



Barclays 2025 **Travel Rewards and Loyalty Report**

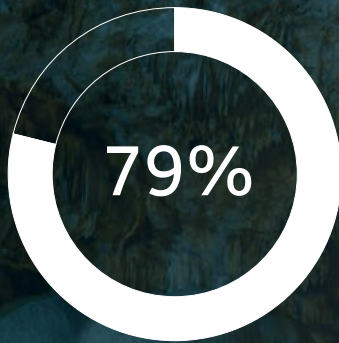
MAY 2025



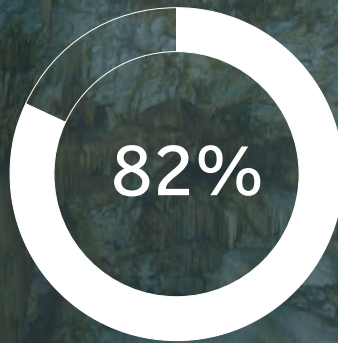
The big picture

While concerns about costs and the economy are prompting some travelers to rethink their plans, many are still prioritizing personal trips. Whether it's a long weekend getaway or a big vacation, travelers are turning to loyalty programs to make the most of their experiences. However, a closer look reveals differences in loyalty program usage, spending habits and travel preferences across demographics.

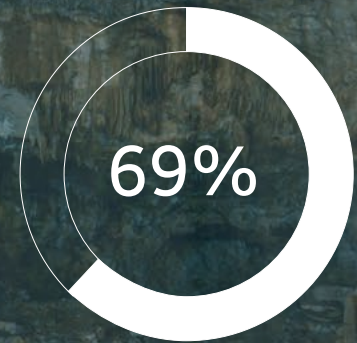
Barclays US Consumer Bank's Travel Rewards and Loyalty Report showed:



of travelers rely on loyalty programs, up from 2024 and 2023.



of travelers acknowledge they would have to travel differently, or not at all, without travel rewards.



More than two-thirds of travelers (69%) have or want to pick a travel destination because of a favorite TV show or movie.

The third annual Barclays US Consumer Bank's Travel Rewards and Loyalty Report, based on a Wakefield Research survey of 1,000 US travelers, uncovers these findings as well as preferences that exist among sub-demographics. The report explores differences among generations and genders, as well as parents, regarding travel priorities and loyalty program usage, while also revealing the influence of TV shows and movies.

At a glance

A generational divide

Baby Boomers, ever the savers, might seem like the generation most likely to take advantage of these loyalty programs.

Men vs. women

Men tend to prioritize exclusivity-focused rewards, such as the ability to upgrade and access airport lounges, while women typically favor perks that enhance comfort and convenience, like free checked bags and priority boarding.

A parent's perspective

Parents are increasingly focused on stretching their money further and are showing a growing interest in cruising.

Impact of Hollywood

TV shows and movie locations are influencing audiences' travel destinations. Rather than jet-setting, consumers are now "set-jetting" to the locations of their favorite shows and films.

"At Barclays, we're deeply committed to understanding the evolving needs and preferences of today's travelers. Our 2025 Travel Rewards and Loyalty Report underscores the importance of travel rewards personalization as consumers differ in how they engage with these programs."

By tailoring loyalty programs to specific demographics, we can ensure we deliver value that truly resonates with each customer's unique journey and empowers them to pursue their travel aspirations with confidence and ease, through the brands they know and love."

Doug Villone, Head of Cards and Partnerships at Barclays US Consumer Bank

A generational divide

Generational differences shape how travelers use loyalty programs, influenced by varying economic backgrounds, travel expectations and spending and investment habits. However, Millennials are most likely to strategically use techniques to earn more points. For example, Boomers are known as dedicated savers, while Millennials have a reputation for spending.

While Boomers might seem the most likely to take advantage of loyalty programs, Millennials currently outpace Boomers in strategic program usage despite Boomers valuing rewards the most.

Millennials lead the way in maximizing travel rewards

72% of Millennials

71% of Gen Z

62% of Boomers

72% of Millennials use rewards-focused methods to stretch travel budgets, followed by Gen Z at 71%, while Boomers come in at 62%.

Millennials are also more likely than other cohorts to strategically use techniques to earn more points (94%). For example, they are far more likely to wait to make a purchase until there is a bonus offer (42%), compared to 24% of Gen Z, 34% of Gen X and just 21% of Boomers.

Millennials are the most reliant on travel loyalty programs, with 40% strongly agreeing that they couldn't imagine taking the trips they want without them. Comparatively, 31% of Gen Z, 38% of Gen X and 24% of Boomers strongly agree with this statement.

Consider this: Generational preferences and loyalty program usage signals a need to further tailor rewards programs to specific age ranges, while considering differences in spending and investment habits. One idea is to adapt loyalty programs as travelers age, recognizing that what appeals to a single 20-year-old will likely change as life milestones such as marriage, children, and increased income occur. Travelers shouldn't have to shop around for new perks; as their preferences evolve, their loyalty program should grow with them.

