

Visitor Profile

Tourism Tofino – Autumn 2016



The Numbers

Visitors were intercepted from September to December of 2016.

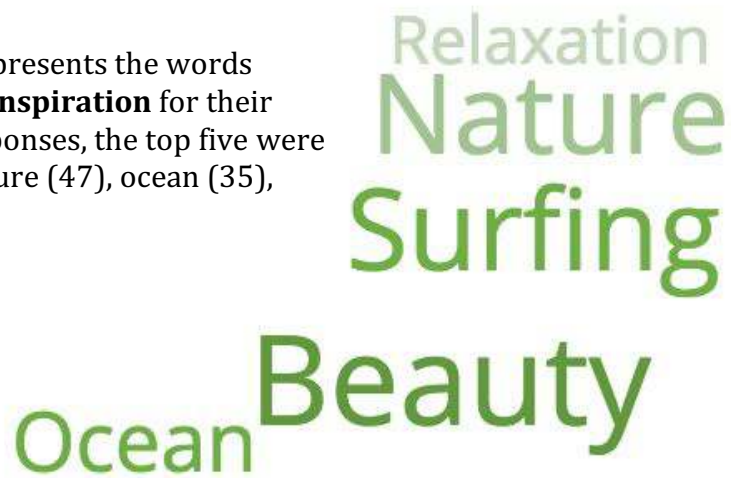
A total of 1,359 ballots were collected and 620 surveys were completed. The response rate was 53%. Out of 620 completed surveys, 6 were minors and 14 were residents resulting in 620 useable surveys.

The Concept and Model

This visitor profile was created for Tourism Tofino, in partnership with the local region, The Sociable Scientists, and Vancouver Island University. Between September and December 2016, ten ballot boxes were placed across the region in businesses and operations that visitors frequent. Prompted by an information poster on the Visitor Experience Survey, and the chance to win a prize package (upon completion of the survey) provided by tourism operators in the region, visitors could complete a ballot with their name and email address while in the community, then drop it in the ballot box. Approximately two weeks later, The Sociable Scientists sent those visitors an invitation to complete an online survey on their experience in the region. Once the survey was closed in January, The Sociable Scientists, and the VIU team analyzed the data, and then created this visitor profile.

Trip Motivation

Figure 1. This word cloud represents the words visitors used to describe the **inspiration** for their trip to Tofino. Out of 557 responses, the top five were beauty (52), surfing (48), nature (47), ocean (35), and relaxation (47).



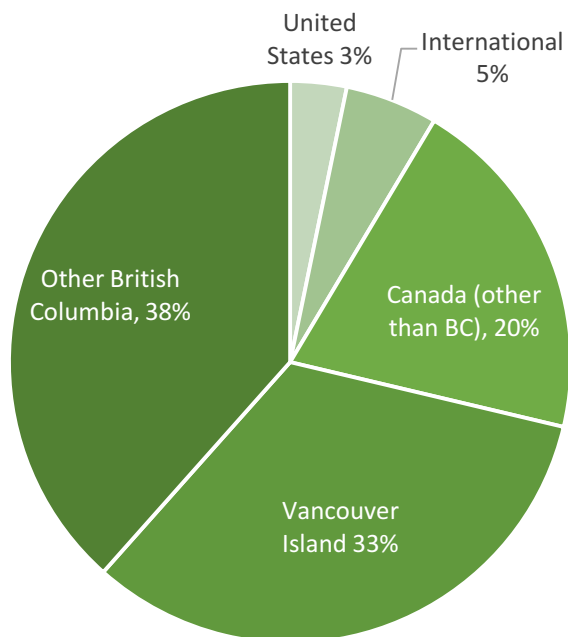
Trip Purpose

When asked about the purpose of their visit, 85% of visitors indicated their trip was for leisure, 11% said they were visiting friends and/or relatives, 3% said it was for a combination of business and leisure, and 1% said it was for business or work.

Visitor Origin

Figure 2. Visitors were asked to indicate where they live. The pie chart below demonstrates that the majority of survey participants were from British Columbia (71%). The boxes show a break down of visitor origin for Vancouver Island, the rest of BC, and the rest of Canada

Figure 2. Origin of visitors



<p>Canada: Alberta 48% Ontario 33% Saskatchewan 8% Quebec 4% Manitoba 2% Yukon 2% New Brunswick 1% Nova Scotia 1%</p>	<p>Vancouver Island: South Island 58% Central Island 23% North Central 11% Cowichan 5% Pacific Rim 4%</p>
<p>Other British Columbia: Vancouver, Coast & Mountains 77% Thompson Okanagan 15% Northern BC 4% Kootenay Rockies 4% Cariboo Chilcotin Coast 1%</p>	

Group Composition

Figure 3. Respondents were asked to select which categories best described with whom they were travelling with on their visit to Tofino. 14% of visitors were travelling with a pet.

