

2019 Family road trip report: Rising gas prices, jobs impact summer road trips

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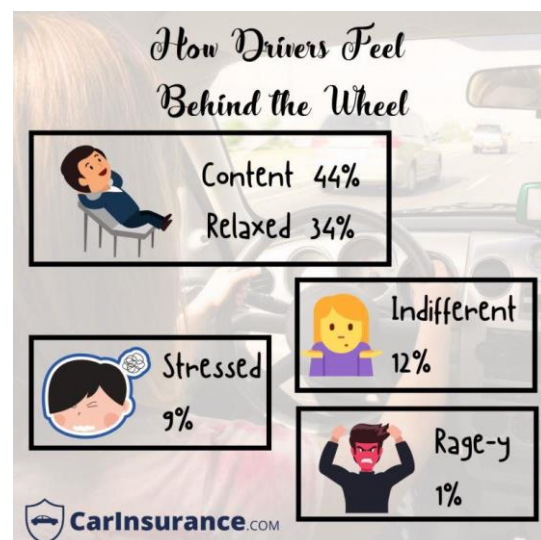


Soon, the school year will be in the rear-view mirror, and families across the nation will hit the road for a good old-fashioned summer road trip. To kick off the season, CarInsurance.com surveyed parents to find out how they feel when driving, what their family road trip experiences are like, what they 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 finds that nearly three-quarters 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.

A whopping 91 percent of respondents said they've been on a family road trip over the past five years. Eighty-three percent of respondents said they're more apt to take a long car ride for a vacation than travel by plane. A mere 17 percent said they prefer air travel.

Why do people prefer the car to a plane? More



than half (55 percent) said they just enjoy road trips more. Nearly half (49 percent) said it's too expensive to fly. About one-third (34 percent) 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 2019 responses compare to those of 2018:

Road-trip experiences	2019	2018
Super fun, we will do it again	73%	69%
Stressful, yet enjoyable	36%	40%
Much more fighting than at home	8%	7%
Someone had a meltdown within an hour of the trip	12%	7%
Someone had a meltdown before we left the neighborhood	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 -- 30%
- 751 miles to 1,000 miles -- 27%
- Less than 500 miles -- 9%

Gas prices, jobs put brakes on road-tripping

AAA estimates that gas prices have risen about 20 cents on average over the past year. In some states, like California, gas prices have gone up even more. California drivers now pay an average of more than \$4 for a gallon of regular gas.

Gas prices are causing many families to stay closer to home. The most common reason why people don't take road trips is gas prices. This is different from a year ago when the top choice was that people couldn't take off work.

Here's how 2019 compared to 2018:

Reasons not to take a road trip	2019	2018
Gas prices too high	44%	36%
Can't take the time off work	30%	41%
Don't like road trips	15%	11%
A family member gets car sick	11%	19%
Can't stand the traffic I'd be in/hate driving	11%	14%

Reasons not to take a road trip	2019	2018
Don't want to spend that much time in car with my family	8%	12%
Hate booking hotels/finding places to stay on the road	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.

Our 2019 findings on how drivers feel about their driving experiences are similar to last year's.

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

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.

We see that:

- 74 percent coped by listening to music
- 39 percent talked or texted on the phone
- 32 percent listened to news
- 29 percent ate an entire meal
- 23 percent listened to audiobooks or podcasts
- 19 percent listened to sports radio
- 13 percent got work done
- 11 percent cried
- 11 percent called people who they weren't particularly close to because they were bored

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

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

Bad road conditions and construction: detours, accidents, dings and dents

The condition of America's roads is getting worse. The most recent [Department of Transportation](#) statistics show 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 2019 responses about how poor roads affected driving compared to last year:

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

Just one accident can raise your yearly car insurance rate by 32 percent, 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 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 doing a car insurance quote comparison, as that was 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.

Methodology:

CarInsurance.com in February 2019 commissioned Op4g to survey 1,000 parents who drive.

