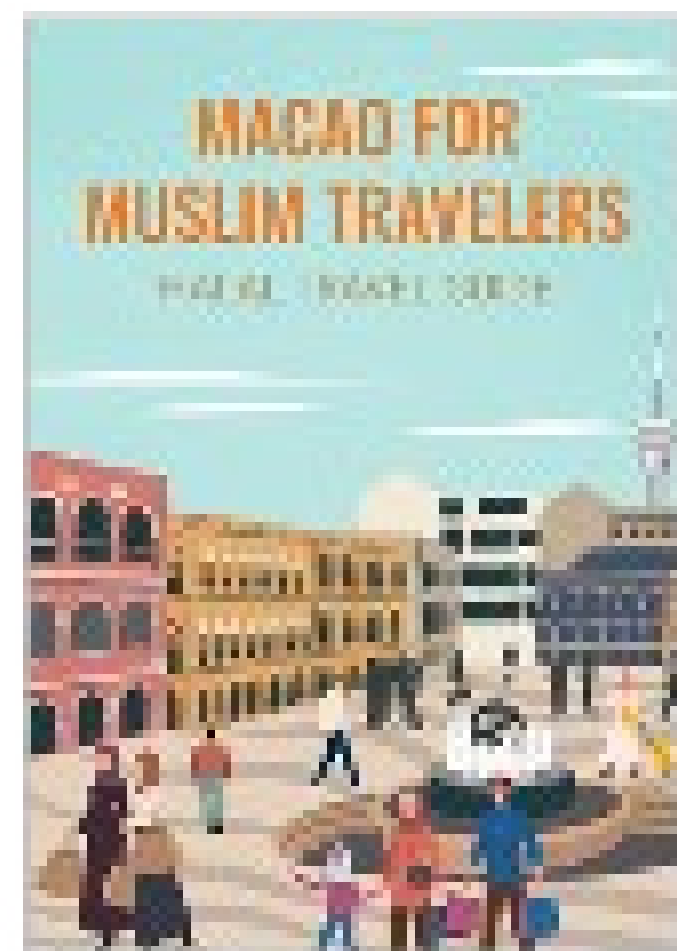
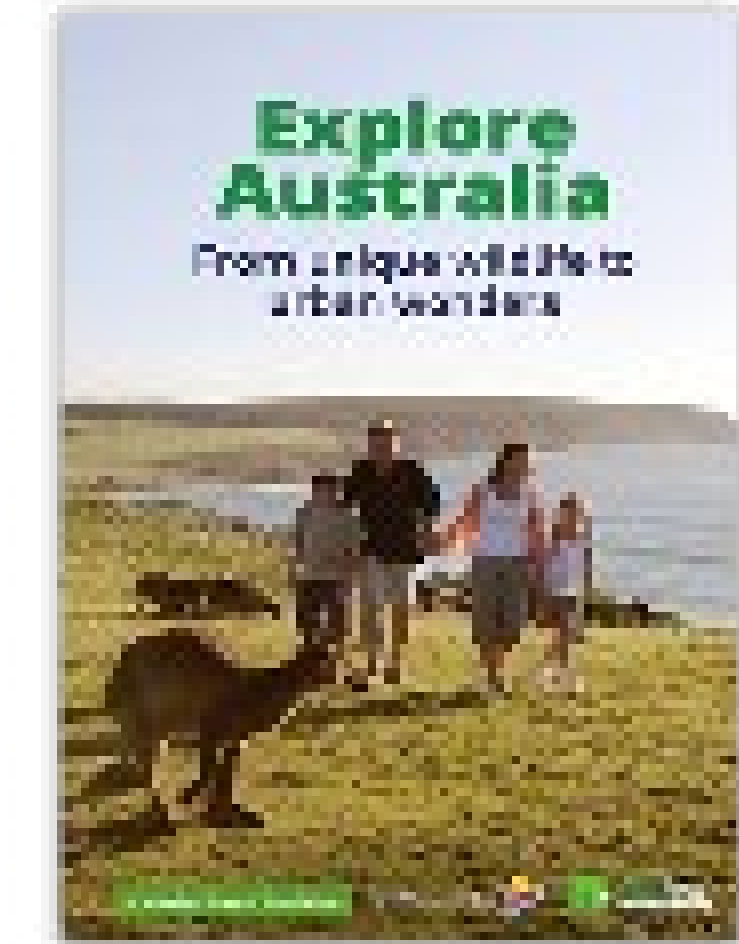
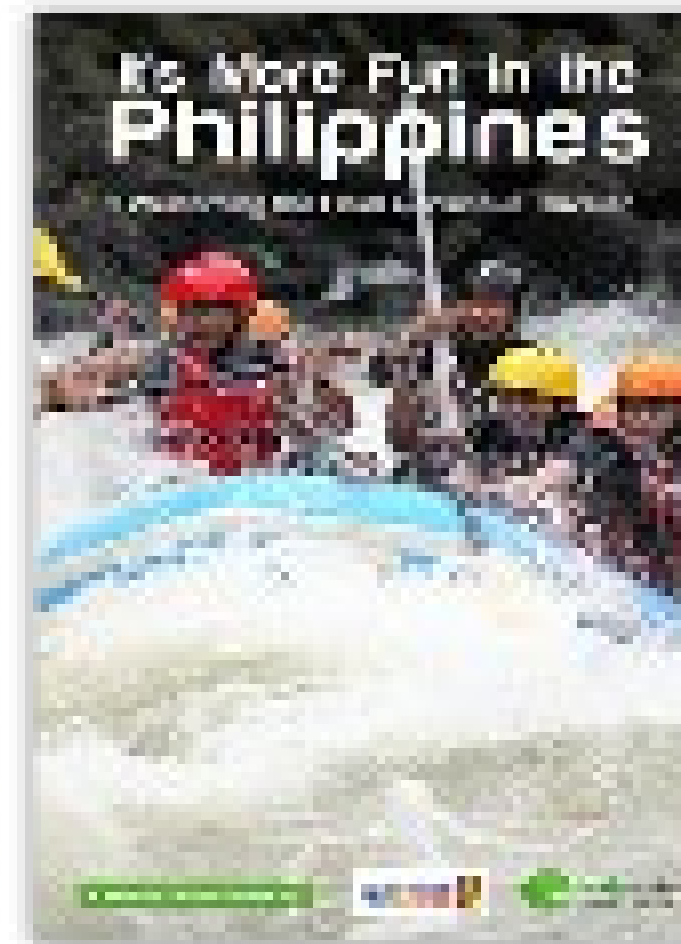




