



## FALL 2020 UPDATE

# THE GROWTH OF CAMPING AMID COVID-19

— Report Issued October 1, 2020 —



A fall 2020 survey of the general population conducted by Cairn Consulting Group  
Sponsored by Kampgrounds of America



# THE CONTINUED EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON CAMPING

With the ongoing uncertainty around COVID-19, leisure travel continues to feel the effects. Not so for camping, though.

According to the results of this special COVID-19 edition of the North American Camping Report, sponsored by Kampgrounds of America, Inc., camping continues to experience a strong rebound with its ability to meet travelers' desire to experience the outdoors with natural social distancing.

Once travelers felt it was safe to resume travel, camping experienced a summer boom with campers taking more trips than originally planned and new campers trying the activity for the first time.

Interest in and frequency of camping has increased steadily since the start of measurement through the annual North American Camping Report in 2014 — and increased camping is expected to continue. Across all leisure travelers, camping is projected to account for 15% of their remaining travel for the year, versus just 11% prior to the pandemic. Other means of travel have not experienced this improvement or projected growth in light of the pandemic.

While there is still uncertainty around COVID-19, the outlook for camping in the remainder of 2020 and beyond is promising and strong. Some may believe camping is having its moment in the sun, but as millions of North American campers already know — and many new campers found out this summer — camping has long fulfilled people's intrinsic desires and provides a place to reconnect with ourselves and others.

For the purpose of this research, campers are defined as leisure travelers who include camping as part of their trips, and noncampers are leisure travelers who don't not camp. Prospective campers are travelers who did not camp pre-COVID-19 but say they are interested in camping. New or first-time campers are those who have indicated taking their first camping trip between May and September 2020.

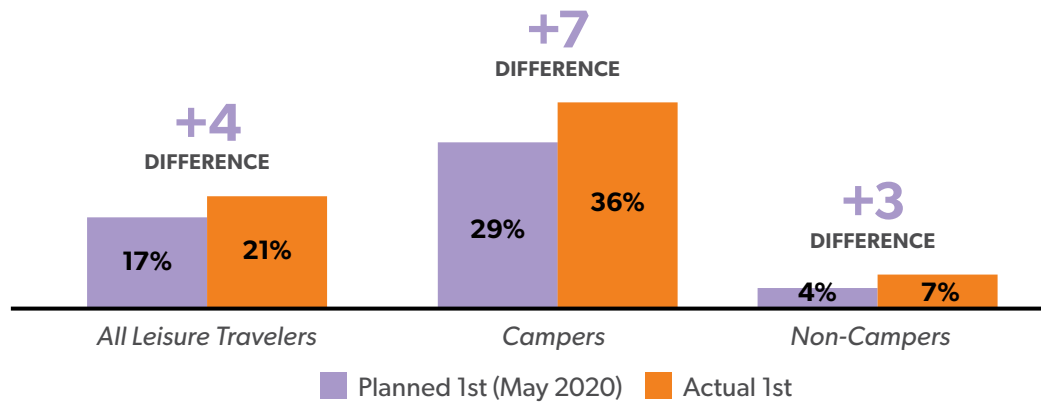
# KEY FINDINGS

## THE CURRENT STATE OF CAMPING AMID COVID-19

### Summer Camping Activity Was Busier than Expected

When originally surveyed in May, leisure travelers predicted that camping would be their first trip once travel restrictions were lifted and results of this September follow-up survey suggest that travelers in fact exceeded their intentions to camp.

**Camping as First Type of Planned Trip  
Once COVID-19 Restrictions are Lifted (May – September 2020)**



### One-fourth of North American Campers Took Their First Camping Trip During the Pandemic

Nearly half of all campers (46%) either started camping for the first time in 2020 or restarted after having not camped in recent years. Further, 19% of Millennial, 17% of Gen X and 15% of Gen Z travelers report having gone camping for the first time since the start of the pandemic.

### First-time Campers Represent a Much Younger Demographic, as well as Families

Millennials comprise 55% of new campers who have indicated taking their first camping trip since the start of the pandemic. What's more, 82% of first-time campers have children in the household.

