



FAMILY TRAVEL TRENDS

FOR THE NEW DECADE



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With the start of the new decade we wanted to dig in and learn what's in store for the family travel segment in the 2020s and beyond. Multigenerational travel, say industry experts, is definitely here to stay and gaining in popularity, but look closer at that particular niche and you'll be seeing a lot more interest in skip-gen. Other trends industry experts say are probably here to stay? Disconnecting so as to create more valuable family bonding; educational/experiential trips; vacationing with the family pet; and, of course, the growing influence from children on where the family travels, including traveling to destinations less-visited as Gen Z and the so-called Gen Alpha generation seek to explore a world beyond the conventional due to what they view on their social media channels.

This is a multi-billion-dollar market, currently the leading segment of the leisure travel industry and one that continues to grow faster than other segments—it should be at the very top of your radar.

For this *Family Travel Trends for the New Decade Report*—a complement to the *Family Travel Trends for the New Decade Survey* conducted on **recommend.com**, as well as the *Family Travel Trends for the New Decade Webinar*—we reached out to experts in the family travel segment to gain insight into what family travelers want and help you better sell to this growing market.



MULTI-GEN TRAVEL IS HERE TO STAY

“Grandparents want in on the action,” says Helen Montijano, v.p., sales & marketing, Canada and USA, **Bahia Principe Hotels & Resorts**, and as a result “multigenerational travel” is here to stay for this new decade. “Today’s boomers are active, healthy, and looking to spend time with their loved ones, especially when traveling,” she

points out. “As a result, there’s a shifting trend in giving, where parents and grandparents want to spend their money on their family and enjoy experiences together. By taking advantage of milestones, birthdays and anniversaries, elders bring-the-whole-gang together and celebrate with a vacation.” Francesca Donlan, communications director for **Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau**, adds that it’s vacations with “multigenerational experiences the whole family can share,” with John Long, **Iberostar Hotels &**

Resorts’ v.p. of sales & business development, USA, noting that “multigenerational travel continues to be a big deal, and we see an abundance of extended family members traveling together.”

Travel advisor Jeni Schrimsher, owner of **Voyages by Jeni LLC**, an Independent Agency in the **Avoya Network**, points out that once “customers do their first multigenerational trip, many become hooked on traveling with their parents or extended family. It’s just the shared experience on the trip—they realize how fun it is and continue to book year after year, and often invite more family and friends each time.” And Richard D’Ambrosio, a Family Travel Expert, sees multigenerational and skip-gen travel “staying for a long time. Baby boomers and matures who have saved well and retired healthy want to spend their newfound luxury of time traveling. They want to spend a substantial portion of that time traveling with their children and their children’s children.” And when it comes to vacations with the extended family, don’t count the family pet out. Says Donlan, “Pets are definitely part of the family and travel is built to include them.”



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“The skip-gen travel trend is deeply rooted in the American market and makes for a beautiful opportunity to vacation with a loved one. Industry experts share that grandparents surveyed agreed that traveling with grandchildren makes them feel younger, and 75% say it’s one of the best vacations they can have.” -- **Helen Montijano, Vice President, Sales & Marketing, Canada and USA, Bahia Principe Hotels & Resorts**



CULTURAL IMMERSION

Culturally immersive trips. That, says Steve Born, CMO, **Globus family of brands**, “will drive more European and exotic family adventures. More families are looking for a getaway that offers substance; a true experience of a foreign culture that helps broaden the perspective of the kids while serving as a discovery that the family can enjoy together.”

Alaskan Dream Cruises’

marketing director Jaime Kennedy says families want to “really experience and connect with local culture,” with **Inkaterra’s** director for business development-sales and marketing Liza Masias noting that, “more and more, we are seeing that families are looking to go on educational trips that expose young children to communities and ways of life that are different than their own. While culturally immersive travel has always been popular within the luxury travel sector, we feel this will be a driver among families throughout the coming decade.”

QUALITY TIME TOGETHER

Another factor that is really pushing family vacations is wanting to spend quality time together, and this is one of the

only times they are able to do that fully. “Unplugged vacations,” says Montijano, “has almost universal appeal. Spending quality time as a ‘family’ while unplugging from daily activities remains the main reason behind traveling with loved ones. Studies show that 91 percent of families, specifically those with Gen-z’s and Millennials, feel the need to vacation from social media and its pressure.” It’s an ideal time, says Sarah Leonard, president and CEO of **Alaska Travel Industry Association**, “to seek an opportunity to disconnect from their phones and then reconnect with nature. Families come to Alaska because they want that time in nature and to see our wild landscapes. That often comes with limited WiFi, so they go hand in hand here. I don’t think that will ever go away.”