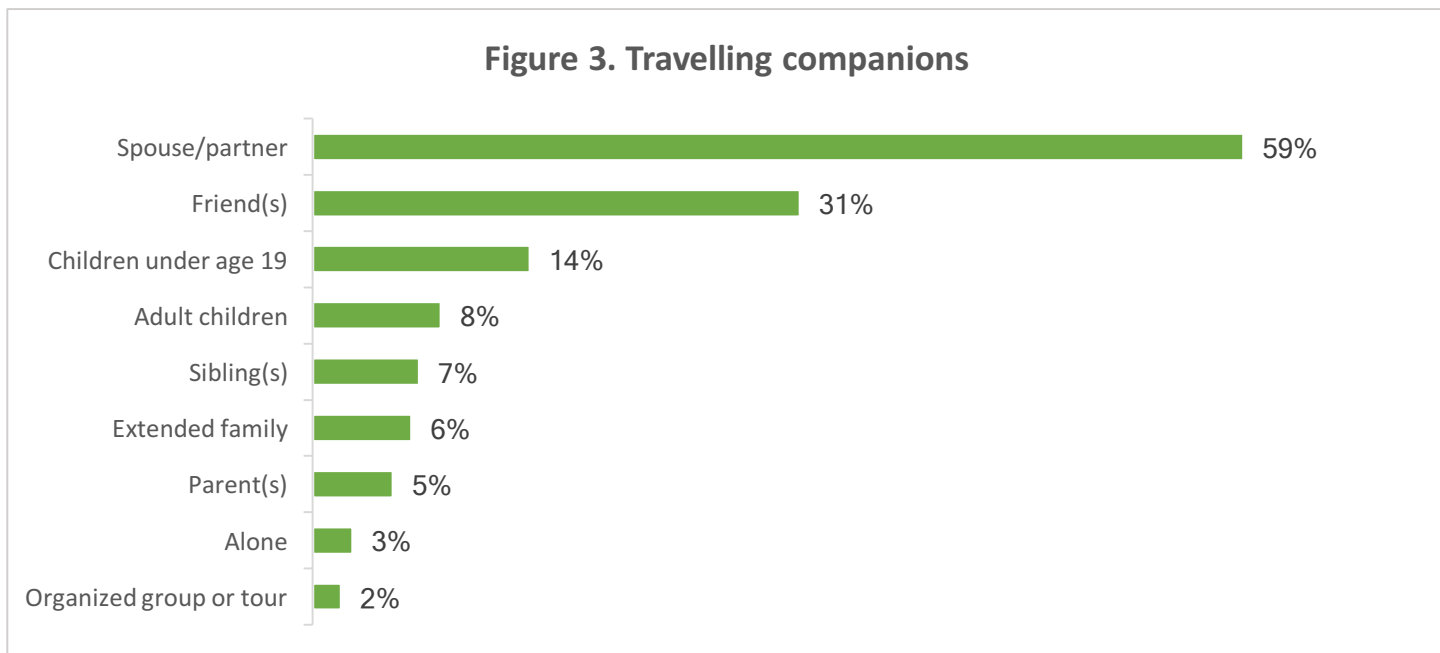
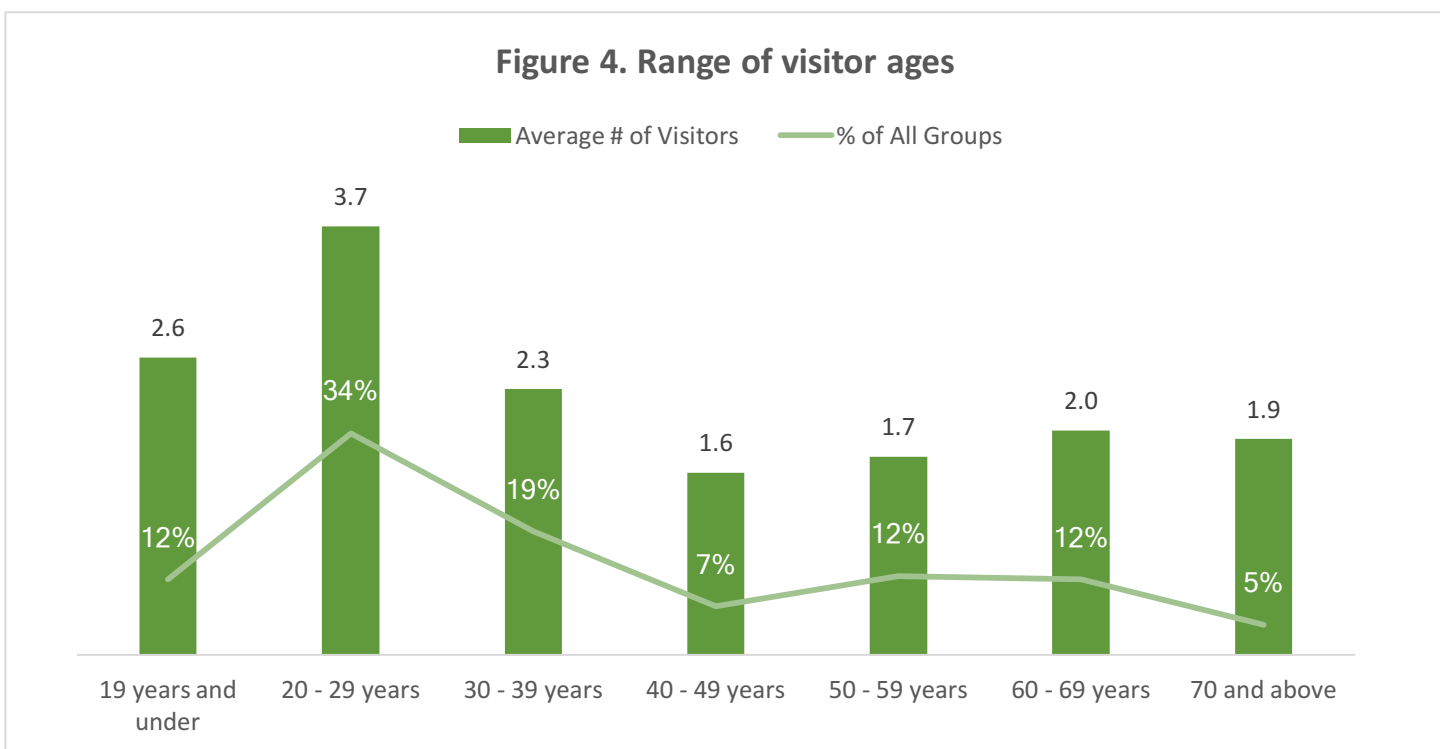


Figure 4. The columns in this graph show the average number of people per group in each age category. The line shows the overall percentage of visitors in each age category. For example, 34% of all groups had at least one person between age 20 and 29, and on average they had 3.7 people in this age category. The average **group size** was **2.9** people per group; 4% were solo travellers, 47% of groups consisted of two or three people, 33% had four to nine people, and only 5% had 10 or more people. **Multiple options could be selected therefore combined percent does not equal 100%.*

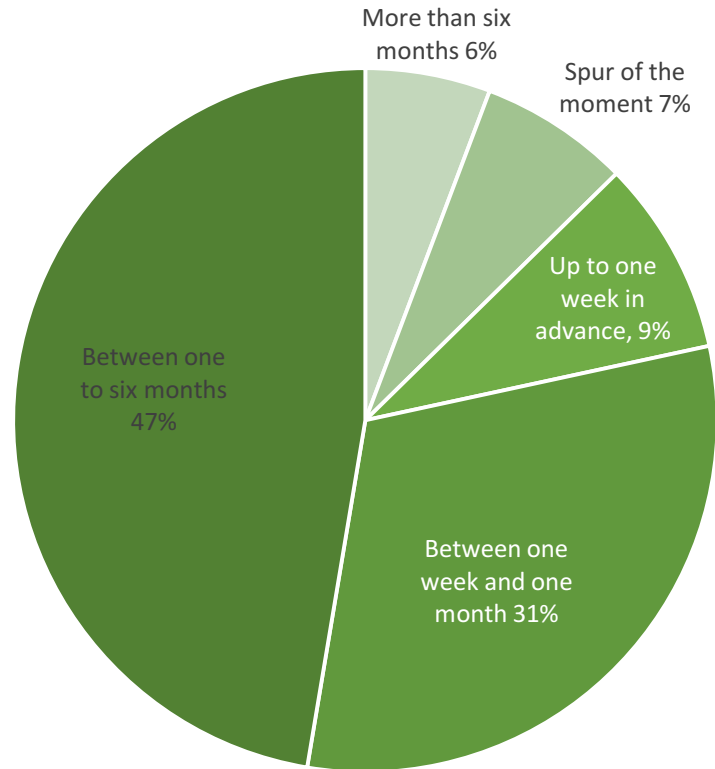


Planning

Figure 5. This figure shows how far in advance visitors planned their trip to Tofino. The results show that 47% of visitors planned their trip *less than* one month in advance, and 53% plan their trip at *least* one month in advance.

"I would like to record the courtesy, friendliness and warmth of the staff at the Visitor Centre on the road into Tofino. They gave us a great amount of information, which we used to make our stay in Tofino especially memorable."

