

Gay Travel Snapshot - Spring And Summer 2011

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New survey shows uptick in summer travel intentions

With the U.S. and global economy gradually coming back to life - and with spending and travel habits under the spotlight during the summer months ahead, a new national survey conducted online by Harris Interactive and Witeck Combs Communications shows an increase in travel intentions among lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Americans.

Gay adults are more likely to have summer travel plans this summer than last. Roughly two-thirds (65%) of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) adults plan to take a leisure trip between May and August of this year. This represents a slight improvement in travel intentions - last summer 60% had leisure travel plans. There was also a slight uptick in business travel intentions this summer versus last - 18% of LGBT adults plan to take a business trip between May and August this year (compared to 15% last year).

Not only are gay Americans more likely to travel this summer than last, those who are traveling are planning to spend more money. LGBT adults report on average they are likely to spend about \$1,300 between May and August 2011 for their leisure or business travel, while during the same time period last year, the average planned travel expenditure was \$1,058.

The new nationwide survey of 2,576 U.S. adults, (ages 18 and over), of whom 331 self identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or transgender, was conducted between April 11 and 18, 2011, by Harris Interactive, a global market research and consulting firm, in conjunction with Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc., a strategic public relations and marketing communications firm with special expertise in the LGBT market.

The new survey also investigated whether Americans plan to maintain or increase their leisure travel plans this summer - compared to their leisure travel last summer. More than 7 out of 10 (72%) LGBT adults will take more (9%) or the same number (63%) of leisure trips by car this summer.

Similar patterns arise when adults were asked about the number of weekend trips planned and the duration of leisure trips too. Among LGBT adults, more than 7 out of 10 (72%) plan to increase (12%) or maintain (60%) the number of weekend leisure trips they will take this summer. Three-quarters (75%) indicate that their leisure trips will be longer (2%) or the same length as last summer (73%).

"Harris Interactive frequently conducts travel related survey research projects, including those focused on the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender marketplace. It is promising to see an increase in travel intentions and travel budgets - now more than ever, it will be important for travel companies to continue to reach out to this important consumer segment." said Allison Powell, Research Director for Harris Interactive's Travel and Tourism Research Group.

Bob Witeck, CEO of Witeck-Combs Communications, added that, "Make no mistake; gay households, like all others, are experiencing real changes in their household budgets, plans and travel expectations. Coming out of the past economic downturn has been costly for all consumers, including LGBT travelers. We see their resilience and desire to travel again this year as evidence of more optimism combined with their ingrained travel habits and needs."

Methodology

Harris Interactive conducted the study online and by telephone within the United States between April 11 and 18, 2011,

among 2,576 adults (ages 18 and over), of whom 312 self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender. We over-sampled gay men and lesbians in order to allow for more detailed analysis of these groups.

Figures for age, sex, race, education, region and income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. In addition, the results for the gay and lesbian sample were weighted separately based on profiles of the gay and lesbian population that Harris Interactive has compiled through many different online surveys. Propensity score weighting also was used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading.

All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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