### Interest in Camping Remains Strong

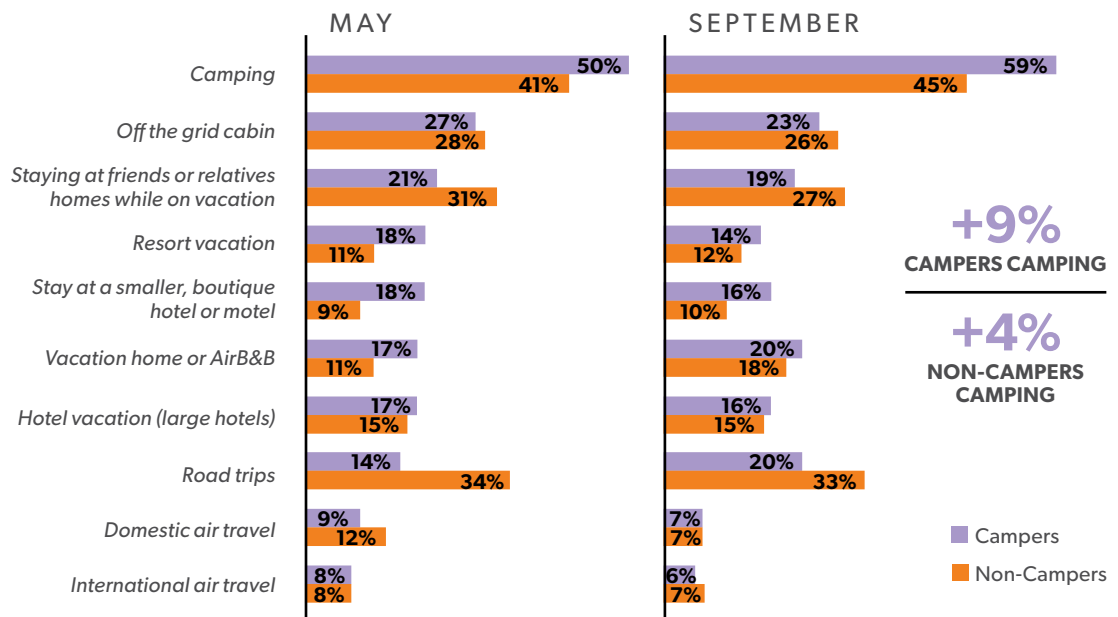
Close to half of all campers, 42%, say that they will still be taking their planned camping trips during the remainder of this year; only 17% cancelled and 10% will likely cancel.

# CAMPING STILL CONSIDERED THE SAFEST FORM OF TRAVEL

## As Travelers Feel it is Safe to Resume Travel, Many to Replace Trips with Camping

Campers and non-campers alike rank camping as the safest type of travel. In fact, 29% of general travelers, 45% of campers and 15% of non-campers plan to replace cancelled or postponed travel with a camping trip.

### Rankings of the Safest Forms of Travel



## Private Bathrooms Still a Preference for Ultimate Social Distancing

Having a private bathroom facility while camping is important to 48% of all leisure travelers, 42% of campers and 58% of prospective campers.



# CAMPING BEHAVIOR AMID COVID-19 REALITIES

## Campers Are Willing to Visit Less Popular Locations to Avoid Overcrowding

A willingness to travel to less popular locations in order to avoid overcrowded areas is of interest for 68% of campers and 60% of general leisure travelers.