Figure 5. Trip planning



Sources of Information

Figure 6. Visitors were asked to indicate which sources of information they used to plan their trip before and during their visit. The top sources of information were friends and relatives (56%), previous personal experience (51%), and website of accommodations provider in Tofino (27%). Sources with 5% or less were not included in the graph. *Multiple options could be selected therefore combined percent does not equal 100%

Figure 6. Sources of trip planning information

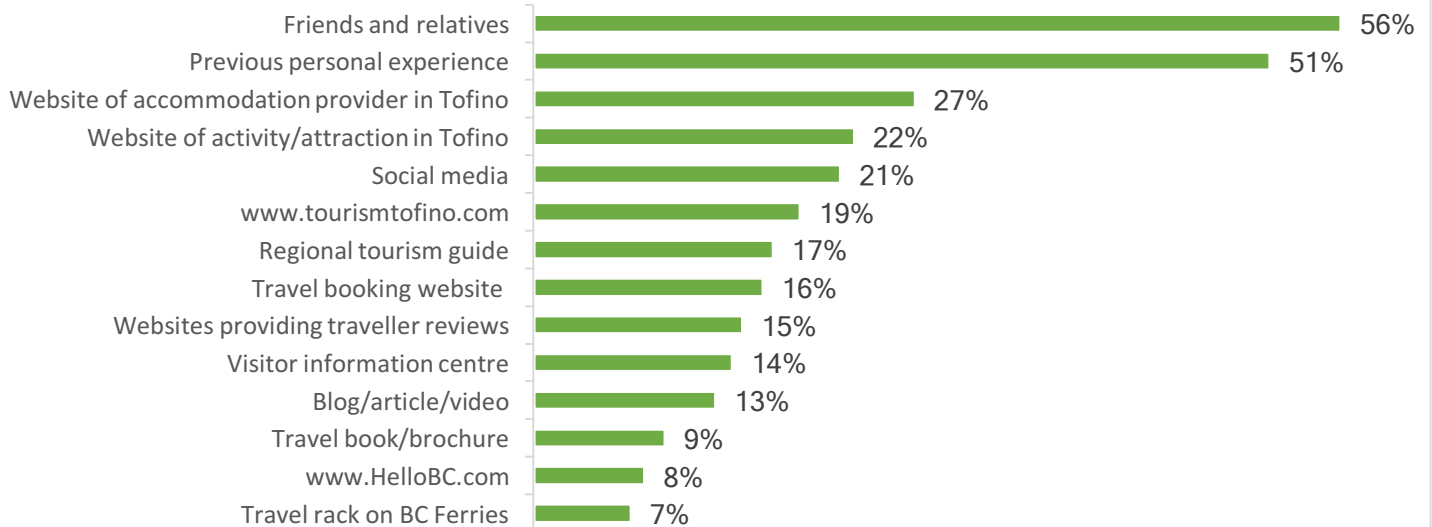


Figure 7. Transportation to Vancouver Island

Transportation

Figure 7. Visitors were asked to indicate what type of transportation they used to travel to Vancouver Island. The results do not include visitors that reside on Vancouver Island.

Of the 84% of visitors who arrived by ferry, 55% landed at Departure Bay, 22% landed at Duke Point, and 16% at Swartz Bay. 93% of ferry passengers travelled in a vehicle and 7% were walk-on passengers.

Of the 16% who arrived by air, 44% landed at the Victoria International Airport, 24% arrived at the Nanaimo Airport, 16% landed at the Comox Valley Airport, and 13% landed at the Tofino Airport.

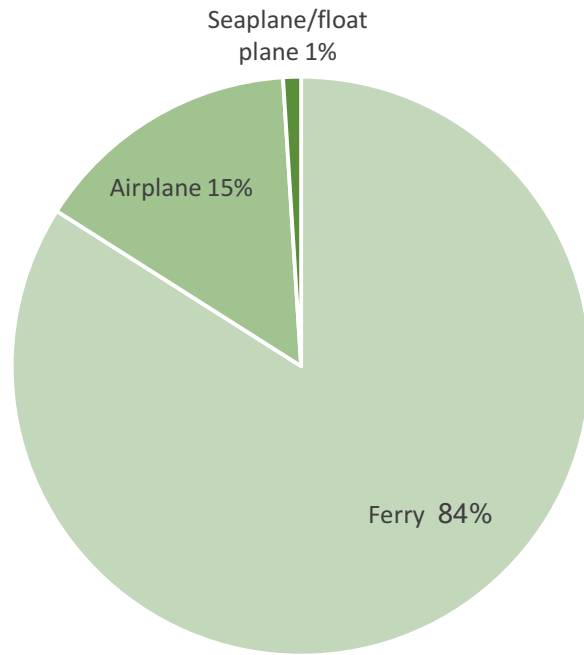


Figure 8. Transportation to and from Tofino

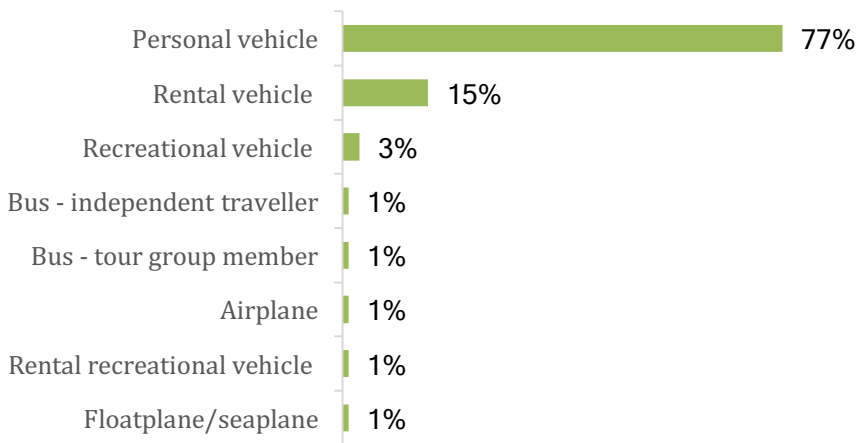


Figure 8. This figure demonstrates what form of transportation visitors used to get to and from Tofino once they had arrived on Vancouver Island (including residents of Vancouver Island).

"Would have been helpful if shuttle bus was running - our trip was the last 2 weeks of October and we didn't have access to a car for the whole time we were staying at a resort outside of Tofino, which then meant a taxi, or hours walk to get into Tofino. Would have been happy to pay for shuttle even if it only ran hourly."

