KOA
KAMPGROUNDS OF AMERICA
RESEARCH

CAMPING & OUTDOOR HOSPITALITY REPORT 2026

The Twelfth Annual Survey of the General Population

Conducted by Cairn Consulting Group | Sponsored by Kampgrounds of America, Inc.

Table of Contents

LEAVE NO TRACE

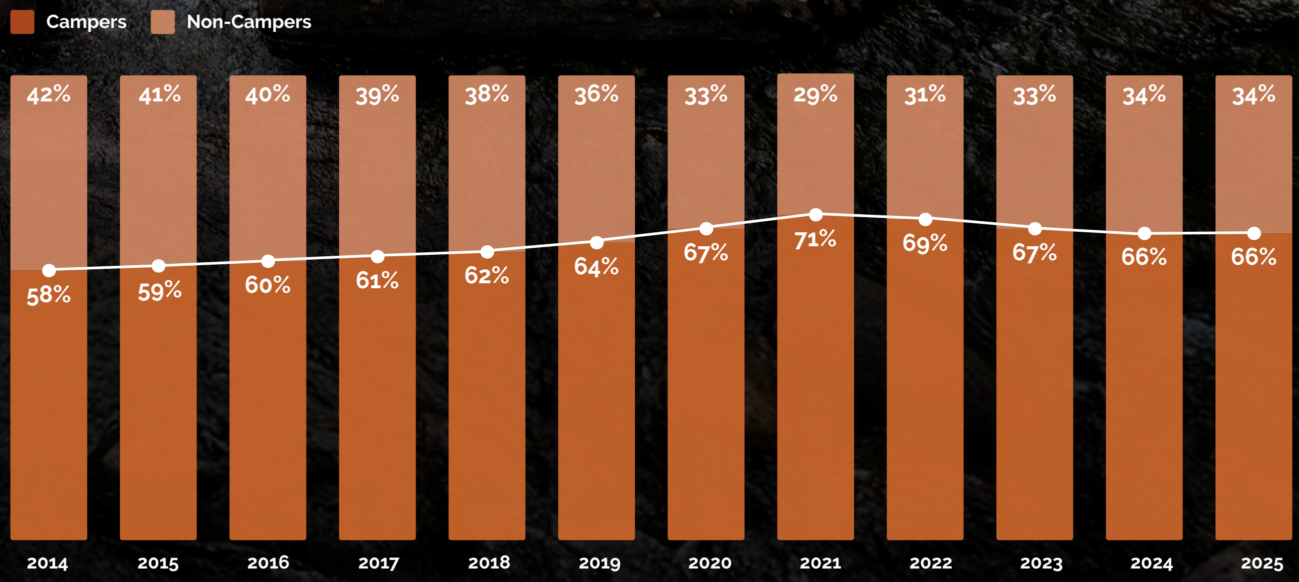
Powered by new insights and tips from Leave No Trace, providing expert guidance for enjoying the outdoors safely and responsibly.

OUTDOOR HOSPITALITY'S STEADY EVOLUTION

Camping and outdoor hospitality continue to demonstrate remarkable resilience and relevance within the broader travel landscape. This year's report highlights healthy participation in outdoor hospitality, with North American camping households holding steady in 2025 at levels higher than pre-2020 benchmarks. While the share of overall leisure trips devoted to outdoor hospitality has moderated since its peak in 2021, today's campers remain highly engaged; integrating camping into a more diverse mix of travel experiences throughout the year.

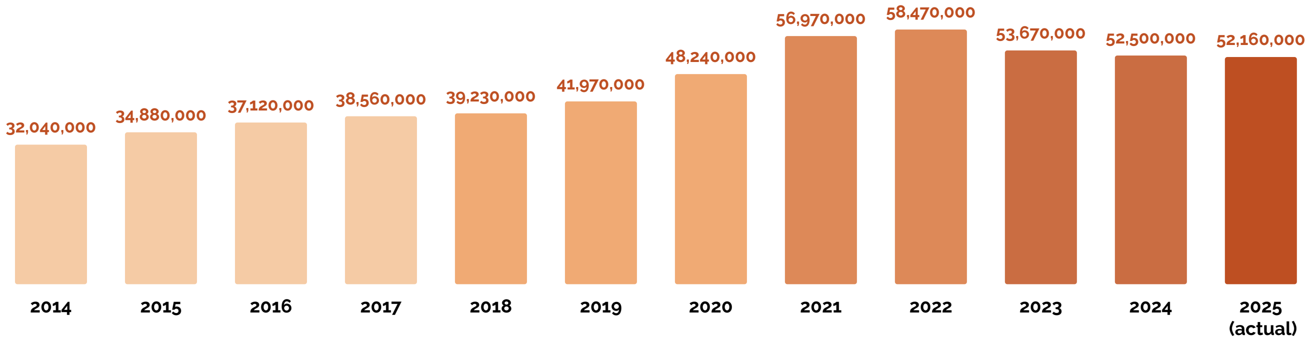
Yet, what's most compelling is how the industry is evolving to meet diverse needs. Glamping expands camping's reach for first-time guests and aging campers seeking accessible outdoor experiences, while pet-friendly sites cater to those traveling with furry family members. Campers increasingly seek wellness through unstructured time in nature, authentic third-place community, and meaningful connection—values that camping uniquely fulfills.

North American Camping Households (2014 to 2025)



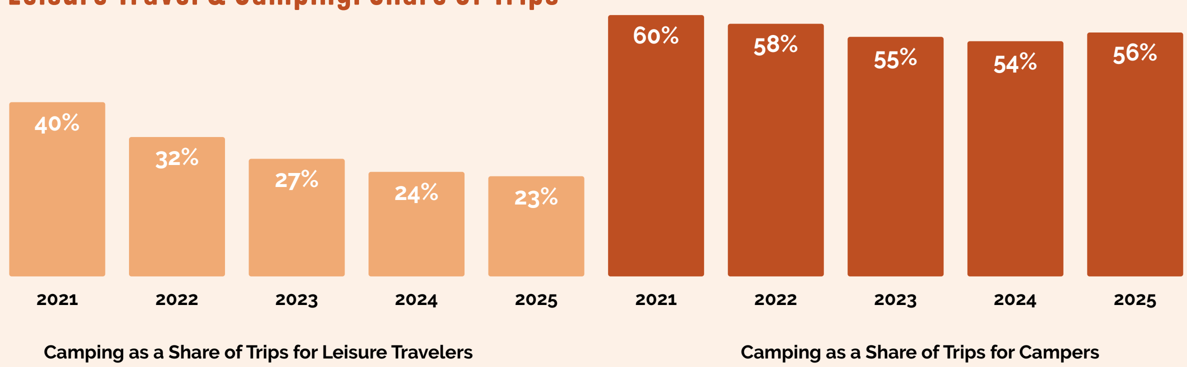
The number of active camper households in 2025 was nearly identical to 2024, including over 52 million households who took at least one trip in 2025.

Active Camping Households 2014 to 2025



Rather than signaling contraction, this evolution reflects maturation. The surge of first-time campers between 2020 and 2022 introduced millions of new households to the outdoors. Many of those campers are still active today, even if they are camping slightly less frequently. Importantly, among active campers, camping continues to account for more than half of their total leisure trips—underscoring the appreciation for the outdoors within this new set of campers.

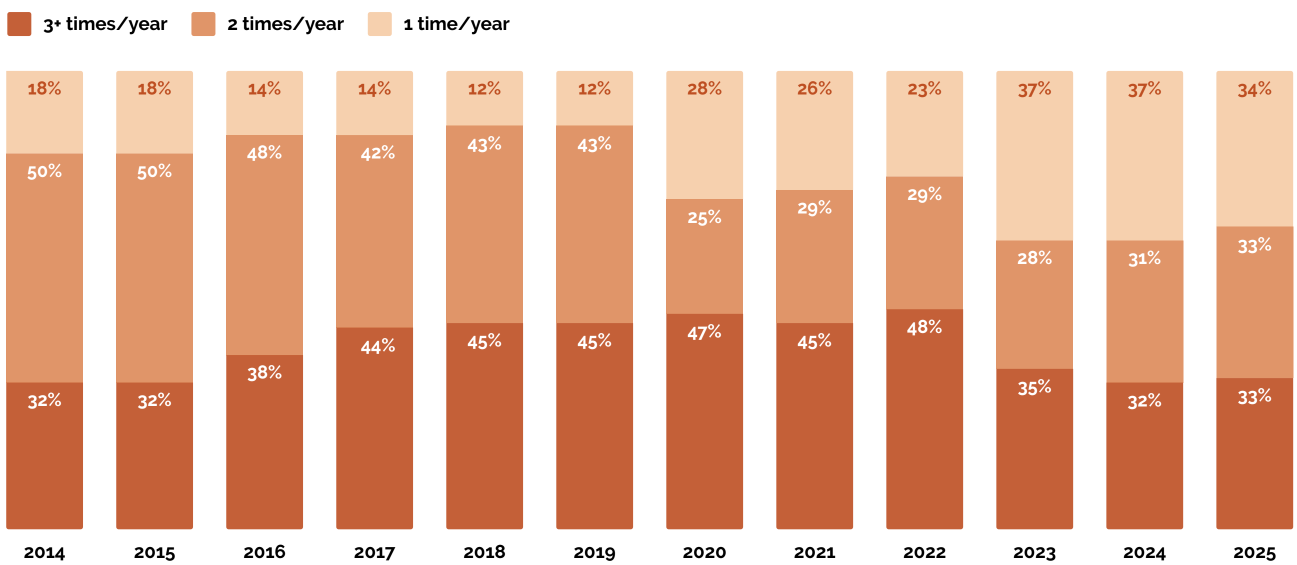
Leisure Travel & Camping: Share of Trips



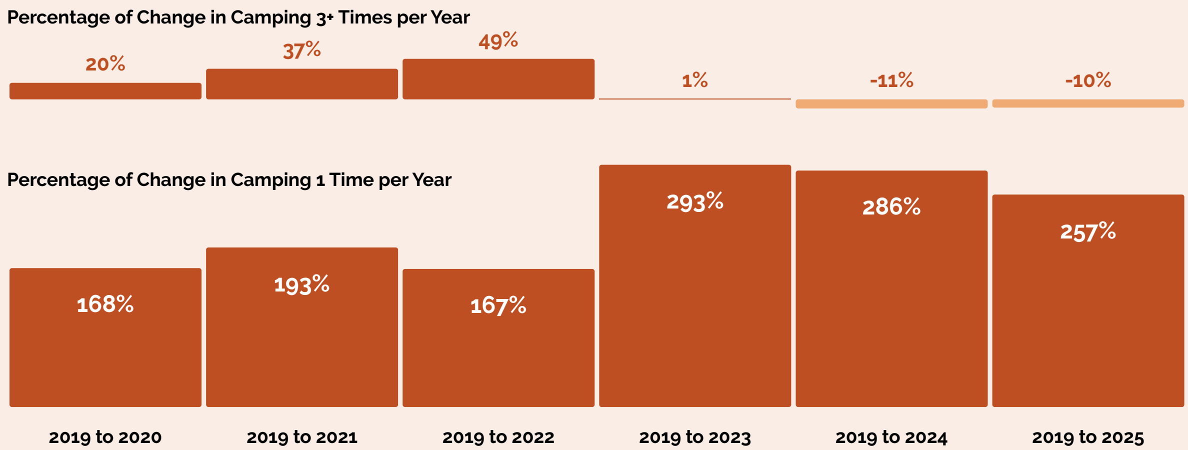
A More Casual Travel Experience

Camping has evolved from a niche pastime into a mainstream travel experience. As new campers have entered the market, more households are incorporating camping into their broader leisure and vacation plans. The result is a larger, more diverse audience, but one that participates less frequently than in the past, with campers who camp three or more times annually decreasing by 10 percentage points since 2019.

Frequency of Camping 2014 to 2025



Change in Camping Three+ Times v. One Time per Year 2019 to 2025



The findings presented in this report show that camping has settled into a new phase of growth. With more than 52 million North American households camping in 2025, well above pre-pandemic levels, the outdoor boom has evolved into a lasting travel behavior. While campers may be taking slightly fewer trips than during the peak years of the pandemic, camping remains a central part of how they travel. Active campers continue to be loyalists, with camping accounting for half of all their leisure trips.

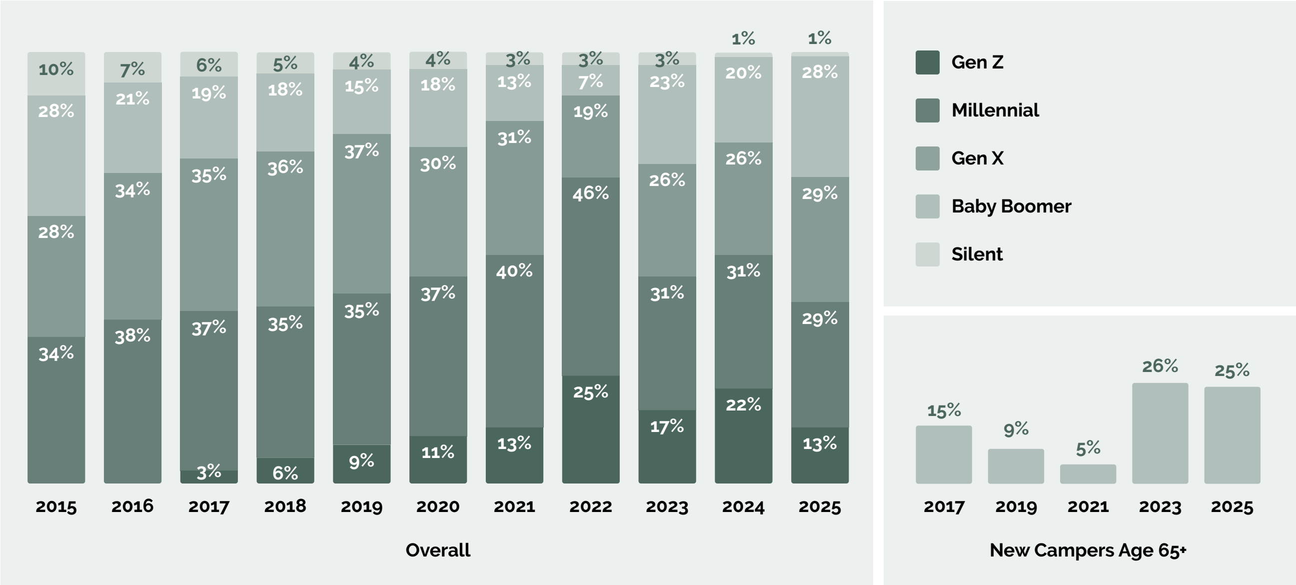
SECTION 1

THE COMPOSITION OF TODAY'S CAMPER

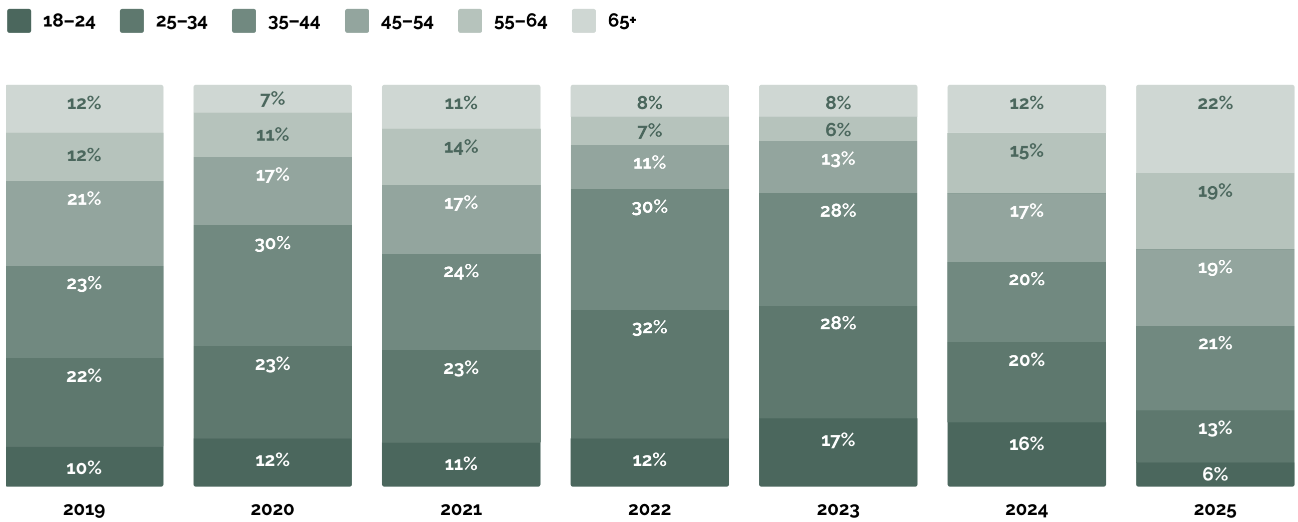
Demographic Shifts and the Impact on Camping

Participation among adults 65+ has reached its highest level in eight years, signaling increased interest from older travelers seeking outdoor and experiential travel options. At the same time, younger generations, particularly Millennials, continue to make camping a meaningful share of their leisure travel.

Generational Representation 2015 to 2025

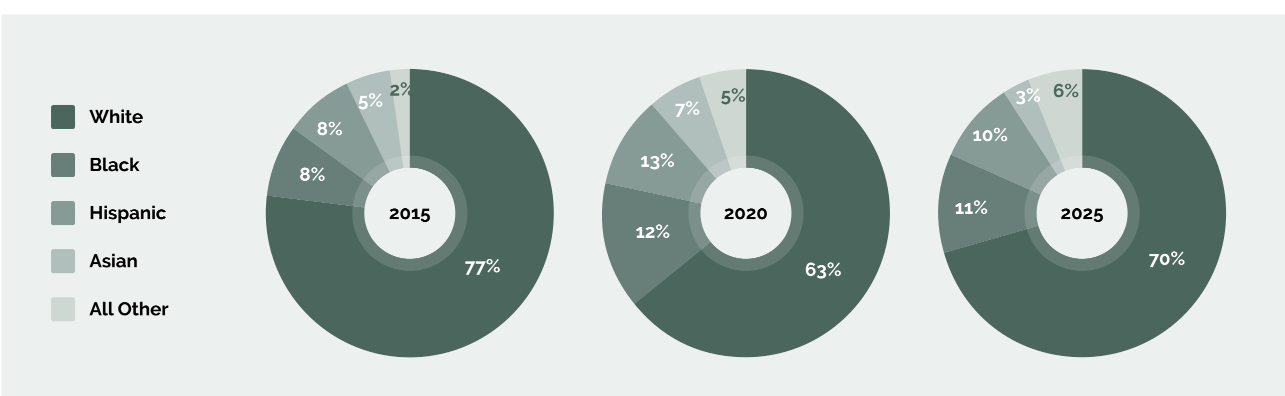


Change in Age Distribution 2019 to 2025



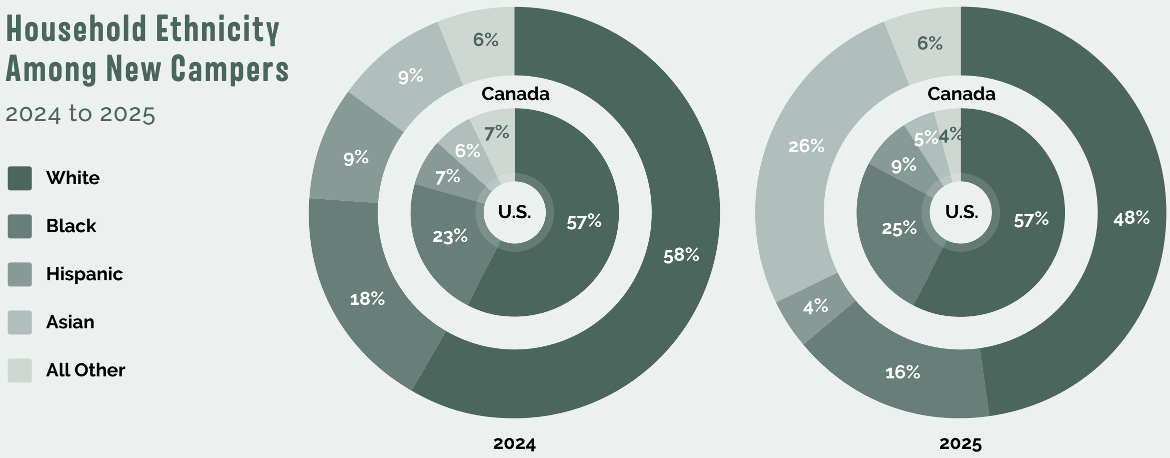
Camping Household Ethnicity 2014 to 2025

While camping and outdoor hospitality have become more inclusive over the past decade, diversity among campers continued to decline in 2025, illustrating a downward trend since 2022. New campers continue to be some of the most diverse campers.

