
No Vacation from the Economy: Two Thirds of Americans Plan Summer Vacation, but Nearly Half will Spend Less Than Last Year

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – May 19, 2009 – As school ends and the weather turns warmer, people normally start to think about summer vacations. The faltering economy does have many Americans, as well as their employers, rethinking and re-budgeting – but not necessarily eradicating – their summer travel plans. Concerns about the economy are prompting two in five Americans (40%) to be less likely to travel for both business and leisure during the summer travel season from May – August.

These are some of the results of The Harris Poll of 2,401 U.S. adults surveyed online between April 13 and 21, 2009 by Harris Interactive. *Please note that this survey was completed prior to the publicly reported cases of H1N1 or the “swine flu” across the globe.*

More than one in three Americans (35%) said they are not planning on taking any leisure trips this summer. Many more (77%) are anticipating that they will not travel on business in the next four months. But not everyone is planning to stay home. Nearly two out of three adults (65%) are planning a vacation this summer, including 17% who are anticipating making three or more trips this summer..

Many travelers say the shaky economy means their 2009 summer vacation will look different than their 2008 summer getaway:

Nearly three in ten (29%) adults plan on decreasing the number of leisure trips they make by car;

One-third (33%) say they will take fewer plane trips for leisure;

Another third (34%) will cut the number of weekend trips they take;

Slightly more than one-third (35%) will reduce the duration of their vacations; and,

Nearly half (46%) plan to reduce the amount of money they spend on vacation.

Those who are planning a trip this summer will spend an average of \$1,629 on their travel this summer. Among those who are planning on reducing the amount of money they spend:

Six out of ten (60%) are hoping to economize their leisure travel this summer by finding less expensive activities or meal options;

Half will seek out less expensive accommodations (52%) or will vacation closer to home (50%);

Nearly two in five (39%) are also hoping to reduce travel costs by staying with family and friends instead of at a hotel, by cooking their own meals instead of dining out or by driving instead of flying; and,

Three in ten (31%) say they will share costs with other family members or friends.

Companies are also altering their summer travel plans due to economic conditions. More than one in five adults (22%) say their employer has reduced or eliminated all non-essential travel and 15% work for companies which are encouraging the use of technology (e.g. teleconferencing, video conferencing) to reduce or eliminate travel.

So What?

While the economy is clearly changing the way Americans vacation, they are not willing to postpone their summer vacation plans altogether. This is great news for those in the travel industry; it is important to be especially mindful of people who are looking to cut costs. Offering deals to people will be especially important this summer. Because many people intend to stay closer to home for their summer vacations, the travel industry would also do well to consider promotions and advertising that reaches out to people in their own cities, states, and regions. Retailers may also look to market to larger group activities as people look to reduce vacation costs by sharing costs with family and friends.

**TABLE 1
LIKELIHOOD TO TRAVEL FOR LEISURE OR BUSINESS IN FUTURE**

“How does your outlook on the U.S. economy impact your likelihood to travel within the next 4 months (May-August?)”

Base: All U.S. Adults

	Total
	%
MORE LIKELY TO TRAVEL (NET)	8
I am much more likely to travel	3
I am somewhat more likely to travel	4
No impact on my likelihood to travel	40
LESS LIKELY TO TRAVEL (NET)	40
I am somewhat less likely to travel	23
I am much less likely to travel	18
I have no plans to travel	12

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100 percent due to rounding.

TABLE 2
NUMBER OF LEISURE TRIPS PLANNED IN FUTURE

“How many leisure trips do you anticipate taking over the next four months (May – August)?”

Base: All US Adults

	Total
	%
0	35
1	28
2	19
3-5	15
6+	2

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100 percent due to rounding.

TABLE 3
NUMBER OF BUSINESS TRIPS PLANNED IN FUTURE

“How many business trips do you anticipate taking over the next four months (May – August)?”

Base: All US Adults

	Total
	%
0	77
1	9
2	7
3-5	4
6+	3

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100 percent due to rounding.

TABLE 4
CHANGE IN NUMBER AND DURATION OF LEISURE TRIPS

“Compared to your travel last summer (May – August 2008), how will your outlook on the U.S. economy impact the leisure travel you anticipate taking this summer (May – August 2009)?”

Base: Traveled last summer

	Increase	Remain the Same	Decrease	Not Applicable
	%	%	%	%
Number of leisure trips by car	15	50	29	6
Number of weekend trips	12	44	34	10
Amount spent on leisure trips	10	40	46	4
Duration of leisure trips	10	51	35	4
Number of leisure trips by	9	29	33	30

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100 percent due to rounding.

**TABLE 5
ANTICIPATED TOTAL TRAVEL (LEISURE + BUSINESS) SPEND**

“Approximately how much do you anticipate you will spend in total (leisure travel/business travel) in the next four months (May – August)? Please consider spending to include transportation, accommodations, food/beverage, activities, etc. Please include spending on items that you will personally pay for (or your company will pay for).”

Base: Plan to travel this summer

	Total
	%
0	2
\$1-\$499	26
\$500-\$999	24
\$1,000-\$1,999	23
\$2,000-\$4,999	17
\$5,000+	7
Mean	\$1,629

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100 percent due to rounding.

**TABLE 6
HOW LEISURE SPEND WILL BE REDUCED**

“Which of the following actions, if any, do you anticipate you will take in order to reduce your leisure travel spending within the next 12 months?”

Base: Plan on decreasing spending

	Total
	%
Find less expensive activities	60
Find less expensive meal options	60
Find less expensive accommodations	52
Reduce travel expenses by vacationing closer to home	50
Reduce travel expenses by driving instead of flying	39
Stay with friends or family instead of a hotel	39
Cook my own meals while on vacation instead of dining out	39
Take a “staycation” (staying at home during my vacation instead of traveling somewhere else)	32
Share costs with other family members/friends	31
Reduce travel expenses by taking a bus or a train	5
“Naycation” – I will not take any leisure trips in the next 12 months	9
None of these	3

Note: Multiple Responses Allowed

**TABLE 7
CHANGES IN BUSINESS TRAVEL**

“Which of the following changes, if any, has your company made to its travel policy within the past year?”

Base: Employed

	Total
	%
Reduction or elimination of all ‘non-essential’ travel	22
Encourage the use of technology (e.g., teleconferencing, video conferencing) in order to reduce/eliminate travel	15
Encourage/Enforce employees to only book at hotels/with airlines that provide the company with preferred rates	11
Encourage day trips in order to reduce/eliminate the need to pay for overnight accommodations	9
Enforce/Establish per-diem meal allowances (the amount of money an employee will be reimbursed for meal expenses)	7
Begin booking travel through an online travel agency (e.g., Expedia, Travelocity) in order to avoid paying travel agency fees	7
Enforce limits on what I am permitted to spend for overnight accommodations at a hotel	6
Reduction/Elimination in the amount I am permitted to spend entertaining clients	6
Encourage/Enforce coworkers to share a hotel room/suite	4
Other	3
Not sure	10
I do not travel for business purposes	32
My company has not made any changes to its travel policy	10
My company does not have a travel policy	16

Note: Multiple Responses Allowed

Methodology

This Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States April 13 and 21, 2009 among 2,401 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different

probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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***The Harris Poll*[®] #50, May 19, 2009**

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