



COVID-19 Research Roundup

August 24, 2020



Bowron Lakes, Cariboo Chilcotin Coast

British Columbia is in Phase 3 of BC's Restart Plan

On June 24, 2020, it was announced that British Columbia is taking the next step in [BC's Restart Plan](#) with a gradual transition to Phase 3, including the smart, safe and respectful return of travel and tourism within the province.

On August 14, 2020, Canadian and US officials agreed to keep the border between the two countries closed to non-essential travel until September 21, 2020.

While BC is in Phase 3 of the BC Restart Plan, and is not open to non-essential travel from the US or International countries, information provided in this Research Roundup Report highlights not only local insights, but global insights which may be applicable to BC now.





Destination BC is rounding up relevant research and articles each week related to the travel and tourism industry and COVID-19.

Last week in brief:

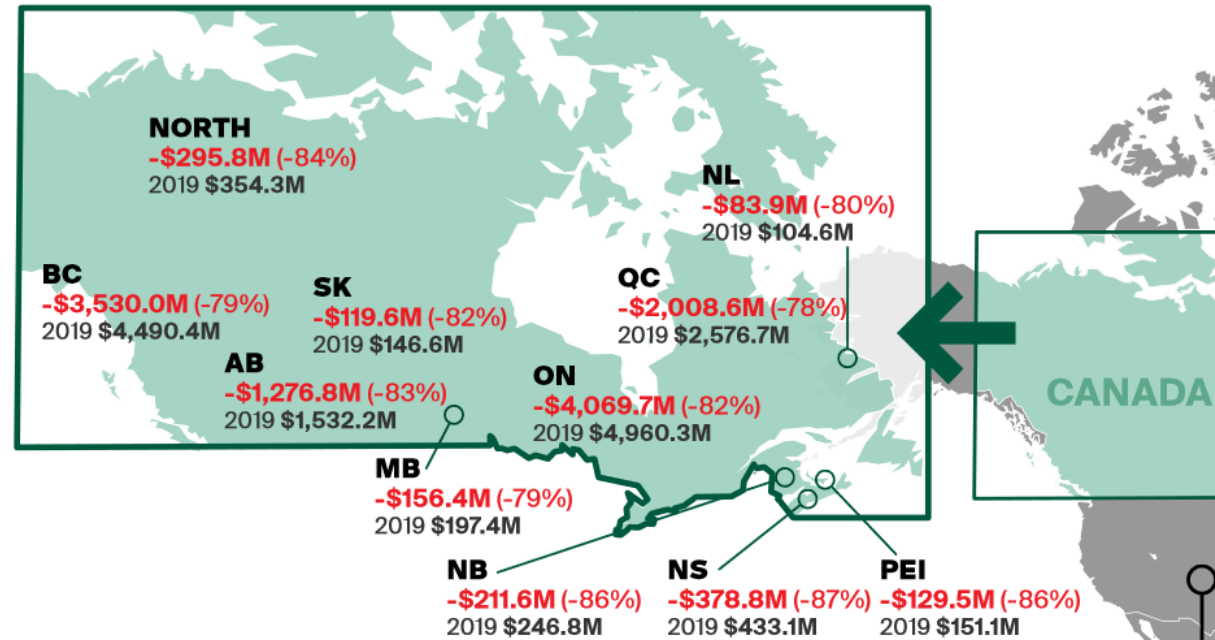
- \$3,530M estimated loss in tourism export revenue for BC
- BC residents' sentiment towards welcoming visitors has declined
- BC's overall domestic overnight visitation declined; visitation for Vancouver, Coast & Mountains and Northern BC increased
- BC residents are increasingly comfortable with non-essential car/RV travel
- BC hotel occupancy was over 50% for second week in a row
- Social distancing, cleaning, and hand sanitizer still essential for tourism
- Air traffic in Europe continues to improve
- Travel industry remains pessimistic towards the next 12 months

\$3,530M estimated loss in tourism export revenue for BC

- Destination Canada estimates BC will see a -79% reduction of tourism export revenue from January to September 2020 compared to 2019. This equates to a loss of \$3,530 M compared to the \$4,490 M in 2019. (Note, estimates are as of August 2, 2020.)
- The estimated tourism export revenue loss is a compiled estimate of various international markets. For further details, refer to the [COVID-19 Impact and Recovery Report](#) which captures estimated tourism export revenue loss in Canada by each individual market.