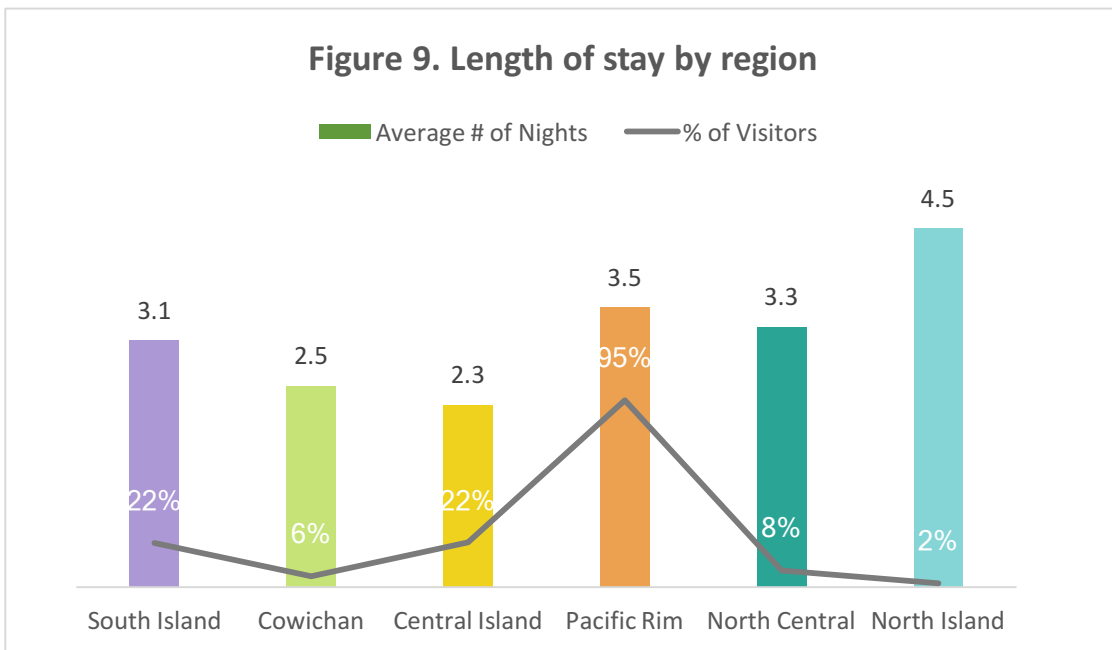




Length of Stay

Figure 9. Visitors were asked to indicate how many nights they spent in each region of Vancouver Island. The columns in Figure 9 show the average number of nights that visitors spent in each of the regions they visited, while the line shows the % of visitors that spent at least one night in each of the regions. Refer to map for regions. On average, visitors to Tofino spent 7.5 nights away from home. *Multiple regions could be selected therefore combined percent does not equal 100%

For 76% of visitors, Tofino was the main destination of their trip, for 19% of visitors it was one of several planned stops but not the main destination, and for 5% it was an impulsive trip because they were visiting another nearby location. 37% of respondents were in Tofino for the first time and 64% were repeat visitors.



Accommodation

Figure 10. The bars in this figure show what percent of visitors stayed in each type of accommodation, and the number in brackets is the average number of nights they stayed. 90% of visitors stayed overnight and 10% were in Tofino for a day trip only. The bars in this figure show what percentage of visitors stayed in each type of accommodation, and the number in brackets is the average number of nights they stayed. For example, 41% of overnight visitors stayed in a resort/lodge/inn and on average they stayed 3.3 nights. **Multiple accommodation types could be selected therefore combined percent does not equal 100%.*

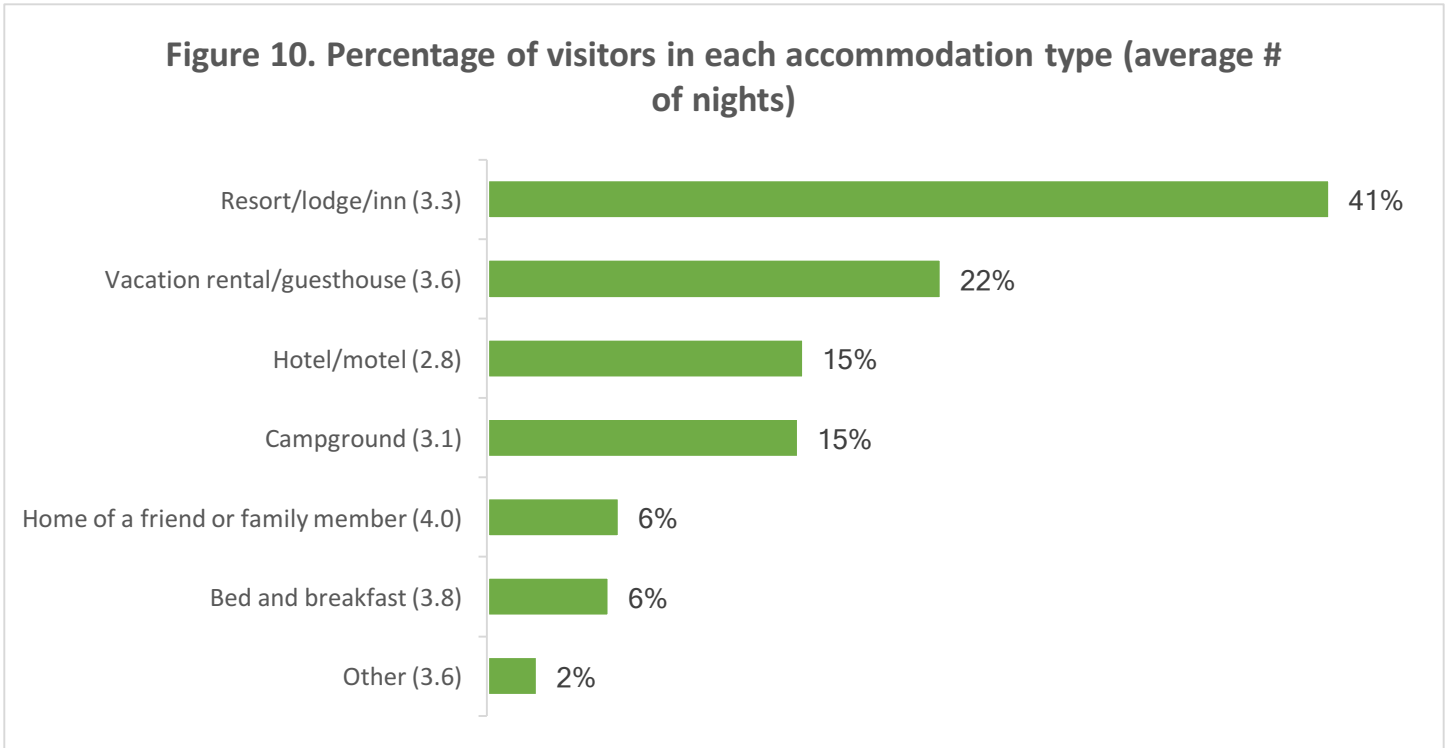
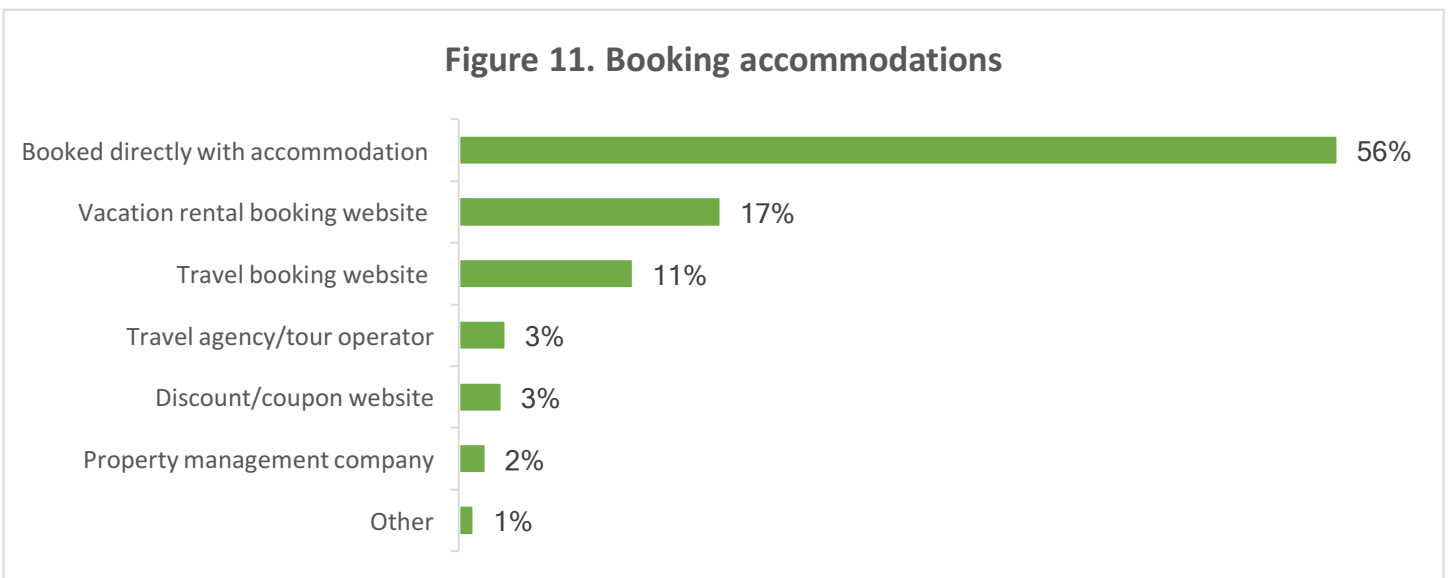


