

Profile of the American Family Traveler



The **Profile of the American Family Traveler** is a comprehensive study of the domestic family travel market, created through the new partnership of Longwoods International and the Family Travel Association. This unique view of family travel comprises a sample subset of Longwoods 2016 **Travel USA®** panel, based on respondents reporting having at least one child in their travel party. The **Travel USA®** methodology studies both overnight and day trip metrics to analyze family travel behavior. This profile study will be updated annually, with 2017 data available in the coming months. The full 2016 Profile of the American Family Traveler study will be made available shortly on familytravel.org.

- The 2016 Family Travel sample consists of 96,580 trips – 67,429 overnight trips and 29,151 day trips.
- Family Travel represents 35% of all reported trips in US domestic travel.
- More than half of Family Travel trips are considered “marketable” leisure, while the remainder are visits to relatives and friends. Marketable trips are discretionary trips whose selection of destinations, accommodations and activities can be directly influenced by marketing and communications from all categories of travel suppliers.
- Family Travelers spend 39% more than non-family travelers on overnight trips, and 29% more on day trips. This increased economic activity makes family travel a highly attractive segment for travel destinations and suppliers.
- The average family travel overnight trip is 3.6 nights long, slightly shorter than non-family trips of 3.8 nights.
- The most common form of transportation for overnight family travel is the family car. 71% use their car as their primary travel transport. Only 20% of overnight domestic family travel involves air travel.
- The most popular accommodations for family travel are resorts at 30%, followed by staying with relatives and friends at 22%. Hotels and motels follow closely behind at 18% and 17% of accommodation stays.
- Family Travelers are drawn to a broader range of activities than non-family travelers. Activities that draw greater participation and spend from family travelers include shopping, swimming, beach/waterfront, theme parks, museums, national & state parks, zoos, fishing, camping, biking, golf, tennis, youth/kid’s sports events and spa visits.

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- The most popular US regions for overnight family travel are the South Atlantic and Pacific regions, representing 29% and 20% of domestic family travel respectively. These two regions include Florida and California, top family destinations. The most popular day trip destinations for family travel are South Atlantic (29%) and Pacific (19%).
- Not surprisingly, family travel's seasonality matches the school vacation schedule. The largest season is the summer, June-August, representing 33% of all family travel overnight trips. The lightest month is September, at 6%.
- Family Travelers plan more of their trips in advance than non-family travelers. 44% of family travel trips are planned 3 months or more in advance, in contrast to 31% of non-family travel.
- Family Travelers are twice as likely to use travel agents for booking than non-family travelers – 14% vs. 7%.
- Family Travelers seek more information, from more sources, than non-family travelers. They use a wide variety of information sources to plan their travel, including word of mouth and recommendations from friends, relatives and social media, as well as traditional sources including travel agents, auto clubs, print, destinations, accommodations.
- Family Travelers use mobile devices (phones, tablets) when traveling more than non-family travelers. Use of social media is higher (80% vs. 67%), including posting photos/videos of trips, viewing other's photos/videos, and searching for travel destination news, events, promotions and discounts. Higher mobile use correlates to the younger age profile of family traveler adults and the presence of children also using mobile devices.
- Demographically, overnight family travel adults are a highly attractive target segment:
 - Evenly split by gender – 50% female, 50% male. Day family travel skews slightly more female at 56%.
 - Family travelers skew younger (average = 38), married (74%), actively employed (61% full time)
 - They skew more to higher income brackets than non-family travelers; 43% have incomes of \$75,000 or more.
 - Education levels attained do not look different between family and non-family traveler adults.

**The full 2016 Profile of the American Family Traveler study will be made available on familytravel.org.
To access, click on the Programs tab, then Research tab.**