



Jeffrey Gayduk – June 1, 2016

On stage in a packed hotel ballroom in 1998, two prognosticators debate the influence of the baby boomer generation as either A) Savior for the group travel industry or B) Extra-terrestrial invasion that will destroy us all. Nearly 20 years later, is the 800-pound gorilla a savior or space invader?



What's Changed?

While previous generations viewed retirement as a brief time to rest and relax before the end of life, with longer lifespans and the rejection of yesterday's model of old age, retirement for boomers has evolved. 88% describe it as an opportunity for new beginnings.

Whether it is a day trip or an immersion experience in a new culture, an extensive cruise or a trip to visit grandchildren, retirees are able to take advantage of off-season rates and make last-minute travel decisions.

Many tour operators assumed that boomers would assimilate to traditional travel styles and destinations, as if at a certain age we flip a switch and our interests change. That certainly hasn't happened, but it doesn't mean that boomers don't enjoy traditional destinations and unique group travel experiences. Consider this:

- Although newly minted retirees enjoy a variety of vacation spots, tried and true destinations such as Hawaii, New York, California and Alaska remain popular, while internationally, traditional stalwarts such as Italy, Australia, England, Ireland and France top wish lists.
- New lodging options pique their curiosity with nearly 1 million Airbnb users over the age of 60.
- Adventure travel is on the rise with companies that cater to mature adventure seekers such as Overseas Adventure Travel reporting a 67% spike in business over the past decade.
- Nearly 1 in 4 retirees indicate an interest in going on an RV trip.
- Biking rates among people ages 60-79 have jumped an astounding 320% since 1995, and marketers say that biking is replacing golf as a popular option for active holiday goers.
- Americans age 60+ are the most likely to have taken a volunteer trip.
- Educational tours that combine travel and learning are booming.
- Cruising will grow, with 45% of retirees indicating a cruise is very appealing.
- Solo travel (as part of a group) will continue to be a trend. 12 million of the 32 million Americans who live alone are 65+.
- 36% of retirees have gone on a multigenerational trip in the past year. While many say it's the greatest experience of their lives, multigenerational travel can have its challenges—chief among them is aligning activities that appeal to every

As boomers move from being time constrained to time-affluent, the leisure travel industry is well positioned to grow and prosper. As an example, in the past year retired boomers spent more than any other group on leisure travel. With a two-decade runway, if you successfully position your tour business to appeal to the types of experiences that boomers are looking for, you can grow and prosper well into your own retirement.

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