



WAKEFIELD

REPORT: THE STATE OF
ROMANCE IN 2023
AMERICANS TO PRIORITIZE
RELATIONSHIPS, INTIMACY,
TIME AWAY

February 2023

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Sandals

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Executive Summary	3
Key Findings	4
The Year of We	5
In Lean Times, Romantic Getaways and Activities are Non-Negotiable	7
Spotlight: Basking Beachside	8
Afterglow: Vacations Make Couples Feel Closer, Even After They Return Home	9
Spotlight: Gen Z More Adventurous, Romantically Speaking	10
Modern Romance: Love and Travel in 2023 and Beyond	11
Conclusion	12

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Couples are falling in love again. Romance is being acknowledged as a key ingredient in thriving relationships and will be prioritized in 2023. In fact, 4 out of 5 Americans (80%) plan to make more time for romance this year. This, despite the majority acknowledging it is challenging to find time for passion in today's hectic lifestyle and predicting 2023 will be busier than ever before.

Against a backdrop of economic uncertainty and inflation, Americans aren't skimping on romantic endeavors, including getaways. Nearly 3 in 5 (58%) say rising costs won't derail their plans for a romantic vacation, as most Americans plan to find the time as well as the funds.

Nearly all of those who slipped away for a romantic trip in 2022 plan to do the same in 2023, with beach vacations being the top choice for most generations. With obstacles to intimacy a cold fact of most people's day-to-day lives, these getaways carry a promise not only of connection, but of more sparks – 73% of those who have taken a romantic escape say lovemaking is more satisfying on vacation, and couples continue to seek that satisfaction even after the romantic respite ends.

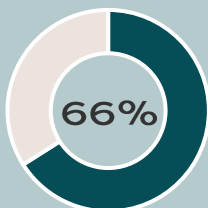
To take the romantic pulse of America in 2023, as part of its Sandals Institute of Romance, the resort company surveyed 1,000 U.S. adults, in partnership with Wakefield Research, to reveal major trends, expectations, and other factors impacting passion and connection.

KEY FINDINGS

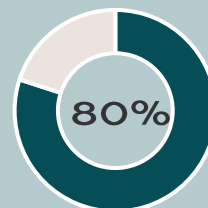
PRIORITIZING ROMANCE



will make more time for romance this year

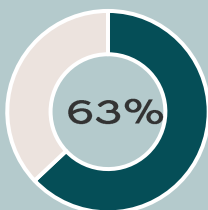


say it's challenging to find time for romance

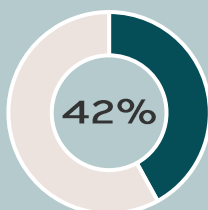


expect 2023 to be even busier

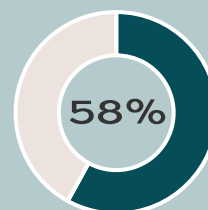
ROMANCE AT ANY COST



are likely to take a romantic vacation in 2023

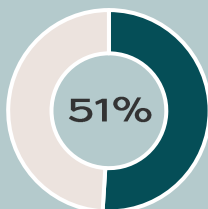


say romantic activities are one of last things to cut in an economic downturn

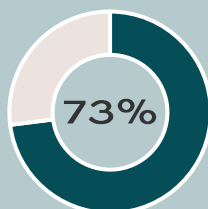


say inflation won't stop a romantic trip with partner

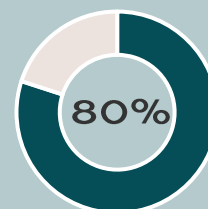
GETTING, STAYING CLOSER



say the closest they've felt to partner is when they're on vacation



agree intimacy is more satisfying on romantic getaway



prioritize intimacy with partner upon returning home

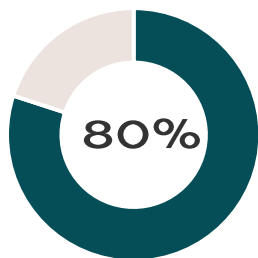
THE YEAR OF WE:

Americans to Make Time for Romance in 2023, Despite Tight Schedules

Americans expect to be busier in 2023 than they were last year. But despite other obligations they are optimistic about their relationships and intend to make time for their partners. And they are planning romantic vacations, which for some offer the promise of reinvigorating their relationships.