Loyalty program enrollment strong across generations

Loyalty program enrollment levels

80% of Boomers

85% of Gen X and Millennials

75% of Gen Z

The increase in enrollment from Gen Z to Millennials, which then stabilizes with older generations, suggests that experience with these programs and improved financial acumen over time increases the likelihood of sustained enrollment.

As for travel reward program perks, 82% of Boomers see earning and redeeming rewards as the top benefit of loyalty programs; this viewpoint steadily dips to 76% with Gen X, 66% with Millennials and 58% with Gen Z. Perks such as free checked bags or priority boarding are also a top contender for 62% of Boomers, however, only 56% of Gen X and Millennials and 45% of Gen Z agree.

Men vs. women

The saying that men are from Mars and women are from Venus holds true when it comes to loyalty program perks.

While men and women have similar loyalty program experience (**87%** vs. **85%** enrollment) and both prefer airline and hotel programs, their travel preferences and reward usage differ. Men largely prefer exclusivity-based rewards, while women prefer rewards focused on comfort and convenience. However, both men and women agree, to differing degrees, that the ability to earn and redeem rewards and lower costs are the top two benefits of loyalty programs.

Consider this: To maximize the appeal of evolving loyalty programs, particularly in the airline and hotel sectors, loyalty program providers should incorporate tailored perks that cater to the distinct preferences of men and women. One idea is a **single-use “status boost”** that allows members to select an extra exclusivity-focused reward (appealing to men) or a comfort-based perk (resonating with women). **By providing a choice of rewards, airlines and hotels can create a more personalized experience that appeals to every individual.**

	Men	Women
Preference for exclusivity-based rewards (ex. upgrades and lounge access).	50%	46%
Preference for comfort and convenience-focused rewards (ex. free checked bags and priority boarding).	53%	58%
Most likely to save for one big trip.	54%	61%
Percentage enrolled in an airline loyalty program.	62%	60%
Percentage enrolled in a hotel loyalty program.	48%	51%
Percentage enrolled in a cruise line loyalty program.	19%	17%



A parent's perspective

Parents are increasingly focused on efficient spending when it comes to travel, and this is reflected in how they use loyalty programs.

At **73%**, parents are the most rewards-savvy demographic, actively using rewards-focused methods to help make their money go further when traveling.

This corresponds with parents largely agreeing that earning and redeeming rewards (**67%**) and lowering costs (**63%**) are the top benefits of loyalty programs.

Half of parents most strongly agree that not planning credit card spend to earn rewards is like throwing money away.

Parents also have a stronger willingness to use their cards to pay tabs for group dinners and collective purchases to earn more rewards points to use on trips. In fact, **41%** of parents **strongly agree** that they "couldn't imagine taking the kinds of trips I want without the benefits of a travel loyalty program," which is higher than other demographics as well. This reliance on rewards is further emphasized by the fact that **89%** of parents agree they would have to travel differently or not at all if they didn't have rewards.

Cruise loyalty sets sail



One-in-five (21%)

parents have a growing interest in cruise lines and are enrolled in a cruise line loyalty program.

Consider this: Parents' growing interest in cruises presents an opportunity for cruise lines to enhance their offerings. **By focusing on family-oriented amenities, offering child-friendly rewards packages and showcasing the unique benefits of a family cruise vacation, they can attract and retain a larger share of the family travel market.**



Impact of Hollywood

Instead of seeking out popular tourist destinations from guidebooks, many travelers are now “set-jetting” to the locations where their favorite TV shows and movies were filmed.

More than two-thirds of travelers (**69%**) have, or want to pick a travel destination because of a favorite TV show or movie, including **40%** who have already done so and **30%** who would like to.



Around 1 in 5 travelers (18%) have “set-jetted” more than once.

This trend is likely driven by the rise of streaming services and the popularity of binge-watching. **81%** of Gen Z and Millennials report being influenced by on-screen locations, compared to **71%** of Gen X and only **40%** of Boomers.

Additionally, according to a study for [Centre National du Cinema](#), *The White Lotus* created a 300% spike in travel searches for Thailand, while Paris experienced over a **200%** spike in interest due to *Emily in Paris*. A [justfly.com](#) survey revealed that **31%** of Gen Z travelers chose their destinations based on the first season of *Squid Game*, and *Game of Thrones* influenced the travel plans of **23%** of respondents.

Consider this: The “set-jetting” trend is an exciting opportunity for travel providers to enhance their rewards programs with a unique twist. **By offering perks like exclusive access to movie set tours, themed packages for popular TV shows and movies, and partnerships with streaming services, travel providers can further resonate with movie and TV enthusiasts.**

Conclusion

"Today more than ever, people are relying on credit card rewards and loyalty points to take the kinds of trips they do. Rewards programs offer valuable benefits, like points or miles for everyday purchases, and usually with additional multipliers for transactions with our travel partners. These benefits can include upgrades, discounts, statement credits, gift cards, priority boarding, lounge access or travel insurance to name a few. Rewards enable consumers to stretch their money further, and even amidst inflation, loyalty programs are helping meet growing travel demands. This year, travel rewards serve as a driving force for exploring various regions around the globe. It's clear that rewards remain an essential part of the travel process.

