

The Cheap Vacation Trend

With an unstable economy still looming, many people are still playing it safe and cutting back whenever possible. From sales at the shopping malls and grocery stores to vacations- the population is far from spending a large portion of their income on leisure and recreation activities. The days of splurging on the annual family vacation seems to still be absent from many Americans' lifestyles. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, "Some 63% of households making at least \$50,000 a year are scaling back on their vacation plans this year, up from 51% in 2010, according to a new survey from Texas-based First Command Financial Services." The middle class has been taken control of and is now scarred by the financial, emotional, and psychological effects of the recession. People like this are finding it much more necessary and cost-effective to either shorten their trips, drive instead of fly, while also hitting two birds with one stone by taking a vacation and visiting relatives all at the same time.

Even when the economy does pick up, many analysts believe that these post-recession habits will stick and people will continue to be more frugal and watch their money more than they did prior to the start of the recession. In addition to these financial obstacles, there have been many more hidden charges and time consuming changes, especially with the airlines and the high price of oil and elevated security measures recently put into place. People are finding it much more convenient and cheaper to drive instead of fly, even though the price of gas is still escalated compared to the pre-recession prices, it did not hit nearly as high as was expected for this summer season. With this being the case, travelers are choosing the open road in place of the friendly skies this year.

Distance is an important factor in planning the cost of vacations and travels, but that is only half of the monetary issue. Many of the costs involved are also included during the stay. This comprises the money spent eating out at restaurants, on activities throughout the vacation, hotels, and all the other small expenses that seem to always add up quickly.

Reasons for Cutting Back

People are not only cutting back financially because jobs are so unstable, but they are also saving as much as they can whenever feasible. Vacations, even if done in a frugal manner, can add up and cost a lot. Taking a vacation every other year and skipping weekend trips can save a large amount of money. What is important for most people to think about is balancing their income, the amount of money they spend on vacations, and compare this to how important vacations are. Many people see trips and vacations as a critical way to get away from work and daily life while rejuvenating their lives.

All in all, taking a vacation is important and there are many ways in which people can save money while spending time with family and friends. Planning ahead and being flexible can make all the difference. Many vacation destinations have deals for people who plan either far in advance or who make extremely last minute plans (this is especially the case with many cruise lines). With this said, most people will more than likely not be taking their annual vacations any time soon, the majority of the population will most likely choose to take shorter weekend trips in order to getaway.