Estimated Change in Tourism Export Revenue from January to September Compared to 2019 by Province (\$M)

(% change compared to 2019) 2019 Tourism Export Revenue from January to September

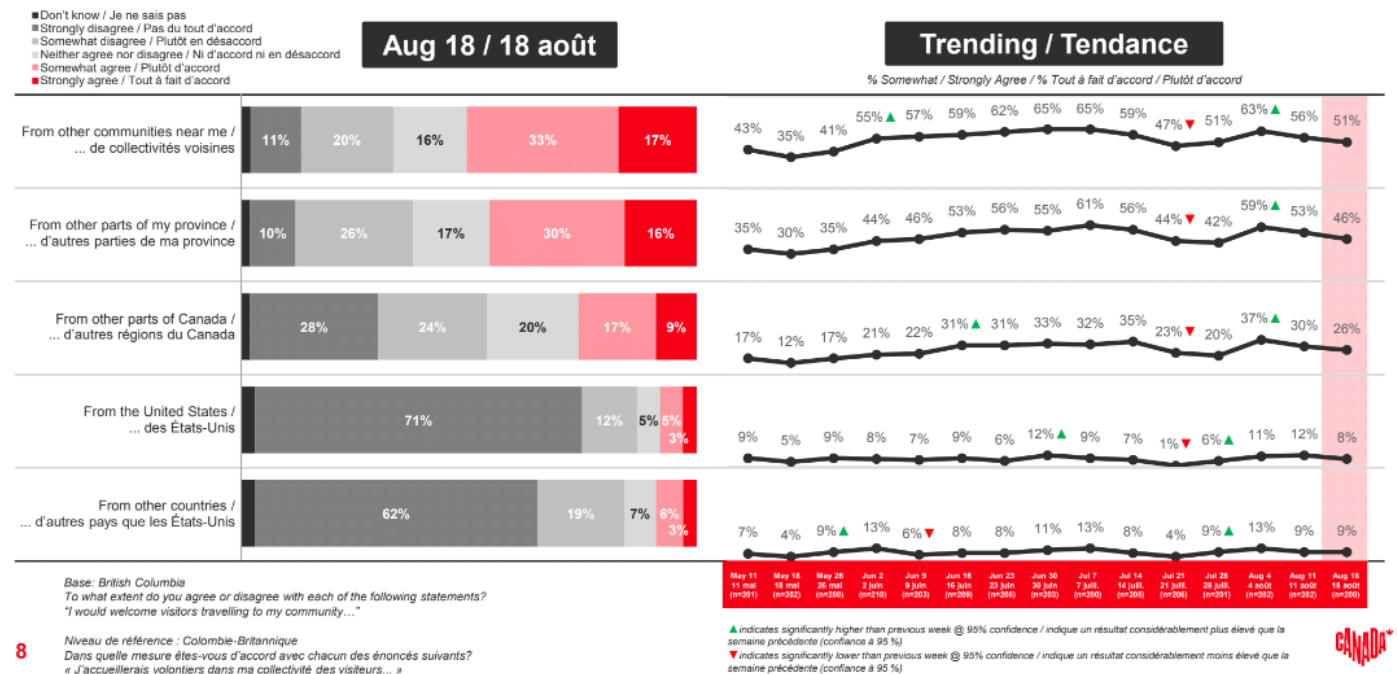


Source: [Destination Canada, COVID-19 Impact and Recovery Report: International Summary, August 4, 2020](#)

BC residents' sentiment towards welcoming visitors has declined

- Destination Canada's Weekly Resident Sentiment Wave 15 (August 18) report shows that the sentiment of BC residents towards all levels of visitors has trended slightly downward.
- Nearly a quarter (23%) of urban residents would welcome visitors from other parts of Canada compared to 41% of rural residents.
- BC residents continue to be less receptive to having their community promoted to the US (-63 net negative) or other parts of Canada (-63 net negative). This has trended downward since August 4.
- Sentiment of BC residents' comfort of welcoming visitors into their community overall, by urban/rural comparison, and by province, can be found in the full report.

