Club Med
The Art of *Free Time*
Report 2026

Club Med

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When Did **Free Time** Stop *Being Fun?*

An exploration of joy, curiosity, discovery, and what happens when we make room for more of what makes us happy.

Research conducted by Wakefield Research for Club Med
September 2026

Free Time, Reimagined

For more than 75 years, Club Med has believed that happiness comes from the freedom to discover, connect, play, and experience something new. It's a philosophy that began with our founders and continues to shape how we welcome guests around the world today.

But somewhere along the way, free time became something else. Our days are filled with responsibilities, expectations, and endless to-do lists. Even the things we enjoy can start to feel like something we need to accomplish.

That curiosity is what inspired our inaugural Club Med The Art of Free Time Report. We wanted to better understand our relationship with free time, what brings us joy, and what might be holding us back from experiencing more of it.

One finding particularly resonated with me: 81% of North Americans miss the sense of wonder they had as children more than the free time they had then.

The desire to explore, be spontaneous, and experience something unexpected is still very much a part of who we are.

We just don't always give ourselves permission to follow it.

At Club Med, we've always believed there's something wonderful about trying a sport for the first time, sharing an unexpected moment with someone new, or simply letting the day unfold without a plan. There's no right way to enjoy free time, and sometimes the experiences we never anticipated become the ones we remember most.

Our new global platform, The Art of Free Time, celebrates that very philosophy. It's an invitation to rediscover the freedom to follow your curiosity, embrace new possibilities, and make room for more of what makes you happy.

I hope this report inspires a broader conversation about the role of joy, play, and discovery in our lives, and reminds us that a little more wonder is something we can all make room for.

Carolyne Doyon

President & CEO,
Club Med North America
and the Caribbean

The *Joy Gap*

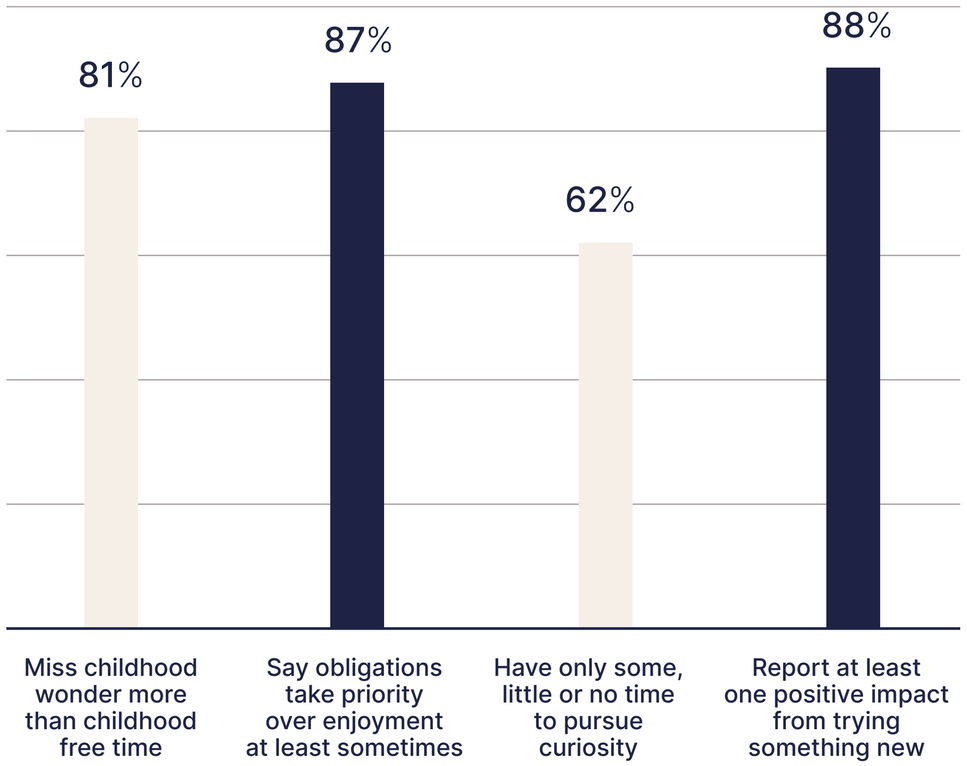
Somewhere between childhood and adulthood, free time began filling up with obligations, expectations, and things we feel we should accomplish.

Club Med The Art of Free Time Report 2026, conducted by Wakefield Research among 2,000 adults across the United States and Canada, explores our relationship with free time, what prevents us from enjoying it, and what happens when we follow our curiosity.

The findings reveal a striking contradiction. North Americans haven't lost their appetite for discovery, but everyday responsibilities and practical barriers can make it difficult to act on it.

Club Med calls this the Joy Gap: the distance between wanting more fun, curiosity, and discovery and making room for those experiences in everyday life.

We Don't *Just Miss* Having More Time, We *Miss* What Made it *Wonderful*



The research suggests that making free time more fulfilling may be about more than finding additional hours. It may also depend on the possibilities we create within the time we already have.

Wakefield Research survey of 2,000 adults in the U.S. and Canada for Club Med, 2026

The *Research* at a Glance

These findings point to six interconnected stories about the way we experience free time today.

