



Hiking Product Overview

BUILDING TOURISM WITH INSIGHT

HIKING

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This profile summarizes information on the British Columbia hiking tourism sector. Information provided includes trends in hiking tourism, an overview of the sector, a demographic and travel profile of travellers who participated in hiking activities while on a pleasure trip, detailed information on motivated hiking travellers to BC, and other outdoor and cultural activities participated in by hiking travellers.

Information in this report has been compiled from several sources, including the 2006 Travel Activities and Motivations Study; an inventory of recreational trails from the British Columbia Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts and the British Columbia Ministry of the Environment; and a report prepared by Tourism Research Services, Nova Scotia Tourism, Culture and Heritage.

Demographic Profile¹

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF HIKING PLEASURE TRAVELLERS

Pleasure travellers participating in the 2006 Travel Activities and Motivations Survey (TAMS) who had been to British Columbia in the past two years, were asked to indicate if they had participated in a hiking activity while on a trip (in the past two years). Those who had participated in these activities were further asked if a hiking activity had been a primary motivating factor for any of their trips.

- Canadian hiking pleasure travellers who have been to British Columbia in the past two years and participated in a hiking activity while on a trip (in the past two years) were slightly more likely to be female (52%) than male (48%), while the split was reversed for US hiking travellers, (54% male and 46% female). Among motivated Canadian hiking travellers, those for whom hiking was the primary reason for at least one trip taken in the past two years, the gender split was nearly equal. For motivated US hiking travellers, the split became even more pronounced, with 64% male and 36% female (see Table 1).
- In terms of age, the greatest number of participated and motivated hiking travellers were between 18-34 years of age. This trend was true for both US and Canadian travellers. One in four of motivated Canadian hiking travellers were between 18-34 years of age.
- There were, however, age differences between US and Canadian hiking travellers in the older age categories. The US Hiking traveller tended to be older than the Canadian hiking travellers with a higher proportion of both participating and motivated hikers in both the 54-64 and 65 + age categories. Among Canadian hiking travellers aged 55 to 64, 11% participated and 8% were motivated. Among the same age group for US hiking travellers, 21% participated and 19% were motivated. Only a few Canadian hiking travellers were over 65 (5% participated, 6% motivated), but there were nearly twice as many US hiking travellers in the same age group (13% participated, 7% motivated).
- Slightly more US hiking travellers (67% participated, 70% motivated) had household incomes above \$60,000 per year than did Canadian hiking travellers (63% participated, 61% motivated) which was slightly higher than the typical pleasure American and Canadian pleasure travellers.
- The majority of hiking travellers were well-educated, with 77% of participating Canadians and 91% of participating Americans having at least some post-secondary education.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, information in this report is from the 2006 Travel Activities and Motivations Survey.

Table 1: Demographic profile of BC hiking travellers from Canada and the US

Demographics of Hiking Travellers from Canada and the US who have been to BC	Canada		US	
	Participate	Motivate	Participate	Motivate
Adults 18+	2,019,612	540,249	2,492,141	741,865
Unweighted Numbers	2,488	716	818	265
Gender				
Male	47.9%	49.3%	54.0%	63.9%
Female	52.1%	50.7%	46.0%	36.1%
Age				
18-34	39.4%	41.8%	25.7%	33.7%
35-44	22.0%	19.5%	17.8%	14.2%
45-54	23.3%	24.5%	22.8%	26.3%
55-64	10.7%	8.3%	21.2%	18.9%
65+	4.6%	5.9%	12.5%	6.9%
Household Income				
Under \$40,000	13.8%	18.0%	10.4%	14.7%
\$40,000-\$59,999	13.4%	12.8%	11.4%	8.5%
\$60,000-\$99,999	29.1%	29.1%	26.6%	26.8%
\$100,000 or more	34.1%	31.6%	40.3%	43.1%
Not stated	9.6%	8.4%	11.2%	6.9%
Education				
Less than Secondary	3.0%	2.9%	1.4%	0.6%
Completed Secondary	19.4%	16.0%	4.8%	6.7%
Some Post Secondary	11.7%	12.3%	18.8%	17.9%
Completed Post Secondary	65.4%	68.5%	72.2%	72.5%
Other	0.0%	0.1%	0.8%	0.8%
Not stated	0.5%	0.2%	2.0%	1.5%

