

# Visitor Profile

Tourism Tofino – Spring 2016



## 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 February and July 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 mid July, The Sociable Scientists, and the VIU team analyzed the data, and then created this visitor profile.

## Special Points of Interest:

Visitors were intercepted from February to July of 2016.

A total of 1,565 ballots were collected and 856 surveys were completed. The response rate was 55%. Out of 856 completed surveys, 11 were minors and 20 were residents resulting in 825 useable surveys.



## Trip Motivation

**Figure 1.** This word cloud represents the words visitors used to describe the **inspiration** for their trip to Tofino. Out of 756 responses, the top six were beach (70), beautiful (69), nature (56), ocean (48), relaxation (47), and surfing (40).

Surfing  
Relaxation

# Ocean Nature Beautiful Beach

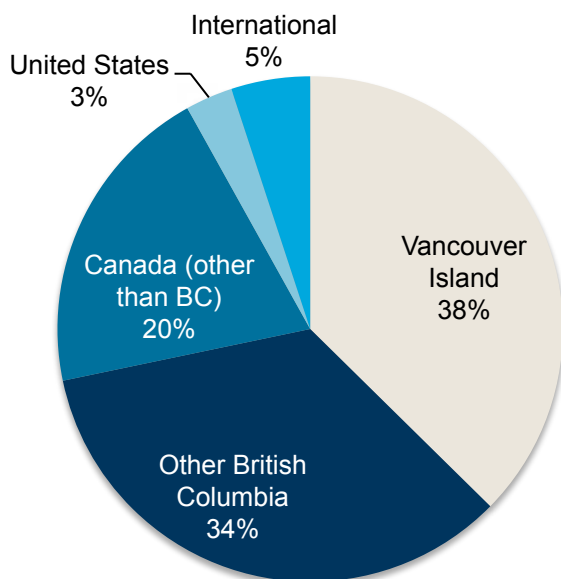
## Trip Purpose

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 (72%). The boxes show a break down of visitor origin for Vancouver Island, the rest of BC, and the rest of Canada. American visitors were mostly from Washington and Oregon. Other international visitors were mostly European (United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands), Australia, and New Zealand.

**Figure 2. Origin of visitors**



### Vancouver Island:

South Island 43%  
Central Island 27%  
North Central 19%  
Cowichan 6%  
Pacific Rim 3%  
North Island 1%

### Canada:

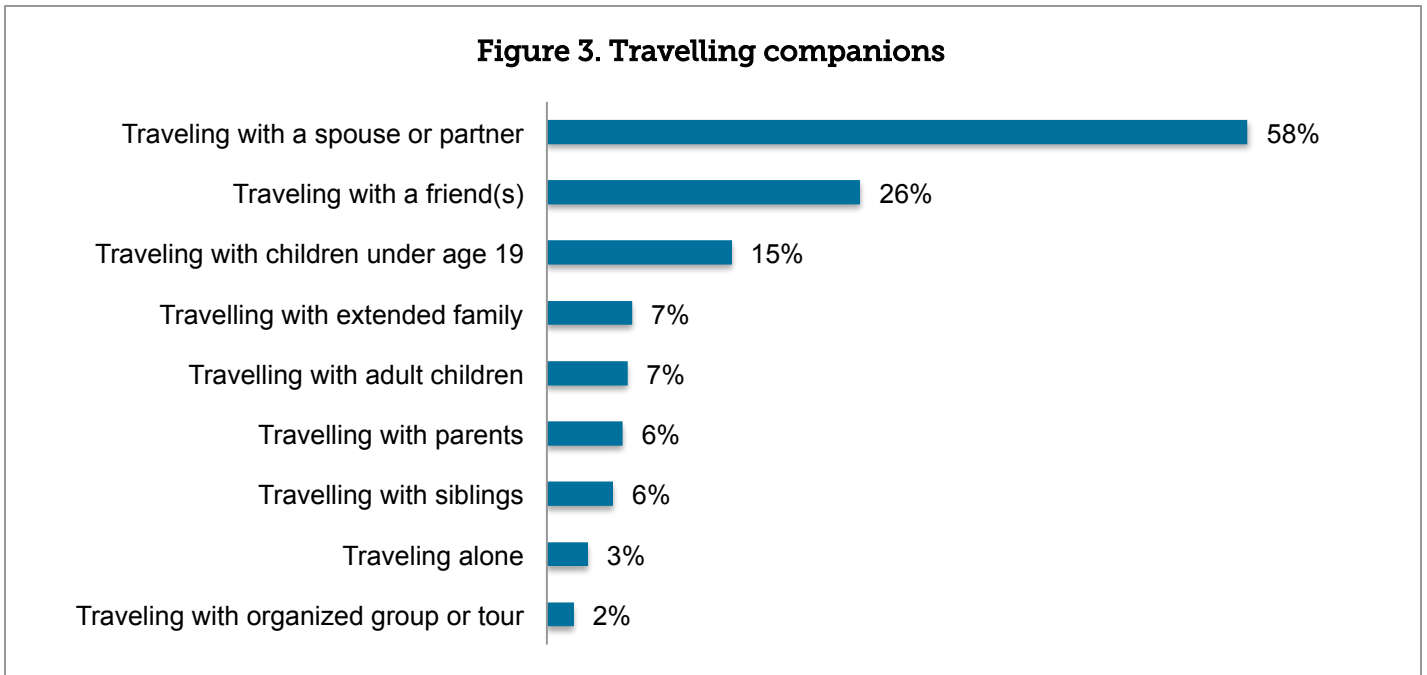
Alberta 50%  
Ontario 23%  
Quebec 8%  
Saskatchewan 8%