Four in 5 (80%) expect to be busier in 2023, with 16% saying they will be significantly busier. And younger generations anticipate their calendars will be substantially more crowded than those of their older counterparts. Almost all of Gen Z (98%) and Millennials (93%) say they will be busier, compared to 82% of Gen X and 62% of Boomers.

PRIORITIZING ROMANCE



are committed to making more time for romance in 2023

While 2 in 3 (66%) acknowledge it is challenging to find the time for romance, the vast majority (80%) are committed to making more time for it in 2023. They plan to do this despite a plethora of obstacles that range from day-to-day commitments to larger impediments. The top obstacles to romance are finding the right setting

(41%), financial constraints (38%), work (34%), social obligations (24%), and children (23%).

The barriers break down along generational lines, as Gen Z is most often stymied by finances (59%), while work is the top obstacle for Millennials (51%), and Boomers struggle to find the right setting (46%).

The busier people are, the more elusive romantic bonding is likely to be. Case in point, 87% of those who say it is challenging to find time for romance also expect to be busier in 2023. For Boomers, some of whom are retired or semi-retired, finding time for romance isn't as difficult, with 45% saying it is not challenging, compared to 32% of Gen X, 24% of Millennials, and 25% of Gen Z.

Those with children find opportunities for love and connection even more fleeting, as more than 3 in 4 parents (76%) say it is challenging to find time for romance. Even in light of this, 88% of parents say they will make more time for romance in 2023, compared with 75% who are not parents.

But couples are cozying up to a new year with optimism. Two in 5 (40%) believe their relationships will improve in 2023. Younger generations are more assured, as 60% of Gen Z think their relationships will improve in the next year, compared to 43% of Gen X, and 21% of Boomers.



Whether they're more content or just more resigned, most Boomers are set in their ways, with 72% expecting their relationships to stay the same in 2023.

To help eliminate obstacles, at least temporarily, and create more time for romance, Americans are ready to pack their bags, with the majority saying a getaway is long overdue. There is evidence of this, as 17% haven't taken one in 1 to 5 years and 8% haven't had a romantic getaway in 6 to 10 years. In fact, 25% have never taken one.

But the trend to pursue romantic trips is heating up, as nearly half (46%) took a romantic getaway in the past year and even more - 63% - expect to take one this year. Millennials and parents lead the way in this search for serenity on sun swept beaches and poolside chairs, as 79% of Millennials and 76% of parents (vs 56% of non-parents) expect to take a romantic vacation in 2023.

In fact, nearly all (91%) who took an idealistic escape in 2022 plan to book another romantic vacation in 2023. As the vast majority seeks a repeat respite, it offers an endorsement – in defiance of economic realities – of the benefits these trips bring to relationships.

IN LEAN TIMES, ROMANTIC GETAWAYS AND ACTIVITIES ARE NON-NEGOTIABLE

Even in times of economic uncertainty, romantic vacations aren't put on the back burner. They are prioritized, particularly by men.

Nearly 3 in 5 (58%) wouldn't let inflation stop them from taking a romantic vacation. Men (64%) are more likely than women (51%) to say inflation won't impede these plans. Similarly, men say romantic activities would be among the last things to cut back on during an economic downturn (46%) compared to women (38%).

This could bode well for couples, because while men are more likely to move ahead with plans regardless of the economy, women are more likely (61%) than men (47%) to say they are overdue for that romantic vacation.

Despite these gender differences over planning and spending on a romantic getaway, both men (56%) and women (56%) each describe themselves as being more romantic than their partner in their relationship.

Regardless of who is the more romantic partner, it's clear both believe it's a break worth the - perhaps increasing - expenditure. Of the nearly half of Americans who took romantic vacations in 2022, nearly two-thirds (64%) say they wouldn't let inflation stop them from taking another one, affirming the importance of a healthy hiatus despite economic challenges.

INGREDIENTS OF AN IDEAL 2023 GETAWAY

1)



49% view 5 to 7 days as an ideal amount of time for a romantic vacation

2)



67% say a relaxing beach vacation would deepen the connection to the person they are with

3)



35% say intimacy with their partner is what they most look forward to on a vacation

4)



followed by relaxing and forgetting their responsibilities **(30%)**



SPOTLIGHT: BASKING BEACHSIDE

Beach Vacations An Enduring Favorite

The warm sand, a gentle breeze, and the sun setting into the ocean below; beach vacations are synonymous with romance. The numbers tell the same story, as the majority of Americans prefer relaxing beach vacations (67%) and secluded vacations (57%), believing these destinations would allow them to deepen their connections as couples.

