



# Inside Leave Management

## 2025 EDITION

# OVERVIEW

Paid time off (PTO) is still one of the perks employees care about most, and that's not changing anytime soon.

A good PTO policy can help you attract top talent and keep them around, so it's important to review it from time to time.

We've gathered insights and trends on how companies in over **100+ countries** manage PTO so you can see what's working and make the best choices for your team.

Time off matters, so make sure you're doing it right.

## HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

1. Check the key figures and how your policy compares.
2. Find your country or region in each of the master tables presented.
3. Use the insights you learn to fine-tune your PTO policy.

## METHODOLOGY

This report looks at how over 2,500 companies worldwide managed their paid time off policies and how employees used PTO in 2024 and in 2025.

All data comes from Vacation Tracker, but to protect privacy, exact numbers and company names have been left out.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. **Unused days are everywhere.** Globally, workers are leaving nearly 3 days on the table every year, costing companies money and employees their well-being.
2. **Summer dominates.** From Canada to Spain, most PTO gets taken mid-year. But patterns vary, India leans on fall, while Sweden is all about summer.
3. **Unlimited PTO is growing... slowly.** It's popular in places like the US and UK but still rare in most parts of the world.
4. **Legal standards don't always reflect reality.** Some countries go above and beyond legal requirements, while others fall short, especially when the law says one thing and companies do another.
5. **January and February are the quiet months.** Great time for product launches, planning, and big projects.
6. **Embrace flexibility over excess.** The rise of remote-work days shows that location freedom can satisfy time-off needs without increasing absenteeism.

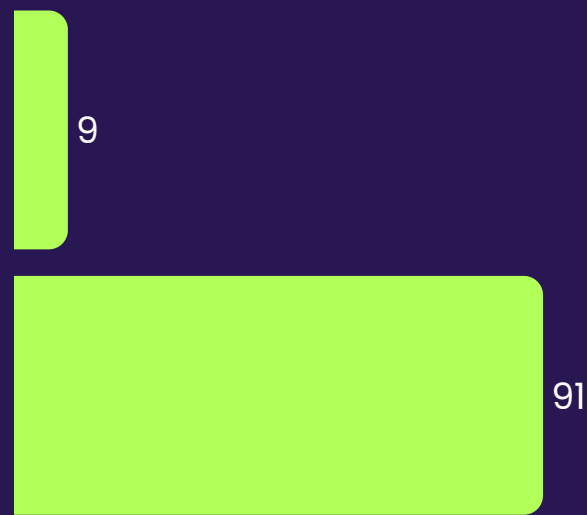
## BOTTOM LINE

Time off is essential for happy teams and healthy companies. In 2025, the big challenge isn't giving more days off; it's making sure people actually use them.

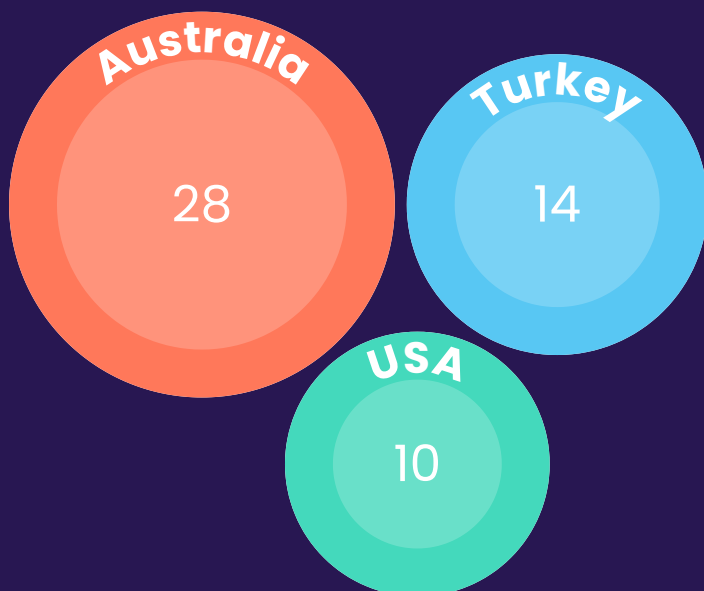
# IS PTO ACCRUED OR ALLOTTED?

The accrual model (earning days as you work) is rare worldwide, with fewer than 1 in 10 companies using it. Most organizations still prefer a lump-sum allotment at the start of the year.

Accrual is used by just 9% of companies globally, while 91% use lump-sum allotments.



