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AARP TRAVEL FINDS CELEBRATION VACATIONS POPULAR WITH BOOMER TRAVELERS

Celebration Travel Beats Bling and Parties for Marking Special Milestones

Washington (July 15, 2014) — AARP Travel (<http://travel.aarp.org>), a valuable resource for America's 76 million baby boomers who spend over \$120 billion annually in leisure travel, today announced new insights related to CELEBRATION VACATIONS. Taking a Celebration Vacation is a popular way to celebrate special milestones in life like anniversaries, birthdays, family reunions and weddings. AARP research found that the joy and satisfaction of travel make it a top choice for celebrating an important milestone with 78 percent of people 45+ saying that they have taken or intend to take a Celebration Vacation in the next two years instead of throwing a party, getting a piece of jewelry or other item.

"Travel is the number one aspirational activity for the boomer generation, and we are seeing not just AARP members but also non-members who seem to prefer investing in a Celebration Vacation for their life's special moments," said Sami Hassanyeh, AARP Chief Digital Officer. "Our research shows that Celebration Vacations are replacing parties, special events, jewelry, big-ticket items for the home or new car purchases with an increasing number of people 45+ wanting to travel more with their family and friends."

AARP Travel has been leading the field of travel for people 50 or older and their families since 1958 and identifies emerging trends that influence how their members dream, plan and book vacations. Celebrating anniversaries is the number one reason people 45+ plan a Celebration Vacation with 87 percent of them choosing a vacation over a party, jewelry, or other item to celebrate anniversaries. People 45+ indicated celebrating milestone birthdays as the second biggest motivation for them to plan a Celebration Vacation (77 percent) followed by retirement (69 percent) and a wedding (66 percent).

Key Reasons Why Americans 45+ Choose Travel to Celebrate Personal Milestones

There are a variety of reasons why people 45+ choose travel as a way to celebrate personal milestones including the following:

1. Enjoy traveling, getting away: 23 percent
2. Celebrate a special occasion: 21 percent
3. Fun thing to do: 14 percent
4. Allows me to spend quality time with friends/family: 9 percent
5. Wanted to go somewhere new/different: 8 percent
6. Wanted a romantic getaway: 3 percent
7. Wanted to do something special: 3 percent

AARP's recent research also revealed some pain points in planning Celebration Vacations, including sticking to a budget (17 percent), budgeting (13 percent), and identifying destination activities (11 percent). The new AARP Travel website (<http://travel.aarp.org>) aims to alleviate some of these pain points by providing tools like the Trip Finder to build custom itineraries and by highlighting discounts.

AARP Travel and Fodor's Travel Help You Plan Celebration Vacations

Planning Celebration Vacations is now easier than ever—travelers researching their next getaway can go to AARP Travel (<http://travel.aarp.org>) and find expert advice and recommendations from Fodor's Travel. The site's expanded content now includes more activities, places to explore, travel tips and entertainment options to complement the destination guides first unveiled on the AARP Travel site in March.

One of the newest additions is Weekend Getaways (travel.aarp.org/weekend-getaways), which includes itineraries curated by Fodor's Travel. The collection recommends local escapes less than three hours from home, including where to eat, shop, and stay, from popular cities including Denver, Washington, D.C. and more locations nationwide.

AARP Travel's range of travel tools and features include:

- **Trip Finder** — a fun, smart and visual series of questions to deliver ideas and recommendations for destinations — including some unexpected ones;

- **Map Explorer** — a detailed street-level interactive map that includes attractions, restaurants, hotels, local color and reviews for each destination;
- **My Trips** — a personal page where users can save and organize trip ideas, itineraries and related articles in one place and add to or edit them over multiple visits;
- **Articles and Destinations** — travel tips from AARP Travel Ambassador Samantha Brown, articles specifically geared toward the 50+ traveler and information about hundreds of domestic and international locations; and
- **Book Trips** — booking tools provided through AARP's relationships with Expedia and Liberty Travel and directly to hotels, and rental cars.

More AARP Travel Celebration Vacations Research Findings

The new AARP Travel research also indicates a vast majority of Celebration Vacations taken in the last two years were taken in the U.S. with the top destinations being:

Top Celebration Vacation destinations for Americans 45+:

63 percent of the respondents took Celebration Vacations in the U.S. as opposed to international destinations in the last two years with the top destinations being:

1. Las Vegas
2. Disney
3. Los Angeles
4. Florida
5. Hawaii
6. New York City
7. New Orleans
8. Chicago
9. California
10. Alaska

18 percent of the respondents chose tropical/beach destinations with the most popular beaches being:

1. Caribbean
2. Hawaii
3. Puerto Rico
4. Bahamas
5. St. Martin
6. Cabo
7. Cancun
8. Maui
9. Negril

While the dream of a Celebration Vacation is becoming more mainstream as a way to celebrate personal milestones, there are some challenges that people 45+ face planning for one.

Top ten hardships in planning a Celebration Vacation include:

1. Sticking to a budget (17 percent)
2. Budgeting for a trip (13 percent)
3. Identifying activities at a destination (11 percent)
4. Choosing dates (9 percent)
5. Developing an itinerary (8 percent)
6. Booking airfare (8 percent)
7. Coordinating ground transportation (7 percent)
8. Communicating changes in itinerary (7 percent)
9. Making reservations at a destination (7 percent)
10. Communicating details to travelers (5 percent)

For more information about AARP's research on Celebration Vacation and trends on how people 45+ are planning their celebration vacations, visit aarp.org/celebrationvacations.

To visit AARP's travel site visit: travel.aarp.org

Here's a tweet if you would like to share these new insights with your friends and family planning a Celebration Vacation: *New study: Boomers and others choosing Celebration Vacations over jewelry/parties:* <http://bit.ly/1oYKdw7> #travelnews

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AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse. We advocate for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world's largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; www.aarp.org; AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP en Español, a Spanish-language website addressing the interests and needs of Hispanics. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at www.aarp.org.

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