What *2,000* North Americans *Told us* About *Free Time*

Survey Finding	North Americans
Miss their childhood sense of wonder more than their childhood free time	81%
Say obligations take priority over enjoyment at least sometimes	87%
Have tried a new hobby or activity within the past year	65%
Experienced a positive impact from trying something new	88%
Are likely to try something new on their next vacation	79%
Say cost or equipment can prevent them from trying new activities	80%
Agree luxury while traveling means freedom to choose what to do	91%
Prefer an open-ended, spontaneous vacation	74%
Feel pressure to accomplish something through hobbies or enjoyable activities	79%
Have continued a hobby or activity first discovered on vacation	52%

Wakefield Research survey of 2,000 adults in the U.S. and Canada for Club Med, 2026

Chapter 1

The Payoff of *Play*

Curiosity Doesn't Have an *Expiration* Date

Growing older doesn't necessarily mean becoming less curious. But making room for curiosity can become more complicated.

Nearly two-thirds of North Americans (65%) have tried a new hobby or activity within the past year. Yet more than one-third (35%) have gone longer than a year without trying something unfamiliar.

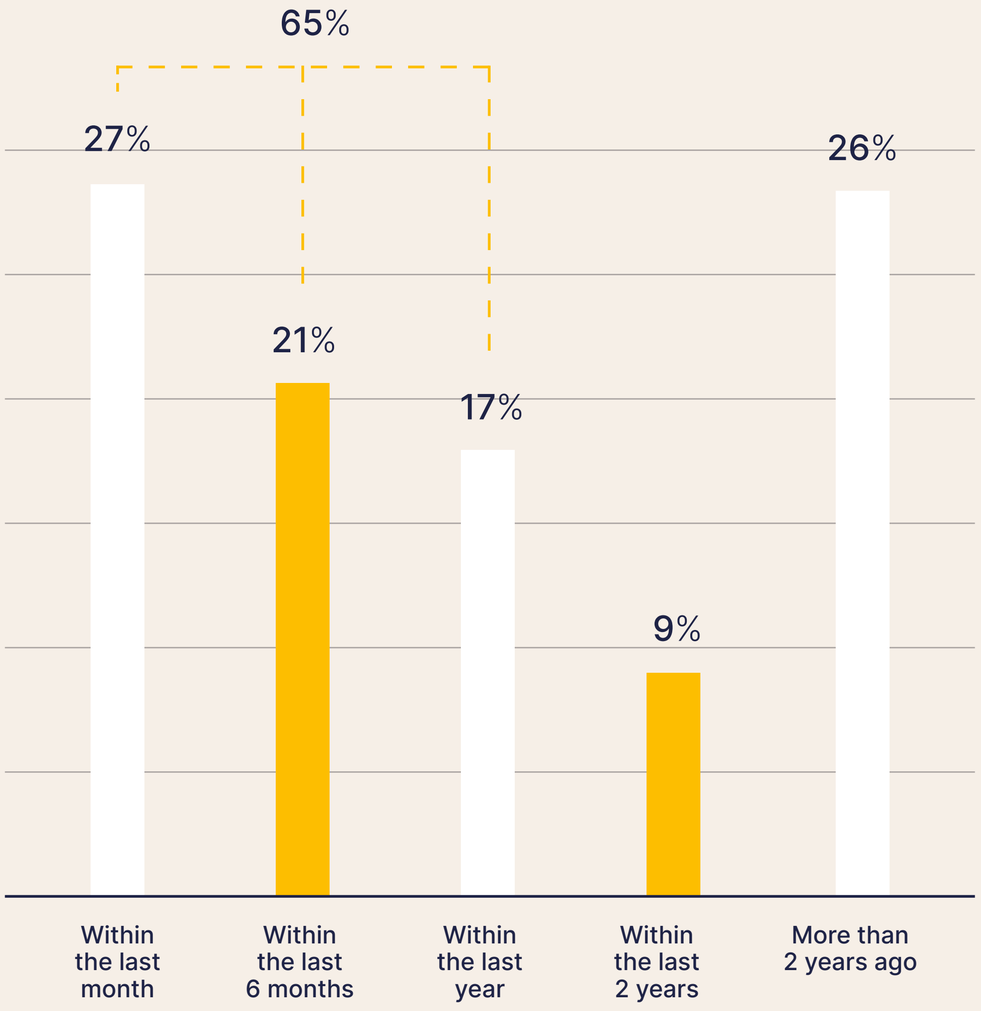
And while many adults want to explore new interests, the majority (62%) say they have only some, little, or no time to pursue their curiosity and discover new things they might enjoy.

The *Desire* to Try Something *New* is Still *There*

The Takeaway

The appetite for discovery remains, even when everyday life makes it difficult to act on it. The findings reveal an opportunity to make trying something new feel more accessible, spontaneous, and enjoyable.

When was the last time you tried a new hobby or activity?



Wakefield Research survey of 2,000 adults in the U.S. and Canada for Club Med, 2026

When we Try, *Good Things* Often Follow

The last time North Americans challenged themselves to try something new, many came away with something they hadn't expected.

For some, it was simply having a better time than anticipated. For others, it meant building confidence, learning a skill, discovering something about themselves, or meeting new people.

Survey Finding	NAM	U.S.	Canada
Had a better time than expected	48%	52%	45%
Learned a skill	41%	43%	39%
Gained self-confidence	41%	41%	41%
Discovered something new about themselves	34%	34%	33%
Followed a spark of curiosity	29%	31%	27%
Met new friends	29%	29%	28%
Reported at least one positive impact	88%	88%	88%

Multiple responses permitted. Percentages represent all respondents, including those who could not recall the last time they tried something new.

88%

experienced a positive impact from trying something new

The results suggest that the rewards of trying something new extend beyond the activity itself. New experiences can introduce us to people, interests, and capabilities we might never have discovered otherwise.

