

Over the Highways and Through the Airports: More Americans Traveling This Holiday Season

42 Percent Traveling for the Holidays, Up from 39 Percent Last Year

Hawaii is Top Holiday Dream Escape, According to TripAdvisor Survey

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TripAdvisor(R), the world's largest travel community, today announced the results of its December holiday travel survey of more than 1,800 U.S. travelers. Forty-two percent of Americans plan to travel for the holidays, up from 39 percent one year ago. Of those traveling for the holidays, 66 percent plan to drive and 52 percent will fly.

(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20080902/TRIPADVISORLOGO>)

Family is Coming to Town

Eighty-one percent of U.S. respondents will see family and friends for the holidays, up from 77 percent last year. Fifty-five percent said they are traveling to visit family, while 38 percent are hosting family this holiday season. Sixty-four percent of Americans would rather stay at a hotel than with their relatives when visiting family this holiday season, down from 75 percent last year. Thirteen percent plan to "escape" family by taking a trip this holiday season.

Top Ten Holiday Dream Escapes, According to TripAdvisor Travelers

1. Hawaii
2. London
3. Paris
4. Aruba
5. New York City
6. Las Vegas
7. Jamaica
8. Rome
9. Bahamas
10. Tahiti

Rockin' Around the Budget

While more Americans plan to travel for the holidays, 68 percent said that they will be more budget conscious with their holiday travel compared to the previous year. Thirty-six percent of U.S. travelers are staying closer to home and 18 percent said they will fly on Christmas Day or New Year's Day because it is cheaper.

It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Stress

Fifty-two percent of Americans find traveling for the holiday season stressful. Despite this, 25 percent of travelers still believe taking a trip somewhere is the best way to alleviate holiday-related stress. Seventeen percent consider getting sleep the best stress reducer, while 10 percent recommend having drinks to blow off some holiday steam.

Of the top holiday travel frustrations, 24 percent noted airline delays and cancellations as the least enjoyable part of traveling for the holidays, while 21 percent cited inclement weather.

Dreaming of a Travel-Friendly Gift

When asked about the best "gift" for travelers this holiday season, 46 percent of Americans are dreaming of a direct flight without delays, while 23 percent are wishing for good weather.

Top 5 Holiday Gifts for the Traveler in Your Life

1. Digital camera
2. Frequent flyer miles
3. Noise-canceling headphones
4. GPS device
5. iPod/MP3 player

Budget Friendly Holiday Tips from TripAdvisor Travelers:

1. "Be flexible! One Advantage of the current economy is last minute deals."
2. "Crash at a relative's and say you want a good old-fashioned family Christmas."
3. "It's OK to haggle on pricing. Most U.S. citizens are uncomfortable with haggling prices. Try it in New Orleans, or any city!"
4. "Bring leftovers from home and have a nice, hot meal in your hotel room."
5. "Take a small Christmas tree and ornament hooks in a suitcase and decorate your hotel room with your trip souvenirs."
6. "Be a traveler in your own state to boost the local economy."
7. "Finding someone to check in on your pets is far less expensive than boarding them."
8. "Check for free events happening in the city you're visiting."
9. "Avoid parking fees and have a friend take you to the airport."
10. "Ask locals where they shop and dine. They live there so they know."

"While more Americans plan to travel this holiday season, people are increasingly looking for inexpensive ways to enjoy this special time of year," said Michele Perry, vice president of global communications for TripAdvisor. "From exploring their own backyards, to taking advantage of free holiday attractions, the majority of travelers will spend time with family and friends this holiday season, while mixing in the occasional 'escape' to alleviate stress."

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