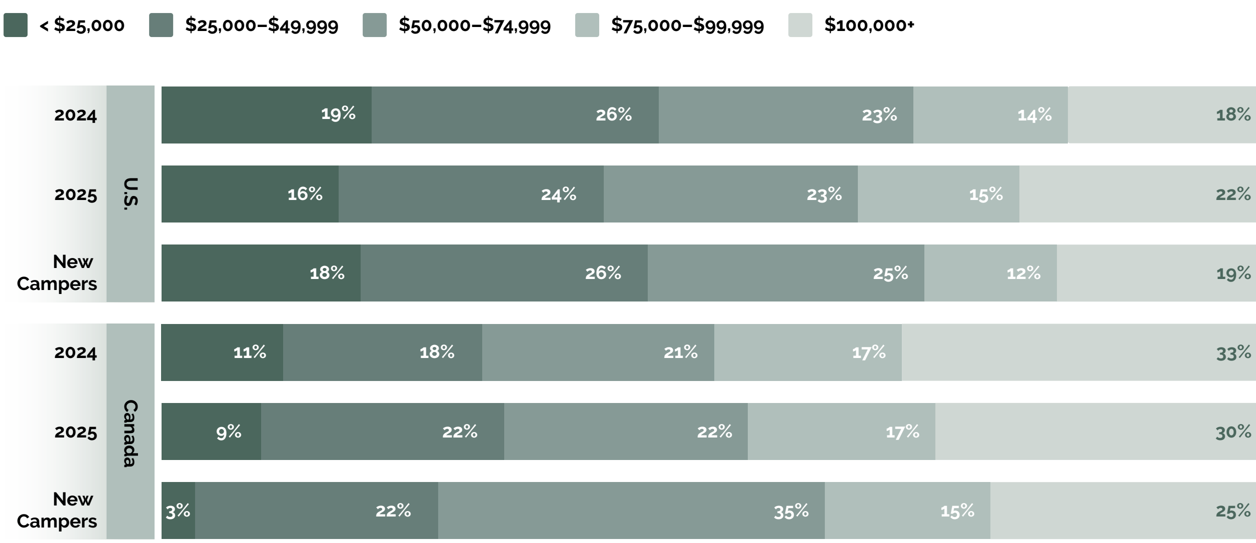


Household Ethnicity Among New Campers

2024 to 2025



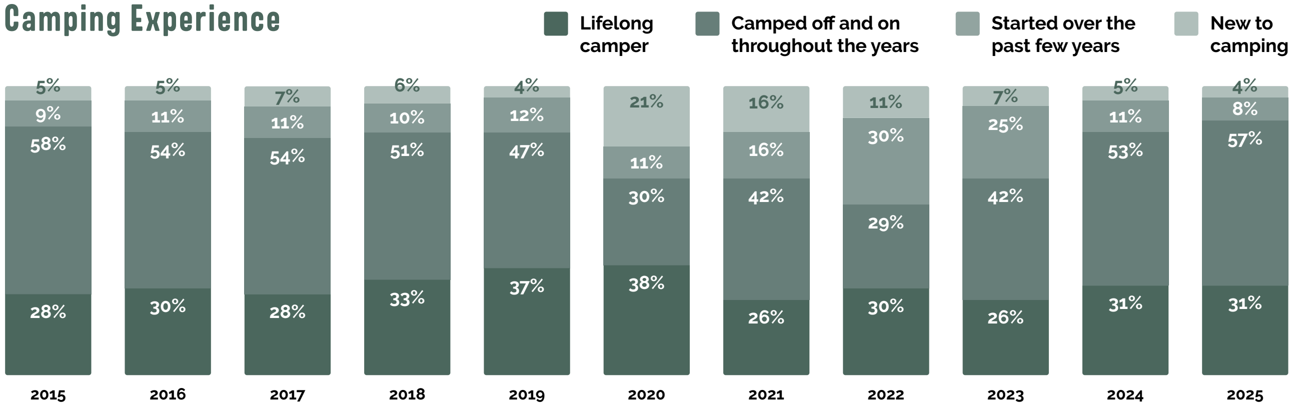
Household Income 2024 to 2025



The outdoor boom during the pandemic brought a surge in higher-income campers, peaking at 37% of the camping population earning $100,000 or more in 2021. Today's picture has shifted: household incomes among campers have settled closer to pre-pandemic patterns. Notably, the newest generation of campers entering the market in 2025 represents a lower household income segment than the overall demographic of campers, signaling a meaningful broadening of who's hitting the campground.

In 2025, the rate of new campers closely matched 2024 levels, remaining well above 2019 levels prior to the pandemic-driven influx.. Since 2023, over 8.5 million households tried camping for the first time. The retention of those who started camping within the last few years continues to create a strong base for the industry.

Camping Experience



Camping Companions

Campers tend to camp based on their life stage and travel goals.

62% camp with their spouse or significant other.

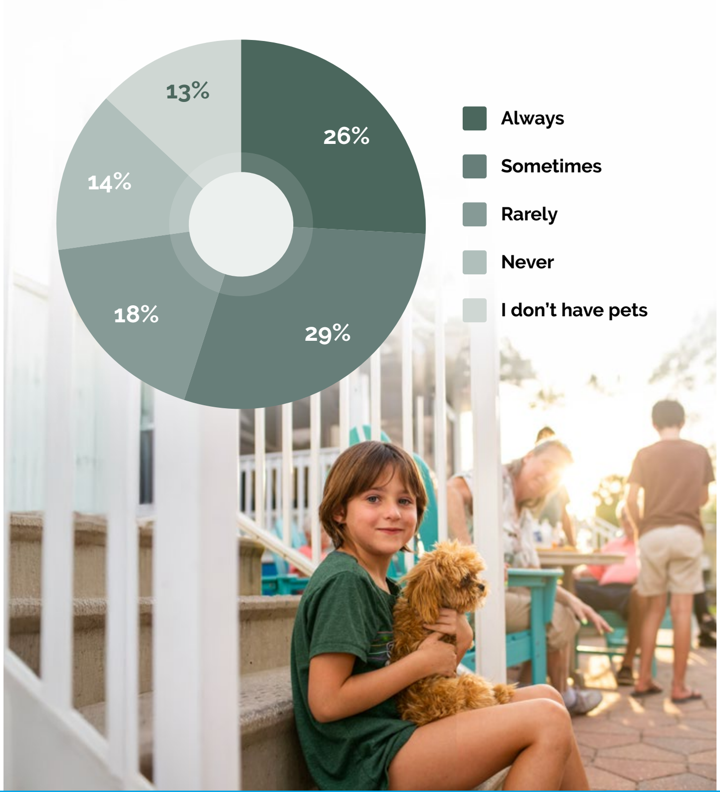
1 in 4 camp with their children.

37% camp with friends.

55% bring along their pet.

3 in 10 Gen Zers camp with their parents.

Frequency of Camping with Pets



Recreate Responsibly with Leave No Trace

Always pack out or pick up your pet's waste to protect our water and soil from harmful bacteria and non-native pathogens. Keeping trails and parks clean ensures a healthy environment for wildlife and humans alike.

LEAVE NO TRACE

Pets Profit

Outdoor hospitality makes it easier to bring the whole family on a vacation, and campgrounds that cater to pet parents profit. Extensive infrastructure and programming is not necessary; rather, campgrounds who offer basic pet amenities like waste stations and off-leash areas will gain traction with this large camper base.

- 62% of Millennials always or sometimes camp with their pets.
- 60% of Gen Z pet campers say that getting their pet off-leash is essential while camping.
- Pet waste and water stations are the most sought-after onsite amenities.

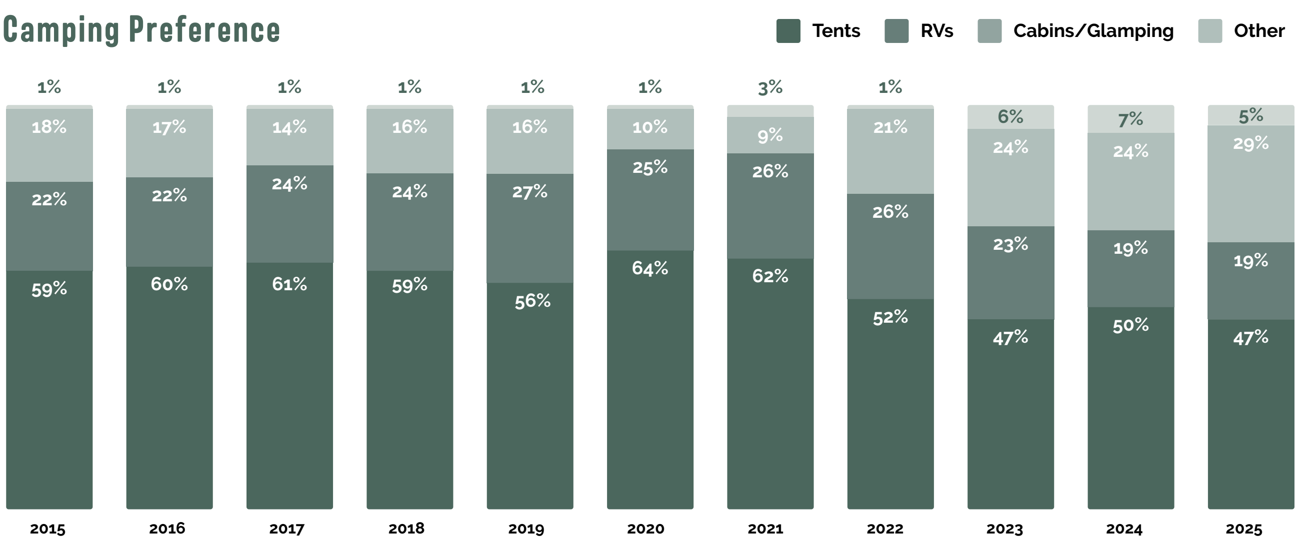
Camping Preference

Campers seek many different experiences while camping, but the desire for onsite amenities continues to grow.

- 3-out-of-10 camper nights are spent at a private campground or glamping resort.
- 34% of camper nights are spent at a National, State or Provincial Park.
- 21% of camper nights are spent on public or privately owned land, other than a campground.

Glamping continues to gain popularity among both new and seasoned campers, accounting for 29% of all forms of camping in 2025. Interest remains high among campers, with 54% planning to glamp in 2026.

Camping Preference



The Campground Experience

Safety and security are the most important considerations when staying at a campground, followed closely by having access to bathrooms.

Among safety-related concerns, theft of personal items ranks highest. Fear of animals and weather are also commonly cited.

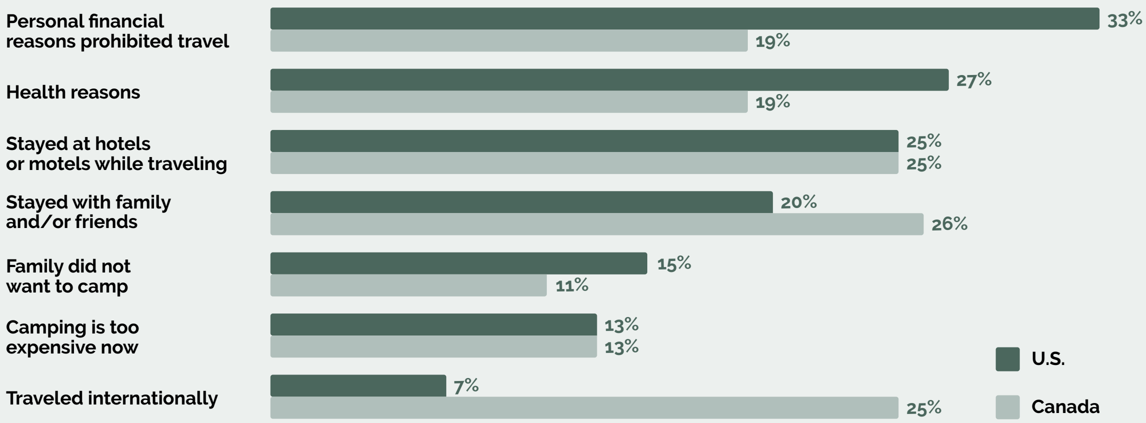
What Matters Most When Choosing a Campground

Safety and security	44%
Clean and well-maintained public bathhouse/restrooms	43%
Self-guided recreational activities	23%
Allows pets and has pet area	22%
Private bathroom	18%

Reasons Not to Camp in 2025

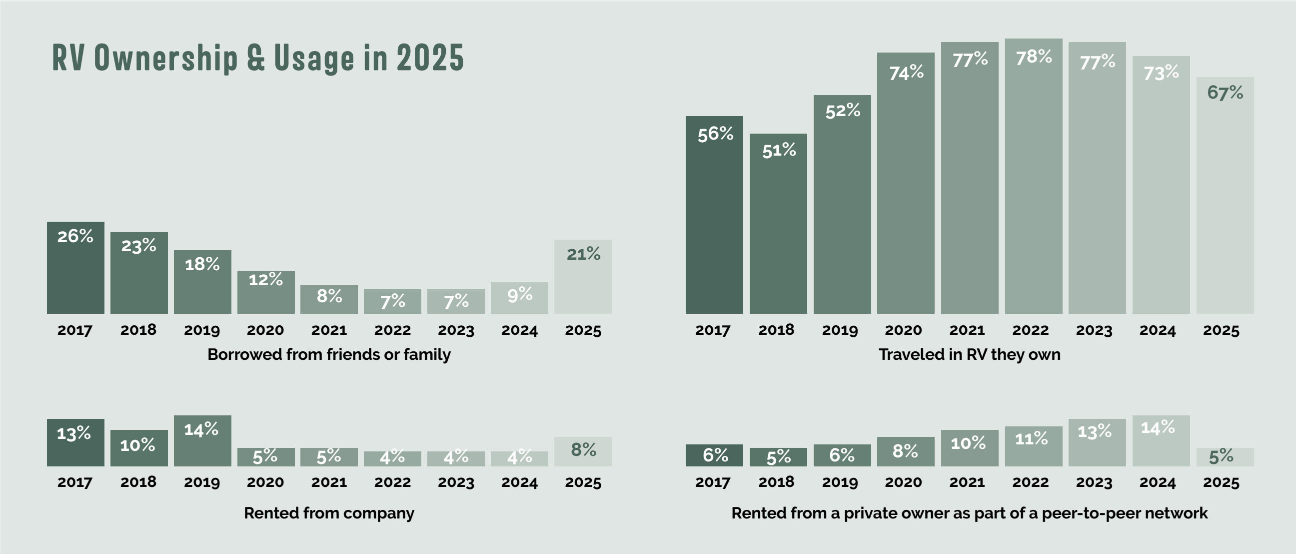
Financial considerations were cited most often as a barrier to camping. Younger generations were more likely than older campers to feel limited by cost. Older adults pointed to health concerns as the main reason they camp less.

Top Barriers to Camping

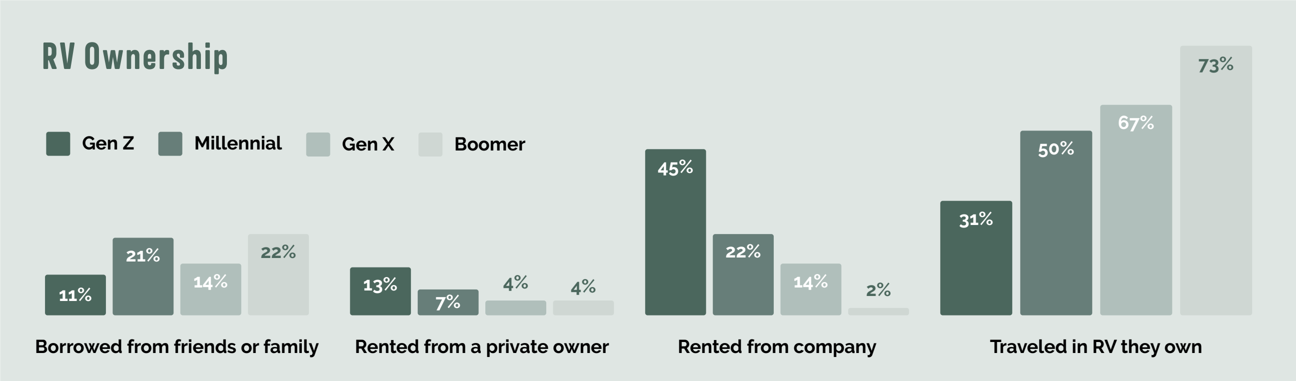


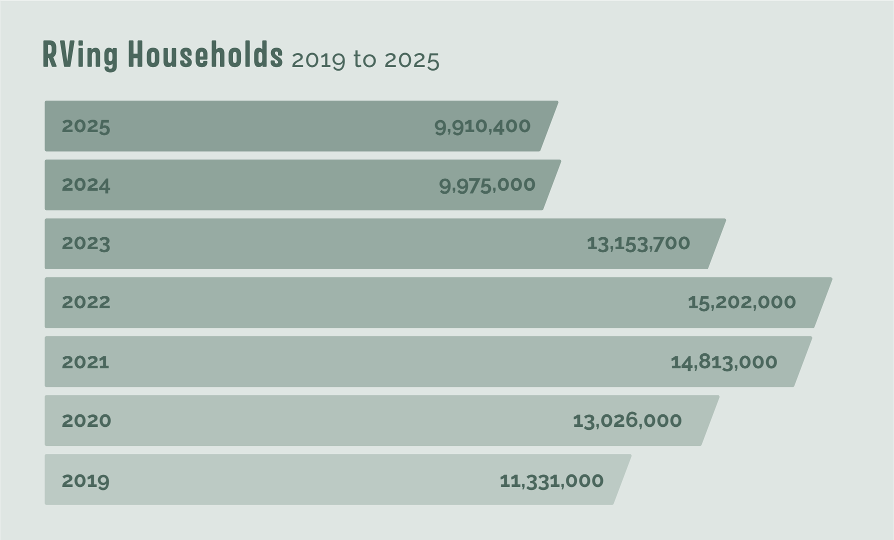
The RV Camper

After steady growth during the pandemic, RV usage is returning to pre-pandemic levels, with 67% of RVers traveling in an RV they own. Interestingly, many more campers experienced the outdoors in borrowed or rented RVs in 2025, demonstrating an interest in RV usage, despite potential cost-to-entry barriers.



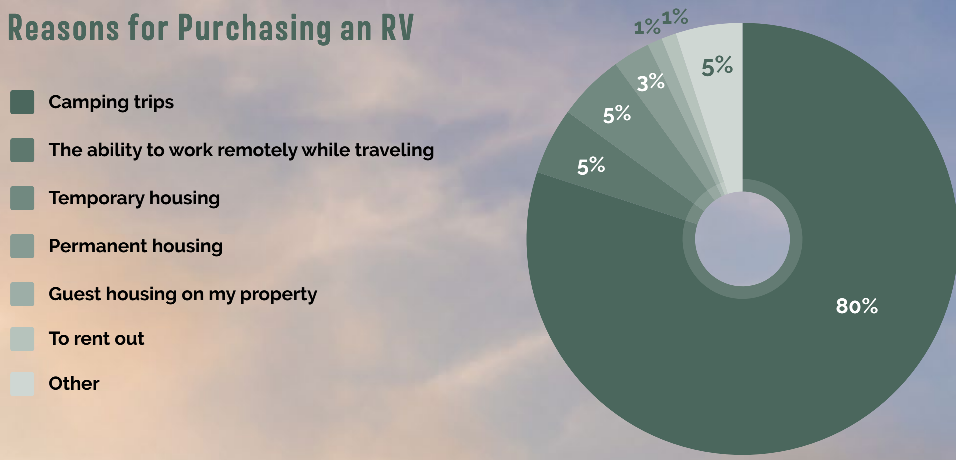
Gen Zers who prefer to RV are least likely to own an RV and twice as likely as Millennials to rent.





RV ownership stabilized and was relatively flat year-over-year. However, fully eight-in-ten RV owners purchased their RV for the primary purpose of camping, a rate above what was observed in 2024 (72%), suggesting that the core group of RVers is much more committed to RV travel in the coming year.

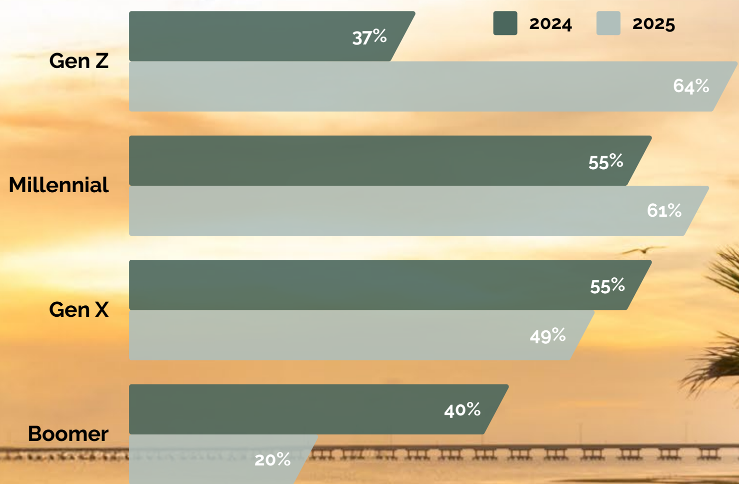
Reasons for Purchasing an RV



RV Rentals

Interest in renting RVs continues to increase, with 48% of campers reporting they are very likely to rent an RV in 2026. This rate is highest among the younger generations of campers. The surge in RV rental interest among younger campers signals a critical opportunity for the outdoor hospitality industry—one that hinges on making rentals accessible through competitive pricing, clear education, and streamlined entry points for first-time renters.

Percentage Likely to Rent



Barriers to RV Rentals

Among those unlikely to rent, the biggest impediment is cost, though one-third mention not knowing how to drive or operate an RV.

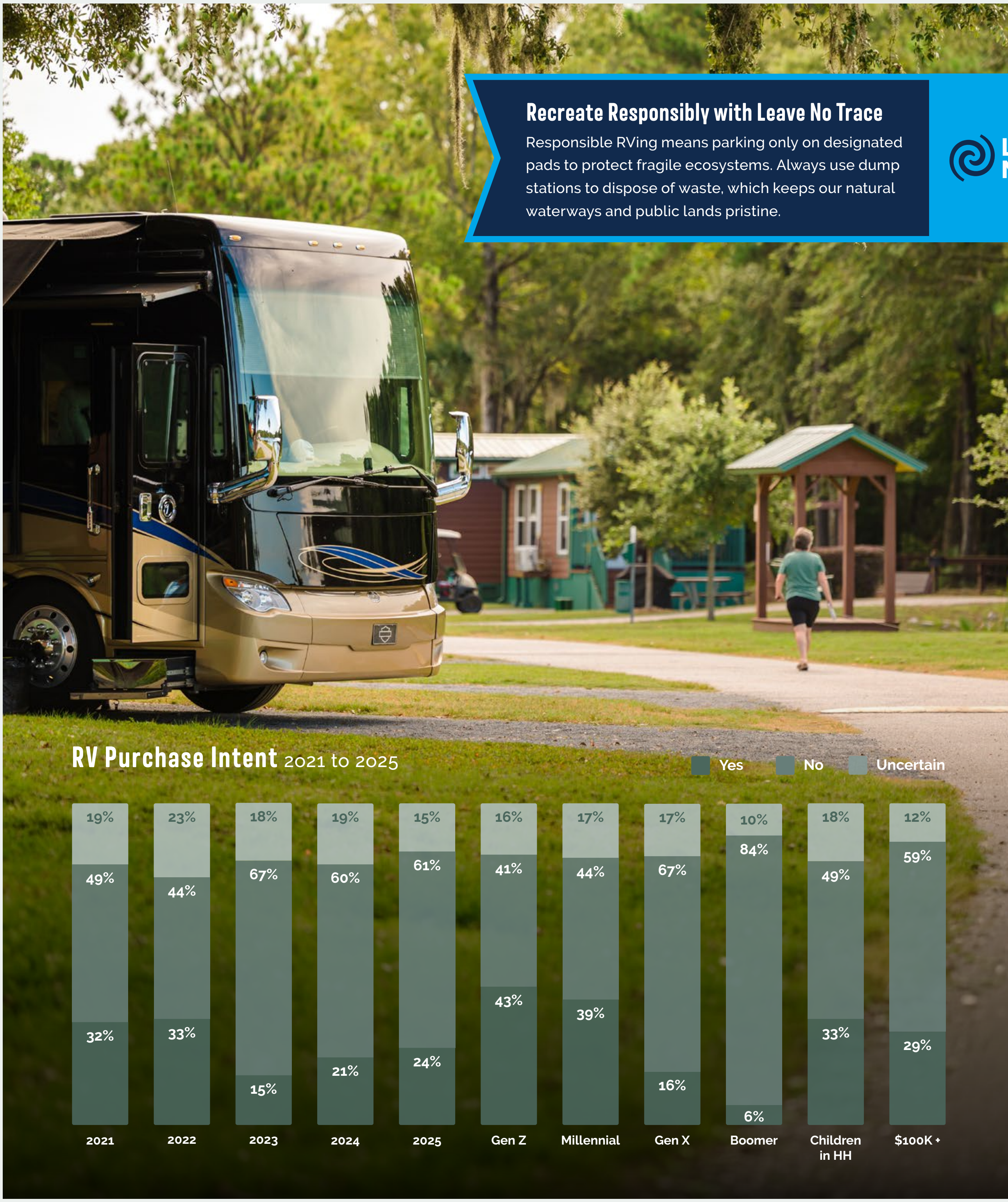
RV Purchase Intent

The intent to become an RV owner has improved over the past two years, perhaps signaling an increase in RV ownership, particularly among the younger set of campers.

