

AAA Shares Travel Trends and Tips for Labor Day Weekend

AAA booking data shows Alaska cruises, European cities, and tourist attractions are most popular

DEARBORN, Mich., August 26, 2024) — This year's [record-breaking](#), blockbuster summer travel season comes to a close during the Labor Day holiday weekend. Although AAA does not conduct a full travel forecast for the holiday it does have a series of trends and tips for travelers.

“Americans see the extended Labor Day weekend as an opportunity to say farewell to summer with one final trip,” said Debbie Haas, Vice President of Travel for AAA – The Auto Club Group. “Since many kids are already back in school, regional road trips tend to be the most popular option for families. Because of that, others see this as an opportunity to travel the world, with the expectation of smaller crowds at popular sites.”

Popular Labor Day Travel Trends

Domestic Travel

Overall, domestic travel over Labor Day weekend is up 9% compared to last year, while the cost to travel domestically is down 2%.

According to AAA booking data, Alaska cruises are sold out for the weekend. Smaller crowds and cooler temperatures, make this a popular travel trend this time of year. That’s why Seattle is the number one Labor Day weekend* destination, up nearly 30% from last year when it also topped the list. Anchorage and Juneau are also on the top ten list of Labor Day destinations.

“If you’re interested in going on an Alaska cruise next summer, the time to book is now to lock in the best rate and ensure you get the type of cabin and scenic views you want,” Haas.

Other top Labor Day destinations include Orlando, New York, Boston, Las Vegas, Denver, Chicago, and San Francisco.

International Travel

International travel over Labor Day weekend is down 4% compared to last year, per AAA booking numbers. Contributing factors include inflation, which has driven up international travel costs by 11%, and timing with many people having taken international summer vacations. The majority of people who did book international Labor Day trips with AAA are visiting European destinations. Eight out of the top ten international destinations booked through AAA are European cities.

Travelers renting a car abroad should consider getting an [International Driving Permit](#) (IDP), which is a key resource recognized by international authorities. Some countries – including Italy and Spain – require it. AAA is the only entity in the U.S. authorized by the State Department to issue an IDP.

Top Labor Day Destinations

DOMESTIC	INTERNATIONAL
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Seattle, WA	Vancouver, BC, Canada
Orlando, FL	Rome, Italy
Anchorage, AK	London, England
New York, NY	Paris, France
Boston, MA	Dublin, Ireland
Las Vegas, NV	Amsterdam, Netherlands
Denver, CO	Barcelona, Spain
Chicago, IL	Athens, Greece
Juneau, AK	Mexicali, Mexico
San Francisco, CA	Edinburgh, Scotland

Labor Day Weekend Travel Pricing

- **Domestic airfares** are 2% cheaper this Labor Day weekend compared to last year.
- **International flights** are 8% cheaper this Labor Day weekend compared to last year.
- **Domestic hotels** are 7% more expensive this Labor Day weekend compared to last year.
- **International hotels** are 2% more expensive this Labor Day weekend compared to last year.
- **Domestic car rentals** are 16% cheaper this Labor Day weekend compared to last year.
- **International car rentals** are 21% more expensive this Labor Day weekend compared to last year.

Protect your Trip with Travel Insurance

Increasingly travelers are protecting themselves and their wallet with Travel Insurance, which can be added up until the time of travel. Travel insurance could save you thousands if something goes wrong before or during your cruise, tour, hotel stay or even car rental. See AAA.com/TravelInsurance for more information.

Best and Worst Times to Travel by Car

[INRIX](#), a provider of transportation data and insights, says car travelers should avoid the afternoon and early evening hours of Thursday and Friday, as those times will be the most congested. Drivers should hit the road in the morning unless they're leaving on Saturday when the best time to travel by car is in the afternoon. Travelers returning on Sunday and on Labor Day should leave as early as possible to avoid heavy traffic in the afternoon.

