

LIFESTYLE

This Nostalgic Travel Trend Is Going to Be All Over Your FYP This Summer—And It's Cheap

It's all about the journey.

BY KATE MCGREGOR PUBLISHED: MAR 27, 2025

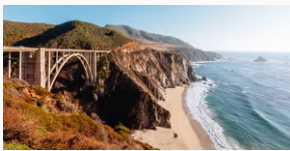


KIERAN STONE // GETTY IMAGES

For the past several summers, it has felt like everyone you know is either in Italy or Japan. International travel has been the norm.

Instead of wandering around your own “backyard” and exploring the United States, people have taken to jetting around the globe. Thanks to a historically favorable dollar exchange rate and the tourism industry, it used to cost about the same to travel abroad or cross-country. But as the economy and international relations shift and air travel grows unpredictable, there’s a nostalgic travel trend taking hold: road trips. They’re back in a major way, just in time for summer.

RELATED STORIES



The Best Places for a Long Weekend Getaway



This \$34 Backpack Changed the Way I Travel Forever



9 Stylish Ski Resorts You MUST Visit This Winter

Why “Getting There Is Half the Fun” Again

While many people have always preferred to travel by car, we’ve noticed all kinds of travelers prioritizing road trips over planes and trains. Experts have taken note, too. “Here in the U.S., we are lucky to

have a remarkably diverse set of landscapes, climates, and cultures to experience. Pair that with our extensive highway system, and you get the perfect formula to escape, unplug, and explore, all at your own pace,” Will Gock, product communications senior specialist at Volkswagen of America, says.

A Slower Pace

Road trips give you a level of freedom and privacy rarely seen outside of private jets and chartered yachts—or houseboats like designer Victoria Sass’s. There’s a sense of nostalgia for slowing down and spending more time on the journey than the destination that travelers are trying to embrace more. Gone are the days of racing to the airport for a 48-hour weekend or looking for the most efficient route. “You can follow the impulse to stop at a roadside store that catches your eye, detour to see the World’s Largest Highboy Dresser, or explore the wonders along the Blue Ridge Parkway, most of which has reopened since Hurricane Helene,” Wit Tuttell, Visit North Carolina’s executive director, says. “The old ad slogan got it absolutely right: Getting there truly can be half the fun.”



MORE FROM HOUSE BEAUTIFUL

Tour This Off-the-Grid Cabin in Bovina Center



Post-Pandemic Anxiety

Tuttell also explains that throughout the pandemic years, driving allowed people to travel without risking the Covid-19 exposure you would get on a commercial airline flight, train, or bus. “During the pandemic, we saw an increase in highway journeys,” he says. “Beyond the idea that traveling by car or RV would minimize contact with Covid, people seemed to discover—or rediscover—the joys of slow travel and savoring the moment. Zooming in on maps and planning a route has an inspirational effect that opens the mind.” It’s a matter of safety and convenience, ultimately boiling down to a desire for control, that travelers are reluctant to give up, even five years later.



SAM DOBBINS

Air Travel Safety Concerns

The rise in road trips also has to do with decreased trust in airlines. Between doors flying off airplanes and cuts to the Federal Aviation Administration, there's a growing sense that air travel has become less safe. There's no actual evidence that airplanes are crashing more often (there's just been more media coverage of the events that do happen, which makes them seem more frequent), but travelers are still looking for alternative methods of transportation, especially for shorter distances.

Road Trip Ready Cars Are Selling

Need more evidence that road trips are catching on? There has even been a noticeable increase in both desire and sales rates for larger

vehicles better suited for longer travel, according to Volkswagen's Will Gock. "We've definitely noticed a growing interest in larger vehicles like the VW Atlas and ID. Buzz, which are designed for families or larger groups that need extra space for comfortable road trips," he says. "These specific models follow a growing shift in the industry towards more comfort, flexibility, and storage, along with practicality, safety, and versatility—all key when spending extra time on the road."

Consumers are swapping sedans and compact cars for models that can handle different terrains and last longer on the open road, no matter what kind. RVs have gotten a bad rap thanks to family comedies and visions of retirees, but **luxury models** are reinvigorating the market with full-size appliances and luxe finishes.

RELATED STORY



A Complete Guide to Luxury RVs and Mobile Homes

From Airstreams to SUVs, the new road trip prioritizes comfort and efficiency rather than speed. This way of traveling is also helping people stretch their budgets and save for more impactful experiences once they reach their destination. "For many, road trips are appealing because they are often more affordable than vacations involving flights or cruises," Gock says. "They're also the most scalable and

flexible of travel options as they allow you to change your time away, or destination, at any given moment. You're in complete control and can fine-tune your journey to exactly what works best for you."

Follow *House Beautiful* on Instagram and TikTok.

Planning your next vacation?

Find The Right Hotel And Spots To Visit.



What's your email address?

SIGN ME UP.

By signing up, I agree to the [Terms of Use](#) (including the [dispute resolution procedures](#)) and have reviewed the [Privacy Notice](#).

This site is protected by reCAPTCHA and the Google [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#) apply.