Source: Travel Activities and Motivations Study 2006; special analysis by Tourism British Columbia. Table includes those who have visited British Columbia (at least once) in the past two years on an out-of-town pleasure or vacation trip of one of more nights.

* Note: Cells with values displayed in red are based on small sample sizes (i.e. less than 50) and should be interpreted with caution.

DEMOGRAPHICS BY SPECIFIC HIKING ACTIVITY – CANADIAN PLEASURE TRAVELLERS WHO HAVE TRAVELLED TO BRITISH COLUMBIA

- Among all Canadian travellers to British Columbia, there was very little difference gender distributions with nearly half male and female travellers. However, across travellers who were motivated by hiking activities gender differences were seen with making same-day excursions were more likely to be female (55%) than male (45%), and those taking overnight backpacking hikes were more likely to be male (58%) than female (42%, see Table 2).
- The largest age category for all Canadian traveller groups was the 18 to 34 group. This was particularly evident for the overnight backpacking hikers, where over half were between the ages of 18-34. In fact, the overwhelming majority of overnight backpacking Canadian hikers were under the age of 55 (92%). This was less so with the same-day excursion hikers, where a lesser majority were under 55 (83%), and a lesser number (39%) were in the 18 to 34 age category.
- Three in ten Canadian travellers to British Columbia reported annual household incomes over \$100,000. Motivated hiking travellers were also likely to report incomes in this category (32%). There were very few differences in household income in day hikers compared to overnight backpackers.
- The majority of both day-tripping hikers and overnight back packing hikers were well-educated, with most having completed post-secondary (69% day hikers, 65% overnight backpackers).
- A total of 29% of overnight backpack trip hikers had children under 17 in the home, while the percent was lower (23%) among day-tripping hikers had children under 17 as part of their household composition.

Table 2: Demographics by specific hiking activity types for travellers from Canada

Demographics of Canadian Travellers who have been to BC by Hiking Type	All Travellers Canadian who Visited BC	Type of Hiking (Motivated)	
		Same Day Excursion	Backpack Overnight
Total	5,651,177	366,731	315,436
Unweighted Numbers	7,315	512	379
Gender			
Male	49.9%	44.9%	57.8%
Female	50.1%	55.1%	42.2%
Age			
18-34	31.4%	38.9%	54.8%
35-44	18.8%	16.7%	20.6%
45-54	21.3%	27.1%	16.3%
55-64	14.9%	10.4%	4.9%
65+	13.5%	6.9%	3.4%
Household Income			
Under \$40,000	17.6%	20.0%	17.5%
\$40,000-\$59,999	13.9%	12.4%	12.4%
\$60,000-\$99,999	27.4%	27.8%	30.2%
\$100,000 or more	29.1%	30.5%	30.6%
Not stated	12.0%	9.3%	9.2%
Education			
Less than Secondary	7.2%	3.5%	2.4%
Completed Secondary	24.9%	17.0%	15.8%
Some Post Secondary	12.0%	10.3%	10.3%
Completed Post Secondary	55.1%	69.1%	64.5%
Not stated	0.7%	0.0%	0.4%

Source: Travel Activities and Motivations Study 2006; special analysis by Tourism British Columbia. Table includes those who have visited British Columbia (at least once) in the past two years on an out-of-town pleasure or vacation trip of one or more nights.