Wakefield Research survey of 2,000 adults in the U.S. and Canada for Club Med, 2026

The *Beginner* Barrier

An interest can begin with a simple thought: I'd love to try that.

But before someone ever begins, that curiosity can come with questions about equipment, lessons, cost, time, and whether the experience will be worth it.

80% of North Americans agree they have activities they'd like to try but haven't because the cost of trying them or getting the necessary gear feels too high when they aren't sure they'll enjoy them.

Trying something unfamiliar can feel easier when the experience is within reach and doesn't require a long-term commitment.

At Club Med, sports, activities, and experiences are built into the vacation, giving guests the opportunity to try something new, revisit an old favorite, or simply see what catches their attention.

Sometimes the first step toward discovering something you love is having the freedom to be a beginner.

Wakefield Research survey of 2,000 adults in the U.S. and Canada for Club Med, 2026

Chapter 2

Freedom is the New *Luxury*

The *Luxury* of Choice

The freedom to decide how we spend our time may be one of travel's greatest luxuries.

Luxury travel is often associated with fine dining, beautiful surroundings, and exceptional service. But the research reveals how strongly travelers also value something less tangible: freedom.

91% of North Americans agree with the statement that luxury when traveling isn't about fine dining and being pampered; it's the freedom to do what they want, when they want.

91%

Agree that luxury means the freedom to do what they want, when they want.

90%
United States

92%
Canada

When everyday life is filled with responsibilities and schedules, having the freedom to follow an interest, change plans, or do nothing at all can feel particularly valuable.

The finding offers a broader definition of luxury: one in which personal choice and flexibility are central to the experience.

Wakefield Research survey of 2,000 adults in the U.S. and Canada for Club Med, 2026

The Appeal of the *Unscripted Vacation*

For most North Americans, the ideal vacation leaves room for the unexpected.

74% prefer keeping things open-ended, with opportunities to explore or do something spontaneous, compared with 26% who prefer a detailed itinerary and full schedule of planned activities.

The preference is shared across both countries, although Americans are slightly more likely to favor an open-ended approach.

Vacation preference	U.S.	Canada
Open-ended and spontaneous	76%	73%
Detailed itinerary	24%	27%

The findings suggest that travelers appreciate having possibilities available without necessarily committing to all of them in advance.

For Club Med, The Art of Free Time reflects that freedom: time is the canvas, and every guest can decide how to fill it.

Wakefield Research survey of 2,000 adults in the U.S. and Canada for Club Med, 2026

Chapter 3

Happiness is the New *Wellness*

Have we *Optimized* the *Fun* Out of *Fun*?

Even our hobbies can start to feel like work.

Activities we choose for enjoyment aren't always free from expectations.

The research found that 79% of North Americans feel pressure to accomplish at least one of several outcomes through their hobbies or activities they enjoy.

Some feel pressure to improve their health. Others feel the need to be productive, achieve a goal, master a skill, or even turn a hobby into a source of income.

Pressure felt during hobbies or enjoyable activities	NAM	U.S.	Canada
See improvements to health	38%	37%	40%
Be productive	36%	38%	34%
Achieve a particular goal	34%	34%	33%
Master a skill	32%	34%	30%
Monetize it or turn it into a side hustle	21%	23%	20%
None of these pressures	21%	20%	21%

Multiple responses permitted.

These expectations aren't necessarily negative. Learning, improving, and achieving goals can all be rewarding. But the findings raise an interesting question: how often do we allow ourselves to enjoy something without expecting it to accomplish anything else?

Wakefield Research survey of 2,000 adults in the U.S. and Canada for Club Med, 2026

Club Med

Chapter 4

The Beginner *Vacation*

Vacation may be the perfect place to *begin*

What if vacation is where we discover what we love doing next?

Vacation can provide something everyday life doesn't always offer: a change of environment, a break from routine, and opportunities to explore unfamiliar interests.

79%

of North Americans say they're likely to try a hobby or activity they've never done before on their next vacation.

81%
United States

76%
Canada

That willingness is particularly interesting when compared with the barriers people encounter at home.

Eight in 10 North Americans say cost or equipment can discourage them from trying an activity. But on vacation, unfamiliar experiences can feel more accessible, especially when the equipment, instruction, and opportunities are already available.

The findings suggest that travel may offer a welcoming environment for experimentation, allowing people to discover what interests them without having to decide whether it will become a lasting commitment.

Wakefield Research survey of 2,000 adults in the U.S. and Canada for Club Med, 2026

The *Souvenir* that doesn't Fit in a *Suitcase*

Some vacation discoveries come home with us.

Not every vacation experience ends when the trip does.

More than half of North Americans (52%) say they've discovered a new hobby or activity while on vacation that they continued or pursued after returning home.

Vacation discoveries continued at home	NAM	U.S.	Canada
Yes, multiple hobbies or activities	17%	22%	13%
Yes, one hobby or activity	34%	33%	35%
No	48%	45%	52%
Yes, at least one (net)	52%	55%	48%

Totals may differ by one percentage point due to rounding.

Americans were more likely than Canadians to report continuing an activity first discovered on vacation, with the largest difference in those who pursued multiple activities.

The findings suggest that vacation can create opportunities for discovery that extend into everyday life.

A new sport, an unexpected interest, or a skill first attempted while traveling may become something people continue enjoying long after they return home.