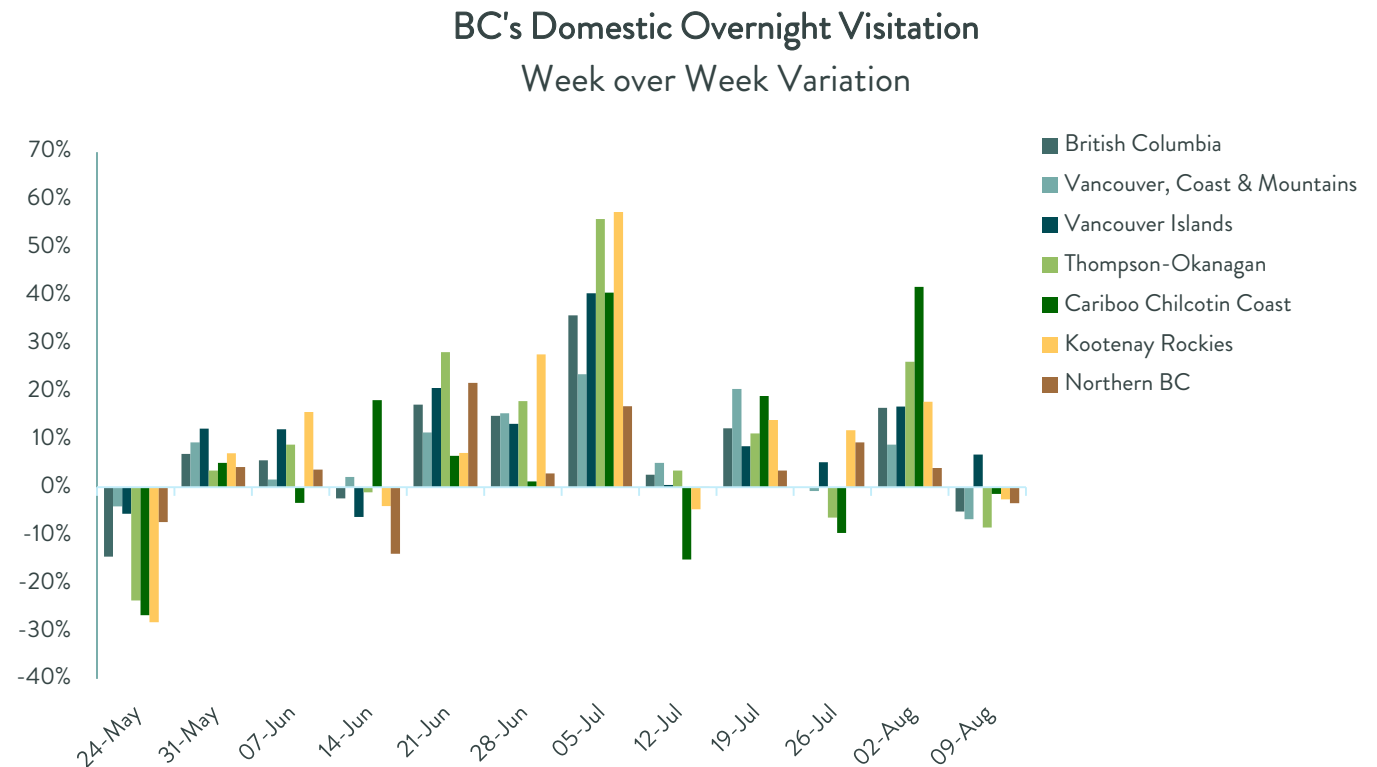
British Columbia / Colombie-Britannique



Source: [Destination Canada's Weekly Resident Sentiment, Wave 15, Leger, August 18 2020](#)

BC's overall domestic overnight visitation declined; visitation for Vancouver, Coast & Mountains and Northern BC increased

- According to Environics Analytics Weekly COVID Tracker Report, a decline in domestic overnight visitation within BC was seen (-2.3%) during the week ending August 16, compared to the previous week.
- Two areas of the province saw increases in visitation: Vancouver, Coast & Mountains (+9.9%) and Northern BC (+2.5%).
- Decreases in visitation were seen in the Thompson Okanagan (-14.2%), Cariboo Chilcotin Coast (-11.2%), Kootenay Rockies (-4.0%), and Vancouver Island (-1.7%).

