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NEWS RELEASE

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New Study Reveals Popularity of U.S. Cultural and Heritage Travel Large, Affluent Market Focuses on History and Tradition

Washington, D.C. – A recent research study reveals that 78% of all U.S. leisure travelers participate in cultural and/or heritage activities while traveling, translating to 118.3 million adults each year. With cultural and heritage travelers spending an average of \$994 per trip, they contribute more than \$192 billion annually to the U.S. economy.

“We discovered that an impressive number of U.S. travelers seek out cultural and heritage experiences,” said Helen Marano, director, Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, U.S. Department of Commerce. “With 78% of all domestic leisure travelers participating in cultural and heritage activities, their expenditures confirm that this is a strong market, and they are contributing significantly to our communities during these challenging economic times.”

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The study is the first to segment cultural and/or heritage travelers, showing the diverse groups that exist within this broader category of traveler. The segmentation analysis uncovered five different types of cultural and heritage travelers: Passionate, Well-rounded, Aspirational, Self-Guided, and Keeping it Light. Three segments – Passionate, Well-rounded, and Self-guided – were more serious about their travels and said that cultural and heritage activities had a greater impact on their destination choice. Together, these three segments represent 40% of all leisure travelers and contribute nearly \$124 billion to the U.S. economy.

Cultural and heritage travelers as a whole are more frequent travelers, reporting an average of 5.01 leisure trips in the past 12 months versus non-cultural/heritage travelers with 3.98 trips. They are also more frequent business travelers and are more likely to have taken an international trip in the past 12 months than their non-cultural/heritage counterparts. More than half of cultural/heritage travelers agree that they prefer their leisure travel to be educational and nearly half said they spend more money on cultural and heritage activities. They are also likely to travel farther to get the experiences they seek: about half of most recent overnight leisure trips were 500 miles or more from home. More than a third say they traveled between 100 and 300 miles for a day trip.

“This is the first study to segment this market,” said Sheila Armstrong, executive director of the U.S. Cultural & Heritage Tourism (USCHT) Marketing Council. “While we suspected that most leisure travelers participated in some cultural activities, this study identifies the passionate cultural and heritage travelers – those for whom culture and heritage drive their destination choices – as well as the more casual cultural traveler. The study helps us understand what travelers consider when making destination and spending choices.”

The study found that cultural and heritage travelers are more likely to participate in culinary activities, such as sampling artisan food and wines, attending food and wine festivals, visiting farmers’ markets, shopping for gourmet foods, and enjoying unique dining experiences as well as fine dining.

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Other cultural and heritage activities identified by travelers include visiting historic sites (66%); attending historical re-enactments (64%); visiting art museums/galleries (54%); attending an art/craft fair or festival (45%); attending a professional dance performance (44%); visiting state/national parks (41%); shopping in museum stores (32%); and exploring urban neighborhoods (30%). The vast majority of these travelers (65%) say that they seek travel experiences where the “destination, its buildings and surroundings have retained their historic character.”

"This study of the habits of cultural and heritage travelers reconfirms the size of this lucrative market," said John Williams, president and CEO of Heritage Travel, the study's lead sponsor. "It also shows that cultural and heritage travelers seek authentic destinations with historic character as well as educational experiences in their travels."

The study was conducted by Mandala Research for the U.S. Cultural & Heritage Tourism (USCHT) Marketing Council, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Commerce. Heritage Travel, Inc., a subsidiary of The National Trust for Historic Preservation, and its website www.gozaic.com was lead sponsor of the study. Other sponsors include American Association of Museums; California Travel and Tourism Commission; Center for Socioeconomic Research and Education at Texas A&M University; Chicago Office of Tourism; Positively Cleveland; Visit Florida; The History Channel Magazine; Marriott International; Museum Store Association; Sarasota and Her Islands Convention and Visitors Bureau; Shop America Alliance; Vantage Technology Partners; and the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

For more information about the study or to purchase a final report, please contact Laura Mandala at laura@mandalaresearch.com or 703.798.5452.

The USCHT Marketing Council's primary purpose is to market and promote cultural and heritage experiences to travelers to and within the United States through online packaging at www.TheCulturalTraveler.com. To learn more about the USCHT Marketing Council, please visit www.uscht.com.

Heritage Travel, Inc. offers the premier online community presenting the broad range of heritage destinations, sites and events that define our collective past and enrich our lives. The company's innovative website – Gozaic.com – provides a powerful travel planning resource for heritage and cultural travelers as well as an online community where people can find and share heritage- and culture-rich experiences. Based in Washington, D.C., Heritage Travel is a for-profit subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. For information, visit www.gozaic.com or contact Scott Gerloff at 202.588.6200 or HTI_Partner@gozaic.com.

Mandala Research, LLC is a leading source for travel and tourism market research needs. The company's mission is to conduct studies that address the unmet needs in travel and tourism research, providing with every study an in-depth understanding travelers, their motivations and desires. To learn more about Mandala Research, please visit www.mandalaresearch.com or contact Managing Director Laura Mandala at 703.798.5452 or Laura@MandalaResearch.com.

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