Wakefield Research survey of 2,000 adults in the U.S. and Canada for Club Med, 2026

Chapter 5

The Generational *Joy* Gap

Trying Something New Across *Generations*

The research reveals a gap between how recently Americans have tried something new and their willingness to explore an unfamiliar activity on their next vacation.

Generation	Tried a new hobby or activity in the past year	Likely to try something new on next vacation
Gen Z	84%	87%
Millennials	83%	89%
Gen X	61%	81%
Boomers	45%	67%

The Key Finding

Curiosity doesn't disappear with age, but the opportunities people take to explore it change.

While Gen Z and Millennials report the highest recent participation in new activities, the desire to try something unfamiliar on vacation remains strong across all four generations.

The largest difference between recent participation and future vacation intentions appears among Gen X and Boomers, with both groups reporting a 20- to 22-percentage-point gap.

For Club Med, the findings reinforce the appeal of vacations that offer a variety of experiences, allowing every generation to discover and enjoy something on their own terms.

Wakefield Research survey of 1,000 adults in the U.S. for Club Med, 2026

Four *Generations*, Four *Relationships* with Discovery

Gen Z
The Experimenters

Gen Z respondents are among the most active in pursuing unfamiliar interests.

84% of U.S. Gen Z have tried a new hobby or activity within the past year, and 95% report at least one positive impact the last time they challenged themselves to try something new.

Another 87% say they're likely to try something new on their next vacation.

Millennials
Missing the Magic

Millennials report a particularly strong connection to childhood wonder.

89% say they miss the sense of wonder they had as children more than the free time they had then.

They also show the strongest intention to try something new on their next vacation, at 89%, while 92% report a positive impact from their most recent new experience.

Gen X
The Time-Squeezed Middle

Only 61% of U.S. Gen X have tried a new hobby or activity within the past year.

Yet 81% say they're likely to try something unfamiliar on their next vacation, and 82% report a positive impact from their last new experience.

The contrast suggests that interest in discovery can remain strong even when everyday participation is lower.

Boomers
Rekindling Curiosity

Among U.S. Boomers, 45% have tried a new hobby or activity within the past year, while 55% have gone longer than a year.

But the desire for new experiences hasn't disappeared.

67% say they're likely to try something new on their next vacation, and 83% report a positive impact from the last time they challenged themselves to try something unfamiliar.

Wakefield Research survey of 1,000 adults in the U.S. for Club Med, 2026

The *Multigenerational* Opportunity

The generational findings point to an important idea about traveling together.

People at different life stages may have different interests, levels of experience, and definitions of an enjoyable day.

One person might want to learn to sail. Another might be curious about pickleball, cooking, or hiking. Someone else may prefer a leisurely afternoon with no plans at all.

The research suggests that a vacation offering different possibilities can appeal to people with different preferences.

For a multigenerational brand like Club Med, The Art of Free Time celebrates the freedom for everyone to explore their own interests while sharing the larger experience of traveling together.

