



## NEWS RELEASE

**'Tis the Season: More than 109 Million Americans and 3.3 Million Michigan residents expected to Travel for the Holidays**  
*AAA predicts crowded roads and skies, with air travel nearly tripling over 2020*

**B-Roll for Media** - [Car Maintenance](#) / [Airport Travel](#) / [TripTik COVID-19 Travel Restrictions Map](#) / [Inspected Clean: Diamond Program enhancement](#)

**DEARBORN, Mich.**, (December 14, 2021) — Americans who had to cancel getaways and get-togethers last year because of the pandemic are making up for lost time this holiday season. More than 109 million people — an almost 34% increase from 2020 — will travel 50 miles or more as they hit the road, board airplanes or take other transportation out of town between Dec. 23 and Jan. 2.

[View the full report](#)

That dramatic bounce-back — 27.7 million more travelers than the 2020 holiday period — brings this year’s numbers in line with 2017 figures, and just 8% shy of 2019 – which was the highest on record.

“Americans who canceled their vacations in 2020 want to gather with family and friends for the holidays this year, although they will still need to be mindful of the pandemic,” said Debbie Haas, Vice President, AAA – The Auto Club Group. “With vaccines widely available, conditions are much different and many people feel a greater level of comfort with travel this year.

National Travel Figures				
	Total	Automobile	Air	Other (bus, train, cruise)

<b>2021 Forecast</b>	109.5 M	100.1 M	6.4 M	2.9 M
<b>2020 Actual</b>	81.7 M	78.5 M	2.3 M	0.98 M
<b>2019 Actual</b>	119.3 M	108 M	7.33 M	3.89 M
<b>Change (2019 to 2021)</b>	-8.2%	-7.3%	-12.6%	-24.8%
<b>Change (2020 to 2021)</b>	+33.9%	+27.6%	+184%	+198.7%

## More than 100 million on the roads and 6 million in the skies

**Road trips** remain the top mode of travel during the holidays, with over 100 million (91%) planning to drive to their destinations, despite [gasoline](#) costing \$1.25 per gallon more than a year ago.

**Airlines** will see a 184% increase from last year. More than 6 million people are expected to fly, while 3 million are booking **buses, trains and cruises**.

“Travelers should pay careful attention to Covid travel requirements, particularly those journeying outside the United States,” Haas continued. “The requirements to enter different countries may vary by destination and over time. Also, Americans should be aware that new rules require them to provide a negative Covid test within a day before reentering the U.S., regardless of their vaccination status. AAA stands ready to assist you in making travel plans with confidence, so you can sit back and enjoy your vacation.”

### New AAA Resources for travelers:

[What to Expect While Traveling](#) – Allows travelers to easily view travel requirements based on their vaccination status, destination and date of travel. Our website and app provide a breakdown of the requirements for various modes of travel.

## MICHIGAN TRAVEL REBOUNDS 34%

**Michigan figures also show a strong rebound in travelers compared to the 2020 year-end holiday period.** More than 3.3 million are forecast to travel between Dec. 23 and Jan. 2. Although that’s 9.9 percent fewer travelers than the record high set back in 2019, it’s still 847,000 (34%) more than last year.

Michigan Travel Figures				
	Total	Automobile	Air	Other (bus, train, cruise)
<b>2021 Forecast</b>	3,357,878	3,093,052	176,501	88,326
<b>2020 Actual</b>	2,510,808	2,419,210	62,207	29,391
<b>2019 Actual</b>	3,727,576	3,413,654	201,241	112,680
<b>Change (2019 to 2021)</b>	-9.9%	-9.4%	-12.3%	-21.6%
<b>Change (2020 to 2021)</b>	+34%	+28%	+184%	+201%

## Higher prices this holiday season

With so many planning to travel, AAA suggests booking flights, car rentals, accommodations and other activities as early as possible.

**Air** – Recent analysis of AAA’s flight booking data revealed that ticket prices for Christmas week are up 5% from last year, with the average lowest round-trip fare of \$154 for major U.S. destinations. For those flying around New Year’s, prices are up considerably more – 27% with the average lowest fare at \$182. Those wanting to book last-minute travel will find the best fares about two weeks before their travel date but keep in mind availability may be limited.

**Hotels** — Mid-range hotel rates have increased 36% for AAA Approved hotels for Christmas travel, with an average nightly rate of \$320. For New Year’s Eve, the average nightly rate is \$267.

**Car Rentals** — The average car rental rate has increased 20% for Christmas travel, with the average lowest daily rate of \$130. It has increased 65% for New Year’s, for an average lowest daily rate of \$103. Rental car companies have been re-building their inventory following a shortage over the summer, but with the increased demand expected around this time of the year, it’s important to book as early as possible.