### Other British Columbia:

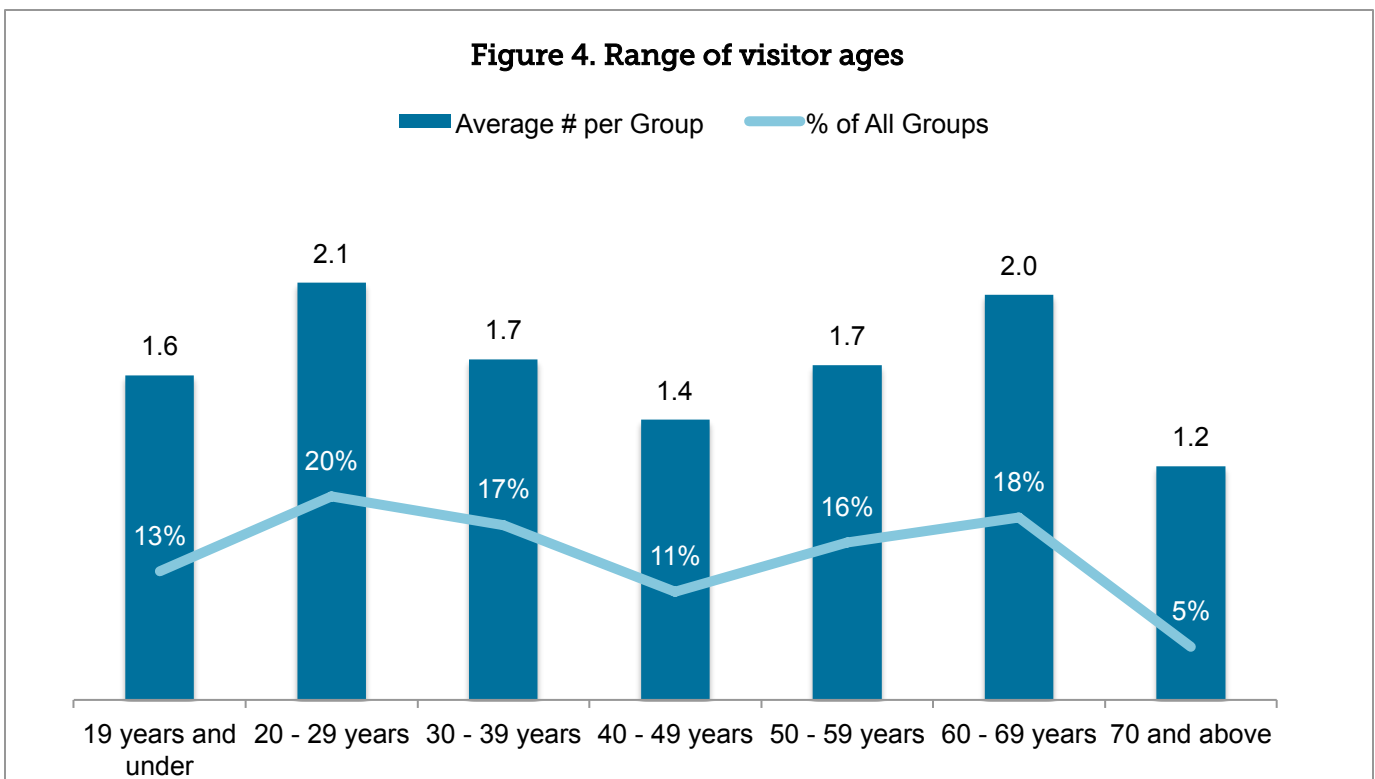
Vancouver, Coast & Mountains 73%  
Thompson Okanagan 14%  
Gulf Islands 5%  
Northern BC 4%  
Kootenay Rockies 4%  
Cariboo Chilcotin Coast 1%

## Group Composition

**Figure 3.** Visitors were asked to select which categories best described their group. 14% of visitors were travelling with a pet.



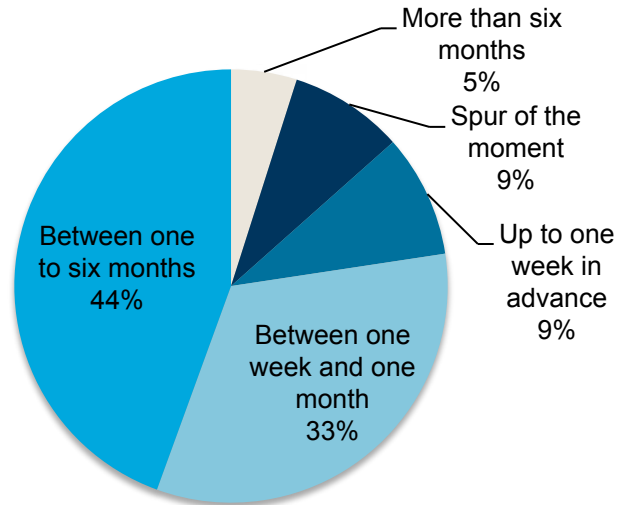
**Figure 4.** The columns in this graph show the average number of people per group in each age category. The line shows the overall percentage of visitors in each age category. For example, 20% of all groups had at least one person between age 20 and 29, and on average they had 2.1 people in this age category. The average **group size** was **2.8** people per group; 62% of groups consisted of two or three people, 5% were solo travellers, and only 5% had 10 or more people. *\*Multiple options could be selected therefore combined percent does not equal 100%.*



**Figure 5. Trip planning**

**Planning**

**Figure 5.** This figure shows how far in advance visitors planned their trip to Tofino. The results show that 51% of visitors planned their trip *less than* one month in advance, and 49% plan their trip *at least* one month in advance.

