

Bankrate

More Than 4 in 5 Holiday Travelers Are Changing Their Plans Due to Inflation

Nearly one-third anticipate traveling for fewer days

NEW YORK - October 21, 2024 - With the upcoming holiday travel season expected to finish off a record year for TSA screenings, more than 4 in 5 holiday travelers are changing their travel plans due to inflation, according to a new Bankrate survey. That's 83% of those planning either air travel or a hotel/short-term rental stay this holiday season. Click here for more information:

<https://www.bankrate.com/credit-cards/news/survey-holiday-travel/>

As far as specific changes holiday travelers are making to their plans because of inflation, nearly one-third (32%) anticipate traveling for fewer days than they otherwise would have, while 30% are picking less expensive accommodations and/or destinations. Additionally, 28% are driving instead of flying to their destination and 25% are engaging in cheaper activities.

The majority of holiday travelers across income brackets are changing their holiday travel plans due to inflation. Among households earning \$100,000 or more annually, 77% of holiday travelers say they are changing their plans due to inflation. For households earning less than \$100,000 annually, 86% say they will change their plans.

Baby boomers are the generation least likely to say they are changing their holiday travel plans due to inflation. Of those planning to travel this holiday season, over 4 in 5 millennials (86%; ages 28-43), Gen Zers (84%; ages 18-27), and Gen Xers (83%; ages 44-59) say they are changing their plans, compared to 72% of baby boomers (ages 60-78).

“Although inflation has come down significantly, it continues to strain holiday travelers in a big way,” said Bankrate Senior Industry Analyst Ted Rossman. “The cumulative effect is the problem. Multiple years of paying more for everything from housing to food, gas and discretionary items has eroded savings and increased debt. And prices are still rising, they’re just rising more slowly.”

In terms of how much holiday travelers are spending, the average expected expense to fly for Thanksgiving is \$925, while the average expected expense to fly for the December holidays is even higher at \$1,165. The average expected expense to stay in a hotel/short term rental for Thanksgiving is \$854, and to stay in a hotel/short term rental for the December holidays, the average expected expense is \$950. Overall, if someone were to fly and stay at a hotel/short term rental for both holiday periods, they would spend close to \$4,000 on average per person.

Credit cards are the most popular payment method for holiday travel expenses (59%), followed by debit cards or cash (45%), rewards points (24%), asking friends or family to pay (13%), and using buy now, pay later services (10%).

More than 1 in 4 holiday travelers (29%) expect to take on debt to fund their travels this season. This includes 22% who plan to carry a credit card balance, and 10% who plan to use buy now, pay later services (adjusted for overlap).

In total, 8% of U.S. adults say they are planning to fly for Thanksgiving this year, and slightly more are planning to fly for the December holidays (14%; e.g. Christmas, New Year's Eve, Hanukkah, etc.). Additionally, 11% say they plan to stay in a hotel/short-term rental for Thanksgiving, and 14% plan to do so for the December holidays.

“Despite economic worries, people are still traveling. They’re traveling differently, though,” Rossman added. “They don’t want to skip the trip entirely, but they’re willing to make adjustments that lower the cost.”

Bankrate’s 2024 Travel Toolkit is now live to help consumers find the best ways to save on travel, maximize points and miles, and more:

<https://www.bankrate.com/finance/credit-cards/travel-toolkit/>

Methodology:

Bankrate commissioned YouGov Plc to conduct the survey. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. The total sample size was 2,538 U.S. adults, including 685 who are planning either air travel or a hotel/short-term rental stay this holiday season. Fieldwork was undertaken between September 18-20, 2024. The survey was carried out online and meets rigorous quality standards. It employed a non-probability-based sample using both quotas upfront during collection and then a weighting scheme on the back end designed and proven to provide nationally representative results.

About Bankrate:

Bankrate has guided savers and spenders through the next steps of their financial journeys since 1976. Whether it's rates or information on mortgages, investing, credit cards, personal loans, insurance, taxes or retirement, the company offers various free resources to help consumers reach their goals. From product comparison tools to award-winning editorial content, Bankrate provides objective information and actionable next steps. Bankrate also aggregates rate information from over 4,800 institutions on more than 300 financial products, with coverage in more than 600 local markets. It's why over 100 million people put their trust in Bankrate every year.

For more information:

Abby Yarber

Public Relations Specialist

abby.yarber@bankrate.com

(704) 697-1372

Bankrate

