



News Release

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AAA PROJECTS MEMORIAL DAY TRAVEL TO DECLINE SLIGHTLY AS AMERICANS DRIVE MORE AND FLY LESS

Nearly 35 million travelers expected to kick off the summer travel season with a getaway

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA, (May 22, 2013) – AAA Travel projects 34.8 million Americans will journey 50 miles or more from home during the Memorial Day holiday weekend, a 0.9 percent decrease from the 35.1 million people who traveled last year. The Memorial Day holiday travel period is defined as Thursday, May 23 to Monday, May 27.

“AAA is forecasting Memorial Day travel to experience a slight dip as lower gas prices and economic improvements from last year are not strong enough to spur an increase in travelers,” said Georjeane Blumling, PhD, Vice President of Public Affairs for AAA Tidewater Virginia. “Economic growth in the first quarter was strong, but the impact of the sequester is now beginning to be felt reducing economic growth expectations.” ***In Virginia, slightly over 1 million persons are expected to travel at least 50 miles from home this Memorial Day weekend.***

Highlights from 2013 Memorial Day Travel Forecast include:

- Memorial Day holiday travelers to total 34.8 million, a decrease of 0.9 percent from the 35.1 million who traveled last year.
- Eighty-nine percent of travelers (31.2 million) to travel by automobile, an increase from 31.1 million last year.
- Holiday air travel expected to decrease eight percent to 2.3 million from 2.5 million in 2012
- Median spending is expected to decrease more than six percent to \$659, compared to \$702 in 2012 with transportation costs consuming about 28 cents of every travel dollar.
- Travelers intend to journey an average of 690 miles which is higher than last year’s average of 642 miles.
- Memorial Day holiday travel volume is expected to remain above the 12-year historical average of 34.7 million.

“Other factors affecting the forecast include a labor force participation rate that fell to a 30-year low in March and now four years removed from the recessionary declines of 2009, pent-up demand has been largely satisfied,” said Blumling. “Despite the decline, travel volumes are expected to remain above historical averages as millions of Americans will kick off the summer travel season by creating special memories with a vacation getaway.”

Automobile Travel Only Mode of Transportation to Expect Increase

Approximately 31.2 million people plan to drive to their destination, an increase of 0.25 percent from the 31.1 million who drove last year. Almost nine out of ten holiday travelers (89 percent) will take to the –

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nation’s roadways during the Memorial Day weekend, keeping automobile travel in the traditional lead as the dominant mode of holiday travel transportation. ***This trend will hold true for the Commonwealth in 2013 as well, with 919,789 expected auto travelers over the holiday weekend. This is down less than one percent from 2012 auto travelers.***

Impact of Gasoline Prices on Travel Plans

A survey of intended travelers found that gasoline prices would have virtually no impact on plans for 62 percent of travelers. Of the remaining 38 percent of travelers who said gas prices would impact their travel plans, 27 percent plan to economize in other areas. Eight percent are planning to take a shorter trip and three percent will travel by an alternate mode of transportation.

Since national gas prices peaked at the end of February, motorists nationwide have felt some welcome relief at the pump. The current national average price for a gallon of regular gasoline is approximately two cents lower than this time last year. ***In Virginia, prices are currently stable at \$3.39 which is down five cents from last Memorial Day.***

