

THE STATE OF THE AMERICAN TRAVELER: Destinations Edition 2023

RESEARCH SUMMARY



Executive Summary

For more than a decade, Miles Partnership has worked with Destination Analysts to share innovative research and cutting-edge analysis on U.S. leisure travelers.

This year, the annual “Destinations Edition” delves into “what’s hot and what’s not,” exploring which destinations are on travelers’ bucket lists and why. Leisure travel as a priority is at an all-time high, with 85% of leisure travelers rating themselves as extremely excited to travel in the next 12 months. With domestic travel recovery surging, where do these travelers intend to go? What factors currently drive or hinder U.S. travelers’ decisions to visit certain destinations, and how can destinations adapt to these shifting motivators and barriers?

Guest speaker, Tim Wright, Director of Content Strategy with Odyssey Studios, looked at effective creative strategies, content types and media channels for destinations seeking to capture the leisure traveler’s attention and interest through video. With one-third of U.S. travelers using online video to plan their trips, and younger generations like Millennials and GenZ looking to visually appealing videos for destination inspiration, it’s more important than ever to have a strategy to showcase your destination, increase engagement and immerse viewers to keep them coming back for more.



RESEARCH BY

Destination  Analysts

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ANALYSIS BY

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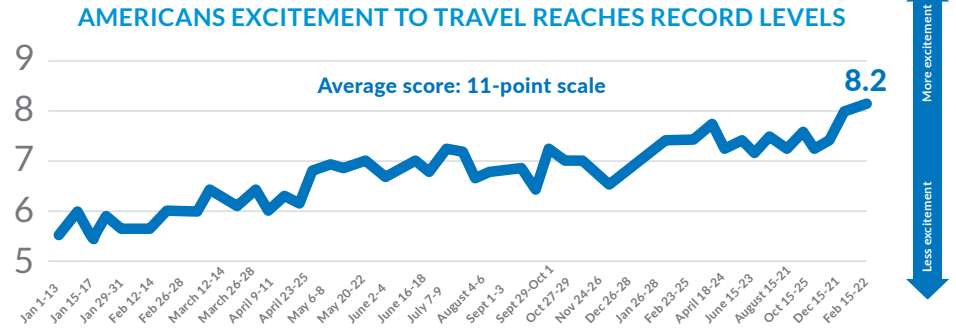
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TRAVEL EXCITEMENT

The outlook for travel over the next 12 months looks bright. Americans' excitement for travel is at record levels and travelers' reported average expected annual travel spending hit \$4,677. American travelers say they will prioritize leisure travel in their household income's spending in the coming months over home improvements, clothing, entertainment and even dining out in restaurants.

Which best describes how excited you are about LEISURE TRAVEL in the next twelve (12) months?