The Same *Vacation* Doesn't Have to Mean the *Same* Experience *for* Everyone

Chapter 6

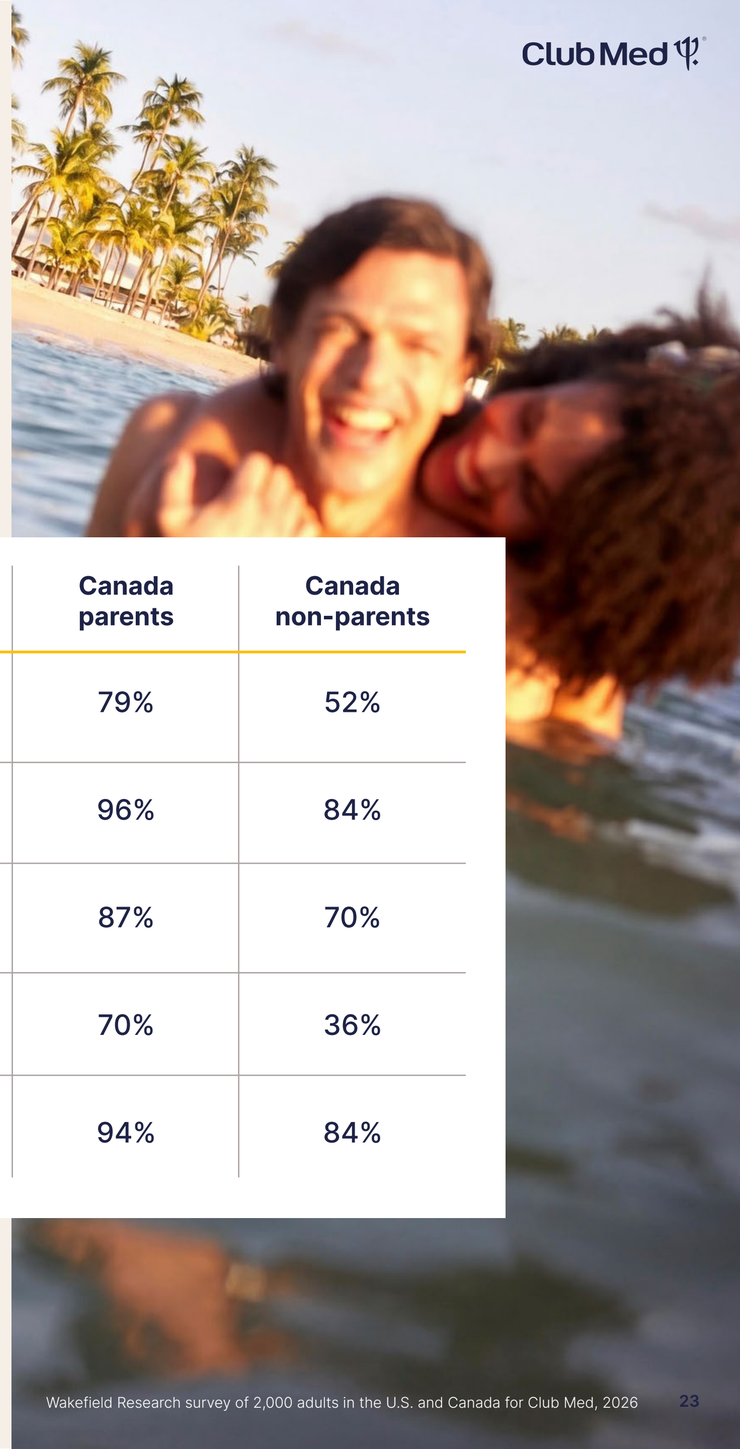
The People Behind the *Joy* Gap

Parents *Aren't Done* Having Adventures

Parenthood may change free time, but it doesn't eliminate curiosity.

The findings reveal an interesting contrast between parents and non-parents.

Parents are more likely to say everyday obligations take priority over enjoyment. Yet they are also more likely to have tried something new recently, report a positive experience, and discover activities on vacation that they continue at home.



Survey Finding	NAM parents	NAM non-parents	U.S. parents	U.S. non-parents	Canada parents	Canada non-parents
Tried something new in the past year	80%	56%	80%	60%	79%	52%
Experienced a positive impact	94%	84%	92%	85%	96%	84%
Likely to try something new on next vacation	88%	73%	89%	77%	87%	70%
Continued a vacation discovery at home	73%	40%	76%	43%	70%	36%
Obligations take priority at least sometimes	93%	83%	93%	82%	94%	84%

The results suggest that having more responsibilities doesn't necessarily reduce the desire to explore.

For parents, travel may create opportunities to reconnect with their own interests while spending time with family.

Wakefield Research survey of 2,000 adults in the U.S. and Canada for Club Med, 2026

Couples and the *Curiosity* Connection

Shared time can create new opportunities for discovery.

The research also reveals differences between adults who are married or in a relationship and those who are not.

Respondents who are married or in a relationship are more likely to report having tried something new recently, experienced a positive impact, and continued a vacation discovery at home.

These findings don't establish that being in a relationship causes greater participation in new activities.

They do suggest that shared experiences and curiosity are relevant dimensions of how people in relationships spend their time.

Travel can offer couples opportunities to discover something unfamiliar about a destination, an activity, or one another.

Survey Finding	NAM in relationship	NAM not in relationship	U.S. in relationship	U.S. not in relationship	Canada in relationship	Canada not in relationship
Tried something new in the past year	68%	57%	69%	62%	67%	52%
Experienced a positive impact	90%	82%	90%	83%	91%	81%
Likely to try something new on next vacation	80%	75%	83%	77%	77%	73%
Continued a vacation discovery at home	56%	41%	59%	46%	54%	37%

Wakefield Research survey of 2,000 adults in the U.S. and Canada for Club Med, 2026

Chapter 7

Two Countries, a Shared *Desire for* More Wonder

The *North American* Picture

The Joy Gap crosses borders.

The research reveals remarkably similar attitudes toward free time, curiosity, and discovery in the United States and Canada.

In both countries, **81% of respondents miss their childhood sense of wonder more than the free time they had then**. And in both markets, **88% report a positive impact from trying something new**.

While the desire for discovery is shared, there are some differences in how Americans and Canadians approach new experiences, vacation freedom, and the barriers that may hold them back.

How the U.S. and Canada compare

Selected research findings | Weighted survey results

Survey Finding	U.S.	Canada
Tried a new hobby or activity within the past year	67%	62%
Likely to try something new on their next vacation	81%	76%
Agree that cost or equipment can prevent them from trying new activities	78%	81%
Agree that luxury means the freedom to do what they want, when they want	90%	92%
Continued a hobby or activity first discovered on vacation	55%	48%
Miss childhood wonder more than childhood free time	81%	81%
Experienced a positive impact from trying something new	88%	88%

What the findings reveal

American respondents report somewhat higher recent participation in new hobbies and activities, greater willingness to try something unfamiliar on their next vacation, and a higher likelihood of continuing a hobby first discovered while traveling.

Canadian respondents are slightly more likely to agree that luxury means having the freedom to choose how they spend their time. They are also somewhat more likely to identify cost or equipment as a barrier to trying new activities.

Yet the similarities are just as revealing. Across both countries, the overwhelming majority miss their childhood sense of wonder, recognize the positive impact of trying something new, and value the freedom to experience travel on their own terms.

The takeway

The Joy Gap is a shared North American experience. While the barriers and behaviors may vary, the desire for curiosity, discovery, and personal freedom transcends borders.

For Club Med, the findings reinforce the relevance of The Art of Free Time across both markets, with a vacation experience that gives guests the freedom to explore new interests, reconnect with what they enjoy, and make their time their own.

Wakefield Research survey of 2,000 adults in the U.S. and Canada for Club Med, 2026

Chapter 8

The Art of *free time* Club Med

Time is the *Canvas*

For more than 75 years, Club Med has been built around a simple belief: happiness comes from the freedom to discover, connect, play, and experience something new.

Club Med The Art of Free Time Report 2026 offers a contemporary perspective on that philosophy.

