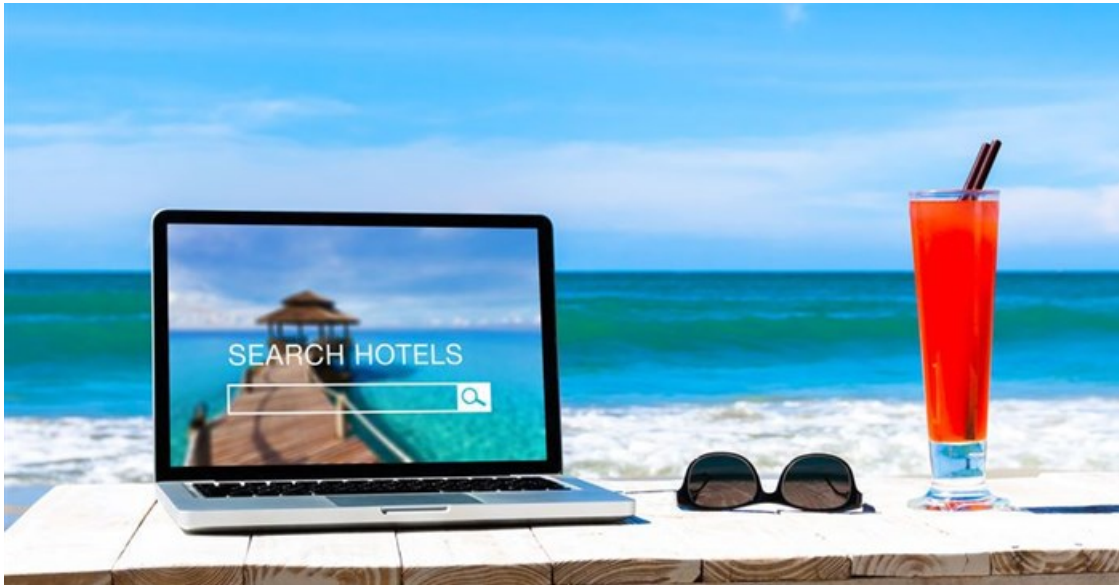


# Study shows 44% of leisure travellers plan and book vacations at the last minute

Nearly two billion vacations were taken last year, according to the U.S. Travel Association. While conventional wisdom would suggest the vast majority of these travellers plan and book their trips a month or more in advance, a new study from advertising agency Hoffman York (HY) reveals that nearly half are doing so at the last minute. HY surveyed 888 people who took at least one overnight trip over 50 miles away for leisure purposes in the last 12 months.



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Why are so many people booking their vacations last minute? Is it all those great last-minute travel deals flooding our inboxes? Or today's millennial travellers who are more comfortable with the technology that allows them to quickly and easily plan and book flights, hotels, rental cars and event tickets? The answer, according to research, is both. Among travellers, 44% are planning and booking their leisure trips two weeks or less prior to their departure, with more than half agreeing that they can be swayed by last-minute deals, and 64% choosing to book their trips through online travel agencies.

What else defines this new-age traveller and what makes them different than other travellers? Hoffman York, an agency that specializes in travel and tourism marketing, got to the bottom of this potential travel trend.

## What does it mean to be a last-minute traveller?

HY defined last-minute traveller (LMT) as a person who books transportation, lodging and event tickets for an overnight leisure trip within 0-14 days of their vacation. How long are their trips? According to the research, the average last-minute traveller spends two to three days on their trip while one in five last-minute travellers are taking trips that are five days or longer. On the contrary, most non-LMTs stay 5 or more days (44%).

## Last-minute traveller demographics

The last-minute traveller is younger—40% are under 35 compared to 32% of non-last-minute travellers. Notably younger, 42 percent of LMTs make \$50,000 or less, annually. LMTs often have children (41%) in the home versus 32% of non-LMTs.

## How they book

Though the last-minute traveller is defined as someone who books within two weeks of departure, survey results show that

most LMTs are actually booking within one week of their vacation. When planning and booking, 58% of transportation, 59% of lodging and 78% of event tickets are purchased within one week of the LMT's departure.

What's more, 64% of flights and 30% of hotels are booked using an online travel agency (OTA) such as Expedia, Travelocity and Priceline. Non-LMT's use an OTA for 30% of flights and 25 percent of hotel bookings. Non-LMTs are more likely to book directly through an airline (46% compared to 24% of LMTs) and directly through a hotel (42% compared to 30% of LMTs).

## How they get there and where they stay

Primarily, last-minute travellers use their personal vehicle (74% of LMTs compared to 67% non-LMTs). The second most popular mode of transportation for LMTs is flying (36%). Significantly more non-LMTs are flying at 57%.

The research showed that 67% of LMTs stay in hotels compared to 76% of non-LMTs. Many LMTs (43%) also stay with friends or family, compared to 34% of non-LMTs.

## Their destinations

On average, a last-minute traveller's destination is 580 miles from their home. A non-last-minute traveller's destination is nearly 900 miles. As for where they are going, 42% of last-minute travellers vacation in cities and 31% visit somewhere outdoors (lake, beach, state or national park). For non-LMTs, 38% visit a city and 27 percent visit the outdoors. During their trips, 58% of last-minute travellers visit friends or family, 21% seek an outdoor adventure, 22 visit a historic attraction and 16% attend an amusement park. As for non-LMTs 48% visit friends or family, 25% seek an outdoor adventure, 32% visit a historic attraction and 17% attend an amusement park.

"Today's new generation of last-minute travellers represents a significant segment of the overall leisure traveller population," said Angie Buchanan, VP, account supervisor for Hoffman York. "How they book, where they're going and how they go about the travel process is different from traditional vacation planners. It's important for today's travel and hospitality marketers to understand how and when to reach them and why they need to make the booking process fast and easy."

To receive Hoffman York's full last-minute traveller study, including how to use the insights to effectively market to last-minute travellers, [click here](#).

Source: [eTurboNews](#)