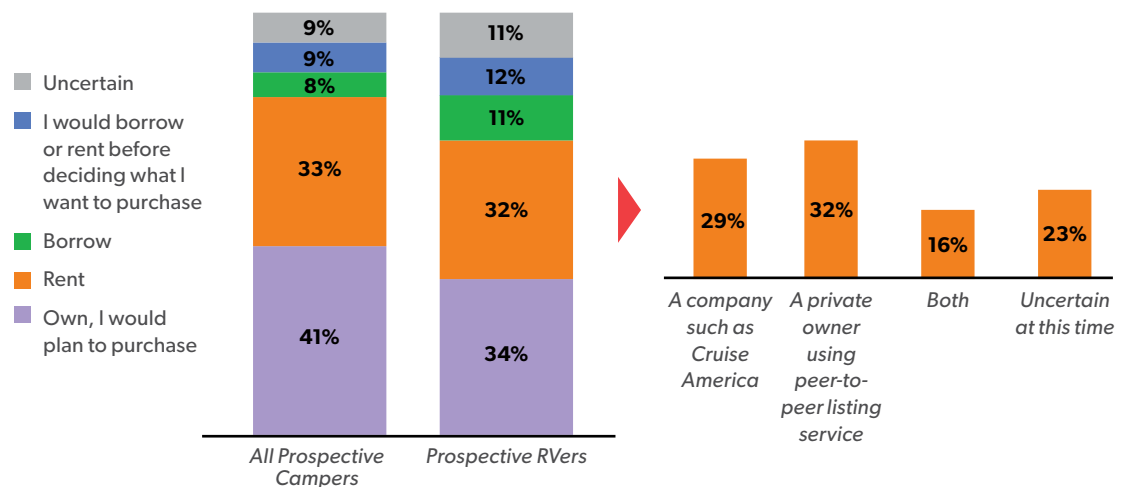
## What's Driving the Current Popularity of RVing

RVs provide the ultimate in personal space for traveling, which makes it no surprise that more than half of all campers (51%) say that they are now more likely to purchase an RV. The primary driver of an RV purchase among campers is concerns over cleanliness while traveling.

Looking at RVing by age, Gen X campers are most inclined to purchase an RV (62%) while interest in full-time RVing is highest among millennial campers (36%).

Among prospective RVers, there is almost an even split between those who would buy versus rent an RV; however, among renters there is a larger difference between traditional and peer-to-peer services.

### Prospective RVers' Plans to Buy, Borrow or Rent an RV



## Since the Pandemic Began, 46% of Leisure Travelers Have Spent More Time Outdoors

This includes 57% campers, but for all respondents, spending more time outdoors is most closely tied to having more free time (58%), followed by the desire to get outside after being forced to stay inside (47%) and exercise (41%).

# TRAVEL PLANS FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2020 HIGHLY IMPACTED BY REMOTE WORK AND SCHOOL SETTINGS

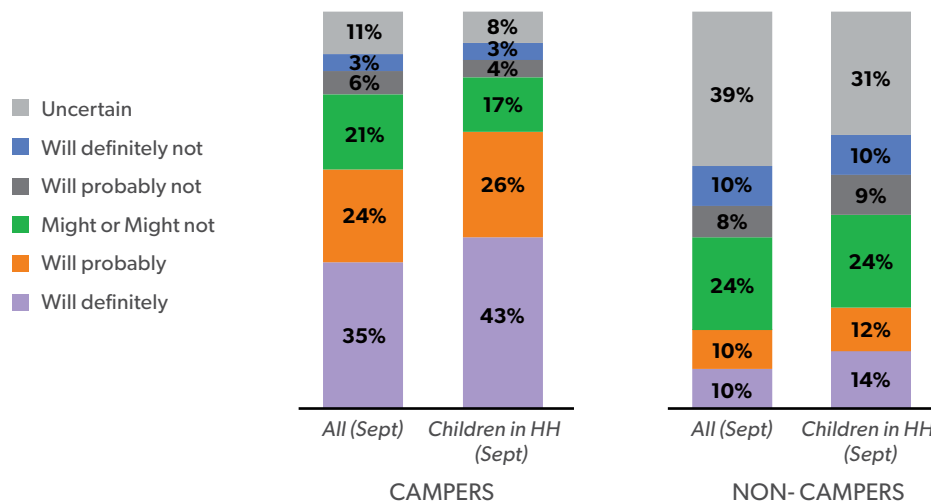
## Campers are Reaping the Benefits of Remote Work and Schooling to Camp More Often

A full 60% of campers say that the ability to work from home during the pandemic is allowing them to camp more often (and work simultaneously) through the remainder of 2020. The impact of working at home on potential camping trips is most pronounced among Gen X (45%) and Millennial (40%) campers.