“More world citizens: Kids are not the same today as they were before social media. Access to media and information has given Gen Z an awareness of the world unlike any generation before them, driving a thirst for experiences outside our borders at a young age.”

-- Steve Born, CMO, Globus family of brands



FAMILY BONDING



Spending quality time together brings us to family bonding and the importance of traveling together as a family in today's world. Says Sabrina Cendral, sr. v.p. of marketing and sales for **Club Med North America**, "Life gets busy with work, school and extracurriculars, and even geographical distance between family members." Because of that, says Kennedy, "We see families wanting to have that undivided attention and time to share together and it seems like getting away from everyday lives on a trip is one of the easiest ways to find that." Adds D'Ambrosio, "Family travel is unique in the opportunities it

presents for new experiences that help family members bond and grow," with Vicki Freed, **Royal Caribbean International's** sr. v.p. of sales, trade support and service, noting that, "Families are looking for more opportunities to bond and stay connected. Vacations are a great way to escape the distractions of everyday life and focus on each other." And Long points out something you can always remind your clients about when they are thinking of opting out of their annual family vacation because of busy schedules: "Studies show that a healthy lifestyle is more important than ever before, and traveling is a healthy and cultural experience that allows families to bond and take a step back from their busy lives."

"Traveling together gives families time to connect with each other and disconnect from all the technology. A client recently wrote to me, 'It was so nice to see our son in a different light. He was engaged with us and we had so much fun.' And this son is 24!"

-- **Virtuoso Advisor**
Judi Glass

Vacation Choices

Among Family Travel for the New Decade Survey respondents, INTERNATIONAL MULTI-DAY VACATIONS are the most popular, with weekend getaways following very close behind.



SUMMERTIME

is the most popular time for families to travel, with winter break a close second, according to Family Travel for the New Decade survey respondents.

Influencers: Children Are #1



So what has happened in the last decade or so that has made children one of the biggest influencers when it comes to family vacation decisions? Two short words: Social media, but there's more. "Kids want to learn and I think that's how they influence their family trips," says Kennedy. "If kids study whales or bears in school, they want to go see them; if they study glaciers, they want to see them. And parents are listening more to what their kids have a desire to learn about and choose destinations based on these requests." Schrimsher concurs, noting that she has many customers who "view travel as an opportunity to give their kids new experiences, broaden their horizons, provide education and prepare them for the future. There is a big market of families who want to take their kids on vacations that aren't promoted as family destinations." In fact, says Masias, "Not too long ago you'd ask a child about their dream vacation and they'd probably bring up Disney World. Nowadays it seems like children are much more curious about the world they live in—they learn about monkeys in school and, if given the chance, would jump at the chance to see a monkey in its natural habitat. This spirit of curiosity and adventure can turn a weeknight dinner conversation into the inspiration for a family's next big vacation to someplace like the Amazon or the Andes." Born concurs, stating that, "The mission of Mom and Dad is to open up options beyond the expected and show them a choice of other places that bring history and adventure to life."

Children are also greatly influencing "the variety of activities and adventures that families seek out in destinations now," says Leonard, with operators adding or adapting offerings to engage kids. Adds Montijano, this is because the "vast majority of parents give children a significant say in family trip decisions and in my opinion, having the entire family happy is key to a successful trip." Freed concurs, pointing out that "with limited vacation time, maximizing every member of the family's experience is incredibly important—parents and kids should be able to equally enjoy their trip."

Kid Power

46.33% of *Family Travel Trends for the New Decade* Survey respondents STRONGLY AGREE or AGREE that children have a strong influence on vacation decisions.



"Children want to travel with their friends and not just immediate family—this is the influence they have. Now, more than ever, we are seeing lot of groups of 10 to 15 people comprised of extended family and friends at our hotels." -- **John Long, Vice President of Sales & Business Development, USA, Iberostar Hotels & Resorts**

"It's interesting—our recent research actually contradicts the previous thought that when on an all-inclusive vacation, most parents look to drop their kids off for the day at their respective kid's club and enjoy time on their own. We noticed both kids and parents are seeking opportunities to spend time together when on vacation, and parents enjoy when their kids come home with new skills and interests."

-- **Sabrina Cendral, Senior Vice President of Marketing and Sales, Club Med North America**

WHAT WILL THE NEXT DECADE BRING?



So we asked the experts to look into their crystal ball to see what new trends might come up in this new decade, and we got everything from more “sibling travel and multi-family chartering,” according to Kennedy, to how conservation and environmental issues will impact travel choices, as Donlan notes. Masias agrees with Donlan, pointing out that, “With global warming an ever-prevalent issue, sustainable travel will continue to gain traction exponentially in the next 10 years. Families will be looking towards companies and hotel groups that are constantly trying to lessen their carbon footprint and are working hard to reverse the effects of global warming.” In the same vein, travelers, says Long, will be looking to “giving back more.” And, of course, technology will be an important element in influencing how families travel, with Freed noting, “No matter the changes in family dynamics to come, we anticipate innovative technologies will continue to play a role in enhancing and streamlining how families eat, stay and play on their vacation.”

