

Americans Flocked to National Parks for Summer Vacations: New Skift Travel Tracker Survey

Haixia Wang, Skift Research

- Sep 16, 2020 10:45 am

**SKIFT
TAKE**

The substantial decline in new Covid cases didn't seem to give travel a much-needed boost. In August, 36 percent of Americans traveled, only one percentage point higher than in July.

— *Haixia Wang*

SHARE

Tweet

Share

Post

Send


Another peak of coronavirus cases seemed to be behind us when we entered August in the U.S. Many universities opened for classes and sent a wave of parents delivering children to campuses. August seemed to be poised to be a minor travel boost from July. Yet the number didn't change much.

According to Skift Research's **U.S. Travel Tracker August survey**, 36 percent of Americans traveled in August, only one percentage point higher than in July. This is despite the fact that consumers were less fearful of the virus, with 50 percent of surveyed consumers saying they were very concerned about the coronavirus, dropping from 57 percent in July.

Summer vacation has been the main driver of travel growth since July. However, these are not typical summer vacations in any case. The new normal of vacationing this summer is characterized by staycations, day trips, and road trips. Destinations that are close to vacation-goers' homes, and safe to travel to, all saw increases in visitations, including urban centers and beaches.

Destinations that have gained the most visitation shares are national parks. In August, 22 percent of all trips taken by Americans were to national parks, thanks to the promise of isolated open spaces that parks have to offer. By comparison, park visitation only accounted for 12 percent of all trips in

January, pre-Covid.

 The picture can't be displayed.

As people seek outdoor access and getaways from being stuck at home, short-term vacation rentals, campgrounds, and RVs are unsurprising winners in their accommodation choices. Since June, campgrounds, RVs, or cabins have consistently accounted for over 10 percent of all personal travel stays. The same holds true for vacation rental stays. The number was especially high in

August, with 15 percent of leisure travel stays involving vacation rentals.

The picture can't be displayed.

Skift Research introduced a monthly U.S. travel tracking survey in January 2020 to examine the travel penetration rates and detailed travel behavior of the U.S. population. In addition to the factual travel occurrences, we also asked respondents their perceptions on the macro-level economic condition as well their personal financial and travel outlook. As we move through different phases of Covid-19, our monthly survey captures the fluctuations of consumer travel behavior and intent in real time.

In our newly released [U.S. Travel Tracker August survey report](#), we highlight new and ongoing trends in travel incidences, consumer sentiments and future travel intents in the pandemic world, distilled from our August Travel Tracker survey.

[Learn More](#)

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN FROM THIS REPORT

- Travel incidences Jan – Aug 2020

- August travel highlights
- Covid-19 impacted travel Feb – Aug 2020
- Changing consumer sentiments on the economic outlook Feb – Sep 2020
- Changing consumer intent on future travel April – Sep 2020