

## Families Report Traveling Farther, Spending More and Taking Shorter Vacations, According to Best Western International Poll

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### Fido More Popular Than Grandma on Vacation

Today's family vacations are shorter yet more elaborate and expensive, involving journeys to farther particularly exotic locations than what most people remember from their childhood, according to a recent survey by Harris Interactive(R) commissioned by Best Western International. In addition, travelers are more likely to include pets in their trips over grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins.

### VACATION 2.0: NOW VERSUS THEN

Eighty-eight percent of U.S. adults who take family vacations indicated that a getaway these days is different from when they were children. More than half (55 percent) claimed that today's vacations are more expensive, while just over two-fifths (42 percent) said they now travel greater distances. The study also found that:

36 percent stay in hotels more now than as a child, with 29 percent of adults who have children under 18 living in their households indicating they are less likely than those without children living with them (39 percent) to stay in hotels more now than they did as a child.

While more than a quarter of respondents indicated that today's vacations have become more elaborate than they remember (28 percent) and that they go to more exotic locales than they did as a child (27 percent), 19 percent say vacations have become shorter now than in their youth.

### VALUE STILL REIGNS SUPREME

Among those who take family vacations, value for the money (62 percent) and the desire to spend time with loved ones (38 percent) are the top considerations when determining where to go on the family vacation, as opposed to an equal amount of activities for adults and children, which came in near the bottom at 14 percent.

'Though value for the money is still a primary factor for many American families, today's vacation experience is impacted by a number of changes in the way they spend their free time,' said Emily Kaufman, Best Western's family travel expert otherwise known as The Travel Mom. 'For example, parents who remember taking simple family road trips to visit relatives, or go camping or fishing when they were kids, are now embarking on more frequent, yet shorter getaways to places they never dreamed of visiting when they were young.'

The 2007 Best Western International Family Vacation Study also discovered that, contrary to popular opinion, children do not always determine where the family goes on vacation. Only one percent of adults polled indicated that the kids have the most sway in the decision-making process.

### AMERICANS' FAVORITE WACKY ROAD TRIPS/VACATIONS

After more than 30 years, The Brady Bunch still has the 'lei' of the land, as more respondents (39 percent) chose the family's exotic 'Hawaiian Adventure' as the wackiest vacation trip they'd most enjoy.

About one-third (31 percent) indicated they would most enjoy a trip to the mountains, like in "The Great Outdoors." Adults in the Northeast were least likely to indicate they would most enjoy a trip to the mountains (23 percent), compared to adults in the Midwest (36 percent), South (35 percent) and West (30 percent).

A quarter (25 percent) indicated they would most enjoy an amusement park vacation, like in "National Lampoon's Vacation." Larger households were more likely to indicate they would most enjoy such a vacation (40 percent for households with 5+ members, compared to 29 percent for households with 3-4 members, 20 percent for single-member households and 21 percent for two-member households).

In general, younger and middle-aged adults were more likely to indicate they would most enjoy taking an exotic vacation (45 percent of those aged 18-34 and 44 percent of those aged 35-54, compared to 29 percent of those aged 55 years and older).

Single, never-married adults were more likely to indicate they would most enjoy taking an exotic vacation (47 percent for single, never married adults, compared to 38 percent for married adults and 31 percent for divorced, separated or widowed adults).

Students (52 percent) were more likely to indicate they would most enjoy taking an exotic vacation compared to those employed part-time (46 percent), employed full-time or self-employed (41 percent) and retirees (28 percent).

### ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

When respondents were asked who is included in their family vacations, more people indicated they include their pets (13 percent) over grandparents (10 percent), aunts and uncles (nine percent) and cousins (nine percent). On a regional level, Midwest travelers are most likely to include pets (17 percent) vs. those in the West (15 percent), South (12 percent) or Northeast (eight percent).

Despite the fact that many upscale properties are adding "kids concierge services" and other special programs for children, the presence of specific kids' activities or programs at a resort is actually the least important factor in selecting a place to go for vacation. Only 4 percent overall of those who usually stay in hotels for family vacations and 12 percent of those with children under 18 living in their households who stay in hotels for family vacations cited this as one of the most important factors in selecting a hotel.

Families whose households include children under 18 (30 percent) are less likely than those without kids (40 percent) to consider educational, historic or cultural experiences as a factor in where to go on a family vacation.

## **SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive(R) via its QuickQuerySM online omnibus service between July 5 and 9, 2007, among 3,389 U.S. adults aged 18 years and older, of whom 2,917 take family vacations. An additional question was fielded online second survey of among 2,407 U.S. adults aged 18 and over between July 16 and 18, 2007. Data from each fielding were weighted to be representative of the total U.S. adult population on the basis of region, age within gender, education, household income, race/ethnicity, and propensity to be online.

With probability samples of 3,389 and 2,917 respectively, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results would have a sampling error of +/- 3 percentage points. Sampling error for data based on sub-samples would be higher and would vary. However, that does not take other sources of error into account. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

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