Younger couples, especially, seek sandy toes and a sun-kissed nose, as nearly 3 in 4 (74%) Gen X prefer a seaside escape more than the 64% of Boomers.

PREFERRED SETTINGS FOR CONNECTION

A relaxing beach vacation

67%

A secluded place

57%

A place with a lot of activities

47%

A resort near a city

40%

An adventure outing

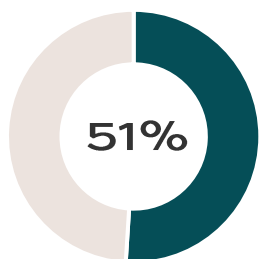
32%

AFTERGLOW: VACATIONS MAKE COUPLES FEEL CLOSER, EVEN AFTER THEY RETURN HOME

Romantic getaways can have a renewing effect on relationships. For couples planning vacations, there's often the anticipation that the trip will re-energize their love lives. The reasons range from the obvious – less distractions, no kids, no work – to the more nuanced.

Being away from their routine can make couples feel more adventurous and willing to step outside their comfort zones. Perhaps inspired to focus more on their significant other, half overall (51%) – and men in particular (60% compared to 42% of women) – feel closest to their partners while on vacation.

ROMANTIC GETAWAYS MAKE COUPLES FEEL CLOSER



feel closest to their partner when on vacation

Intimacy with their partner (35%) is what people look forward to the most when connecting on vacation. Three in 10 (30%) anticipate being intimate 3-4 days during a weeklong romantic vacation, while 26% anticipate intimate relations on each of the 7 days.

Just over 7 in 10 (73%) of those who have taken a romantic respite say intimacy is more satisfying on vacation. This is especially the case among Millennials (82%) compared to 68% of both Gen X and Boomers. Those who say they are closest to their partners on vacation (85%) are also most likely to say intimate relations are more satisfying with their partner while on a getaway.

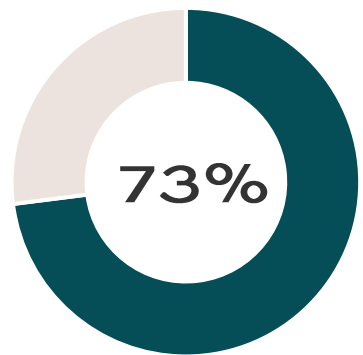
A change of scenery and lack of distractions work their magic; 69% say that romantic vacations impact their intimacy by making them more relaxed. This was cited in particular by Gen X (77%). And romantic getaways might take intimacy to a new level. 48% of Millennials say romantic vacations impact their intimacy by making them more adventurous, compared to 28% of Gen X, and 23% of Boomers.

For most, the vacation doesn't end when they turn in their room key. Those who say they are closest to their partner on vacation (84%) and those who want to make more time for romance in 2023 (85%) are more likely to say they will prioritize intimacy with their partner after a romantic vacation. **For most, the glow remains after they're home and unpacked, with 80% saying returning from a romantic vacation inspires them to prioritize intimacy.** Millennials are especially likely to say this (85%).



SPOTLIGHT: GEN Z MORE ADVENTUROUS, ROMANTICALLY SPEAKING

Younger generations are using vacations to become more adventurous with their partners and improve their relationships. Among Gen Z, 73% say it is likely they will take a romantic vacation in 2023, with 39% saying they are very likely to take one. And Gen Z vacationers have high hopes for bonding, with more than a third (36%) anticipating being intimate every day during a 7-day vacation.

