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The Montana Expression 2016: Vacation Planning

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The Montana Expression 2016: Vacation Planning

MT Expression Research Report 2016-15

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9/19/2016



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Introduction

The Montana Tourism Advisory Council, Office of Tourism and Business Development, and individuals in the tourism industry are interested in learning more about visitor behavior for a Montana vacation, namely their use of Montana airports and their advanced reservations and purchasing. This “snapshot” of Montana residents and visitors highlight these behaviors.

Purpose

There were two purposes of this snapshot analysis; 1) To further understand how Montana visitors arrive in Montana and their use of Montana airports, and 2) To briefly explore the booking behavior and pre-purchase behavior of both residents and visitors for their trips into Montana.

Methods

Data was collected through the ITRR panel survey software. The panel members were recruited by ITRR surveyors who intercepted both visitors and residents at Montana gas stations, rest areas or airports. At that time, respondents were invited to be a member of the research panel.

A link to the survey was emailed to the panel members. Of those sent the link, 1,113 people responded to the overall survey: 760 nonresidents, (629 USA; 113 Canada; 18 overseas), and 353 Montanans. There were 792 respondents who reported their behavior on a recent trip to Montana for the trip planning questions.

Limitations

This study was limited to nonresidents who have visited Montana in the past and to Montana residents who have agreed to participate in the research panel.

The Montana Expression 2016: Airport results

Nonresident respondents were asked the first three items in Table 1 regarding their method of entry into Montana as related to any of their trips to the state. As shown, 72% of US residents in the sample have driven to Montana at one point, while 96% of Canadians have driven. Forty-one percent of US resident respondents have also flown directly into Montana and 14% have flown into a city outside of Montana and driven into the state. Thirty-nine percent of overseas visitors flew directly in to Montana, but 61% flew to another city and drove into the state. Spokane, Salt Lake City, Seattle and Denver are the airports outside of Montana most frequented by nonresidents.

The two most cited reasons for not flying into Montana were that it was a trip with destinations both in and outside of Montana, and cost of flights as a factor. This was followed by the fact that some indicated no direct flights were available from their city of origin.

This group of respondents was more likely to have driven into Montana than to have flown directly into the state (Table 1).

Table 1: Nonresidents Arriving in Montana

N= 760	USA (N=629)	Canada (N=113)	Overseas (N=18)
Drove from home to Montana	72% (455)	96% (108)	0%
Flew directly to a Montana airport	41% (256)	15 (13%)	7 (39%)
Flew to an airport outside MT, then drove into MT	14% (87)	1% (1)	61% (11)
Airport flown into			
Spokane, WA	32	0	1
Salt Lake City	26	0	2
Seattle	24	0	2
Denver	21	0	4
Jackson Hole	13	0	0
Portland	8	0	0
Cody, WY	6	0	0
Idaho Falls	6	0	0
Minneapolis	6	0	0
San Francisco	3	0	0
Calgary	2	1	1
Rapid City, SD	2	0	0
Vancouver, BC	0	0	2
Other	(1 each) Boise Oakland Sacramento Wyoming		
Reason for not flying into Montana			
It was a trip with destinations in and outside of MT	39	1	8
Cost	35	0	1
No direct flight from my city of origin	29	0	0
I was visiting friends/relatives outside of MT	21	0	2
Departure/arrival times not good from me	7	0	0
Seat availability	4	0	1
Comments related to flying outside of MT			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adventure and Exploration • Cost, cost, cost • I live on driving distances • I work for American Airlines so only fly to airports serviced by AA • I like to fly Southwest. I have miles built up. Disappointed Southwest does not fly into Montana anywhere. Have looked at other airlines into Missoula, but too long a layover and want to avoid O'Hare • Now we have American nonstop which we take • Used friend's vehicle at no additional cost 			

The Montana Expression 2016: Booking and purchasing behavior

All respondents answered questions about their typical vacation habits (Table 2). While there is some variation in the planning process based on residency, the means are only slightly different from one another, signifying similar behaviors. Interestingly, Montanans have the highest mean on the first four questions, indicating they are more likely to agree to those statements than the visitors. Overall, travelers are more likely than not to 1) reserve as much ahead as possible; 2) reserve when going to new places; 3) be spontaneous and change along the way. However, the means ranging between 2.1 and 2.96 signifies that almost half of visitors are likely to reserve and pay in advance and the other half are less likely to reserve and pay in advance.