Recreate Responsibly with Leave No Trace

Responsible RVing means parking only on designated pads to protect fragile ecosystems. Always use dump stations to dispose of waste, which keeps our natural waterways and public lands pristine.

LEAVE NO TRACE



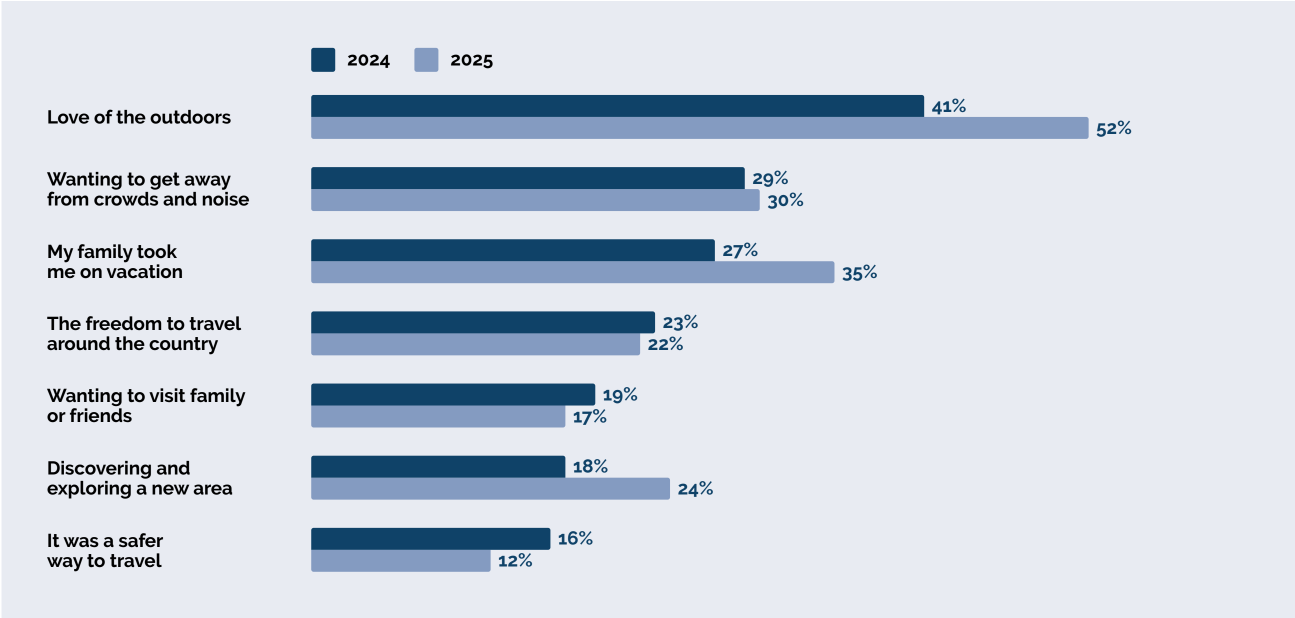
SECTION 2

THE NEWEST CAMPERS

New campers continue to increase each year. 2025 saw more than 2.2 million new campers, an increase of 23% over new campers introduced to the activity in 2015.

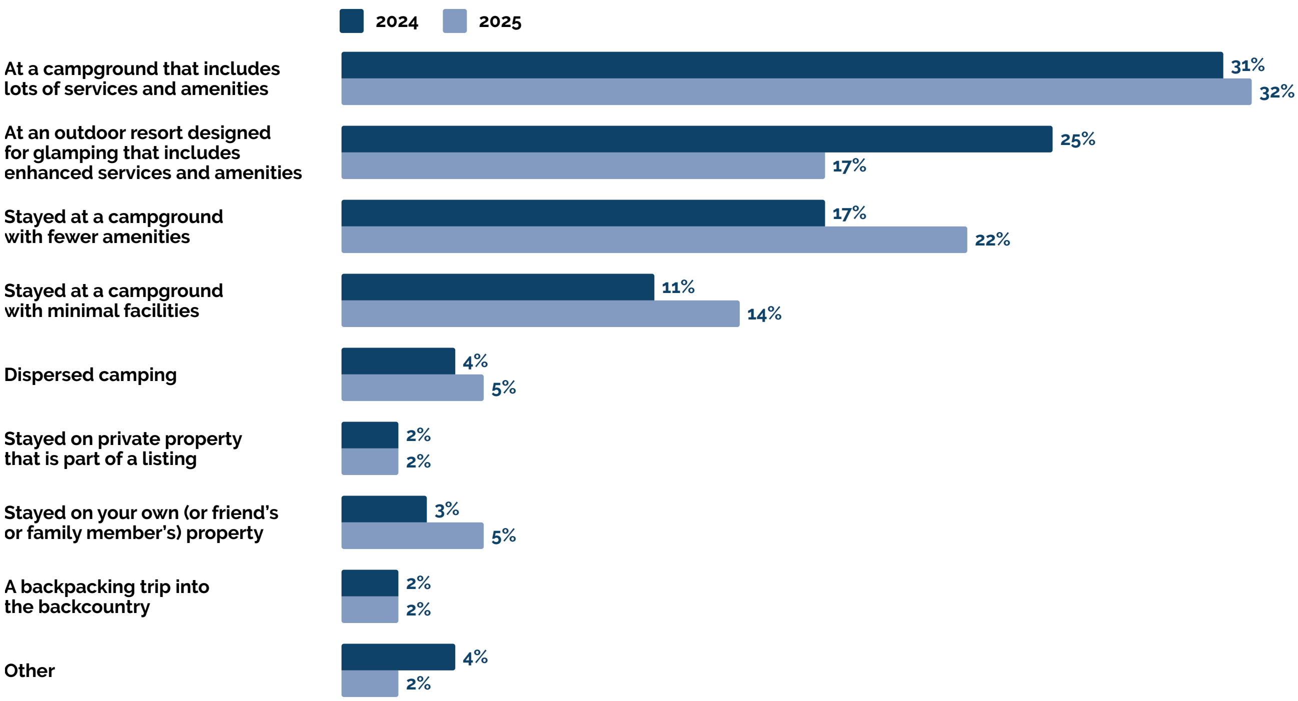
What Initiated Camping Interest?

A love for the outdoors was the top reason new campers tried camping . That is encouraging, as past results show that people motivated by outdoor experiences are more likely to stay engaged over time. This sentiment remains the leading motivator across all generations.

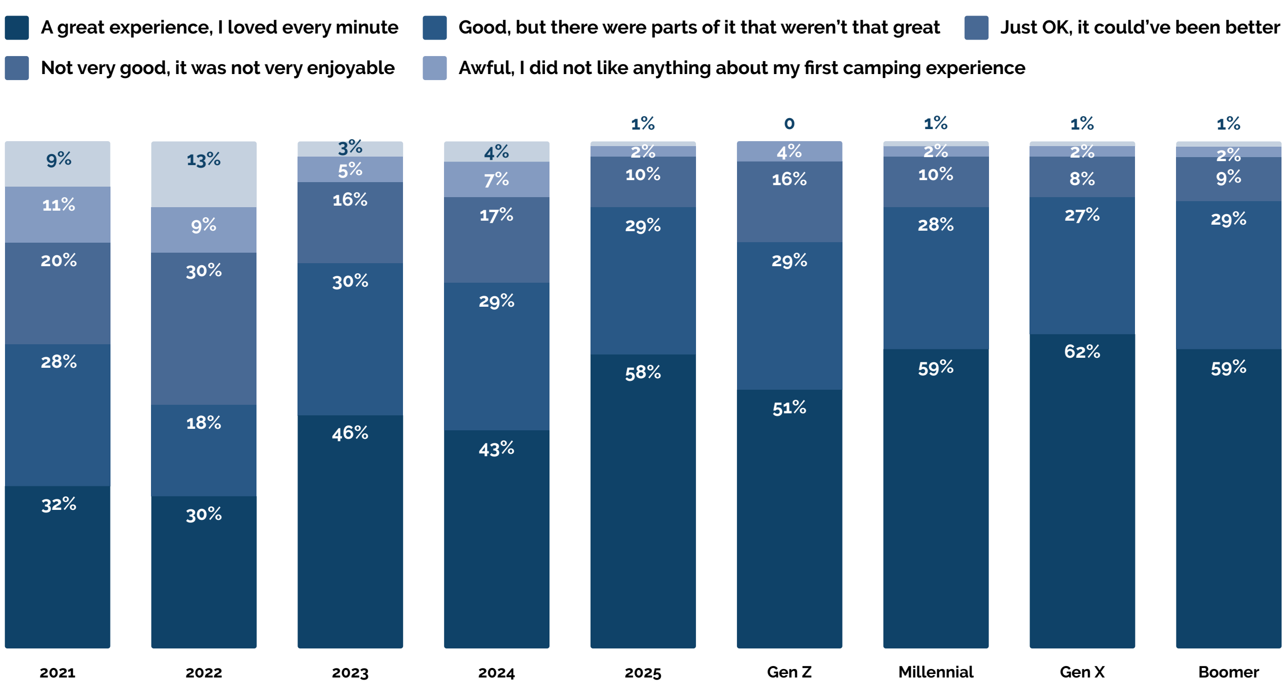


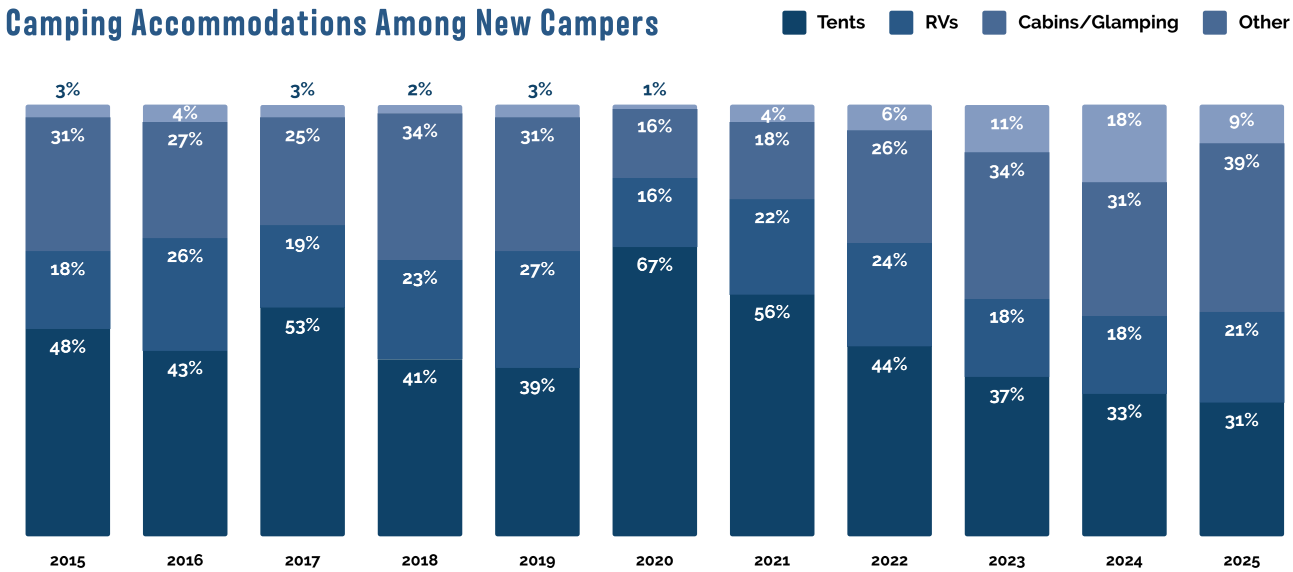
First Camping Experience 2025

Similar to last year, first camping experiences were most likely to be at a campground with a lot of amenities and services.



Nearly six-in-ten new campers say they loved their first camping experience, reaching the highest levels of satisfaction since fielding this report. Gen X and Boomers report the most positive views of their first camping experiences, with nearly 90% saying it was good or great.

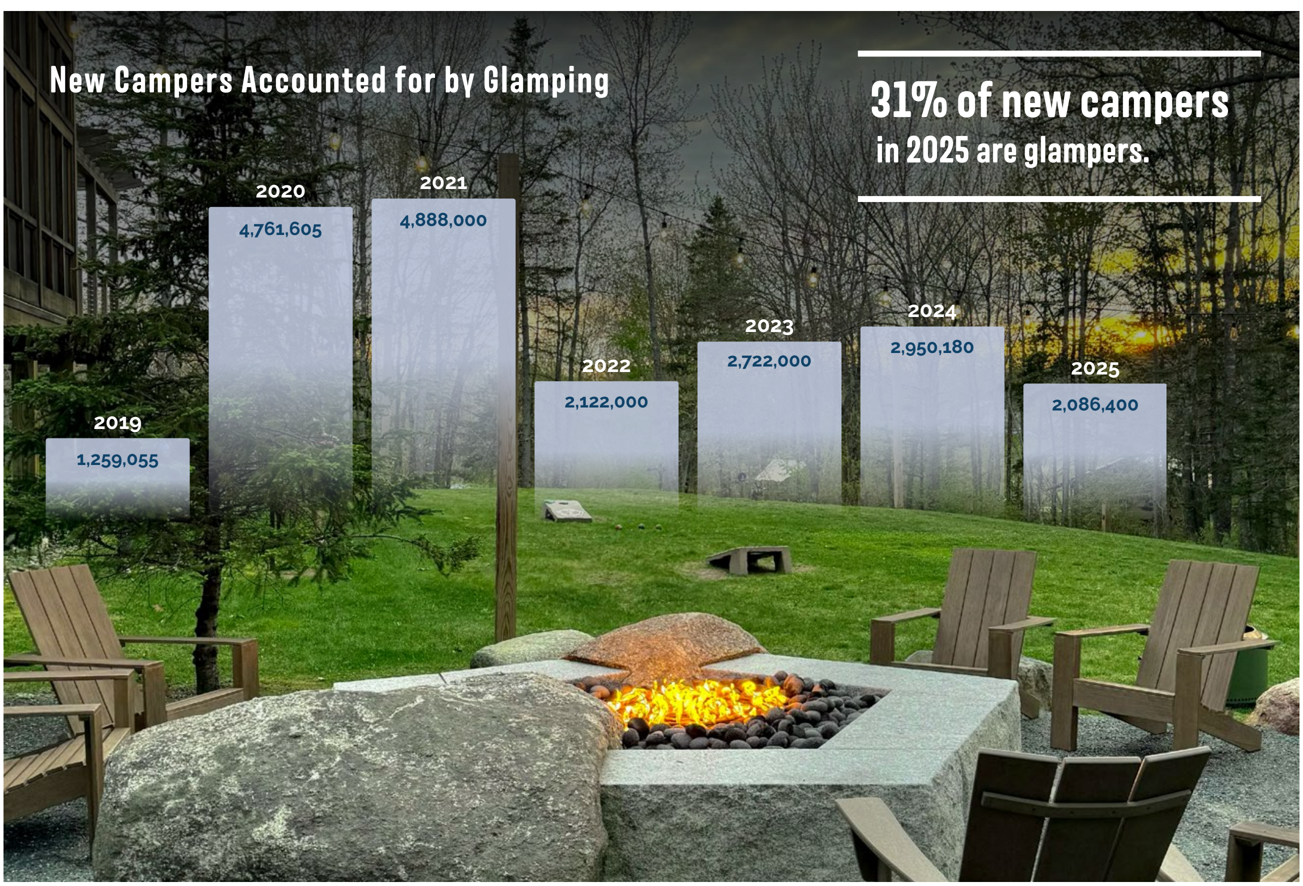




Among new campers, glamping continues to be the preferred form of camping.

The Impact of Glamping on New Camping Participation

Identical to 2024, 31% of new campers in 2025 classify themselves as glampers. This consistent proportion demonstrates that glamping continues to serve as a critical gateway for attracting households that might otherwise be unlikely to engage with outdoor hospitality.



GLAMPERS ARE GRADUATING

Glamping continues to draw travelers outside. Findings show that once these new campers are comfortable with the outdoors, they are more adventurous and willing to try other forms of camping. This indicates that experiences in nature create a lasting impression and a drive for continued connections with nature.

65% of glampers

choose glamping because it allows them to disconnect while still enjoying luxury and convenience.

HALF of all

Millennial glampers are interested in RV rentals.

1 in 4 glampers

are interested in trying traditional tent camping—this is highest among Gen Z and Millennial glampers.

33% of Gen Z

glampers are considering purchasing an RV.

SECTION 3

FAMILY CONNECTION

Sharing a Love for the Outdoors—Together

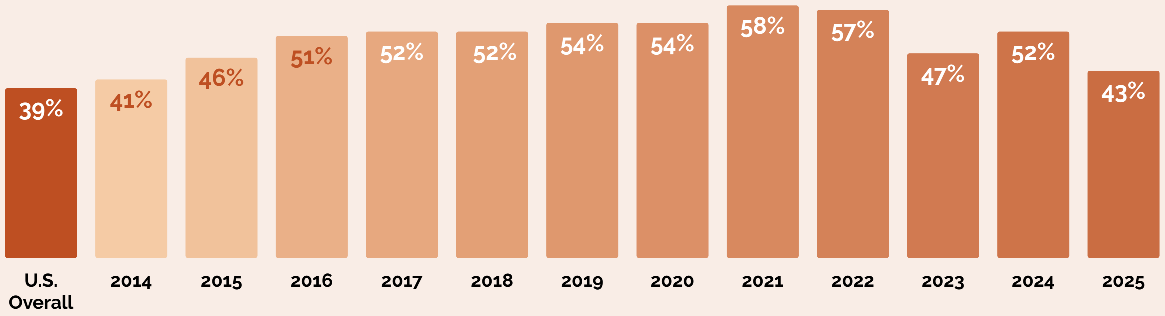
For generations, camping has been how families create lasting memories and build connection. Although family camping participation softened in 2025, the underlying appeal remains resilient.

Parents who grew up camping seek to recreate those traditions for their own children, drawn by camping's core value propositions: the nostalgic pull of multi-generational connection, genuine one-on-one interaction free from daily distractions, and affordable access to quality time. Despite reaching its lowest level in a decade—potentially a reflection of the shifting age of campers and competing vacations—families continue to view camping as one of the most accessible, low-stress travel options for bonding.

This resilience signals both a challenge and an opportunity for operators to reclaim family camping as a growth segment.

Family Camping Households

Children in the Household 2014 to 2025



Easiest Forms of Travel with Children

One third of adults in the U.S. and Canada believe camping is the easiest form of travel with children.

When planning vacations, families prioritize flexibility, onsite activities, and amenities.

Campers with children in the household are more likely to:

37% vs. 27%

camp more often.

58% vs. 37%

rent an RV.

66% want to

recreate childhood memories while camping.

Recreate Responsibly with Leave No Trace

Teach kids to "leave what you find" to ensure wildlife habitats remain healthy. Empower the next generation to become lifelong stewards who protect the wild places they love exploring.

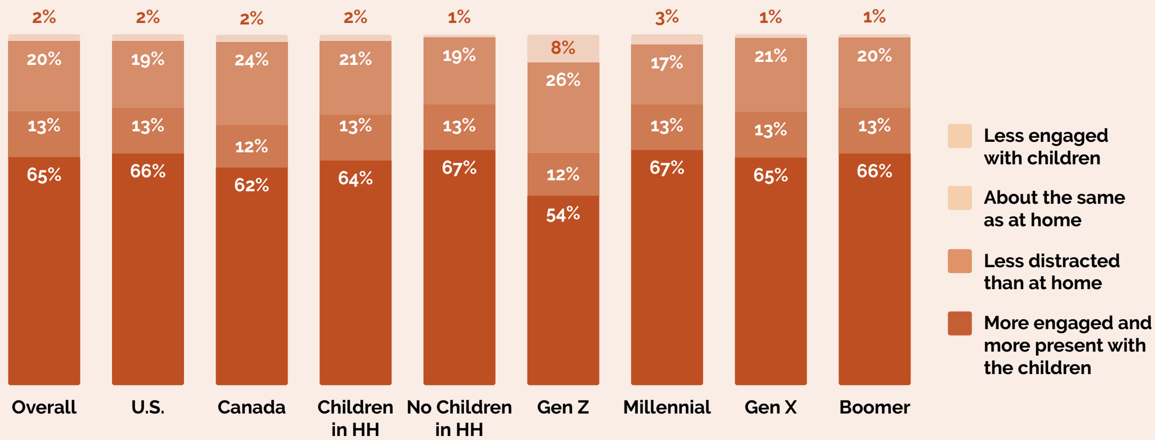
LEAVE NO TRACE

60% of families

say camping offers a better chance to connect together over other forms of travel.

About eight-in-ten campers say they feel more engaged and present with their children or less distracted while camping with them.