By analyzing the travel preferences and needs outlined in this report, companies and leaders managing rewards programs should take note. High on the priority list is giving consumers what they want – the ability to earn and redeem rewards more easily and more often. For the third year in a row, US travelers have consistently placed great value on rewards points and loyalty programs. Indicating their significance in fulfilling their desire for experiences. Travelers are discerning and seek rewards programs that are relevant and help make travel possible. Companies that can continue to deliver additional value will benefit from stronger loyalty and customer engagement."

Doug Villone, Head of Cards and Partnerships at Barclays US Consumer Bank



Methodology

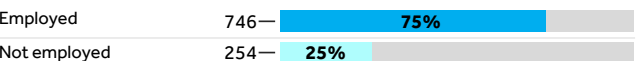
The Barclays Travel Report Survey was conducted by Wakefield Research (www.wakefieldresearch.com) among 1,000 U.S. Adult Travelers, between March 10 and March 18, 2025. "Travelers" was defined as having traveled by air in the past 12 months, and likely to travel by air again in the next 12 months.

Snapshot of the 1,000 travelers we surveyed

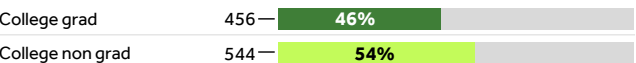
Gender



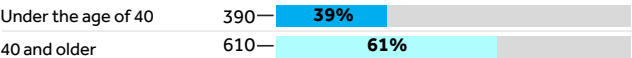
Employment



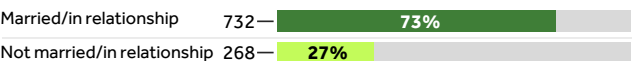
Education



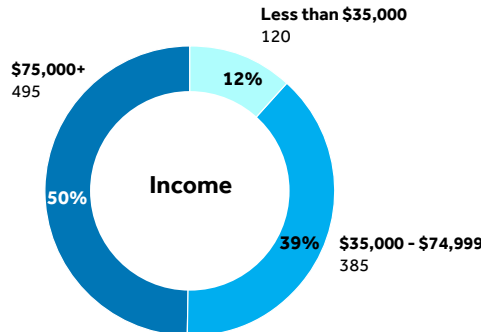
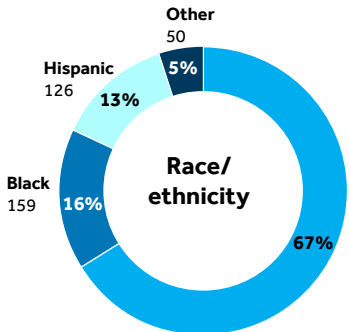
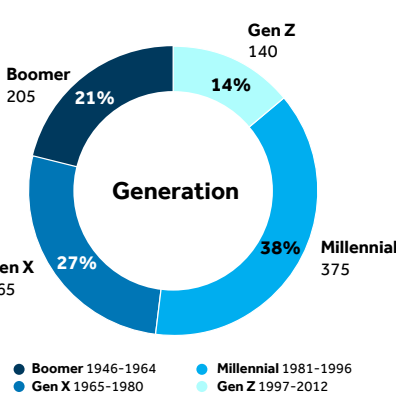
Age



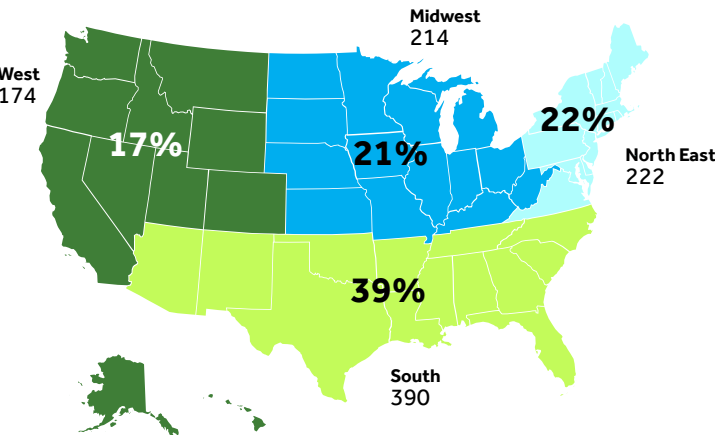
Marital status, relationship



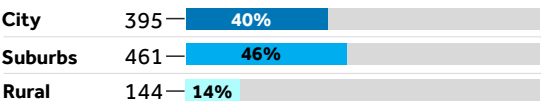
Children in household



Region



Area



The Barclays USCB Travel Report Survey was conducted by Wakefield Research (www.wakefieldresearch.com) among 1,000 U.S. Adult Travelers, between March 10th and March 18th, 2025. "Travelers" was defined as having traveled by air in the past 12 months, and likely to travel by air again in the next 12 months.