Table 2: Typical reservation and payment behavior during the trip planning process

How likely are you to do the following for a vacation?		Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely	MEAN*
Reserve as much as I can ahead of time						
	USA (n=629)	14%	18%	41%	28%	2.82
	Canada (n=113)	9%	24%	47%	20%	2.78
	Overseas (n=15)	13%	25%	44%	19%	2.69
	Montana (n=353)	7%	16%	52%	26%	2.96
Reserve things only when going to new places						
	USA	17%	29%	42%	11%	2.48
	Canada	12%	33%	43%	12%	2.55
	Overseas	7%	47%	40%	7%	2.47
	Montana	12%	22%	49%	17%	2.72
Pay for as much as I can ahead of time						
	USA	18%	35%	32%	14%	2.42
	Canada	15%	39%	36%	9%	2.40
	Overseas	13%	31%	44%	13%	2.56
	Montana	13%	30%	42%	15%	2.59
Pay ahead only when going to new places						
	USA	24%	45%	25%	6%	2.13
	Canada	18%	52%	23%	7%	2.18
	Overseas	13%	60%	27%	0%	2.13
	Montana	17%	39%	35%	9%	2.36
Avoid paying ahead as much as possible						
	USA	23%	30%	31%	16%	2.4
	Canada	22%	32%	39%	8%	2.32
	Overseas	20%	27%	33%	20%	2.53
	Montana	25%	37%	27%	11%	2.25
Be spontaneous and change along the way						
	USA	9%	29%	42%	21%	2.74
	Canada	14%	27%	35%	24%	2.68
	Overseas	13%	25%	44%	19%	2.69
	Montana	8%	34%	42%	16%	2.66

*Scale: 1=very unlikely; 2=unlikely; 3=likely; 4=very likely

Two additional questions asked of all the respondents related to booking multiple things at one time and their use of Airbnb for accommodations in Montana. Slightly over one-third of Montanans and other US residents never book more than one component for a vacation (Table 3). However, overseas visitors and Canadian visitors are more likely to occasionally or frequently book more than one component.

The use of Airbnb for booking accommodations is growing worldwide along with the issue of tax remittance on those bookings. However, the vast majority of the panel respondents have never used Airbnb to arrange accommodations in Montana (Table 3) and even though 13% of overseas visitors have used Airbnb in Montana, it only represents two travel groups.

Table 3: Likelihood of multi-component booking and use of Airbnb in Montana

For your vacations how often do you book more than one of accommodations, air and/or rental car?				
	All the time	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
USA (n=629)	5%	15%	44%	34%
Canada (n=113)	4%	12%	55%	27%
Overseas (n=15)	11%	33%	28%	17%
Montana (n=353)	4%	12%	46%	36%
How often have you used an Airbnb accommodation in Montana?				
	Never	1 time	2 times	Multiple times
USA (n=629)	94%	3%	1%	<1%
Canada (n=113)	94%	0	1%	1%
Overseas (n=15)	80%	13%	0	0
Montana (n=353)	92%	4%	1%	<1%

In the next section, only respondents who reported booking something in advance for their selected trip are included. We looked to see if there were differences in booking and payment based on residency (US, Canadian, overseas, or Montana resident) and little to no differences existed therefore Tables 4 and 5 reflect all respondents who booked in advance. Out of the 1,113 respondents, 789 booked in advance. This represents 429 US residents, 82 Canadians, 13 overseas visitors, and 265 Montanans.

