

AAA: 33M Americans plan to travel over Labor Day

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NEW YORK (AP) — Americans plan to hit the road this Labor Day weekend despite rising gas prices.



Thirty three million people will travel 50 miles or more, a 2.9 percent increase from last year, according to AAA, a federation of auto clubs which sell vacations, insurance and lobby on behalf of car owners. That's the highest level of travel for Labor Day since the start of the recession in late 2007.

A gallon of gas now costs an average of \$3.72. That's up about 40 cents from July 1, although still down 22 cents from the peak reached in early April. Experts say gas could rise to around \$3.75 per gallon by the holiday weekend.

The overwhelming majority of travelers — 85 percent — plan to drive to their destination. Once there, they will find hotel rooms costing 4 to 6 percent higher than last year.

Families planning to get away plan to spend \$749, according to an economic model done for AAA. That's up from \$702 last year.

"In the absence of strong economic growth that might fuel a significant boost in travel volume, it is an encouraging sign that Americans continue to prioritize travel," Bill Sutherland, vice president of AAA Travel Services said in a statement. "Travel is still within America's discretionary spending budget."

Of those who plan to travel, 66 percent said their current financial situation would not negatively impact their Labor Day holiday weekend travel plans, 21 percent said they will cut costs in other parts of their budget, 9 percent will shorten their trip and 4 percent will cut transportation costs.

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AAA did not include responses from those who do not plan to travel.