**Trend:** Accrual usage spikes in countries with stringent payroll regulations or high contractor populations.



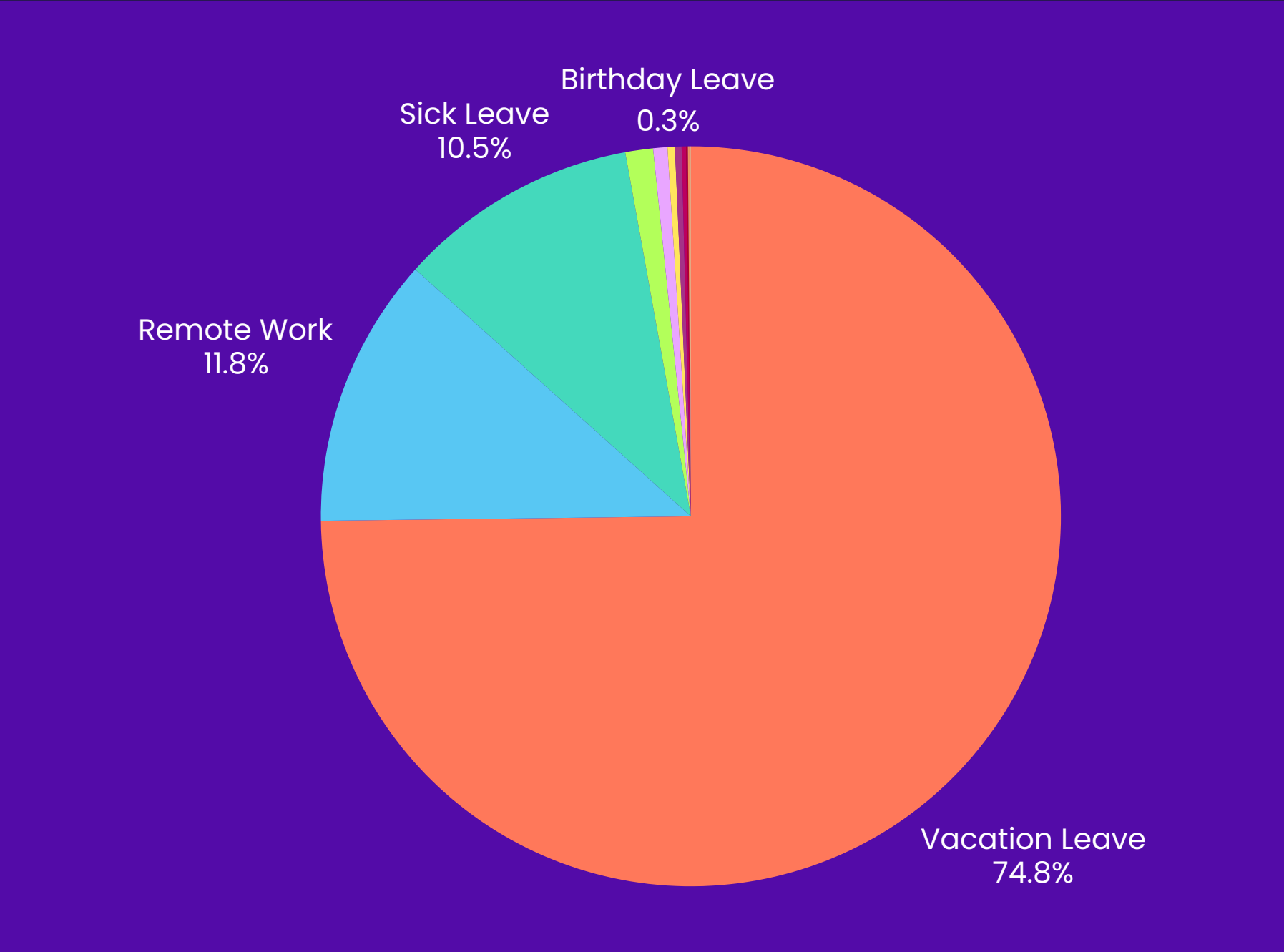
Australia, Turkey, and USA have the highest accrual usage rates.

If you operate across borders, check compliance: some regions mandate accrual-based grants, while others allow the flexibility of lump-sum allotments.

To see the data for all countries, [click here](#).

# MOST POPULAR TYPE OF LEAVE REQUESTED

Across 112 countries and 2,500 companies, vacation leave accounts for 75% of all PTO requests. Remote-work days and sick leave trail far behind, while every other category barely registers.



