Leisure Travel Outlook Rebounds

American travelers are once again feeling more optimistic about their upcoming leisure travels. The proportion of leisure travelers expecting to travel more in the upcoming year (compared to the previous year) is approaching its highest level since January 2008, or before the recent economic crisis began. In our latest survey, this figure increased to 33 percent, up from 27 percent six months ago. Underlying this increase appears to be rising consumer confidence driven by recent improvements in the nation’s economic outlook and relative stability in prices at the pump. In this round of our survey, fewer travelers reported that either personal financial concerns or high gas prices had kept them from traveling more than they would have otherwise preferred in the past 12 months.

Q In the past twelve (12) months, how many trips have you taken of more than 100 miles (roundtrip) for purely leisure or personal reasons?

- One: 24.4%
- Two: 21.2%
- Three: 12.9%
- Four: 9.6%
- Five: 7.3%
- Six: 6.6%
- Seven to Ten: 9.3%
- Eleven to Twenty: 6.1%
- Twenty One to Thirty: 1.6%
- More than Thirty: 0.8%
- Average: 4.8

Q How many of these leisure trips were day trips (no overnight stay)?

- Zero: 41.6%
- One: 20.9%
- Two: 14.0%
- Three or more: 23.5%
- Average: 2.1

Q How many of these leisure trips were primarily by automobile?

- Zero: 11.9%
- One: 25.5%
- Two: 19.1%
- Three: 11.4%
- Four: 8.5%
- Five or more: 23.5%
- Average: 3.3

Q How many of these leisure trips included travel outside the United States?

- Zero: 79.3%
- One: 15.2%
- Two: 3.1%
- Three or more: 2.4%
- Average: 0.3
Americans are Resolved to Travel!

Our enthusiasm for travel runs deep, and is shown in response to a first-time question asked in this January survey. Apparently, many travelers (37.8%) make New Year’s resolutions and nearly one quarter (24.1%) of these resolutions involve leisure travel in some way. When asked what type of travel-related resolution they made (or would make), the most common was to travel more. Nearly 30 percent of those surveyed said they would increase their travels, followed by making an effort to travel with friends and family (8.9%), visiting a specific domestic destination (9.2%) and visiting a specific international destination (7.5%).

Top Travel-related New Year’s Resolutions

1. Travel more – take more frequent trips .............................................. 29.5%
2. Travel more with friends and family ................................................. 8.9%
3. Visit a specific domestic destination* .............................................. 9.2%
4. Visit a specific international destination ........................................... 7.5%
5. Visit new places ............................................................................. 7.2%
6. Be more careful with money while traveling .................................... 5.8%
7. Miscellaneous other resolution ......................................................... 5.6%
8. Take a cruise .................................................................................. 3.9%
9. Visit Las Vegas .............................................................................. 3.5%
10. Visit New York City ....................................................................... 3.4%

* Destination other than Las Vegas, New York City, Hawaii, Florida, California and Alaska, each of which was specifically mentioned by more than 1 percent of respondents.

Did you make any New Year’s resolutions this year?

[Graph showing 62.2% Yes, 37.8% No]

Were any of these resolutions related to leisure travel?

[Graph showing 75.9% Yes, 24.1% No]

Reasons for cutting back on leisure travel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Gasoline was too expensive</th>
<th>Personal financial reasons</th>
<th>Airfare was too expensive</th>
<th>Safety concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2008</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2009</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2009</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2010</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2010</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2011</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>54.6%</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2011</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2012</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the past 12 months, which (if any) of the following kept you from traveling more for leisure than you would have otherwise preferred?

(Select all that apply)

- Personal financial reasons ................................................. 49.1%
- Gasoline was too expensive ................................................. 45.9%
- Airfare was too expensive .................................................... 35.2%
- I was too busy at work ......................................................... 23.7%
- I didn’t have enough vacation time ....................................... 18.9%
- Child care responsibilities .................................................... 12.2%
- Health/illness ........................................................................ 8.6%
- Safety concerns ....................................................................... 7.8%
- I did not have a travel companion(s) ...................................... 7.3%
- Other personal responsibilities .............................................. 6.7%
- Frustration with TSA airport screening procedures .................. 6.5%
- I travel frequently for business and prefered to stay home ....... 2.2%
- Lack of availability (at hotels, golf courses, spas, etc.) .......... 1.6%

Which of the following are you likely to do given the overall economic climate (including gasoline prices, travel costs and your personal financial situation)?