Figure 11. When asked how they booked their accommodations, 56% of visitors booked directly with the accommodation provider, 17% booked through a vacation rental booking website (e.g. AirBnB.com or VRBO.com), and 11% used a travel booking website (e.g. Expedia.ca, Hotwire.com). **Multiple options could be selected therefore combined percent does not equal 100%.*



Activities & Attractions

Figure 12. Visitors were asked to indicate which tourism attractions they visited during their stay in Tofino. The most popular attractions were beaches (96%), dining out (83%), and parks and trails (80%). Some of the “other” responses included Hot Springs Cove and markets. Attractions with 5% of responses or less have been left out of this graph. *Multiple attractions could be selected therefore combined percent does not equal 100%.

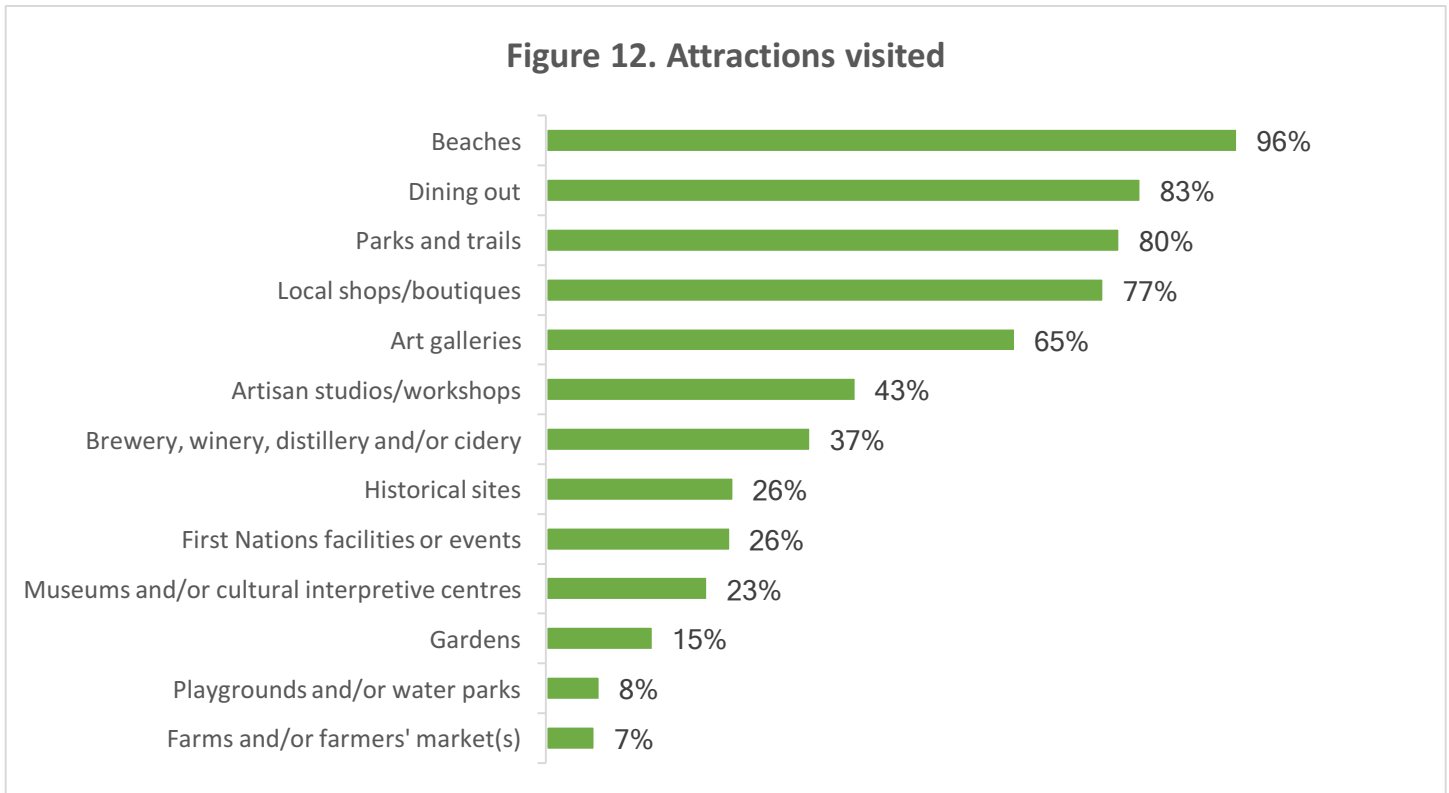


Figure 13. Visitors to Tofino specified which activities their groups participated in during their stay. The top activities were beach activities (81%), shopping (51%), self-guided sightseeing (50%), and hiking (48%). Activities with 5% of responses or less have been left out of this graph. *Multiple activities could be selected therefore combined percent does not equal 100%.