### Plan ahead for road trips

Auto travel remains the preferred mode of transportation for 91% of holiday travelers. INRIX, in collaboration with AAA, predicts only marginal delays overall throughout the holiday week. However, with over 847,000 more Michigan residents on the road compared to last year, AAA believes drivers in major metro areas could see more than double the delays versus typical drive times.

Worst Corridors and Times to Travel			
Metro Area	Corridor	Peak Congestion	% Over Normal
Atlanta	I-85 South; Clairmont Rd to MLK Jr Dr	1/2/22, 3:45–5:45pm	198%
Chicago	I-290 West; Morgan St to Wolf Rd	12/23/21, 3:30–5:30pm	240%
Detroit	US-23 North; 8 Mile Rd to I-96	12/23/21, 9:45–11:45am	209%
Los Angeles	I-405 South; Sunset Blvd to I-105	1/2/22, 5:30–7:30pm	194%
New York	I-278 South; I-495 to 3rd Ave	12/27/21, 4:30–6:30pm	358%
Washington DC	I-95 South; I-395 to VA-123	12/27/21, 9:30–11:30am	270%

Source:

INRIX

Daily Worst and Best Times to Travel		
Date	Worst travel time	Best travel time
12/23/21	12:00–6:00pm	After 7:00pm
12/24/21	2:00–6:00pm	Before 1:00pm
12/25/21	Minimal congestion expected	

12/26/21	1:00–7:00pm	Before 12:00pm
12/27/21	5:00–6:00pm	Before 1:00pm
12/28/21	1:00–7:00pm	Before 12:00pm
12/29/21	1:00–7:00pm	Before 11:00am
12/30/21	1:00–7:00pm	Before 12:00pm
12/31/21	2:00–4:00pm	Before 1:00pm, after 5:00pm
1/1/22	Minimal congestion expected	
1/2/22	2:00–6:00pm	Before 1:00pm

Source: INRIX

"Vehicles that have been driven less during the pandemic should get an inspection to check key components like the battery, fuel system, tires, brakes and fluid levels to avoid an unnecessary breakdowns," said Adrienne Woodland, spokeswoman, AAA – The Auto club Group. "It's important to do this as early as possible in case there is an issue that needs to be fixed."

The 100 million Americans planning to drive over the holidays need to be prepared for slowdowns and breakdowns. **AAA expects to respond to as many as 1.3 million calls for help.**

Motorists can visit [AAA.com/AutoRepair](https://www.aaa.com/AutoRepair) to find a certified AAA Approved Auto Repair Facility in their area.

### Theme parks, beaches and Vegas are popular destinations

AAA booking data through October shows that domestically, theme-park-heavy destinations like Orlando, Florida, and Anaheim, California, top the list of popular travel spots. Las Vegas, New York City and several other Florida cities also rank high.

U.S. destinations
Orlando, FL
Anaheim, CA
Las Vegas, NV
New York, NY; Kahului, Maui, HI (tie)
Honolulu, HI
Miami, FL
Fort Lauderdale, FL
Tampa, FL
Phoenix, AZ
San Diego, CA

## ACG Travel VP Shares First Hand Experience

Covid-related restrictions and requirements often change and vary by destination, especially for Americans who wish to travel internationally. ACG Travel Vice President Debbie Haas is currently on a European cruise, for a first-hand experience of how cruising has changed for American passengers.

“Cruise lines like AMAWaterways have implemented many new safety protocols that should help travelers feel more comfortable while sailing,” Haas explained. “Before boarding, passengers were asked to submit proof of vaccinations. Once onboard, we’re required to wear masks when moving around indoors, undergo daily temperature checks and meet any local requirements before disembarking. Despite these minor inconveniences, the overall experience of taking a cruise remains just as enjoyable as before.”

## AAA Advice for Travelers

AAA urges anyone considering gathering or traveling for the holidays to consult the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) guidance](#). It’s essential to know requirements and recommendations based on your vaccination status, where you’re traveling from and your destination.

**A trusted travel advisor** can provide advice, serving as an advocate before, during and after a trip. Their extensive knowledge and expertise allow them to help travelers with questions related to travel insurance options, what destinations and attractions are open both domestically and internationally, destination-specific testing and vaccination requirements, what to do if last-minute changes to a trip are needed and much more.

AAA’s [COVID-19 Travel Restrictions Map](#) helps travelers understand closures, recommendations and requirements when traveling in the U.S. In addition, the CDC has an [interactive map](#) with recommendations and information about restrictions for international travel.

