



Prepared for New Hampshire  
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Development

## ***Social media plays increasing role in decision making***

Social media is taking an ever-increasing part in our holiday habits, from picking the perfect spot to retouching the photos of our time away.

According to a recent survey:

- 51% of U.S. travelers admit to retouching their vacation photos to make them more likable on social media – ahead of all the other countries surveyed
- U.S. travelers are also the least cynical with 52% thinking that people who share photos on social media during their holiday are having a great time – compared to just 20% of British travelers
- 52% of American travelers book their holiday based on its “instaworthiness” coming in third behind Spanish (55%) and Italian (58%) holidaymakers
- Only a marginal percentage of respondents said they've booked a holiday destination inspired by an influencer.

Source: eDreams



U.S. Travel Association

## **Destination marketing organizations participate in national promotion week**

DMOs across the country participated last week in National Travel and Tourism Week, part of an effort by U.S. tourism officials to rally support for the industry.

Here are a few examples:

### **NORTH CAROLINA**

Local officials gathered at Museum of the Albemarle last Tuesday for a “tourism rally” to celebrate tourism’s large and growing economic impact in Elizabeth City and across North Carolina.

The event, held on the museum’s portico, was short but festive and featured a breakfast of muffins, mimosas, and freshly-picked numbers about the benefits of tourism.

Visitor spending pumped a record \$25.3 billion into the state economy last year, Andre Nabors, a representative of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, told the gathering.

Tourism is also a great boon to

Elizabeth City and Pasquotank County, Corrina Ferguson and Christian Lockamy told the gathering. Ferguson and Lockamy are the directors of the city-county Tourism Development Authority and Economic Development Commission, respectively.

Ferguson said that, according to U.S. Travel research, visitors' direct spending contributed \$62 million to small businesses in the city and county in 2017. That translates to about \$1.5 million in local taxes that support education, policing, infrastructure and other needs, she continued.

“Travel really does matter,” Ferguson said, alluding to the theme of this year’s tourism week, “Travel Matters.” Lockamy said there are more than 500 tourism-related jobs in the city and county.

### **ILLINOIS**

The Illinois Office of Tourism celebrated the week by releasing new “Instagrammable Illinois” trip ideas

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## Travel Week includes many different promotional ideas

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showcasing 20 of the state's most Insta-worthy places to visit in 2019.

Enjoy Illinois social channels (@EnjoyIllinois) highlighted a different destination each day.

Illinois Tourism selected the places to incorporate a mix of well-known attractions and lesser known sites.

### ARKANSAS

The Natural State put out the welcome mat for Travel Week.

Arkansas Welcome Centers across the state invited travelers and

residents to participate by hosting events throughout the week to showcase how tourism builds communities and enhances lives.

Each center had different events.

The Bella Vista/Bentonville Welcome Center provided Arkansas stickers, Riceland Rice samples, House of Webster jelly samples, Cavender's Greek Seasoning samples and bottled water. The Blytheville Welcome Center hosted representatives from area attractions to chat with travelers.

### COLORADO

Promotions didn't have to be elaborate: Areas of Downtown Colorado Springs and Old Colorado City offered free parking all week.

### NEW YORK

Oneida County Tourism ran Instagram polls last week asking followers to vote on which attractions local tourism officials should visit.

**Sources:** [dailyadvance.com](http://dailyadvance.com), [1440wrok.com](http://1440wrok.com), [kark.com](http://kark.com), [koa.com](http://koa.com), [wktv.com](http://wktv.com)

## Impact of offshore wind farm seems to defy dire predictions for tourism

Researchers at the University of Rhode Island who analyzed AirBnB rental data before and after construction of the Block Island Wind Farm have found that the turbines have been linked to increased tourism on the island.

Corey Lang, URI associate professor of environmental economics, and doctoral student Andrew Carr-Harris, said that many coastal communities that rely on tourism to sustain their economy have worried that offshore wind farms would negatively affect tourism.

The researchers collected lodging data from AirBnB to examine trends in monthly revenues, occupancy rates and reservations from roughly two years before construction of the turbines to one year after construction was completed. They compared AirBnB rental trends in Block Island to those in nearby communities that are also dependent on summer vacation

rentals -- Narragansett, Westerly and Nantucket.

The results were almost entirely positive for the peak summer months of July and August, and there were no noticeable effects during the rest of the year.

During July and August following construction of the turbines, AirBnB rentals in Block Island experienced, on average, a 19 percent increase in occupancy rates and a \$3,490 increase in monthly revenue compared to those in Narragansett, Westerly and Nantucket.

While the data didn't indicate the reason for the increase in occupancy, Lang and Carr-Harris suggest that people were curious about the wind farm and wanted to see it for themselves.

The researchers noted that the curiosity factor may dissipate shortly, so the positive effects on vacation rentals may not persist for long.



Deepwater Wind

**Block Island Wind Farm comprises five turbines off the coast of Rhode Island.**

Also, because the Block Island Wind Farm is the first of its kind in North America, it may be generating more tourism interest than will future wind farms, they said. And a small wind farm like at Block Island may not generate the negative impressions that a much larger wind farm may generate in the future.

The research was published in the journal *Resource and Energy Economics*. Funding was provided by Rhode Island Sea Grant.

**Source:** [sciencedaily.com](http://sciencedaily.com)