More respondents are likely to book a hotel/motel over any other type of accommodation followed by a camping spot and a vacation home (Table 4). The highest percent of respondents were most likely to book motels and camping via the businesses website, while those booking a vacation home or room in a home used the 'direct' online site such as Airbnb or VRBO. People who booked bed and breakfasts and farm/ranch stays were more likely to call the business directly to book (Table 4).

Table 5 includes other types of activities that travelers could book in advance. More respondents booked a rental car than any other booking (aside from motels in Table 4). All the bookings for car rental, activities, tours and events were more likely to be booked directly with the business by calling or on the business website.

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Table 4: Accommodation Booking and Advance Payment

789 or 72% of respondents booked something in advance for their trip. Of those...		Booked via calling business	Booked via Business Website	Booked via Online 'Direct'*	Booked via Online Travel Agent**	Paid in Advance
557 (71%) booked a Hotel/motel in advance	➔	30% (168)	39% (216)	7% (39)	22% (123)	54% (301)
174 (22%) booked camping in advance	➔	39% (67)	53% (92)	5% (8)	0% (1)	63% (109)
120 (15%) booked a Vacation home in advance	➔	26% (31)	26% (32)	42% (50)	3% (3)	83% (99)
57 (7%) booked a B&B in advance	➔	42% (24)	25% (14)	12% (7)	12% (7)	53% (30)
35 (4%) booked a Farm/ranch stay in advance	➔	40% (14)	23% (8)	11% (4)	9% (3)	54% (19)
30 (4%) booked a room/couch in advance	➔	17% (5)	13% (4)	57% (17)	1% (2)	80% (24)

Note: the percentages in the 4 types of booking options will not add to 100%. Respondents could do more than 1.

*e.g. VRBO, Airbnb, Homeaway...

**e.g. Expedia, Priceline, Travelocity...

Table 5: Booking and Advanced Payment for Rental Cars, Activities, and Tours

789 or 72% of respondents booked something in advance for their trip. Of those...		Booked via calling business	Booked via Business Website	Booked via Online 'Direct'*	Booked via Online Travel Agent**	Paid in Advance
224 (28%) booked a rental car in advance	➔	20% (44)	48% (107)	3% (7)	26% (58)	46% (102)
129 (16%) booked activities in advance	➔	33% (42)	41% (53)	9% (12)	0% (1)	54% (70)
110 (14%) booked events in advance	➔	28% (31)	37% (41)	10% (11)	3% (3)	52% (57)
107 (14%) booked a attractions in advance	➔	42% (45)	26% (28)	7% (8)	5% (5)	29% (31)
101 (13%) booked a local tour in advance	➔	48% (48)	32% (32)	6% (6)	0% (1)	41% (41)
95 (12%) booked a guided/outfitted trip in advance	➔	59% (56)	28% (27)	5% (5)	0% (1)	57% (54)
53 (7%) booked a tour company in advance	➔	32% (17)	43% (23)	8% (4)	6% (3)	56% (29)

Note: the percentages in the 4 types of booking options will not add to 100%. Respondents could do more than 1.

*e.g. VRBO, Airbnb, Homeaway...

**e.g. Expedia, Priceline, Travelocity...

Finally, at the end of the on-line survey, a comment box was provided for additional comments related to the topic. All comments are provided next in Appendix A. Most of the comments relate to flying into Montana and it appears that cost is the predominant reason written by nonresidents who do not fly directly to Montana.

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Appendix A: Comments by respondents

