

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Travelers ready for impulsive, indulgent trips in 2021: report

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Travelers are likelier to splurge on relaxing trips in 2021. Image credit: Four Seasons

By SARAH RAMIREZ

After almost a year of postponing or canceling vacation plans, travelers are embracing spontaneity and booking more last-minute trips.

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According to a new report from Hotels.com, more than a third of consumers, 35 percent, are planning to prioritize traveling whenever possible in 2021. Travelers are also looking to reward themselves and are likelier to splurge on accommodations and other upgrades.

"2020 was the year of staying home, postponing trips and posting old vacation pictures on social media," said Josh Belkin, vice president of global brand at [Hotels.com](#), Dallas. "This year, travelers are ready to seize the 'stay' when travel returns and they feel comfortable to take the trips they missed out on.

"We saw that when travel restrictions eased for many in July and August 2020, over half of bookings were made three days or less ahead of their stay, compared to 40 percent in 2019," he said. "People are ready to channel their inner spontaneous self, dropping everything at the last minute to get away and enjoy the best that hotel life has to offer."

The Hotels.com study was based on a survey of 1,000 U.S. respondents and booking data from December 2020.

Spontaneous travel

Nearly nine in 10 U.S. travelers, 89 percent, hope to be more spontaneous in 2021 after a trying 2020.

More than a quarter, 28 percent, are receptive to last-minute vacations booked within three days of the trip. Twenty-nine percent also report being willing to leave the same day as a trip if the chance materializes.

Consumers will even be flexible with the location or timing of their vacations, with 24 percent interested in booking a luxury hotel for a "staycation" weekend and 23 percent willing to take a midweek vacation for a more affordable stay at an upscale hotel.



More hotels and destinations are promoting overnight packages for staycations. Image credit: Four Seasons

While these figures are indicative of spontaneity, it is also a sign of the times as many travelers may find it more practical to wait until the last minute to book vacations due to ever-evolving travel restrictions in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to a recent survey from Amadeus Hospitality, 30 and 40 percent of global travelers cited concerns such as government-imposed quarantines, being stranded, mixing with crowds and reduced enjoyment due to restrictions or closures ([see story](#)).

Once ready to go on vacation, 17 percent of travelers plan to book a five-star hotel for their stay. A quarter will book better rooms than they did pre-pandemic or upgrade to a better option if offered while booking.

Travelers are also opting for relaxation instead of overly busy or regimented trips, and 25 percent report staying in a hotel is what they miss most about vacationing.



Travelers are missing room service. Image credit: Peninsula Hotels

Other hotel perks consumers miss include hotel beds, robes, room service, hotel pools, spas and dining options.

This also means consumers are likelier to splurge on onsite experiences to elevate their vacations. Twenty percent of travelers would splurge on spa treatments or a gourmet meal, while 24 percent would indulge in a fancy cocktail at the hotel bar.

Extended stays

While some consumers are leaning into spontaneity, others are embracing the flexibility of remote work and learning to spend more time at their favorite hotels or resorts.

Hospitality group Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts is inviting guests to stay longer at their properties in a new campaign playing on the trend of "workcations." Through the "Extend Your Stay" initiative, guests can unlock special services and benefits once they book stays that are 30 days or longer ([see story](#)).

With so many individuals still working from home, brands like Auberge Hotel Collection and Mandarin Oriental are introducing remote long-term stay packages to accommodate working individuals looking for a vacation while still navigating the pandemic. Some packages even include tutoring for children who are attending school remotely.

For instance, the Mandarin Oriental Workcation package includes private sanctuaries in selected rooms, complimentary Wi-Fi, printing, dining credit, as well as temperature checks, increased cleaning measures across all

areas and even PPE for all guests ([see story](#)).

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