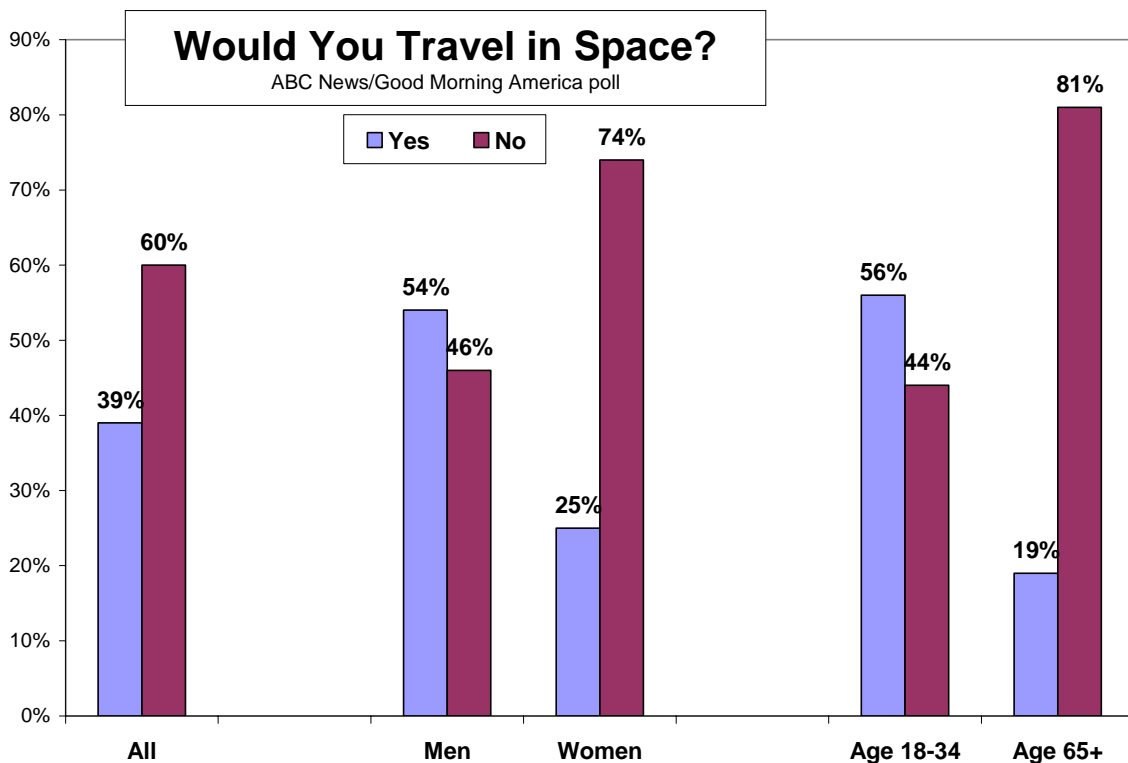


Four in 10 Would Fly in Space; Just Knock \$198,000 Off the Ticket

Four in 10 Americans are up for a ride in space – but the ticket price will have to come down by just a bit. Like, say, about \$198,000.

Whatever the cost, most expect it to happen: Sixty-five percent in this ABC News/Good Morning America survey think that in the years ahead ordinary people will travel in outer space. And 39 percent say that if they themselves had the chance, they'd go for it.

But that's where price sensitivity comes in. There's a huge range in how much money people would be willing to pay for a ride into space and back. Twenty-one percent cite a figure under \$500, including 7 percent who'd only go for free. At the other end of the spectrum, 4 percent say they'd shell out \$1 million or more for the thrill of a blast off.



The median answer comes in at just \$2,000 – a far cry from the \$200,000 ticket price backers of the prospective spaceliner called Virgin Galactic are asking right now. They say the ship could start taking paying passengers to the edge of space in 2009 or 2010.

Then again, this is probably not a mass-market business.

Interest in participating in space flight is in fact down from its peak. In polls back to 1981, as many as 47 percent of Americans (in 1998) have said they'd like to travel in space; it was about as high, 46 percent, in 1982. Indeed today's 39 percent matches the low in these 26 years of polls. Lingering memories of the Challenger and Columbia disasters, in 1986 and 2003, may contribute to some of the compunctions.

GROUPS – Interest in traveling in space differs sharply among groups. Fifty-four percent of men would like a ride; three-quarters of women by contrast, would rather stay right here on Earth. Interest peaks among under-35s; 56 percent would take the trip, compared with just two in 10 people age 55 or older. And – perhaps anticipating the ticket price – better-off Americans are more apt to say they'd like to rocket off into the yonder.