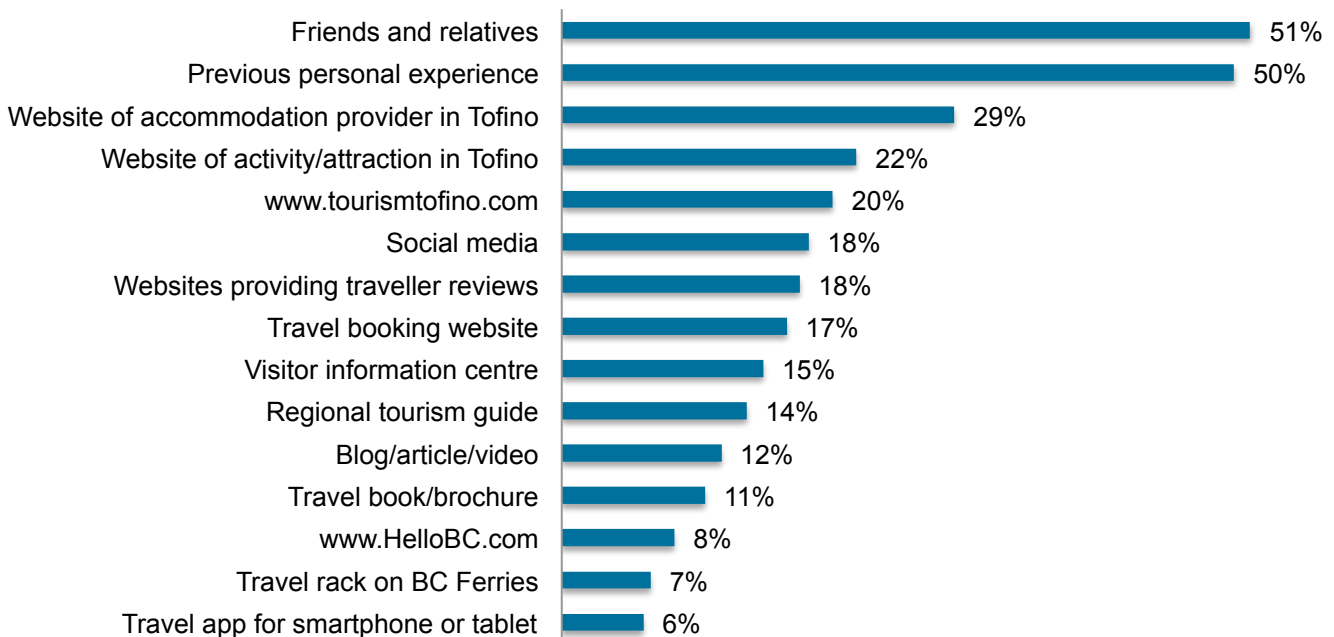


*"Planning ahead for the season would have improved our trip -- we visited in March and experienced heavy rainfall and rough oceans, and most of the activities were oriented towards outdoor activities near/on the water that we were unable to do. More cultural centers, galleries or museums - for example, similar to the Roy Henry Vickers gallery, would have provided us with more rainy day friendly activities!"*

**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 (51%), previous personal experience (50%), and website of accommodations provider in Tofino (29%). 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**



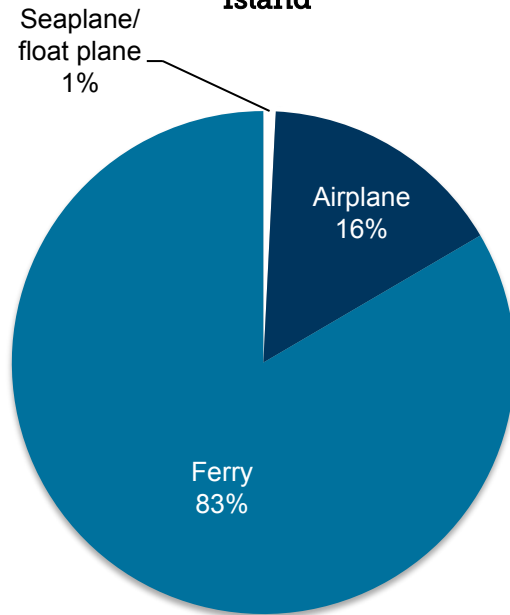
## Transportation

**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. 1% of visitors or less chose cruise ship, personal boat, and other.

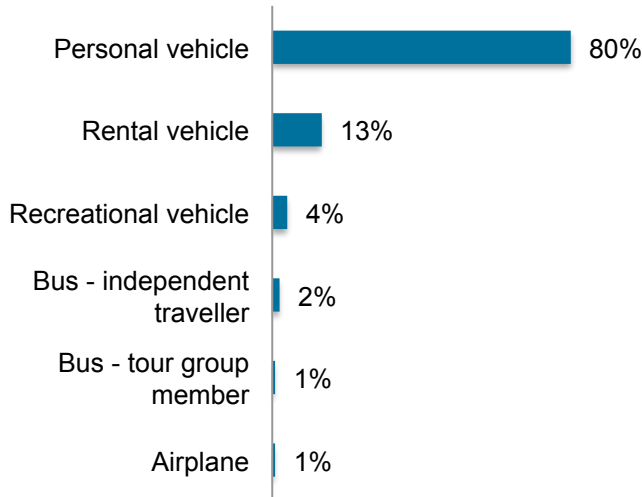
Of the 83% of visitors who arrived by ferry, 50% landed at Departure Bay, 26% landed at Duke Point, and 18% at Swartz Bay. 88% of ferry passengers travelled in a vehicle and 12% were walk-on passengers.

Of the 16% who arrived by air, 39% landed at the Victoria International Airport, 21% arrived at the Nanaimo Airport, 14% landed at the Comox Valley Airport, 10% landed at the Tofino Airport, and 10% landed at the Nanaimo Harbour.

**Figure 7. Transportation to Vancouver Island**



**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).



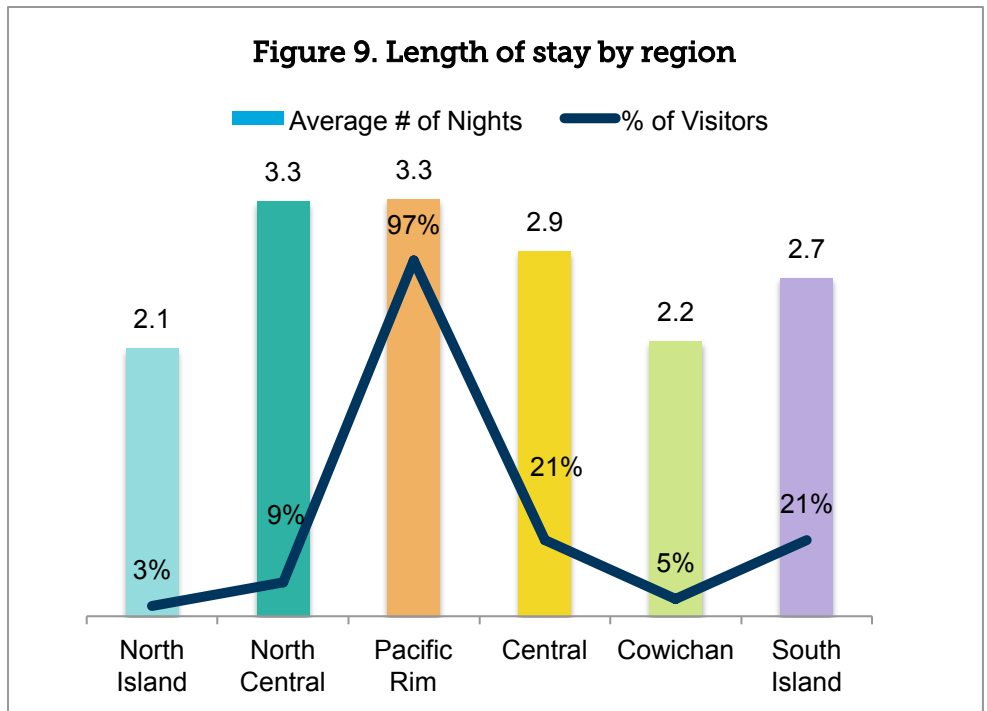
*“Although a massive undertaking, any improvements to the road into Tofino would be greatly appreciated. Windy and nausea inducing to the extreme.”*



## 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 1 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 **6.3** 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, and for 23% of visitors it was one of several planned stops but not the main destination. 34% of respondents were in Tofino for the first time and 64% were repeat visitors.

