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Visa Business and Economic Insights

Global Travel Insight

Key Points:

- Family vacations face a millennial makeover
- Active leisure rises to the top of the list of destination attributes
- Adventure parks offer a wide variety of activities that could appeal to this generation

Millennials on family vacations breathe new life into adventure parks

Mention millennials[1] and digital native, subscriptions for everything, and even avocado toast might come to mind. Family vacations may not be at the top of the list, but as more members of this generation start to have children they should be. Nearly 80 percent of all children under the age of 12 live in households today with at least one millennial parent, so how these families travel and what they expect out of their trips could be a key trend to watch for global travel and tourism providers.[2]

More than other generations, millennials prefer to spend their holidays relaxing at the beach. They also retain a bit of wanderlust from their younger years, looking to explore new, distant locations. At the same time, millennials with children strongly prefer destinations that offer physical activities.

While seemingly paradoxical to want to relax and have an activity-driven vacation, it's very much in keeping with a key aspect of this generation: Millennials report being more time-pressed. This is more so for millennials with children. Seeking to decompress through more active leisure is a distinguishing feature of affluent workers. It is fitting then that millennials with children also report earning more but having less time for leisure.

With these demographic trends and challenges in place, adventure park tourism—typically involving more physical, participatory activities than a traditional amusement park— could have a bright future ahead. Why not take the family and kids on a vacation zip-lining through jungles, snorkeling among coral reefs, dunking in water parks, horseback riding on beaches or swimming with dolphins?

Visa Business and Economic Insights analysis of anonymized aggregated transactions on VisaNet indicates that vacations including a stop at an adventure park are gaining currency. In September, total spending on Visa credentials by domestic and foreign visitors at adventure parks was up 11 percent and 18 percent year-over-year (YoY), respectively.* For destinations, families visiting adventure parks have become an attractive demographic, especially for those destinations facing challenges with over tourism. Our data shows that visitors to adventure parks tend to be more affluent, spending 2-4 times more than the general population per year on their Visa credentials. A deeper analysis into North American visitors to adventure parks in Latin America and the Caribbean, reveals that travelers who visit adventure parks stay longer in country, at four days on average, than those who don't, at two days. Moreover, they spend up to four times as much as visitors who do not visit these parks as they seek to fill their trip with memorable experiences.

**Constant dollars, 12 months ending Sept-2025 vs. Sept-2024.*

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Millennials reaching the next milestone in life and finding time for the family

Millennials may have a reputation for hitting key life milestones later than previous generations, but in fact as they age, they too are hitting them. Since 1997, over 2 billion babies have been born to millennial mothers. Millennials in emerging markets have led their counterparts in advanced economies in having babies, where the peak in child-bearing has come later (Fig. 1).[3]

To get a sense of how millennials could impact family travel, consider how many children are being raised in households where at least one parent is a millennial. More than three out of four children (12 years of age and under) live in households with a millennial parent (Fig. 2). In advanced economies, the share of pre-teens in millennial households rises to four in five. At least for the next decade, especially in advanced economies, millennials' travel preferences will shape the family vacation given that a strong majority of children live in households headed by them.

When it comes to their travel preferences, millennials—regardless of whether they have children or not—share at least two commonalities: they enjoy beach holidays and they don't mind travelling far distances to see new attractions (Fig. 3). They are more likely to want to do these two activities than other generations. And, their preference for destinations that offer physical activities depends a lot on whether or not they have children: 60 percent of those with kids agreed they like to go to destinations with some form of physical activity, as opposed to only 50 percent for those without kids. This preference for more active leisure makes sense especially for millennials with children who are short on time and who want their little free time to not be occupied by work and chores.[4]

Fig. 1: Millennials' child raising takes off in the 2000s
Share of children born to millennial mothers (% of total)