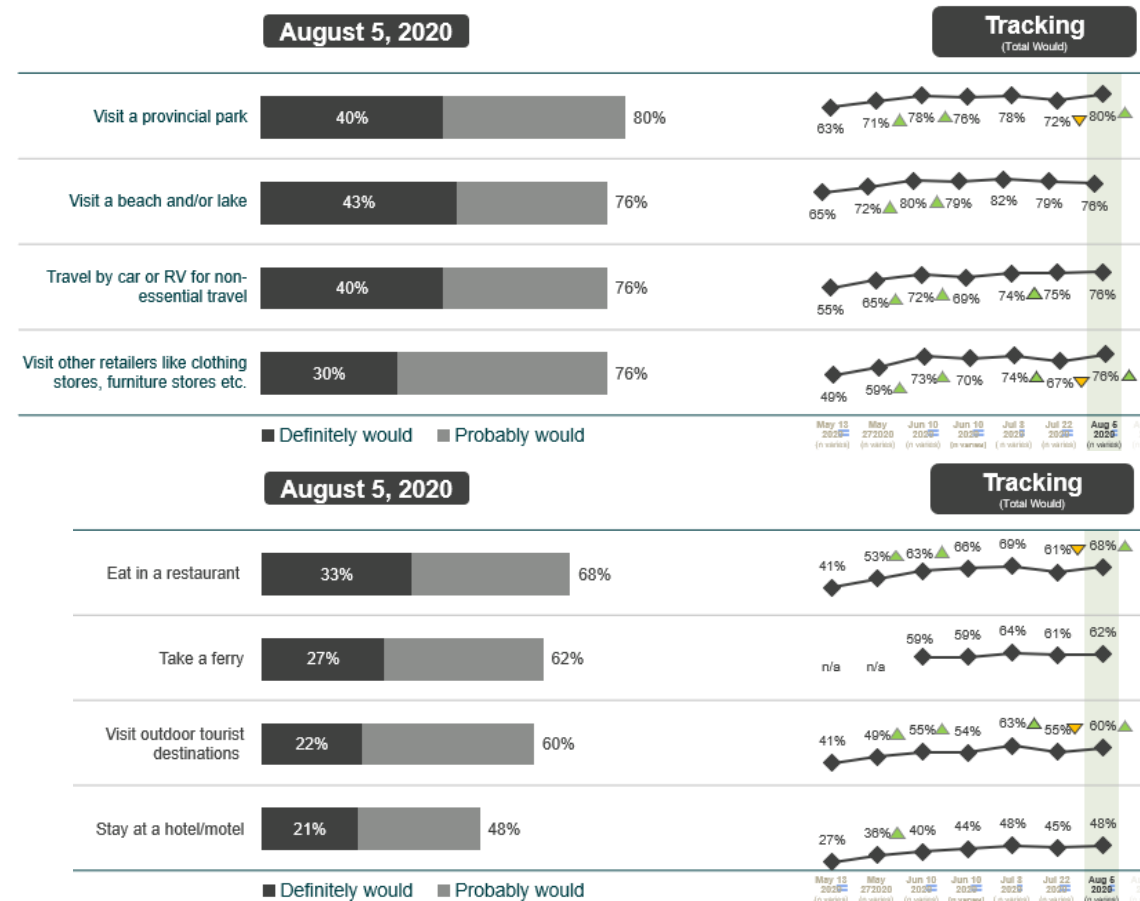


Source: [Environics Analytics Weekly COVID Tracker Report, August 9, 2020](#)



BC residents are increasingly comfortable with non-essential car/RV travel

- BC residents level of comfort using a car/RV for non-essential travel continues to rise. While similar to Wave 6 (75%), 76% of BC residents are comfortable travelling by car/RV.
- BC residents are comfortable with non-essential travel by ferry (62%), by plane (18%), and by cruise (13%). Level of comfort remains unchanged from the previous wave.
- Levels of comfort participating in certain travel activities are increasing. This includes visiting a provincial park (80% of BC residents feel comfortable, up 8% from Wave 6), eating in a restaurant (68%, up 7%), visiting an outdoor tourist attraction (60%, up 5%), and staying at shared economy accommodations (37%, up 7%).



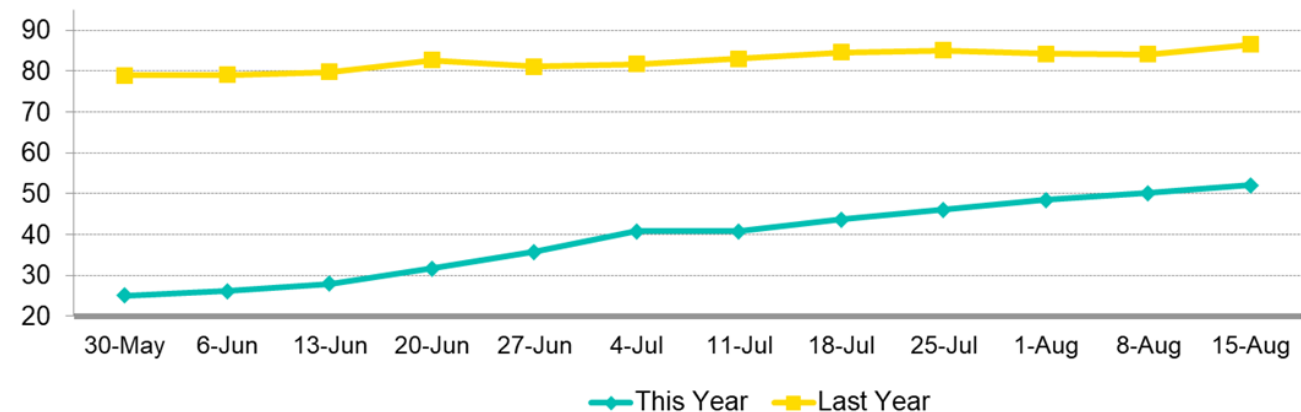
Source: [Destination BC's BC Resident's Public Perceptions: COVID-19 Travel and Tourism Wave 7, Insights West, August 10, 2020](#)



