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Tags : Adventure Trip, FTF Media Room, Multigen, Travel Trends



Chris & Skyler Rainier share the wildflowers of Iceland. c. R.L. Hopkins, Lindblad-National Geographic

- Family Travel Consulting finds current events, active wellness, and endangered environments are among top motivators for family vacation planners in 2015 -

Family Travel Consulting (FTC) is seeing a resurgence of big adventure, bucket list trips for families, as predicted by the 2014 MMGYGlobal Traveler Sentiment index, which found traveler confidence bolstered by the strong economy. Every aspect of the travel industry, from airlines to cruises, hotels to motor coaches, has had a record-breaking year and is looking forward to an even stronger 2015.

What's new is that **Grandparent travel has grown 30%** in the past year, forcing businesses to stand up and offer a seat (and a family suite) to boomers arriving with toddler or teen in tow.

Here are some of the latest trends – as varied as today’s families themselves – caused by this demographic shift.

1. News Creates New Destinations for 2015. *An educated worldview is the new suntan.*

Greece and Thailand, often on the 11 o’clock news, have never been cheaper, easier to get to or more desirable. [RoadScholar](#) is leading educational family trips to China and Iceland. Insight Cuba will offer family-oriented People to People programs. [Extraordinary Journeys](#) is offering alternative safaris to India, Tasmania and Galapagos until Ebola is eradicated.

2. Fitness, Health, Sports Motivate Travel. *Forget buffets; get fit instead.*

Royal Caribbean’s [Quantum of the Seas](#) boasts recreational opportunities from sky-diving to bumper cars, roller skating to spin classes. Hotels are adopting workout tools and apps like Fitbit (available in 8 languages.) Multisport soft adventure tours (hiking, biking, horseback riding and more) increasingly attract families with special itineraries. [ResponsibleTravel.com](#) sends active families to hike Petra in Jordan, sea kayak in Croatia, and bike through Spain, which has the second greatest number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the world.

3. Ecotourism Evolves from Admiration to Participation. *Everyone prefers must-do’s to must-see’s.*

Eco-stars like Costa Rica, the Riviera Nayarit region of Mexico, and New Zealand will promote active adventures designed to introduce families to local culture and the environment. [Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic](#) is sailing with upscale, multigenerational passengers to Greenland.

4. All-Inclusive Travel Wins Resort Wars. *The Flop n’Drop beach vacation gets even easier.*

Club Med is [expanding](#) internationally; Hilton Hotels is managing its own all-inclusive line; Hyatt has just launched the Zilara (adults-only) and Ziva (family) all-inclusive brands. To compete, resorts and cruise ships will pack in more perks and make planning a family beach vacation seamless.

5. Luxury Family Travel Arrives. *We’ll say it: Kids are demanding travelers.*

Two-thirds of the multigenerational travelers surveyed recently by [Preferred Hotels Group](#) said that kids actively choose the family’s destination. Since 60% of millennials polled worked with travel agents, luxury travel specialists are thriving. The British [Family Twist](#), for example, plans custom, super-luxe vacations with chauffeurs, private photographers, and en-suite nannies.

6. The Sharing Economy Discovers Family. *Mobile, user-friendly and hip = value.*

Our in-laws’ 13-person reunion at an AirBnB.com villa rental happened because the house-sharing service is trusted and chic enough for vacation planners. Hitting the road next is [uberFamily](#) which brings kid-focused rideshares, with carseats installed for a \$10 surcharge, to uber cars in New York, Philadelphia and Washington DC. [RentLuggage.com](#) will unhinge the suitcase industry; [AlltheRooms.com](#) is selling out hotels by including condos, homestays and more in search results.

7. Technology Makes Family Travel Easier. *High tech gets high marks.*

Hotels and cruise lines are caving in to demands for ubiquitous free WiFi by D-I-Y travelers. Smart wristbands, cards and apps safeguard tickets to Disney parks, open rooms on cruise ships, monitor skills on Vail ski trails, predict wait times at airports, and find cheap gas stations with a clean restroom.

Next year, Siri – using Google Maps – should be able to answer, “Are we there yet?”

About Family Travel Consulting

[Family Travel Consulting](#) is the collaboration of Eileen Ogintz of [Taking the Kids](#), the nationally syndicated travel column with millions of readers; and Kyle McCarthy of [Family Travel Forum](#), the vacation planning resource that’s *The Wall Street Journal*’s “Best for Grandparents” and a *Forbes* “Favorite.” FTC provides strategy, marketing, digital and social know-how to travel and family products, and hosts the TMS Family Travel conference and Summit for media reaching the family vacation audience.