



TOURISM BRITISH COLUMBIA
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RESEARCH AND PLANNING

COLUMBIA VALLEY GOLF RESEARCH STUDY RESULTS

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this study was to develop a profile of golfers who visited the Columbia Valley in terms of traveller and trip characteristics.

A multi-location, two-stage survey design was used to achieve the study objectives. Travellers were interviewed at one of eight golf courses to obtain information about the typical golf traveller to the Columbia Valley. On-site interviews collected information from travellers during their trip and a follow-up questionnaire collected information from travellers after their trip. The purpose of the follow-up questionnaire was to gather information about trip motivation, planning, experiences and activities, and to understand travellers' perceptions of the Columbia Valley and British Columbia upon trip completion.

- Between June 1 and September 7 2008, 2,136 people were approached at various golf courses. Five surveys that were barely filled out, and for all practical purposes considered incomplete, were excluded resulting in 2,131 useable surveys. 1,416 agreed to the interview, but 369 were excluded because they were members of the golf club at which they were interviewed. 107 respondents indicated that they had previously completed the survey and were removed from the analysis, resulting in 940 useable surveys.
- Seventy percent of respondents agreed to complete the follow-up survey and 41% of these did so, resulting in 229 useable surveys for analysis.
- Eighty percent of travellers were from Alberta, whereas fewer were from BC (7%), elsewhere in Canada (8%), the US (3%) or from other international countries (2%).
- The majority of golf travellers in the Columbia Valley were between the ages of 35 to 64 years with the most frequently stated age category being 45 to 54 years of age (36%).
- Almost four-fifths (80%) of golf travellers had at least a college or technical diploma, with the most frequently stated education category being a basic university degree (45%).
- While a quarter of travellers (25%) stated explicitly that they preferred not the answer the question on annual household income, half (50%) of the respondents had incomes of at least \$100,000 and another sixth (16%) had incomes between \$65,000 and \$99,999.
- Approximately two-thirds (66%) of respondents were not currently members of a golf club, almost a quarter (25%) were members of a semi-private/public club and just under one-tenth (9%) were members of a private club.

- The majority of travellers interviewed at Columbia Valley golf courses were travelling for leisure purposes (90%), while fewer were travelling to visit friends and family (9%) or for business (1%).
- A majority (97%) of travellers used a car/truck/motorcycle as their primary mode of transportation, whereas fewer travelled in a recreational vehicle (2%) or a bus (<0.5%).
- Over a quarter (29%) of travellers were staying in second homes and over a fifth (23%) were staying in timeshares. Fewer were staying at traditional types of accommodation such as a resort (14%), with friends/relatives (11%) or in a hotel/motel (10%).
- BC residents were more likely to stay at a hotel/motel (26%) than were those from Alberta (9%) or other locations (12%). Alberta residents were more likely to stay in a second home (34%) than were BC residents (10%) or those from other locations (9%); and those from other locations were more likely to stay at a resort (24%) than were BC (12%) or Alberta (13%) residents.
- Golf was the primary trip motivation for the majority (78%) of respondents interviewed. Almost a fifth (18%) did not indicate an activity that as a primary trip motivator whereas the remaining 5% provided a diverse range of motivations that included relaxing, attending a wedding, boating, swimming and water sports.
- The primary destination of the majority of golf travellers (97%) was the Columbia Valley. Very few respondents (2%) were touring with no particular destination whereas the remainder (< 2%) had primary destinations elsewhere in the Kootenay Rockies (1.0%), elsewhere in BC (<0.5%) or in Alberta (<0.5%).
- Overall, the average travel party size was 4.7 people and 26% of travel parties had children. Those parties with children had an average of 6.6 people travelling in their group. Parties travelling without children had an average travel party size of 4.1 people.
- The majority of respondents (91%) had not travelled or planned to travel by air on the trip. Of the 9% who indicated they travelled by air, the overwhelming majority were on return tickets. However, there were differences in the planned arrival and departure cities. The arrival cities mentioned most frequently included Calgary (68%), Cranbrook (13%) and Edmonton (8%). The most common departure cities included Calgary (58%), Cranbrook (11%) and Toronto (10%).
- Travellers planned to spend an average of nine days away from home, including eight days in British Columbia and seven days in the Columbia Valley. Less than one-percent of the travellers (0.9%) indicated that they were just passing through the region.
- The majority (90%) of travellers indicated that golf was their primary leisure activity while in the Columbia Valley. 7% did not have a primary leisure activity whilst the remaining 3% had other leisure activities on which they spent the most time such as boating, relaxing and swimming.