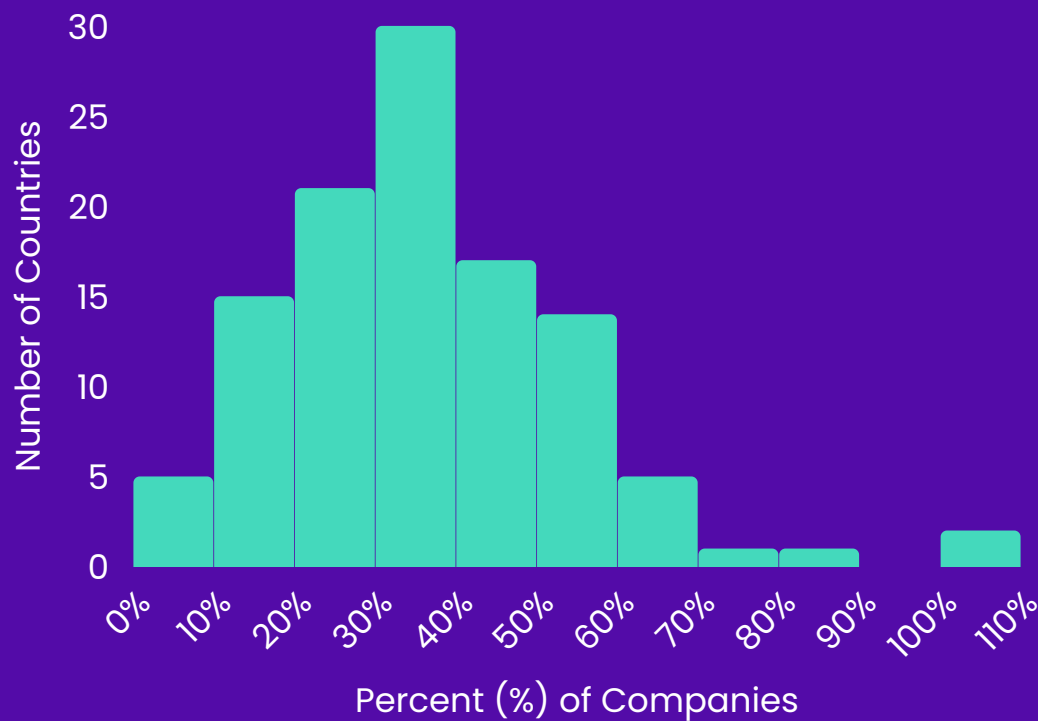
Remote-work days (11.8%) now outpace sick leave (10.5%), showing that flexible location is a top driver of time-away requests.

Less than 2% of requests fall into parental, bereavement, or study leave, yet these categories can be mission-critical when they occur.

To see the data for all countries, [click here](#).

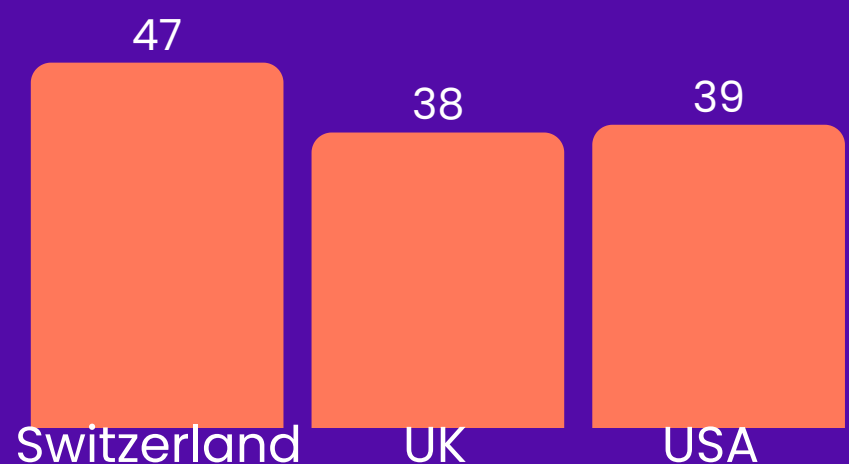
# HOW COMMON IS UNLIMITED PTO?

36% of companies worldwide that use Vacation Tracker offer some form of unlimited PTO, and the practice is concentrated in a handful of regions. The vast majority of countries remain under 15% adoption.



In over 60% of countries, fewer than 1 in 10 companies offer unlimited PTO.