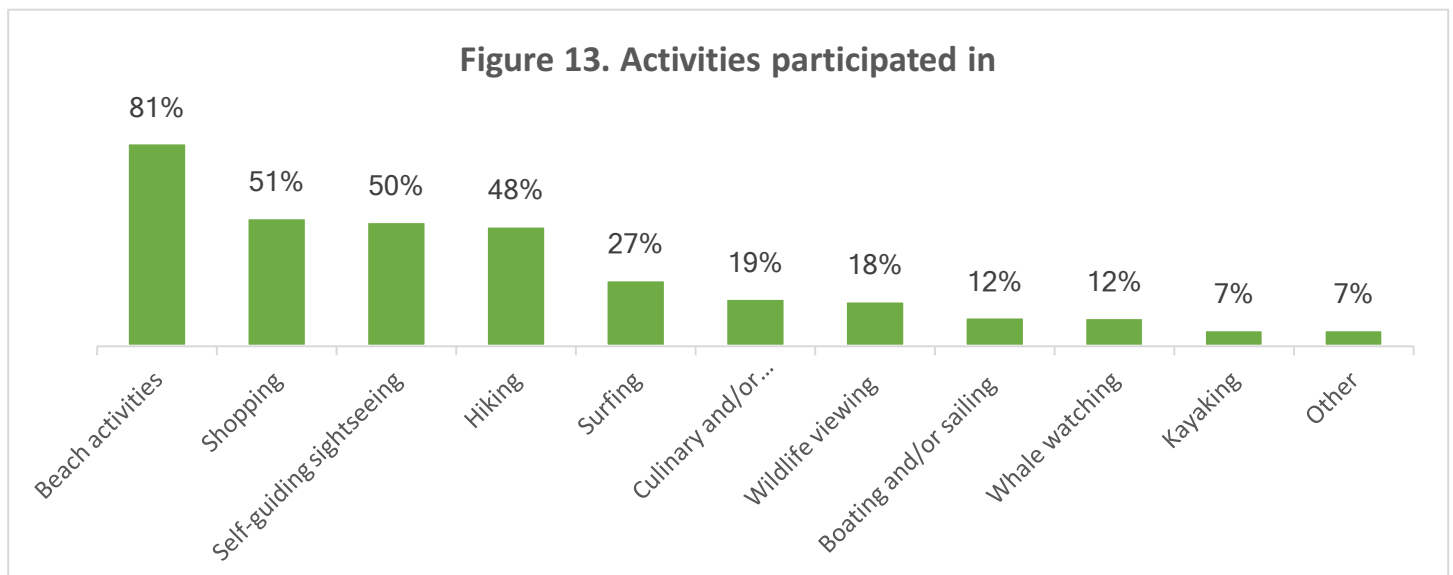
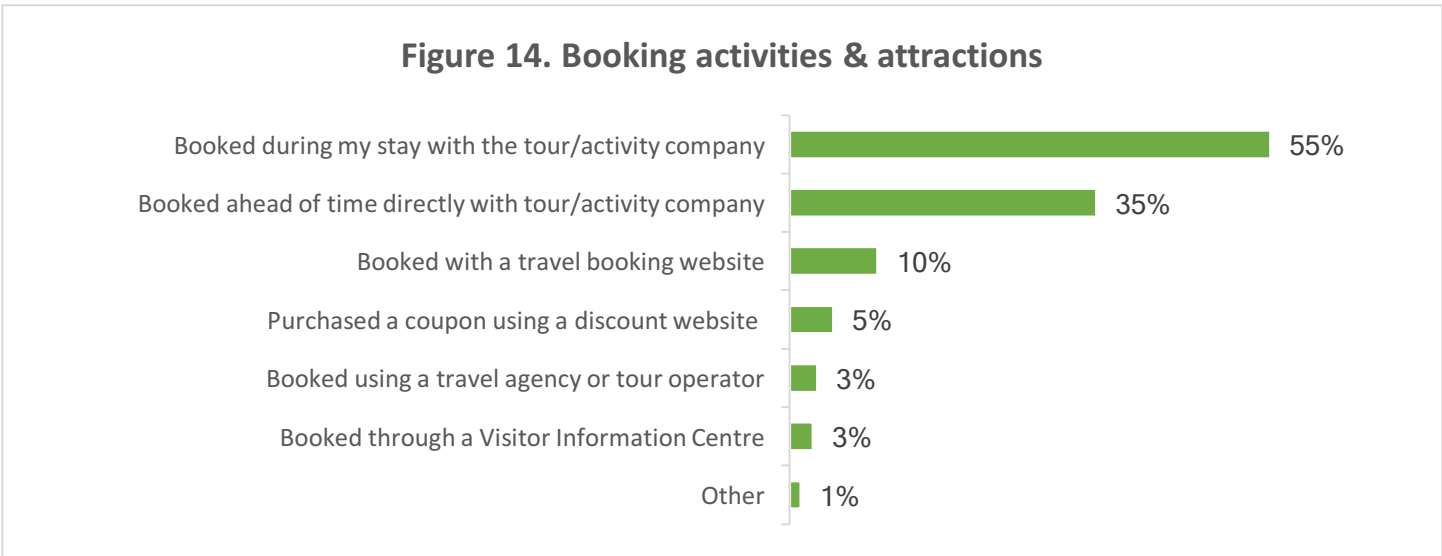


Figure 14. When asked how they booked the activities and attractions they participated in, 55% of visitors booked *during their stay* with the tour/activity company and 35% booked *ahead of time* directly with the tour/activity company. *Multiple options could be selected therefore combined percent does not equal 100%.



Events Attended

Figure 15. Visitors were asked if they were visiting Tofino to attend a specific event. Some of the events in the “other” category were the *Surfs Up for Autism* and concerts. The category “other personal and/or family event” refers to weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, and family reunions.