Downloadable Muslim Visitor
Guides in partnership with
Destinations

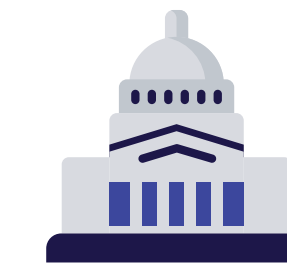
Access the latest Downloadable
Muslim Visitor Guides on HalalTrip
mobile app or Halaltrip.com

www.Halaltrip.com/downloadable-halal-travel-guides/





WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM OUR SERVICES?



Government Agencies



Hotels



Tourism Boards



Restaurants



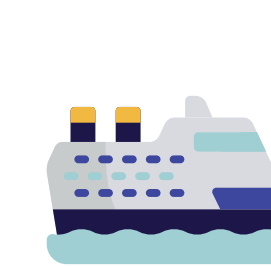
Spas & Wellness Facilities



Airports



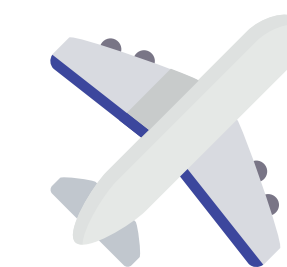
Travel Agents



Cruises



Railway Stations



Airlines



Travel Associations



Convention Venues



Attractions



Shopping Malls



Hospitals

Talk with our Experts...