Air Travelers to decline by eight percent

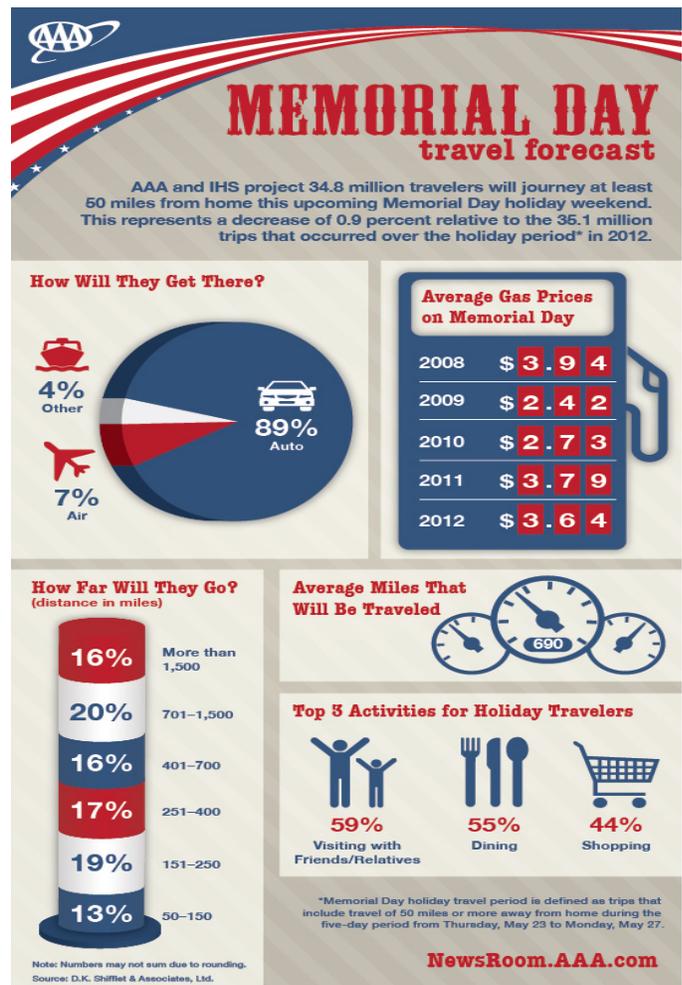
More than 2.3 million leisure air travelers (more than seven percent of holiday travelers) will arrive at their destination by air, an eight percent decrease from last year’s 2.5 million air travelers. ***Virginia is expected to see an even greater decrease in air travel with almost a 10 percent decrease from 2012.*** The remaining four percent of holiday travelers are expected to travel by other modes, including rail, bus and watercraft.

Average travel distance increases

According to the survey of intending travelers, the average distance traveled by Americans during the Memorial Day holiday weekend is expected to be 690 miles, which is 48 miles more than last year’s average of 642 miles.

Median spending is expected to decrease as travelers prioritize family and friends

Median spending during the Memorial Day holiday weekend is expected to be \$659, six percent less than the \$702 median spending last year.



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Transportation is expected to consume approximately 28 cents of every dollar. Travelers expect to spend 22 percent on food and beverage and 20 percent on lodging. During the holiday weekend, more than half of intending travelers will plan to partake in visiting with friends/family (59 percent) and dining (55 percent). Other popular activities include shopping (44 percent), going to the beach (32 percent) and touring and sightseeing (27 percent).

Car rental rates highest in four years, hotel rates rise modestly

According to AAA's Leisure Travel Index, hotel rates for AAA Three Diamond lodgings are expected to increase over four percent from one year ago with travelers spending an average of \$166 per night compared to \$160 last year. The average hotel rate for AAA Two Diamond hotels remained unchanged with an average cost of \$120 per night. Weekend daily car rental rates will average \$43, 19 percent more than last year and the highest rate recorded for the holiday since 2009.

AAA offers digital travel planning resources

AAA's digital tools for travel planning 'on the go' include eTourBook guides for 101 top North American destinations, available free to members at AAA.com/ebooks. Choose from city titles, like the award-winning Las Vegas, regions, like Wine Country, and National Parks.

The free AAA Mobile app for iPhone, Android and iPad uses GPS navigation to help travelers map a route, find current gas prices and discounts, book a hotel, and access AAA roadside assistance. Travelers can learn about the AAA Mobile app and AAA Mobile Web at AAA.com/mobile.

On AAA.com, travelers can find thousands of AAA Approved and Diamond Rated hotels and restaurants using AAA's TripTik Travel Planner or the searchable Travel Guides at AAA.com/Travel. Every AAA Approved establishment offers the assurance of acceptable cleanliness, comfort and hospitality, and ratings of One to Five Diamonds help travelers find the right match for amenities and services.

AAA's projections are based on economic forecasting and research by IHS Global Insight. The Colorado-based business information provider teamed with AAA in 2009 to jointly analyze travel trends during the major holidays. AAA has been reporting on holiday travel trends for more than two decades. The complete AAA / IHS Global Insight Memorial Day 2013 Forecast can be found [here](#).

As part of North America's largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA Tidewater Virginia provides its more than 325,000 members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding AAA Tidewater Virginia has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. For more information, visit AAA.com and follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/AAATidewaterVA](https://twitter.com/AAATidewaterVA).

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