“One of the biggest trends I see in family travel is the strong market of families who are not choosing different types of vacations because of kids, rather they want the same type of trips they took pre-kids and now include their children.” -- **Jeni Schrimsher, Owner of Voyages by Jeni LLC, an Independent Agency in the Avoya Network**

“Ten years from now, I think we’ll see even more remote workspaces around the world, and parents who move their children to a destination for longer periods of time to explore at a slower pace. We see it as a blending of today’s digital nomad culture with the slow travel trend.” -- **Sarah Leonard, President and CEO, Alaska Travel Industry Association**



Almost half of the *Family Travel for the New Decade Survey* respondents say that the top emerging trend is **ancestry travel**, with visiting **off-the-beaten-path destinations** and **Christmas-time vacations** also gaining in popularity.



THE ROLE OF THE TRAVEL ADVISOR

"Travel advisors are clearly the best choice for parents, grandparents, and anyone else trying to consider all of the options for their next family vacation," says D'Ambrosio. "Professional travel advisors who understand families and build their training around serving them, know how to qualify clients best for the ultimate family vacation experience." Montijano adds that, "the key role of today's travel advisor is crucial." In fact, says Cendral, "many travel advisors are really the go-to's for families seeking hassle-free vacations to accommodate all members of the family—from babies and teens to parents and grandparents."

According to **Virtuoso** travel advisor Judi Glass, "as professionals, our role is to get to know the families on a deeper level and what they like, from time to start a day to their special interests," with Schrimsher adding that, "travel advisors need to listen. Listening is the most important thing to do to understand what types of travelers their family customers are. I find that families want and will pay for experiences and what experience they want will differ. For some the destination is the most important and they may scale back for a moderate hotel and rental car so that they have more money for interesting tours, admission fees and once-in-a-lifetime activities. I've also booked intergenerational cruises on luxury lines such as Oceania because that is the experience my clients wanted and they weren't traveling for the kids' club (there is no kids' club)."

Long stresses that you, the advisors, are instrumental in creating just the right experience, because, he says, "the travel advisor has either personally experienced the destination or has sent a customer to experience it, so they can share those success stories with their customers to give them the confidence in the right choice for their travel plans."

"Knowledge is key and today's travel advisors have the experience and knowledge to help families make the best decisions in making their vacation choices and plans—helping to maximize the experience while fitting every budget."
-- **Francesca Donlan, Communications Director, Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau**

POINT YOUR CLIENTS TO GREAT FAMILY EXPERIENCES

So what do some of the hotels, tour operators, cruise lines and destinations that are focused on family travel have on offer for your clients? Dedicated family programs, state-of-the-art water parks, access to local culture, trekking on glaciers, gastronomic workshops, visits to lesser-visited communities in remote places, unforgettable hikes, and private island destinations.

Bahia Principe Hotels & Resorts' *Family & Friends Experience*, for example, offers activities and amenities that caters to guests of all ages, from evening shows and parties for the whole family, to gastronomic workshops, kids' and teens' clubs, and fairytale castles. "We offer distinct activities," says Montijano, "including ways for guests to connect with the resorts' natural surroundings, the environment, their loved ones and themselves."

Over at **Club Med**, there's an *Amazing Family Program* that, notes Cendral, is specifically catered toward multigenerational families traveling together. It "provides weekly activities that allow them to bond and create shared memories, including movie nights under the stars, life-sized board games and resort-wide scavenger hunts, or more 'high-impact' activities like family flying trapeze lessons and archery."

For **Inkaterra**, "families that adventure together, stay together," says Masias. "The excitement and intrigue of exploring new places in unique ways, whether that be horseback riding or mountain climbing, bring families together and out of their comfort zones." To keep the family

bonding, guests can take a hike above the Amazon rainforest on Inkaterra's Canopy Walkway, make traditional Andean corn beer, or go collecting, processing, and consuming organic tea in the Andes.

At **Iberostar Hotels & Resorts'** properties, they're educating their guests about the environment and local culture via its *Wave of Change* movement, focusing on three fundamental pillars: moving beyond plastics and towards a circular economy, promoting the responsible consumption of seafood and improving coastal health. Families focused on sustainability will also embrace Iberostar's *Honest Food* commitment, which, says Long, "helps guests experience local culture, as it consists of the consumption of fresh, natural produce prepared using homemade methods, respect for the

food we eat and the environment, and the desire to discover new cultures and destinations through cuisine."