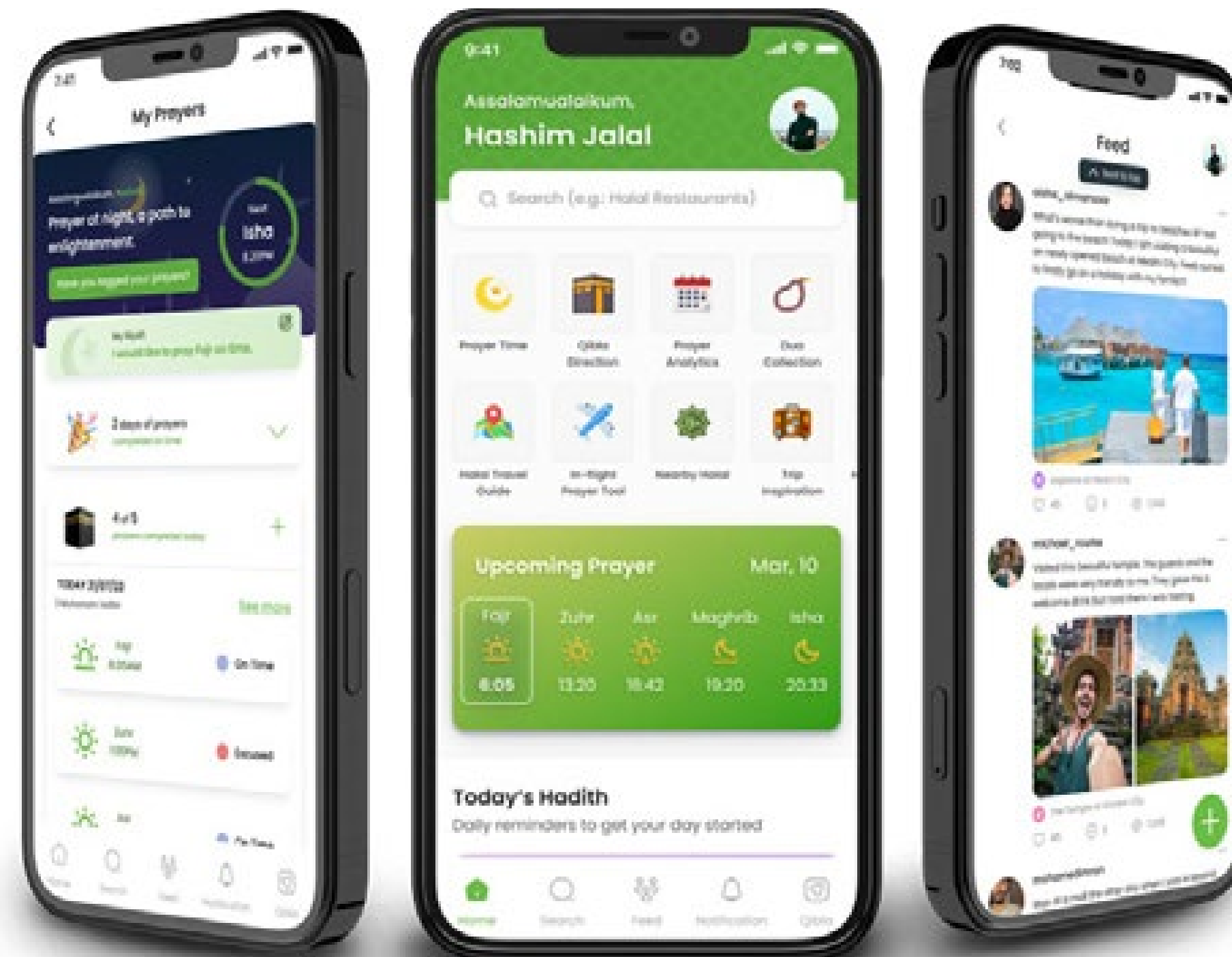


Find out how you can better connect with Muslim travelers.



Get inspired • Go • Inspire others

Every Muslim's Lifestyle App



**Available in multiple languages*



HALALTRIP INSPIRATION JOURNEY MAP

Muslim travelers are able to use the HalalTrip application to plan for all phases of their travel journey. Trip planning begins by getting inspired of the latest buzz and activities the destination has to offer. Upon immersing themselves in the destination, travelers can then share their stories online and inspire others.



