

Family Vacations, Girlfriend Getaways, "Man"cations Heat up While Staycations Cool Down

More Americans are planning to travel this summer despite rising gas prices, according to the latest *American Express Spending & Saving Tracker* (59 percent in 2011 vs. 51 percent in 2010). Vacationing consumers plan to take an average of two week-long vacations, spending an average of \$1,200 per person, and three weekend-getaways with an average spend of \$300 per weekend.

"Staycations, popularized during the recession, are falling to the wayside as consumers go beachside instead," said Claire Bennett, senior vice president and general manager of American Express Travel. "Most Americans will be enjoying their summer away from home this year with many planning multiple vacations. This is terrific news for the travel industry."

Family vacations are making a big comeback this year. Nearly 70 percent of those with travel plans say they'll travel with their immediate families, up from 45 percent in 2010. Among those who are planning to take summer vacations with their families, nearly two-thirds (64 percent) will take one or more weeklong trips, with an average of two weeklong trips this summer.

Weekend Getaway Top Travel Desire

Americans with travel plans prefer quick getaways this summer to weeklong vacations (68 percent vs. 63 percent). Girlfriend getaways and "man"cations are on the rise compared to 2010 (15 percent compared to 10 percent).

More than 40 percent of consumers said that getting a good deal on hotels, rental cars, flights, etc. is the most important factor in planning where they go for weekend getaways. Many also cited that they choose destinations based on where friends, family or significant others have decided (32 percent), diversity of activities (31 percent) and accessibility to a beach (29 percent).

Visiting a beach or lake is the top activity for Americans during a weekend getaway (42 percent). Other activities include shopping (33 percent), attending family or school reunions (23 percent), partaking in learning activities (22 percent), going to waterparks (22 percent) and camping (22 percent).

Cutting Vacation Costs

To make summer vacations more affordable this year, consumers are willing to sacrifice to save. More than eight in 10 note that they have specific strategies to reduce their vacation costs (88 percent) as they prepare for their summer getaways. These include driving instead of flying (38 percent) and choosing less expensive destinations (24 percent).

Nearly 60 percent of Americans with travel plans will make everyday trade-offs to afford their summer vacations such as spending less on:

- Dining out (38 percent)
- Clothing (30 percent)
- Home improvements (25 percent)
- Entertaining or going out with friends (24 percent)
- Pampering at spa or salon (20 percent)
- Gadget/tech purchases (18 percent)

Source: *American Express Spending & Saving Tracker* research was completed online among a random sample of 2,025 consumers aged 18 in April 2011.