The research shows that adults still want wonder in their lives. They're interested in trying new things, value the freedom to choose how they spend their time, and often find something positive when they step outside familiar routines.

But obligations, expectations, and practical barriers can make those opportunities harder to pursue.

The Art of Free Time is Club Med's invitation to rediscover the possibilities within our time.

Across its beach, island, and mountain resorts, that might mean trying a sport for the first time, discovering a new flavor, spending time with friends and family, embracing something unexpected, or doing absolutely nothing at all.

There's no single formula for a fulfilling vacation, and no requirement to make every moment productive.

Time is the canvas. What we choose to do with it is entirely our own.

The Possibilities are *Ours* to Explore

Research *Appendix*

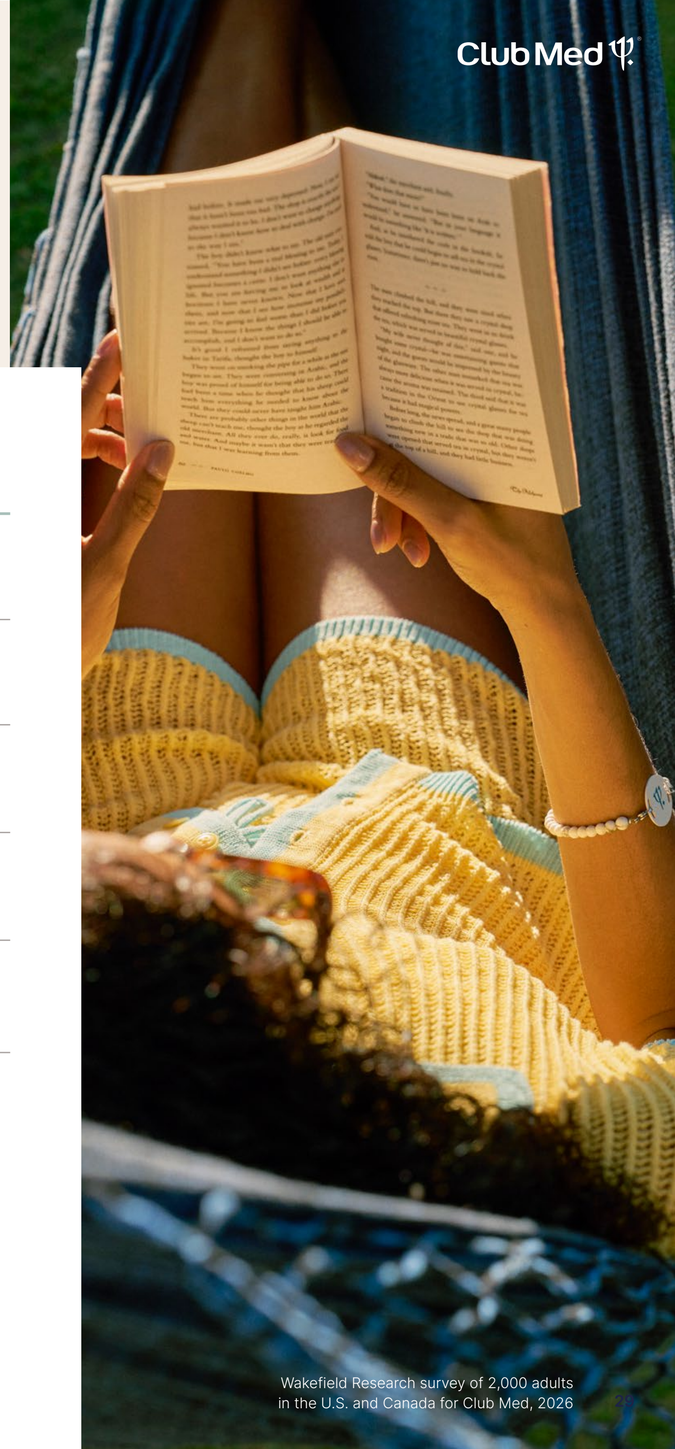
Complete question-by-question findings

The following tables present response distributions for 11 selected Wakefield survey questions at the North American, U.S., and Canadian levels. They are intended to accompany the editorial report and allow journalists to reference findings beyond the featured stories.

All figures are weighted percentages rounded to whole numbers. Net totals are calculated from underlying weighted results and may differ slightly from the sum of displayed response categories.

A1 – When was the last time you tried a new hobby or activity?

Response	NAM	U.S.	Canada
Within the last month	27%	30%	24%
Within the last 6 months	21%	20%	22%
Within the last year	17%	18%	16%
Within the last 2 years	9%	9%	8%
More than 2 years ago	26%	23%	30%
Within the last year *(net)*	**65%**	**67%**	**62%**



Wakefield Research survey of 2,000 adults in the U.S. and Canada for Club Med, 2026

A2 – How much time do you typically have in your daily life to pursue your curiosity and discover new things you may like?

Response	NAM	U.S.	Canada
Unlimited time	12%	14%	11%
A lot of time	25%	25%	26%
Some time	41%	42%	41%
Little time	17%	16%	17%
No time	4%	3%	5%
Some, little or no time *(net)*	**62%**	**61%**	**63%**

A3 – How often do obligations take priority over things you want to do for enjoyment?