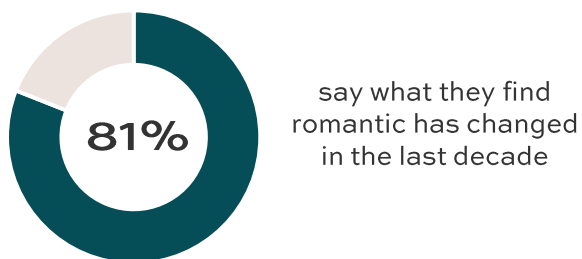


of Gen Z are likely to take a romantic vacation in 2023

MODERN ROMANCE: LOVE AND TRAVEL IN 2023 AND BEYOND

For the majority, their view of love and romance evolves. In fact, more than 4 in 5 (81%) say what they find romantic has changed in the last decade, including 17% who say it has changed drastically. This can include finding new ways to connect with one another. For example, of those who said their idea of romance has changed, a third (33%) say they find learning a new skill or hobby with their partner to be romantic, compared to just 22% who have kept a static view of romance in the past decade.

ROMANCE HAS CHANGED OVER THE YEARS

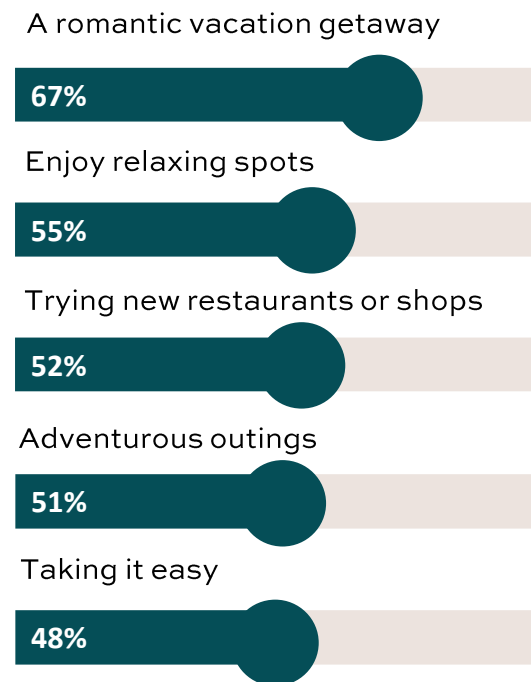


Many see 2023 as a promising year for romance, with 60% of Gen Z and 51% of Millennials believing their relationships will improve in the next year, compared to 43% of Gen X, and 21% of Boomers.

And most hope to take their romance on the road. Romantic getaways (67%) top the list of partner-pleasing offerings, and gift choice for partners in 2023. Other options topping the list of what's romantic

include enjoying relaxing pleasures such as watching the sunset (55%), trying new restaurants or shops (52%), and adventurous outings (51%). Even those who have never been on a romantic vacation selected a romantic getaway for two (56%) as one of the most desired paths to greater intimacy.

ACTIVITIES FOUND PARTICULARLY ROMANTIC TO DO AS A COUPLE



CONCLUSION

Love Conquers All as Americans Prioritize Relationship, Intimacy and Time Away in 2023

Isn't it romantic? The economic outlook is uncertain. Inflation is a hard reality. People expect to be far busier in 2023 than they were in 2022. They're making difficult choices about how much they spend, prioritizing immediate needs over frivolous ones. And yet, when it comes to spending their ever-shrinking dollars on romance, a majority say they don't plan to forfeit gifts, getaways, and activities that strengthen connections and fuel intimacy.

People in relationships want and need a break – the beachier the better. Americans are planning romantic getaways and adventures, which they attribute to increasing closeness and intimacy, and bringing the glow home with them. Whatever challenges 2023 brings, for most, a change of scenery, a break from distractions and obstacles ranging from financial concerns to family obligations to the demands of work, is seen as a worthwhile and even essential investment of time and money.

Though to slightly differing degrees, couples of all ages are treating themselves to hard-earned pleasures. As nearly all who had romantic getaways in 2022 are planning these for 2023, the benefits are clear, and not only in the moment. The trend toward making more time for romance and romantic getaways bodes well for the health of relationships when couples return home and resume their busy routines.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

The Sandals Resorts State of Romance Survey was conducted by Wakefield Research among 1,000 nationally representative US adults ages 18+, between December 23rd, 2022, and January 8th, 2023, using an email invitation and an online survey. The data has been weighted.

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. For the interviews conducted in this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

An aerial photograph of a tropical resort featuring numerous overwater bungalows with thatched roofs, connected by a wooden walkway. A prominent heart-shaped lagoon is in the center. The water is a vibrant turquoise, and the sky is a clear, deep blue. The text 'WAKEFIELD' is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font on a dark teal background that covers the left and center portions of the image.

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