

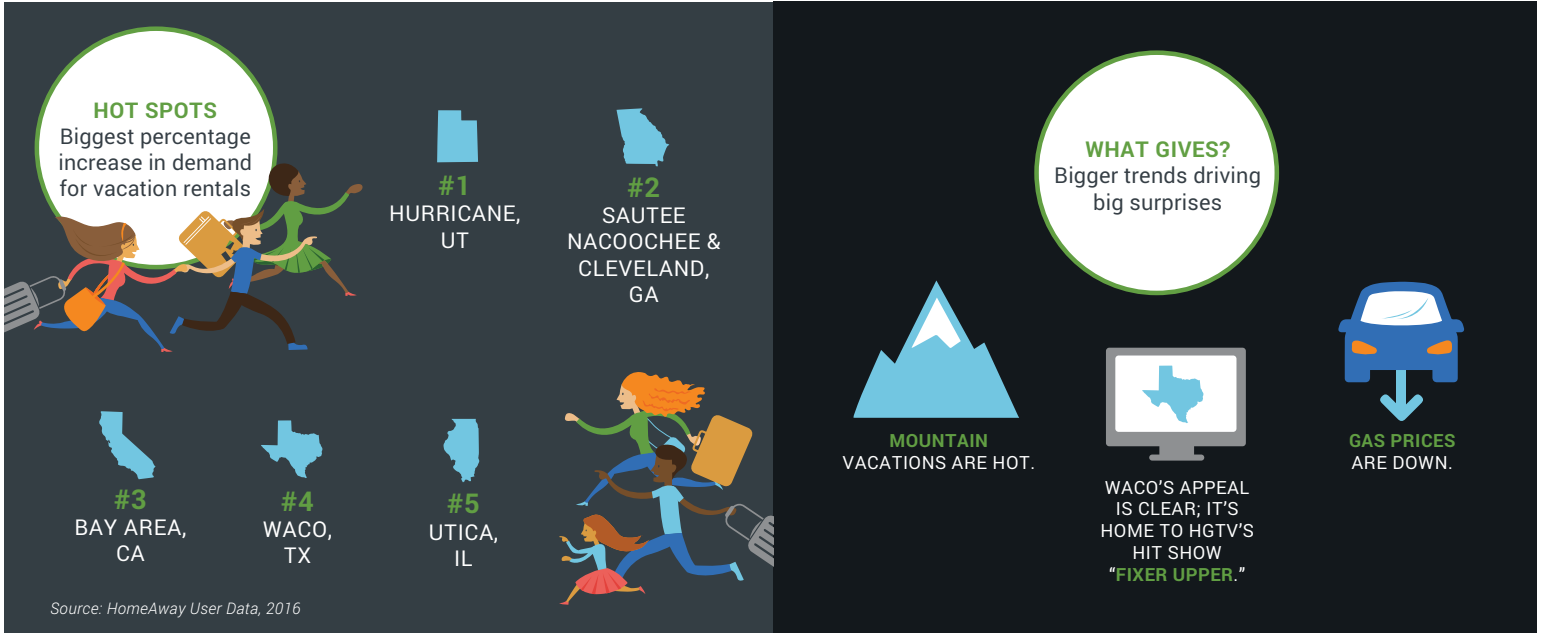


# 2017 Trend Report



# #1 Up-and-Coming Vacation Destinations: Big Surprises

Americans are renting vacation homes in remote locales like Hurricane, UT, and Sautee Nacoochee, GA; Waco, Stamford and Menlo Park are newly hot for city minded.



## BEHIND THE FINDINGS

While longtime US vacation favorites like Florida's beaches, New York City and Hawaii continue to be the most popular destinations for HomeAway® travelers, the future is taking shape in HomeAway's latest data that shows where demand for vacation homes is growing the fastest.

"We're seeing a few factors conspiring to create what might be called the next generation of vacation destinations," says Karen Fuller, HomeAway's senior director of global market research. It's a combination of people expanding their options and homeowners realizing there's a demand for places to stay. It's also interesting to see new mountain destinations make the list at about the same time that a [HomeAway study](#) found mountain vacations to be more memorable than trips to other kinds of destinations.

As for the surprise city locales, there may well be a satellite city phenomenon taking shape. "The likes of Stamford, CT, which cracked the top ten, and

Menlo Park are emerging as we believe families want it all on vacation," says Fuller. Stamford is a prime example as a city in its own right that also has beaches and woodsy back country for hiking. What's more, it's just a one-hour drive or train ride to Manhattan.

"We also see a 'HomeAway Effect' taking hold," says Fuller. "By that, I mean that increasing home vacation rental availability in places where hotels simply don't exist, or can't satisfy demand, is starting to shape where and how Americans are vacationing in the US. The growth in demand that is now evident for nontraditional destinations would certainly support our theory."