Use Train.
Advance seating and benefits
Adventure Cycling Association handled my Mt. biking trip and did an outstanding job. We stayed a couple of nights at the Whitefish Bike Retreat and it was wonderful.
Air travel to and from PDX to BZN, ultimately takes most of a day.... To drive, it takes about a day.....
Airbnb is often my preferred long term stay. I have had good experiences in Missoula but not so good in rural areas throughout the country. That info is good for folks to know when going near national parks etc. that are remote.
Airbnb was a wonderful experience....we used it twice in Bozeman and I have recommended others to use it there as well. The Bozeman airport is now oversized...the addition could have been about 1/3 the size.
Airfare with a stop-over from my closest airport. However, planning driving to Montana later this summer and will study route book accomadations ahead of time. Dog friendly hotels included.
Airlines are too expensive in/out of Missoula!!
Airport in Bozeman is great...
almost no direct flights, makes it an all day trip
Always book motels in advance.
always drive so I can see the country
always drive to Montana
Always look for deals flying into Missoula.
Appreciate the small airports of MT.
Arrival and departure times via air are really poor.
Availability of flights is difficult. Also more expensive to fly out of mt
Billings is not easily or conveniently flown into.
Book as early as I can. Up to six months ahead of time.
Bozeman has one of the prettiest airports in the country.
Certain cites cost much more compared to towns only 100 miles away. Thanks for the survey!
Choice are extremely limited & usually booked way out - expensive.
Choose of airport, Boise, is limited with frequencies of flights
Coming from Australia numerous times I have found it cheaper and more convenient when planning, to use Denver or Salt Lake as a start / finish point on American road trips which we usually do annually.

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cost
Direct flights are not feasible to/from the places I travel
Do as much as possible online.
do not fly to Montana
Do not fly. Drive, and book hotel rooms in advance along the way.
Don't fly because it's a nice drive from Portland along the Clearwater/Lochsa River.
Don't go on many trips sorry
Easy process.
Enjoyed flying into Billings Montana. Nice small airport that is easy to walk thru and rent a car from.
Enjoyed our visit ,Thank you/
Except for Allegiant, we find flying to Montana to be fairly expensive.
Family and friends live in the Butte area.
find more flights
Flew directly into Billings.
Flight to Helena would be awesome
Fly into great falls and meet my friend who drives from Indiana
Fly out of Butte, Mt., free parking!!!
Fly to Bozeman, rent a car...But 90% of the time drive from Kansas City to Ennis.
Flying here is difficult and expensive.
Flying into and out of Montana tends to be more expensive than in and out of other states, so as much as possible, we use skymiles when flying.
Flying into Montana airports is too expensive, and time consuming given the multiple airports and stops often required. Then you have to rent a car once you get there --- also expensive.
Flying into Montana can be a hassle because it's not direct, and as stated earlier I like to fly Southwest. So I look for close options from a Southwest destination. Spokane, WA has worked well, but still a 3 hour drive to Missoula. Also have flown in the past though O'Hare and either had long layovers or other issues. The flight from Chicago is long. Have considered Delta from Minneapolis and from Denver. But then again, you have to change airlines and go through the hassle of security again. There really is no easy way to get to Montana, but for me.....I love going so I'll figure out a way. Unfortunately, can't make the trip this year but hope to next year. Thanks of this opportunity to give feedback!!! Sheila :)
Flying into Montana is unreasonably expensive.
For 'mom and pop' motels in Montana I call and book directly after finding a place on the Montana Tourism web site.
for Montana and other western US states we tend to drive, book and use motels along the route to a time share destination (including those in Montana)
Funeral

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Generally I only precook all aspects when travelling abroad. When driving, booking of accommodation is generally a day or two in advance while on the road through the Internet
Getting to Montana is costly compared to other vacation destinations. It's the cost of flights that keeps us from vacationing in Montana. I've used AirBNB but not in Montana
GNP did not take reservations for many of the campgrounds until this year. This is a very beneficial asset in planning our yearly trip there.
Good luck
Good selection of airports in MT. But I lived in SEA at the time and was driving back home thru MT on my way to TX.
Great service all around, helpful
Have always enjoyed Montana Planning to attend my nephews daughters graduation They live in western part of the state
Have friends to visit in Hot Springs, MT.
Have just booked my first air bb for this coming August 2016 in Bozeman.
Have never and have no plans for flying into Montana.
Have never even heard of Airbnb before. Might be interested in looking into that.
Have never flown to a destination.
Have never flown, but did drive out once and then took a bus home when I left the vehicle with a relative. However, after taking a two day bus trip... I wish I had flown home!
Haven't flown into Montana.
Helena has terrible air flight availability and very high prices. Bozeman is better, even though we live in Helena.
Hope to be coming to my most favorite place on earth - Montana - sometime this year :)
I almost always camp out when away from home.
I almost always drive to MT.
I always travel by URAL Gear Up motorcycle.
I am a Montana resident so I never fly within the state. When taking a trip I like to be as informed and planned out as possible, although the occasion detour tends to happen.
I am thinking about visiting Montana in three years' time. Warm regards,
I clicked 'drive' but it has always been via motorcycle for me. It's the BEST way to see the Big Sky!!!!
I do not fly into Montana, the cost is way too high for a trip I can take in a few hours.
I do not fly unless it's my only option, I prefer to use my own car and drive. I will always book reservations in advance for lodging and sometimes for things we want to do, depending on time of year and popularity of the venue.
I do not fly.

