

**Experiential Travel and New Adventures Fuel  
Interest In Camping and Outdoor Hospitality in 2023**

Press Release Date: May 2, 2023

**BILLINGS, Mont. (May 2, 2023)** – The outdoor travel sector has grown considerably over the past several years, becoming a formidable part of the overall leisure travel landscape as people seek solace in nature and affordable vacation options in the great outdoors. Today, new data from [Kampgrounds of America, Inc's](#) (KOA) 2023 North American Camping and Outdoor Hospitality Report provides an in-depth look at key trends shaping the outdoor hospitality industry, including how the camping and glamping market is evolving as travelers re-establish pre-pandemic travel habits, how travelers are adapting their upcoming plans amid economic uncertainty, and how specific demographic populations describe their relationship with outdoor-focused leisure travel as the 2023 peak camping season begins.

In its ninth year continuously measuring growth and interest in camping and outdoor travel, KOA's industry-leading camping report broadens its scope to look more holistically at outdoor hospitality and its importance in the larger camping industry. Outdoor hospitality extends across four sectors, accommodation, food and beverage, travel and tourism, and entertainment and recreation – 61% of campers strongly agree that offering services and amenities beyond the campsite or accommodation is pivotal in providing outdoor hospitality. In total, 78% of campers say that outdoor hospitality is important in their travel experiences. In 2022, camping and glamping accounted for 32% of all leisure trips, making camping and outdoor hospitality a crucial travel segment.

“As leisure travelers increasingly choose the outdoors over other alternatives, we need to look more granularly at camping,” said Toby O'Rourke, CEO and president of Kampgrounds of America, Inc. “A decade of independent research confirms that camping is a preferred way for many to travel, try new things, and connect with what they care about most. The segment of outdoor hospitality, growing in importance, offers additional ways for people to connect to the outdoors.”

KOA's 2023 survey found that a hunger for new experiences, whether it's a specific type of camping, or a camping trip that includes a new or unique experience, is driving camping participation in 2023. Year-to-year, about 80% of campers try a new form of camping they are unfamiliar with; in 2023, the average camper will seek out three new or unique camping experiences. Trips for natural events such as eclipses, meteor showers and animal migrations are the most common type of trips campers are looking for in 2023, with 40% of campers seeking out this type of experience in 2023. Other types of trips that campers are interested in include food tourism (36%) and visits to small towns (31%). Glamping also continues to gain momentum. Over 10 million households took a glamping trip in 2022, and four-in-10 campers express interest in taking a glamping trip in 2023, up by 7% from the prior year.

Though the COVID-19 pandemic generated record-breaking growth in outdoor travel, 2022 witnessed an increase of about 1.5 million additional camping households—a stabilization compared to the previous year. Amid a reshuffling of behavior, new audiences discovering a love for camping are younger, more diverse and more likely to reside in urban areas. Today, 92 million U.S. households identify as campers. Even amid economic headwinds, half of campers say that camping offers a more cost-friendly way to travel during a downturn, and 38% say they'll continue to camp, even if the economy worsens. More than half (56%) of RVers will use their RV more (33%) or the same amount (23%) in the case of an economic downturn. Furthermore, campers find that outdoor travel offers physical and mental health benefits, as well as the opportunity to connect with family and friends.

“Camping continues to prove that it is resilient to economic headwinds,” O'Rourke said. “In fact, 38% of campers will continue to camp and take fewer trips of other types during times of economic uncertainty. Camping offers physical and emotional benefits that are important in a reliable, cost-effective way that outdoor travelers seek out.”

Additional key findings from the 2023 North American Camping and Outdoor Hospitality Report include:

### Camping's Impact on Local Communities

- On average, campers spent an additional \$19 per day on travel expenses in 2022 compared to 2021.
- Glampers spend the most per day on accommodations and off-site, spending \$393 per day in average expenses.
- It is estimated that campers spent \$52 billion in local communities last year, an increase of \$8 billion from the year prior.

### Gen Z Campers

- Participation in camping is getting younger over time, including the highest-ever representation among Gen Z campers – having doubled since last year – who now account for more than one-fourth of all campers.
- This year's research confirms the impact of camping as a teen on Gen Z, with 65% of adult Gen Z campers saying their camping experiences as a teen made them want to continue camping.
- Looking ahead, avid Gen Z campers say they plan to take an average of four trips this year that include new or unique experiences.