For those with children in the home, 43% of campers and 14% of prospective campers say that they will “definitely” be able to extend the camping season if learning remains remote.

### Impact of Remote Work and/or Learning on the 2020 Camping Season

ABILITY TO EXTEND SEASON AND/OR CAMP MORE OFTEN



## Access to Technology Impacts Camping Frequency

In the COVID-19 landscape, access to technology to stay connected to family and friends, work remotely and facilitate learning is important and likely the caveat that will allow for more camping trips.

For 46% of campers, access to technology was considered very important for working remotely, and 36% of campers for allowing both children and campers themselves to complete schoolwork.

## Interest in Snowbirding

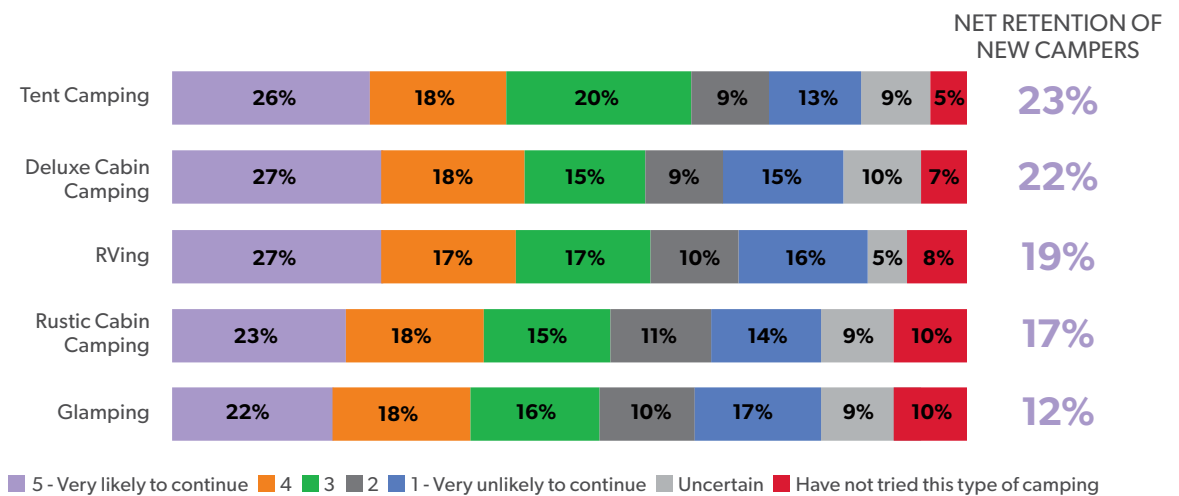
Whether American or Canadian, 28% of active campers indicate likelihood of becoming a “snowbird” camper with the highest interest from Gen X campers and non-campers alike.

# THE CONTINUED GROWTH OF CAMPING IN 2021

## Retention Forecast

Of new campers in 2020, it is estimated that 18% will continue camping in 2021. New campers who recognize themselves as tent or cabin campers have the highest likelihood of continuing to camp next year.