**Masks are still required** for everyone on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of U.S. public transportation and within transportation hubs such as airports and stations. The CDC also [recommends](#) everyone wear a mask indoors in public places in an area of substantial or high transmission.

Other things to consider:

- **Travel insurance** — AAA highly recommends travel insurance to cover unexpected delays or trip interruptions. Travel insurance provides financial benefits for lost baggage and flight interruptions of as little as 3 hours. It is best to consult the expertise of a travel advisor who can guide you on the coverage options available for your specific trip, including if your destination requires visitors to carry travel insurance.
- **Clean accommodations** — When booking a place to stay, look for accommodations that prioritize cleanliness and have implemented additional housekeeping standards since the start of the pandemic. Hotels that meet AAA standards for cleanliness earn AAA Diamond designations. Earlier this year, as part of the Diamond program, AAA enhanced its housekeeping evaluation, and inspections now include objective, scientific validation of the cleanliness of common surfaces throughout hotels. Hotels that have been inspected since that new testing started and now meet these new standards are recognized as Inspected Clean. A current list of AAA Diamond hotels, including those recognized as Inspected Clean, can be found [here](#).
- **Domestic and international travel guidelines** — When traveling within the U.S., fully vaccinated travelers do not need a negative viral test or to self-quarantine. For international travel, all air passengers, regardless of vaccination status or nationality, must show a

negative COVID-19 viral test result taken no more than one day before travel into the U.S. Refer to the [CDC](#) for more information.

### **Forecasted numbers may change**

AAA notes that the actual number of travelers could fluctuate as we approach the holidays. Some people may decide to stay home if there is an increase in reported COVID-19 cases or because of concerns about the omicron variant, while others may note the progress in vaccinations and make last-minute decisions to travel. AAA recommends working with a travel advisor who can help you plan a vacation that meets your needs and comfort level this holiday season. To get started and to learn more, visit [AAA.com/Travel](#).

### **Forecast Methodology**

In cooperation with AAA, IHS Markit—a world leader in critical information, analytics and expertise—developed a unique methodology to forecast actual domestic travel volumes. The economic variables used to forecast travel for the current holiday are leveraged from IHS Markit's proprietary databases. These data include macroeconomic drivers such as employment, output, household net worth, asset prices including stock indices, interest rates, housing market indicators, and variables related to travel and tourism, including prices of gasoline, airline travel and hotel stays.

Historical travel volume estimates come from DK SHIFFLET's TRAVEL PERFORMANCE/Monitor<sup>sm</sup>. The PERFORMANCE/Monitor<sup>sm</sup> is a comprehensive study measuring the travel behavior of U.S. residents. DK SHIFFLET contacts over 50,000 U.S. households each month to obtain detailed travel data, resulting in the unique ability to estimate visitor volume and spending, identify trends, and forecast U.S. travel behavior.

The travel forecast is reported in person-trips. In particular, AAA and IHS Markit forecast the total U.S. holiday travel volume and expected mode of transportation. The travel forecast presented in this report was prepared the week of Nov. 15, 2021.

### **About INRIX**

INRIX is the global leader in connected car services and transportation analytics. Leveraging big data and the cloud, INRIX delivers comprehensive services and solutions to help move people, cities and businesses forward. INRIX's partners are automakers, governments, mobile operators, developers, advertisers, as well as enterprises large and small.

### **About IHS Markit**

IHS Markit (NYSE: INFO) is a world leader in critical information, analytics and solutions for the major industries and markets that drive economies worldwide. The company delivers next-generation information, analytics and solutions to customers in business, finance and government, improving their operational efficiency and providing deep insights that lead to well-informed, confident decisions. IHS Markit has more than 50,000 business and government customers, including 80 percent of the Fortune Global 500 and the world's leading financial institutions. Headquartered in London, IHS Markit is committed to sustainable, profitable growth.

**AAA in Michigan** celebrated its **100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - A Century of Service** in 2016 and has over 1.5 million members across the state. It is part of The Auto Club Group (ACG). Connect with us on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

**The Auto Club Group (ACG)** is the second largest AAA club in North America with more than 14 million members across 14 U.S. states, the province of Quebec and two U.S. territories. ACG and its affiliates provide members with roadside assistance, insurance products, banking and financial services, travel offerings and more. ACG belongs to the national AAA federation with more than 62 million members in the United States and Canada. AAA's mission is to protect and advance freedom of mobility and improve traffic safety. For more information, get the [AAA Mobile app](#), visit [AAA.com](#), and follow us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.