



FACTUM

Relaxation Tops the List of Destination Priorities (72%)

Over half (55%) of Canadians Say There Are Many Destinations They Have Yet to Explore

Toronto, Canada, October 20, 2026 — Canadian travellers are driven by a desire to relax, recharge, and escape the stresses of everyday life when planning fall and winter travel. Nearly three quarters (72%) say relaxation is an important factor in choosing a winter destination, according to a survey by Air Canada conducted by Ipsos. Canadians see plenty of opportunities for future travel, with the majority of Canadians saying there are many destinations they have not yet explored (55%). Nearly one-quarter (21%) mainly focus on a few familiar destinations when considering winter sun travels. Just over one in ten (12%) feel they have already considered most available options and the same proportion don't know enough about alternative destinations. Despite the appeal of familiar getaways, many travellers might remain open to discovering somewhere new.

Relaxation, Value and Warm Weather Drive Destination Decisions

Among those who regularly travel during the fall or winter, the desire to unwind is the primary driver of travel decisions. Nearly three quarters (72%) say relaxation, recharging, and taking a break from daily stress are important considerations that impact their travel decisions (30% extremely important/43% very important). Affordability follows closely behind (68%; 24% extremely important/44% very important) with guaranteed sun and warm weather (57%) also being a major draw for travellers seeking an escape from Canadian winters (23% extremely important/34% very important). Convenience ranks highly as well, with more than half (53%) prioritizing factors such as direct flights and shorter travel times or staying with family or friends. At the same time, nearly half (47%) say adventure and opportunities for new experiences influence their destination decisions (13% extremely important/33% very important), suggesting many travellers are balancing comfort with a desire to explore. Nearly one-third (31%) of travellers are driven by family or social traditions when considering taking a winter vacation (10% extremely important/21% very important).



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The Discovery High Beats the Social Media Upgrade

When asked about the hidden benefit of trying a completely new winter destination, Canadians are most likely to choose "The Discovery High" (36%), the possibility of finding a new favourite place that surpasses their usual getaway. Another 25% point to "The Relationship Reset," valuing the chance to break routine and experience something new with their travel companions. Smaller shares cite "The Main Character Energy" of feeling adventurous (16%), "The Dinner Party Flex" of having interesting stories to share (10%), or "The Social Media Upgrade" of posting new travel photos (7%).

Safety Concerns, Financial Risk, and Logistics Hold Travellers Back

Exploring somewhere new is appealing, but travellers want reassurance before making the leap. Safety, healthcare quality, and political stability are the top worries when considering an unfamiliar winter destination (43%). Financial risk follows closely behind, with 30% concerned about spending money on a trip that may not meet expectations, while a similar proportion (30%) worry about poor weather, and 23% are worried about food or dining uncertainty. Logistical challenges such as long layovers and complicated flight routes concern another 26%, highlighting the importance of convenient and reliable travel options. Trusted recommendations play an important role as well, with nearly one quarter (23%) hesitant to book a destination they cannot validate through friends, family, or other reliable sources. Almost two in ten (17%) feel paralyzed by too many choices, reviews, and booking options, and a similar proportion expresses discomfort with navigating unfamiliar languages or local customs (17%).

Dream Destinations Are Waiting Beyond Canadians' Comfort Zones

When looking ahead to future winter travel, Canadians express interest in a diverse mix of familiar favourites and more adventurous destinations. Hawaii (49%) and Costa Rica (47%) top the list of destinations Canadians would consider for a future winter escape, followed by Australia (41%), Jamaica (38%), Thailand (33%), and California (31%). Interest is also notable for the Philippines (21%), Martinique (21%), Peru (20%), Rio de Janeiro (18%), Guatemala (13%), Tenerife (11%), and Roatán (10%). Importantly, more adventurous destinations appear to be aspirational rather than off-putting.



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While destinations such as European winter cities and Mediterranean escapes (55%), Caribbean and Mexican all-inclusive resorts (52%), and the U.S. Sunbelt (46%) are comfortably within most Canadians' travel comfort zones, many travellers remain intrigued by more adventurous destinations that push them beyond their usual travel habits. More than one third (37%) say destinations in Central and South America, such as Costa Rica, Colombia, and Peru, are outside their comfort zone but places they would still like to visit, compared to just 15% who say those destinations are not their style. Similarly, one third (33%) say long-haul Asia-Pacific destinations, such as Thailand, Bali, and Hawaii, are outside their comfort zone but appeal to them, while only 17% say they are not interested. These findings suggest that destinations in Latin America and Asia-Pacific are not being rejected by Canadian travellers; rather, they are viewed as desirable destinations that many have yet to feel fully confident booking. For travel providers, the challenge may be less about generating demand and more about helping travellers overcome uncertainty and take the leap from interest to action.

About the Study

These are the findings of an Ipsos survey conducted on behalf of Air Canada between September 8 and 11, 2026. A total of 2,001 Canadians aged 18 and older participated in the survey through the Ipsos online panel. Of these, 1,101 identified as fall or winter travellers and completed the full set of travel-related questions. Quotas and weighting were used to ensure the sample's composition reflects that of the Canadian population according to census parameters. This survey has a credibility interval of +/- 3.6 per cent 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had all Canadian adults 18+ been surveyed.

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