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I don't fly to Montana because I live in Southern Alberta. I drive. Flight connections would be awful and expensive if I did want to fly. Most of my Montana time (Several weeks per year) is dedicated to Wolf Watching in and around Yellowstone NP.
I don't fly to Montana or anywhere in the U.S. I prefer to drive.
I don't go on vacations. I usually just go home to visit. I've visited an aunt in Indiana on my way home a couple times, and before I moved to Hawai'i, I went to Hawai'i for a friend's wedding. Other than those brief experiences, all several years ago, I haven't been on any vacations.
I drive from Alberta, to Montana to the airport to fly elsewhere
I drive often and we travel around the lower 48. We have friends and family we like to visit in MT so travel methods vary.
I drive to Montana and fly out for the cost and convenience.
I enjoy the experience as long as I don't have to connect through Chicago.
I flew in on a whim with a friend and spent the weekend. I had a specific event I wanted to go to at Archie Bray Foundation and then visited other sites, church. Museum. Art galleries along the way.
I fly in from MN. Service has suffered the last decade (it is sparse) and it is too expensive when compared to Denver.
I fly into billings typically and fly within the state to reach my final destination.
I fly out of Montana and back. In Montana I drive.
I fly to Montana about one quarter of the time. About half the time I also drive; the other quarter of the time I take the train. I visit Montana at least once a year to visit my son, so we plan everything before I leave home.
I go to Montana to visit family.
I have a cabin here so I don't accommodations, other than air fare.
I have considered the possibility of driving to Montana and then flying to other destinations from there. Several hotels offer to allow Canadians to leave their cars while on a trip.
I have flown in/out of Kalispell multiple times. Very nice airport, wish it was less expensive. Have also flown in/out of Bozeman. Also very nice and I also wish it was less expensive!
I have just purchased an RV and will be driving to Montana when I do come.
I have never flown to Montana, I have only driven.
I have visited Montana many times, but I've only flown into the state once; I have driven to Montana for all of the other visits.
I just hop on my motorcycle and visit Montana.
I like to fly out of Billings, but have had to fly out of Bismarck lately because flights were better.
I like to have the hotel/motel reservations secured, then plan other activities when i actually reach my destination, after i see the town/area where I'm staying.
I live in Montana, I don't need air travel accommodations...getting there in MONTANA is half the fun and all the scenic view
I live in Montana, but flying in and out is hugely expensive and I know it keeps out-of-state friends from visiting.
I love Montana's scenery when flying over the state when on the ground.

