

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Consumers ready to splurge on trips with travel rewards: report

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Travelers are saving up their credit card miles for luxury trips. Image credit: Getty Images/NerdWallet

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Seventy percent of U.S. consumers are planning on taking a leisure trip in the next 12 months, and nearly a quarter are saving travel rewards for luxury experiences.

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According to a [new survey](#) by NerdWallet, the COVID-19 pandemic is still impacting consumers' travel choices. On average, however, U.S. travelers plan to take two leisure trips in the next 12 months.

"For the foreseeable future, COVID has dramatically changed the way many of us plan our vacations by adding new layers of complications," said Sarah Rathner, travel expert at [NerdWallet](#), in a statement.

"Travel is still full of uncertainty, but that doesn't mean it's impossible if you plan for the unexpected."

NerdWallet's findings are based on an online survey of more than 2,000 U.S. adults conducted by The Harris Poll.

Ready to travel

In the next 12 months, 47 percent of respondents plan to take at least two or more leisure trips.

Sixty percent of Gen Z travelers and 58 percent of millennials are planning more than one vacation in the next year. In contrast, just 41 percent of Gen X and 40 percent of baby boomers are following suit.

In preparation for their travel plans, 77 percent of consumers with travel rewards credit cards are saving up their miles or points rather than redeeming them as they are earned.

Twenty-three percent are saving their rewards for a luxury trip or special occasion. About one in six travelers are accumulating their travel rewards for an international trip.

Although the pent-up demand for travel remains high, 56 percent of respondents admit their travel habits have changed since the start of the pandemic.

Nearly a third currently only visit destinations that are low-risk for COVID-19. Twenty-eight percent have stopped traveling internationally, opting for domestic trips instead, while 27 percent no longer take cruise vacations.

A quarter of travelers are only taking trips to locales that require COVID-19 testing and proof of vaccination.

More than 60 percent of U.S. consumers feel more comfortable traveling with certain pandemic precautions in place.

The preferred precautions include low COVID-19 case counts and cleaning and sanitization of hotel rooms or rental properties between guests, with both conditions cited by 38 percent. About 30 percent prefer hotel staff or airline employees be required to be vaccinated, while 28 percent are more comfortable somewhere with rapid tests widely available.

Only 15 percent reported that they do not feel comfortable traveling at all in the current climate.

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