



# Trend Report

2021



# About the Vrbo Trend Report

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Welcome to the 2021 Vrbo Trend Report. It goes without saying that 2020 was a challenge. In some ways, this year's only constant was unpredictability. In previous editions of the Trend Report, Vrbo used the current year's travel demand data to identify what trends will shape travel for the upcoming year. With countless people canceling, rescheduling or reimagining their travel plans in 2020, using the same methodology would have been a fool's errand.

For this year's report, we analyzed data from Vrbo's global vacation rental marketplace and also invited family travelers around the world to participate in a first-of-its-kind consumer survey. The survey data helped us uncover families' travel aspirations for 2021, as well as which 2020 travel patterns will stick around, and which might disappear when life returns to "normal".

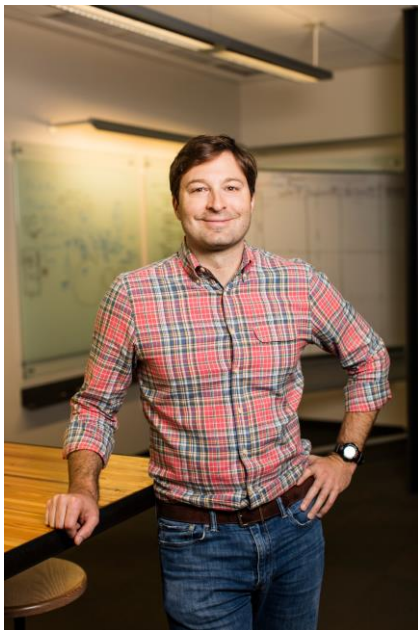
This report is based on a survey of 8,000+ people from 8 countries, as well as Vrbo travel demand for the 12-month period ending August 31, 2020 (except as otherwise indicated).



# Letter from Jeff Hurst

## Vrbo President

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In my 10 years in the vacation rental industry, I've never experienced a year quite like 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on our family lives, social lives, home lives and of course, our travel plans. Whether you've been virtual schooling your children or working remotely, one thing is clear – we could all use a vacation.

I know this pandemic has been incredibly hard on families and I'm disappointed for anyone who had to cancel a long-awaited vacation. It's also been challenging for the vacation home owners and property managers around the world who delight in welcoming guests to their homes.

Despite these challenges, I've been inspired by the thousands of resilient families who trusted Vrbo with a vacation this year. Though a lot of families might have cancelled an international flight or a visit to an amusement park, it makes me smile that many discovered new destinations, tried a road trip and experienced the joy of staying together in a private vacation home.

I don't have a crystal ball that can predict exactly what will happen in 2021, but I do know that Vrbo is committed to bringing families together when they need it most. For 25 years, Vrbo's purpose has been grounded in spending quality time with loved ones and making lifelong memories together. In 2021, I'm confident we'll continue helping families do that.



# Travel slowed down. Travel planning didn't.



Though 2020 gave us lemons, families made lemonade by planning their next vacation. Even though 61% had a trip canceled due to COVID-19, travel is still top of mind. 82% of families surveyed already have travel plans in mind for 2021.

Despite travel restrictions and canceled plans, Vrbo users created 15.7M Trip Boards this past spring and summer\*. What better way to pass the time indoors than dreaming about the next place to go?

The pent-up urge to travel and escape the day to day is palpable. When asked what the number one benefit of a 2021 vacation would be, 22% of travelers said a vacation would improve mental health and act as self-care.

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\* Vrbo Trip Boards created between March and September 2020

# 2 Pandemic travel habits may be hard to break.



## Staying in the driver's seat

In 2020, families chose to travel by car and 2021 will be another year filled with road trips. With travel restrictions and social distancing guidelines, families opted to avoid taking flights and visiting crowded places by simply hitting the open road.

- 59% of families say they are more likely to drive instead of fly on their next trip.

## Seeking wide open spaces

It's no secret that families love the great outdoors. Vrbo travelers have always gravitated toward peaceful and picturesque destinations, but the pandemic has made fresh air, open sky and scenic views that much more appealing.

- 61% of U.S. families said they are more likely to visit an outdoorsy destination than an urban one.
- 54% said they are more likely to visit a national park than an amusement park.





## Mixing work and play

In 2020, countless people adapted to working from home or facilitating e-learning for their kids. Though turning their homes into an office or classroom was not easy, many families used the newfound flexibility in their schedules to book a vacation rental where they could mix working from home, virtual school and vacation time. We call this the Flexcation.

- 1 in 3 survey respondents said they were able to fulfill their travel needs because they were working from home.
- 38% of those who took a Flexcation said they did so to give their children a new experience.
- 52% of Flexcationers found the experience refreshing and 67% said they would do it again.