Engagement with Children While Camping

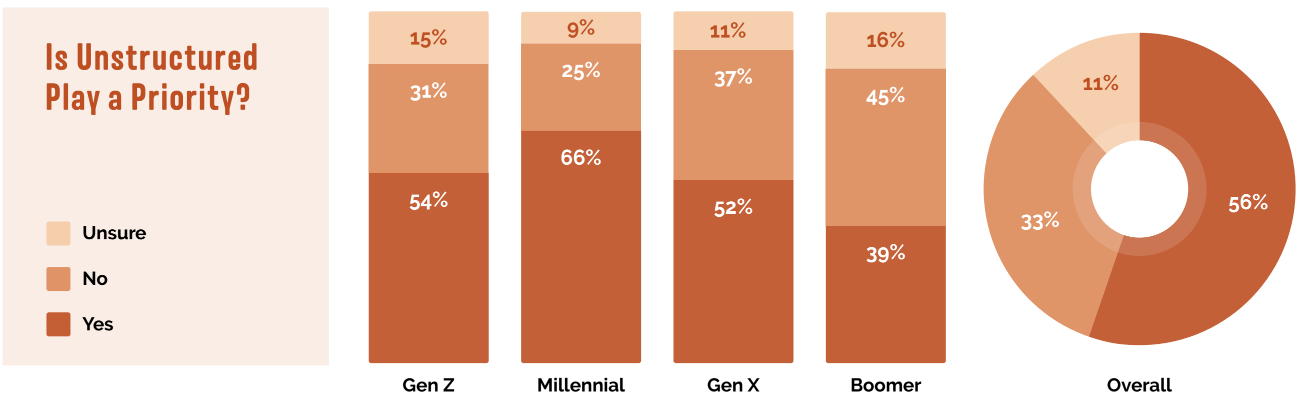


Same-Sex Households 2015 to 2025

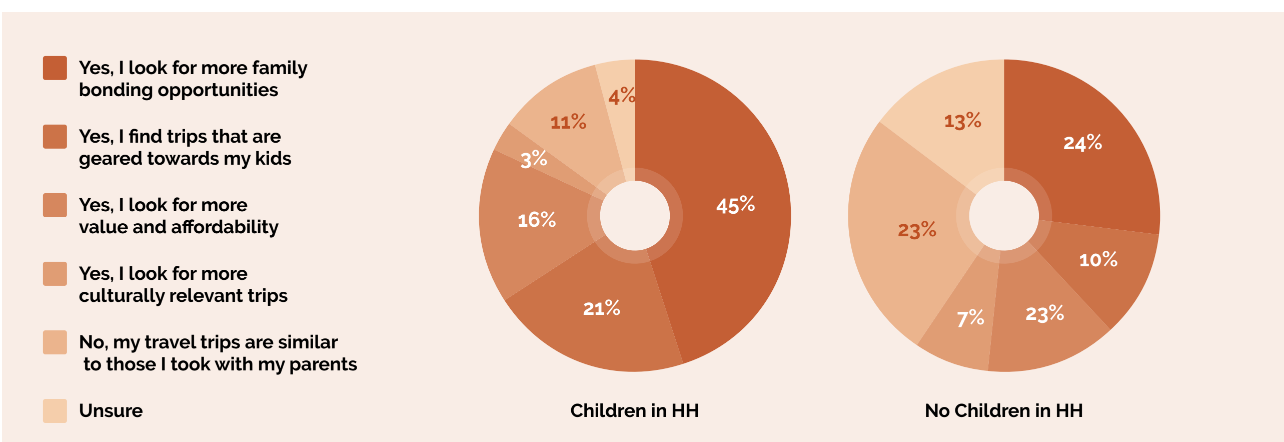
According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2021 Current Population Survey, an estimated 1.3 million same-sex households live in the United States. Historically, camping has resonated strongly within this community, reflecting the outdoor industry's broad appeal and inclusivity. While participation among same-sex households has moderated slightly over the past two years, engagement remains meaningful. Notably, same-sex camper households are just as likely as other camping households to include children, highlighting camping's role as a welcoming, family-oriented experience across diverse communities.

Children in Household

A majority of parents say they prioritize unstructured play when considering how they travel. This result is most prominent among Millennial parents, two-thirds of whom prioritize unstructured time.



Nostalgia and a desire to foster a love for the outdoors are key motivators for parents to take their children camping. At this time, childhood camping traditions are evolving, with three in four parents saying their camping trips will be different than the ones they took as children. Parents are still seeking those memory-making experiences created by camping, but they are making them unique in their own way.

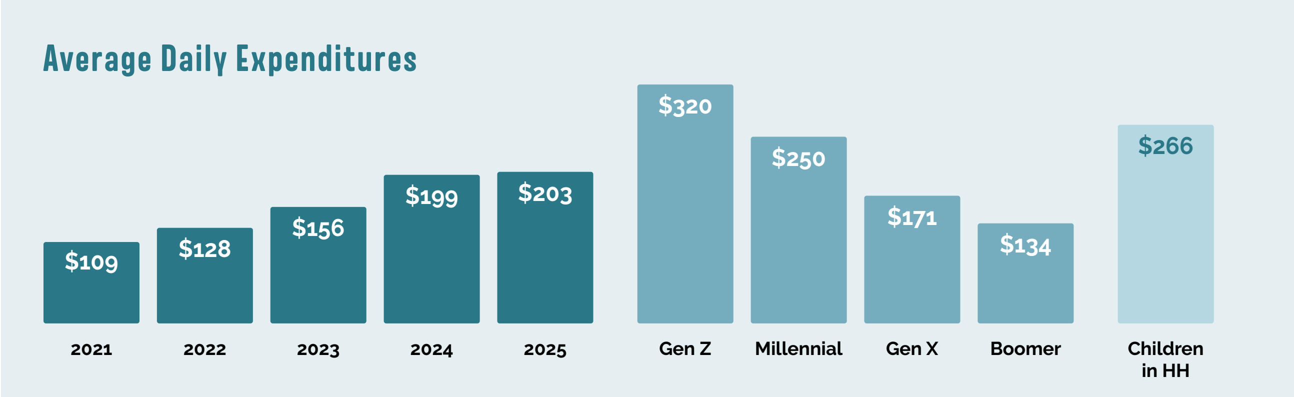


SECTION 4

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF OUTDOOR HOSPITALITY

Economic Impact

Camping's economic contribution continued to expand in 2025 with travelers spending $66 billion in local communities. The newest set of campers, younger generations and those traveling with children spend the most in local communities camping, demonstrating a healthy future for areas that support outdoor hospitality.



Average daily spend per person per day in local communities surpassed $200 in 2025. These expenditures include food, beverage, retail and experiences directly supporting local businesses. They do not account for overnight accommodations or site rentals.

Overall, campers spent $66 billion in local communities in 2025. The increase in spending reflects increases in the prices of goods and services, as well as a minor uptick in the average number of days spent camping in 2025.

Diverging Paths: Travel in a Two-Speed Economy

As travel spending rises, a widening divide is emerging between households with greater financial flexibility and those facing tighter budgets. Lower-income travelers are more likely to stay closer to home, choose campgrounds as a cost-effective option, and remain highly price-sensitive. In contrast, higher-income travelers tend to travel longer distances, incorporate a mix of accommodations—including hotels, vacation rentals, and resorts—and are more willing to absorb rate increases rather than forgo trips altogether. This divergence underscores the growing stratification within the travel market and its implications for outdoor hospitality.

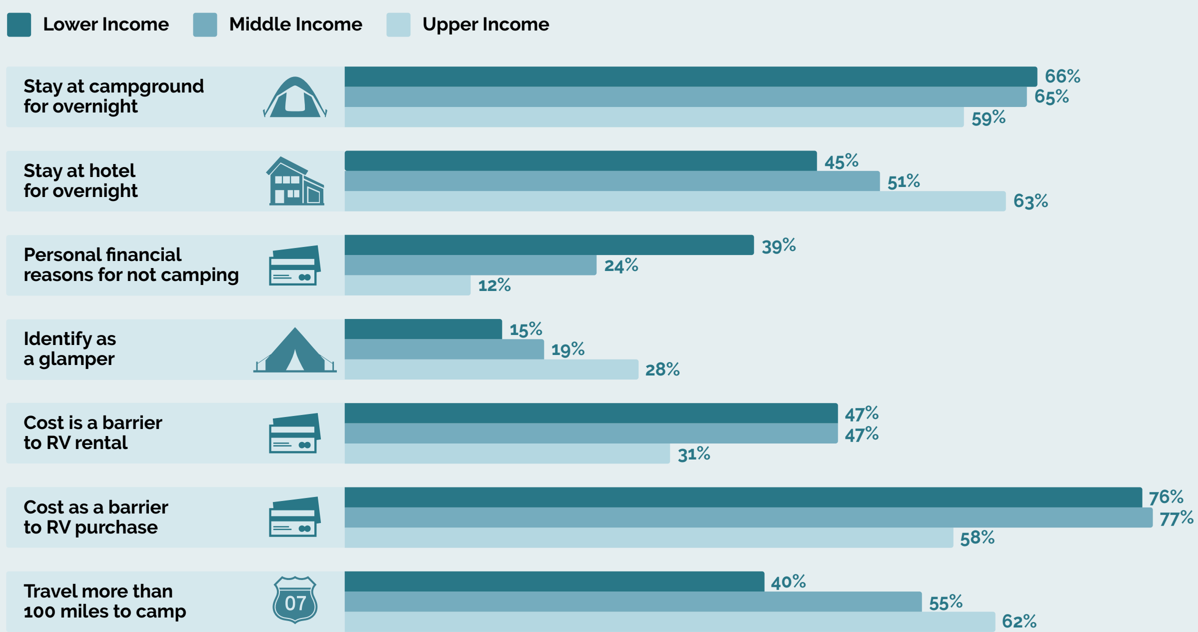
The Economics of Travel Choice

Lower-income Campers	High-income Campers
More often backcountry	Most interested in glamping
Prioritize low-cost activities like fishing	Opt for resorts and vacation rentals over camping
Look for trips under 50-miles from home	Travel 200+ miles from home
Say personal finances & health kept them from camping in 2025	Will book a stay regardless of price increases

35% of campers

believe camping is a more affordable travel option when compared to other travel.

Camping Preferences by Income

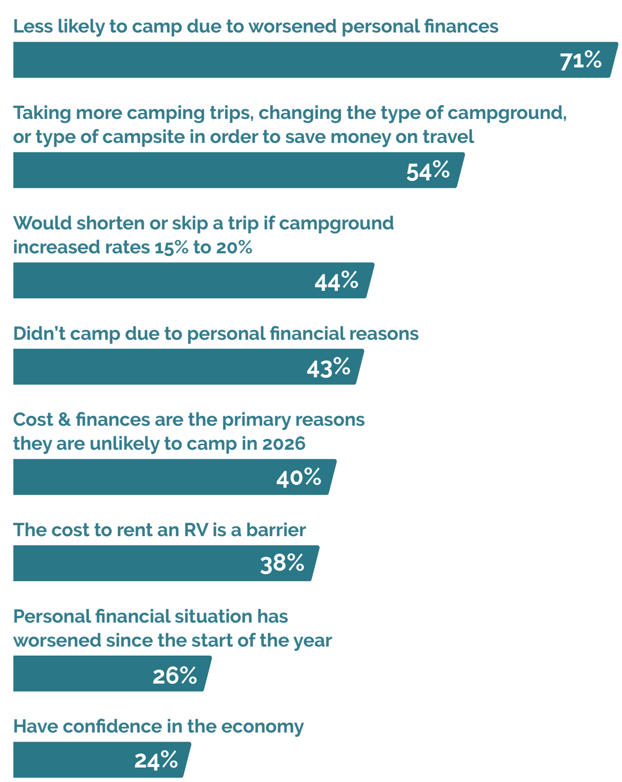


Price Sensitivity Among Younger Campers

Financial barriers are significantly shaping camping participation across generations, with younger cohorts most impacted. When asked why they didn't camp in 2025, 40% of Gen Z and 41% of Millennials cited personal financial reasons—substantially higher than Gen X (32%) and Boomers (22%). Nearly 20% of both younger generations view camping costs as prohibitively high.

Yet this price sensitivity reveals a compelling paradox: Gen Z and Millennials demonstrate the highest daily spending when they do camp, spending the most in local communities. This suggests that when financial barriers are overcome, younger campers invest meaningfully in their experiences and hold significant loyalty potential. The contraction in Gen Z camping participation in 2025, driven by financial constraints, represents a critical turning point for the industry. Safeguarding younger generations' access to camping is imperative for the outdoor hospitality sector's long-term health. The challenge before operators is clear: lower barriers to entry while preserving the experiences that resonate most with younger campers.

Financially-Driven Participation Barriers



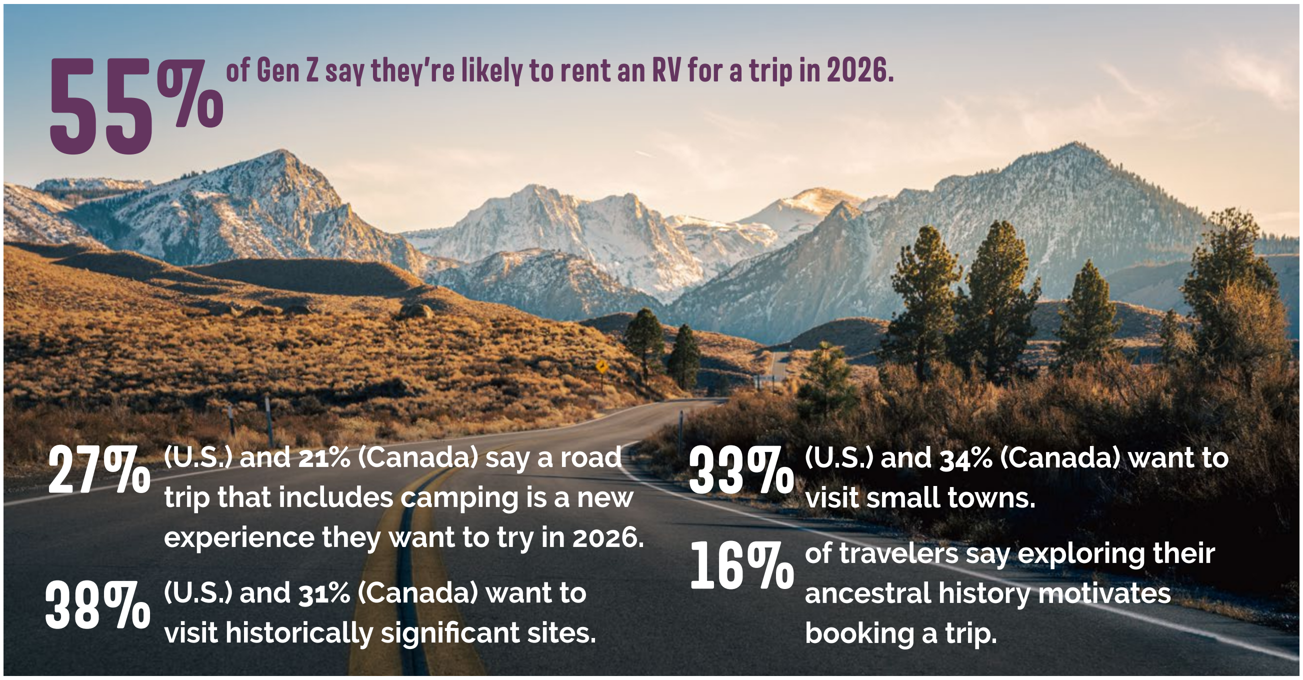
SECTION 5

2026: A YEAR OF OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES

Major events will play a big role in getting people outdoors in 2026, but they will not be the main driver. Campers are already planning to make 2026 the year of intentional simplicity, with 31% planning more camping nights spent under the stars compared to 2025.

The Year of the Road Trip

In 2026, road trips aren't just about the drive, they're about the places along the way. Interest in small towns, historic sites, and longer, blended camping trips show that campers are planning multi-stop journeys to explore more of the country.



55% of Gen Z say they're likely to rent an RV for a trip in 2026.

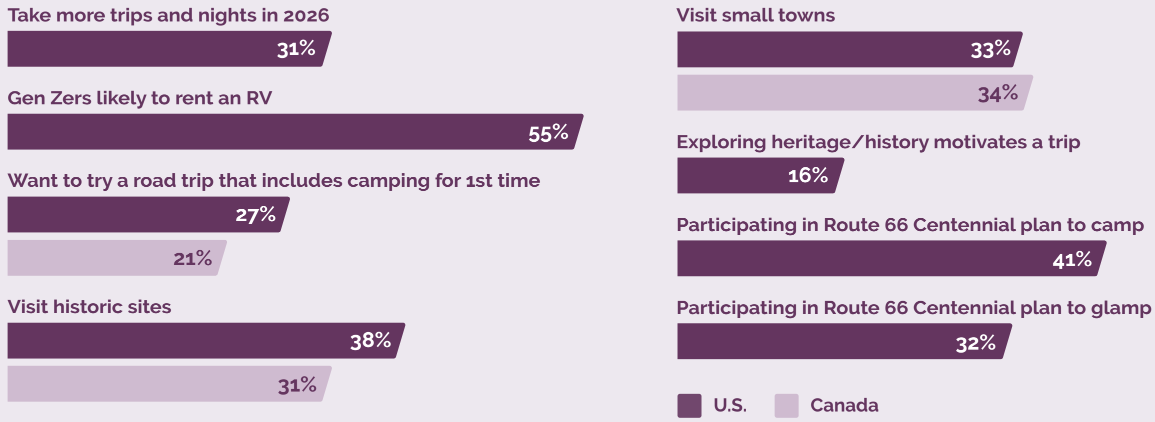
27% (U.S.) and **21%** (Canada) say a road trip that includes camping is a new experience they want to try in 2026.

38% (U.S.) and **31%** (Canada) want to visit historically significant sites.

33% (U.S.) and **34%** (Canada) want to visit small towns.

16% of travelers say exploring their ancestral history motivates booking a trip.

Travel Intentions for 2026



Outdoor Experiences Drive Overnight Stays

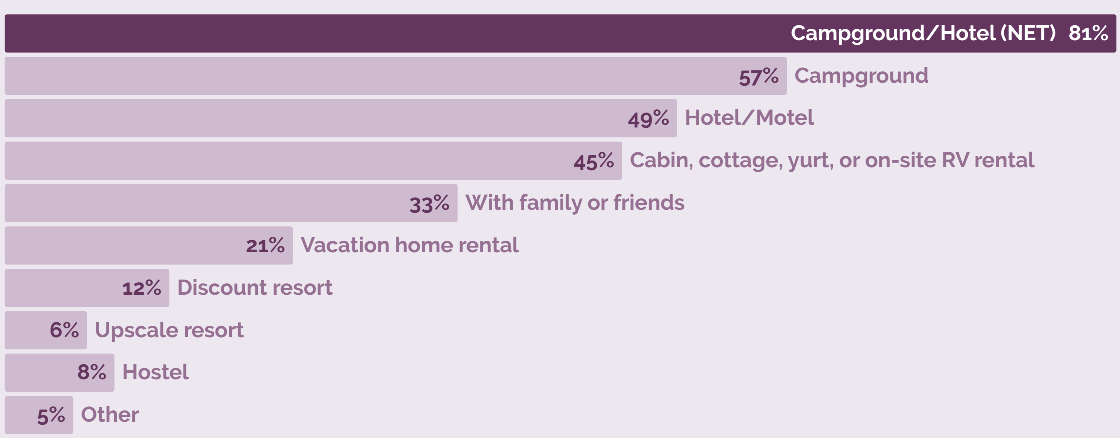
When travelers participate in outdoor recreational activities, they tend to extend those trips into overnight travel with 81% staying at a campground or hotel.

Recreate Responsibly with Leave No Trace

When hiking or trail running, protect trails by staying on established paths; running or hiking through puddles rather than around them prevents trail widening—preventing soil erosion and keeping plants healthy.

LEAVE NO TRACE

Location of Overnight Stays for Outdoor Recreation



Top 3 Outdoor Activities

54%

water-based activities like paddleboarding, swimming, fishing

49%

hiking or trail running

27%

Canoeing or kayaking

2026 Major Events

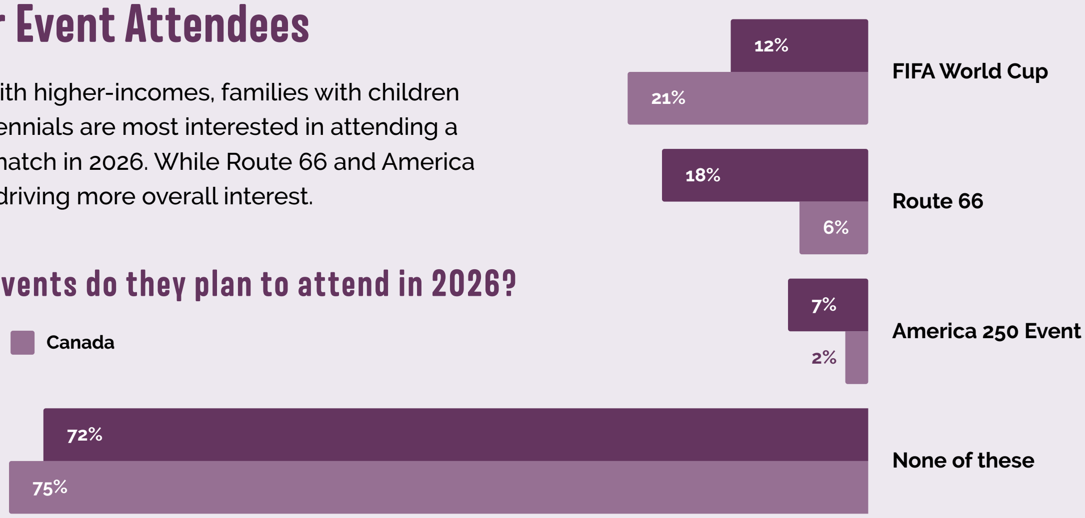
2026 will be an exciting year for travel and hospitality in North America. The U.S., Canada, and Mexico will host international soccer competitions in 16 cities, celebrating the largest professional soccer tournament in the world, the beloved Route 66 is celebrating its centennial, and America turns 250 years old. Destinations are gearing up for the excitement, with expectations that thousands of visitors will embark on major event travel.

Major Event Attendees

Those with higher-incomes, families with children and Millennials are most interested in attending a soccer match in 2026. While Route 66 and America 250 are driving more overall interest.

What events do they plan to attend in 2026?