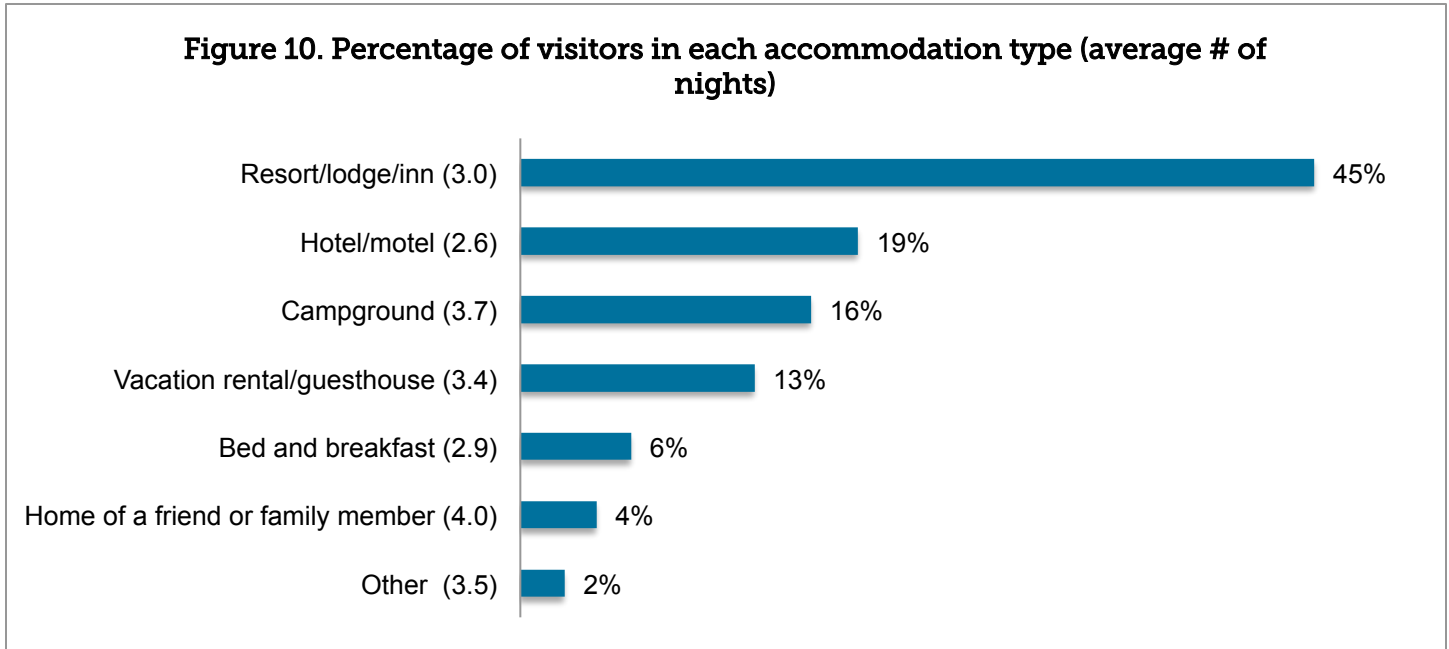


*"The only thing we will do differently on our next visit is stay longer!"*

*"I'd spend more days in Tofino. I feel like I barely saw anything over the 2 nights we were there. It felt like heaven on earth."*

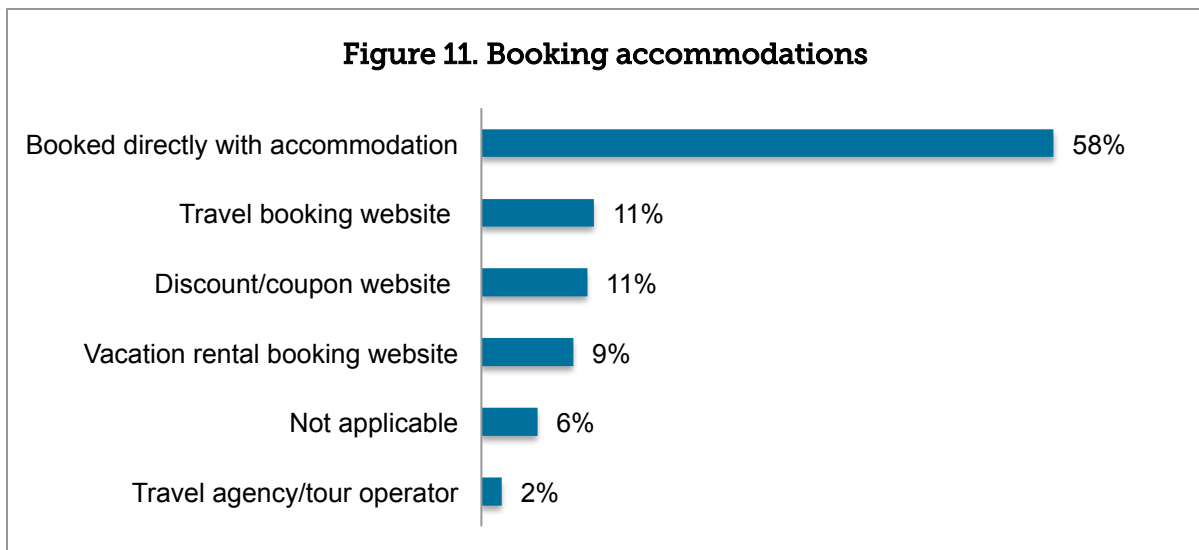
## Accommodation

**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. For example, 45% of visitors stayed in a resort/lodge/inn and on average they stayed 3 nights. 92% of visitors stayed overnight and 8% were in Tofino for a day trip only. \*Multiple accommodation types could be selected therefore combined percent does not equal 100%.



