

Group Travel Stays 'All in the Family'

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Orbitz Traveler Update Report(TM) finds that trips with extended families are driving group travel trend

Estimated to reach approximately \$90 billion in 2008(1), the leisure group travel market continues to be one of the fastest growing segments of the travel industry. Orbitz (www.orbitz.com), furthering its commitment to keep travelers "A Step Ahead(TM)," takes a closer look at group travel in its quarterly Traveler Update Report, released today, to get a pulse on traveler behaviors driving this popular trend. The report also offers insider tips on how to best manage group travel challenges.

Key Findings

The family vacation can make for lasting memories, and also for great comedy. While some might associate stress with extended family, these trips are the most popular type of group trip according to those polled. Traveling with friends is the next most popular option for group travel, which is defined as traveling with five or more people. The top companions for group travel are as follows:

- Extended family - 50%
- Friends - 29%
- Social group - 11%
- Guys/girls only getaways - 6%
- Groups where you meet new people - 4%

Family reunions are always a favorite type of group trip, however The Traveler Update Report found that cultural-themed vacations are the most popular, with women preferring these activities more than men (45 percent versus 28 percent, respectively). Trips that center on a sporting activity were also popular, with more men than women preferring sports-related trips (27 percent versus 10 percent, respectively). The most popular group travel vacations, according to the Traveler Update Report are:

- Cultural-themed - 36%
- Sports activity-related - 19%
- Family Reunions - 19%
- Cruise - 16%
- Travel to a sporting event, destination wedding and bachelor/bachelorette parties comprise the remaining - 10%

"Group trips are an excellent way to reconnect with family and friends, however, they often require a lot of coordination and with multiple parties, and email exchanges can become overwhelming," said Tom Russell, group vice president, brand marketing for Orbitz Worldwide. "We're catering to the growing number of travelers who want to plan a group trip, and making the planning and coordination aspect of that trip easier for all who are going."

Challenges in Group Travel

Once travelers know with whom they're traveling and the type of trip they'd like to take, it is the planning that can be the most difficult part. When asked about the challenges of planning a group vacation, the Orbitz survey found that the biggest concern was keeping everyone happy (40 percent). Thirty percent point to the challenge of organizing and scheduling activities and itineraries as the toughest task. To keep everybody's preferences in check, e-mail is the most preferred tool (36 percent) with travel agents/trip planners/coordinators the least popular organizational method (14 percent).

Other challenges in coordinating a group trip include:

- Deciding where to go - 14%
- Deciding what to do - 9%
- Gathering deposits and confirmations - 8%

Other Findings

While group travel may come with some implied cost efficiencies, the Traveler Update Report found that 75 percent of those surveyed say they spend the same amount or more on group travel. In addition, while "group" means traveling together, most prefer to stay solo when it comes to lodging. In fact, group travelers are more averse to sharing hotel rooms, with the majority (39 percent) saying they never share a room, compared to 22 percent who reported they always share a room.

Those who consider themselves group travelers play a variety of different roles when vacationing with others. Twenty percent of those surveyed feel they are a "tag along," while 32 percent consider themselves "planners." The final 48 percent were comprised of vacationers who prefer to do their own thing (two percent) and a combination of all choices (46 percent).

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