

TripAdvisor Reads Traveler Tea Leaves to Reveal 2010 Trends

Annual Traveler Survey Discovers a Flu-nomenon as U.S. Respondents Becoming Far More Cautious When it Comes to Germs U.S. Travelers Expect to Take More Leisure Trips in the Coming Year Troncones, Mexico is 2010's Top Up-and-Coming Travel Destination

NEWTON, Mass., Dec. 8 /PRNewswire/ -- TripAdvisor®, the world's most trusted source of travel advice, today announced the results of its annual travel trends survey of more than 3,000 U.S. travelers. Americans are not taking the H1N1 warnings lightly, as 88 percent of respondents said they are concerned about germs, bacteria and viruses when traveling, compared to 83 percent last year. Seventy-seven percent of travelers said they are washing their hands more often on the road than they normally do, an increase of 17 percent from one year ago.

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Despite the concerns over germs, Americans expect to travel more in 2010 than in 2009. Forty-one percent of U.S. respondents said they plan to spend more on leisure travel in 2010 than they did in 2009 and 92 percent of travelers are planning to take two or more leisure trips in 2010, up from 89 percent last year. Sixty-six percent said the economy will not affect their travel plans for the coming year.

Troncones, Mexico is TravelCast's Emerging Hotspot for 2010

The TripAdvisor TravelCast identifies up-and-coming travel destinations based on site data, including increases in search activity and postings for the past year on TripAdvisor.com.

TripAdvisor TravelCast Top Five World Destinations for 2010

1. Troncones, Mexico

Boasting miles of white sand beaches, Troncones is a peaceful and secluded haven nestled between the jungle foothills of the Sierra Madre del Sur Mountains and the warm tropical waters of the Pacific Ocean.

2. Nairn, Scotland

Located on the Moray Forth coast, this small seaside town enjoys one of the sunniest climates in Scotland, and is a perfect base from which to explore the Highlands.

3. El Chalten, Patagonia

Your cell phone won't work here and the town's limited capacity means you've got to book in advance -- but you'll be richly rewarded with incredible hiking in Parque Nacional Los Glaciares, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

4. Patara, Turkey

With a 12-mile long beach (also a national park) and an abundance of Lycian and Roman ruins peeking out of the sand dunes, Patara is steeped in both natural beauty and history.

5. Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany

This picturesque Bavarian town is celebrated not only for its well-preserved medieval buildings and walls, but also for its unspoiled setting.

TripAdvisor TravelCast Top Five U.S. Destinations for 2010

1. Seward, Alaska

Situated at the head of Resurrection Bay on the Kenai Peninsula, this historic and picturesque town is the gateway to Kenai Fjords National Park, rich with wildlife, spectacular fjords and tidewater glaciers.

2. Hyannis, Massachusetts

John F. Kennedy's former Presidential retreat can be found in Hyannis, the largest and most central village in Cape Cod's Town of Barnstable, and its picturesque sandy stretches make it a fantastic retreat.

3. Hot Springs, Arkansas

True to its name, nature's geological wonders are a key feature of this picture-perfect town, which boasts natural hot and cold mineral springs in which to relax, restore and renew.

4. Chinle, Arizona

Drive around nearby Canyon de Chelly's rim roads for a bird's eye view of the spectacular scenery below, or take a tour of the canyon floor for a closer look at its breath-taking rock formations, cave art and cliff dwellings.

5. Waimea, Hawaii

Situated on the Southwest side of the beautiful island of Kauai, this unassuming beach-side town is the gateway to Waimea Canyon, the largest canyon in the Pacific, which oozes natural beauty.

Additional 2010 Travel Trends Survey Findings

Just Plane Sick

Eighty-nine percent of travelers would react if they noticed their flight seatmate was displaying visible flu-like symptoms. While 55 percent would request to be moved to a different seat, 27 percent would notify a flight attendant, four percent would put on a face mask or scarf and an additional three percent would request that their fellow passenger cover up with a mask or scarf.

Airplanes are considered the top spot to beware of unwanted microbes (48 percent), followed by public transportation (19 percent) and hotels (six percent).

Mile-High Misdemeanors

Sixty-one percent of travelers confess they have disregarded airline rules on a flight. Unbuckling seatbelts before the light is off tops the list of flier felonies, with almost half of travelers (49 percent) admitting to unclipping prematurely. Further indiscretions include moving someone else's luggage to make room for their own (23 percent), standing up before the seatbelt light is turned off (16 percent), and six percent even admit to using a forbidden electronic device in-flight, such as a cell phone or pager.

Sketchy Seatmates

Sitting next to a traveler with noticeable body odor is most likely to get travelers switching seats on a flight, with 38 percent confessing that if their neighbor was whiffy, they'd be gone in a jiffy. Intoxicated travelers take second place on the list of nightmarish neighbors, with obese travelers rounding out the top three. The survey results also reveal that 69 percent of travelers believe that passengers over a certain weight should be required to pay for two seats.

Flying Faux Pas

Children may be small in stature, but when it comes to the top travel annoyances, they deliver a mean punch -- or rather, kick. Thirty-seven percent of travelers cite seat-kicking kids as their primary pet peeve, while fliers that sneeze and cough without covering their mouth and rude seat recliners claim second and third spots respectively. Forty-two percent of travelers also expressed frustration about not having space on flights for their carry-on bags. Forty-five percent think travelers without carry-on bags should be allowed to board flights first.

Quiet Sections Preferred

Forty-one percent of travelers said they'd be most likely to pay extra to sit in a "quiet section" of a plane, while 39 percent would love to be free of kids in a "child-free section." Wi-Fi may be a useful in-flight option, but some travelers would prefer to remain altogether disconnected, with 11 percent saying they'd choose a "Wi-Fi-free section."

In-flight Indulgences

Seventy-two percent of travelers expect to pay for in-flight extras when flying in 2010, with extra leg-room top of the wish list for more than one-third (35 percent) of respondents. Twenty-six percent are most likely to pay for snacks or an in-flight meal, and more travelers plan to shell out for in-flight alcohol (23 percent) than for seat selection (22 percent) or checked bags (20 percent).

Eco-nsiderations

Twenty-two percent of travelers expect to be more environmentally conscious in their travel decisions in 2010 than they were in 2009. Thirty-two percent consider their carbon footprint when traveling, and as a result, 44 percent of these travelers choose to stay at "green" or environmentally-conscious hotels, while 26 percent choose to drive rather than fly, and 20 percent travel shorter distances. A hotel having "green" policies also factors into 33 percent of travelers' booking decisions.

Ugly Americans and America the Beautiful

There's good and bad news for U.S. travelers, with Americans voted the friendliest travelers -- but also the most annoying. Twenty-five percent of U.S. respondents consider Americans to be the most irritating travelers, followed by travelers from France (nine percent), Japan (eight percent), China (seven percent) and Germany (six percent).

Nineteen percent said Americans are friendliest, followed by travelers from Australia (16 percent), Canada (nine percent), England (eight percent) and Ireland (four percent).

Pledge Allegiance to the Brand

Fifty-nine percent of travelers said they are brand loyal when it comes to booking hotels, with the survey revealing the top three brands to be Marriott (12 percent), Hilton (nine percent) and Hampton Inn (four percent).

"If it isn't already, hand sanitizer should be among the first things travelers think to pack these days," said Christine Petersen, chief marketing officer for TripAdvisor. "As far as destinations to consider for 2010, Mexico offers some real bargains -- and Troncones made the top of our emerging destinations TravelCast list."

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*Source: comScore Media Metrix, July 2009

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