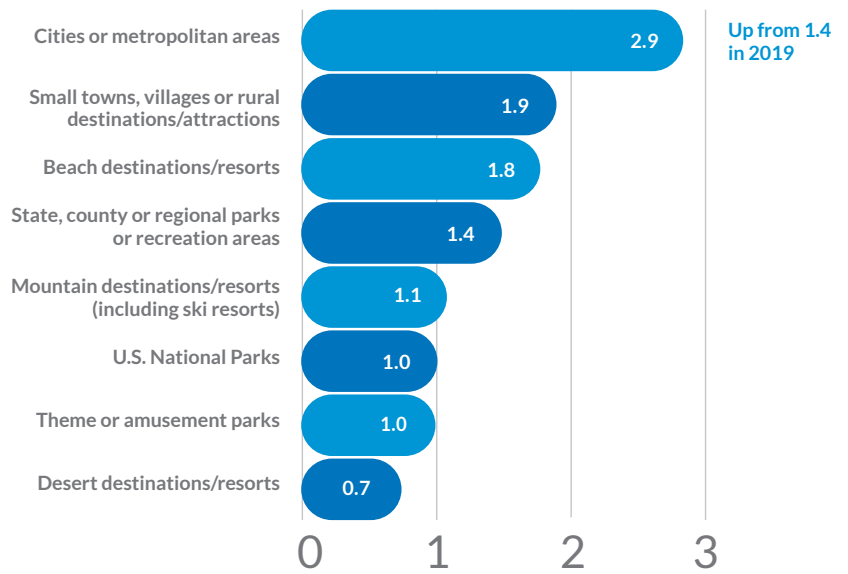


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EXPECTED LEISURE TRIPS

When asked about their feelings about various destination types, American travelers express the most excitement for beaches (60.0%), followed by cities (47.7%), small towns (44.8%) and then national parks (41.2%). However, in a turn-around from the pandemic era, cities top the list in the reported number of leisure trips Americans plan to take to them this year. The average American traveler says they plan to take 2.9 leisure trips to cities this year, up from 1.4 reported in 2019.

In the next 12 months, HOW MANY OF YOUR LEISURE TRIPS will likely include the following types of leisure destinations?



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WHAT ARE DESTINATIONS BEST KNOWN FOR?

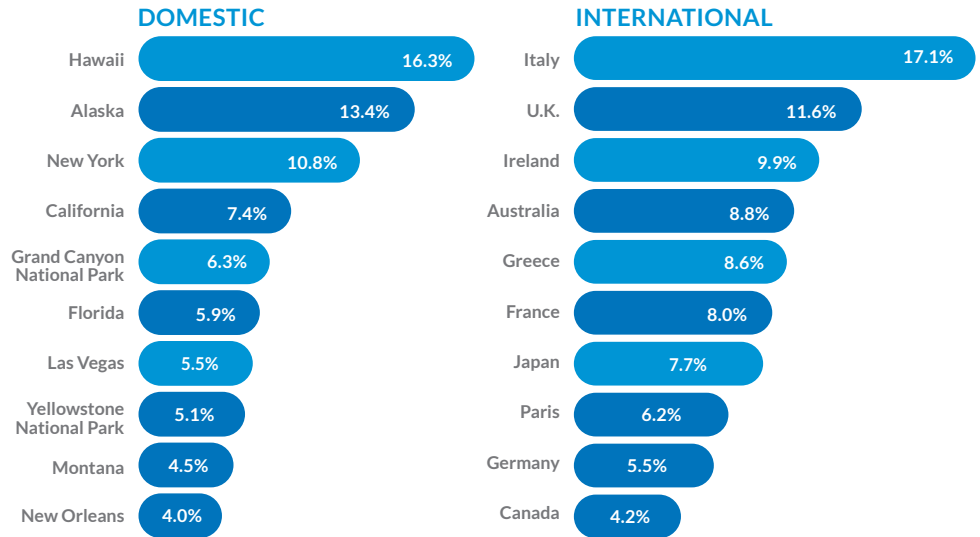
In our latest survey, American travelers also rated dozens of destinations on a variety of different attributes. Best for food? New York. Romantic atmosphere? Miami. Welcoming to people like themselves? Orlando. A Place to Attend a Meeting/Conventions? Las Vegas.

FOOD		ROMANTIC ATMOSPHERE		WELCOMING TO "PEOPLE LIKE MYSELF"		MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS	
New York	69.6%	Miami	36.7%	Orlando	53.8%	Las Vegas	43.6%
Las Vegas	66.1%	Reno-Lake Tahoe	33.2%	Las Vegas	50.3%	Washington DC	40.5%
San Francisco	63.2%	Santa Barbara	33.0%	Nashville	46.3%	New York City	39.8%
New Orleans	63.1%	Las Vegas	32.1%	New Orleans	43.5%	Orlando	39.2%

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WHICH DESTINATIONS ARE HOT?

