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AAA: Nearly 100 Million Americans Will Embark on Family Vacations this Year

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Road trips reign supreme for family getaways

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ORLANDO, Fla. (March 21, 2019) – From coast to coast, families are gearing up for another year of exciting travel adventures with their loved ones. According to a recent AAA Travel survey, nearly 100 million Americans – 4 in 10 U.S. adults – are planning to take a family vacation in 2019, slightly more than last year. Spring and summer road trips will top many of these families’ vacation plans.

Two-thirds of all family travelers (68 percent) will embark on a summer getaway, while just under half (45 percent) are making plans to travel as a family this spring.

Regardless of the season, the great American road trip remains a major draw for these families; about half of traveling families (53 percent) expect to pack up their cars for a road trip this year.

Travelers in the South are more likely to be making plans for a family trip this year (62 percent) than travelers in the Northeast (35 percent).

Additional Resources

Graphics gallery

A welcome gift to road trippers, gas prices have averaged nearly a quarter cheaper so far in 2019 compared with the first few months of last year. While gas prices are increasing now, summer prices are expected to be cheaper than last year. Another recent AAA survey found that 33 percent of Americans would go on at least one additional summer road trip if gas prices remain low.

“The great American road trip is still one of the best ways for families to relax and reconnect with one another,” said Stacey Barber, executive director, AAA Travel Information & Content. “This is quickly shaping up to be another busy year for family travelers, both on the roadways, as well as other popular travel destinations and attractions. To make the most of their vacations, AAA recommends families plan and research as far ahead as possible to avoid missing out on popular activities and fun.”

To help inspire would-be road trippers, AAA’s travel editors have curated more than 450 pre-planned road trips. The top five routes for summer travel according to AAA member road trip routing data are as follows:

1. Las Vegas to National Parks – Any road trip through the desert southwest is full of unique twists and turns, regardless of whether you remain on the interstate or head off along enticing back roads. Long the destination for gold prospectors and other dreamers, the mountains and valleys of the Arizona, Nevada and Utah deserts today provide a glimpse of mankind’s historical interaction with the area’s fantastic natural landscapes.
2. Northern California and Southern Oregon Coast – The trip begins in California’s Central Valley, meanders through high elevation forests and snakes up the awe-inspiring Pacific coast. Not to be rushed, this extraordinary route is winding, narrow and flanked by the ocean and majestic redwood trees. As you make your way past beach towns and shifting sand dunes, you’ll find constant stops are necessary to photograph the stunning terrain.
3. Northern New England – You’ll travel the backroads of New England on this trek through the Berkshires of Massachusetts and the Green Mountains of Vermont. Quaint country inns, steepled churches and weathered barns—some predating the Revolutionary War—dot the roadside.
4. Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina – If any drive merited the term “scenic,” it’s the Blue Ridge Parkway. Begun in 1935 to create a transportation link between Shenandoah National Park and Great Smoky Mountains National Park, it was finally completed in 1983. This winding road was designed to maximize enjoyment of the mountainous terrain, so heed the posted speed limit.
5. Black Hills, South Dakota – This picturesque route winds through South Dakota’s Black Hills, taking you from one of America’s best-known landmarks, Mount Rushmore, past granite spires and into historic mining towns nestled in valleys thick with Ponderosa pine. The area packs so much scenery into a small area that it’s become a mecca for motorcyclists and anyone else who loves the outdoors.

For more destination recommendations, travel tips and expert advice from AAA inspectors and travel editors, visit [AAA.com/TravelTips](https://www.aaa.com/TravelTips). AAA’s travel experts offer these top tips for a perfect family road trip:

Be prepared – For passengers, pack books, games, or music for the ride, and a pillow. Bring information on your destination to keep kids and other passengers entertained. Pack healthy snacks for kids, especially if you can’t stop for a full meal while traveling.

Safety first – Drivers should plan frequent stops, about every 100 miles or two hours, to remain alert. Make sure everyone is restrained by seat belts or a child safety seat to prevent injury in case of a sudden stop, swerve or crash. AAA members who are renting a car through Hertz can request a complimentary infant car seat or toddler booster seat.

Pack your patience – Be prepared for busy roads and long airport security lines throughout the summer. If hitting the road during a holiday weekend, consider leaving earlier or later than the typical holiday travel times to avoid heavy traffic. Same goes for air travel, and be sure to arrive at the airport at least two hours before scheduled take-off.

Do your research – To make the most of your trip, map out your route in advance, using a tool like AAA's TripTik Travel Planner. For extra guidance, seek the advice of a knowledgeable travel agent. And be sure to download the AAA Mobile app to find AAA Diamond Rated hotels and restaurants, gas prices and fun stops along the way.

Be road trip ready – Take your vehicle to a trusted repair facility to perform any needed maintenance before heading out on a road trip. In case of an emergency, always carry a flashlight, extra batteries, warning devices such as flares or reflective triangles, jumper cables, a first-aid kit and extra water. To locate a AAA Approved Auto Repair shop in your area, visit com/AutoRepair.

Passengers are one of the most precious cargo on a trip, be it 5 or 50 miles down the road. AAA recommends drivers keep their attention on the road by pre-programming GPS devices and adjusting seats and mirrors before driving. So a driver can remain focused safely on driving, enlist the help of passengers and don't use handheld or hands-free cell phones while driving.

AAA's family travel research is the result of a telephone survey (landline and cell phone) consisting of 1,007 adults living in the continental United States. Interviewing for this survey was conducted January 24-27, 2019. This study has an average statistical error of ± 3 percent at the 95 percent confidence level for all U.S. adults.

AAA provides more than 59 million members with automotive, travel, insurance and financial services through its federation of 34 motor clubs and nearly 1,100 branch offices across North America. Since 1902, the not-for-profit, fully tax-paying AAA has been a leader and advocate for safe mobility. Drivers can request roadside assistance, identify nearby gas prices, locate discounts, book a hotel or map a route via the AAA Mobile app. To join, visit AAA.com.

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