Look no further than Waco's own Chip and Joanna Gaines of HGTV "Fixer Upper" fame and their home-remodeling clients, several of whom now rent out their homes to people visiting the midsized town with low hotel inventory.

## #2 The Year of Privacy

(i.e., it's your vacation; why share it with strangers?)



### BEHIND THE FINDINGS

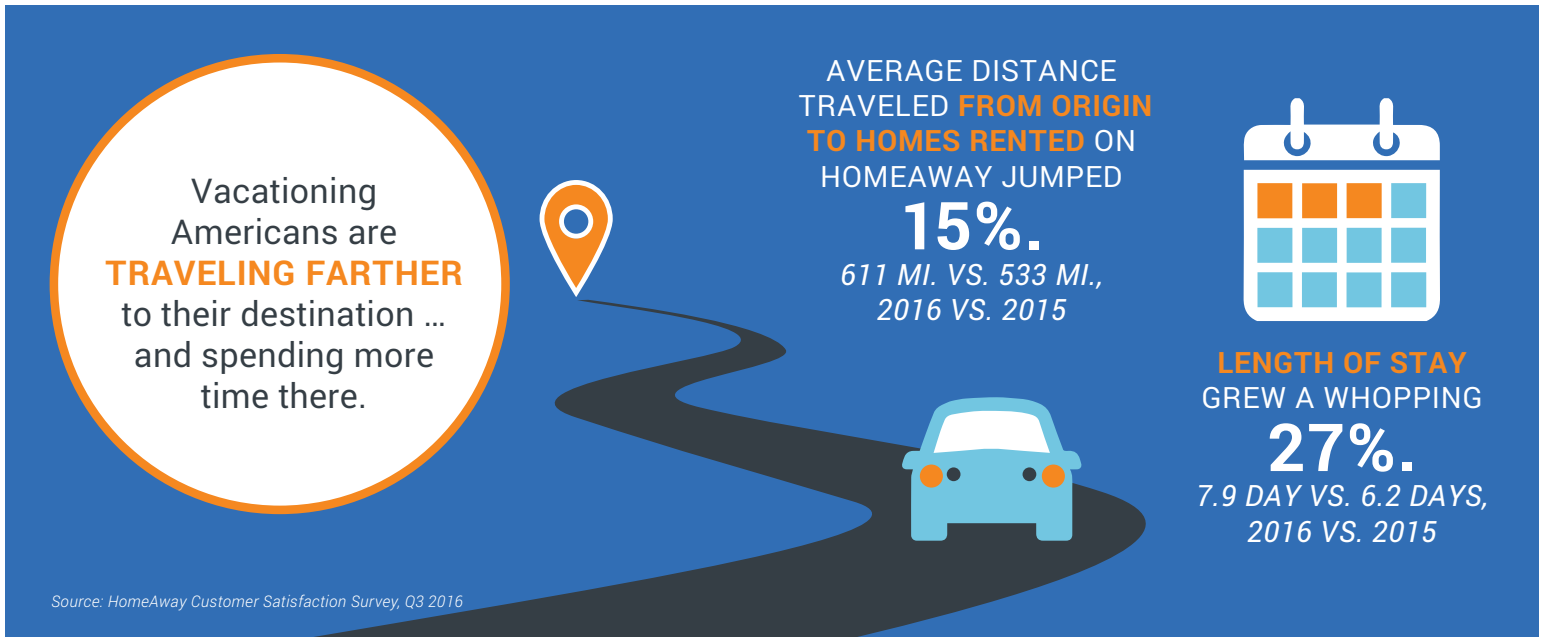
The sharing economy's appeal goes only so far. Rolling up research conducted for HomeAway by Phocuswright, 2017 may well go down as *The Year of Privacy*. With over 60 percent of travelers preferring owners not be present in rental homes, it's clear that vacationers want to be who they want to be with ... and no one else. Or as we like to say, "to get HomeAway from it all."

"What suits a traveler's needs in one situation simply doesn't in another," says Karen Fuller, senior director of global market research. "And as vacation lodging options rapidly proliferate beyond hotels, resorts, and shipboard, the differences are coming into sharper focus."

Fuller said that millennials' attitudes came as the findings' biggest surprise. "This is the generation for whom home sharing with an owner is a natural choice, but it's clear that on vacation, privacy and alone time supersede what may be considered advantages in other situations."

## #3 Going the (Vacation) Distance

Adventurous vacationing Americans are traveling farther to their destinations ... and spending more time there.



### BEHIND THE FINDINGS

With 61 percent going by car to get to their home away from home, a prolonged period of relatively low prices at the pump helps explain the trend to longer distances traveled. The national average price per gallon for regular gasoline in August 2016 was \$2.12, compared to \$2.60 per gallon in August 2015.

