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New York, NY – More than one in ten (13%) Americans have got an early start on their summer vacation this year, up 5 points from last year, having traveled for at least a week to a destination at least 100 miles from their home, according to a new Ipsos Public Affairs poll conducted on behalf of Allianz Global Assistance USA. Further, nearly half (44%) of Americans are ‘confident’ (32% strongly/12% somewhat) that they will take a summer vacation this year. Combining those who have taken a vacation with those who are confident they’ll take one, nearly six in ten (56%) Americans are likely to hit the road this summer, up 3 points from last year. This also exceeds the 50% of Americans who say they typically take a summer vacation.

While three in ten (31%) aren’t confident (22% not at all/9% not very) they’ll get a summer vacation, another 12% won’t take a summer vacation but intend to take an annual vacation at another time of the year.

Many Americans appear to be loosening the purse strings for their summer vacations this year. While last year a higher proportion of Americans said they were going to spend less (21%), not more (12%) on their vacation than the year before, this year, a higher proportion of Americans say they’ll spend more (17%), rather than less (14%). Three in ten (28%) will spend roughly the same amount as they did last year.

That some Americans are willing to spend more than they did last year is perhaps reflected in the higher proportion of Americans who have already travelled this year. However, among those who are confident they’ll take a vacation this summer but haven’t already gone, the average anticipated expenditure is \$1,565 – down roughly 8% since last year. So while Americans who have yet to vacation are intending to spend less, this is likely balanced out by a higher proportion of Americans who have already vacationed this year.

Generational Divide: Travel Inspiration and Airport Mishaps...

The data reveal that a majority (52%) of Americans who are confident that they’ll take a vacation this year are turning to social media to get their inspiration. Three in ten (29%) are using Facebook for guidance, while others are using sites such as Tripadvisor (14%), Twitter (6%) and Pinterest (4%).

Focusing on those who are using social media for travel inspiration, regardless of whether or not they intend to travel this year, three quarters (73%) of young adults aged 18 to 34

are using social media for inspiration, compared to 45% of those aged 35 to 54. In fact, even one quarter (24%) of adults aged 55+ are using social media platforms to help with their travel decisions.

Young people are not only leading the way on social media when looking for travel options, but they also have different attitudes and experiences about travelling – in particular, what to do while delayed at the airport. Imagining that their flight is delayed for several hours, while three in ten (28%) Americans would get right down to business and immediately call their travel agent or get in line to try and get rebooked, it is predominantly those aged 35 to 54 (30%) and 55 and older (29%) that would take this course of action. Just one quarter (24%) of adults aged 18 to 34 would do the same.

On the other hand, while one quarter (24%) of Americans, overall, would take the time to catch up with friends and family via phone, Skype, etc., younger adults (33%) are much more likely than middle-aged (22%) or older (17%) adults to make use of their time in this way. Two in ten (19%) Americans would “catch some zzz’s” (22% younger vs. 20% middle-aged vs. 15% older), and one in ten (9%) would load up on celebrity magazines and indulge in the latest gossip (11% younger vs. 8% middle-aged and older). Perhaps not surprisingly, women (11%) are twice as likely as men (6%) to load up on this kind of reading material.

Younger Americans are also far more likely to have had an airport mishap, perhaps reflecting their more relaxed attitude about delays as evidenced above. While one quarter (23%) of Americans say they’ve packed too much and had to pay an extra fee for luggage, younger adults are much more likely (30%) than middle-aged (23%) or older (16%) adults to say this is the case.

Further, two in ten (20%) Americans didn’t leave enough time to get to the airport and missed or nearly missed their flight – led by younger adults (24%) compared to middle-aged (21%) and older (14%) Americans. Nearly one in ten (7%) Americans say they didn’t follow security regulations or had prohibited items in their luggage and missed or nearly missed their flight as a result – relatively even across ages – and one in twenty five (4%) Americans say they’ve sat in the airport lounge/bar for too long and nearly missed or missed their flight, also fairly even across generations.

Vacation Deficit Shrinking...

Slightly more Americans report having taken a vacation in the last month this year (10%) than at the same time last year (8%). A further one in ten (11%) took a vacation one to three months ago (unchanged). On the far end of the spectrum, one half (50%) of Americans haven’t taken a vacation in the last year, down 1 point.

Overall, six in ten (56%) Americans say that taking an annual vacation is ‘important’ (32% very/25% important) to them. And while that roughly mirrors the 52% of Americans who are ‘confident’ (35% very/17% somewhat) that they’ll take a vacation at some points in 2012, one in three (35%) are not confident (23% not at all/13% not very) that they’ll get a vacation at any point this year. One in ten (11%) say their vacation for the year has already happened.



The vacation deficit can be measured by taking the proportion of Americans who think a vacation is important but are not confident that they'll get one this year. Nearly two in ten (18%) Americans who say an annual vacation is important to them are not confident that they'll get one this year, down six points from last year and 10 points from two years ago.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted June 7-12, 2012. For the survey, a nationally representative sample of 1,001 randomly-selected adults residing in the U.S. interviewed by telephone via Ipsos' U.S. Telephone Express omnibus. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire population of adults in the U.S. been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other subgroupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/gender composition reflects that of the actual U.S. population according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

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