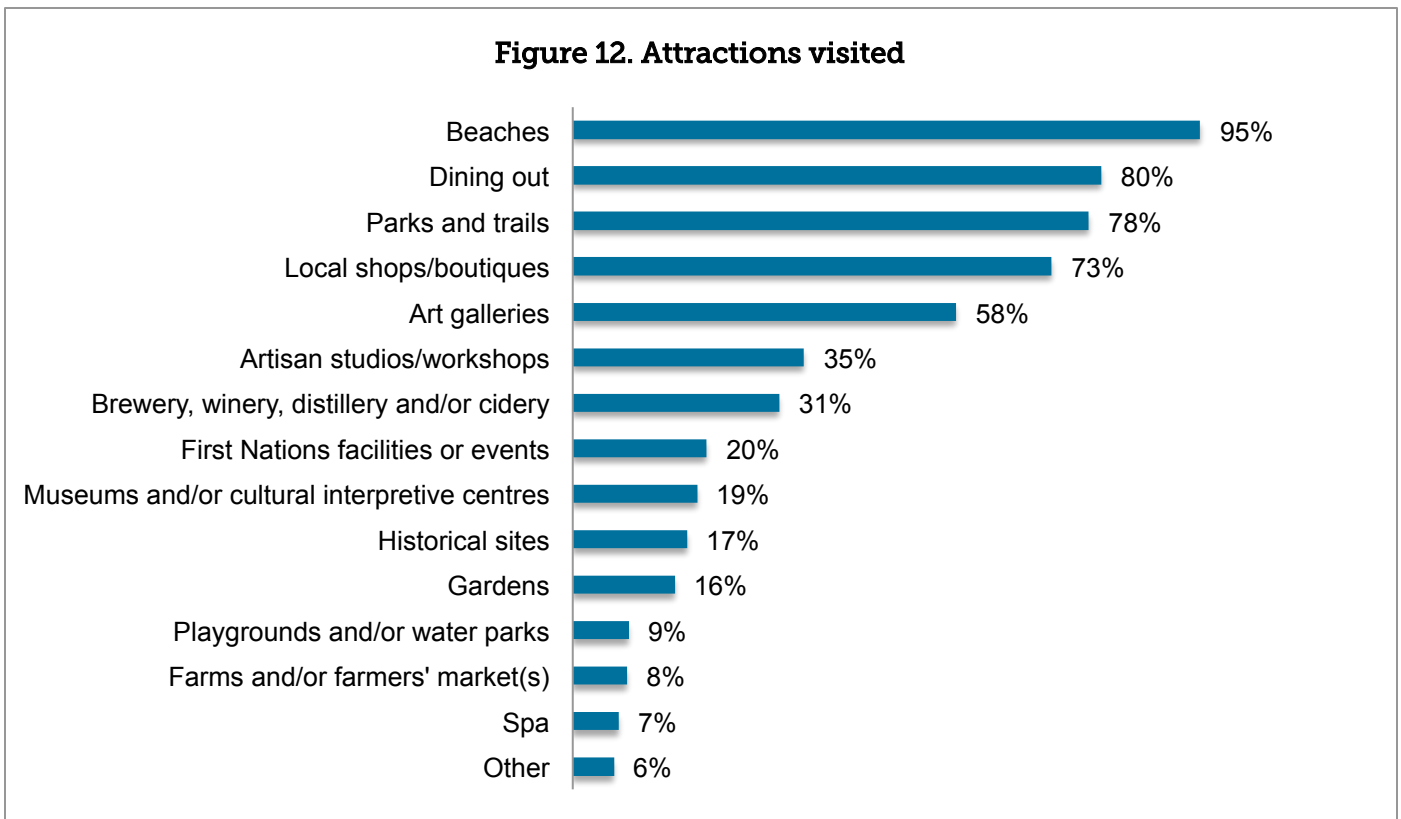
*"We stayed in a cabin and had our dog with us, which was so nice. Staff were very friendly, housekeeping was awesome, and we loved the hot tub at the end of the day. We took advantage of the 5 nights for 3 promotion, which made it more affordable. We are planning on coming back next year!"*

**Figure 11.** When asked how they booked their accommodations, 58% of visitors booked directly with the accommodation provider, 11% booked with a travel booking website, and 11% booked through a discount/coupon website. \*Multiple options could be selected therefore combined percent does not equal 100%.