Response	NAM	U.S.	Canada
All of the time	12%	14%	9%
Most of the time	30%	30%	29%
Sometimes	45%	42%	49%
Rarely	11%	11%	10%
Never	2%	3%	2%
At least sometimes *(net)*	**87%**	**86%**	**88%**
Most or all of the time *(net)*	**41%**	**44%**	**38%**

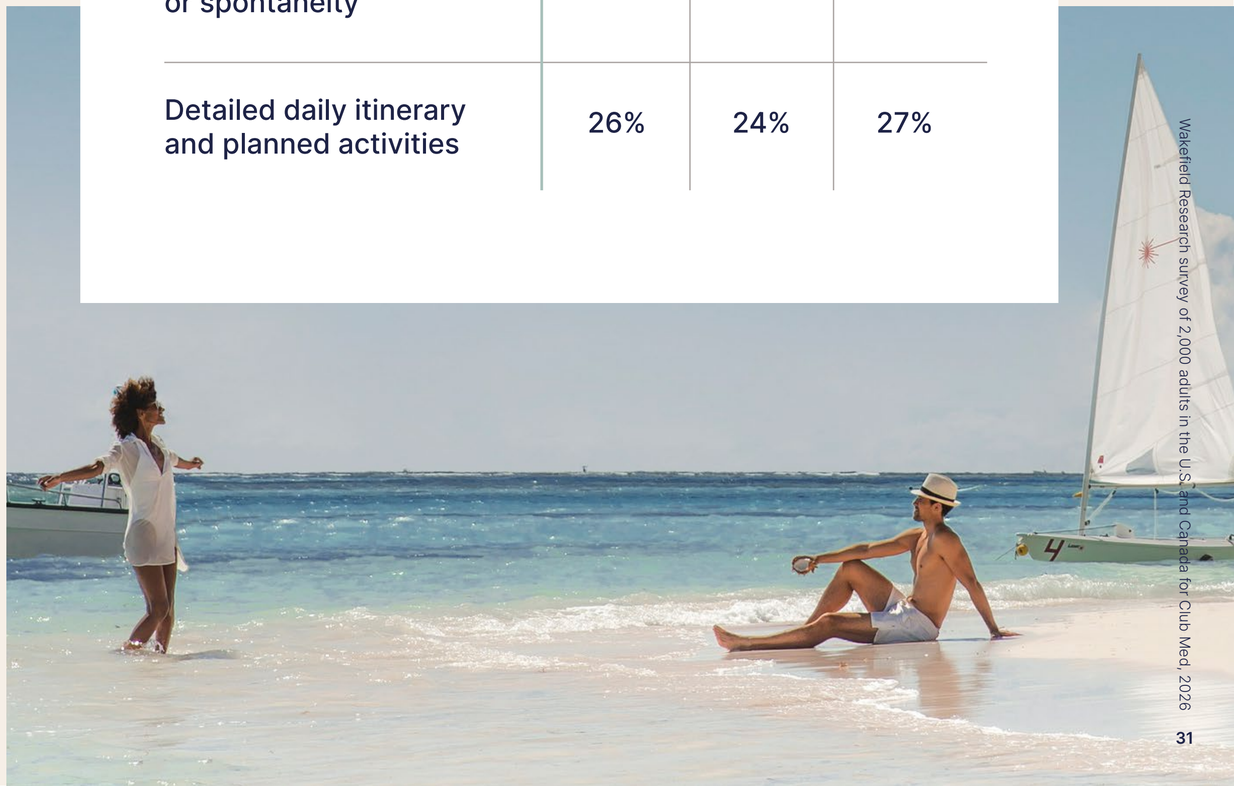
Wakefield Research survey of 2,000 adults in the U.S. and Canada for Club Med, 2026

A4 – I miss the sense of wonder I had as a kid more than the free time I had then.

Response	NAM	U.S.	Canada
Agree strongly	28%	29%	28%
Agree somewhat	53%	52%	53%
Disagree somewhat	15%	14%	15%
Disagree strongly	5%	5%	4%
Agree *(net)*	**81%**	**81%**	**81%**

A5 – Which best describes your preferred vacation?

Response	NAM	U.S.	Canada
Open-ended with opportunities for exploration or spontaneity	74%	76%	73%
Detailed daily itinerary and planned activities	26%	24%	27%



Wakefield Research survey of 2,000 adults in the U.S. and Canada for Club Med, 2026

A6 – Luxury when traveling isn't about fine dining and being pampered; it's the freedom to do what I want, when I want.

Response	NAM	U.S.	Canada
Agree strongly	47%	48%	46%
Agree somewhat	44%	42%	46%
Disagree somewhat	7%	8%	7%
Disagree strongly	2%	2%	1%
Agree *(net)*	**91%**	**90%**	**92%**

A7 – What positive impacts did you experience the last time you challenged yourself to try something new?

Response	NAM	U.S.	Canada
Had a better time than expected	48%	52%	45%
Learned a skill	41%	43%	39%
Gained self-confidence	41%	41%	41%
Discovered something new about myself	34%	34%	33%
Followed a spark of curiosity	29%	31%	27%
Met new friends	29%	29%	28%
Other positive impact	2%	2%	2%
Cannot remember last time trying something new	12%	12%	12%
Experienced positive impacts *(net)*	**88%**	**88%**	**88%**

Multiple responses permitted.

Wakefield Research survey of 2,000 adults in the U.S. and Canada for Club Med, 2026

A8 – How likely are you to try a hobby or activity you've never done before on your next vacation?

Response	NAM	U.S.	Canada
Very likely	30%	36%	25%
Somewhat likely	48%	45%	51%
Not very likely	16%	13%	19%
Not at all likely	5%	5%	6%
Likely *(net)*	**79%**	**81%**	**76%**

A9 – Which things do you feel pressured to do through hobbies or activities you enjoy?