Unlimited PTO is most common in Switzerland, the US, and the UK

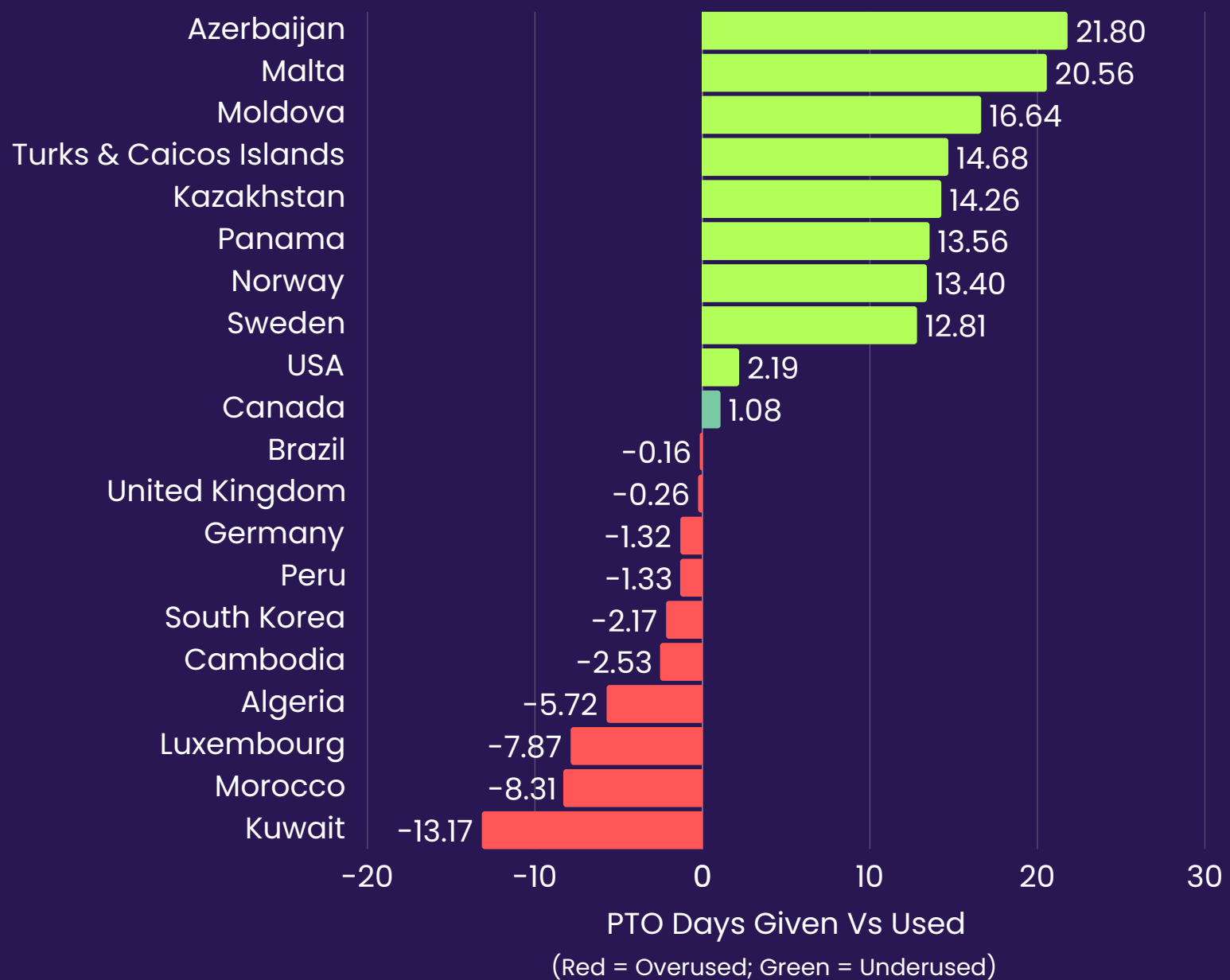


Unlimited PTO grabs headlines but isn't yet the norm. If you're considering it, benchmark against peers in your country, your talent market may not expect it (yet).

To see the data for all countries, [click here](#).

# WHERE PTO GETS USED (AND WASTED)

Green bars show how many days employees leave behind, a sign of untapped recharge time. Red bars reveal countries where workers dip into extra leave or unpaid days to stay afloat.



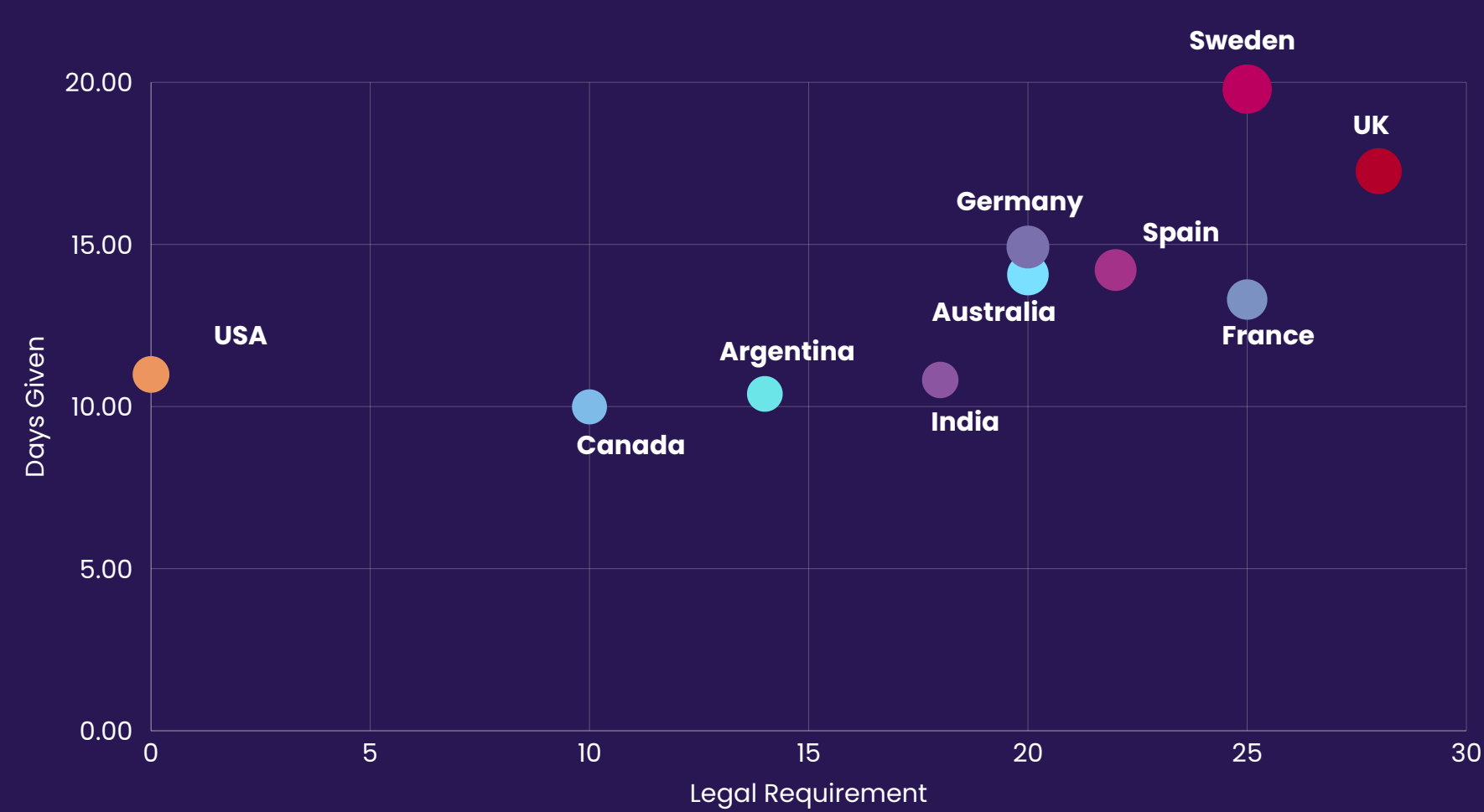
## Quick facts:

- **Azerbaijan** tops the “underused” list, leaving more than 21 days untouched.
- **Kuwait** swings the other way, burning through PTO and dipping into an additional 13 days
- **US** and **Canadian** companies are efficient at using PTO, leaving only 1-2 days untouched.

To see the data for all countries, [click here](#).

# PTO: LAW VERSUS REALITY

Here’s how the number of PTO days actually given compares to what’s legally required around the world:



### Above and Beyond

- USA gives the most above the legal requirement, but that's because there's no legal minimum, so everything is employer-driven.
- Countries like **Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Mexico, and Japan** also give significantly more than legally required, by 6 to 10 days, showing more generous employer practices or strong cultural norms.

### Close to Legal Baseline

- Countries like **Canada, Belgium, and Germany** give slightly less than required, but the gap is not drastic, often around 3 to 5 days.
- This could be due to how public holidays are counted or more cautious leave policies.

### Falling Short of Legal Requirements

- Some countries (like **Brazil, France, and the UK**) consistently give less than what’s required.
- This might come down to how “legal PTO” is defined or what gets counted in the data.

To see the data for all countries, [click here](#).



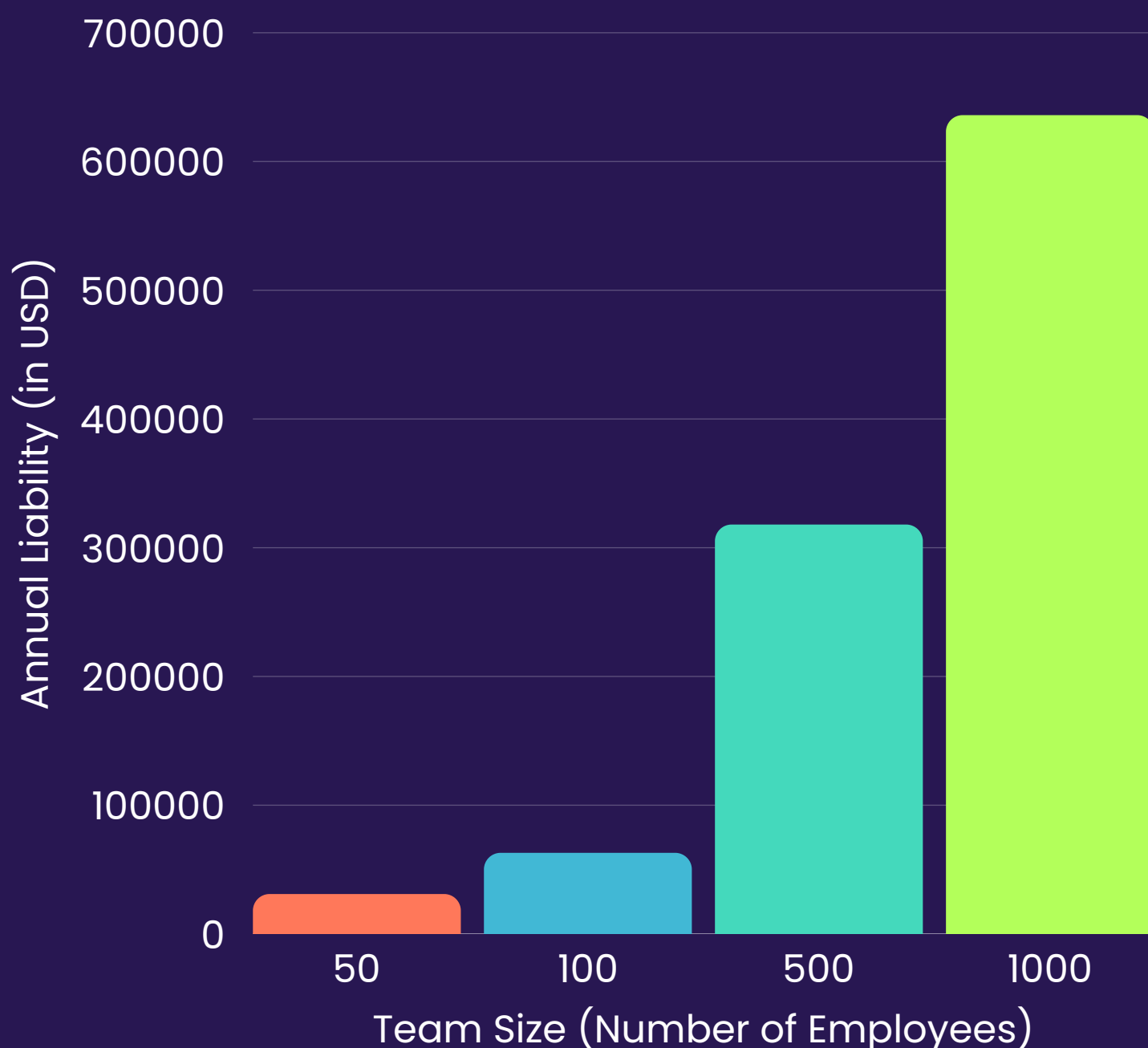
# THE HIDDEN COST OF UNUSED PTO

Employees worldwide leave an average of 3 paid days unused each year. At a typical daily wage of \$212 USD (assuming a global average salary of \$55k and 260 working days), that's \$636 per employee sitting on the balance sheet.

Multiply that across a 100-person company and the liability tops \$64,000, funds owed if staff cash out or quit without taking their leave. Beyond the hard dollars, unused PTO fuels burnout, turnover, and unscheduled sick days, compounding hidden costs even further.

$$\text{Unused PTO Cost} = \text{Unused days} \times (\text{Average Salary} \div 260)$$

Example: 3 days x \$55,000 ÷ 260 = \$636

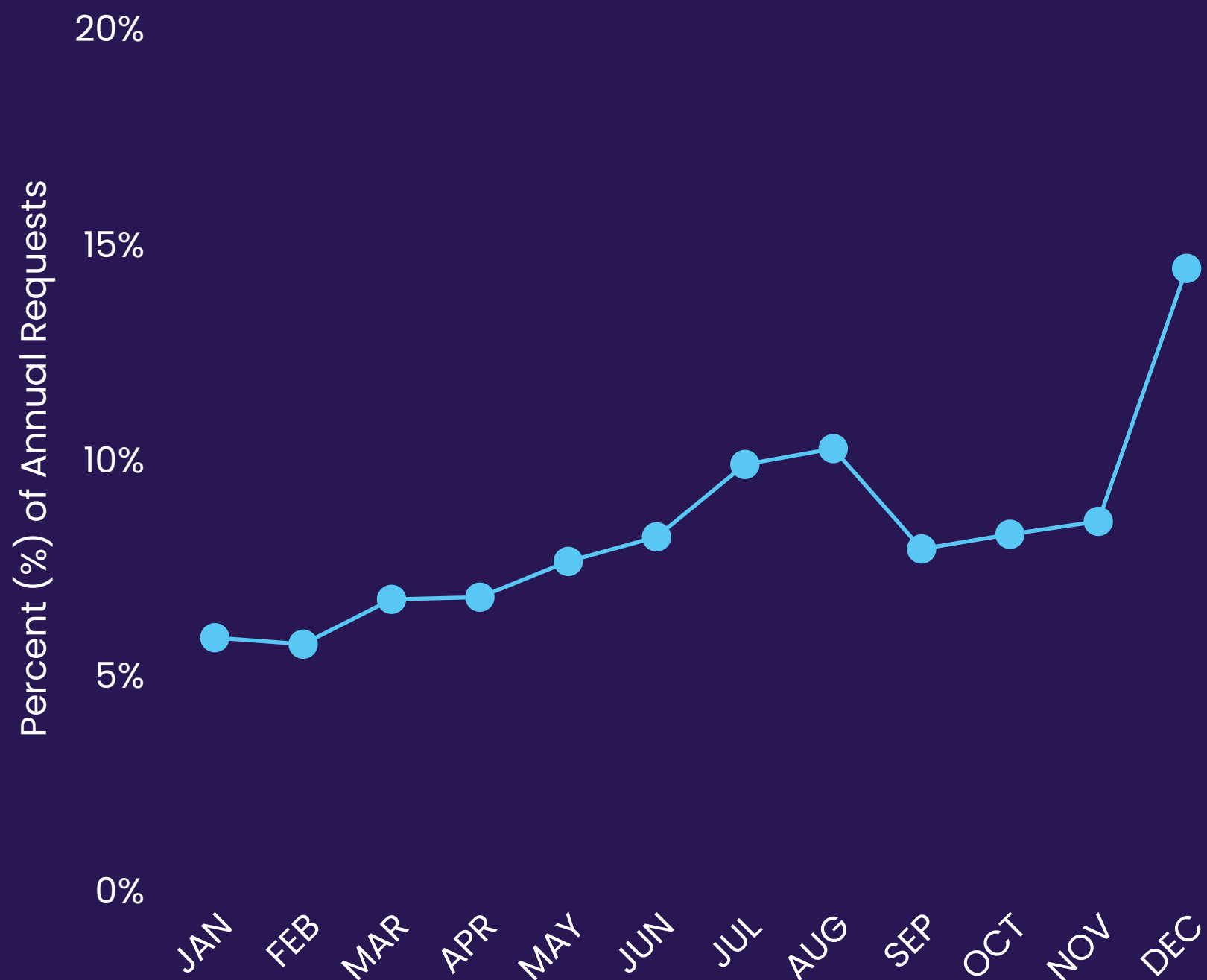


To see the data for all countries, [click here](#).

