

ForwardKeys: Americans will return to travel to celebrate Thanksgiving



A snapshot of Olivier Ponti, VP Insights, ForwardKeys, who says basking in the sun and hitting the slopes retain their popularity

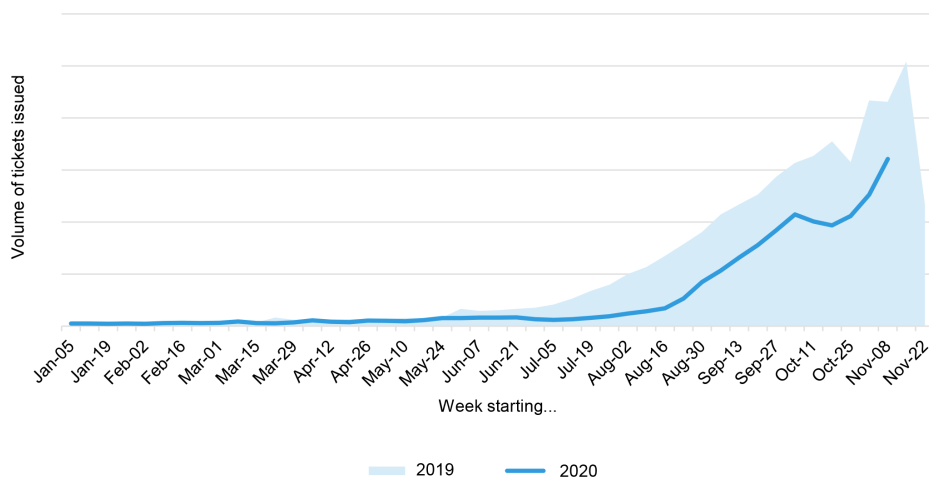
Research conducted by ForwardKeys, the travel analytics firm, reveals that despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the collapse in aviation, many Americans are planning a last-minute return to the skies this Thanksgiving, traveling to be with their families at home or to take a break in the sunshine or on the slopes.

“[COVID-19 has decimated international air travel and badly damaged domestic air travel. In the past three weeks, we have seen the pace of bookings decelerate and that correlates with the third wave of the virus.

However, there are a couple of highly resilient periods, Thanksgiving and Christmas, where bookings have not slowed down and are relatively much stronger in comparison to the rest of the year. Flight tickets issued in the week starting November 8 for travel over the Thanksgiving period (departing November 19 - 25) surged to 74.5% of last year’s volumes,” explains Ponti.

Ticketing pace for US domestic Thanksgiving travel

Weekly volumes of tickets issued, for travel from 19 to 25 November



 Tickets issued as of 14 November for travel dates between 19 to 25 November 2020, vs same periods in previous year.
  Only considered pax staying at least 1 night, on a return ticket.
  Source: ForwardKeys Air Ticket Data.

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With American Thanksgiving around the corner, this graph shows the holiday as a highly resilient period for domestic air travel

In a ranking of major US domestic destinations this Thanksgiving (those with at least 1.0% share of domestic flight bookings), many of the most resilient are family holiday hotspots – in order of resilience benchmarked against 2019, Fort Myers, Florida, leads the list of; as of November 14, bookings for travel over the Thanksgiving period (November 19 – 25) were 11.9% behind last year’s levels.

It is followed by another sunshine destination, Tampa, where bookings are 14.2% behind. The next three most resilient places are most popular for skiing, Salt Lake City, Utah (23.5% behind, Phoenix, Arizona (30.0% behind) and Denver, Colorado (32.1% behind).

Most resilient US domestic destinations* for Thanksgiving

Year-on-Year variations for travel from 19 to 25 November, on the book as of 14 November

	Top resilient destinations*	Year-on-Year variation
	Fort Meyers (FL)	-11.9%
	Tampa (FL)	-14.2%
	Salt Lake City (UT)	-23.5%
	Phoenix (AZ)	-30.0%
	Denver (CO)	-32.1%
	Miami (FL)	-33.5%
	Orlando (FL)	-33.9%
	Kahului (HI)	-35.4%
	Dallas (TX)	-38.6%
	Las Vegas (NV)	-40.6%

*out of destinations with a share >1.0% of US domestic destinations



Tickets issued as of 14 November for travel dates between 19 to 25 November 2020, vs same periods in previous year.



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Featuring year-to-year variations, a list of the most resilient US domestic destinations for Thanksgiving; with last-minute booking a current trend, numbers will likely climb further this week

“Whilst hardly anybody is traveling on business, the encouraging news for the travel industry is that people don’t want to drop what they usually do for Thanksgiving and are keen to travel. As going abroad is much more of a hassle owing to COVID-19 travel restrictions, we are seeing a greater proportion of Thanksgiving bookings being domestic, 91% this year, compared to 79% last year. There is even room for a little more optimism because with booking trends being increasingly last-minute, numbers will likely climb further this week,” concludes Ponti.