

2020 Family Road Report



Les Masterson
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Americans are known for their love of hitting the road in the summer to enjoy a good old-fashioned road trip.

To kick off the season, CarInsurance.com surveyed parents to find out how they feel when driving, what their family road trip experiences are like, what they do to cope with traffic and what types of mishaps they've had due to poor road conditions.

CarInsurance.com's new survey of 1,000 parents found that 70% of respondents had the time of their lives on their family road trip -- and would do it again. That's despite some reporting family members having a meltdown before leaving the neighborhood.

Seventy-nine percent said they've been on a family road trip over the past five years. Seventy-two percent of respondents said they're more apt to take a long car ride for a vacation than travel by plane. A mere 28% said they prefer air travel.

Why do people prefer the car to a plane? More than half (54%) said they just enjoy road trips more. Nearly half (46%) complained that it's too expensive to fly. About one-third (34%) said they don't want to deal with airport hassles.

People have a more positive outlook on family road trips this year compared to last year, despite a small uptick in fighting and meltdowns in the car. We asked drivers to describe family road-trip experiences.

Here's how 2020 responses compare to our two previous surveys:

Road-Trip Experiences	2020	2019	2018
Super fun, we will do it again	70%	73%	69%
Stressful, yet enjoyable	39%	36%	40%
Much more fighting than at home	6%	8%	7%
Someone had a meltdown within an hour of the trip	7%	12%	7%
Someone had a meltdown before we left the neighborhood	6%	6%	3%

CarInsurance.com finds that drivers love road trips so much that they don't mind driving more than 1,000 miles. We asked how many miles people would drive on a road trip. Here are the responses:

- 1,001 miles or more -- 34%
- 500 to 750 miles -- 28%
- 751 miles to 1,000 miles -- 20%
- Less than 500 miles -- 18%

Gas Prices, Jobs Have Traditionally Put Brakes on Road-Tripping

Gas prices have plummeted this year. Even in states like California that last year paid more than \$4 for a gallon of regular gas on average last summer is under \$3 a gallon.

In previous summers, gas prices caused many families to stay closer to home.

Here's how 2020 compared to previous years:

Reasons Not to Take a Road Trip	2020	2019	2018
Gas prices too high	30%	44%	36%
Can't take the time off work	23%	30%	41%
Don't like road trips	19%	15%	11%
A family member gets car sick	4%	11%	19%
Can't stand the traffic I'd be in/hate driving	11%	11%	14%
Don't want to spend that much time in car with my family	12%	8%	12%
Hate booking hotels/finding places to stay on the road	8%	7%	17%




Contentment in the Car

Road rage is something nearly everyone has experienced, but our findings show that drivers are, overall, happy behind the wheel. Or at least they claim that's the case.

More than two-thirds feel relaxed or content behind the wheel. Here are the 2020 results and how they compare to the previous two years.

Feelings About Driving	2020	2019	2018
Content, I like being behind the wheel	37%	44%	46%
Relaxed and Zen, I enjoy driving	31%	34%	30%
Indifferent, I don't really have any feelings about driving, I just do it	20%	12%	14%
Stressed out, I'm always in a hurry or worried about getting where I need to go	9%	9%	8%
Rage-y, I hate driving	2%	1%	2%

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In a Lane of their Own: No Crying in Baseball, but Plenty in Traffic

Sitting and driving in heavy traffic are two of the worst parts of the family road trip. Americans find ways to cope. It could be music, talking on the phone or even getting some work done.

Here's what people did while in traffic:

- 71% coped by listening to music
- 36% talked or texted on the phone
- 30% listened to news
- 19% ate an entire meal
- 18% listened to audiobooks or podcasts
- 18% listened to sports radio
- 12% got work done
- 12% called people who they weren't particularly close to because they were bored
- 6% cried

There have also been negative outcomes of driving in heavy traffic:

- 7% got into an accident
- 6% admitted to getting into an altercation with another driver
- 6% said they've received a ticket

Bad Road Conditions and Construction: Detours, Accidents, Dings and Dents

The condition of America's roads is getting worse. [Department of Transportation](#) statistics shows that about half of U.S. roads are considered poor/mediocre. In some states, such as Connecticut and Illinois, the percentage is nearly three-quarters. Road conditions and the cost of insurance and gas are chief among motoring metrics that CarInsurance.com uses to rank the [best and worst states for driving](#).

Road conditions are leading to drivers taking other routes, suffering vehicle damage and getting into accidents, respondents say.

Here's how 2020 compared to previous years:

Impact of Road Conditions	2020	2019	2018
Changed my route to avoid poor roads	55%	52%	56%
My car sustained minor damage (repairs or accident costing less than \$1,000)	29%	30%	30%
I got lost	25%	29%	27%
I hit an object (single-car accident)	17%	20%	17%
I got into an accident with another car	15%	19%	17%
My car sustained severe damage (repairs or accident costing over \$1,000)	14%	15%	13%




Just one accident can raise your yearly car insurance rate by 32%, or \$450 a year, on average, according to CarInsurance.com's rate data analysis.

Regardless of your experience on the road, and whether or not you've experienced an accident or got a ticket, you can still save on car insurance by comparing rates, says Penny Gusner, CarInsurance.com senior consumer analyst. "If you've had a recent accident, you should compare car insurance companies as your current carrier may no longer have the lowest rate," says Gusner. "That's because each insurance company assesses risk differently, so pricing varies significantly for the same coverage among insurers."

CarInsurance.com data show that drivers with a recent accident can save about \$1,100 by making a car insurance quote comparison. That's the difference between the highest and lowest rate fielded from six major insurers.

See [average car insurance rates](#) for your ZIP code for three coverage levels, as well as the highest and lowest rate fielded from up to six insurers, so you know what you can expect to pay and don't overspend when buying a policy.

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Les Masterson
Managing Editor | 

Les Masterson has more than 20 years of experience in journalism, editing and content creation. In his career, he has covered everything from health insurance to presidential politics.



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