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I love the Great Falls, and Missoula Airports. I always stay with family when I visit.
I love the idea of flying into a Montana airport and renting a car so I can travel to all the wonderful sights
I may look at booking flights to/from Montana within the US after driving from Canada if the price is significantly less.
I never fly into Montana as I live near the border. I have on occasion flown out of Kalispell.
I never use a travel agent to book vacations just because I love doing the research and finding out things about the places we plan to visit. Half of the fun of vacation is the planning stage.
I now live in Idaho. When I go to Montana, I drive.
I only drive because not only do I feel safer, but I get to see the countryside as I travel!
I only live 25 miles from Montana so I will never fly into Montana. I go for relaxing, golf and shopping.
I pay ahead when required and pay at the time of stay most of the time. Paying ahead has nothing to do with where I choose to stay.
I rarely fly within Montana
I rarely have days off work, so just take a one or two day local 'vacation.'
I rarely if ever fly into Montana, I usually drive.
I thought this was going to help me find things to do in Montana. This was of no use to me and I am sure not to you.
I typically book hotels ahead so I can take my time and know that I have a place to stay for the night.
I usually book flight and accommodation ahead of time, unless I have a place to stay for free. I don't book activities or camp very often.
I usually booked my hotel via hotels.com.
I usually do not fly out of Butte, as the price for a ticket is so much more than the expense of driving to different airport.
I usually drive to Montana.
I usually fly through Denver, but last time I flew through SLC.
I usually lock in part of my trip and leave the rest such as driving to and from Montana rather more fluid.
I usually look at airports within about 100 miles when flying to and from Montana
I usually map out a pretty detailed agenda, but leave room for inevitable changes, delays, weather, etc.
I usually plan a year ahead, then drive to my destination with few side trips.
I usually search online discount travel companies for hotel deals, then use the property's website for more information before actually booking.
I usually stay with my family in Montana so always have a room
I usually wing it all.
I want to move their
I was born in Helena
I will like to fly to Montana, but I didn't have the opportunity to do so. I always drive to my vacation destination. Thank you for the survey and have nice day.

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I will use the Bozeman airport, to fly from Bozeman to Dallas, Texas, now that they have a direct flight, to visit my daughter.
I wish I could.
I would never use Airbnb, and I usually camp, so don't tend to book anything for vacation. For business travel I book everything in advance.
I'm a retired travel agent so I'm very experienced in planning my travel we hope to pass through Montana again on our way to Sturgis on the Harley this year
I'm going there this summer in July
I'm Montana our trips are usually spontaneous
It is more expensive to fly into Montana than almost any other state in the western U.S.
It's more expensive to fly into Montana than to fly to Europe.
I've only driven to Montana. On road trips we tend to rent rooms as we go, no reserving ahead. When we're travelling to a specific event/destination we always reserve well in advance of arriving.
Keep access to Indian Creek available for the public. I usually stay with family so much doesn't apply to me. Once I get there we take many day trips which can be weather dependent and harder to plan in advance.
Knock on wood I have had pretty good luck with most of my travelings.
Like the Place.
Love Montana, great people, very friendly.
love the airports because they are not crowded
Love the Billings airport
Love the ease and accessibility of flying directly into glacier international airport
Love the Missoula airport
Love the small airports and not having to walk a mile to baggage claim or my personal car. Though the rental car in Missoula was a jaunt.
Love visiting Glacier and Yellowstone. No problems with flying.
Missoula airport is nice but needs to be upgraded like Bozeman, Kalispell
Missoula is still quite expensive to fly in or out of even compared with other cities in MT
Most of our vacations to Montana involve driving and staying in our own RV. We generally are very spontaneous in our route and destination points as we fish our way around the state. See you this summer.
Mostly drive to Montana
My family helps me find places to stay, as they live here and know what options are available
My vacations in Montana are normally road trips so I normally just book my accommodations early particularly if I am traveling to a well-known destination such as Glacier National Park.
Need better service into NW MT