### 💡 Did you know?

Booking a Flexcation lets you experience amenities you might not have in your own home. In fact, 35% of respondents said they booked a Flexcation to enjoy different amenities. Here are Vrbo's top picks for places with the most sought-after amenities\*:

- **Splashing in the sun** → Visit Cape Coral, Fla. where 92% of vacation homes have a pool.
- **Cooking over an open fire** → Head to Sevierville, Tenn. where 87% of vacation homes have a BBQ.
- **Cozying up with a book and hot chocolate** → Go to Steamboat Springs, Colo. where 87% of vacation homes have a fireplace.

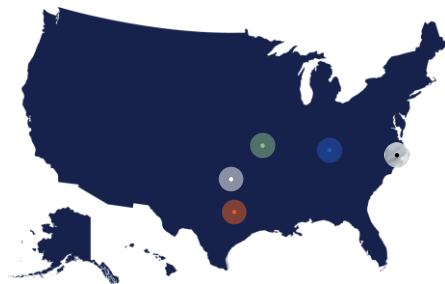


# Lakes, rivers and streams reign supreme.

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Vrbo demand data shows that travel to lakes and rivers increased in popularity while beaches took a back seat. Four of the top five trending destinations are near lakes, rivers or streams where families can camp, hike and fish.

Flanked between two lakes and surrounded by campgrounds, Emory, Texas is a mere 1-hour drive from Dallas and emerged as the top trending vacation destination in the U.S.



## Top Emerging U.S. Destinations\*

- Emory, Texas
- Smithville, Mo.
- Slade, Ky.
- Outer Banks, N.C.
- Mannford, Okla.



## Did you know?

- Emory's Lake Fork is a top fishing spot for catching largemouth bass and home to the A.C. McMillan African American Museum.
- The Red River Gorge in Slade appeared in *The Kentuckian*, the first major motion picture to be filmed in the state. It is also close to Mammoth Cave National Park, rich with the history and stories of African American cave explorers.
- Bald Eagles, peregrine falcon and other storied high-flyers are in abundant view over Abermarle Sound, the gateway to North Carolina's legendary Outer Banks.

\*Based on Vrbo travel demand (Sep., 2018–Sep., 2019 vs. Sept. 2019–Sep., 2020)



# Cozy is king.



During the pandemic, families who wanted to escape their own four walls opted for the coziness and comfort of Vrbo cabins and chalets.

Typically nestled near mountainsides, forests and lakes, cabins and chalets are inviting places to relax and make memories.

- Vrbo demand for cabins increased nearly 25% and chalets were up almost 20% year-over-year\*.





# Time to go all out.

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After a year of canceled travel, 2020 has made families appreciate travel more and gave them a new sense of urgency to take that dream vacation. When travel returns to pre-COVID levels, travelers are thinking BIG – families are willing to travel more frequently, spend more money and finally take that once-in-a-lifetime trip.

- 65% of travelers plan on traveling more than they did pre-COVID.
- 33% are willing to spend more than they traditionally would.
- 54% say they are more likely to take their bucket list trip.



## Did you know?

1 in 3 families plan on spending more on 2021 travel. This is what they plan to splurge on:

- 46% traveling further away.
- 55% staying longer.
- 48% staying at nicer accommodations.



# Families want a vacation redo.

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Families miss their loved ones and want to make up for lost time. In fact, families who had to cancel a vacation in 2020 are ready for a redo – talk about a bad case of FOMO. Rather than scrapping the trip completely:

- 44% of travelers who had a trip canceled due to COVID-19 plan on rescheduling the same vacation.
- 54% of respondents who want a redo say they were looking forward to going to that destination.
- 31% of travelers say the main reason they want to go on their next trip is to spend quality time with family.





## Methodology

This survey was fielded among a total of 8,258 18+ aged parents in the U.S., U.K., France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Australia/New Zealand, and Brazil, with a distribution across gender, generation, income, and region. The data in this report was based off U.S. survey results unless otherwise noted.

This survey was conducted online during the period of October 12-26, 2020 and has a margin of error of +/- 1.1%.



## About Kelton Global

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# About Vrbo

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In 1995, Vrbo introduced a new way for people to travel together, pairing homeowners with families and friends looking for places to stay. We were grounded in one purpose: To give people the space they need to drop the distractions of everyday life and simply be together. Since then, we've grown into a global community of homeowners and travelers, with unique properties around the world. Vrbo makes it easy and fun to book cabins, condos, beach houses and every kind of space in between.

Vrbo is part of Expedia Group and offers homeowners and property managers exposure to over 750 million visits to Expedia Group sites each month. To learn more, visit [www.vrbo.com](https://www.vrbo.com).

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