# WHEN DO EMPLOYEES REQUEST PTO?

This pattern indicates a **dual-peak** structure: mid-year vacations and end-of-year holidays.

Q1 tends to be the calmest period with the fewest amount of requests coming in.



## Quick facts

- **December** sees the highest PTO request volume at 14.41%, likely due to year-end holidays and last minute requests.
- The lowest months are **January** (5.84%) and **February** (5.69%), possibly due to post-holiday return to work.

To see the data for your specific country, [click here](#).

# PTO REQUESTS ACROSS TOP MARKETS

We analyzed **PTO request trends** in ten key countries that represent a diverse mix of work cultures, geographies, and economic influence. This group includes some of the world’s largest economies, tech hubs, and countries with varying leave policies, from generous statutory leave to employer-discretionary time off.

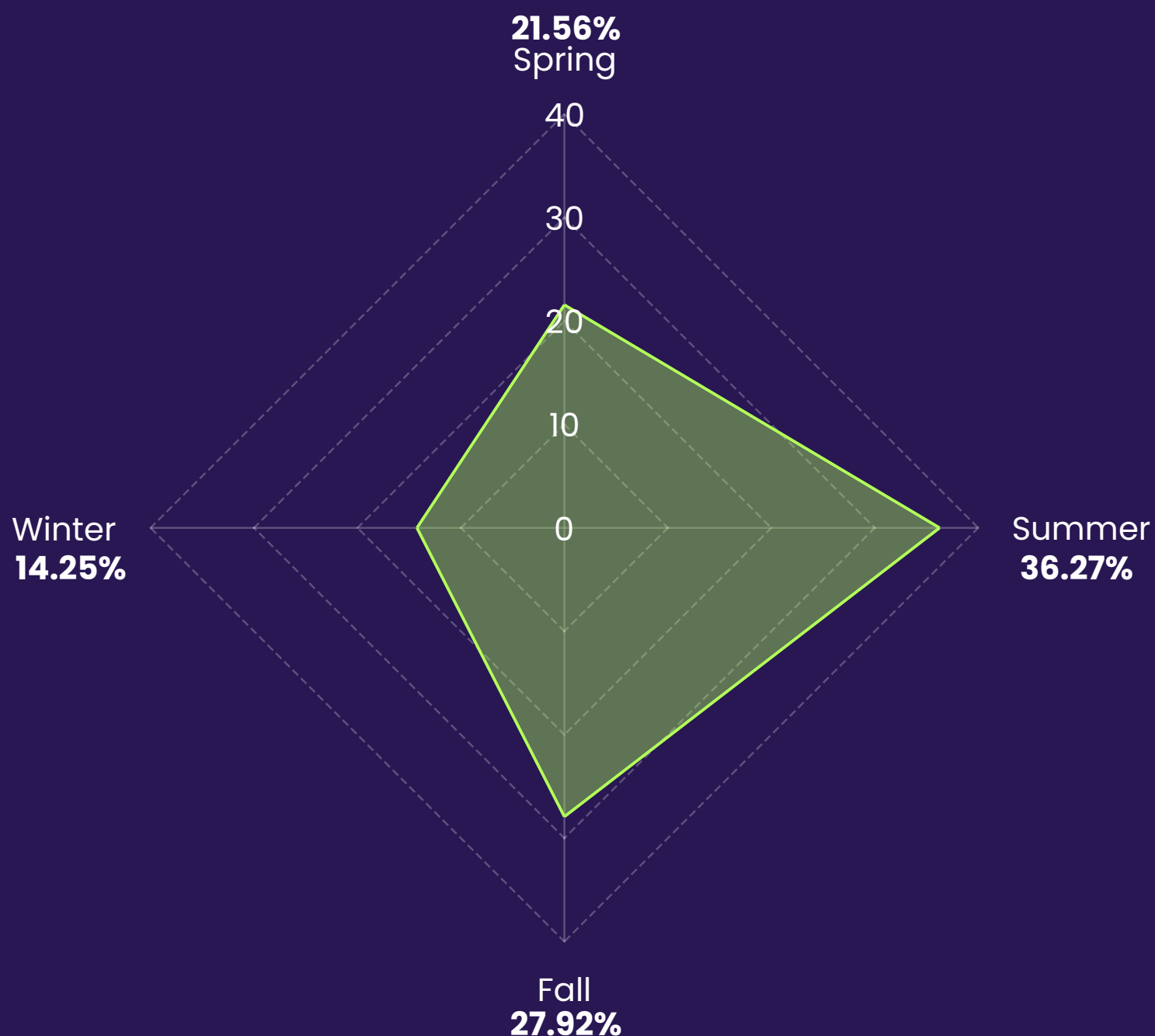
Together, they give a snapshot of how PTO is actually used around the world.