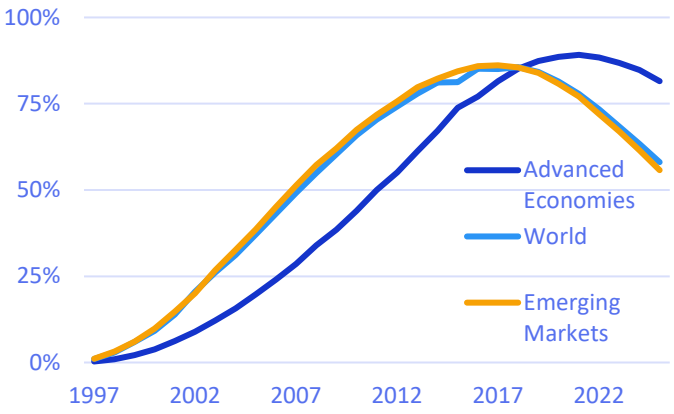
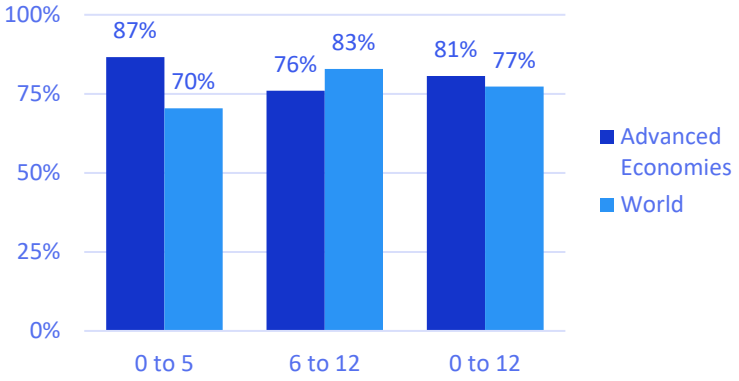
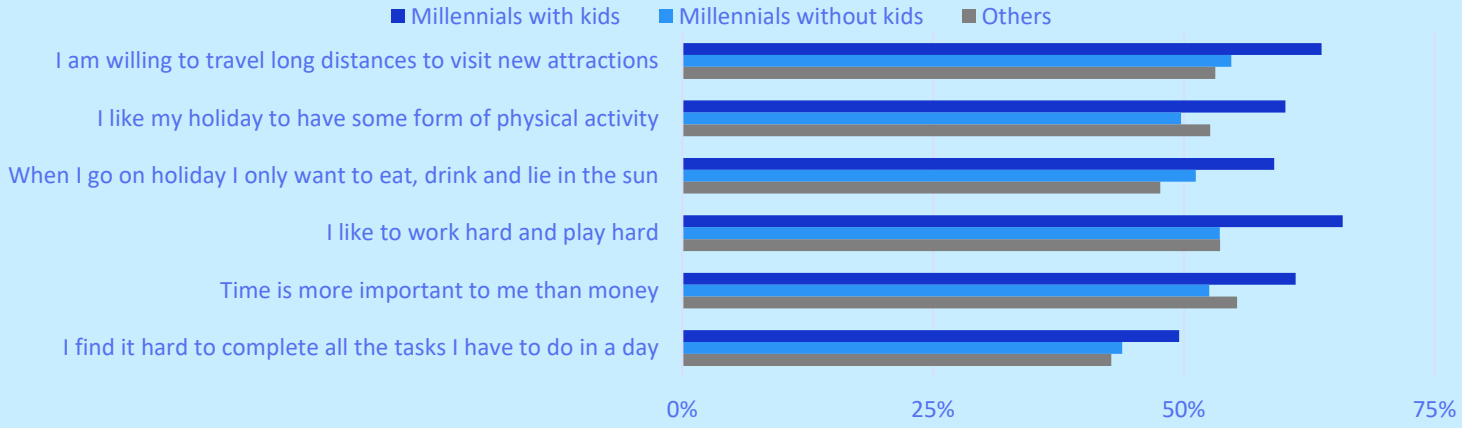


Fig. 2: Most children live in households headed by millennials
(Millennials' share of children by age and geography, % of total)



Source: Visa Business and Economic Insights analysis of data from the United Nations, World Population Prospects 2024.

