

First Ever Report On Girlfriend Getaways Says Social Pressures Cause More Women To Vacation Without Men

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Forty Percent of American Women Plan to Take a Girls-only Vacation Soon.

A landmark new travel survey on women travelers shows that girlfriend getaways are growing in popularity, in part because American women feel the need to escape their personal and professional responsibilities. The report also shows that vacations including just girlfriends and female family members ease stress and have become an important part of the lives of American women.

The survey, conducted by AAA (www.AAA.com) and Aspire (www.aspireinnovativelearning.com), is the most comprehensive study of the girlfriend getaways travel market. The report found that 24 percent of American women have taken a girlfriend getaway in the past three years, and 39 percent of American women plan on taking one in the next three years.

'The experience of a girlfriend getaway has a deep effect on the lives and friendships of women who take these types of trips, and many believe that going away with their girlfriends is important, no matter the destination,' said Betsy Sell, Managing Director of AAA Travel. 'In fact, 62 percent of women who plan on going on a girlfriend getaway in the next three years said that taking a future trip was equally as important as the one they'd previously been on.'

The first ever report included an online survey of 1,500 women, a telephone survey of 513 women and a telephone focus groups of 16 women.

Aspire's Founder and CEO, Renie Cavallari, observes, 'Hotels and resorts need to recognize the impact of the girlfriend getaway market. These women represent a significant amount of money- four percent of all U.S. travel spending, which is almost \$200 million a year. The number of women going on girlfriend getaways is likely to keep growing, so it's important that properties are prepared to cater to this market.'

Women participating in the survey said that while the most common destinations include the beach (66 percent), going to the spa (63 percent), taking a shopping trip (55 percent) or taking a cruise (51 percent), they were very clear that the destination and the accommodations are incidental to the primary purpose of a girlfriend getaway - spending time bonding with their female friends and family. The women in the focus groups talked about how important these trips are for them, saying they feel more self-confident, adventurous and relaxed as a result of their girlfriend getaway. It is a time for women to bond by sharing common experiences and getting validation and acceptance from their female friends and family.

'Girlfriend getaways are becoming very popular, and actually quite necessary, as women are under an increasingly large amount of pressure at work and at home,' says Sell. 'Spending time with female friends and family members is an effective and fun way for women to recover from these pressures.'

Husbands, significant others and children of these women, have no fear. The AAA/Aspire study shows that women are not going on girlfriend getaways just to get away from you. At least, they're trying to get away from you less than they were three years ago. Thirty-nine percent of women gave 'break from significant other' as an answer in 2004, while only 34 percent gave the same answer in 2007. However, they do talk about you when they're away. The vast majority (79 percent) admitted that men or their significant other are the most frequently talked about topics.

Interesting facts about girlfriend getaways

œ Most girlfriend getaways consist of 2-3 women (51 percent).

œ Girlfriend getaways account for approximately four percent of all U.S. leisure travel spending. (Source: D.K. Shifflet & Associates Ltd. DIRECTIONS? DESTINATION PERFORMANCE/MonitorSM.)

œ Women who participated in the focus groups highlighted the importance of spending time with girlfriends in general and taking these types of trips specifically. These women also felt that these types of trips provided an added intensity and importance to their connections with their women friends.

œ The leading reasons women gave for wanting to take the girlfriend getaway was to bond with friends or family (70 percent) and/or escape from their daily responsibilities (65 percent).

œ The most popular activities while on a girlfriend getaway are dining out (86 percent), shopping (74 percent), spa (73 percent) and going to the beach or pool (70 percent).

œ The most difficult aspects of planning a girlfriend getaway are finding a time that works for everyone (77 percent) and selecting a trip that fits everyone's budget (76 percent).

œ Fifty six percent of women surveyed said they have yet to make plans for a future girlfriend getaway, but would like to plan one.

œ Between 2004 and 2007 there has been an increase in taking girlfriend getaways for 'no reason' - 30 percent vs. 40 percent, respectively.

œ The largest portion of women who said they had been on a girlfriend getaway in the last three years was between the ages of 25-34 (40 percent).

œ The greatest number of participants who had gone on a girlfriend getaway in the past three years had no children (38 percent), and were not married (42 percent).

About AAA

As North America's largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA provides more than 50 million members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding in 1902, the not-for-profit, fully tax-paying AAA has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. AAA clubs can be visited on the Internet at www.AAA.com.

About Aspire

Aspire is a global training and consulting company that provides innovative products and services designed to help companies optimize revenues and increase profitability. Aspire has maintained a 96 percent client retention rate over the past twelve years by providing extraordinary results for clients through the implementation of high impact marketing, customer service, sales-oriented training and consulting solutions. Aspire has experience in eleven countries in eight languages impacting more than 5,000 businesses. Headquartered in Phoenix, Aspire has offices in New Jersey, North Carolina, Colorado, England and Germany. For more information, visit www.aspireinnovativelearning.com.

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