Alaskan Dream Cruises also delves into the local culture with its focus on exploring the many small villages and lesser-visited communities. The focus for the cruise line, says Kennedy, is on the "amazing scenery and adventures that are here in Alaska." And while in Alaska, notes Leonard, "there are moments that families don't ever forget—trekking on a thousand-year-old glacier, watching bear fish for salmon, riding on the back of a dog sled."

And whichever the activities or destinations a family chooses, the point for travel advisors to know is that, as Freed says, "There continues to be a strong desire for self-enrichment and discovering new, unique experiences as a family on vacation."



TRAVEL ALASKA/BRIAN ADAMS

FAMILY TRAVEL

Iberostar Hotels and Resorts caters to the long-awaited family vacation. With over 20 properties in Mexico, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, Iberostar has the ideal combination of luxurious accommodations, international gastronomy, and the epitome of kids' entertainment, Star Camp.

Featuring an environment for kids to play and learn, Star Camp is grouped into three age groups and offers over 140 activities curated for each child development phase. Based on the theory of multiple intelligences, each group has unique educational and recreational activities, all in the educational orbit of Wave of Change, the movement pioneering the all-inclusive, eco-conscious vacation.

ABOUT US

Iberostar Hotels & Resorts, a hotel chain with unparalleled services, exquisite culinary fare and entertainment for adults and kids alike. Incorporating the Wave of Change movement into all aspects of the all-inclusive vacation experience, Iberostar is moving beyond plastics, as well as offering responsibly sourced seafood and the promotion of coastal health.

iberostaragents.com/manifesto



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HOTELS & RESORTS

Families find themselves away from it all, but closer together on our islands. On behalf of your clients, plan an unforgettable family vacation to The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel. Whether it's boating between hundreds of islands along our Southwest Florida coastline or pedaling paved bike trails on Sanibel Island, nature is essential to our way of life. Collecting seashells is an instant favorite activity thanks to the gentle waves of the Gulf of Mexico. Colorful birds soaring overhead and high-flying dolphins playing in boat wakes are natural attractions for outdoor lovers and photographers. Your clients won't find high-rises and big crowds – only endless white-sand beaches, lush wilderness and friendly wildlife.

More than nature, city life and island living blend smoothly before and after sunset. The spotlight shines on a thriving arts, theater and dining scene in the downtown Fort Myers River District, with several galleries and theaters taking center stage along the brick-lined streets. Any history buffs in your clientele? Then the Edison and Ford Winter Estates are a must-see. Explore the lab, homes and gardens of these great American inventors for a perfect change of pace. From vacation rentals to hotels and more, there's an ideal lodging option for your clients' budget. And it's all a short drive from Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW), where over 50 direct flights arrive daily.

Great rates, amenities and easy transportation all make for a travel agent's dream. Everything else makes for your clients' new favorite destination.

Learn more at **FortMyers-Sanibel.com**



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FAMILY & FRIENDS: A COMPREHENSIVE EXPERIENCE CREATED WITH GUESTS OF ALL AGES IN MIND

Bahia Principe Hotels & Resorts has recently introduced “Experiences”, offering distinct activities, entertainment, food and beverage options, aimed to satisfy different needs and preferences for the perfect stay. One of them is the Family & Friends Experience, created for groups and families of any size, available at 11 of the brand’s 20 all-inclusive resorts in the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Jamaica.

The Family & Friends Experience offers activities and amenities catered to guests of all ages: evening shows and parties for the entire family, culinary workshops, kids and teen clubs, plus children’s waterparks. Group activities include aerobics, running and sports tournaments. Also, guests at Family & Friends Experience hotels are privy to dining points in all the properties’ restaurants, and have the option of indulging in family-style sharing dishes.

The brand’s most notable Family & Friends Experience property is the centerpiece of its seven-hotel complex in Punta Cana. With its massive fairytale castles, Bahia Principe Fantasia Punta Cana is what every kid’s dreams are made of and where they learn about Papimber, the young explorer behind the resort’s magical atmosphere. Comprehensive entertainment programming by day and breathtaking video mapping shows by night make every single day a special one.

Contact your preferred tour operator for more information about Bahia Principe’s properties in the region.

ABOUT BAHIA PRINCIPE HOTELS & RESORTS

Bahia Principe Hotels & Resorts has all-inclusive hotels in the Dominican Republic, Riviera Maya (Mexico) and Jamaica. All our resorts feature well-appointed rooms, magnificent swimming pools and outstanding service at stunning locations. From entertainment for every family/group member to delectable cuisine and everything in between, you clients are guaranteed an experience like no other in paradise.

