



# 2018 Year-End Holiday Travel Forecast

December 13, 2018



## Record-Breaking 112.5 Million Americans Expected to Travel During Year-End Holiday Period

### Year-End Holiday Travel to Break Record with **112.5 Million** Travelers

Travel during the year-end holiday period is expected to increase 4.4 percent to 112.5 million travelers, which is an increase of 4.7 million compared to last year. This year's holiday travel period runs Saturday, Dec. 22 - Tuesday, Jan. 1, which is one day more than last year. It is the highest number of holiday travelers since AAA began tracking the trend in 2001.



### 91 Percent to Travel by Car; Year-over-Year Rise of **4.3 Million**



Travel by car will grow 4.4 percent, in line with overall travel and resulting in 91 percent - 102.1 million travelers - on the road this holiday season. The recent drop in gas prices is motivating more Americans to hit the road.

### Air Travel Will Rise to **6.7 Million** Travelers

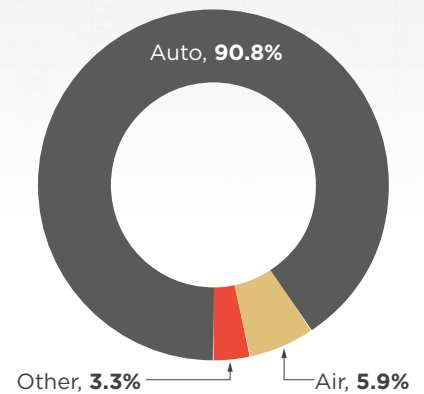


Air travel will increase for the seventh consecutive year, rising by 270,000 travelers, the highest since 2003 and 4.2 percent more than last year.

## Key takeaways:

- With 112.5 million travelers, 2018 year-end holiday travel will set a new record and is the 10th consecutive year of growth. This is the seventh straight year of reaching a new record-high travel volume. And the most since 2001.
- Travel by automobile, the most preferred mode of transportation, will rise for the eighth consecutive year to 102.1 million, an increase of more than 4.3 million from last year.
- Air travel volume will be the highest since 2003, with 6.7 million travelers—4.2 percent above last year.
- Travel by other modes (including bus, rail and cruise ship) will increase by 4 percent to 3.7 million.
- The 2018 year-end holiday period is defined as Saturday, Dec. 22 through Tuesday, Jan. 1. This 11-day period is one day longer than last year.

## Share of Travelers by Mode



## Year-End Holiday Travelers by Mode (millions)

	Automobile	Air	Other
2017	97.8	6.4	3.5
2018	102.1	6.7	3.7
Growth	4.4%	4.2%	4.0%

## Economic gains include the following:

- Economic growth remains steady as real gross domestic product is forecast to rise 3.1 percent in the fourth quarter compared with last year while the unemployment rate has fallen to 3.7 percent.
- Consumer spending continues to drive U.S. economic growth, as rising incomes are accompanied stable prices for goods and services, strong employment and increasing household asset values.
- Consumers remain optimistic as consumer sentiment and consumer confidence levels remain well above figures seen in recent years.
- Gas prices averaged \$2.46 for the first week of December, which is two cents per gallon less than one year ago.

AAA and IHS forecast a **4.4 percent** increase in total travelers this year-end holiday season, with **112.5 million** travelers expected to take to the roads, skies, rails and water.



# Holiday Forecast Methodology: A Brief Overview

## Travel Forecast

In cooperation with AAA, IHS Markit-- a world leader in critical information, analytics and expertise -- developed a unique methodology to forecast actual domestic travel volumes. The economic variables used to forecast travel for the current holiday are leveraged from IHS Markit's proprietary databases. These data include macroeconomic drivers such as employment; output; household net worth; asset prices including stock indices; interest rates; housing market indicators and variables related to travel and tourism, including prices of gasoline, airline travel and hotel stays.

Historical travel volume estimates come from DK SHIFFLET's TRAVEL PERFORMANCE/*Monitor*<sup>sm</sup>. The PERFORMANCE/*Monitor*<sup>sm</sup> is a comprehensive study measuring the travel behavior of U.S. residents. DK SHIFFLET contacts over 50,000 U.S. households each month to obtain detailed travel data, resulting in the unique ability to estimate visitor volume and spending, identify trends, forecast U.S. travel behavior and position brands—all after the trips have been taken.

The travel forecast is reported in person-trips. In particular, AAA and IHS Markit forecast the total U.S. holiday travel volume and expected mode of transportation. The travel forecast presented in this report was prepared the week of Nov. 19, 2018.

## Year-End Holiday Travel Period

For purposes of this forecast, the year-end holiday travel period is defined as the 11-day period from Saturday, Dec. 22 to Tuesday, Jan. 1. This period is one day longer than the 2017/2018 year-end travel period.

## About AAA

AAA provides more than 59 million members with automotive, travel, insurance and financial services through its federation of 35 motor clubs and nearly 1,100 branch offices across North America. Since 1902, the not-for-profit, fully tax-paying AAA has been a leader and advocate for safe mobility. Drivers can request roadside assistance, identify nearby gas prices, locate discounts, book a hotel or map a route via the [AAA Mobile app](#). To join, visit [AAA.com](#).

## About IHS Markit

([www.ihsmarkit.com](#))

IHS Markit (Nasdaq: INFO) is a world leader in critical information, analytics and solutions for the major industries and markets that drive economies worldwide. The company delivers next-generation information, analytics and solutions to customers in business, finance and government, improving their operational efficiency and providing deep insights that lead to well-informed, confident decisions. IHS Markit has more than 50,000 key business and government customers, including 85 percent of the Fortune Global 500 and the world's leading financial institutions. Headquartered in London, IHS Markit is committed to sustainable, profitable growth.

## About DK SHIFFLET

([www.dkshifflet.com](#))

DK SHIFFLET boasts the industry's most complete database on U.S. resident travel both in the U.S. and worldwide. Data is collected monthly from a U.S. representative sample, adding over 60,000 traveling households annually and is used daily by leading travel organizations and their strategic planning groups. DK SHIFFLET is an MMGY Global company.