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DEMOGRAPHICS BY SPECIFIC HIKING ACTIVITY – AMERICAN PLEASURE TRAVELLERS WHO HAVE TRAVELLED TO BRITISH COLUMBIA

- Among American travellers to British Columbia, there was little difference in gender (52% male and 48% female). However, when looking at the gender distribution across hiking categories, there are notable differences. Same day hikers were more likely to be male (64%) than female (36%), and overnight backpacking hikers were also more likely to be male (59%) than female (41%). These differences are considerably larger than those seen among Canadian hiking travellers to BC (see Table 3).
- American hiking travellers were, again, quite young compared to the typical American pleasure traveller, with the largest age group of same day and overnight backpack hikers being between the ages of 18 to 34. Those who took overnight backpacking trips were more likely to be in this age group with 41% of all US motivated backpacking travellers in this age group.
- The household income distribution of US motivated hiking travellers is similar to those from Canada with the largest group reporting incomes over \$100,000. Those taking same day hikes were more likely to be in this category compared to overnight backpackers.
- Both groups of US hiking travellers were well educated. Nearly three-quarters of both same-day and overnight backpacking travellers had completed post secondary education which is higher than the average American pleasure traveller to BC.
- The majority of US hiking travellers' households were adult-only, similar to the Canadian hikers' profile.

Table 3: Demographics by specific hiking activity types for travellers from the US

Demographics of US Travellers who have been to BC by Hiking Type	All US Travellers Visited BC who	Type of Hiking (Motivated)	
		Same Day Excursion	Backpack Overnight
Total	7,025,878	539,404	352,214
Unweighted Numbers	2,196	191	136
Gender			
Male	52.2%	65.7%	58.5%
Female	47.8%	34.3%	41.5%
Age			
18-34	21.5%	32.9%	40.5%
35-44	13.6%	14.0%	13.7%
45-54	21.9%	24.0%	30.1%
55-64	19.7%	20.8%	13.2%
65 +	23.3%	8.3%	2.4%
Household Income			
Under \$40,000	13.0%	15.0%	17.0%
\$40,000-\$59,999	13.6%	7.5%	8.6%
\$60,000-\$99,999	27.4%	26.7%	29.3%
\$100,000 or more	34.5%	43.5%	39.2%
Don't Know/Not Stated	11.6%	7.2%	6.0%
Education			
Less than Secondary	1.6%	0.0%	1.2%
Completed Secondary	7.9%	8.7%	4.5%
Some post Secondary	23.4%	14.5%	21.1%
Completed Post Secondary	64.7%	73.6%	72.6%
Other	0.5%	1.1%	0.0%
Not Stated	1.9%	2.0%	0.6%

Source: Travel Activities and Motivations Study 2006; special analysis by Tourism British Columbia. Table includes those who have visited British Columbia (at least once) in the past two years on an out-of-town pleasure or vacation trip of one of more nights.

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Travel Profile

TRAVEL BY CANADIAN AND US HIKING PLEASURE TRAVELLERS

- The 2006 Travel Activities and Motivations Survey estimated that a total of 5.6 million Canadian travellers visited British Columbia in 2004/05. Among these travellers, 36% participated in hiking while on at least one trip in the past two years and approximately 10% were motivated hiking travellers (travellers for whom hiking was the primary reason for taking at least one trip in the past two years). Among the estimated 7 million US travellers who had visited BC in 2004/05, 35% participated in hiking, while 11% were motivated hiking travellers (see Table 4).
- The majority both Canadian and American of travellers to British Columbia indicated that they had taken more than 5 out-of-town pleasure trips over the past two years (58% and 65% respectively). An even higher percentage reported frequent trips among travellers who both participated in and were motivated by hiking. A total of 69% of participating and 75% of motivated Canadian hiking travellers could be considered frequent travellers with 5 or more trips, while 75% of participating and 76% of motivated American hiking travellers reported travelling with the same frequency two years.
- The appeal of British Columbia was rated highly by the majority of all hiking travellers across all categories. Of all Canadian travellers to BC, 88% rated British Columbia an 8 or higher on a 10-point scale, while 76% of all US travellers to BC rated the province an 8 or higher on the same scale. A greater percentage of motivated hiking travellers gave a high rating, with 92% of motivated Canadian hiking travellers and 85% of motivated American hiking travellers rating BC 8 or higher.

