

The Path to Purchase: Uncovering how travelers plan and book online

Key insights: Vacation rental guests



With a complex and multifaceted path to purchase, this research unpacks traveler behaviors along the way, including the main drivers that influence online travel booking decisions.

The Luth Research includes vacation rental traveler data from:

- 700+ survey respondents
- 15,000+ member digital data panel

Vacation rental guests spend nearly 40 days thinking about their trip and almost 45 days planning it, which is longer than the average across all booking types (hotels, flights, etc.). Booking then occurs about 3 months prior to going on a trip, significantly further out than the average.



Inspiration



Research & planning



From purchase to stay

Longer trips and larger group sizes



10.7 days

average trip length

→ versus 8.8 days across all booking types



3.2 people

average group size

→ versus 2.4 people across all booking types



48%

travel with family

→ versus 37% across all booking types



Open to destination inspiration

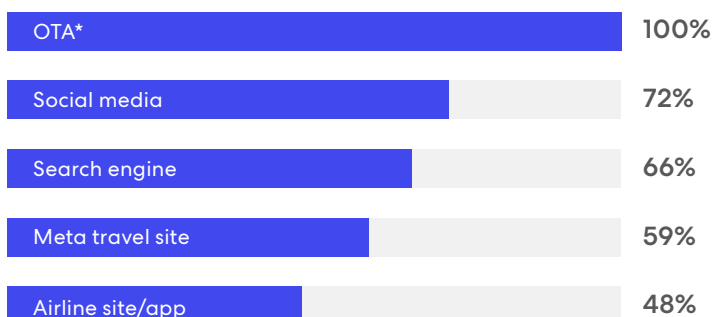
63%

of vacation rental guests did not have a specific destination in mind or considered multiple destinations.



Resources used leading up to a travel purchase

Vacation rental guests are more likely than other travelers to use social media and meta travel websites, such as Google Flights and Kayak, during their path to purchase.



*Vacation rental sites are considered OTAs in the digital data.

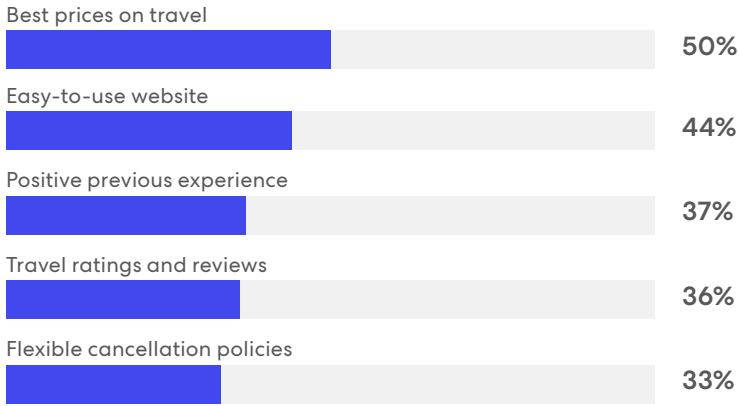
Higher than average content consumption in the 45 days before booking

511 minutes

spent consuming travel content

→ versus 303 minutes for all travelers

When deciding where to plan and book, a positive previous experience is more important to vacation rental guests than other travelers.



Vacation rental guests are more likely to be influenced by advertising

 **26%**

of vacation rental guests said advertising influenced their booking decision
→ versus 19% of all travelers

← What they find most influential:



53%
Beautiful imagery



50%
Promotions or deals



44%
Content highlighting interesting experiences

Vacation rental guests will pay more to book with loyalty programs

40% of vacation rental guests are members of a travel rewards program like One Key™.

↑ of those members:

- **65% feel it's important to book** with a brand where they are a loyalty member
→ versus 58% of all travelers
- **19% would pay more to book** with a brand where they are a loyalty member
→ versus 12% of all travelers

Top reasons vacation rental guests are interested in loyalty programs



73%
Price discounts



57%
Gaining points or cash rewards for future travel



57%
Member deals



49%
Complimentary upgrades

Top takeaways

Vacation rental guests spend a lot of time considering their options.

Make sure your property listing is up to date and shows off all the best features that your home (and surrounding community!) offers. And don't forget to load in your inventory and availability so guests can find you as soon as they start their planning process.

Vacation rental guests travel with larger groups for longer stays.

Outfit your property with all the amenities to make a large group comfortable in their home away from home, such as extra bedding, state-of-the-art cooking appliances, and functional outdoor spaces. And consider offering a length of stay discount for 7+ or 28+ day stays.

Vacation rental guests are looking for a frictionless experience.

Aim to create the smoothest booking experience possible. Leverage tools like Instant Book and offer a flexible cancellation policy to deliver a positive guest experience, drive positive reviews, and keep guests coming back year after year.