



Camping Membership Info

Even when fuel prices rise, RV trips remain the least expensive type of vacation, according to a new study comparing vacation costs.

PKF Consulting, an internationally recognized consulting firm with expertise in travel and tourism, found that “typical RV family vacations are on average 26 to 74 percent less expensive than other types of vacations studied.”

Even factoring in RV ownership and fuel costs, the study reveals that RV vacations are more economical than those taken by personal car, commercial airline or cruise ship.

PKF analyzed major costs that would be incurred by families taking nine different types of vacations to such popular travel destinations as the Grand Canyon; Orlando, Fla.; Cape Cod; Napa, Calif.; and Alaska. PKF selected three types of RVs typically used by families for vacation purposes—a folding camping trailer, conventional travel trailer and Type C motor home.

“In all cases, RV trips were more economical than other vacations analyzed, regardless of trip duration, distance or region of the country,” says Kannan Sankaran, PKF’s lead researcher for the study.

“Even when fuel prices rise, our data show that each RV vacation would still be significantly less expensive,” Sankaran explained. “While fuel costs are a component of the overall vacation cost, fluctuations in fuel prices aren’t significant enough to affect a family’s decision of whether or not to take RV trips over other types of vacations.” According to the study, fuel prices would need to triple to make RVing more expensive for a family of four than other forms of travel.

Vacations using a personal car, staying in hotels and eating in restaurants—the least expensive of the non-RV travel options—were found to be 36 percent more costly on average than going by RV.

The study showed, for example, that a family of four traveling from Washington, D.C. to Dennis Port, Mass. for 10 days with their folding camping trailer in tow, staying in campgrounds for the local average of \$25 per night, would save 54 percent, or \$1,696, over the same trip taken by car, staying in hotels averaging \$120 per night and eating in restaurants. Taking the same vacation by motor home would save \$974, or 34 percent, over going by car.

On a trip from Atlanta to Orlando for a week, a family of four would save \$1,658, or 53 percent, by traveling in their motor home and staying in campgrounds averaging \$27 per night, rather than flying, renting a car, staying in hotels averaging \$125 per night and eating in restaurants.

A week-long family vacation towing a conventional travel trailer from Salt Lake City, Utah to the Grand Canyon compared to the cost of taking the same trip by airline, renting a car and staying in a rental property would be \$2,820 or 70 percent less expensive.

Shorter getaways were also found to be more economical by RV. For example, a family taking a three-day vacation from Pittsburgh, Pa. to Lancaster, Pa. would save \$271—or 31 percent—by towing a conventional travel trailer, rather than going by car, staying in hotels and eating in restaurants. The savings would be even greater—\$1,049 or 62.2 percent—for families taking the same trip by motor home rather than flying.

According to PKF, renting an RV is the most affordable way to tour Alaska. The study shows that 14-day

RV rentals were less than half the cost of Alaskan all-inclusive cruises, including roundtrip air fare, and 69 percent less expensive than trips involving air fares, car rentals, hotels and restaurants.

In addition to major expenditures required from the start to finish of each vacation, PKF factored in an estimated cost of ownership of the RVs analyzed. Research included documenting average ownership periods, residual values, annual days of use, and insurance and applicable IRS interest deductions for second-home mortgages.

“RV travel offers great value and affordability,” says Coon, “but there are other key reasons to travel by RV, too. RVs are a comfortable, convenient, stress-free way to travel, enjoy the great outdoors and spend quality time with family.”

The PKF study considered only quantifiable economic factors, not the comparative quality of each vacation. As a result, the convenience, flexibility and quality family time cited as major benefits of traveling in an RV could not be addressed.

RV Vacations Save Money

How going by RV reduces family vacation costs vs. other vacation types, according to a comprehensive study comparing travel expenses to popular U.S. destinations:

Vacation Type	Itinerary	Amt. Saved by RV
Folding Camping Trailer vs. Car / Hotel	Denver to Grand Canyon	54 percent
Type C Motorhome vs. Airline / Rental Car / Hotel	Atlanta to Orlando	53 percent
Travel Trailer vs. Airline / Rental Car / Rental Home	Washington D.C. to Cape Cod	43 percent

Transportation Mode/Accommodation	3 Days	7 Days	10 Days	14 Days
Car towing a Folding Camping Trailer / Campgrounds	\$508	\$1,125	\$1,605	\$2,317
Light-Duty Truck or SUV towing a Travel Trailer / Campgrounds	\$623	\$1,376	\$1,963	\$2,837
Motor home / Campgrounds	\$647	\$1,491	\$2,127	\$2,996
Personal Car / Hotels or Motels	\$903	\$2,182	\$3,125	\$4,222
Personal Car or Airplane / Rental Property	\$1,514	\$2,725	\$3,570	\$4,281
Airplane or Rental Car / Hotels or Motels	\$1,678	\$3,044	\$4,406	\$5,742
Cruise Ship Vacation	N/A	\$9,399	\$7,425	\$9,053
All-Inclusive Package Vacation	N/A	\$5,056	\$7,125	\$9,285

Source: Leading tourism research firm PKF Consulting. When vacationing by RV, a family of four can spend up to 74 percent less compared to other vacation types. RV vacations were found to offer big savings over travel by car or plane with hotel accommodations or rental properties. Even the most expensive RV trip is one-third the cost of a cruise excursion and one-fifth the cost of an all-inclusive package getaway. For more information, contact RVIA’s Kevin Broom at 703/620-6003, extension 304.