



# Travel Trends Among U.S. Teenagers 2012

Special thanks to our partners:



**Report on results of 2012 FTF Teen Travel Writing Scholarship**

FTFc - Family Travel Forum Consulting

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2012 Best Photography winner Christina Memmott photographed her "Life As A Kyrgyz Nomad"

## INTRODUCTION

From mid-April to August 2012, the 6th annual Family Travel Forum Teen Travel Writing Scholarship asked young writers ages 13-18 attending American, US Department of Defense, International-American, or home school programs, to submit their travel blogs for a merit scholarship. The Society of American Travel Writers (SATW) sponsored cash prizes for writing, photography and video, and their professional members chose the winners. Ripley's Believe It or Not! and National Geographic Kids provided winners with travel gifts and Universal Orlando Resort awarded the Grand Prize theme park vacation for a family of four to the First Place Winner.

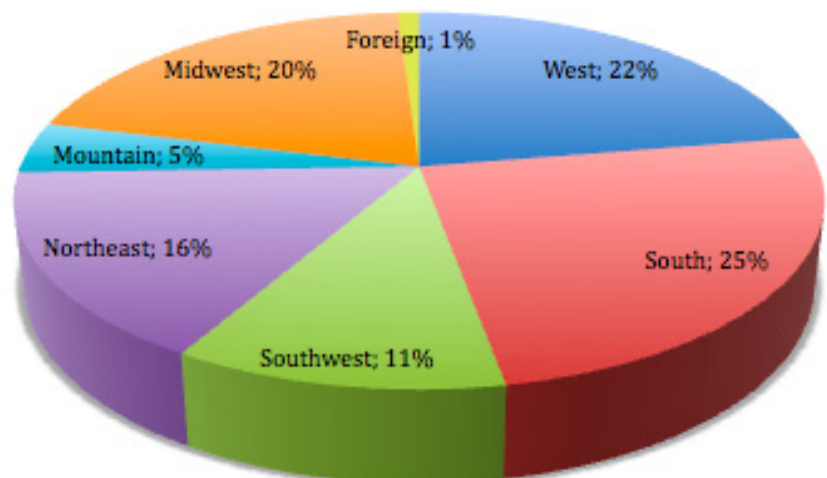


## APPLICANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Scholarship hopefuls came from all over the United States, Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, as well as 7 foreign countries. The three states with the greatest number of applicants were California, Florida and Texas in that order; Hawaii was the only state with no applicants. Teens in Canada, the U.K., South Africa, Japan, Germany, China and Vietnam also submitted scholarship entries.

## Regions Teens Applied From

“There were over 6,300 applicants from 49 U.S. states, 2 territories and 7 foreign countries.”





Honorable Mention recipient Annalisa Jackson learns a valuable lesson in the slums of Korah, Ethiopia in "Day at the Dumps."

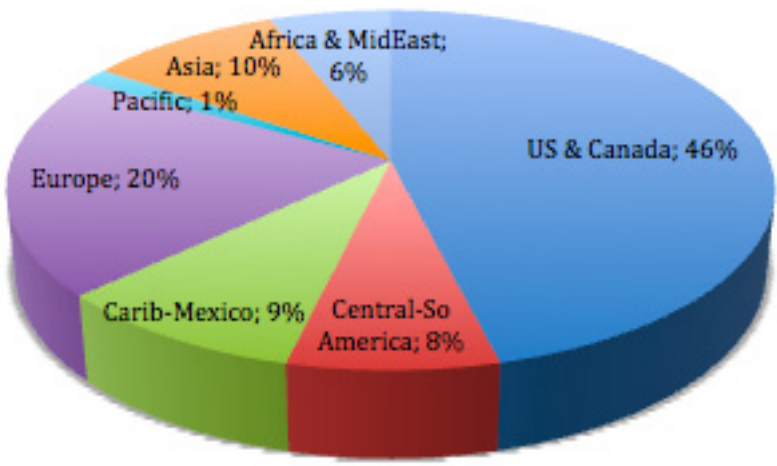


### WHERE?

As varied as the travel motivators were among the 2012 scholarship applicants, the places they chose to write about were even more diverse. Applicants could write about a destination they had visited within the past five years.

In 2012, FTFc concludes that 54% of teens traveled outside the United States and Canada by the time they were 18 and, by their own telling, often more than once. This is the second year since the US recession began in 2008 that the majority of student travels was not within the 50 states or Canada, indicating potential economic optimism for many families.