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Never enough flights to get into Missoula, hard to get out of Missoula as well.
never flown
Never flown to Montana
Never fly Delta
Never fly to Montana. Short enough drive.
no other additional information to add
No problem experienced, easy airports, good service
not fly
Now, most of our trips in MT are for camping at National or State parks and we cannot reserve spaces at most locations. If possible, we do like to plan and reserve accommodations whether camping or staying in hotels.
Occasionally is spelled wrong on your survey
Only plan ahead in the states when traveling with friends. We do some planning when traveling to Europe, but not necessarily reservations. We find a place to stay in whatever town/village we end up in, & move on. When traveling in states with family, we basically only plan what direction we're heading & 'go with the flow, or weather.' It's all about exploring.
Out of country. Third world
Plan my trips around scenic routes and fishing.
Prefer flights with only one stop when we fly from Virginia to Montana. One year our flight had two stops before getting to MT and it was a long day. Non-stop would be ideal of course :)
Previously flew from Montana (Great Falls) to other US destinations. Have recently found it cheaper to fly from Calgary to southern points. Also, cheaper to fly from San Diego to Calgary which my son is doing this coming Sunday (07/17/16).
Rarely fly anywhere
Rarely fly into Montana because it is so expensive and the airports are limited.
Returning an Enterprise Car in Kalispell was downright crazy, couldn't find the spot.
Since I am in Calgary, AB it is easier just to drive down and enjoy the sights.
Since I live here, I don't fly to vacation here.
Since I live here, I only fly into Montana when returning from visiting family. The vacations we take in Montana are usually with the camper.
Since we are only a 2 hour drive from Montana we drive.
Sometimes the price into Bozeman is quite steep.
spontaneous RV travel and fishing
Stay with family while there. Spend time visiting local trails and historic places.

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Still ticked off about those Montana idiots that set up 'a stand' about govt. property that ruined and destroyed Indian archeological sites, trashed a building, and were armed. Won't be visiting Montana soon. And yes, I know that all Montanan's are not like them (at least I hope not).
The airports in Montana are fairly expensive, it's much cheaper to fly into Boise or Seattle first.
The only things I ever book together are airfare and rental car. We would book a campsite ahead of time, but we like Apgar and it does not take advance reservations. When we can reserve in advance, we do. I only pay the booking fee in advance most of the time. There are no Airbnb's in Glacier, so that question is not applicable to most of our vacations there.
The only times we have flown into Montana are when we are returning from another destination. We usually drive to Montana and either stay there (Kalispell or Great Falls) or fly to another destination within the US.
The survey did not allow me to provide accurately the mode of transportation to Montana. I arrived by Amtrak train.
There are no airports near the places I usually visit.
Too expensive and difficult to find flights. I usually look at all nearby airports for best deal.
Too expensive.
Trips such as a recent Viking River cruise required payment well in advance of departure.
Use AAA for hotels
Use air for funerals and weddings but vacations are taken with trailer. We use time share or motel occasionally to break up trip
Usually Drive - Have only flown occasionally
Usually drive in Montana as we live here. The flights in and out (mostly out) are so expensive. We try to book at least 8 months in advance if we for sure know we need to be somewhere out of state. Driving in Montana is great except when you hit unforeseen road construction.
Usually plan as much as possible, including route and attractions.
Usually try not to plan/pay for too much in advance unless it's a busy spot requiring tickets in advance.
Utilize direct flight to/from PDX - MSO. Wish it wasn't so expensive to fly to MSO
Vacation destinations within Montana are usually car trips, with time built in to stop at interesting places along the way, eat, etc. I usually book hotel rooms in advance, but during the particular trip in mind, found the hotel to be unpleasant and found another. On museum trips, I don't buy a ticket in advance, but do look up prices before we go to have that amount in cash available.
Very expensive to fly into FCA
very expensive to fly out of Missoula
VRBO & Homeaway.com are wonderful sites. I hope to make it to Montana soon.
Want more direct flights from Eastern hubs and more flights in general
We always drive pulling our pop-up/tent trailer camping along the way. We research on line about an area that we will be going to or passing through so we can choose what highway route we want to travel to take in all the attractions that we would like to see.

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We are finding it is harder to be spontaneous in Montana at National Parks and Forest Service locations because there seems to be an increase in 'baby boomers' using RVs. State and Fed parks need to continue to have both reservable site and first come first serve sites.

We are generally very flexible in our plans. We have one or two things planned and then find others along the way.

we are lucky enough to live here so can be more spontaneous.

We book rooms ahead of time simply because of the sheer number of people in the Yellowstone area. If we travel elsewhere in Montana we prefer to just 'wing it'.

