In December 2020, Expedia Group conducted a study of 2,200 Americans in collaboration with data intelligence firm The Morning Consult to better understand how the travel industry has evolved since the outset of the pandemic, and the way consumers are feeling about traveling in the year ahead.

The purpose of this report is to provide a holistic view of the outlook on travel. We encourage all travelers to make responsible travel decisions, including adhering to guidance issued by governments and health authorities.
Looking back at 2020

Before we dive into 2021, let’s reflect.

Travelers had to endure a change of plans — but the trips taken were worth it.

Still, the majority of travelers discovered unexpected benefits of taking trips for leisure or business during the pandemic.

- 78% enjoyed pandemic travel more than anticipated
- 37% experienced less crowded restaurants, bars and shops
- 29% explored a new destination outside their area
- 25% participated in new outdoor activities

34% had a shorter booking window
30% opted to drive over other methods of transportation

Expedia Group’s 2021 Travel Trends Report
Predictions for 2021
In the year ahead, travel will play an increasingly critical role in strengthening connections, broadening horizons, and bridging divides.

The majority of Americans agree that travel:

- **63%** Creates greater cultural understanding
- **62%** Makes me feel more connected to the world
- **56%** Is healing
Initiatives to reduce the spread of COVID-19 will fuel travel industry recovery.

46% are more likely to travel when a COVID-19 vaccine is made widely available

42% said positive news surrounding a COVID-19 vaccine made them more hopeful about travel, or drove them to book a trip

39% believe instituting travel bubbles will help keep communities safe

Married couples and city dwellers will be first to travel following the wide release of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Married

Urban 54%
Suburban 50%
Rural 30%

Unmarried

56%
40%

The graphs below represent the percent of respondents who report being more willing to travel as soon as a COVID-19 vaccine is widely available:
After months in relative isolation, the pent-up demand for travel is significant. With the advent of the vaccine and other treatments, people are starting to believe normal life is within reach — and they can’t wait to explore the world and see loved ones.

44% will take more trips in 2021 compared to 2020.

39% say their next vacation will be at least a week.
Among those who plan to travel, Millennials and those on the West Coast and in the Northeast will splurge the most. Respondents in the following geographic breakdown say they will spend more on travel in 2021 compared to 2020:

- West: 52%
- Northeast: 50%
- South: 35%
- Midwest: 32%

And travelers are willing to cut back on personal expenses to afford more trips. Here’s what they would give up:

- 43%: dining out or getting takeout
- 38%: alcohol
- 25%: streaming services

Consumer spending on travel will be high in 2021.
Travelers will use their savings on a dream vacation.

Compared to Boomers, 2x as many Gen Zers have a bucket list trip planned and hope to take it soon.

56% Want a beach vacation
51% Would love to take a U.S. landmark tour
45% Can’t wait to board a cruise
People will travel with those they’ve been closest to throughout the pandemic.

Most popular travel companions:

1. Children
2. Quaranteam
3. Immediate family outside my quaranteam

Least popular travel companions:

1. Persons at risk of contracting COVID-19
2. Those with different views on the pandemic
3. Friends or family outside my quaranteam
Here’s a snapshot of what several Expedia Group brands are forecasting in the year ahead.
April to September is the most popular time to travel, and younger generations are leading recovery.

An Expedia Group Media Solutions survey of 11,000 individuals across 11 countries found that Millennials and Gen Z will be traveling the most this year, dependent on restrictions. All generations are hopeful about travel in the spring and summer compared to early in the year. Seasonality plays a role here, but this trend could in part be due to optimism about traveling a bit more freely and internationally in the latter half of the year.

View the full report by Expedia Group Media Solutions, Understanding Traveler Sentiment & Influences.
Cities will make a comeback.

U.S. travelers are already booking their return to cities, according to Brand Expedia®’s top arrival destinations based on flight demand.

**H1 Top Fly-To Destinations**
1. Cancun
2. Orlando
3. Las Vegas
4. Miami
5. Denver
6. New York
7. Los Angeles
8. Fort Lauderdale
9. Chicago
10. Phoenix

**H2 Top Fly-To Destinations**
1. Cancun
2. Orlando
3. Las Vegas
4. Honolulu
5. Kahului
6. New York
7. Los Angeles
8. Seattle
9. London
10. Miami

**Saturday**
Best day of the week to book air travel

**Thursday/Friday**
Best days to depart for travel

Brand Expedia flight demand data as of Jan. 2021. H1 is defined as January through June 2021; H2 is July through December 2021.
Families will continue to embark on drivable flexcations together.

Vrbo® discovered many families will still stick close to home and enjoy flexcations — blending play with remote work and school. The findings below were sourced from a survey of 8,000+ people across 8 countries and Vrbo demand data.

In the U.S.:

- **67%** of families who took a Flexcation this year would embark on a similar trip again.
- **65%** plan on traveling more than they did pre-COVID.

Across the globe:

- **63%** of families say they prefer outdoorsy destinations over urban settings.
- **60%** want to travel to a new destination rather than one they’ve been to before.

Top Drivable Destinations

1. Broken Bow, OK
2. Boone, NC
3. Naples, FL
4. Miramar & Rosemary Beach, FL
5. Gatlinburg & Pigeon Forge, TN


View Vrbo’s full 2021 travel trends report and resources.
Parents will plan and book trips early.

A recent Travelocity® survey of more than 1,000 American parents found that parents are 2x more likely than those without kids to have traveled since the start of the pandemic, and they’re feeling very optimistic about taking trips in the year ahead.

56% had already started or were about to begin planning their next vacation by the second week of January.

55% report feeling extremely confident about 2021 travel.
Travel is a force for good.