### New Campers to Continue Camping in 2021

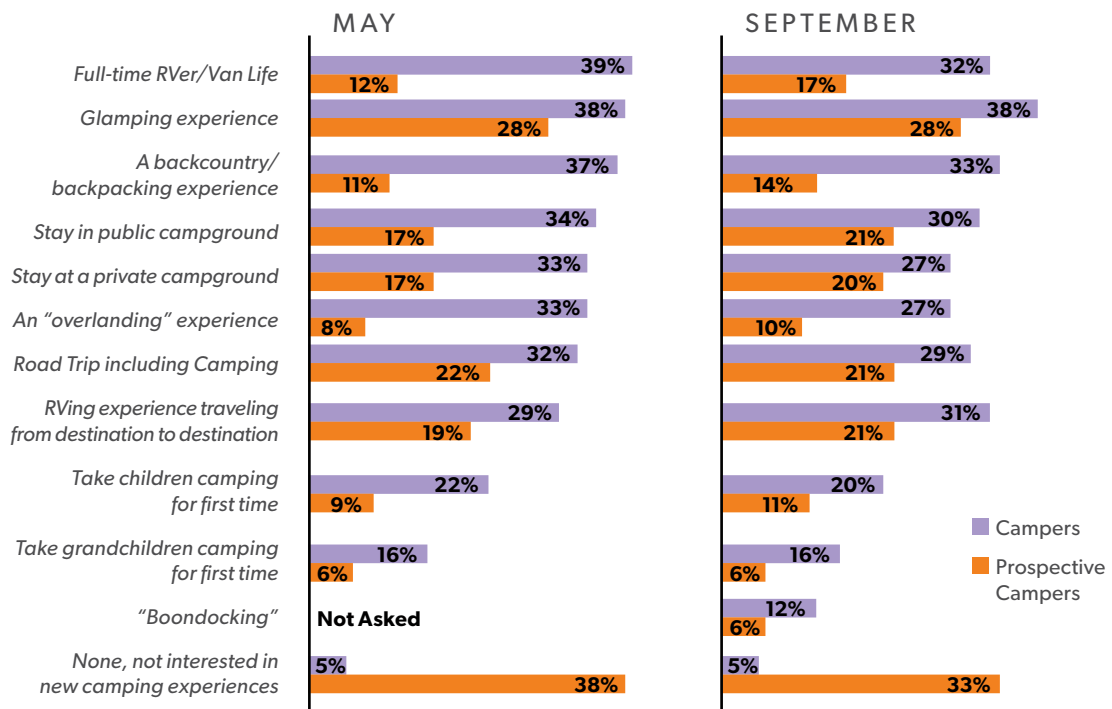




## Interest in Glamping is Robust Among Campers and Prospective Campers for 2021

Interest in glamping remains robust among both campers and prospective campers; Gen X (45%) and Millennial (42%) campers are the most interested in glamping experiences.

### Interest in Types of Camping Experiences for 2021





# APPENDIX

## Methodology

The North American camping survey was conducted by Cairn Consulting Group, an independent market research firm with extensive experience in the hospitality and services industries.

The survey was conducted from September 4-9, 2020. The sampling methodology targeted a randomly selected sample of U.S. and Canadian households who participate in leisure travel. Sampling was designed to obtain n=3,508 completed surveys among representative U.S. households and n=500 representative Canadian households. A sample of n=3,508 U.S. households is associated with a margin of error of +/- 1.65 percentage points. Among Canadian households, a sample of n=500 is associated with a margin of error of +/- 4.37 percentage points. All surveys were completed online via an outbound solicitation sent to a randomly selected cross-section of U.S. and Canadian households.

## About The North American Camping Report

This report represents an abridged version of the full survey results available. We're happy to work with interested parties wanting to explore additional findings from this report, or the spring COVID-19 Special Report, [North American Camping and the Effects of COVID-19](#). In addition to deeper data points, regionalized and demographic cuts are available.

The spring and fall COVID-19 reports are part of the [North American Camping Report](#) annual research initiative, sponsored by [Kampgrounds of America, Inc.](#). The North American Camping Report looks at the behaviors and attitudes of North American campers, including where, how, why and with whom they camp.

Media: With correct sourcing and credit, KOA and its research partner Cairn Consulting Group encourages the use of North American Camping Report findings by industry partners and the media. Please visit the [KOA Press Room](#) if you are interested in speaking with KOA about expanded data from the fall COVID-19 North American Camping Report or to access past reports and visual assets.

## About Kampgrounds of America

[Kampgrounds of America, Inc.](#) (KOA) is the world's largest system of open-to-the-public campgrounds with more than 520 locations across the U.S. and Canada. The industry leader in outdoor hospitality, KOA's family of campground brands – KOA Journey, KOA Holiday and KOA Resort – offer sites and amenities designed for every type of camping experience. These offerings are central to KOA's mission of connection people to the outdoors and each other. The company was founded 58 years ago in Billings, Mont., and today serves more than a million camping families each year, who rely on the standards of excellence and unique outdoor adventures KOA is known for. For more information, visit [KOA.com](#).



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