	Want a ride in space?	
	Yes	No
All	39%	60%
Men	54	46
Women	25	74
18-34	56	44
65+	19	81
<\$50K	35	64
\$50K-\$75K	40	58
\$75K+	50	50

Traveling to space is different from taking up residence there, and this poll does not find broad interest in a push by NASA to colonize space. Fifty-eight percent oppose having the space agency work on ways to establish permanent settlements where large numbers of people could live in outer space or on other planets. And among those who do support the idea, barely two in 10 say it should be given a high priority.

ALLURE – Clearly part of the allure of space is the thought of intelligent life out there. Most Americans believe it does exist – although *how* intelligent is another matter. While 55 percent think some form of intelligent life exists in outer space, fewer – 40 percent – think there's life up there that's more intelligent than humans.

There are differences among groups in these views as well. Westerners are notably more apt than people in other regions to believe there's intelligent life in outer space; so are younger and better-educated adults. Seniors are especially skeptical.

	Intelligent life in outer space?	
	Yes	No
All	55%	37%

18-34	62	35
65+	33	46
Northeast	53	39
Midwest	55	36
South	47	46
West	70	23
HS or less	47	44
Some college	67	27
College grad	60	34

People who believe there's intelligent life in outer space are better attuned to space exploration, both personally and by NASA. Forty-nine percent in this group would like to travel in outer space; by contrast, among those who don't think there's intelligent life in space, far fewer, 28 percent, yearn for a trip there.

Similarly, among people who believe there's intelligent life in outer space, 50 percent say NASA should try to establish permanent settlements in space. Among people who doubt that such life exists, just 23 percent support a space-settlement program.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone Jan. 25-29, 2008, among a random national sample of 1,019 adults. The results have a 3-point error margin. Field work by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1. How likely do you think it is that in the years ahead ordinary people will travel in outer space? Do you think this will definitely happen, will probably happen, will probably not happen or will definitely not happen?

	----- Will happen -----			----- Will not happen -----			
	NET	Definitely	Probably	NET	Probably	Definitely	No opin.
1/29/08	65	18	47	33	24	9	2
5/6/99*	57	12	45	41	32	9	2

*Pew, "in the next 50 years"

2. If you had a chance in your lifetime to travel in outer space, would you do so, or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
1/29/08	39	60	1
4/1/04*	39	60	1
8/3/99	41	57	3
10/28/98	44	55	2
4/1/98	47	52	1

7/14/97	43	56	1
6/22/94	40	58	2
1/31/86	44	54	2
11/16/82**	46	50	4
8/11/81	42	55	3

*CBS, 2004 to 1986

**NBC/AP, 1982 and previous

3. (AMONG THOSE WHO WOULD TRAVEL IN OUTER SPACE) If space tourism were possible, how much would you be willing to pay for a ride into outer space and back?

	1/29/08
\$0	7
\$1 - \$499	14
\$500 - \$999	6
\$1,000 - \$4,999	16
\$5,000 - \$9,999	10
\$10,000 - \$19,999	7
\$20,000+	19
No opinion	21

Median \$2,000

4. Thinking about NASA, which runs the space program - do you think NASA should or should not be working on ways to establish permanent settlements where large numbers of people could live in outer space or on other planets?

	Yes	No	No opinion
1/29/08	38	58	4

5. (AMONG THOSE WHO THINK NASA SHOULD ESTABLISH SPACE SETTLEMENTS) Things NASA does now include the space shuttle, the space station, and space exploration projects. Compared with these, what kind of priority should NASA give to a program to establish permanent space settlements - should it be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority?

	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority	No opinion
1/29/08	19	57	22	2

4/5 NET

	--- NASA establish settlement ---						
	Yes	High	Medium	Low	No op.	No	No opinion
1/29/08	38	7	22	8	1	58	4

6. Do you believe that some form of intelligent life does or does not exist in outer space?

	Does	Does not	No opinion
1/29/08	55	37	8
7/9/97	56	37	7
1/17/82*	47	37	16

*Audits & Surveys

7. (AMONG THOSE WHO THINK INTELLIGENT LIFE EXISTS IN SPACE) Do you think there's life in outer space that has greater intelligence than humans here on Earth, or not?

	Greater	Not greater	No opinion
1/29/08	72	19	9
7/9/97	67	21	12

6/7 NET

	----- Does exist -----					
	NET	Greater	Not greater	No opinion	Does not	No opinion
1/29/08	55	40	10	5	37	8
7/9/97	56	37	12	7	37	14