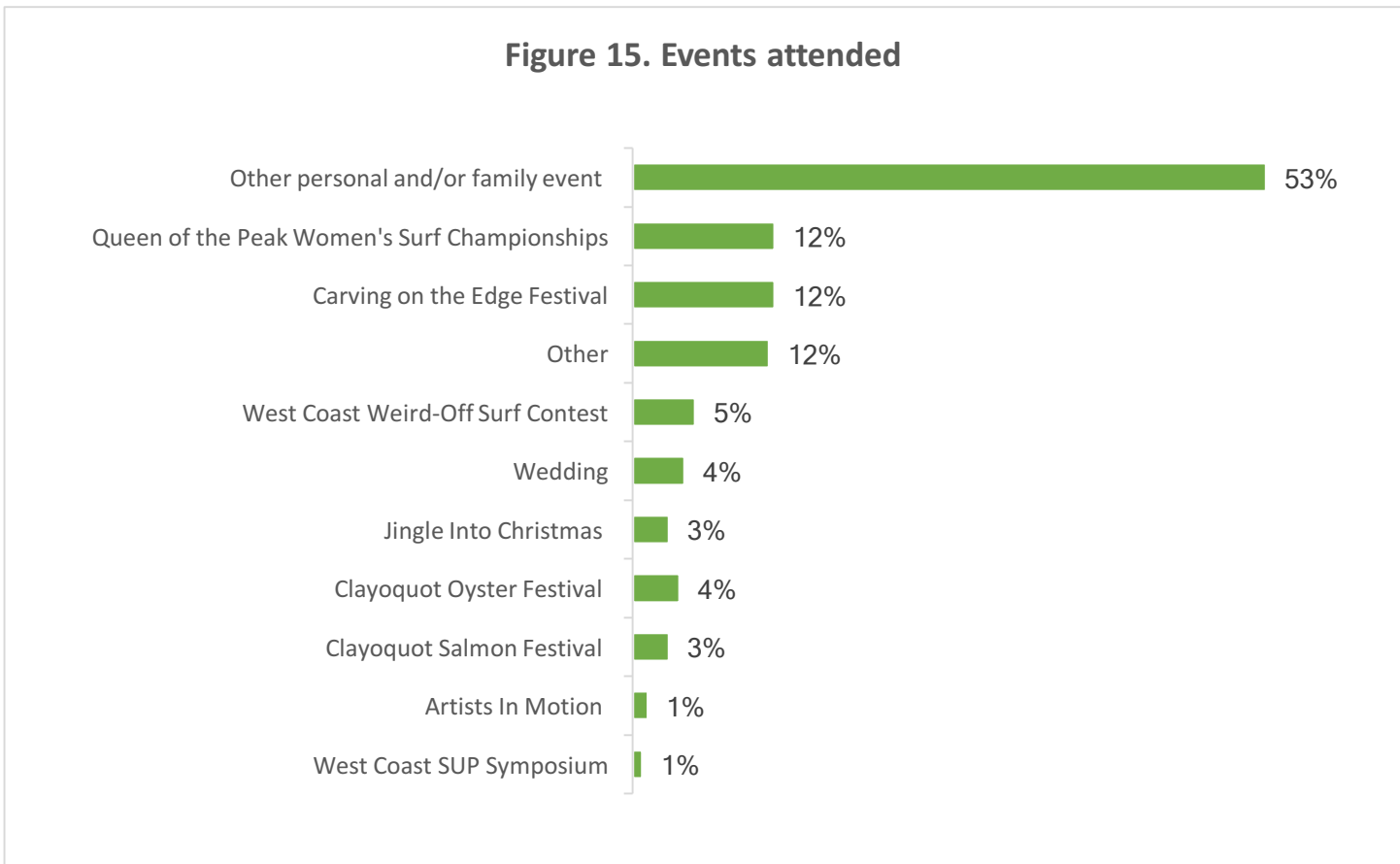
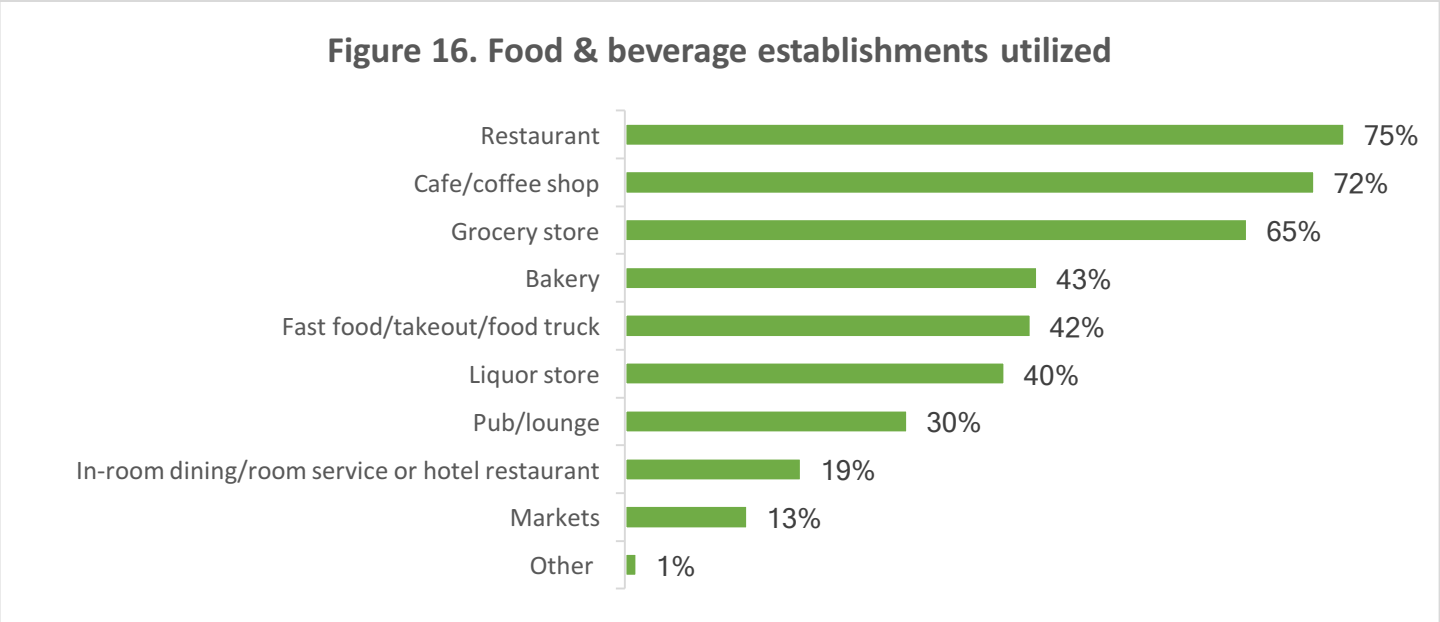


Figure 16. The most commonly used food and beverage establishments for visitors were restaurant (75%), café/coffee shop (72%), and grocery stores (65%). *Multiple options could be selected therefore combined percent does not equal 100%.



"Promote local grocery shopping. We always stay where we have a kitchen on hand - we have younger children, so it's easier to eat in. We know about Tofino's great food culture, but we didn't know about the reasonability of shopping for groceries in the Tofino/Ucluelet area. I wish we had!"

