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Survey

New survey looks at the travel habits of affluent families

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Two-thirds of affluent parents are OK with children missing school for Travel; Nearly half have taken kids to a 5-star hotel or resort, according to new survey from Top Flight Family.

NEW YORK, NY - Just in time for the holiday travel season, **Top Flight Family**, the leading online destination for luxury family travel, released the results of a survey that looks at the travel habits of U.S. families earning more than \$100,000 per year, including their top destinations, their favorite accommodation options, and the upgrades they say are must-haves for getting the most out of their vacations.

"Family travel is one of the fastest-growing segments within the travel market," says Carmen Sognonvi, founder and publisher of Top Flight Family. "The insights uncovered by our survey can help families on any budget minimize hassle, maximize quality time, and have a richer travel experience."

They Spend Big on Family Travel

Survey respondents reported spending about \$1,500 per person per vacation. With an average household size of 3.9 and an average of 4.1 trips taken per year, that means affluent households spend over \$23,000 per year just on family travel.

They're OK With Missing School for Travel

Nearly a quarter of affluent parents (23%) said they take trips primarily to enrich their children's education and development, and a whopping two-thirds said they are willing to let their kids miss some school in order to travel (65%).

One Iowa mom explained the educational benefits of travel: "When we travel together we get to do all of those fun things we never find time to do at home and learn more in the process than the countless hours of homework combined."

Millennial parents were twice as likely (28%) than Gen X parents (14%) to name education and enrichment as their number one reason for traveling with kids.

They Bring Kids to 5-Star Hotels

Despite the growing number of accommodation options available to travelers, hotels remain the top

Despite the growing number of accommodation options available to travelers, hotels remain the top choice for families on vacation (60%). And affluent parents aren't afraid to bring their children to the highest-end properties. Nearly half (43%) of respondents said their child had stayed with them at a 5-star hotel or resort.

One Nevada mom said she books hotels for her family trip because she finds it "less stressful than staying with family, there is plenty of room and you're not imposing on others."

Vacation rentals were the second-most popular option, with 17% of survey respondents pointing to rentals from companies such as Homeaway, VRBO, onefinestay as their favorite accommodation choice.

Despite its surging popularity among travelers in general, Airbnb doesn't hold much interest for luxury family travelers. Only 3.5% of survey respondents chose Airbnb rentals as their favorite accommodation option, ranking it behind staying with friends and family (13.5%) and booking timeshares (4.4%).

They Travel to Foster Family Closeness

"Travel brings us closer together as a family" was the single most popular reason given by survey respondents for why they travel with their children (35%). Many affluent parents also listed visiting relatives who live far away as a top reason for family travel (20%).

Gen X parents are more likely than millennial parents to use travel as a way to reconnect with extended family and friends:

- 32% of Gen X parents said their primary reason for traveling with children is to visit long-distance relatives, while only - 16% of millennial parents listed this as their number one reason for hitting the road
- 24% of Gen X parents said "visiting friends or family" is their favorite type of vacation to book, while only 11% of millennial parents chose this as their favorite
- 24% of Gen X parents say their favorite type of accommodation is staying with friends or family, while only 6% of millennial parents selected this as their preferred lodging option

They Pay Extra for Space and Convenience

Affluent parents are savvy about paying extra for add-ons that make the experience of traveling with children more convenient and enjoyable. For most parents, the number one option worth spending on is upgrading from a standard hotel room to a suite or villa (71%).

One Illinois mom pointed out that different bed times are better accommodated in multiple rooms. "It helps to have a suite so if parents want to stay up later than the kids and watch TV we can. It also helps to spread out and not be on top of one another in a hotel room with just 2 beds, a TV and maybe a desk and chair."

Global Entry and/or TSA Pre-Check was the second-most popular choice (40%). As one Maryland dad explained, there's "nothing worse than starting a vacation with long lines" when traveling with children.

Although affluent families travel primarily to foster closeness, everyone needs a break sometimes. That's why survey respondents chose kids clubs as the third-most popular upgrade (32%). These facilities at hotels and resorts give kids their own dedicated activities and allow parents to enjoy some alone time.

Other upgrades that affluent parents say are worth a look include:

- First or business class flights – 29%
- Club floor access in hotels – 18%
- Luggage shipping/forwarding services – 14%
- Babysitting/childcare at destination – 14%
- Access to airport lounge – 13%

They Seek Adventure Through Travel

Unsurprisingly, beach vacations ranked high with affluent parents, but they were edged out of first place by destinations that offer adventure for the whole family:

- Activity and adventure – 25%
- Beach – 24%
- Visiting friends or family– 20%

Taking in the Northern Lights topped the travel bucket lists of affluent parents (16%), with a trip to the Galapagos Islands a close second (15%). Going on an African safari (11%), diving the Great Barrier Reef (10%) and seeing the pyramids of Giza (9%) rounded out the top five dream getaways.

Of the Galapagos Islands, one Minnesota mom said: “My kids love animals and would really love being on the islands. At the ages they are now, this would have great experience value and memory making possibilities.”

