

Survey: More women vacationing together

By Troy Green

A survey of women travelers shows that girls-only vacations — the girlfriend getaway — are growing in popularity, in large part because American women feel the need to escape personal and professional responsibilities. The survey also shows girls-only vacations with girlfriends and female family members ease stress, making them an important part of American women's lives.

Conducted by AAA and Aspire, a global training and consulting company, the survey is the most comprehensive study of the girlfriend getaways travel market. The report found that 24 percent of American women have taken a girlfriend getaway in the past three years and 39 percent of American women plan to take one in the next three years.

"The experience of a girlfriend getaway has a deep effect on the lives and friendships of women who take these trips. Many believe that going away with their girlfriends is important, regardless of the destination," said Regina C. Averella, public and government affairs manager for AAA Mid-Atlantic. "In fact, I recently took such a vacation. Although I missed my

family, the bonding and friendship that comes from such a vacation is quite rewarding."

This comprehensive report included an online survey of 1,500 women, a telephone survey of 513 women and telephone focus groups of 16 women.

Women participating in the survey said that while the most common destinations include the beach (66 percent), going to the spa (63 percent), taking a shopping trip (55 percent) or taking a cruise (51 percent), the destination and the accommodations are incidental to the primary purpose of a girlfriend getaway: Spending time bonding with their female friends and family away from personal and professional responsibilities.

The most difficult aspects of planning a girlfriend getaway are finding a time that works for everyone (77 percent) and selecting a trip that fits everyone's budget (76 percent). Fifty-six percent of all women surveyed said they have yet to make plans for a future girlfriend getaway, but would like to plan one.

— *Troy Green is a public affairs specialist with AAA Mid-Atlantic.*

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