- Hiking travellers were more likely to have travelled in the summer compared to winter, although participation rates were high (over 70%) for both seasons in all categories.

Table 4: Travel profile of Canadian and American hiking travellers

	Canada			US		
	All Travellers who visited BC	Participate	Motivate	All Travellers who visited BC	Participate	Motivate
Total	5,651,177	2,019,612	540,249	7,025,878	2,492,141	741,865
Unweighted Numbers	7,315	2,488	716	2,196	818	265
Total number of out-of-town pleasure trips taken in past two years						
One	6.9%	4.8%	2.1%	3.3%	0.9%	1.0%
Two	11.8%	6.4%	5.6%	8.7%	4.3%	5.5%
Three	11.9%	10.0%	7.3%	9.5%	8.5%	6.6%
Four	11.5%	9.9%	10.3%	11.7%	10.0%	9.5%
Five Or More	57.9%	68.9%	74.7%	65.4%	75.4%	76.5%
Not Stated	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	1.0%	0.9%
Appeal Of British Columbia – Rated on a scale of 1 to 10						
8 to 10	87.5%	90.4%	92.0%	75.7%	80.5%	85.1%
4 to 7	9.6%	8.3%	5.7%	18.2%	15.6%	11.5%
1 to 3	1.1%	0.6%	1.1%	2.6%	2.1%	2.4%
Don't Know	0.6%	0.1%	0.0%	2.2%	0.6%	0.5%
Not Stated	1.2%	0.7%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	0.6%
Season travelled						
Summer	89.9%	95.7%	95.6%	87.7%	92.8%	95.0%
Winter	71.0%	80.1%	80.5%	77.4%	83.6%	82.9%

Source: Travel Activities and Motivations Study 2006; special analysis by Tourism British Columbia. Table includes those who have visited British Columbia (at least once) in the past two years on an out-of-town pleasure or vacation trip of one or more nights.

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OTHER DESTINATIONS VISITED

- Of the estimated 1.4 million Canadians who were primarily motivated by a hiking activity as part of their travel in the past two years, 38% had travelled to British Columbia in the same time period. BC travellers were much more likely than Canadians overall to travel within the province, with 95% of motivated hiking travellers taking a trip within BC over the past two years.
- British Columbian motivated hiking travellers were slightly more likely to have travelled to Alberta, the US, and Mexico and the Caribbean compared to the general Canadian motivated hiking tourist. However, among those who had travelled within BC in the past two years, Canadians in general were more likely to travel to Canadian destinations, while those from BC were slightly more likely to travel to the US.
- Of the estimated 9.8 million motivated US hiking travellers, approximately 8% had made a trip to British Columbia in the past two years.
- Virtually all motivated American hiking travellers had travelled within the US in the past two years, and over half (51%) had travelled exclusively within the US. Nearly one quarter (24%) had travelled to Mexico or the Caribbean, while 22% had travelled to a Canadian destination.
- Among motivated American hiking travellers who had travelled to British Columbia in the past two years, the percent that had also travelled to Mexico and the Caribbean jumped to 45%. Europe and other countries were also more popular destinations than any other Canadian province (33% and 32%, respectively).

OTHER ACTIVITIES (OUTDOOR AND CULTURAL) PARTICIPATED IN

- Overall, participation rates in other activities that hiking travellers took part in were similar between British Columbian, Canadian and US travellers (see Table 5).

- The most popular activities included strolling to see city buildings, visiting a nature park, sunbathing, swimming, and visiting well-known natural wonders.
- British Columbian travellers were nearly twice as likely to include swimming in lakes in their travel compared to US travellers. US travellers were also less likely than BC travellers to include sunbathing or sitting on a beach as part of their travel.
- Motivated US hiking travellers had high participation rates in many heritage-type activities, such as visiting historic sites or buildings (66%), visiting museums (54%) and visiting other historic sites or buildings (51%).