Fig. 3: Millennials are ever the explorers, and those with children are looking for relaxation and activities
Statements agreed to by segment (share of total, %)



Source: Visa Business and Economic Insights analysis of survey data from You Gov Global Profiles, 10-29-2025

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Adventure parks can be a great option for parents and kids, especially in millennial families

For parents short on time and looking for an active vacation, adventure parks have much to offer. Situated in great natural locations around the world, they can offer educational experiences through encounters with rare plants and animals, outdoor recreational activities and even cultural explorations. While some combine all the activities through one provider, in other cases a destination supports many small businesses. For travel providers, bundling or highlighting nearby adventure parks could enhance their appeal to this demographic.

VBEI analysis of anonymized and aggregated transaction data allows us to better track spending at adventure parks. Visitor spending at select parks located in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East and Asia Pacific shows steady growth in park spending, with the amount spent by international visitors growing faster more recently than their domestic counterparts. In the year ending September 2025, international visitor spending in adventure parks was up 18 percent year-on-year (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4: Adventure parks can help satisfy time-pressed travelers' vacation goals and needs

Sample of adventure parks' payment volumes (rolling 12-month basis indexed 100=2024)

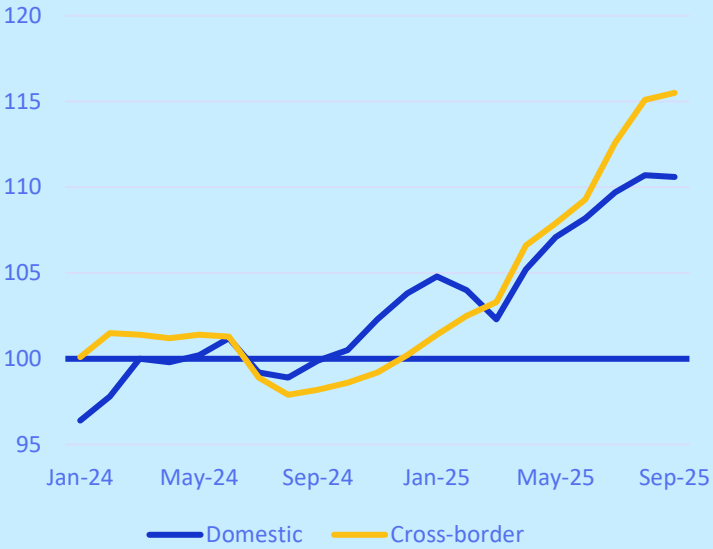

Fig. 5: Travelers outspend other cardholders, and adventure park travelers even more so

Median annual spending by travelers relative to median spend in country

Source: Visa Business and Economic Insights analysis of VisaNet data

Transaction data provides valuable insights into adventure park visitors. Analysis across multiple countries reveals that these visitors are typically more affluent, spending significantly more per year on their Visa credentials than the general population. In fact, adventure park visitors outspend even cross-border travelers, who are themselves a high-spending group. For example, in Singapore, the median cardholder who traveled abroad between November 2024 and October 2025 spent twice as much as the median domestic spender, while those visiting adventure parks spent three times as much (Fig. 5). As a result, many destinations are enhancing their offerings to attract higher-spending visitors—a strategy increasingly used to address the challenges of over tourism by bringing in visitors more engaged and invested in destinations.

Combining transaction data with demographic information from third-party sources reveals that those who are visiting adventure parks are only a fraction of the potential market. For example, U.S. visitors who have visited an adventure park in Mexico, Jamaica and Costa Rica were only slightly more likely to be parents (at 77 percent of the total) as opposed to other visitors (68 percent). Additionally, the gap between those who have visited versus those who have not is much wider by generation, with 47 percent of those who visited the parks being millennials as opposed to 36 percent of those who did not. Marketing outreach to millennials with children could help to attract more visitors to the parks and lodging and other small businesses adjacent to them. For issuers, partnering with adventure parks could be a means to deepening connections with this key customer segment.

