

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FAMILY VACATIONS CREATE LASTING MEMORIES



Family vacations create memories that last for decades, are shared across generations and bring a family closer together, according to a new survey. Adults participating in the survey say they still have vivid memories of family vacations taken in their early childhood and surveyed children say family vacations create some of their favorite memories.

The survey, "Family Vacations Create Lasting Memories," explores the vacation habits of American families and how memories from family vacations are valued, captured and shared. Harris Interactive conducted the online survey in December 2012 on behalf of the U.S. Travel Association. The survey included 2,531 adults and 1,130 youth ages 8-18.

FAMILY VACATION MEMORIES LAST A LIFETIME

American adults report that memories formed during family vacations taken in their childhood remain vivid well into adulthood. These memories are treasured and shared with younger generations, as parents tell stories about them to their children.

- Adults remember vacations from a young age: the majority of adults surveyed (62%) say their earliest memories were of family vacations taken when they were between ages 5 and 10.
- Half (49%) of adults describe their memories of childhood family vacations as "very vivid." These memories are significantly stronger than their memories of school events or birthday celebrations (34% and 31%).
- Travel experiences are not only remembered, but also passed on to younger generations: 77% of youth respondents report that their parents have told them stories about their childhood family vacations.

PARENTS PLAN FAMILY VACATIONS TO CREATE MEMORIES

Parents participating in the survey reported that they plan family vacations in order to provide their children with experiences they will remember for years to come.

- Three in every four (76%) parents believe that family vacations are worth the time and money because they "give my child experiences that they will remember years down the road."
- Similarly, 75% of parents indicated that the cost and time are justified because the memories created from family vacations are "priceless."

In many cases, parents want to provide their children with the kinds of experiences and memories they have from their own childhoods.

- Parents with children under 18 are far more likely to model vacations after those they took during their own childhoods than adults without children (46% vs. 28%).
- More than half of parents surveyed (55%) reported that "I have fond memories of vacations that I took as a child, and I want to create similar experiences for my family."

LIKE THEIR PARENTS, CHILDREN CHERISH FAMILY VACATION MEMORIES

Youth participants in the survey strongly agreed that:

- They get to see and do new things on family vacations that they'll remember for a long time (64%);
- Vacations bring their family closer together (53%);
- Memorable things happen on family vacations that their family talks about even after they return home (47%); and
- Some of their best memories are of things that they did during a family vacation (49%).

PARENTS UNDERESTIMATE THE VALUE OF INCLUDING GRANDPARENTS ON FAMILY VACATIONS

While slightly less than half (49%) of adults believe strongly that family vacations are worthwhile because they provide opportunities for multiple generations to come together, children are very enthusiastic when it comes to traveling with their grandparents.

- Children who traveled with their grandparents on family vacations reported that they get to spend quality time with their grandparents (78%), they feel closer to their grandparents (60%) and they like to remember stories about what they did with their grandparents after they return home (65%).

ADULTS AND CHILDREN CAPTURE AND SHARE THEIR TRAVEL MEMORIES ONLINE

Not unexpectedly, teens and young adults are more likely to share their travel experiences online than other age groups. However, adults are also moving their travel memories to social media sites, blogs and online photo albums.

- More than half of teens and young adults share details about their family vacations online:
 - 58% of 13-18 year olds share their vacation memories via social media.
 - 58% of 18-34 year olds share their vacation memories online through Facebook, online photo albums, or blogs.
- Half (51%) of parents with children post pictures and stories from family vacations online.
- Surprisingly, a full quarter (25%) of both the youngest (ages 8-12) and oldest (55 and older) respondents are sharing vacation memories online.