Table 5: Other outdoor and cultural activities participated in by hiking travellers

Activities	BC		Canada		US	
	Participate	Motivate	Participate	Motivate	Participate	Motivate
Stroll A City To See Buildings	68.2%	61.2%	67.9%	63.6%	70.7%	63.6%
Nature Park- National/Provincial	65.0%	65.0%	64.6%	65.8%	70.7%	72.9%
Sunbathing/Sitting On A Beach	65.1%	59.7%	63.7%	61.2%	46.3%	45.4%
Swimming In Lakes	59.3%	63.7%	59.3%	58.6%	29.4%	37.2%
Historic Site/Buildings	56.3%	48.6%	56.3%	53.5%	63.9%	66.4%
Swimming In Oceans	50.7%	46.0%	47.0%	48.3%	43.3%	46.8%
Well Known Natural Wonders	38.8%	50.9%	46.6%	51.7%	59.6%	58.2%
Other Historic Sites/Buildings	48.2%	36.1%	44.3%	40.3%	56.3%	51.1%
Museum - History/Heritage	40.4%	41.8%	41.4%	40.6%	50.6%	54.1%
Art Galleries	40.1%	39.8%	38.3%	42.8%	45.2%	47.0%
Farmers' Markets/ Country Fair	45.1%	32.4%	36.6%	26.3%	42.0%	48.7%
Wildlife - Land Based Animals	24.2%	26.5%	30.8%	29.1%	46.1%	45.7%
Botanical Gardens	26.3%	33.4%	28.0%	31.9%	44.2%	45.0%
Skiing - Downhill	20.0%	36.5%	24.1%	33.4%	20.9%	27.9%

Source: Travel Activities and Motivations Study 2006; special analysis by Tourism British Columbia. Table includes those who have visited British Columbia (at least once) in the past two years on an out-of-town pleasure or vacation trip of one or more nights.

Overview of the British Columbia Hiking Trail System

HIKING TRAILS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

- Estimates of the total number of trails in the province indicate that there are in excess of 6,200 multi-use trails with a combined distance of over 28,300 kilometres in British Columbia.² This includes public recreation trails, trails found within the Parks network, regional district, municipal, and Parks Canada trails, as well as trails converted from former railways (see Table 6).

Table 6: Number and distance of British Columbia trails by type

Trail Type	Number of Trails	Total Distance (km's)
Rail Trails	6	1,029
MTCA Public Recreation Trails	1,168	9,237
MTCA Commercial Recreation Trails	n/a	n/a
B.C. Parks Trails	1,222	7,076
Regional District Trails	n/a	980
Municipal Trails	3,874	9,096
Parks Canada Trails	n/a	950
Total	6,270	28,368

Source: Recreation Trails Strategy for British Columbia, Phase 1, Background Report, May 2007.

² Recreation Trails Strategy for British Columbia, Phase 1, Background Report, May 2007, BC Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, and BC Ministry of the Environment. Available at http://www.tca.gov.bc.ca/sites_trails/docs/Provincial_Trails_Strategy/Trail_Strategy_Background_Report_May23.pdf

- The vast majority number of British Columbia trails can be used for hiking, although they are often multi-use trails which can also accommodate biking, horseback riding, ATV use, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and canoe portage (see Table 7).

Table 7: Length (km) of British Columbia trails by usage

Trail Type	Mountain Biking	Snowmobiling	Hiking	ATV	Horseback Riding
Rail Trails	1,029	600	1,029	0	1,029
MTCA Public Recreation Trails	2,260	2,793	5,760	785	2,008
Municipal Trails	0	0	492	0	61
Total	3,289	3,393	7,281	785	3,098

Source: Recreation Trails Strategy for British Columbia, Phase 1, Background Report, May 2007.

For more information contact:

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