U.S. Canada



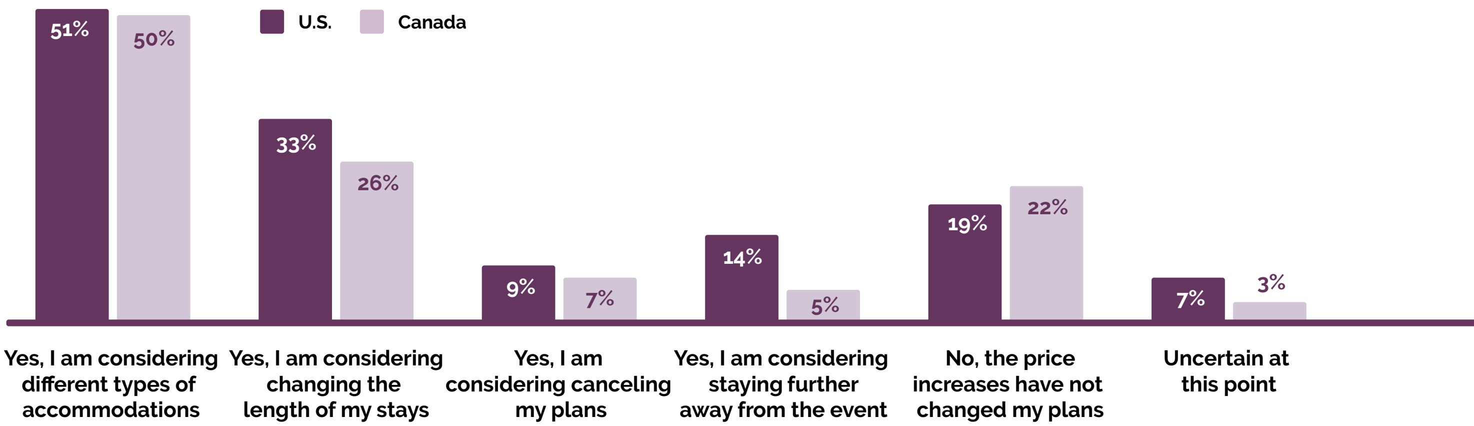
Who Plans to Attend These Events

	FIFA World Cup	Route 66	America 250 Event
Gen Z	26%	19%	25%
Millennials	45%	34%	42%
Gen X	20%	27%	21%
Boomers	9%	20%	13%
Under $50,000	21%	38%	22%
$50,000 to $75,000	22%	25%	16%
$75,000 to $100,000	18%	15%	14%
$100,000+	39%	23%	48%
Children in Household	67%	57%	62%
White	51%	68%	67%
Hispanic/Latino	21%	13%	13%
Black	10%	9%	7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	14%	4%	7%
Other	5%	6%	7%
Urban	60%	39%	48%
Suburban	34%	40%	35%
Rural	5%	21%	16%

Event Planning & Restraints

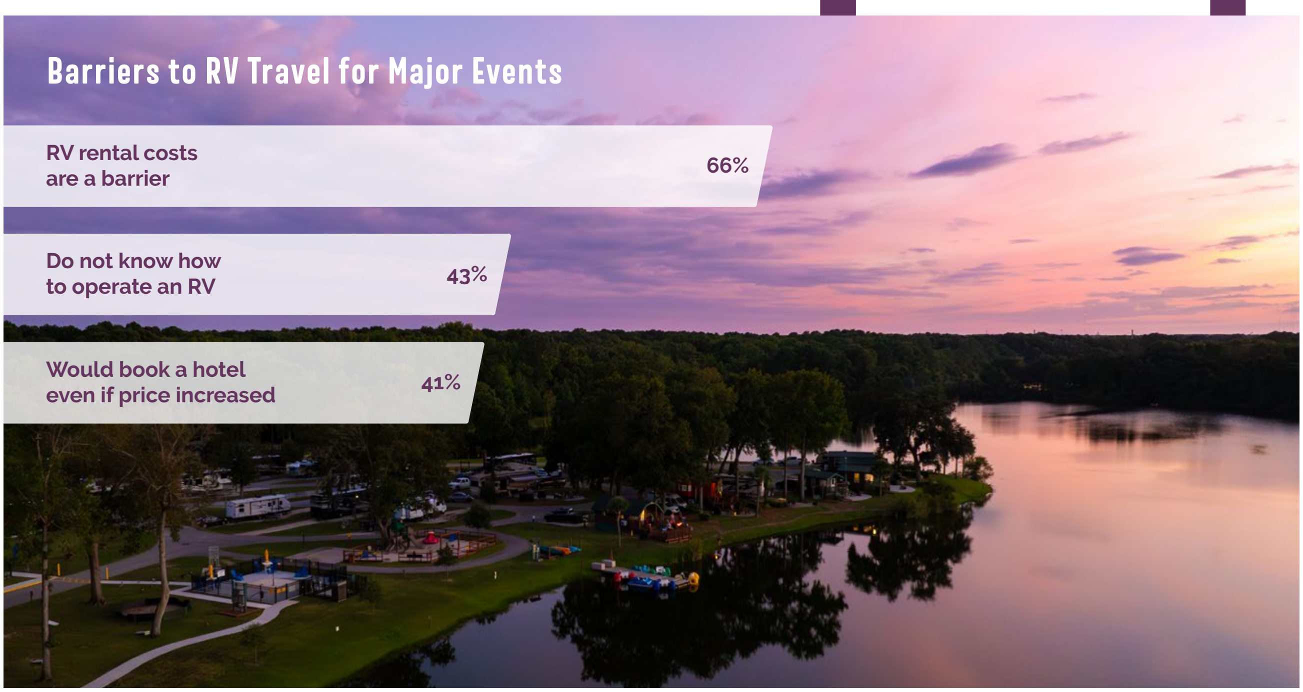
Excitement will continue to grow for these events as more and more people become aware and begin planning their 2026 trips. Many interested travelers are concerned about high hotel prices and three-fourths of prospective event goers would consider other accommodation options like a campground or glamping resort. Others would stay farther away from the event, shorten their length of stay due to costs, or cancel their plans entirely if prices were too high.

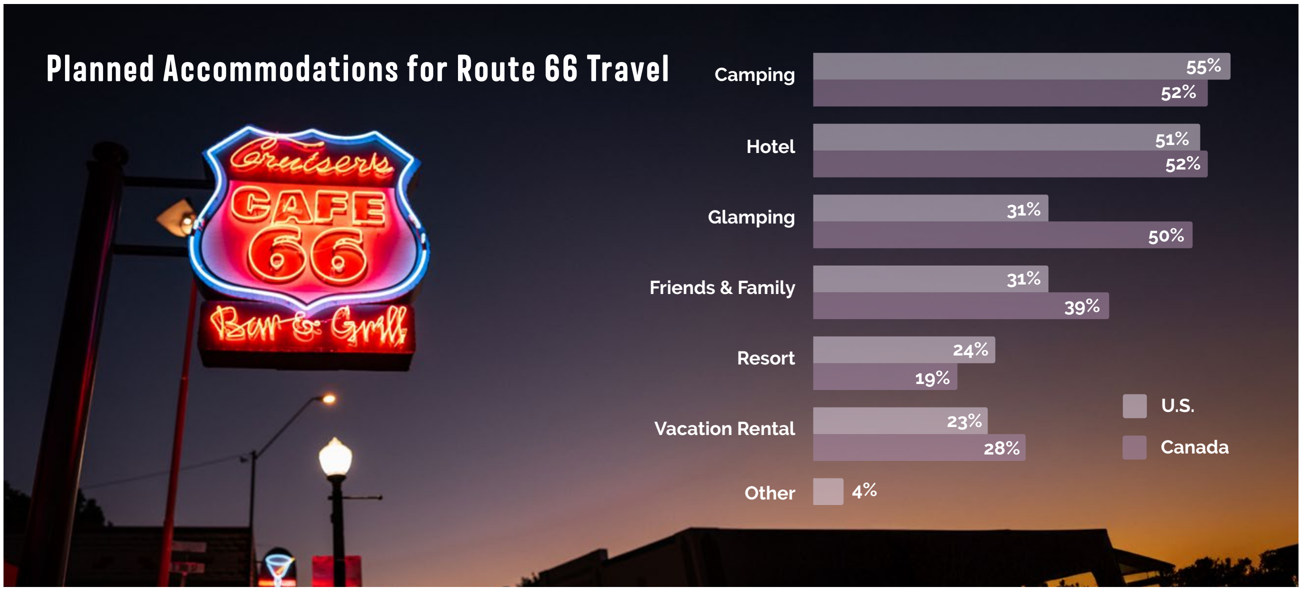
Event Planning



For new campers or non-RV households, the option to camp is often not initially considered when planning a major event trip. Others cite the cost to rent an RV or their lack of knowledge on how to use an RV as major barriers.

30% of event goers will travel 200+ miles for their trip.





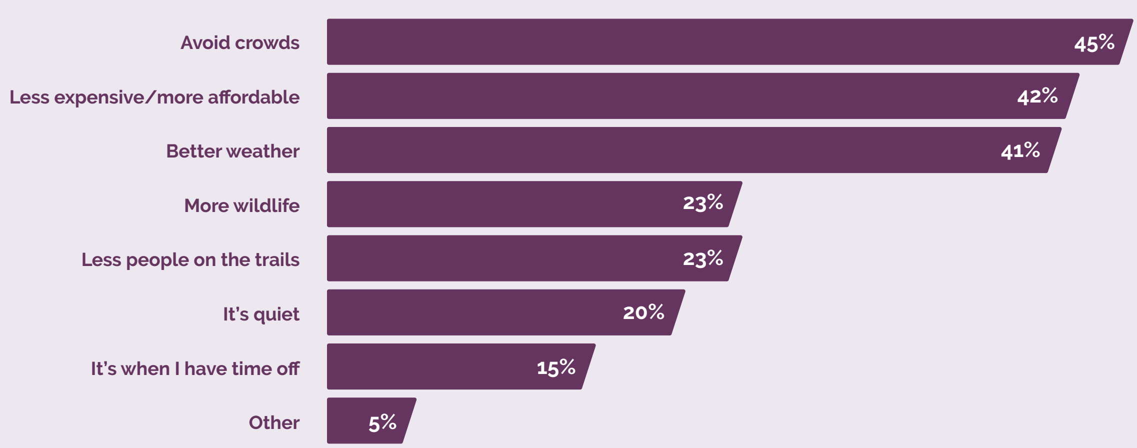
Route 66 participants are most interested in camping, with over half planning to camp while experiencing the iconic drive.

An Expanded Season

The camping season is expanding, with more travelers extending trips into the fall and starting earlier in the spring. Favorable weather, fewer crowds, and better affordability are the primary reasons campers are booking outside peak summer months. In fact, one in five campers say shoulder season is the best time of year to camp.

76% of Boomers camp in the shoulder seasons to avoid crowds.

Reasons for Camping in the Off-Season



Top Reasons Why Campers Avoid Summer Camping

35% Overcrowded Campgrounds

30% Too Expensive

29% Shoulder-Season is More Fun

29% Harder to Find a Campsite

When They Plan to Camp

June, July and August	43%
September and October	26%
April and May	25%
November and December	3%
January, February and March	3%

Recreate Responsibly with Leave No Trace

In the spring and fall, wildlife is extra sensitive. Always observe animals from a distance to prevent unnecessary stress during these critical times. Respecting their space and avoiding feeding helps ensure their survival and keeps wildlife wild.

LEAVE NO TRACE

Recreate Responsibly with Leave No Trace

FIRE SAFETY & STEWARDSHIP

Nearly 85% of wildfires in the United States are

are caused by humans. Many human-caused fires start with unattended campfires. Other causes include burning debris, equipment use and malfunctions, and negligently discarded cigarettes.

Follow the Leave No Trace Principle 5—"Minimize Campfire Impacts," by keeping campfires small and only using dead, "downed," or campground designated wood.

To properly extinguish a campfire, burn all wood to white ash and soak it thoroughly with water until it's cool to the touch. This prevents wildfires and ensures that your campsite remains pristine for others to enjoy.

Learn more about the 7 Principles of Leave No Trace to minimize your impact when visiting the outdoors.

lnt.org/why/7-principles/

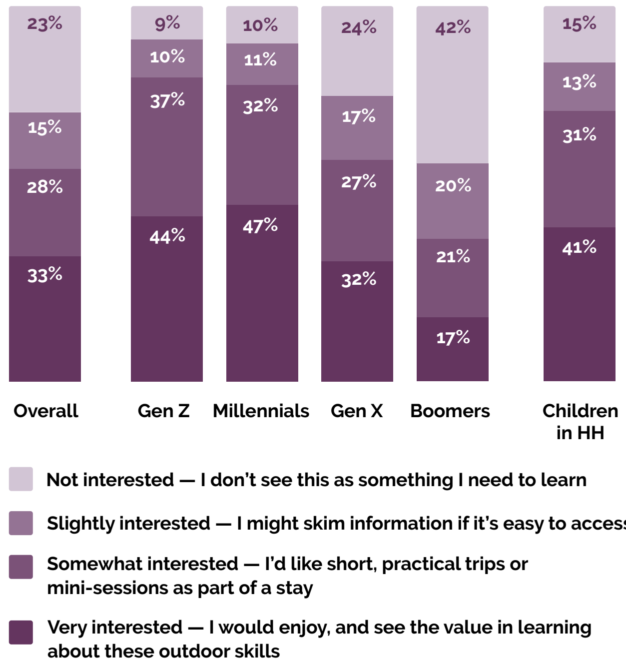
LEAVE NO TRACE

 2000-2017 data based on Wildland Fire Management Information (WFMI) and U.S. Forest Service Research Data Archive

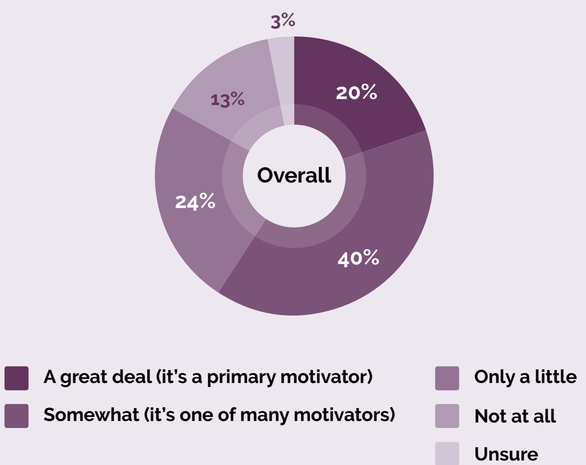
Emerging Camping Activities: Skillbuilding & Games

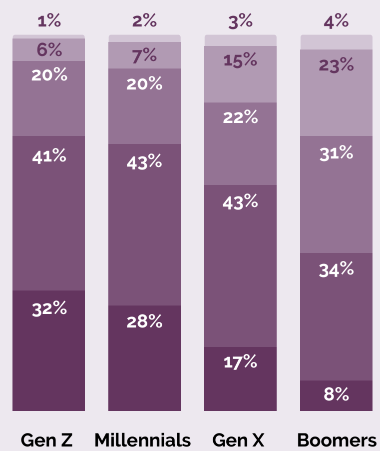
Interest in learning outdoor preparedness skills, commonly referred to as "bushcraft," is prevalent among both young and new campers. Sixty-one percent of all campers express interest in learning bushcraft skills.

Interest in Learning Bushcraft Skills



Does Participating in Traditional Games Motivate More Camping?



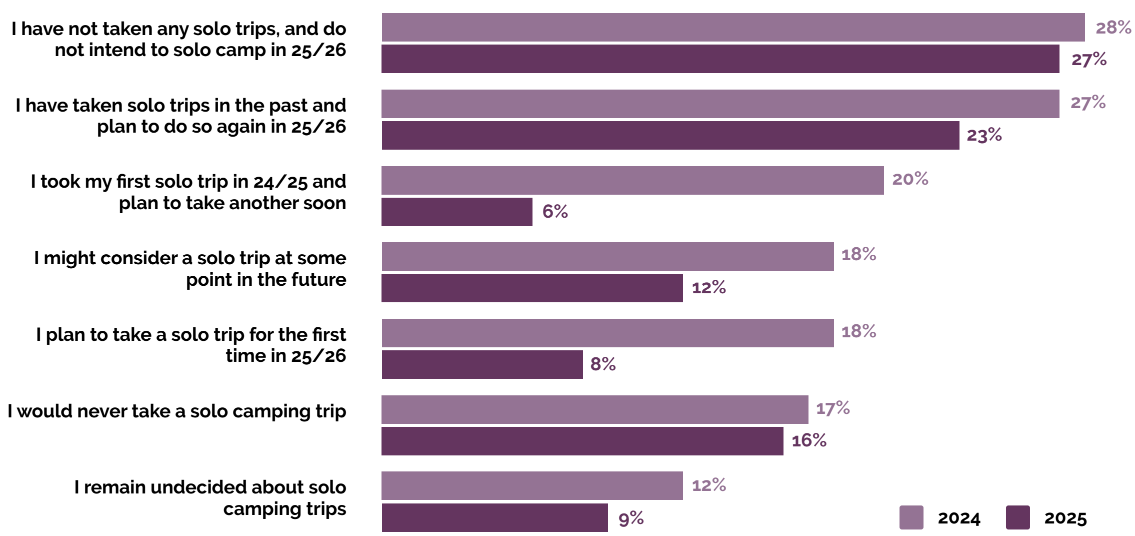


Participating in traditional games, like board or card games, motivates about six-in-ten campers overall, including three-fourths of Gen Zers.

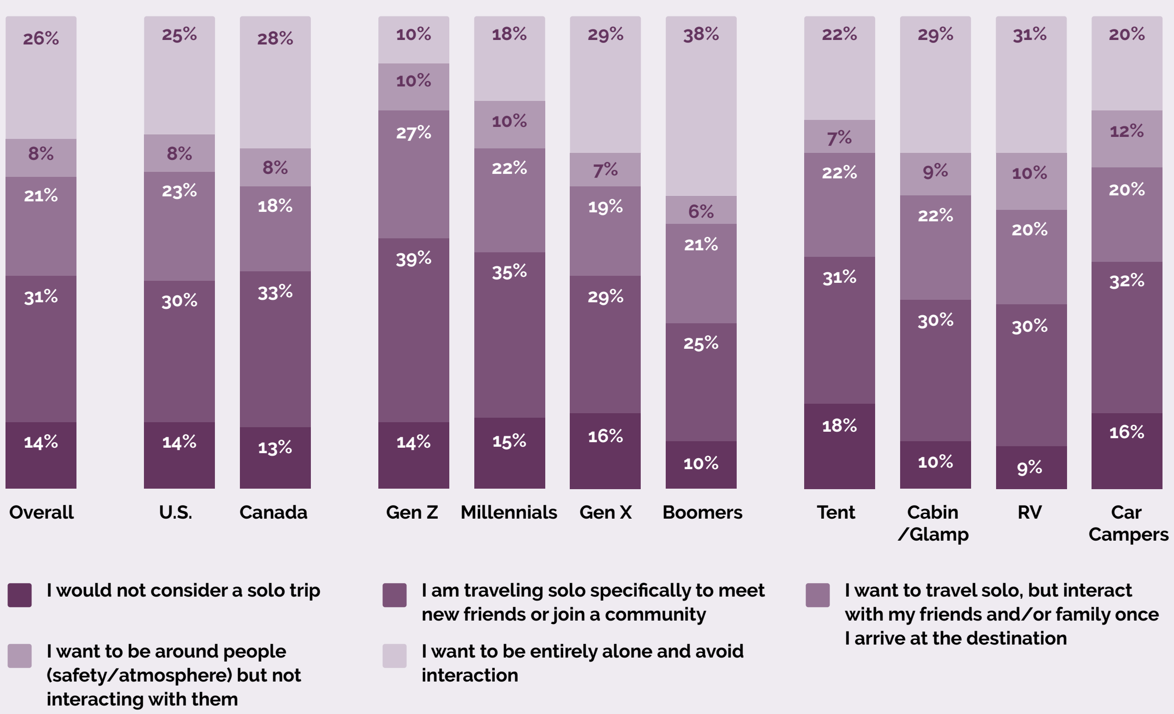
Solo Travel Soars

Solo travel continues to grow in popularity with 20% of campers taking their first solo trip in 2025. Gen Z are most open to solo travel, however they are leaning into solo travel in search of social interactions.

The Outlook for Solo Travel



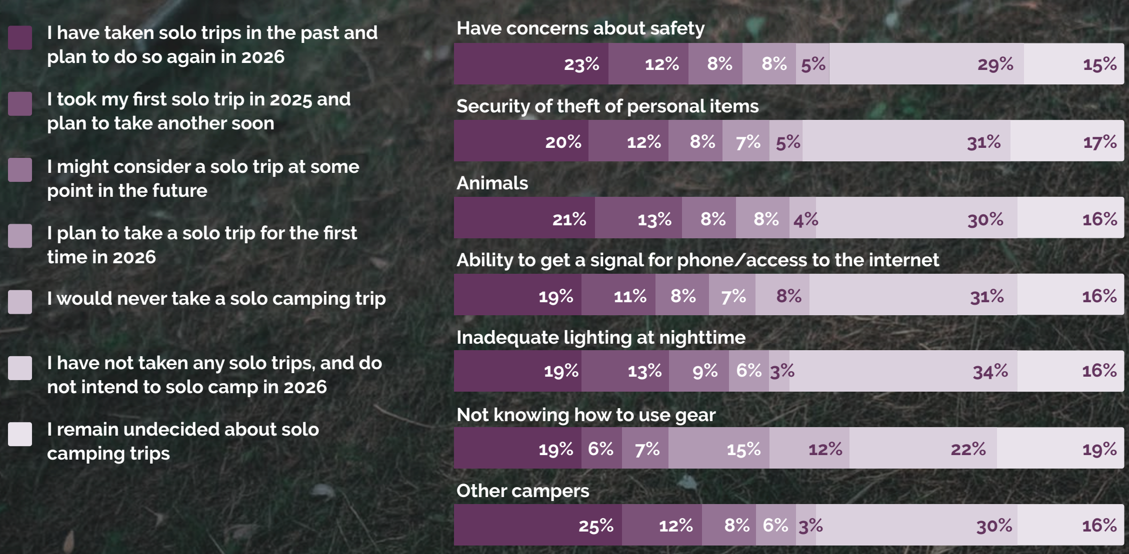
Social Implications of Solo Travel



Safety Concerns for Solo Campers

Those who are least likely to consider solo camping have concerns around infrastructure, such as lighting or cell phone signal. Conversely the groups most likely to solo travel include those whose biggest concern is other people or animals.

