



Why People Travel

In thinking about the experience you hope to create for your visitor, it's helpful to know what visitors are seeking. The following list shows the reasons people travel. Most content is adapted with permission from the Agri-Business Council of Oregon's Agritourism Workbook (revised in 2007).

To build and strengthen relationships

The primary reason Americans travel on vacation is to spend time with family. They want to be together in stress-free surroundings, and they consider a trip away from home to be the ideal opportunity. They view travel as a time to rekindle and strengthen their relationships, as well as an opportunity to make new friends.

To improve health and well-being

Vacations are vital to travelers' physical and mental well-being. They seek an experience that gets their blood pumping or their mind cleared. Many Oregon travelers do this by participating in outdoor activities.

To rest and relax

Americans on vacation want to rest and relax. A trip away from home is a trip away from work and worry. When they return, they feel refreshed and renewed.

To experience adventure

Some travelers vacation away from home to find adventure. They want their vacations to provide excitement, be it dangerous or romantic.

To experience places they have read about or seen through media

Travel-related visuals can incite a sense of "wanderlust" that inspires an intense desire to physically visit a destination. Social media, television, internet sites and other travel publications highlight a diversity of options that can incite that travel bug—as well as highlight hidden gems outside the typical well-known destinations.

To escape and find connection

Many people travel to escape daily routines, worry and stress, and to attain what they sense is missing in their lives (Krippendorf 1986). They seek something different: perhaps a better climate, a slower pace of life, cleaner air, prettier scenery or quieter surroundings. This connection can be to other people, the environment, or themselves and their purpose.



To check something off their bucket list

Travel can be a major focus for those who have created a list of personal milestones and accomplishments to complete. For example, it is common for Europeans to want to visit every U.S. national park. Completing a travel-related bucket list item can be a source of external bragging rights, or provide a sense of accomplishment.

To learn

Some travelers travel to learn and discover. They want to see, hear, touch and feel unfamiliar things. More specifically, they want to learn or practice a language, study a culture, explore gourmet foods or wines, investigate spirituality, etc. Visitors want to meet people from other cultures and be exposed to new perspectives, and acquire an understanding of a different culture's lifestyle, food and daily life.

To mark a special occasion

Many Americans vacation away from home to celebrate life milestones and special occasions. New relationships, marriages, birthdays and professional achievements provide a reason.

To save money or time by traveling locally

People sometimes take short, local vacations to save money or time. Some vacationers are very frugal. Some vacationers want to enjoy a "staycation" to stretch their vacation dollars and reduce travel. Sometimes travelers will seek an opportunity to combine a work-related trip with a visitor experience, not only to see the area beyond the office or meeting location but to expand the cost-effectiveness of the trip.

To reminisce

Travel can evoke the past. Some vacationers—particularly older ones—visit a farm to rekindle memories of the simple rural lifestyle they once knew. Although these people do buy food, lodging, transportation and souvenirs, they are primarily purchasing a sentimental journey.

To view nature

A recent U.S. Fish and Wildlife survey reported that nature tourists view wildlife to observe nature's beauty, relax from daily pressures, get away from home, and be with family and friends (Leonard 2008). Social interaction and relaxation are particularly important, sometimes secondary only to seeing wildlife. These tourists like learning about nature, being physically active and meeting people with similar interests.

To visit places they have heard about from friends and family

Recommendations from friends and family are a strong motivator in selecting a location for travel. Endorsements help travelers select locations, because they know their friends and family have vetted the location based on common interests and general qualities like safety and the amount and type of amenities.