- On average, respondents had taken an average of 3.5 overnight leisure trips over the previous 12 months to purposely play golf. Only one eighth (12%) of respondents did not take a single overnight trip for golf purposes in the previous year.
- Over one third (34%) of respondents played 40 or more rounds of golf in the past year, half (50%) played between 11-39 rounds, a sixth (16%) played between 1-10 rounds whereas a small fraction (<0.5%) did not play a single round of golf in the preceding 12 month period.
- The majority of travellers (84%) spent three weeks or more planning their trip. Reasons for selecting their primary destination included golf (27%), proximity/location (23%), accommodation (14%), prior experience (12%), family (8%), and cost (4%).
- Approximately two-fifths (43%) of travellers spent no more than two weeks pre-planning for the golf component of their trip. Almost half (48%) indicated that the first consideration in planning the golf component of their trip (independent of cost or budget considerations) was the actual destination.
- Previous visits to the Columbia Valley (87%), golf club/resort business websites (55%) and advice from friends/relatives (53%) were the top three information sources used before travel. Also important, but less frequently used information sources included golf resort brochure/travel guide ads (37%) and a local or regional tourism website (24%).
- Previous visits to the Columbia Valley (46%), advice from friends/relatives (30%) and golf resort brochure/travel guide ads (25%) were the top three information sources used during the trip. Also important, but less frequently used information sources included Visitor Centres (15%), golf club/resort business websites (14%) and magazines/newspapers (13%).
- Travellers were asked about leisure activities they participated in during their trip and, not surprisingly, almost all mentioned golf as a leisure activity (99%). The three most frequently cited activities aside from golf were fine dining (64%), visiting a natural hot spring pool (52%) and shopping for local arts and crafts (48%).
- Over three-quarters (77%) of respondents indicated their entire travel party played golf on the trip during which they were interviewed. Activities undertaken by those who did not play golf included swimming (34%), shopping (20%), hiking (6%) and relaxing (6%).
- Travellers were also asked about leisure activities they participated in while on other leisure trips in the past year. Again, the majority of respondents mentioned golf (74%) most frequently as a leisure activity that they participated in while on leisure trips in the past year. Aside from golf, the three most frequently cited activities included fine dining (70%), swimming (53%) and shopping for local arts and crafts (53%).

- The majority of the residents interviewed (89%) had previously golfed in the Columbia Valley. Almost half of the travellers interviewed planned to spend time golfing at the Copper Point (49%) and Eagle Ranch (46%) golf courses. Approximately one-third were planning to golf at Greywolf (36%) or the Springs (33%) whereas fewer were planning to golf at Riverside (29%), Mountainside (24%), Windermere (22%), Radium Resort (22%) or the Ridge at Copper Point (10%). Responses from the follow-up survey show the proportion that actually golfed at each course is higher.
- Over three quarters (77%) of travellers were repeat visitors to the golf course at which they were interviewed. Their average golf party size was 3.8 people; they played an average of almost two rounds of golf at that particular location and almost 4.5 rounds of golf in total over the course of their trip.
- Nearly two-thirds of travellers (61%) reported being very satisfied with their overall experience and a slightly lower proportion (56%) reported high satisfaction with the staff/customer service they received. Overall value for money (32% very satisfied) and cost of green fees (25% very satisfied) received the lowest ratings.
- Travellers were asked how many 9 and 18-hole rounds of golf they played during their visit to the Columbia Valley. Just over a quarter (28%) played at least one 9-hole round of golf and averaged 2.7 rounds during their visit. On the other hand, almost all respondents (99%) reported playing at least one 18-hole round of golf and an average of 4.8 rounds during their trip.
- Less than a tenth of travellers (5%) indicated that a portion of their trip was part of a packaged deal. Of those travellers that had purchased a package, the most common components were green fees (95%), accommodation (86%), meals (7%) and other entertainment (2%) components.
- Almost three-fifths of travellers indicated that their golf tee-time was very (32%) or quite important (27%) to them when choosing to play at the course that they were interviewed and surveyed at.
- Almost one-half (46%) of travellers were inflexible and could not have golfed at any other time of the day.
- Over two-thirds (68%) of respondents were not willing to pay more or less to change their golf tee time.
- Respondents were asked about their satisfaction with their trip in the Columbia Valley. Four-fifths (81%) were very satisfied with their trip. Those who were dissatisfied cited bad weather, limited inexpensive things to do, high costs and poor quality golf course compared to other resorts in the area as reasons for their poor rating.