Response	NAM	U.S.	Canada
See improvements to health	38%	37%	40%
Be productive	36%	38%	34%
Achieve a particular goal	34%	34%	33%
Master a skill	32%	34%	30%
Monetize it or turn it into a side hustle	21%	23%	20%
None of these	21%	20%	21%
Feel at least one pressure *(net)*	**79%**	**80%**	**79%**

Multiple responses permitted.

Wakefield Research survey of 2,000 adults in the U.S. and Canada for Club Med, 2026

A10 – Have you discovered a new hobby or activity on vacation that you continued or pursued after returning home?

Response	NAM	U.S.	Canada
Yes, multiple hobbies or activities	17%	22%	13%
Yes, one hobby or activity	34%	33%	35%
No	48%	45%	52%
Yes *(net)*	**52%**	**55%**	**48%**

A11 – There are activities I'd like to try but haven't because the cost of trying them or getting the gear is too expensive when I'm not sure I'll enjoy them.

Response	NAM	U.S.	Canada
Agree strongly	29%	31%	27%
Agree somewhat	51%	47%	54%
Disagree somewhat	14%	14%	14%
Disagree strongly	7%	8%	6%
Agree *(net)*	**80%**	**78%**	**81%**

Wakefield Research survey of 2,000 adults in the U.S. and Canada for Club Med, 2026

About the *Research*

Club Med The Art of Free Time Report 2026 was conducted by Wakefield Research among 2,000 adults ages 21 and older in the United States and Canada, including 1,000 U.S. adults and 1,000 Canadian adults.

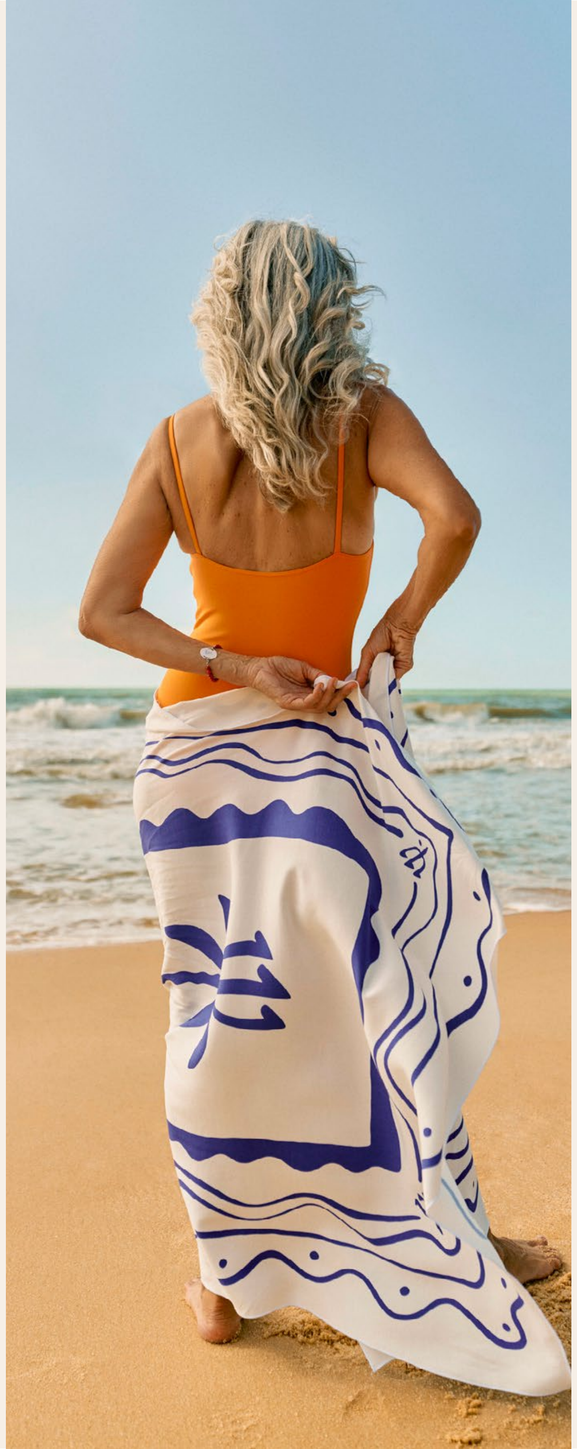
The survey was conducted between September 11 and September 23, 2026, using an email invitation and online survey. Data was weighted.

The combined North American findings reflect respondents across both countries. U.S. and Canadian findings are identified separately throughout the report.

According to the Wakefield methodological notes, results for the combined sample are subject to sampling variation of approximately ±2.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, and results for each country are subject to sampling variation of approximately ±3.1 percentage points. Sampling variation for demographic subgroups is larger.

Survey findings are based on respondents' self-reported attitudes, experiences, and intentions. They describe associations and preferences, not necessarily causal relationships. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding, and multiple-response questions may exceed 100%.

Research attribution:
Club Med The Art of Free Time Report 2026, conducted by Wakefield Research, September 2026.



About Club Med

Founded in 1950 by Gérard Blitz, Club Med pioneered the all-inclusive vacation concept and continues to welcome travelers to premium resorts across beach, island, and mountain destinations around the world.

With sports, activities, dining, entertainment, and opportunities for discovery built into the experience, Club Med celebrates the freedom for guests to enjoy their vacation in whatever way makes them happy.

The Art of Free Time is Club Med's global platform celebrating joy, curiosity, connection, and the freedom to embrace new possibilities.

For more information, visit **Club Med**.