Travel Videos

Travel inspiration from the comfort of your home.
Get featured when you share yours with us!



HalalTrip.com

We do the research for you.
Best Muslim-friendly places to eat, pray and explore.



City Guides

These offline guides will save you when Wi-fi won't!



Travel Etiquettes and Dua

Begin your trip with Bismillah.
Supplications for all your travel needs.



Inflight Prayer Calculator

Math can be tough but not when we do the calculations for you.



Search Nearby

The food on your flight might be *plane* but our nearby locator will get you to the nearest Halal eatery in a jiffy.



HalalTrip Feed

Share your travels and be a part of the HalalTrip family.



Prayer Analytics

Your physical health is important but so is your spiritual well-being.
Track them from day to day.

feels like home



HOMES & HOTELS

Muslim-friendly accommodation options

travel with a peace of mind



VACATIONS

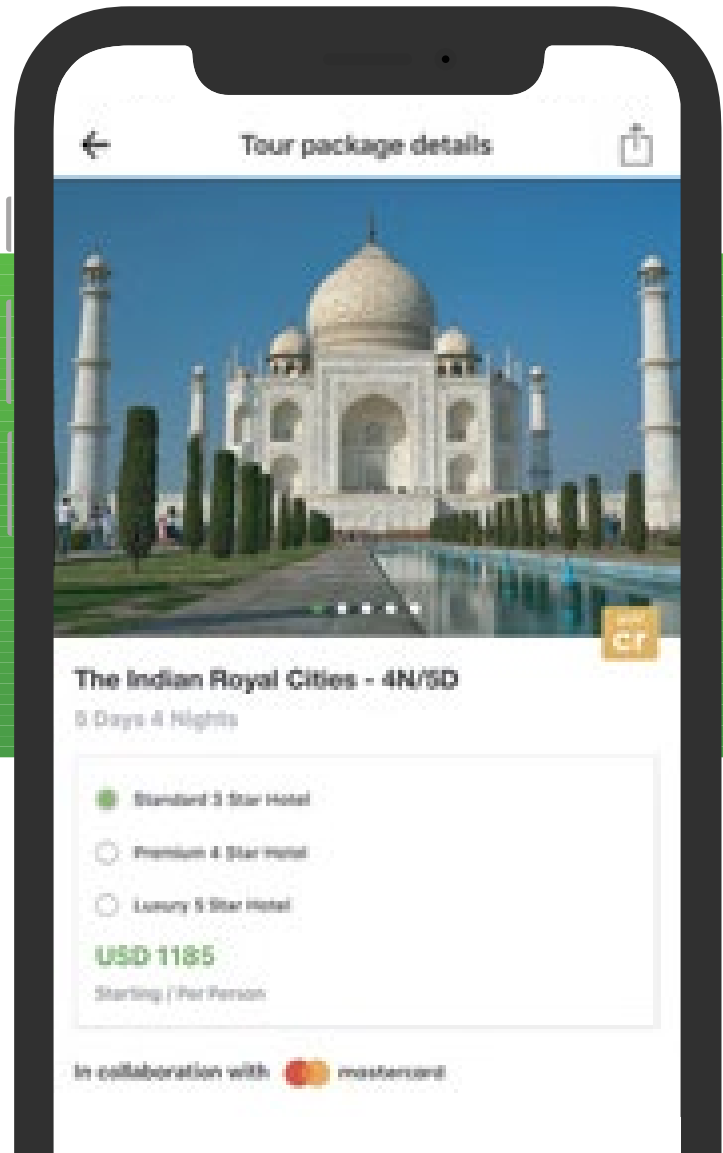
Choose from a wide range of Crescent Rated tour packages

spend less save more



ACTIVITIES & EXPERIENCES

Exclusive discounts to popular attractions.



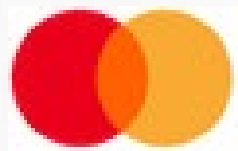


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BEHAVIOURS, BOOKING TRIGGERS,
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