

## **American Express Travel Agent Poll Finds New Trends in 'Girls-Getaways' - More Active and Luxurious Than Ever**

Companion Consumer Survey Finds Women Taking Vacations Together Beyond the Typical Weekend Retreat, Guilt- and Worry-Free

The popular "girls-getaway" has gone upscale and extends beyond the traditional weekend escape, reveals a new poll of 246 American Express Travel agents. The poll, which found an increase in "girls-getaways" according to two-thirds of agents, also found that women traveling together are seeking more active and luxurious vacations. Three in four agents said that "girls-getaways" -- including vacations with girlfriends or female relatives -- are a significant trend. While spa, beach and shopping vacations still dominate as favorites for "girls-getaways," agents say women are increasingly taking cruise, culinary, city and active vacations that include golf (36%), skiing (33%), scuba diving and biking (20%).

More than two-thirds (68%) of agents polled reported that when traveling together, women are indulging in more luxurious vacations than in years past. The majority of agents (56%) say these getaways are not merely weekend retreats, rather they are between 4-7 days long. While away, women are splurging on ultra-customized tours and experiences (42%), traveling first or business class (36%), and staying in private villas (20%). More than one-third (35%) of agents said women are spending between \$2,600 to \$5,000 per person when traveling with a group of girlfriends or female relatives. Even bachelorette getaways are going more upscale, say 57% of agents polled. In order by ranking, agents cited the most popular "girls-getaway" destinations as: the Caribbean, Mexico, Europe, Canada and South America.

Many women consider their 'girls-getaways' to be the highlight of their year," said Audrey Hendley, vice president of American Express Travel. "American Express Travel agents know how important getaway experiences are and create customized vacations that are tailored to customers' needs and desires so they can get the most out of their special time away."

### ***In Their Own Words: A Survey of Women***

According to a companion consumer survey of 470 women, when traveling with female friends or family members, women say they do so guilt- and worry-free (92% and 73% of those polled, respectively). In fact, an overwhelming majority (82%) of women say they "never" check in with the office while on a "girls-getaway." The majority of women polled say they feel excited (78%) and liberated (64%) when they go on a women-only vacation. They said that being able to "re-connect with friends" (88%) and "relax and recharge" (86%) are among the best things about "girls-getaways." More than two-thirds (68%) of women highlighted the benefits of not having to "take care of anyone else" or "dress-up and put on make-up" (37%) while away without their significant others. As an added perk to getting away, 54% of women reported feeling more appreciated by their mates once back at home.

### ***Women Traveling Solo***

In addition to women-only group travel, nearly half of agents (48%) polled saw an increase in women traveling alone, the majority of which (84%) tend to be between the ages of 31 and 55. Fifty-nine percent say women are extending business trips to include personal vacation time for enjoying leisure activities. Three in four (75%) agents polled said that wellness/self-improvement travel -- such as spa resorts, yoga retreats and wellness centers -- were the primary travel experiences for women traveling alone. More than half (52%) reported that women traveling alone embark on cultural excursions such as visiting ruins and touring museums.

### ***About the American Express Travel's Girls-Getaway Poll and Survey***

Data on women-only travel trends was collected via an online poll of 246 American Express Travel agents and representatives across the United States from June 6-13, 2007.

The companion consumer survey, fielded in early June by International Communications Research, was conducted separately among 470 women.