

# Brace yourself for an expensive summer travel season

(Courtesy of Melanie Lieberman, The Points Guy)

The days are getting longer, the temperatures are creeping higher, and, for many travelers, summer vacations are already top of mind.

With the unofficial start of summer just weeks away, it's time to lock in those summer travel plans if you haven't already. However, for travelers who haven't booked flights or reserved hotel rooms, the cost of a summer vacation this year might be shocking.

This year, less than half of U.S. adults (49%) plan to travel during the summer travel season between Memorial Day and Labor Day, according to a survey conducted by [YouGov](#) (a market research and analytics firm) on behalf of TPG in late March.

Of the 51% who are not planning to travel at all, price was the single biggest factor — 40% of U.S. adults said their reason for skipping summer vacation this year is because it is too expensive.

It's "too crazy and costly," said one respondent who will not be traveling this summer.

The rising costs of everything from flights to hotels, plus a looming spike in gas prices, are largely to blame. Some may have had to adjust more than one or all of those factors to make a summer vacation possible this year. About 37% of people who said they plan on traveling this summer expect to spend more than they did before the pandemic. Many claim they were priced out of their first-choice hotel or accommodation, flight, destination or car rental.

It's not just anecdotal, either. The travel forecasting site [Hopper](#) has predicted that airfare this summer will once again surpass pre-pandemic averages.

Americans are finding other ways to cut down on costs, though. Some travelers will drive instead of flying this summer (33%), while others will stay closer to home than before (31%). About 39% of prospective travelers said they would need to budget more for gas for their summer getaways.

One person said their travel plans included "inconvenient times and inconvenient airports to cut costs," while another said they would shorten the duration of their trip. Multiple people said they were opting for more budget-friendly motels instead of hotels, while one respondent will stay with family to save on vacation expenses.

With many travelers still reeling from the eye-watering travel costs of last summer, the fact is that many of the pressures plaguing the industry and forcing prices skyward are still in play. Some airlines have proactively reduced schedules due to staffing and equipment shortages, and with that reduced supply, prices on many routes are higher than ever due to ever-surging demand.

Inflation, in general, continues to be a major cause for concern for many travelers. Though recent inflationary data suggests hotel prices may be softening (or at least leveling out), that doesn't mean relief is coming to travelers' wallets anytime soon. Instead, it just means those nightly rate hikes of several hundred dollars won't be as common.

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March consumer price index data showed hotel rates jumped 8% from a year ago — still an increase, but well below the nearly 26% annual jumps seen earlier in the pandemic recovery. Hotel data provider STR anticipates U.S. hotel rates will increase by 2% this year, meaning rates will remain high.

Many hotel CEOs have [already warned](#) travelers that they shouldn't hold out for deals, either.

Inflation has also pushed jet fuel prices to historical highs, which is one reason your [summer flights](#) might be so expensive. Demand continues to soar, labor costs are higher and there's still limited capacity, at least compared to 2019, according to the [Airlines Reporting Corporation](#).

In fact, ARC shows that flying to the top 10 summer travel destinations could cost you 54% more than it did in 2019 — and even 37% more than last year.

People are also booking further out, meaning that if you haven't booked yet, what's likely left are more expensive fares since the cheapest fare classes have already been snapped up.

**The bottom line** is that this year, regardless of where you're going, you want to book your flights and hotels now before prices go even higher.