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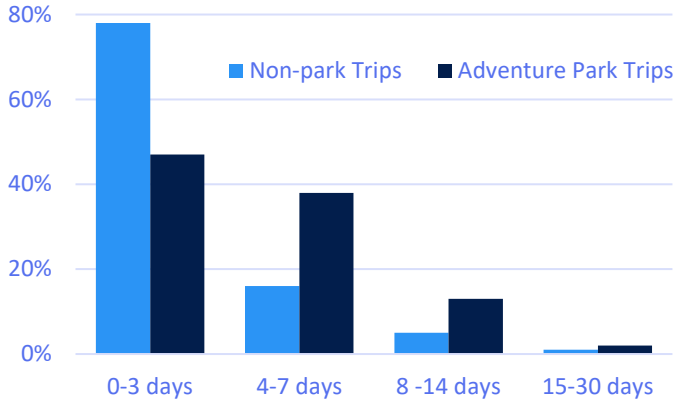
Trips involving adventure parks can yield strong returns to destinations

We found that adventure park tourists are more engaged and spend significantly more time at their destinations than other cross-border travelers. Our analysis focused on North American cardholders who visited Mexico, Costa Rica, and Jamaica over the past year. For each cardholder, we identified trips by tracking the first and last day their card was used in each country. This method allowed us to treat each trip separately—so, for example, if a traveler visited Mexico multiple times in a year, each adventure park visit was analyzed as a distinct trip.

The data revealed that trips including an adventure park visit averaged four days—twice as long as other North American travelers' trips—and generally lasted longer than the typical visit (see Fig. 7). Not only did these travelers stay longer, but they also spent nearly three times more in-person at their destinations. Moreover, adventure park trips were more experience-focused, with travelers prioritizing immersive activities over other types of visits.

Fig. 6: Trips that include adventure park visits tend to be longer in duration

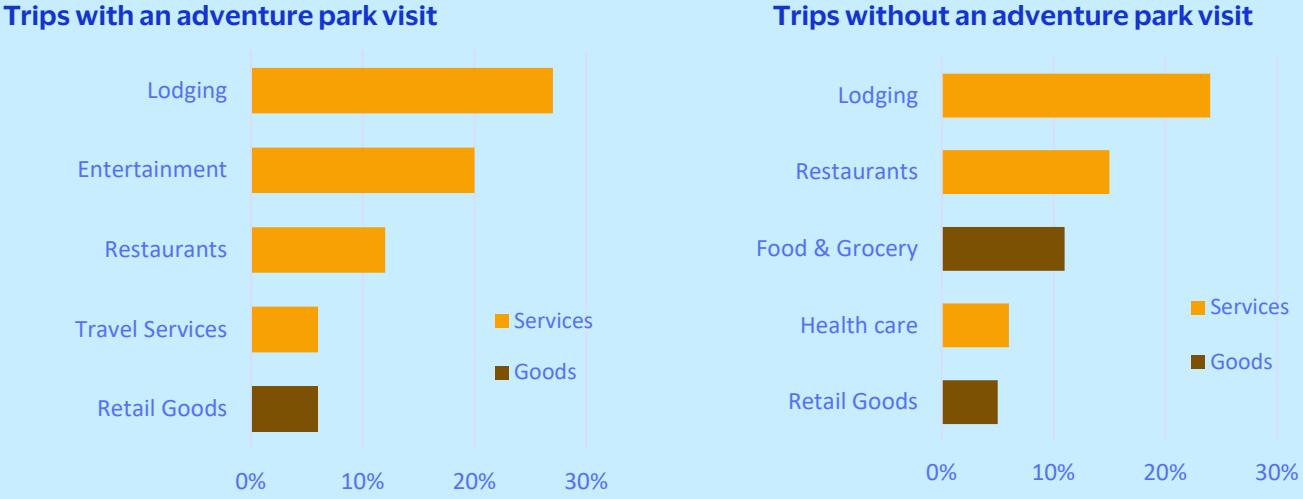
Distribution of trips by duration and type (% of total)