- Respondents were also asked about their likelihood of recommending the Columbia Valley as a place to visit for family and friends. A majority of respondents indicated that they were either 'very likely' (81%) or 'likely' (16%) to do so.
- Respondents were asked about their likelihood of returning to the Columbia Valley. A large majority (94%) of travellers indicated that they were either 'very likely' (80%) or 'likely' (14%) to return for a future trip.
- Almost three-fifths of respondents (57%) were very satisfied with their overall golf course experience at the golf resort at which they were interviewed. Less than a tenth (8%) of respondents indicated that they were somewhat or very dissatisfied. Reasons provided by these respondents were related to cost, poor course conditions and limited dining opportunities.
- Positive images of the Columbia Valley were dominated by the golf experience (63%), beautiful scenery/landscapes of the region (56%), and weather (34%).
- Negative images of the Columbia Valley region focused heavily on cost considerations (65%), crowding (17%) and distance (14%).
- In terms of likelihood of taking another leisure trip in British Columbia, an overwhelming majority of travellers indicated that they were either 'very likely' (90%) or 'likely' (6%) to take another trip in the next two years.
- Respondents were also asked about their likelihood of taking another leisure trip in British Columbia with the main motivation of the trip being golf. A majority of respondents were 'very likely' (74%) or 'likely' (16%) to visit British Columbia because of golf.
- A variety of characteristics were identified as unique to the area including its scenery (69%), variety of golf course offerings (69%), weather (33%), proximity/accessibility (17%) and mountain golf (14%).
- Travellers at the Columbia Valley golf courses spent an average of \$423.23 per party per day or \$106.51 per person per day. There were notable differences in expenditures when broken down by origin of the travellers, primary accommodation type, travel party size and age.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	6
Introduction.....	7
Methods.....	7
DATA COLLECTION - INTERVIEW	7
DATA COLLECTION – FOLLOW-UP SURVEY	9
DATA ANALYSIS	10
Results	12
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOLF TRAVELLER (DEMOGRAPHICS)	12
TRIP CHARACTERISTICS	15
TRIP PLANNING	21
TRAVELLER ACTIVITIES	25
PERCEPTIONS OF COLUMBIA VALLEY AND BRITISH COLUMBIA	41
COMMUNITY COMPARISON	43
TRAVEL EXPERIENCE IN BC	44
EXPENDITURES	45
RESIDENT GOLFER CHARACTERISTICS	50
ORGANIZED TOURS GOLFER CHARACTERISTICS	55
Conclusions	63
Limitations.....	65
Appendices	66
Appendix A - Interview Schedule and Interviews Completed.....	67
Appendix B - Questionnaires	71
Appendix C - Response Bias Testing	92
Appendix D - Reasons for Dissatisfaction with Overall Value of Golf Course	97
Appendix E - Comments from e-mail Follow-up Survey.....	99
Appendix F - Positive Images of the Columbia Valley as a Vacation Destination	104
Appendix G - Negative Images of the Columbia Valley as a Vacation Destination	110
Appendix H - Unique Images of the British Columbia as a Golf Destination	115