(Select all that apply)

- Look for travel discounts or bargains ........................................ 55.2%
- Visit generally less expensive destinations .......................... 26.2%
- Take at least one “staycation” (a vacation spent at home) ....... 26.2%
- Rather than traveling .............................................................. 19.1%
- Reduce the number of leisure trips I will take ......................... 17.7%
- Reduce the number of total days I will spend on leisure trip(s) to save money ................................................. 16.7%
- Shorten the distance of my trip(s) or reduce side trips along the way to save money ................................................. 16.1%
- Select less expensive mode(s) of transportation ................... 14.4%
- Cancel a trip that I’ve already begun to plan ......................... 2.5%
What are the five domestic destinations that you would most like to visit in the upcoming year?

- Las Vegas ................................ 34.0%
- New York City .............................. 28.3%
- Orlando/Disney World ..................... 25.8%
- Chicago ..................................... 11.4%
- San Francisco .............................. 11.4%
- San Diego ................................... 11.2%
- Los Angeles ................................. 9.8%
- Miami ........................................ 8.4%
- Anaheim/Disneyland .................... 6.5%
- Washington, DC ........................ 6.0%
- Seattle ...................................... 6.0%
- New Orleans .............................. 5.7%
- Boston ...................................... 5.1%
- Grand Canyon ............................ 4.9%
- Atlanta ..................................... 4.7%
- Phoenix .................................... 4.1%
- Miami ........................................ 8.4%

What are the five foreign destinations that you would most like to visit in the upcoming year?

- United Kingdom .......................... 14.1%
- Ireland ..................................... 4.8%
- Italy .......................................... 12.8%
- China ........................................ 4.2%
- Canada ...................................... 12.0%
- Japan ......................................... 3.6%
- France ...................................... 11.7%
- Bahamas .................................... 3.5%
- Mexico ....................................... 10.2%
- Greece ...................................... 3.3%
- Australia .................................... 6.4%
- Holland ...................................... 2.7%
- Spain ......................................... 5.8%
- Jamaica ..................................... 2.7%
- Germany .................................... 5.6%
- New Zealand ............................... 2.5%

What We Do on Our Leisure Trips

- Visit friends or relatives .................. 73.7%
- Dine in restaurants ........................ 69.2%
- Shopping .................................... 61.6%
- Go to a beach or lake ...................... 46.8%
- Sightseeing in cities ...................... 43.4%
- Visit an historical place or attraction 37.4%
- Visit small towns/villages ............. 34.0%
- Visit a theme/amusement park ....... 30.4%
- Casinos/Gambling .......................... 29.7%
- Visit a state or local park ............. 26.8%
- Sightseeing in rural areas ............. 25.7%
- Visit National Parks ................. 25.7%
- Day hiking .................................. 22.2%
- Attend a sporting event .............. 21.8%
- Camping .................................... 21.0%
- Art galleries or museum .............. 20.3%
- Attend concert, play or musical .... 20.0%
- Drive a designated scenic byway .... 19.0%
- Fishing ...................................... 17.5%
- Attend a family reunion .............. 16.4%
- Nightclubbing .............................. 16.0%
- Visit a National Forest .............. 13.2%
- Take a guided tour ...................... 12.8%
- Stay in an all-inclusive resort ....... 12.7%
- Visit a winery ............................... 12.4%
- Foliage or fall scenery watching .. 12.4%
- Visit environmental/ecological sites 9.8%
- Visit ethnic heritage sites .......... 9.6%
- Sailing or other water sports .. 9.2%
- Spa or hot spring ......................... 9.0%
- Visit a Civil War battlefield or historic monument/location .. 8.8%
- Golf .......................................... 8.4%
- Bird watching .............................. 7.2%
- Canoeing or kayaking ................. 7.2%
- Horseback riding ....................... 6.9%
- Take a day cruise ....................... 6.7%
- Hunting ..................................... 6.4%
- Hiking trip (1 or more nights on trail) .. 6.0%
- Astronomy or stargazing ............ 5.8%
- Mountain biking ....................... 5.4%
- ATV or off road vehicles .......... 5.0%
- White water rafting ..................... 4.9%
- Visit a Revolutionary War battlefield or historic monument/location 4.3%
- Rock climbing ............................ 4.1%
- Mountaineering ......................... 2.6%
- Tennis .................................... 2.4%
- Ranch vacation ............................ 2.4%
- Skiing or snowboarding ............ 2.4%

In the past 12 months, which of these activities did you participate in (at least once) while on leisure trips (of 50 miles or more one-way)?

