

## COVID-19: Canadians eager to take road trips and get back outdoors: survey

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Cheryl Chan  
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Out of those who are planning road trips this summer, about 43 per cent said they plan to visit a provincial park or national park, like the Yoho National Park in Canada's Rocky Mountains. Photo by Adam Kealoha Causey /PNG

After more than a year of staying close to home, Canadians are eager to get back outdoors and hit the road this summer, according to a new survey.

The survey, conducted by Leger on behalf of Toyota Canada, polled 2,000 Canadian drivers to get their thoughts on road trips as more Canadians get vaccinated against COVID-19 and as more provinces start to lift travel restrictions.

More than three-quarters of Canadians polled said they have a new-found appreciation for the outdoors because of the pandemic.

With international travel off the table for most Canadians, about 65 per cent reported a greater appreciation for travel within Canada since the pandemic began.

Once travel is permitted, 49 per cent said they plan to get behind the wheel on a road trip, a nearly 10-per-cent increase over last year.

Of those planning road trips, 67 per cent say they will go with a day trip and return to sleep in their own homes, while 35 per cent say they will only be venturing about four to six hours away from home.

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When restrictions are lifted, the top activities road-trippers are planning are: hiking (56 per cent), exploring new cities and towns (51 per cent), spending time with family and friends (43 per cent), visiting national or provincial parks (43 per cent), and camping (42 per cent).

Despite the eagerness to get back on the road, many remain cautious.

The vast majority — 84 per cent — say they plan to stay closer to home than usual. British Columbians are more likely to play it safe than other Canadians, with 89 per cent saying they won't venture far. About 65 per cent say they will only go with shorter day trips.

British Columbians are also slightly more likely than others to say the pandemic changed their vacation plans — 79 per cent compared to 73 per cent nationally.

Around three-quarters of all respondents say that even on a road trip, they will still wear a mask in public as an added safety measure. In terms of accommodations, many are opting for more remote locations such as campsites (37 per cent), or cabins, chalets and cottages (34 per cent).

The Leger poll was conducted online among 2,000 Canadian drivers aged 18 and older using Leger's online panel. Leger said it used weighting to ensure the sample composition reflects the adult population of Canada.

chchan@postmedia.com  
twitter.com/cherylchan