Views on Solo Camping by Safety Concerns



Solo travelers seek more than solitude—many solo travelers are looking for interactions with others during their trips. Whether solo traveling with the intention of interacting with friends and family (22%), or selecting locations with other guests in the vicinity (31%), there is a desire for both casual and in-depth connection.

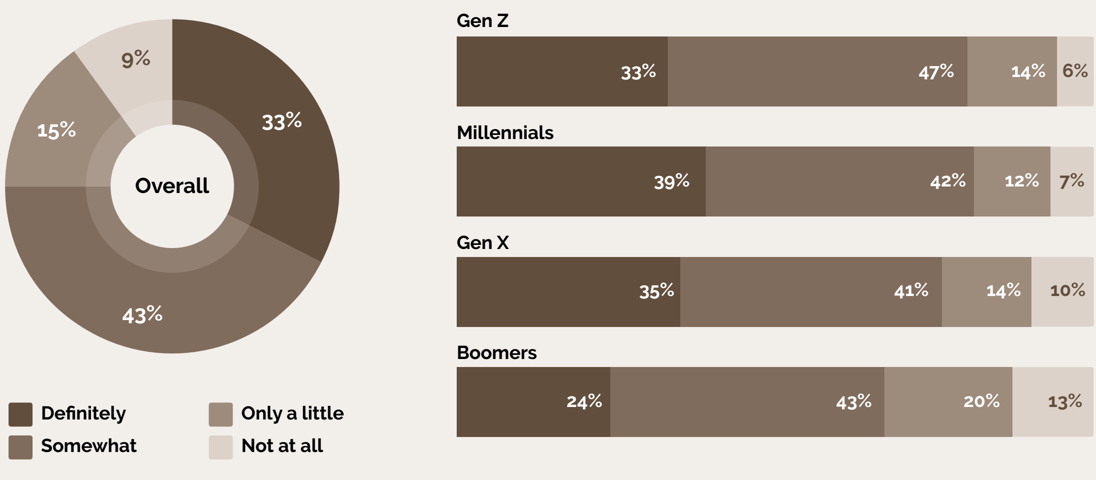
Gen Z represents the segment most likely to seek solo trips, and is also most likely to seek out interactions with others upon arrival (27%) or in the vicinity (39%).

SECTION 6

A COMMUNITY AROUND CAMPING

In an era when connection feels increasingly fragmented, campgrounds are emerging as vital "third places"—environments outside of home and work where people genuinely gather and belong. These spaces offer something special: permission to slow down, to be present with one another, and to build community around simple shared rituals in the outdoors. This report reflects how deeply connection resonates across generations.

Are Campgrounds a Modern "Third Place?"

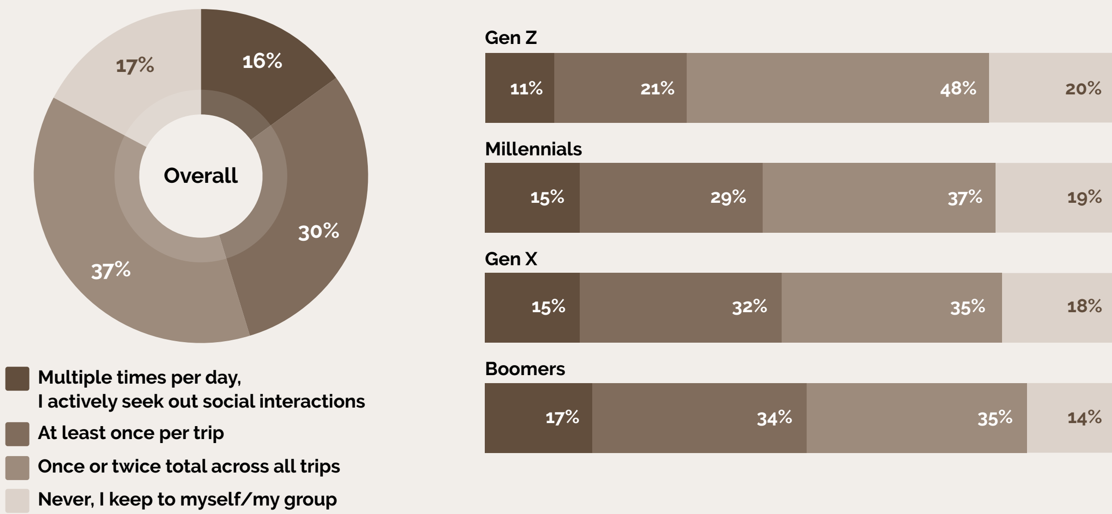


Overall, three-fourths of campers view campgrounds as a place to connect with others outside of home or work, a view most likely shared by Millennial and Gen Z campers.

Meaningful Interactions with Others

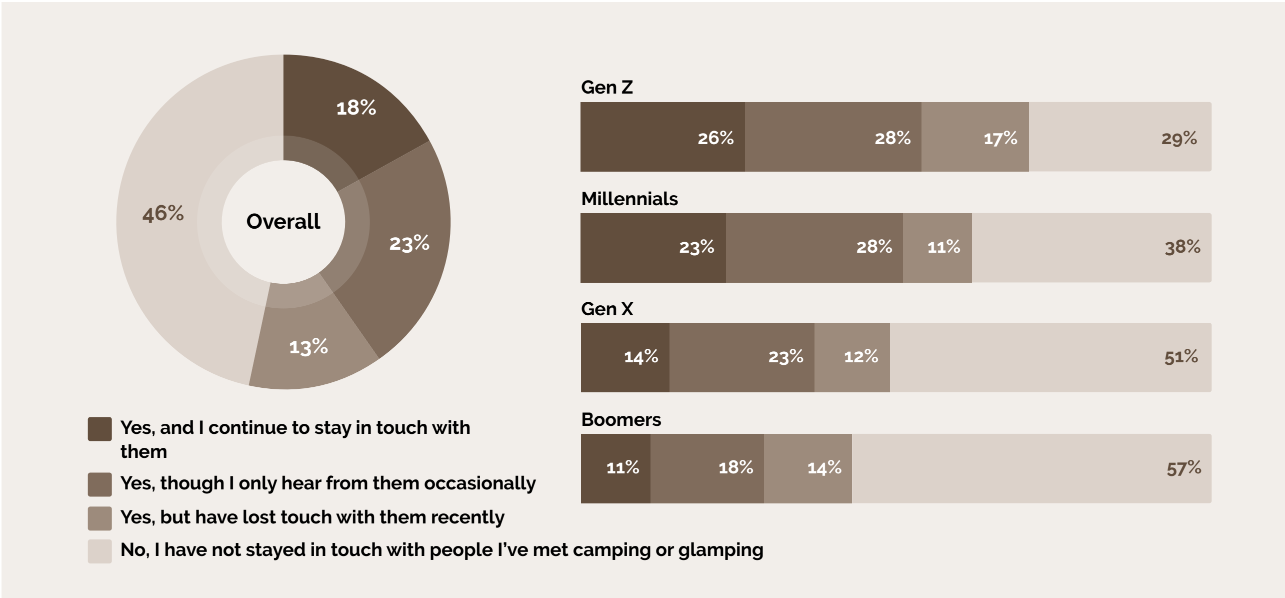
About 45% of campers say that they have at least one meaningful interaction with another guest during their trips, with Gen Z campers least likely to do so and Boomers most likely.

Frequency of Interactions with Other Guests



Staying in Touch

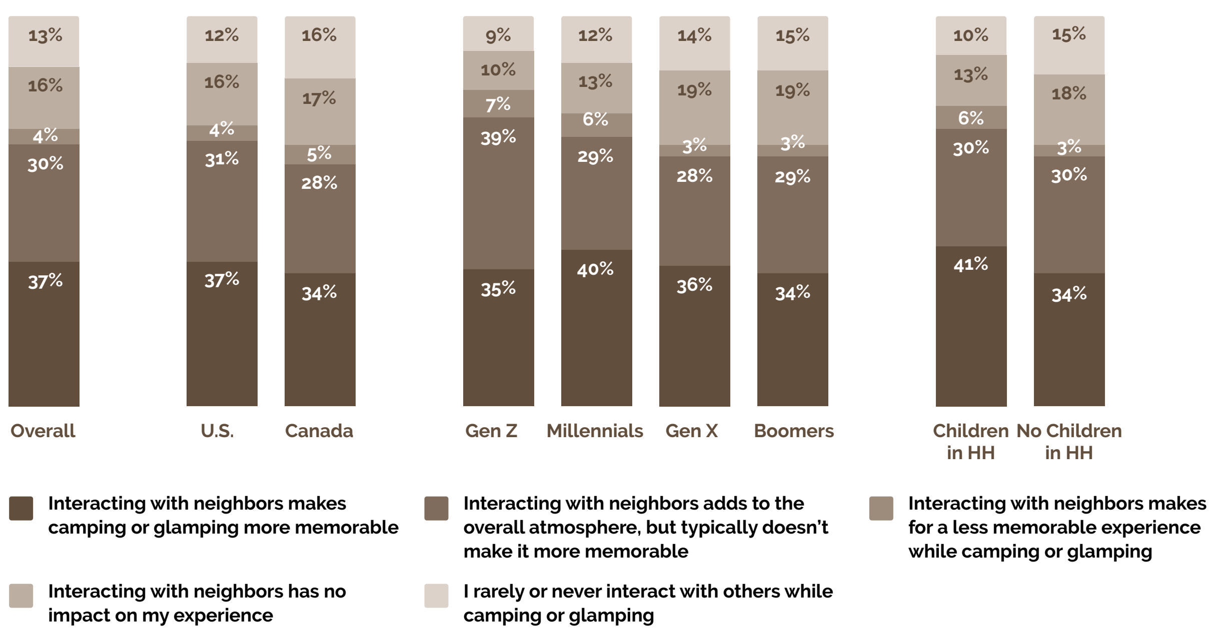
By contrast, Gen Z campers are most likely to develop a stronger bond with other guests, even though they have fewer interactions overall.



Campers agree that cruises are the most social form of travel (40%), followed by camping at a campground (26%), and staying at a glampground or glamping resort (12%)—highlighting the importance of outdoor hospitality plays in social connection.

Interactions with Camping Neighbors

More than one third of all campers say that interacting with neighbors while camping makes the trip more memorable, a result more likely to be mentioned among Millennials.



Creating a Social Connection

Gen Z is most likely to turn a campground meeting into a **long-term bond**, with 43% saying they stay in touch long after the camping trip.

Millennials (40%) are the most likely to say that **interactions with neighbors** make their trips more memorable.

Boomers are the most likely to report frequent interactions with others while camping, with 51% saying they have at least one interaction per trip.

39% of Gen Z say **interacting with neighbors adds to the atmosphere** of the trip, even if it's not what makes the experience memorable.

These findings show that campgrounds are becoming essential spaces where people unplug and reconnect with what matters most.

SECTION 7

WELLNESS IN THE OUTDOORS

Wellness has become a primary driver of camping, a fundamental shift in why people seek out the outdoors. More than just a byproduct of time away, mental restoration is now one of the core reasons people choose to camp. Yet campers are clear about what wellness means to them: it is not found in structured schedules or programmed classes, but in the restorative power of unstructured time outside. They want space to breathe, to move at their own pace, and to recharge organically through simply being in nature.

Camping, in this sense, has become the antidote to an overscheduled life—a place where wellness emerges not from timed activities, but from the freedom to simply be.

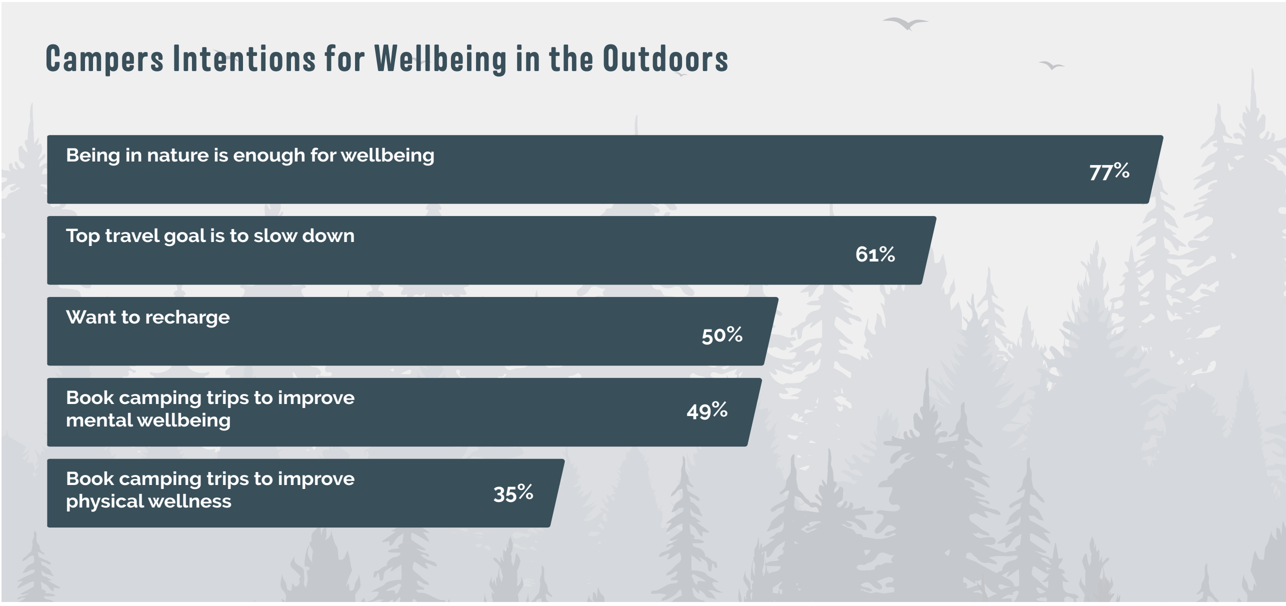
77% of U.S. campers say

just being in nature is enough, without the need for structured programming or added amenities.

61% (U.S.) say

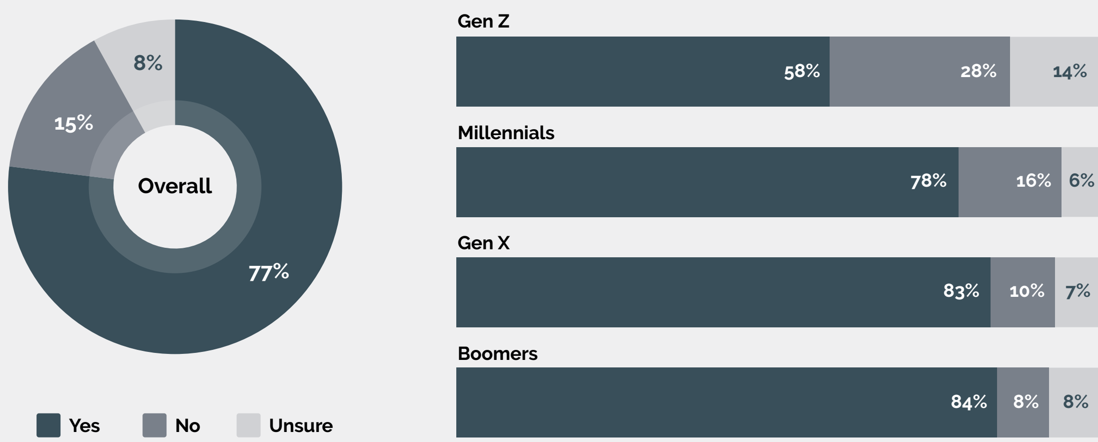
their top travel goal is to slow down and be in the moment.

Campers Intentions for Wellbeing in the Outdoors



Mental wellbeing is the top motivator for camping across generations, with nearly half of all campers stating they book camping trips to improve their mental wellbeing.

Time Outdoors Improves Mental Wellbeing



The top activities tied to mental wellbeing while camping:

52% Walking near water

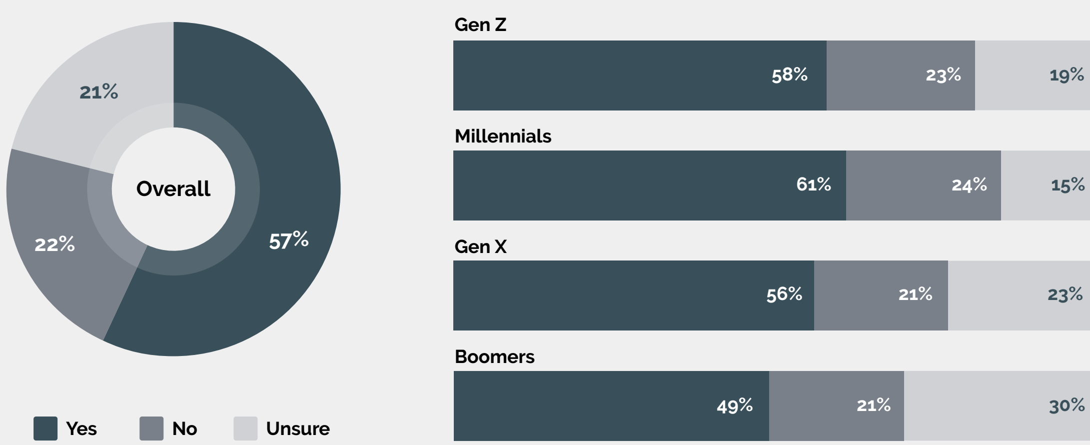
52% Wildlife viewing

50% Night sky viewing

50% of campers want experiences to help them recharge.

Campers are also seeking silence and natural soundscapes as a way to recharge and decompress.

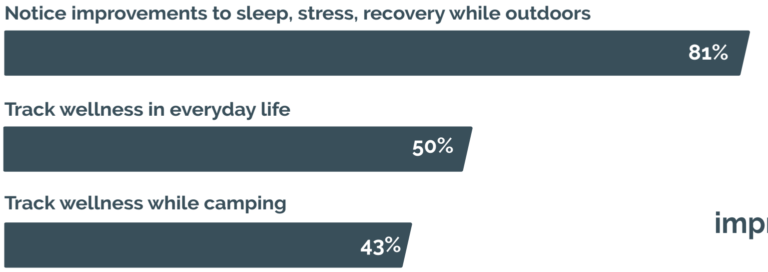
Would Choose a Campground for its Soundscape



BIOHACKING MEETS THE OUTDOORS

As travelers become more focused on tracking sleep, stress, and recovery, camping naturally aligns with the biohacking movement. Campers are already generating the health data that proves the measurable benefits of time outdoors.

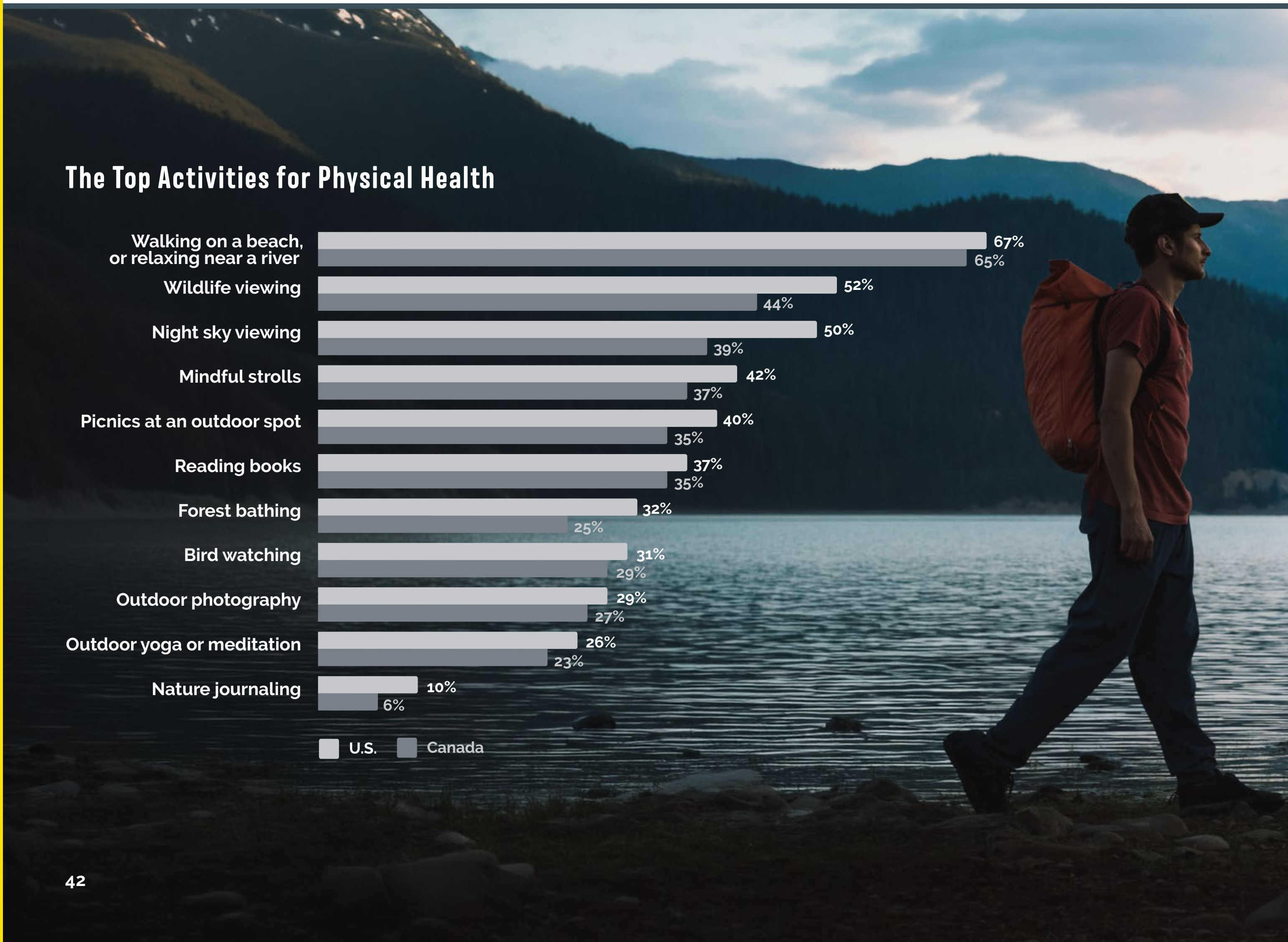
Health Tracking & Benefits in the Outdoors



67% of travelers

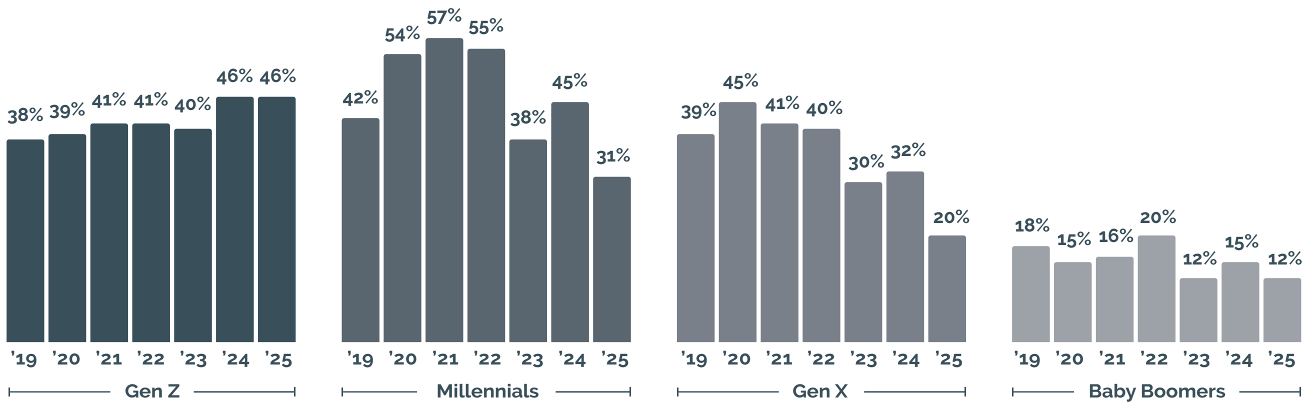
say, if health data shows improvement, they would camp more.