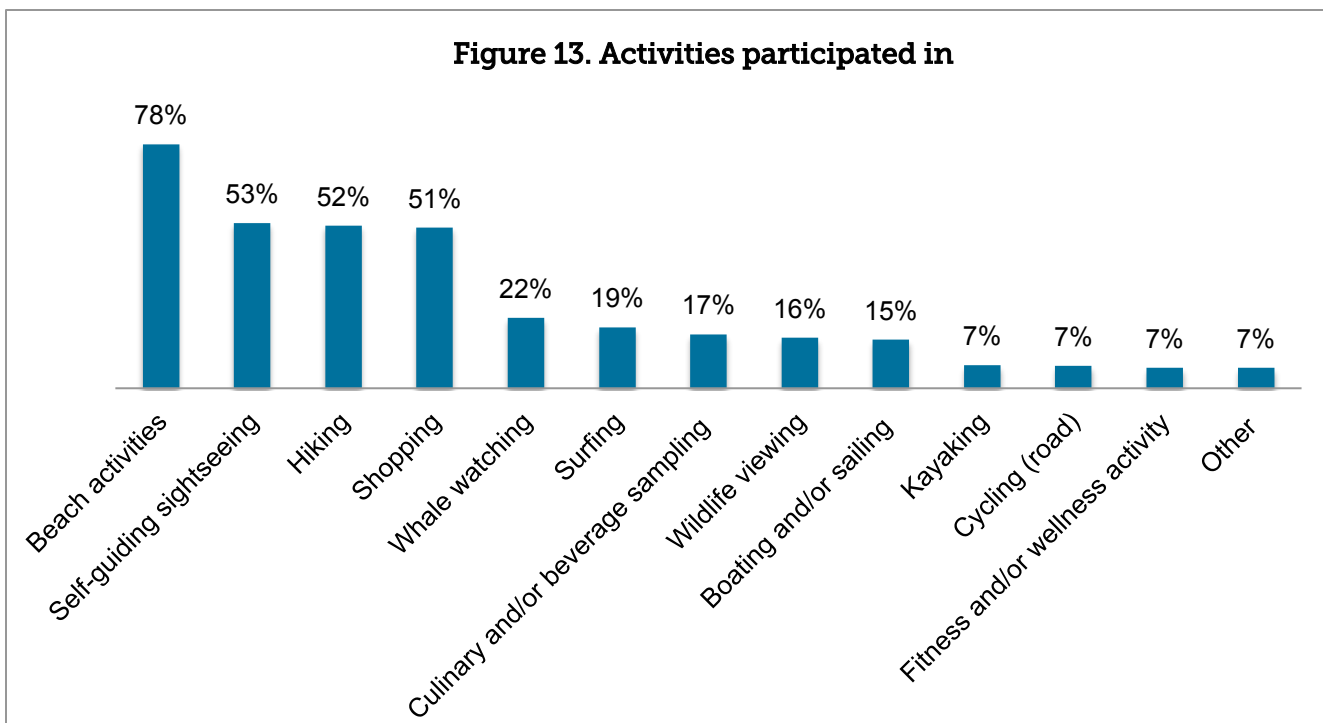


## Activities & Attractions

**Figure 12.** Visitors were asked to indicate which tourism attractions they visited during their stay in Tofino. The most popular attractions were beaches (95%), dining out (80%), and parks and trails (78%). Some of the “other” responses included Hot Springs Cove and whale watching. 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%.

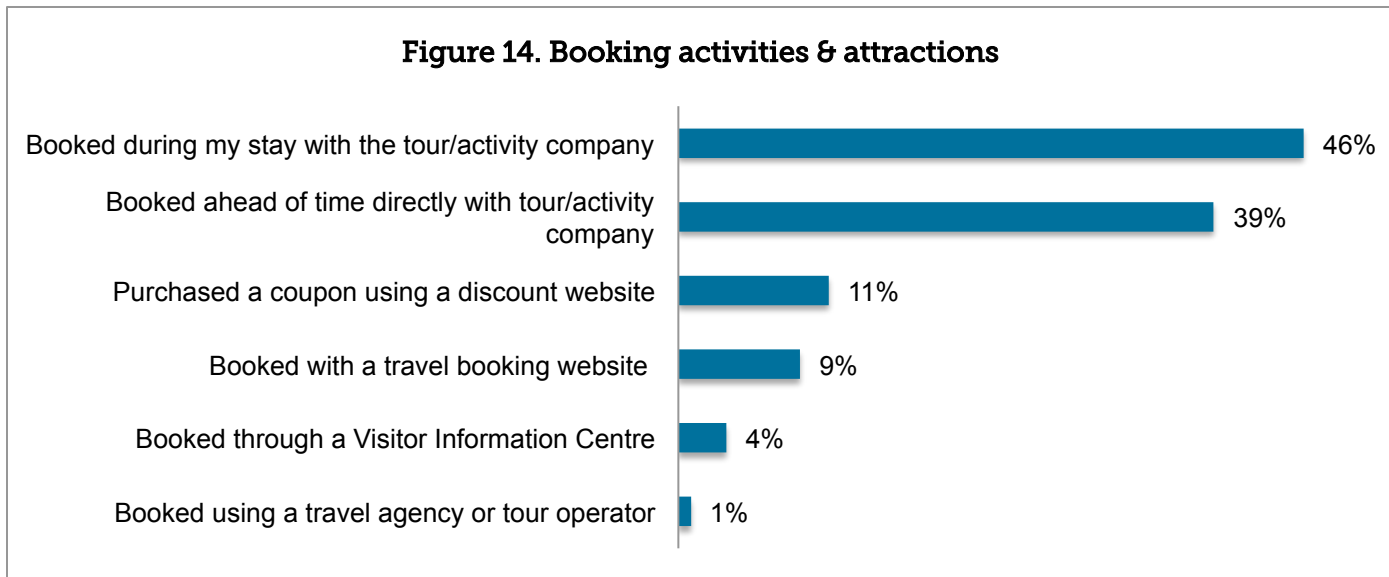


**Figure 13.** Visitors to Tofino specified which activities their groups participated in during their stay. The top activities were beach activities (78%), hiking (55%), self-guided sightseeing (53%), and hiking (52%). Activities with 5% of responses or less have been left out of this graph. \*Multiple activities could be selected therefore combined percent does not equal 100%.