Source: Visa Business and Economic Insights analysis of VisaNet data

Fig. 7: Trips with adventure parks tend to encompass more spending on experiences

Distribution of spending across the top five categories for each type of travel



Source: Visa Business and Economic Insights analysis of VisaNet data

As the year-end approaches and spring and summer holidays become top of the mind, adventure parks that offer a little bit of everything for everyone in the family could be strong vacation options in 2026. For millennial families, including adventure parks in the itinerary could open up new experiences in distant lands while also offering a wide range of activities. Such trips could also appeal to their preference for active leisure given their typically busy work and household schedules.

For destinations, VBEI analysis shows that visits including adventure parks attract higher-spending travelers who will stay longer in destinations as they seek to build memories through unique experiences. These travelers can help to even out some of the stresses that are placed on destinations more accustomed to shorter-term visits that involve less engagement by the traveler.

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Footnotes

1. Millennials in this report are defined as those born between 1982 to 1999.
2. VBEI analysis of data from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2024), *World Population Prospects 2024,* published July 2024.
3. VBEI analysis of data from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2024), *World Population Prospects 2024,* published July 2024.
4. VBEI analysis of data from the You Gov, *Global Profiles,* October 29, 2025.

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Accessibility notes

Fig. 1: A chart showing three lines comparing the share of children born to millennial mothers as a % of the total from 1997 to 2022 in emerging economies, advanced economies and for the world in total, with all three starting at 0% in 1997. The share of millennial children increased steadily over the next 28 years, reaching a high for emerging economies of 86% in 2017 before declining over the next eight years to the current 56% in 2025, while in advanced economies the share was 89% (in 2021) and 81% respectively and for the world the millennial share was 86% (2018) and 58% respectively.

Fig. 2: A bar chart showing that in advanced economies, 87% of children aged 0-5 live in millennial households, while 76% of children aged 6-12 do and 81% of those aged 0-12 do. Worldwide, the percentages are 70%, 83% and 77% respectively.

Fig. 3: A bar chart showing the share of survey respondents who agreed with six statements segmented into three groups: millennials with kids, millennials without kids and others. For example, 64% of millennials with kids are willing to travel long distances, compared to 55% without kids and 53% of others. 60% of millennials with kids prefer holidays with physical activity, versus 50% without kids and 53% of others. Other statements include preferences for relaxation, work-life balance, valuing time over money, and feeling time-pressed.

Fig. 4: A chart shows two lines: domestic and cross-border. Both start near 100 in January 2024. Domestic spending rises steadily to about 111 by September 2025. Cross-border spending grows more rapidly, reaching about 116 by September 2025, indicating faster growth among international visitors.

Fig. 5: A bar chart comparing median annual spending by cross-border travelers and adventure park travelers relative to the median spend in each country. Adventure park travelers consistently spend more than cross-border travelers across all countries shown. For example, in Singapore, cross-border travelers spend about 1.6 times the median, while adventure park travelers spend 2.5 times. In Hong Kong, the difference is even larger (2.4 vs. 4.4 times). The pattern holds across Poland, UK, Costa Rica, US, Canada, and Argentina.

Fig. 6: A bar chart showing the distribution of trips by duration and type, with 47% of adventure park trips lasting 0-3 days, 38% lasting 4-7 days and 13% lasting 8-14 days. For non-adventure park trips, the percentages are 78%, 16% and 5% respectively.

Fig. 7: Two grouped bar charts comparing the distribution of spending across top five categories for trips with and without adventure park visits. Adventure park trips show higher shares in lodging, restaurants, and entertainment. For non-park trips, spending is distributed across retail goods, health care, food & grocery, restaurants, and lodging, with lodging at 24% and restaurants at 15%. For adventure park trips, lodging is 27%, entertainment 20%, restaurants 12%, travel services 6%, and retail goods 6%.

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