Two out of three campers say noticeable physical health improvements from camping would increase their likelihood of camping more often. The top sought-after activities for physical health include water-based activities and trail experiences.



Campers are taking their desire to recharge and relax seriously. The percentage of campers who work while camping has hit an all-time low since the inception of this report, with only 26% of campers saying they always work while camping.

Percentage of Campers Who Work



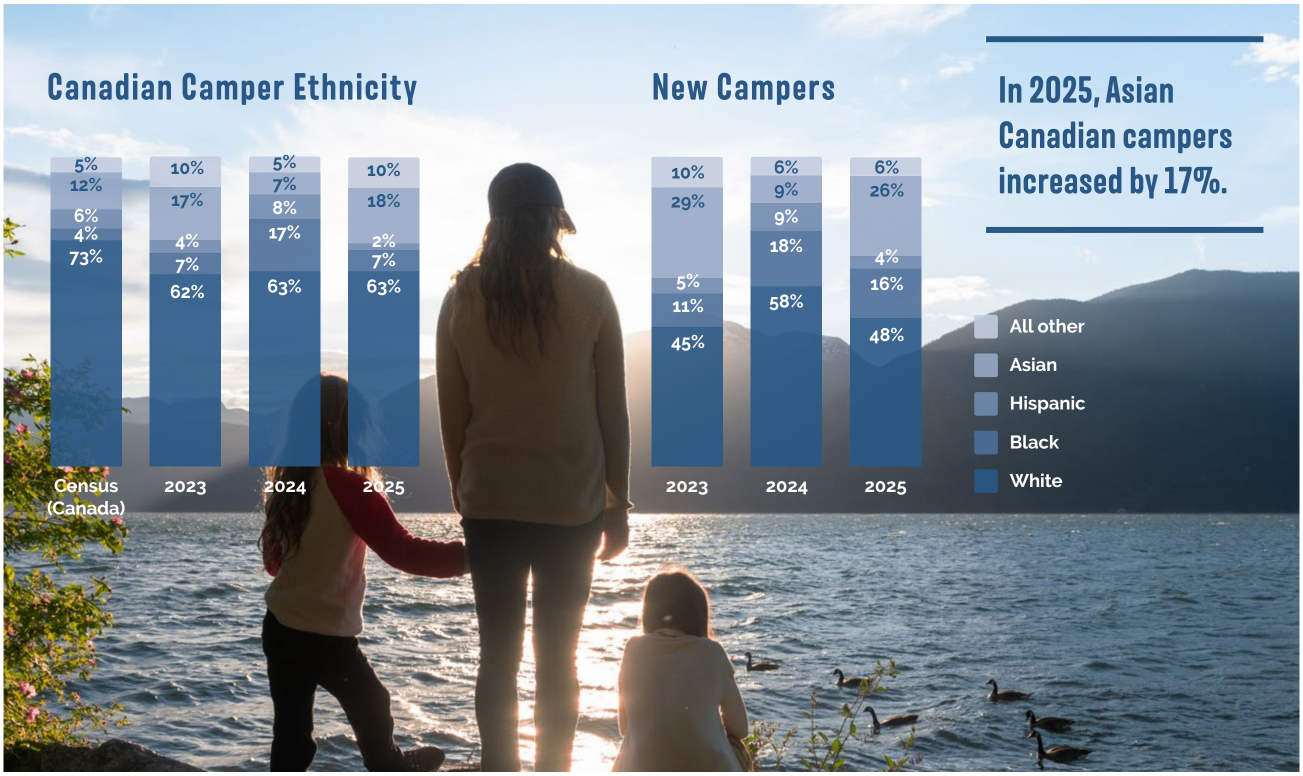
SECTION 8

THE CANADIAN CAMPER

Camping remains deeply rooted in Canadian culture, yet the landscape is shifting. Economic pressures are reshaping how, and where, Canadians camp. Facing steeper financial strains than their U.S. counterparts, Canadian campers are increasingly choosing domestic travel, redirecting trips that once crossed the border to destinations closer to home. This domestic-first orientation reflects both pragmatism and opportunity. Canadian campers are seeking authentic, distinctive experiences that move beyond crowded tourist destinations, gravitating toward spaces that offer genuine respite and discovery.

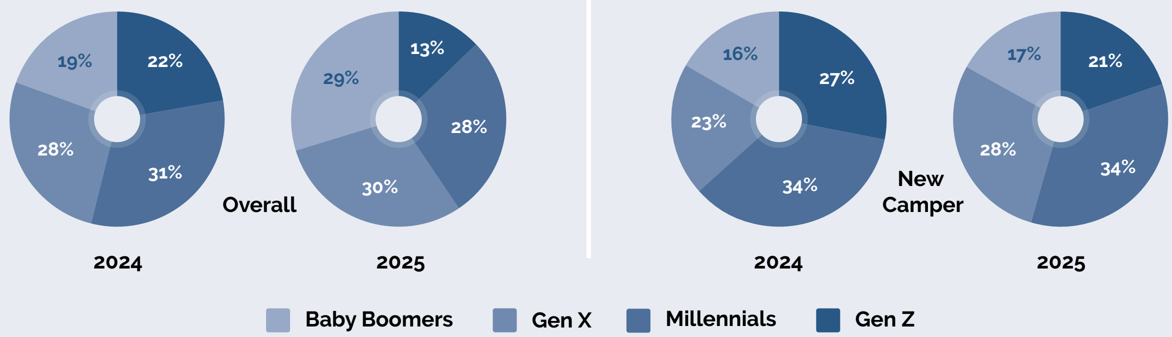
For operators, this moment presents both a challenge and a call: to understand how economic realities are shaping travel decisions while meeting the growing demand for unique, meaningful experiences that justify the investment Canadian families are making in camping.

The profile of Canada's camping community is also evolving. New Canadian campers represent a highly diverse demographic, including one-fourth who are Asian, bringing fresh perspectives and expectations to the outdoor hospitality sector.

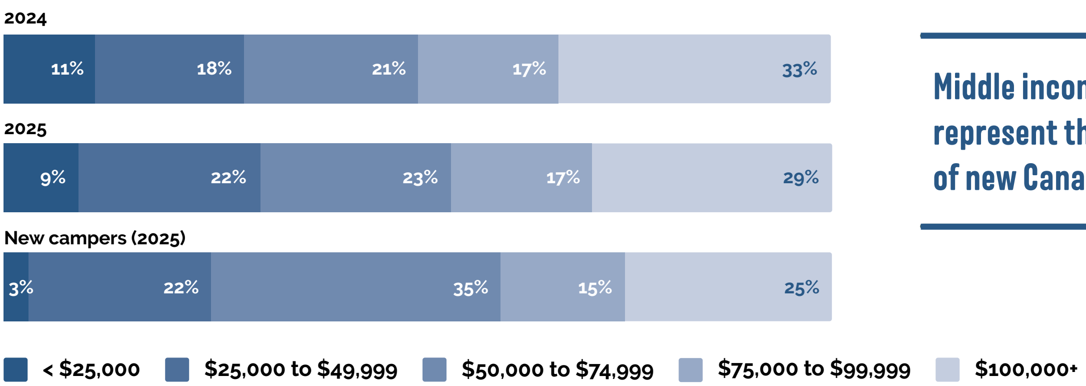


Generational representation shows a drop-off in Gen Z guests both overall and among new campers.

Generational Campers



Canadian Household Income 2024 to 2025

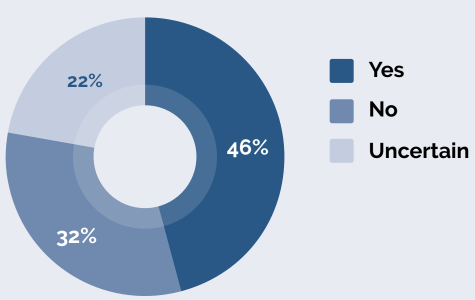


Middle income guests represent the largest block of new Canadian campers.

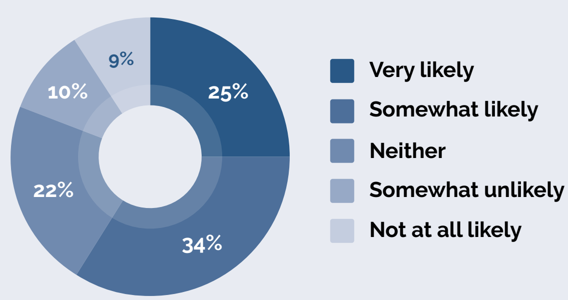
Plans for Domestic Travel

In general, Canadians are planning more domestic travel this year when compared to 2025, Additionally, nearly six-in-ten of Canadian campers say that they are likely to choose a domestic camping trip over a stay at a hotel or resort.

Planning More Domestic Travel This Year Over Last year



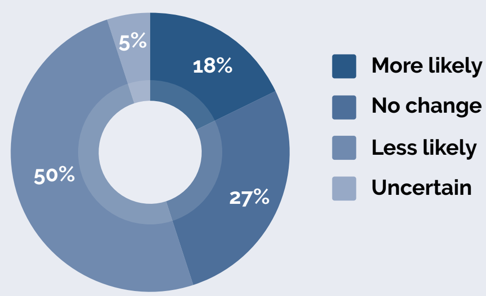
Chose Domestic Camping Trip Over Stay in Hotel/Resort



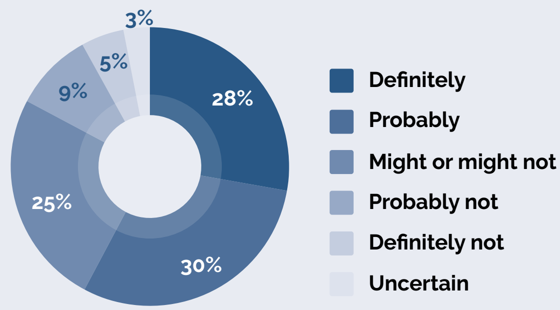
Cross-Border Travel Intentions

When asked about U.S. travel intentions, a majority of Canadian campers (50%) say they are less likely to travel to the U.S. when compared to two years ago. Financial concerns, the desire for domestic experiences and new international regulations are key factors for Canadians when considering traveling to the U.S.

Likely to Travel to U.S. vs. 2 Years Ago



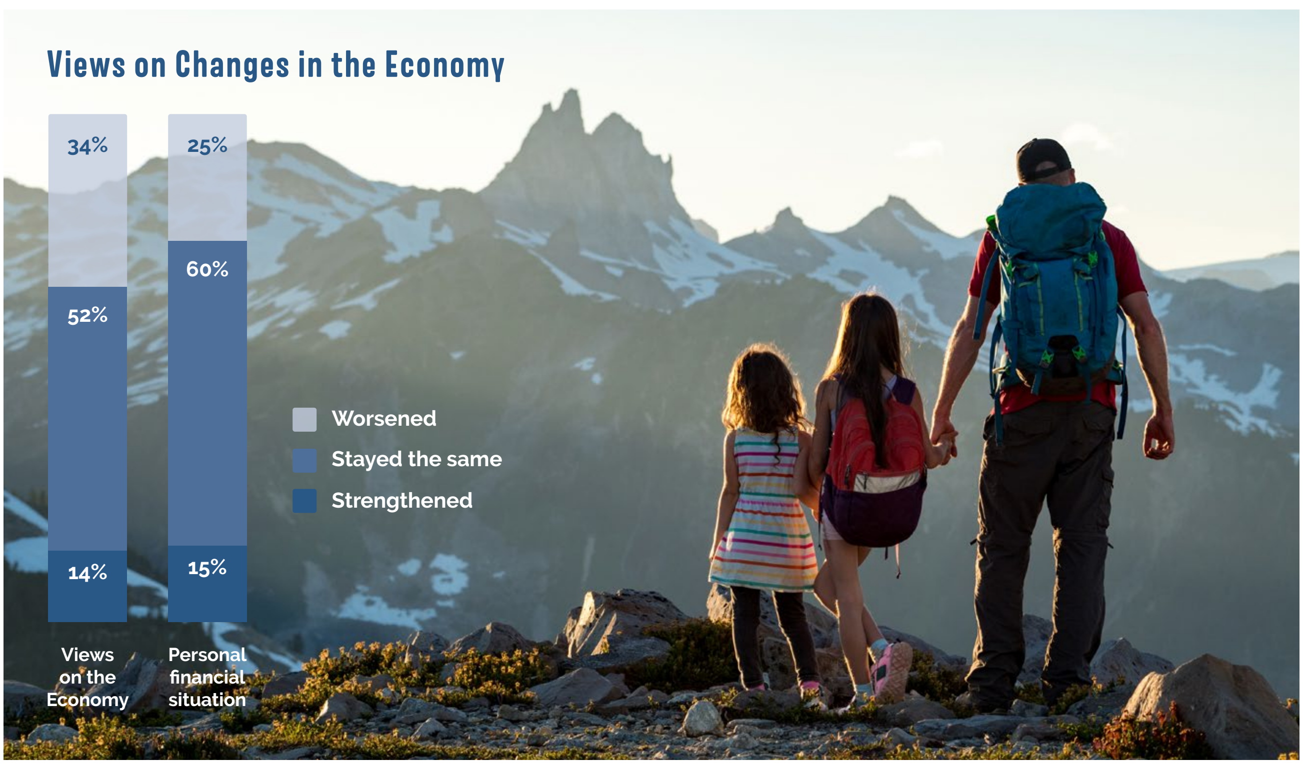
Does Exploring Off-the-Beaten Path Places in Canada Increase Likelihood of Camping



The idea of exploring off-the-beaten path places in Canada increases the likelihood of camping to 58%, suggesting that the desire to avoid the busiest locations has a strong draw to Canadian campers in 2026.

Impact of the Economy

Canadians are more likely to say the economy has stayed the same over the past year, but negative sentiment continues to rise for the overall economy (-20 percentage points from last year) and for their personal finances (-10 percentage points since last year).

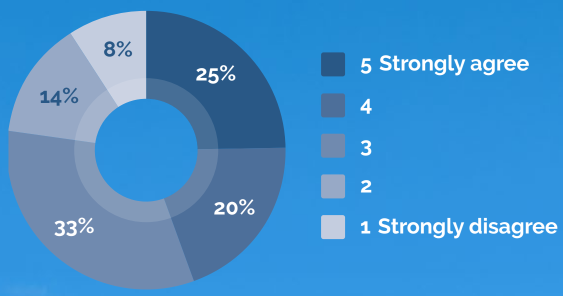


Close to half of Canadian campers (45%) say that economic uncertainty is causing them to delay bookings in 2026. Importantly, only one-fourth of Canadians have confidence in their economy.

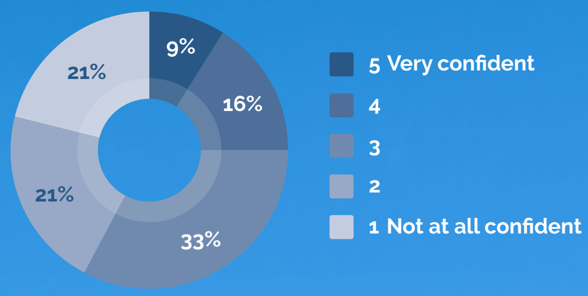
1 in 4 Canadians opted

for international travel over camping in 2025.

Economic Uncertainty is Delaying Bookings



Confidence in the Economy



SECTION 9

TECHNOLOGY IN THE OUTDOORS

Technology and remote work are still shaping camping behavior. Working while camping has declined, but it still remains most common among overlanders (39%) and car campers (35%). This shift is likely influenced in part by an aging camper demographic.

Gen Z remains the most likely to work while camping (46%), though participation is down year-over-year, potentially reflecting a broader return to in-office work. Other generations also show a decline in working while camping as they age. Looking ahead, just 7% of campers say they plan to work more while camping in 2026.

At the same time, the importance of connectivity continues to rise. Nearly half of campers (47%) cite WiFi as very important, despite the decline in reported work activity. New campers are more likely than experienced campers to prioritize connectivity (50% vs. 43%), and among those who do work while camping, 70% consider WiFi very important. As noted in previous editions of this report, access to technology directly influences length of stay. Campers report an average of 5.2 additional nights per year when WiFi is available—down from 6.8 nights in 2024—with RVers seeing the greatest impact at 9.3 additional nights annually.

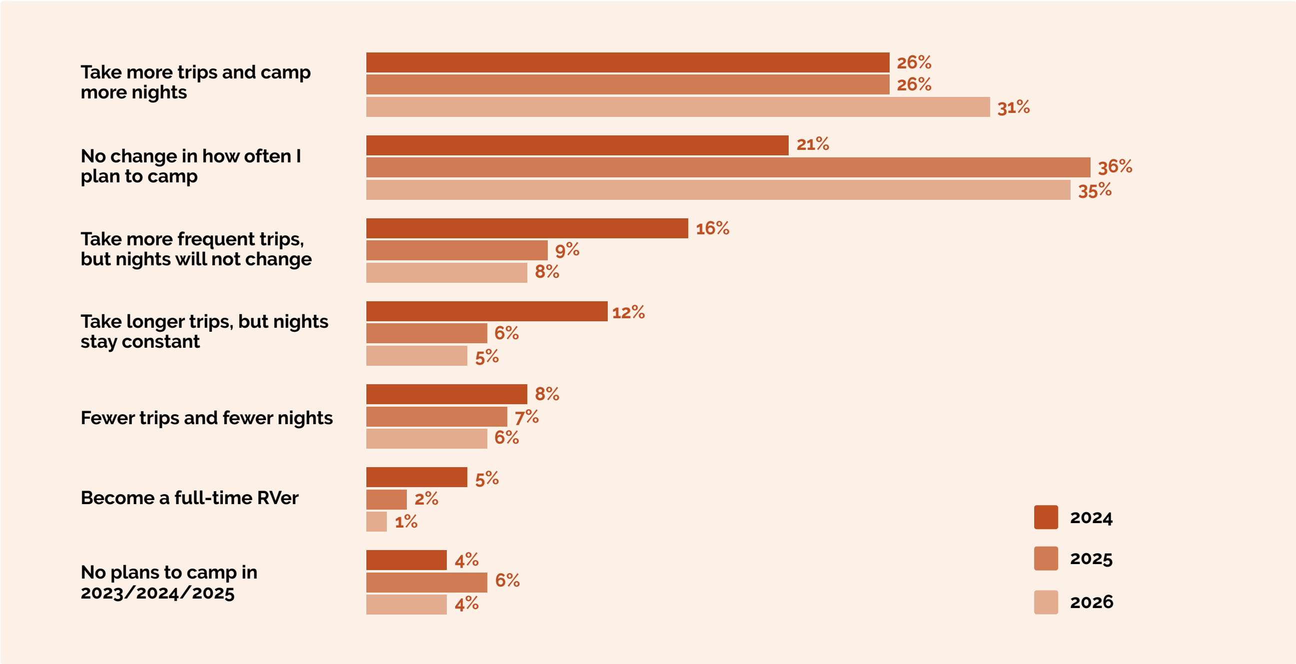
SECTION 10

THE FUTURE OF OUTDOOR HOSPITALITY

Camping in 2026 is entering a new chapter of growth. The sector is seeing genuine momentum across multiple fronts: new campers are arriving with excitement and fresh energy, Boomers and RVers are returning with renewed enthusiasm, and families are recognizing camping as an affordable travel option which creates unique opportunities for connection. Campers plan to take more trips in 2026 than 2025, a trajectory further energized by significant cultural moments like the Route 66 Centennial and America 250 celebrations that position outdoor travel as both nostalgic and forward-looking.

As this report demonstrates, camping's growth in 2026 is fueled by something deeper than travel trends. Camping has become essential to how people prioritize wellbeing, foster genuine connection, and reclaim time for what matters most. In a world of constant demands, campers are choosing outdoor hospitality as a reset—a space to recharge and reimagine how they want to live. For operators, this moment represents far more than a business opportunity. It's an invitation to recognize that campgrounds serve a vital role in personal restoration, family bonding, and building community.