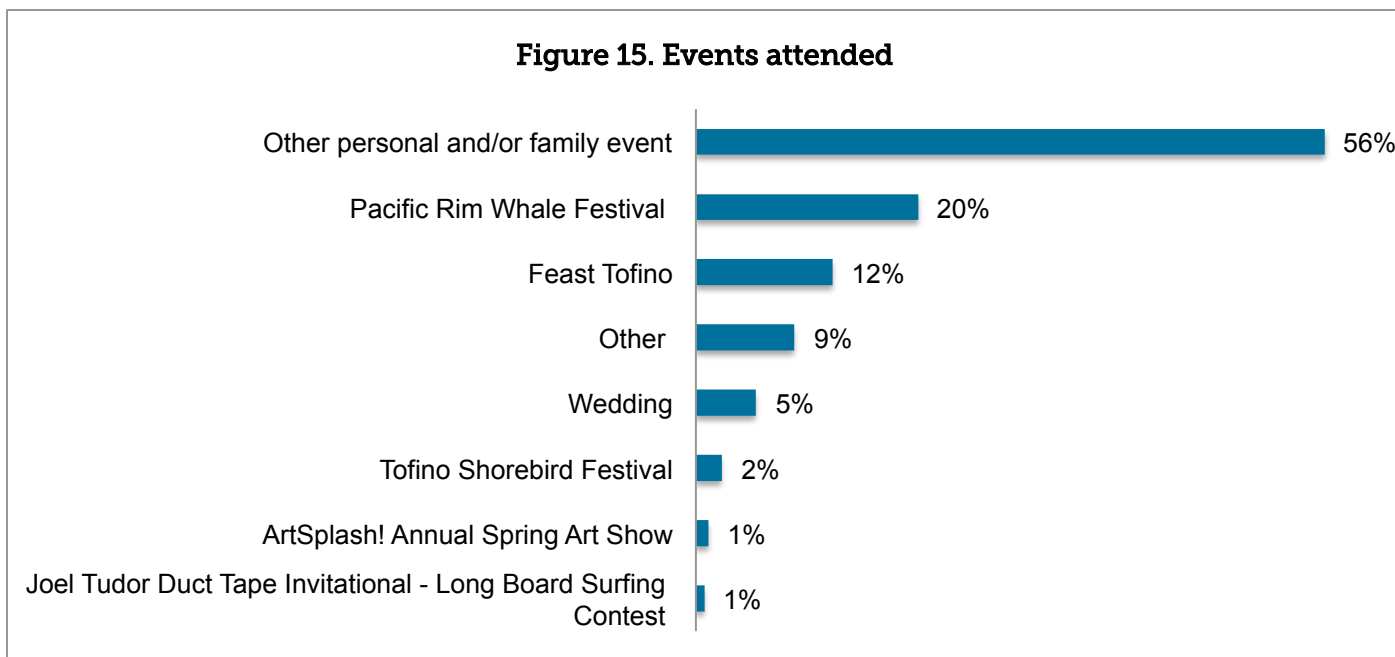


**Figure 14.** When asked how they booked the activities and attractions they participated in, 46% of visitors booked *during their stay* with the tour/activity company and 39% booked *ahead of time* directly with the tour/activity company. \*Multiple options could be selected therefore combined percent does not equal 100%.



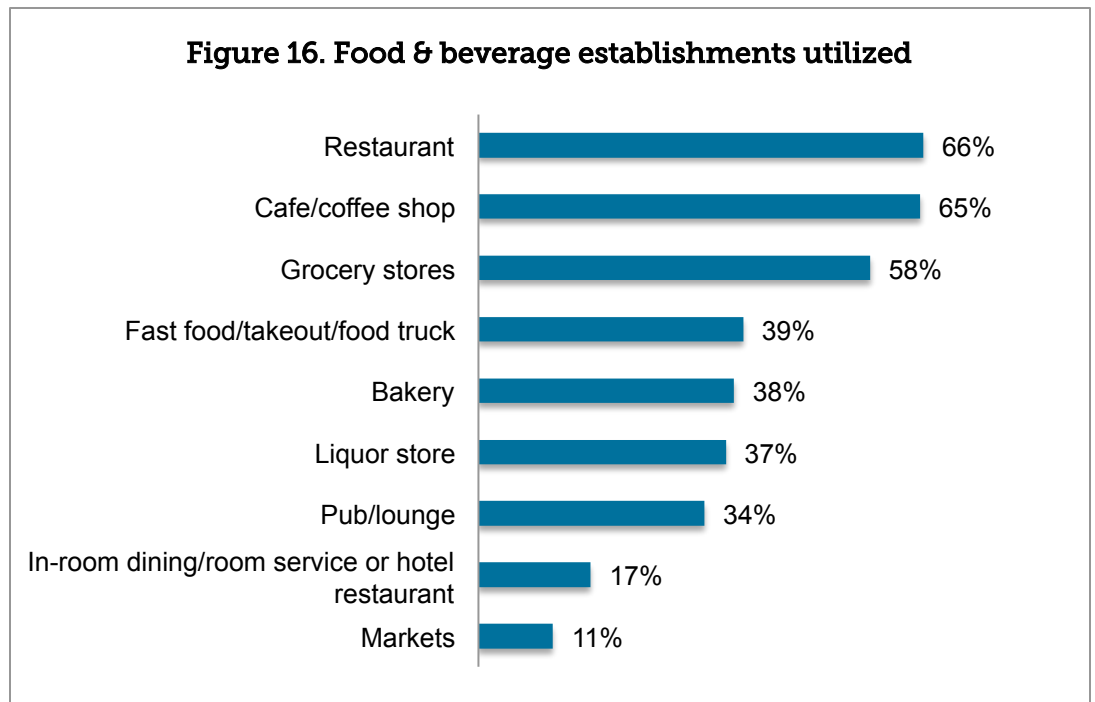
### Events Attended

**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 *Rip Curl Surf Competition* and the *Edge to Edge Marathon*. The category “other personal and/or family event” refers to weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, and family reunions.



*“Tofino is not only a wonderful romantic destination for couples, but a great option for families as well. I can see coming here again and again as our son gets older and enjoying amenities such as the play structure in the downtown park as well as kayak trips, day hikes, and other outdoor activities.”*

**Figure 16.** The most commonly used food and beverage establishments for visitors were restaurants (66%), café/coffee shop (65%), and grocery stores (58%). \*Multiple options could be selected therefore combined percent does not equal 100%.



*"I was expecting more rustic accommodations and average dining experiences due to Tofino's remote location as well as being surrounded by a national park reserve, but I was \*blown away\* by the level of quality of services."*



