

Power of Tourism

#BCTourismCounts



DESTINATION
BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Photo: Darren Robinson

FACT SHEET

The COVID-19 crisis has challenged BC's tourism industry in ways we couldn't have imagined just a few months ago. Before the pandemic, tourism was one of the fastest growing industries in the world, and BC was no exception. Here are some insights into BC's tourism industry, pre-COVID 19.

Tourism – By the Numbers

- British Columbia's tourism industry generated revenue of \$20.5 billion in 2018*, an increase of 4.9% over 2017, and a 53.3% increase from 2008.
- In 2018, British Columbia's tourism industry employed 161,500 people, a 4.3% increase from 2017. This means that tourism provided a job for roughly 1 out of every 16 people employed in the province.
- There were 19,329 tourism-related businesses in BC, in 2018, employing over 161,500 people and paying \$6 billion in wages and salaries.
- The tourism industry generated \$6.9 billion in export revenue in 2018, growing 8.2% from 2017.
- GDP for the provincial economy as a whole grew 2.7% over 2017. The tourism industry contributed \$8.3 billion of value added or GDP (in 2012 constant dollars) to the BC economy. This represented 3.0% growth over 2017 and 42.1% growth since 2008.
- In 2018, tourism contributed more to GDP than any other primary resource industry. (Tourism: \$8.3B, mining: \$5.2B, oil & gas: \$4.9B, forestry & logging: \$1.8B, and agriculture & fishing: \$3.2B.)
- In 2019, the majority of BC's visitation was domestic: 74% of all visitors to BC were Canadians. These domestic visitors contributed 49% of tourism revenues in our province.
- British Columbians can support BC's visitor economy by spending some of the \$6.7 billion they annually spend abroad by exploring their own province.
- The visitor economy is increasingly recognised as one of the first and hardest-hit economic sectors during this crisis, and likely the last to recover. BC tourism businesses are suffering unprecedented losses.
- When people stop travelling, the benefits of tourism stop, too. Most tourism businesses buy goods locally, hire locally, and retain their profits locally. The economic impact is, and will continue to be significant.

More provincial statistics on tourism industry performance can be found at: <https://www.destinationbc.ca/research-insights/type/industry-performance>

*Latest information available from BC Stats

Tourism Enriches All of Our Lives

- Tourism was a growing industry, before COVID-19. Over the last few years, BC's visitor economy welcomed more travelers, created new businesses, and employed more British Columbians in communities across our province, than ever before.
- Tourism has been a key economic driver and one of BC's competitive strengths in the world economy.
- Tourism strengthens international perceptions of British Columbia, which has positive impacts on trade and investment, international education, and immigration.

- Tourism improves the quality of life for all British Columbians—think about the things we enjoy that would not be as viable without the tourism engine:
 - museums and galleries,
 - festivals and sports events,
 - air/highway and coastal transportation,
 - dining and wine touring, and
 - parks and recreational facilities.
- All these benefits contribute to why life so good here in BC.