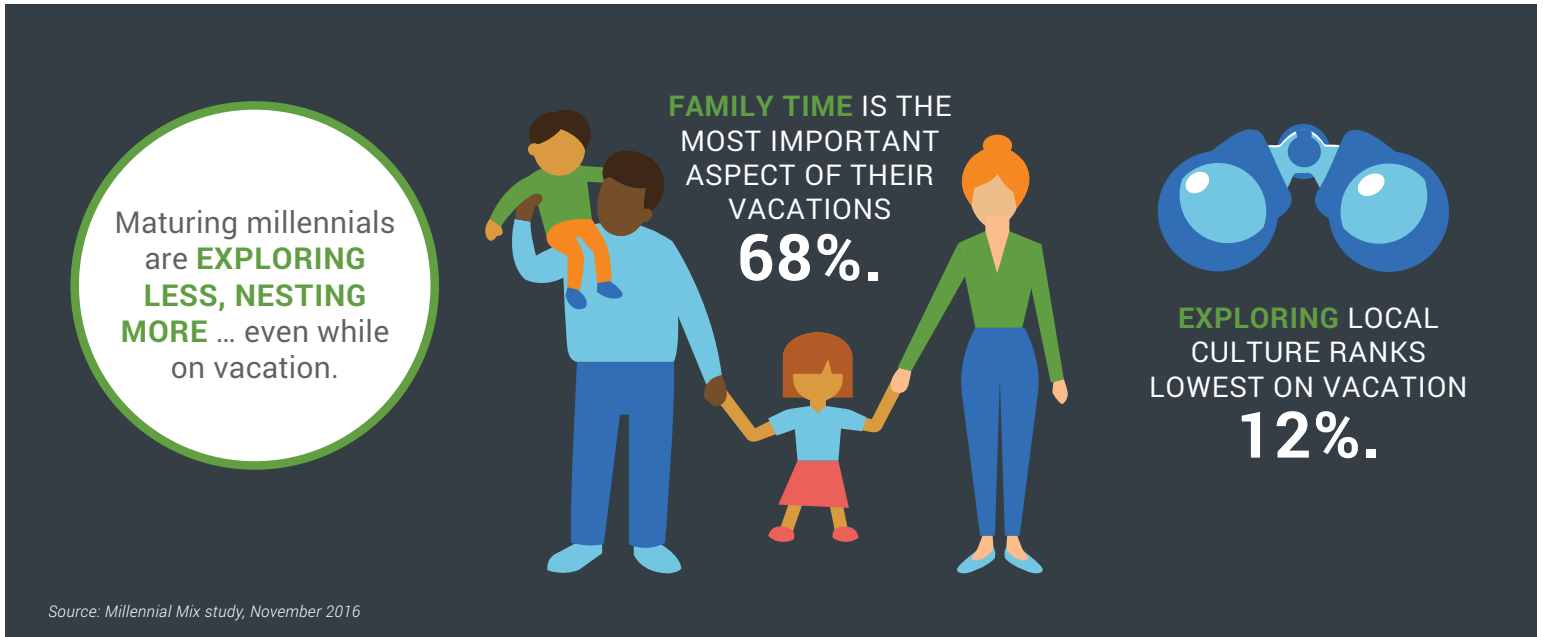
Gas prices are predicted to rise in 2017, so we'll be closely tracking how lasting this trend to longer-distance travel may be ... if at all. "Now that we've had a taste of wanderlust, perhaps our thirst for further-away adventure will prove stronger than any budget tightening brought on by extra pennies at the pump," says Melanie Fish, HomeAway's family travel expert.

The sharp uptick in vacation length is welcome news in a society long gravitating toward longer work hours at the expense of rejuvenating leisure time, and often with it, invaluable family time. HomeAway's same data set showed the average number of domestic vacations per year holding steady (3.5 in 2015 vs. 3.6 in 2016), so when travelers are vacationing, they are making it count more.

At the same time, mobile technology has enabled the world to connect with work, whenever and wherever anyone wants or needs. While that may be contributing to longer stays away, it may not be all for the good.

## #4 Millennials Living Less Like Locals, More Like Families on Vacation

Time to rethink what we think ... and think we know ... about a generation at leisure.



### BEHIND THE FINDINGS

*And just when we thought we got what makes millennials tick.*

Perhaps learning that the generational cohort famous for prizing experiences over possessions values family time over everything else while on vacation shouldn't come as a huge surprise. What is eye opening is the huge gulf between that revelation and what ranked next: *Adventures and Activities and Time with Friends*, each coming in 35 percent lower on the importance scale than family time.

Rounding out the "most important" rankings: *Relaxation/De-stress* (30 percent), *Seeing the Sights* (24 percent) and the afore-noted *Experiencing the Local Culture* (12 percent).

Implications? "For one, as millennials become older parents to more children, we could see more frequent vacationing, and maybe longer stints away. We'll be watching closely," says Melanie Fish, HomeAway's family travel expert.