

WHEN IT'S TIME FOR YOU, WE'LL BE READY



P R E S S R E L E A S E

New Research Reveals Even Planning a Getaway Boosts Happiness

Travel industry inspires Americans to plan a future trip with new “Let’s Go There” campaign

WASHINGTON, D.C.—As Americans struggle through months of at-home isolation and pandemic-driven worries, new research suggests that the simple act of making travel plans can boost their happiness and increase their energy levels and sense of well-being.

In new polling conducted by happiness researcher Michelle Gielan, 97 percent of respondents say that having a trip planned makes them happier, while 82 percent reported that it makes them “moderately” or “significantly” happier. Seventy-one percent reported feeling greater levels of energy when they had a trip planned in the next six months.*

Given the benefits of trip planning, America’s travel industry has a message for everyone who has dreamed of missed getaways: When you are ready to travel, we’ll be ready to welcome you back.

Launching today and extending into 2021, a new, industry-wide initiative called “Let’s Go There” aims to spark a conversation about future getaways.

“Booking a trip—even just getting it on the calendar—might be the very thing we need to restore our emotional immune system after months of mounting uncertainty and stress,” said Gielan, founder of the Institute for Applied Positive Research and an expert in the science of happiness. “In our study on the connection between travel and happiness, 82 percent of people say simply planning a trip makes them ‘moderately’ or ‘significantly’ happier.”

Gielan’s findings align with previous research finding an inherent sense of happiness and satisfaction generated by the mere act of planning a future travel experience—and that anticipating a trip might have an even stronger positive effect than reflecting on one that has already happened.

With flexible booking and cancellation policies in place and great deals for destinations across the United States, there has never been a better time for people to start looking ahead to all the travel they’ve been missing.

“The memories and experiences that travel enables cannot be replaced,” said Jill Estorino, President and Managing Director at Disney Parks, Experiences and Products, and a co-chair of the Let’s Go There Coalition. “This campaign is a first step in inspiring Americans to think about planning a vacation, and encouraging them to look forward to experiencing the wonder and joy—and even magic—that only travel can offer.”

Coalition co-chair, Brian King, Global Officer at Marriott International, said, “As the norms of travel evolve to ensure health and safety practices are firmly in place, we have immense optimism that when it feels right to do so, travelers

will open their front door and see the world again. The yearning for togetherness and a change of scenery highlight just how much we miss travel. When travelers turn their wanderlust into plans, emotional excitement grows as a host of dream destinations are ready to be discovered and explored.”

Roger Dow, President and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association, whose organization is supporting the activities of the Let’s Go There Coalition, said the time is right to unite the industry behind a campaign that reminds Americans that the benefits of travel begin the minute they start planning a trip.

“As millions of people have stayed close to home to contain the pandemic’s spread, we have all missed getting away to be with others and experience moments that clear your mind and refresh your soul,” said Dow. “Those days will return, and we want travelers to know that we’ll be ready when they’re ready to make their next trip.”

Traveling not only brings abundant benefits to the individual—it also provides an economic lifeline for millions of people employed by the industry. Travel supported employment for one in 10 American workers pre-pandemic—but more than one-third of those jobs (34%) have been lost since March. The travel industry is committed to being fully prepared for the moment travel demand returns, in order to keep its customers and workers safe and healthy and to restore jobs as quickly as possible.

Social media content will be tagged using #LetsMakePlans.

The Let’s Go There Coalition includes more than 75 partnering businesses and counting, including: American Airlines; American Express; the American Resort Development Association; Chase; Delta Air Lines; Disney Parks, Experiences and Products; Ecolab; Enterprise Holdings, Inc.; Expedia Group; Hilton; the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Visitor & Convention Bureau; Hyatt Hotels Corporation; the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority; Loews Hotels & Co; Marriott International; PepsiCo; Sabre; the South Dakota Department of Tourism; United Airlines; the U.S. Travel Association; Visa; Visit California; Visit Spokane; and World Cinema, Inc., among other organizations.

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*When asked if they agreed with these statements, the following percentages of respondents said yes:

- “Simply knowing there was something to look forward to would bring me joy”: 95%
- “Planning travel for some time in the next six months would bring me happiness”: 80%
- “Planning something would make me feel more in control amidst so much uncertainty”: 74%
- “Getting to travel and feeling safe while doing it would bring me peace of mind”: 96%

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[Cathy Reynolds](#) • (C) 703.899.7031
[Chris Kennedy](#) • (C) 202.465.6635