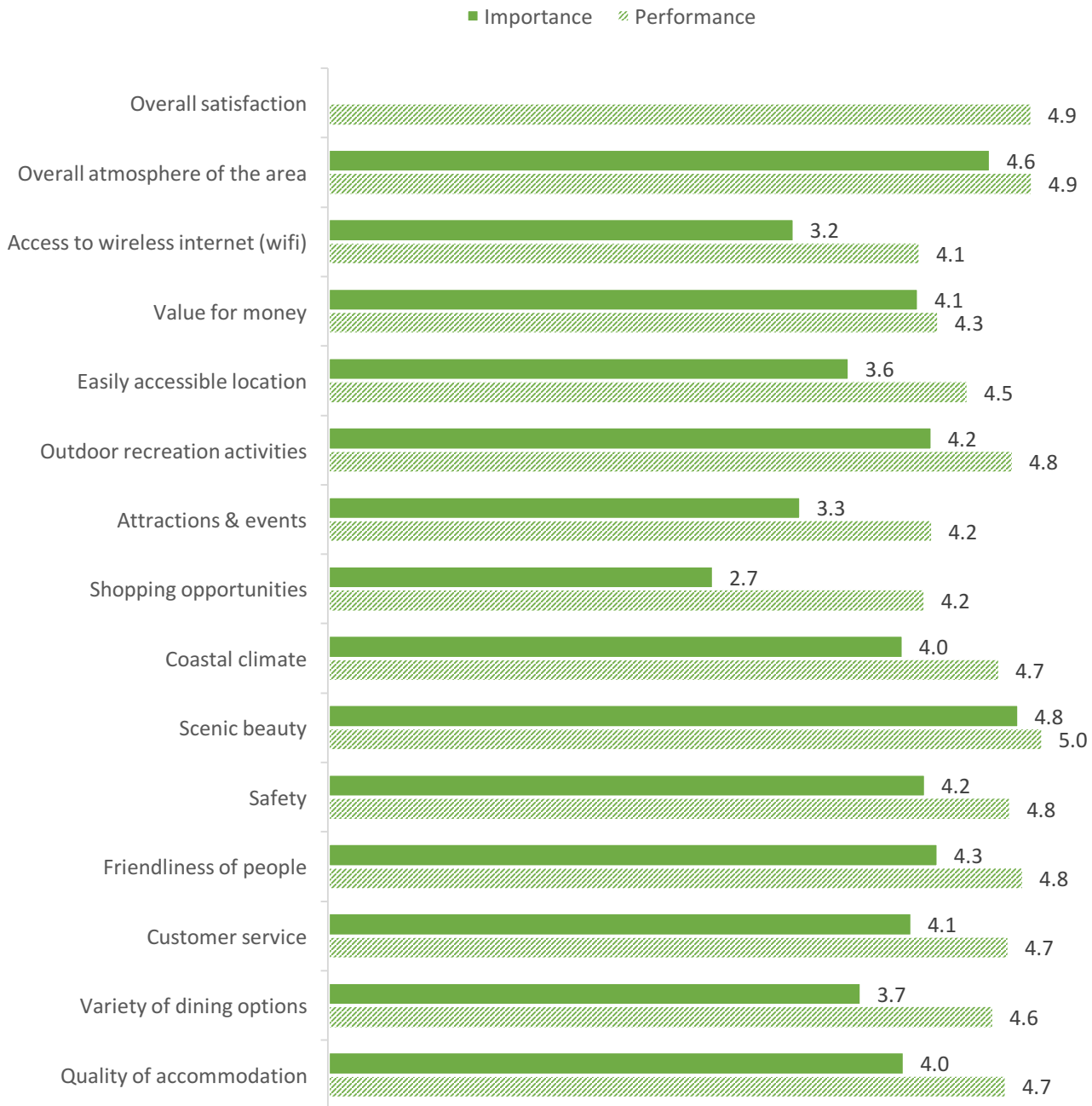
Spending

Figure 17. To gather data on group spending, visitors were asked to report approximately how much their group spent on a typical day during their visit to Tofino for each category. The average total spending per group was \$517 per day.

Figure 17. Average spending per group



Figure 18. Comparison of importance of destination attributes with Tofino's performance



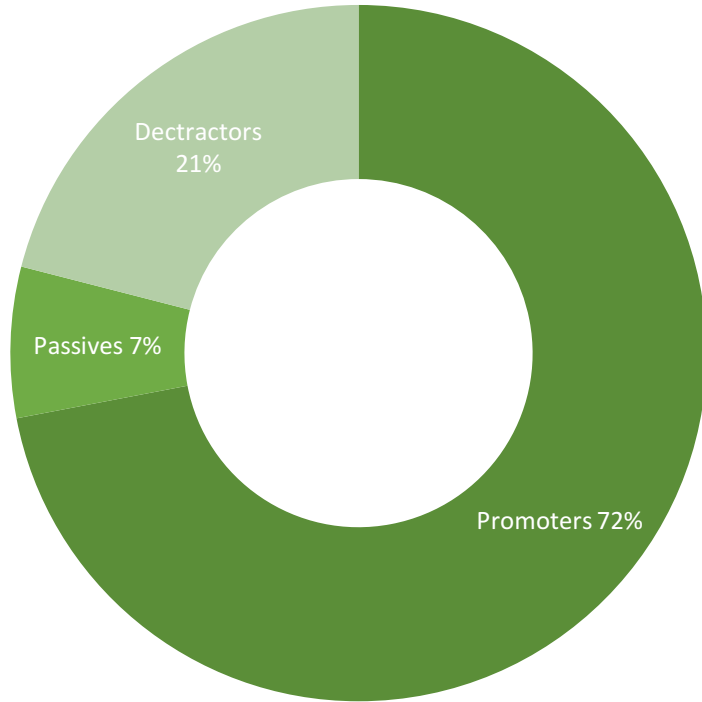
Importance/Performance Ratings

Figure 18. Visitors were asked to rate the importance of a number of features in their decision to visit Tofino on a scale from “Not At All Important” (1) to “Extremely Important” (5). They were then asked to evaluate each feature based on their actual experience in the region on a scale from “Very Bad” (1) to “Excellent” (5). Figure 18 shows the average performance of each feature compared with visitors’ perceptions of importance. The overall satisfaction rating was 4.9 out of 5 (98%); the results show that Tofino is over performing in all attributes.

Figure 19. Net Promoter Score™

Net Promoter Score™

Figure 19. Visitors were asked to rate their likeliness to recommend the Tofino region to their family and friends on a scale from “Very Unlikely” (0) to “Very Likely” (10). The people that rate between 0 and 6 are considered detractors, those that rate 7 or 8 or considered passives, and those that rate 9 or 10 are considered promoters. The results show that 72% of visitors are promoters, 7% are passives, and 21% are detractors. **The Net Promoter Score™ for Tofino is 50.7.**



“Extremely pleased with my experience in Tofino. It exceeded all my expectations. Such a beautiful location, not too crowded. One of the most scenic beaches I’ve ever seen, I could have walked down the beach for the whole day and been perfectly content.”

Figure 20. Visitors were asked to share the most enjoyable part of their trip to Tofino in one word. Their responses are displayed in the word cloud above. Of the 415 responses, the top five words visitors used were beaches (87), surfing (39), relaxing (22), scenery (21), and beautiful (19).



Open-ended Feedback

Visitors were asked an open-ended question asking for feedback and suggestions for improvements to the tourism experience in Tofino. Responses were analyzed and themed; the main three are summarized below. For complete analyses, see Appendix A: Open-ended Responses.

Affordability

- It can be a little pricey, though that is expected with world-class destinations. Wish we could afford to go more often!
- We love Tofino. Hopefully it won't become a place for the elite only because of pricing.
- I would love to return, but I suspect that there are other places in Canada (or elsewhere) where we might enjoy the same outdoor experiences and dramatic scenery at a more affordable price. We loved it, but unfortunately it may be a once in a lifetime occurrence on our budget.
- Looks like you could use some more hostels and cheaper options for accommodation. I'd imagine the surfers are pretty damn let down that they have to break the bank if they want to stay indoors. Ditto for backpackers. More hostels, cheaper accommodation options.
- It would be great to have more affordable accommodation options for families with young children.
- Affordability and availability is always an issue

Development

- Don't change a thing (3).
- We hope that it does not lose its small village feel.
- Keep it small and accessible to locals.
- Keep it local.
- Just keep Tofino as simple as possible. Don't complicate it by trying to make it over the top. The beauty of Tofino speaks for itself. Keep everything as local as possible.
- Keep Tofino as natural as possible... it's very beautiful.
- I find that the Long Beach area is becoming a contrast between private wealth and public poverty. Inequality of access and living is not healthy for any of us.
- Don't let it get too busy! That's part of what makes it special. (And also why we like to come after the summer.)
- Don't change Tofino. Its beauty and the people and what it has now is perfect. No big chains establishments. That would make me stop going.

Seasonality

- Have shops open all year round! No shut downs for the winter season
- It would be nice if there were a list of which stores and restaurant are open during storm season and the hours; often things were closed at strange times or not open at all
- We like to be able to cook our own meals, and found it was difficult to find local fresh seafood. Many vendors were closed for the season, which was disappointing. If they could stay open longer it would be great.
- We were there for a slow season and some restaurants, pubs, wine/oyster bar were closed for the season
- (Would have been good to) know that some services are unavailable in September
- Longer hours for art gallery so can be out and about in day and still have time to visit.
- It would have been helpful to know what was open and the hours of operation as late November many things are closed or reduced hours.

For more information:

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