2026 Camping or Glamping Plans

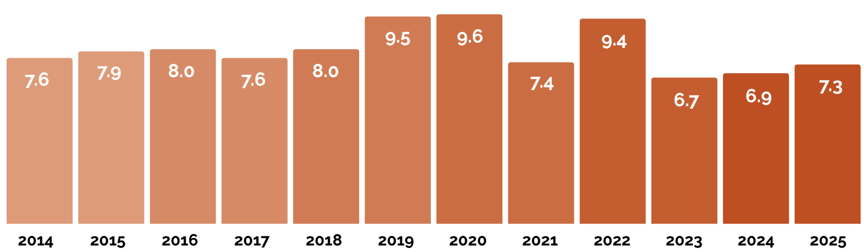


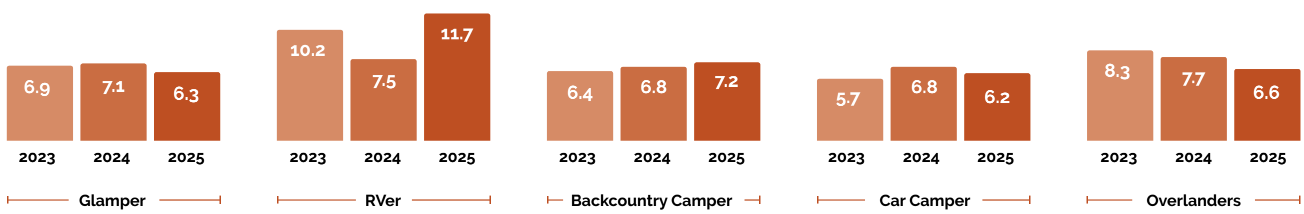
The outdoor hospitality sector has navigated real challenges: economic pressures, shifting travel patterns, and the need to remain relevant across generations. But the through-line is clear: the desire to connect with nature, to slow down, and to build lasting memories remains not just resilient, but central to how people define meaningful experiences.

For operators who understand and serve these evolving needs, the outlook is distinctly positive. Camping is not just surviving—it is becoming essential.

Nights spent camping have increased slightly year-over-year, and remained fairly consistent since 2014. The most noticeable increase was driven by RVers, who spent an additional four or more nights camping in 2025.

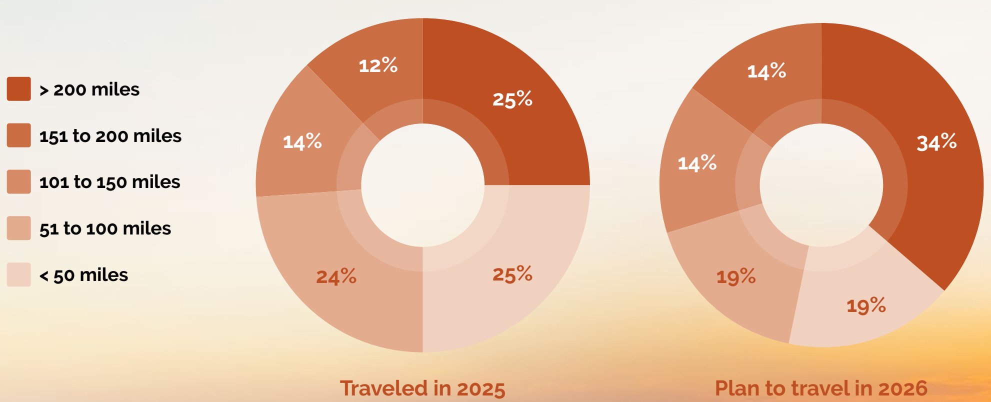
Average Camping Nights in the Past Year



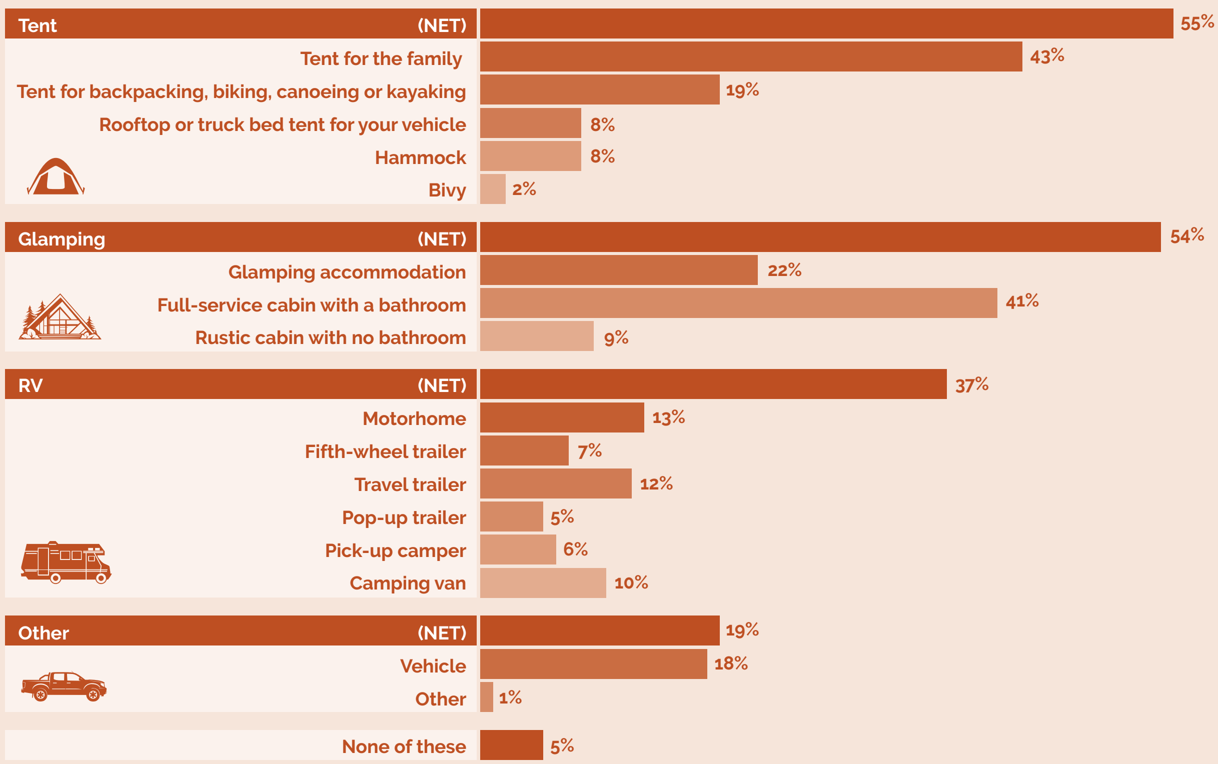


Optimistically, campers say they plan to travel much longer distances in 2026.

Longer Distances in 2026



Ways Campers Plan to Camp in 2026



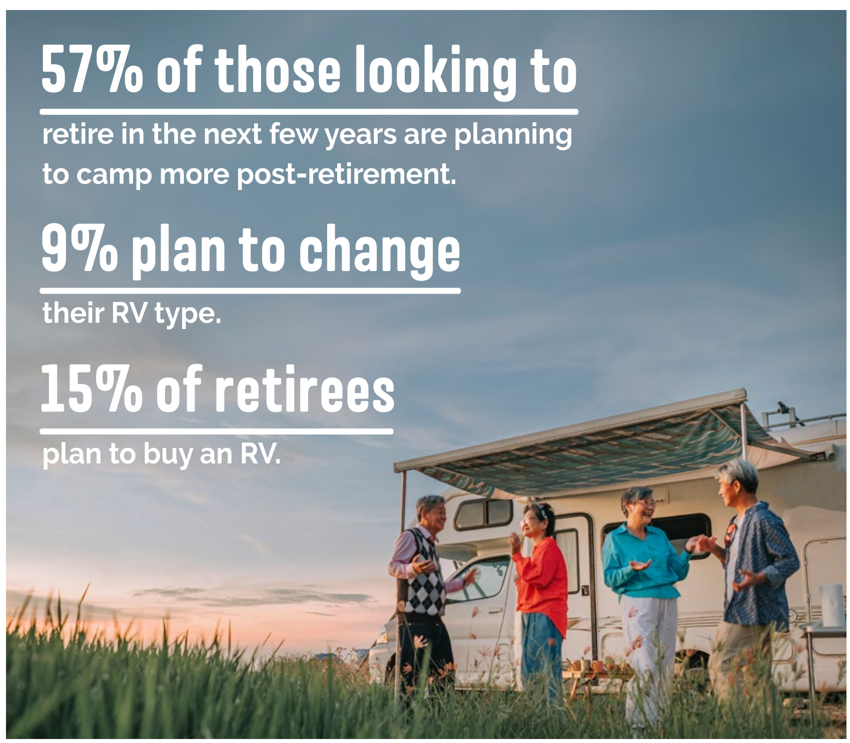
For 2026, campers are split in their likelihood to try out a tent or glamping accommodation.

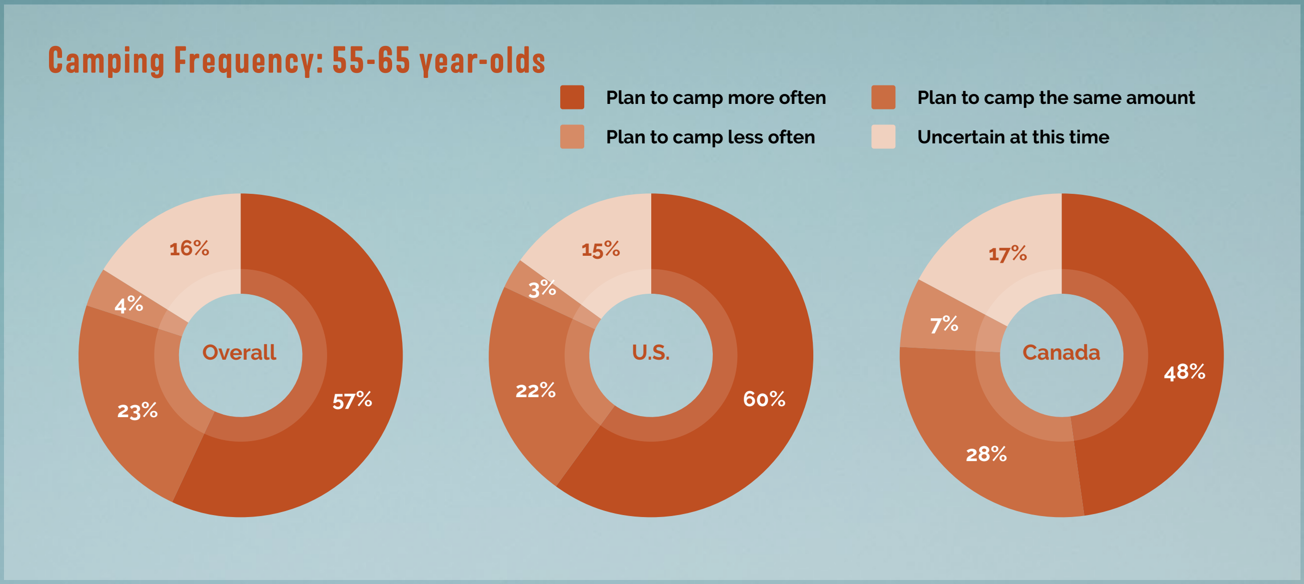
More Time for Nature Later in Life

The reemergence of the Boomer generation is supporting the stability of the industry, however excitement is building within Gen X as they approach retirement years.

Within the near-retirement segment—those 55-65 years-old:

- 50% plan to retire within five years and 30% are already retired.
- 57% plan to camp more in retirement; very few (4%) plan to camp less.
- 15% plan to buy their first RV.





Future Retirement Plans

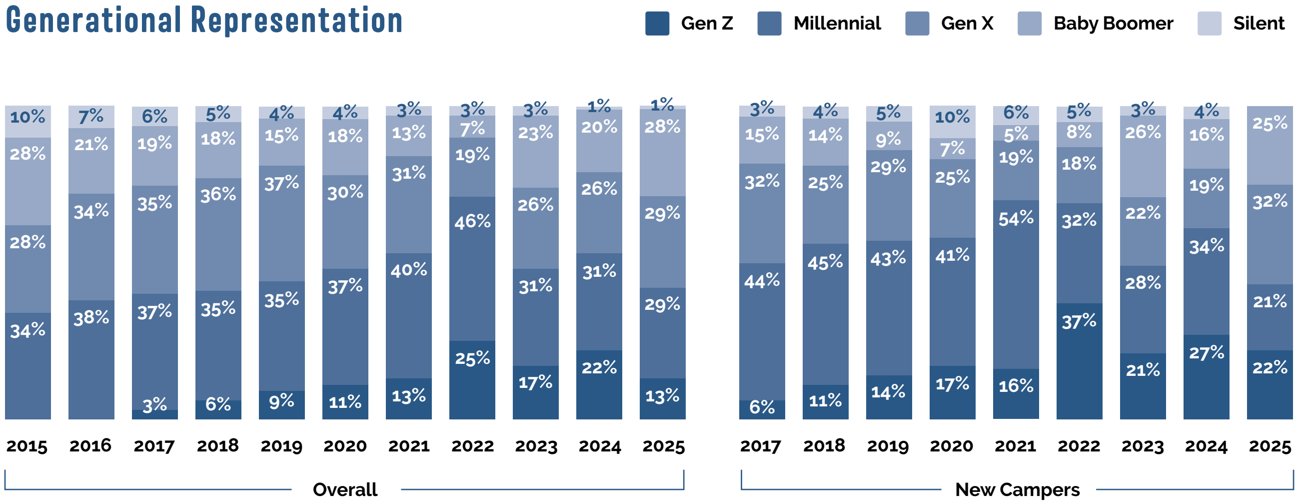
A sense of controlling their own schedule and having the freedom to choose where to go and when is what the largest bloc of near-term retirees mention as what they're looking forward to most in retirement.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Camper Demographics

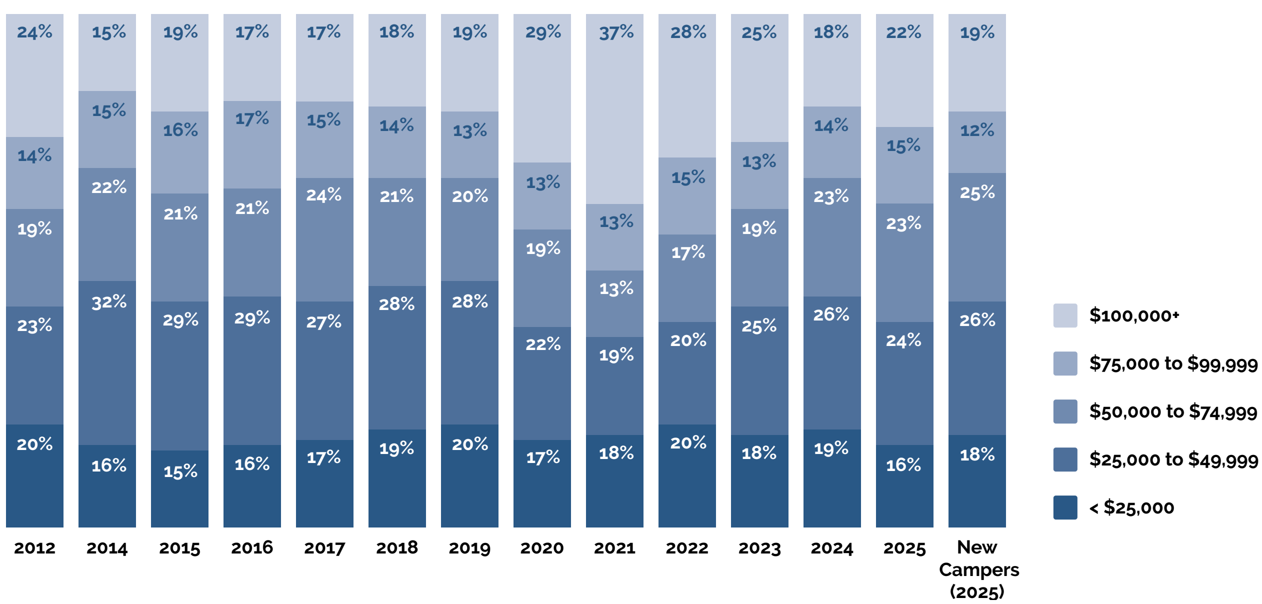
The percentage of Gen Z campers declined in 2025, a result that has been consistent with previous research showing that Gen Z campers were less likely to continue camping this past year. However, there is a solid set of Gen Zers who went camping for the first time in 2025.

Generational Representation



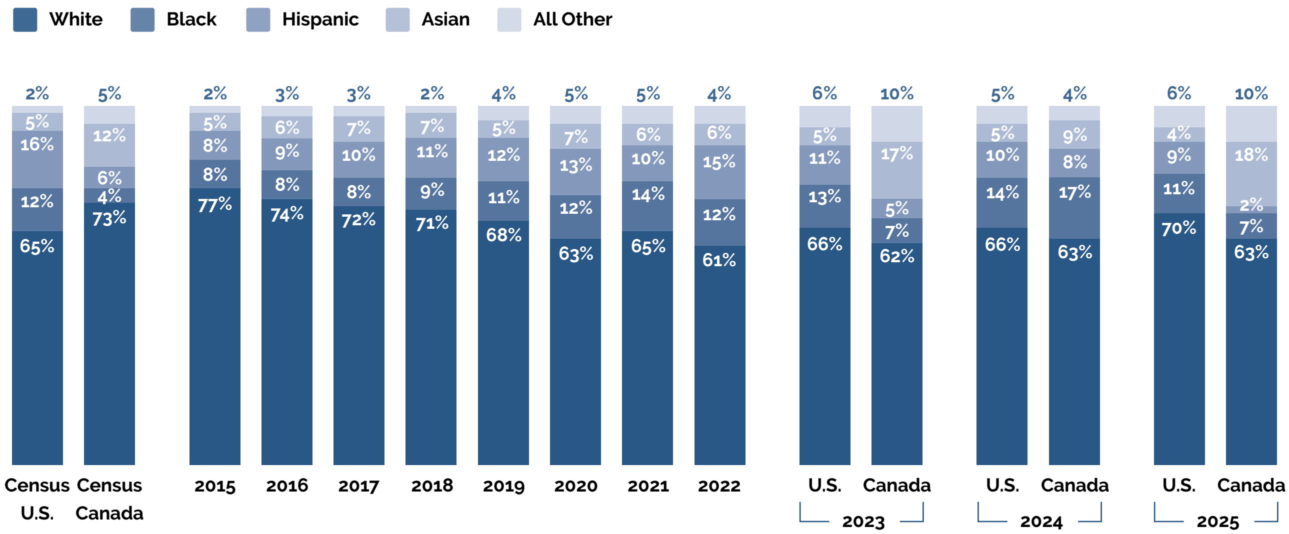
Household Income 2012 to 2025

Household income has decreased over the last five years, but there remains a solid set of middle income participants.



Household Ethnicity 2014 to 2025

In 2025, the diversity among campers declined to its lowest level since 2018, a result that is being driven by the rate of attrition among the younger, more diverse set of campers.



Incidence of Physical and Neurodivergent Campers

About one-third of U.S. camper households includes someone with a mobility issue.

METHODOLOGY

Background

This report represents the twelfth annual installment of a detailed report comparing the latest iteration of the Outdoor Hospitality Survey to the previous results. The survey, commissioned by Kampgrounds of America, Inc. (KOA), is designed to provide a detailed accounting of the U.S. and Canadian camping markets. This effort, on an overall basis, will be compared to a benchmark incidence study conducted in 2014 and followed up in each year up to the present.

U.S. and Canadian Household Results

The results of the most recent iteration of the Outdoor Hospitality Report are based on a total of 4,088 surveys completed among a random sample of U.S. (n=2,834) and Canadian (n=1,254) households within the U.S., results are stratified by census region: Northeast (n=704), Midwest (n=711), South (n=710), and West (n=709). Overall, a sample of 2,834 households is associated with a margin of error of +/- 1.82 percentage points, while a sample of n=1,254 Canadian households is associated with a margin of error of +/- 2.83 percentage points. Other surveys and sources of information include the KOA Quarterly Research Reports, November, 2025 and February 2026, sponsored by KOA. All surveys were completed online via an outbound solicitation sent to a randomly selected cross-section of U.S. and Canadian households. In order to calculate overall incidence, the respondent sample was statistically balanced to ensure that the results are in line with overall population figures for age, gender identity, and ethnicity. Some results may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

For questions regarding usage, please email **newsroom@koa.net.**

GLOSSARY

Research Terms

Baby Boomer – Born 1946–1964

Camping – For the purposes of this study, camping is defined as "any occasion when you spent at least one night outside of your primary residence and stayed in accommodations such as a tent, trailer, RV, vehicle or cabin/cottage at a campground."

Dispersed Camping – The term used for camping anywhere in the National Forest outside of a designated campground. Dispersed camping means no services such as trash removal, and little or no facilities which may or may not include tables and firepits.

Generation X (Gen X) – Born 1965–1980

Generation Z (Gen Z) – Born 1997–2012

Glamping – Defined as staying in unique accommodations with enhanced services and amenities.

Incidence – For camping incidence, this figure is calculated by dividing the total number of households with at least one person who camps divided by the total number of eligible households.

Millennial – Born 1981–1996

Overlanding – An "overlanding" experience is where you travel in an off-road vehicle, taking back roads, no services/amenities, you are completely self-sustaining and the purpose is the journey.

Peer-to-Peer RV Rental – A rental that occurs between a private RV owner and a renter. Generally, this is facilitated by a designated marketplace.

Public Land Camping – Staying at a public campground in a national park, state park, municipal campground, national forest campground, national forest land, or BLM land designated wilderness areas.

RV – Includes type A, B, or C motorhomes, travel trailers, fifth-wheels, pick-up campers, pop-up trailers and small van campers.

RVing Experience (used in new camping experiences) – Where you travel in an RV from destination to destination.

Silent/Mature – Born prior to 1946

Van Life – Defined as a form of adventure tourism that involves a van that is livable and self-sustained, used to access remote areas to recreate in.

Types of RVs

Fifth-Wheel Trailer – The fifth-wheel travel trailer can have the same amenities as the conventional travel trailer, but is constructed with a raised forward section that provides a spacious bi-level floor plan. These models are designed to be towed by a pick-up truck equipped with a device known as a fifth-wheel hitch.

Motorhome – Motorized RVs are vehicles designed as temporary living quarters for recreational camping, travel, or seasonal use that are built on a motorized chassis.

Type A Motorhome

Type B Motorhome

Type C Motorhome

Pick-up Camper/Truck Camper – The truck camper is a portable unit designed to be loaded onto, or affixed to, the bed or chassis of a pickup truck. The slide-in units are easily loaded and unloaded from the bed of the truck, freeing the truck's bumper to tow boats, ATVs and other trailers.

Pop-up Trailer – Also known as pop-ups and tent trailers, folding camping trailers have canvas sides that extend to reveal queen size beds. The folding camping trailer stows away for easy, lightweight towing.

Roof Tent – A tent that is designed to easily mount directly to the rack or aftermarket bars on the rooftop of a vehicle.

Small Van Camper – a smaller vehicle that provides both transport and sleeping accommodation.

Travel Trailer – Conventional travel trailers offer a wide range of floor plans, sizes and conveniences.

"Types of RVs" credit: GoRVing.com

KOA.COM