(Select all that apply)

- Spent more money than I expected to ........................................ 47.9%
- Took a laptop computer with me when I traveled for leisure .... 39.1%
- Made a new friend(s) ........................................ 27.7%
- Did something totally new and exciting .......................... 25.8%
- Traveled specifically to get away from my work ............. 17.3%
- Ordered room service in a hotel ........................................ 17.0%
- Attended religious services ........................................... 13.3%
- Did something risky or dangerous .................................... 12.0%
- Used an iPad or other tablet computer to access online travel information .................. 10.8%
- Brought my pet(s) with me ........................................... 10.5%
- Extended my vacation because I was having so much fun .... 10.0%
- Took my work with me on vacation ..................................... 9.8%
- Brought my own meal on an airline ................................... 9.6%
- Traveled specifically to spend time away from someone ...... 8.8%
- Used the mini bar in a hotel ........................................... 8.3%
- Purchased a travel package ............................................ 7.7%
- Met a new romantic partner ........................................... 5.9%
- Took a class or educational seminar .............................. 4.8%
- Visited a national Park ........................................... 4.8%
- Traveled in an organized group tour ............................. 3.9%
- Came home early because I was bored ......................... 3.5%
- Traveled to meet (for the first time) someone I was introduced to online .... 2.8%
The State of the American Traveler Survey is conducted every six months by Destination Analysts, Inc, a San Francisco-based tourism industry research company. The survey is conducted online amongst a nationally representative sample of adult Americans. From January 3rd through January 5th, 2012, surveys were collected from a group of respondents who were then screened by their leisure travel behavior. Only those respondents who had traveled at least once in the past 12 months for purely leisure or personal reasons were interviewed. This travel must have been of at least 50 miles one-way — the standard distance threshold used in the tourism industry to signify that a “trip” has been taken.

In total, 1,010 leisure travelers completed the survey. With this sample size, the topline data presented here can be considered to have a reliability of +/- 3.1%.

Methodology

The survey is conducted online amongst a nationally representative sample of adult Americans. From January 3rd through January 5th, 2012, surveys were collected from a group of respondents who were then screened by their leisure travel behavior. Only those respondents who had traveled at least once in the past 12 months for purely leisure or personal reasons were interviewed. This travel must have been of at least 50 miles one-way — the standard distance threshold used in the tourism industry to signify that a “trip” has been taken.

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**Technologies, Resources and Services Used to Plan Leisure Travel**

In the past 12 months, which of these have you used to help plan your leisure travel? (Select all that apply)

![Bar chart showing the percentage of respondents using different technologies, resources, and services to plan leisure travel.]

- **User-generated reviews of hotels**: 29.7%
- **User-generated travel reviews of destinations**: 19.1%
- **User-generated reviews of restaurants or activities**: 21.2%
- **User-generated travel itinerary or blog**: 18.8%
- **Submitted reviews, comments, or itinerary online**: 7.8%
- **Destination’s page on social media website**: 14.5%
- **Became a friend/fan of destination on social media website**: 8.1%
- **Followed a city or destination on Twitter**: 1.2%
- **Microblogging/Twitter**: 6.8%
- **Social photo-sharing websites**: 7.5%
- **Social bookmarking websites**: 3.3%
- **DMO website**: 30.4%
- **Mobile phone/PDA to access travel info**: 29.4%
- **Travel-related e-mail newsletter**: 12.9%

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**Q** When did you use your mobile device for travel information?*

(Select all that apply)

*Asked only of those using mobile phone/PDA to access travel information

- **DURING a trip(s)**: 89.2%
- **BEFORE I left home for a trip(s)**: 63.3%

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**Q** Which of the following did you specifically do using your mobile device?*

(Select all that apply)

*Asked only of those using mobile phone/PDA to access travel information

- **Find restaurant information**: 69.4%
- **Check weather**: 63.3%
- **Look at maps**: 62.6%
- **Use a GPS-related app for directions**: 58.6%
- **Find hotel information**: 44.4%
- **Find shopping information**: 42.4%
- **Find sightseeing or attractions information**: 38.4%
- **Check into a flight**: 28.3%
- **Use a destination-specific app for travel information**: 14.8%
- **Get a mobile boarding pass**: 14.5%
- **Research public transportation**: 12.8%
- **Check into a hotel**: 12.1%
- **Check out of a hotel**: 10.1%
- **Buy tickets (to an event, festival, museum, etc.)**: 8.4%

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