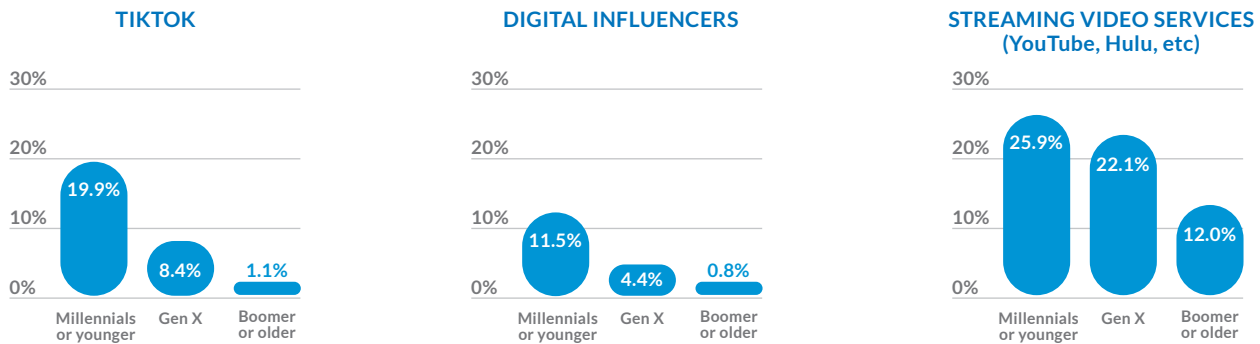
Nearly half (48%) of U.S. travelers say they have an active bucket list of places they want to visit. Domestically, these bucket lists most commonly include Hawaii, Alaska, New York and California. Internationally, Italy comes out on top, followed by the UK. With 31.2% of American travelers reporting they are likely to travel abroad this year, perhaps many will be able to fulfill these travel wishes.



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TRAVEL INSPIRATION: MEDIA RESOURCES

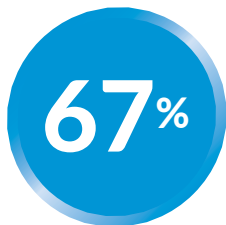
About one-third of American travelers overall report they used online video specifically for trip planning purposes. But when it comes to destination inspiration, Millennial and GenZ age travelers are particularly open to content they receive through video sources like TikTok and streaming services.



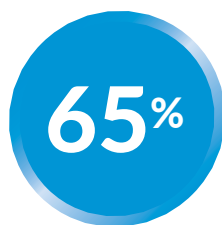
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HOW VIDEO INFLUENCES TRAVEL DECISIONS

When it comes to researching and planning trips, almost 50% of travelers use online video in some shape or form before they decide where to go.



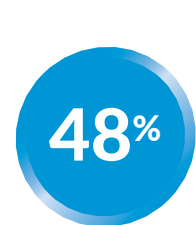
USE VIDEO WHEN CHOOSING A DESTINATION



USE VIDEO WHEN THINKING ABOUT TAKING A TRIP



USE VIDEO WHEN DECIDING ON AN ACCOMMODATION



USE VIDEO WHEN THINKING OF THE TYPE OF TRIP THEY WANT

Think With Google/Ipsos MediaCTTech Tracker

5 Key Takeaways

1

Excitement for travel is at an all time high heading into 2023, with 85% of travelers rating themselves as extremely excited for leisure travel in the next 12 months. Domestic leisure travel specifically has taken precedence over food and dining, education, home improvements and international travel plans.

2

While beach destinations still take the lead in excitement for U.S. travelers, cities are making a comeback and are projected to see the highest number of leisure trips this year, followed by beaches, small towns and then national parks.

3

Despite economic uncertainty influencing the decision-making process for some travelers, those seeking leisure still anticipate spending more than \$4,600 on travel this year.

4

While domestic travel is seeing a significant rebound, intentions to travel internationally remain relatively low, with only 31% of leisure travelers expressing the likelihood of booking trips outside of the U.S. within the next 12 months.

5

Just over half of U.S. leisure travelers say they don't currently have a travel bucket list, and with the rise of travel inspiration through media consumption, this offers many destinations an opportunity to inform and inspire these travelers into making long term plans to make repeat visits to their destinations down the road.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Webinar: The State of the American Traveler: Destinations Edition](#)

[Blog: Destinations Edition Summary](#)

[Online Video Research and Resources](#)

[Quarterly Special Edition Webinars of The State of the American Traveler](#)

[Time for DMOCracy Resources](#)