### Where Teens are Traveling



“More languages.  
More diversity.  
More traveling.  
Hong Kong? Cape Town? Stuttgart?  
*Pourquoi pas?*”

-Emily Joyce, "Pourquoi Pas?"  
Honorable Mention

Photo: Honorable Mention recipient Julia Chen uncovers her past in the streets of Shanghai in "Just A Place in China."



Honorable Mention recipient Erin Ceconi bikes across the country in "Somewhere Between Two Oceans."



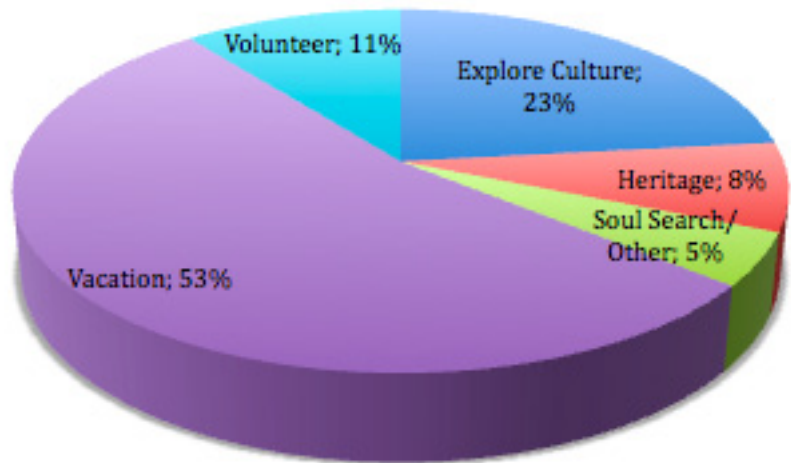
## WHY?

In reviewing data collected from over 6,300 applicants, Family Travel Forum's consulting division searched for patterns in teen travel.

- After an initial sharp increase, trips for the primary purpose of helping others have remained relatively steady in the years since FTF began its scholarship, rising from 7.5% in 2007 to 11% in 2011 and 2012, possibly a reflection of teens' awareness of global poverty.
- In 2012, 8% of teens wrote about traveling to discover their family's heritage, up from 6% in 2011. FTFc believes that even in a recession, heritage travel remains of great value to families, despite the expense. Travel to Central and South America, Africa and the Middle East, and Asia--all regions where many new citizens have their roots--has all increased.

## Why Teens are Traveling

"Heritage and Culture trips are up from 25% to 31% since 2011."





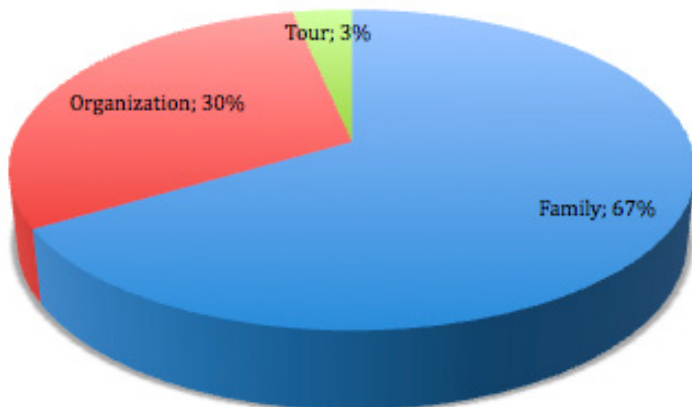
Honorable Mention recipient Brianna Leigh Johnson roughs it in Utah's outdoors in "When Your Toilet Is Called 'The Groover.'"



## TRAVEL COMPANIONS?

- Little over half (53%) of teens said they traveled for "vacation," fewer than those (67%) who told us they were traveling with family members. This suggests an increased interest in taking Cultural, Volunteer and Heritage trips *en famille* -- underlining parents' growing emphasis on education and bonding through family vacations.
- 30% traveled with an organized tour led by a school group, organization or exchange program for a cultural immersion experience, to learn a foreign language, partake in a homestay, play music, sports, etc. This is a slight decrease from the 31% in 2011. But the scholarship travel blogs also reflect an uptick in the number of commercial teen tour participants (3%), indicating that confidence in the economy's improvement perhaps means parents are more willing to pay for such tours.
- 67% of teens wrote about travels with family, compared with 69% in 2011. But this decrease is small compared with the dramatic rise in percentage points from 2007, when travel with family was only at 54%. In addition to this being a possible signal of budgetary constraints, we hope it is also an indication that, overall, our independent teens have maintained a steady desire to travel with their families.

## Who traveled with these teens?



“Travel with family members has remained at about 2/3 of all teen travel for the past two years.”