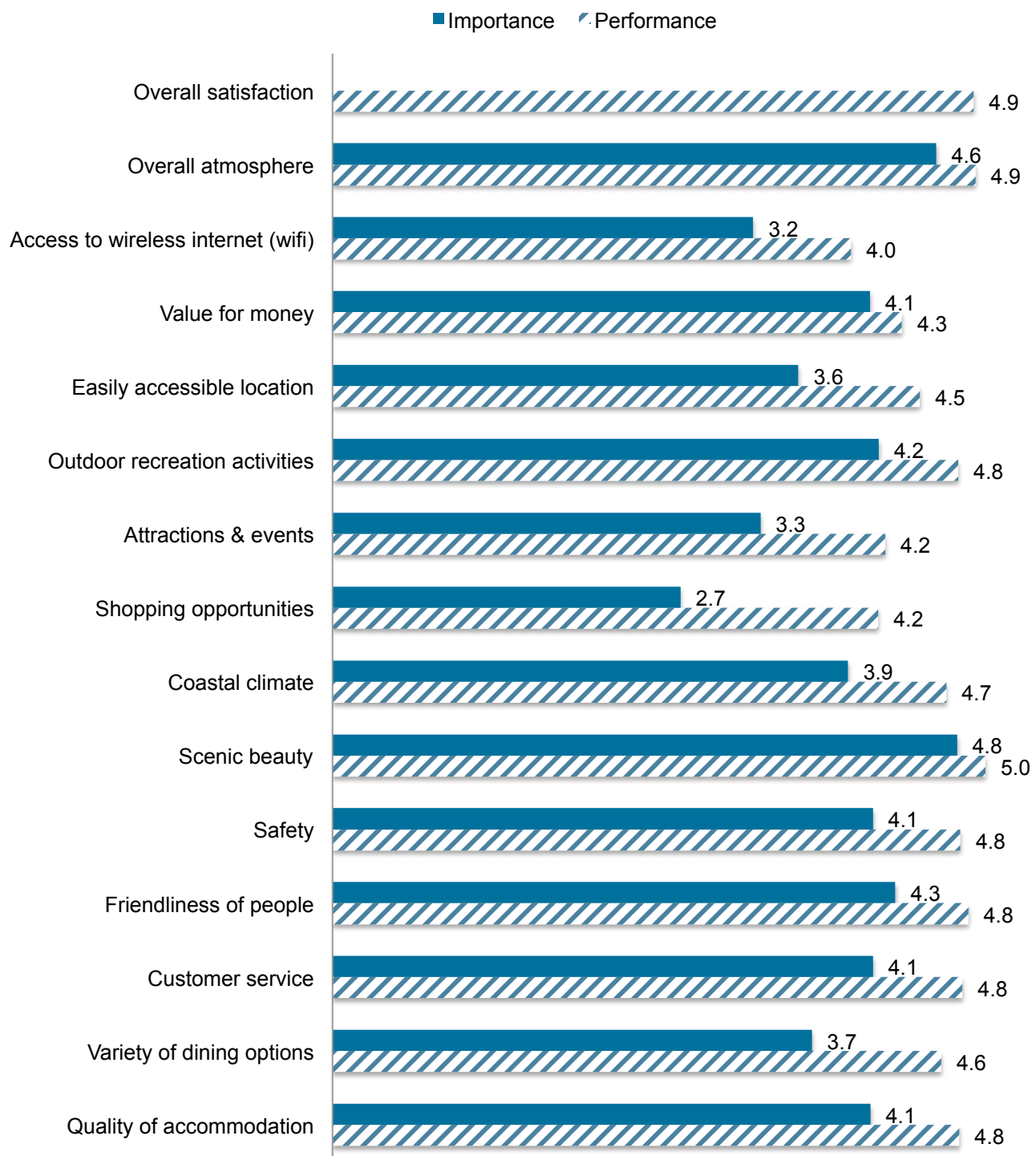
### Spending

**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 \$537 per day.

**Figure 17. Average spending per group**

-  \$218 Accommodation
-  \$128 Meals
-  \$71 Shopping
-  \$69 Entertainment
-  \$55 Transportation

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



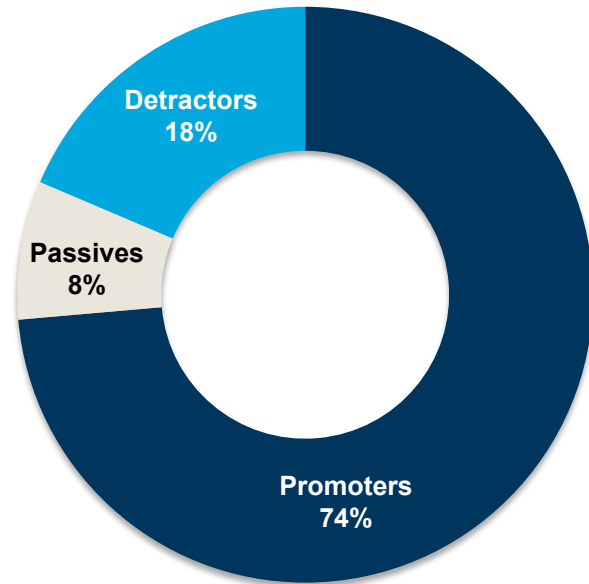
### Importance/Performance Ratings

**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.

### 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 74% of visitors are promoters, 8% are passives, and 18% are detractors. **The Net Promoter Score for Tofino is 55.0.**

**Figure 19. Net promoter score**



*“It’s our happy place and it’s gorge there. I’d recommend it to anyone.”*



**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 738 responses, the top six words visitors used were beach (53), relaxation (47), scenery (39), nature (38), surfing (35), and beautiful (31).

## 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.

### Closures

- We only learned that some of the beaches were not accessible by car due to constructions upon our arrival. We wish we could have been informed about this earlier on the Tourism Tofino webpage or such to plan our stay accordingly; some trails were closed for seasonal road construction in the vicinity. It would be helpful to know this in advance; we really wanted to visit the Native Cultural Centre close to Tofino on one of the beaches but couldn't due to (road) constructions -> wish we would have known this before our arrival.
- Many of the Pacific Rim trails and interpretive centre were closed, which was a big disappointment; Pacific Rim National park was not accessible by car in many spots as was the cultural centre. That was disappointing; I was disappointed that some of the attractions were not accessible - no access to Wickaninnish Centre; better access to the Parks. All the roads were closed for upgrades and maintenance at the same time; Probably come at a different time of year as many of the roads in Pacific Rim were closed due to construction; we were there in the off-season so some parks closed. More interpretive opportunities (self guided or volunteer) would have been a good way to learn about the area was disappointed that half of the beaches in the park were inaccessible due to maintenance and repair.

### Affordability

- What would bring us back more would be affordability of accommodations; maybe a discount for returning guests who live on Vancouver Island; more fair pricing for local Islanders; perhaps more accommodation specials in low season or to island residents!
- The cost of hotels is extremely high; lodging too expensive in Tofino; I wish we could have stayed longer but it's out of our price range; Accommodation in general can be quite expensive in Tofino; it's getting too expensive! It's quite expensive to visit Tofino...becoming unaffordable to get there! Accommodation too expensive for the quality; accommodations are not a very good value for the price; I find that prices for accommodation are too high, it doesn't fall in line with the general feel of the grassroots community.
- Restaurant prices are very high; dinner choices are extremely expensive.
- We didn't do any of the recreational activities or attractions because we couldn't afford it.

### Transit

- To have more accessible transit services in the area; better transportation around town; more mass transit; shuttle around town; more transfers to beaches; A looping shuttle from downtown to several of the available beaches would have been VERY beneficial.
- Perhaps get a mini bike share program.
- More cabs who also ride in the nights; more shuttles/taxis so we can enjoy eating out without driving; We probably would have checked out more restaurants and bars but since there are minimal taxis we stayed at our hotel for most nights; Once in Tofino, it is difficult to move from the resorts to the town for dining or shopping unless you have a car. If you fly in or take a bus, then you are stranded at your resort which means you may be a very long and expensive taxi ride from the town centre - which means you cannot shop or dine in town unless you pay very expensive taxi fares.

### For more information:

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