### The Continued Rise of Urban Campers

- 44% of new campers in 2022 reside in urban areas.
- Urban campers camp two more nights on average compared to suburban or rural campers.
- Urban campers are more likely to have experienced glamping, overlanding, backcountry camping, or bringing their kids camping for the first time in 2022
- Urban campers want camping experiences such as those including natural events, food tourism, agritourism, or combining work and leisure travel.

## The Resurgence of the Great American Road Trip

- More campers took road trips in 2022, and there is great interest among leisure travelers—both campers and non-campers—to hit the open road in the year ahead.
- Almost half of campers (48%) are interested in taking an extended road trip, defined as traveling 8 or more hours.
- Four-in-ten respondents are interested in taking an adventurous trip designed to explore new places.
- Nostalgia and creating family memories are two core drivers for a road trip.
- Millennials, in particular, are seeking opportunities to recreate trips from their youth.

## Creating Memories for the Next Generation

- The stress associated with the past couple of years has resulted in a desire for some to connect more with their families and friends, and camping provides a way for them to create new memories.
- Six-out-of-ten campers say that creating new chapters in their family's book of shared experiences is important to them in 2023.
- More than half of campers cite the importance of these shared experiences, whether it's the way they camp, the stories, or traditions.

## Accessibility in the Outdoors

- Among all leisure travelers, about one-third view camping as more accessible than other outdoor activities for people with limited abilities, including three-fourths who say that it is either the same or more accessible.
- Campground accessibility is an increasingly important consideration due to a higher than national average percentage of campers with physical mobility issues. In total, 37% of campers state that finding a location that accommodates their physical needs prevents them from more frequent camping trips or dictates campground selection.
- Those with physical limitations or who travel with others with physical limitations say the top three barriers to camping or more frequent trips include the restroom or bathhouse (46%), level or smooth pathways/walkways (37%), and adequate accessibility (32%).

To view additional findings from the 2023 North American Camping and Outdoor Hospitality Report, or view previous versions of the annual report, please visit <https://koa.com/north-american-camping-report/>.

## **SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

The results of the most recent iteration of the North American Camping and Outdoor Hospitality Report are based on a total of 4,100 surveys completed among a random sample of U.S. (n=2,900) and Canadian (n=1,200) households. Within the U.S. sample of households, results are stratified by Census Region: Northeast (n=725), Midwest (n=725), South (n=725), and West (n=725). Overall, a sample of n=2,900 U.S. households is associated with a margin of error of +/- 1.82 percentage points, while a sample of n=1,200 Canadian households is associated with a margin of error of 2.83 percentage points. All surveys were completed only via an outbound solicitation sent to a randomly selected cross-section of U.S. and Canadian households. In order to calculate overall incidence, the sample of respondents was statistically balanced to ensure that the results are in line with overall population figures for age, gender, and ethnicity. Some results may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

## **ABOUT KAMPGROUNDS OF AMERICA**

[Kampgrounds of America, Inc.](#) (KOA) has been the definitive leader in outdoor hospitality for more than 60 years. United under the mission of “connecting people to the outdoors and each other,” the company consists of two unique brands: KOA and Terramor Outdoor Resorts. KOA, the world's largest system of privately owned, open to the public campgrounds, consists of more than 500 franchised and owned campgrounds. With unrivaled brand visibility, KOA offers campground owners and operators unparalleled support in campground education, design, recruitment, marketing and technology. Terramor Outdoor Resorts, a glamping venture, opened its first flagship property in Bar Harbor, Maine in 2020. Translated to “Love of Land,” the brand focuses on delivering a refined and upscale outdoor experience. For more information, visit [KOA.com](#) and [TerramorOutdoorResort.com](#).

## **ABOUT CAIRN CONSULTING GROUP**

Cairn Consulting Group is a market research firm with extensive experience in the hospitality and services industries. For the past several years, Cairn Consulting Group has worked with organizations in both indoor and outdoor hospitality, including the gaming/casino areas, food services/restaurant space, accommodations, travel/tourism and the products and services that are a part of the hospitality industry. The organization also serves clients in branding/brand positioning efforts, evaluating consumer behavior, public opinion & policy and product development.