We booked our vacation home through VRBO

We drove to Montana because gas prices were so cheap. Also, it's very expensive to fly into Montana from our nearest airports.

We generally don't fly to Montana. We live in Spokane and we prefer to drive.

We have a timeshare in Montana and travel to it at least twice a year.

We have flown into Bozeman several times, we love that airport and the people working there are so very friendly.

We have vacationed in Montana only one time. We knew about 10 days in advance of travel that we could take the trip. Therefore this was a very 'spontaneous' vacation. We had a wonderful time.

We like to research our own experiences.

We live 2 hours from the Montana border so would probably never fly in.

We live in Montana. We don't fly here. We take long and complex vacations, often overseas, and my wife spends many hours on the computer setting up transportation, tours, accommodations, etc. She uses multiple different sites to do so but prefers to interact electronically as directly as possible with the vendors.

We normally drive into Montana, would prefer flying but find it cost prohibitive, huge difference between flying/driving cost, plus the time is usually about the same.
we stay with relatives

We tend to book accommodations close to or in downtown.

We travel with 2 little dogs, so flying isn't an option

We try and do as many stay-cations as possible. And because Montana is so great it's super easy. We are planning on using Airbnb in the near future for an out of town trip to CA.

we usually do not fly into Montana as it is so close to home we drive.

We usually do not fly. Most of our travels are for sight-seeing, so we usually drive. Montana has so many excellent opportunities for a driving vacation, it would be a shame to travel the state any other way.

We usually drive to Montana.

We usually go to Montana for shopping, but occasionally stop there when heading 'deeper' into the US (like Jackson Hole). I had to answer some of the last questions as pertaining to recent trips to Hawaii because they didn't pertain to my recent Montana trips. We live close to the Montana border, so when we go, we drive there. Our closest Montana airport is in Kalispell and the flight costs are a lot higher than from Spokane. So when we fly out of the US, we go from there. Too bad, because Kalispell is a lot closer for us. Also, the ghastly exchange rate for Canadian money is reducing our travel to the US for anything.

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We usually look on the internet for any events going on such as a rodeo.
We usually travel in our RV as we are going to Glacier NP.
We visit and stay with family and tag along with them for entertainment and activities.
We visit Montana at least once a year and have done so for 25+ years. All our trips are by car.
WEB Research and positive comments by other travelers is important.
What is an 'AIRBNB'? This acronym is never defined in your survey.
When all 4 of us go it's not cost effective to fly, but on occasion if there's good flight specials we have flown.
When flying stand by its hard to when you're going for sure.
When I fly, it is by private plane.
When I planned my trip to MT, I booked my flight 3 months in advance, and my stay at East Glacier Lodge was reserved ahead of time. A friend provided transportation to and from the airport; and I flew in and out of Kalispell. Everything else I did during my MT trip was planned day by day during my stay, making agendas to visit sections of Glacier park and to hike or to shop depending on weather and accessibility.
When I travel to Montana for a mix of business/vacation, I tend to pre-book quite a bit of the trip. When I travel for purely vacation, I pre-book much less and am more spontaneous.
wife generally makes reservations for motels and maps out travel plans on google before we travel. Flying into and out of Montana cities seems to always be very early departures and very late returns. Wish airlines could plan better for more reasonable flight times. . .
Will normally vacation in personal RV. Usually only phoning camping areas a few hours ahead of arrival. Reserve a site, if available. Pay at check in.
Wish Butte airport had another airline other than Delta
Wish connections from east coast to Billings were better
Wish I had better options flying into Kalispell from Cincinnati!
Wish there was a direct flight to Portland. We would travel there a lot more often!
Wish there was a direct flight!
With Delta and Alaska flying into Montana from SEA it is now a more viable option.
would be nice to fly to more places direct
Would love to visit
You don't offer a train option; we've traveled in and out of Montana by Amtrak, for instance
Your first question ignores train travel!!!!!! I have had to answer a false answer