Location	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Argentina	9.43%	10.97%	9.43%	4.90%	7.07%	6.62%	8.70%	8.43%	8.98%	6.98%	8.25%	10.24%
Australia	10.88%	5.75%	6.84%	8.32%	5.89%	6.81%	7.77%	7.59%	8.26%	8.22%	8.03%	15.65%
Canada	5.26%	5.33%	6.66%	6.06%	6.71%	8.16%	11.31%	12.47%	8.06%	7.90%	8.38%	13.71%
France	4.98%	5.87%	6.04%	5.19%	10.01%	7.47%	10.09%	13.34%	7.60%	6.84%	8.07%	14.48%
Germany	6.91%	5.43%	6.26%	5.97%	8.22%	7.65%	8.88%	9.85%	8.06%	8.90%	6.71%	17.17%
India	7.65%	7.68%	8.72%	8.79%	7.15%	6.85%	7.62%	8.25%	8.12%	8.02%	9.25%	11.89%
Spain	7.80%	4.80%	6.16%	6.45%	5.96%	7.08%	9.42%	13.31%	8.72%	7.30%	6.64%	16.36%
Sweden	7.50%	4.33%	5.74%	6.18%	7.45%	9.36%	13.05%	10.96%	6.24%	6.62%	6.50%	16.08%
UK	4.97%	5.65%	6.58%	7.06%	7.59%	8.32%	9.10%	10.99%	8.17%	8.17%	7.80%	15.59%
USA	5.43%	5.72%	6.90%	6.88%	7.89%	8.21%	9.76%	9.33%	7.82%	8.65%	9.39%	14.02%

To see the data for all countries, [click here](#).

# WHEN DOES THE WORLD TAKE PTO?

Globally, more than a third of annual PTO is burned in the summer months, with spring and fall splitting most of the remainder. Winter remains the quietest season for leave.



## Quick facts:

- Summer leaders: **Germany** and **Canada** both log 40%+ of their PTO between June and August.
- Spring surge: **Japan** requests 29% of leave in spring, double the global winter share.
- Fall focus: The **US** leans into October travel, nudging fall to 29% of its annual total.
- Winter lull: Across our dataset of 2,500 companies, winter never tops 20% in any major market.

To see the data for all countries, [click here](#).

# WHEN TIME OFF IS TAKEN IN TOP MARKETS

By focusing on the same **key countries** as before, we can see not just when PTO is being requested, but also when it's taken throughout the seasons.

Location	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Argentina	16.59%	31.95%	32.74%	18.72%
Australia	25.28%	27.01%	31.14%	16.57%
Canada	22.53%	36.93%	22.86%	17.68%
France	25.49%	44.94%	16.98%	12.59%
Germany	23.58%	40.19%	19.81%	16.42%
India	22.47%	24.32%	36.42%	16.79%
Spain	21.17%	41.49%	22.53%	14.81%
Sweden	22.07%	63.85%	7.81%	6.27%
UK	24.65%	37.12%	24.92%	13.31%
USA	23.31%	29.95%	24.44%	22.30%

Quick facts:

- European countries lean heavily on summer.
- **India** stands out with fall as its main PTO season.
- The **US** shows the most balanced PTO usage across all seasons.
- **Sweden** is the most seasonally concentrated, summer or nothing.

To see the data for all countries, [click here](#).

# BUILD A LEAVE POLICY, IN MINUTES

## Leave Policy Generator

Follow these steps to create a sample, legally compliant leave policy in under five minutes.

### 1. Enter company details (size, industry, and location)

#### STEP 1 OF 5

##### Getting Started

Enter the name and size of your Company as listed in your employment contract.

Company name

Apple

Company size

5000

Next >

#### STEP 2 OF 5

##### Setting Holiday Entitlement

When does your holiday year start?

Day

Month

1

January

How many days of annual leave are employees allowed to take, excluding public holidays?

Annual Leave Days

20

< Back

Next >

### 2. Choose country rules, the generator pulls statutory requirements automatically.

### 3. Download a ready-to- share custom PDF policy.

[Open the generator](#)

# Conclusion

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You don't have to overhaul your PTO policy to make a difference, even just a little flexibility can go a long way. Simple changes, like not requiring a reason for time off or letting employees "dip into" future days, show that you trust them and value their needs.

The key to a great PTO policy is staying informed on the latest best practices.

## Manage time off with confidence.

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Managing leave can get complicated, but it doesn't have to be.

Vacation Tracker makes it easy to automate requests and approvals, sync with your calendars, and more. It's so simple to use, **your team will love it too.**

**Start a free trial**

Need help getting started? [Request a demo instead](#)