"Drivers should expect the most severe traffic jams before the holiday weekend as commuters mix with travelers," said Bob Pishue, transportation analyst at INRIX. "Monitoring traffic apps, local news stations, and 511 traveler information services may help drivers navigate around congestion and reduce driver frustration this Labor Day."

Best and Worst

TIMES TO TRAVEL BY CAR OVER LABOR DAY WEEKEND

DATE	WORST	BEST
THURSDAY, AUG 29	1:00 - 7:30 PM	BEFORE 11:00 AM
FRIDAY, AUG 30	2:00 - 6:00 PM	BEFORE NOON, AFTER 7:00 PM
SATURDAY, AUG 31	8:00 - 11:00 AM	AFTER NOON
SUNDAY, SEP 1	2:00 - 8:00 PM	BEFORE NOON
MONDAY, SEP 2	11:00 AM - 8:00 PM	BEFORE 10:00 AM
TUESDAY, SEP 3	8:00 AM - NOON	AFTER 1:00 PM

Stay alert while driving
and move over for
disabled vehicles and
emergency responders.

MOVE OVER
FOR ME.

Gas Prices

Travelers taking road trips should expect to pay less for gas compared to last year. The national average over Labor Day weekend in 2023 was \$3.81. In recent weeks, gas prices have remained steady, hovering around \$3.40. Despite the popularity of summer road trips, overall gas demand is down as daily driving habits have changed post-pandemic, tempering price spikes. Hurricanes hitting the Gulf and affecting regional refineries could cause gas prices to go up as the peak of the season approaches in September. For drivers taking road trips in their electric vehicles, AAA now offers information on the cost of Level 2 commercial EV charging and updates that data [weekly](#).

AAA Expects to Rescue 300,000 Stranded Motorists

Nationwide, AAA expects to rescue more than 300,000 stranded motorists during the Labor Day holiday weekend. The three most common reasons are flat tires, dead batteries, and lockouts. These could be avoided by having your car inspected before leaving for your destination and bringing an extra set of keys.

“The best way to avoid spending your holiday on the roadside is by getting a full vehicle inspection before your trip,” said Adrienne Woodland, spokeswoman, AAA – The Auto Club Group. “This will help ensure everything from your battery to brakes is in proper working order.”

In the event of car trouble:

- **Pull as far over on the shoulder as safely possible** to create more distance between your vehicle and passing traffic.
- **Turn your hazard lights on** so other drivers are aware you are there.
- **Get to the nearest exit** or stopping point if possible.

- **Call for assistance** via phone, website or the [AAA Mobile app](#).
- **Remain with your vehicle** as long as it's safe to do so.
- **If getting out of your vehicle, watch the oncoming traffic for a good time to exit, and remain alert and close to your vehicle.** Avoid turning your back to traffic whenever possible.

Move Over for Roadside Workers and Stranded Motorists

Fatal roadside crashes are a growing problem nationwide. Every year, nearly 350 people are struck and killed outside a disabled vehicle. Additionally, on average, one tow operator is killed at the roadside every other week. These deaths can be avoided if drivers follow the law and move over.

“AAA’s roadside technicians will put their lives on the line to rescue hundreds of thousands of drivers during Labor Day weekend,” continued Woodland. “We urge drivers to stay focused on the road and if you see flashing lights, move over so everyone can make it home safely.”

How Drivers can Prevent Roadside Collisions:

- **Remain alert.** Avoid distractions and focus on driving.
- **Constantly scan the road ahead.** This will help you identify and avoid potential hazards.
- **Move over a lane when approaching a vehicle on the roadside with flashing lights.** If you can't move over, slow down to safely pass them.
- **Watch for people on the roadside.** People may be in or near a disabled vehicle. Just because you don't immediately see them doesn't mean they aren't there.
- **Be a good passenger** - Help identify roadway issues and remind the driver to slow down and move over.

***Labor Day Weekend**

AAA looked at booking data for Thursday, August 29 through Monday, September 2, and compared those numbers with booking data for that same five-day period in 2023.