BC hotel occupancy was over 50% for second week in a row

- STR, an agency which captures accommodation indicators, such as hotel occupancy and average daily room rates, reports a continued, steady rise in BC hotel performance, week after week.
- BC's hotel occupancy for the week of August 9-15 was 52.1%. This represents a positive increase of 1.9 points from the previous week. Prince Edward Island joins BC this week as the only Canadian provinces to reach a 50% occupancy level.
- The average occupancy rate for the City of Vancouver was 28.7% (up 1.3 points from the previous week), Kelowna was 81.1% (down 1.2 points), Kamloops was 60.8% (up 1.2 points), Victoria was 45.7% (up 4.3 points), Whistler was 58.9% (down 1.4 points), and Richmond was 42.2% (up 1.9 points).

Weekly Occ (%) - May 30, 2020 to Aug 15, 2020

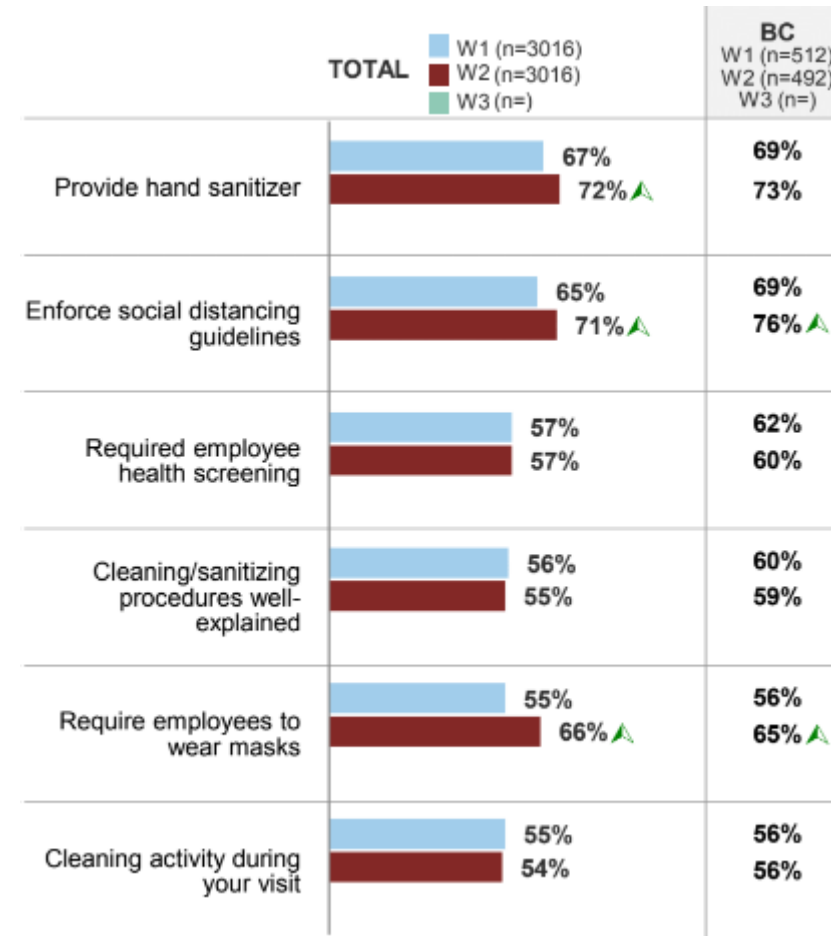


Source: [2020 STR, STR Global Ltd](#)



Social distancing, cleaning, and hand sanitizer still essential for tourism

- According to Destination Canada's Global Tourism Watch COVID Special Survey Wave 2 (July), BC residents consider the most important operational practices in restaurants to be enforcing social distances (76% agree, up from 69% from Wave 1 in June), and providing hand sanitizer (73%, up from 69%)
- BC residents seem less concerned with operational practices in hotels. The most important are considered to be enforcing social distancing (68%, up from 63% from Wave 1), providing guests with safety materials (67%, up from 63%) and proper explanations of cleaning procedures (66%, up from 65%).
- The full report, covering Canadian travel intentions, domestic resident characteristics and COVID-related topics, will be posted online shortly. In the meantime, please email Destination BC's Research & Analytics team at TourismResearch@DestinationBC.ca for more insights.

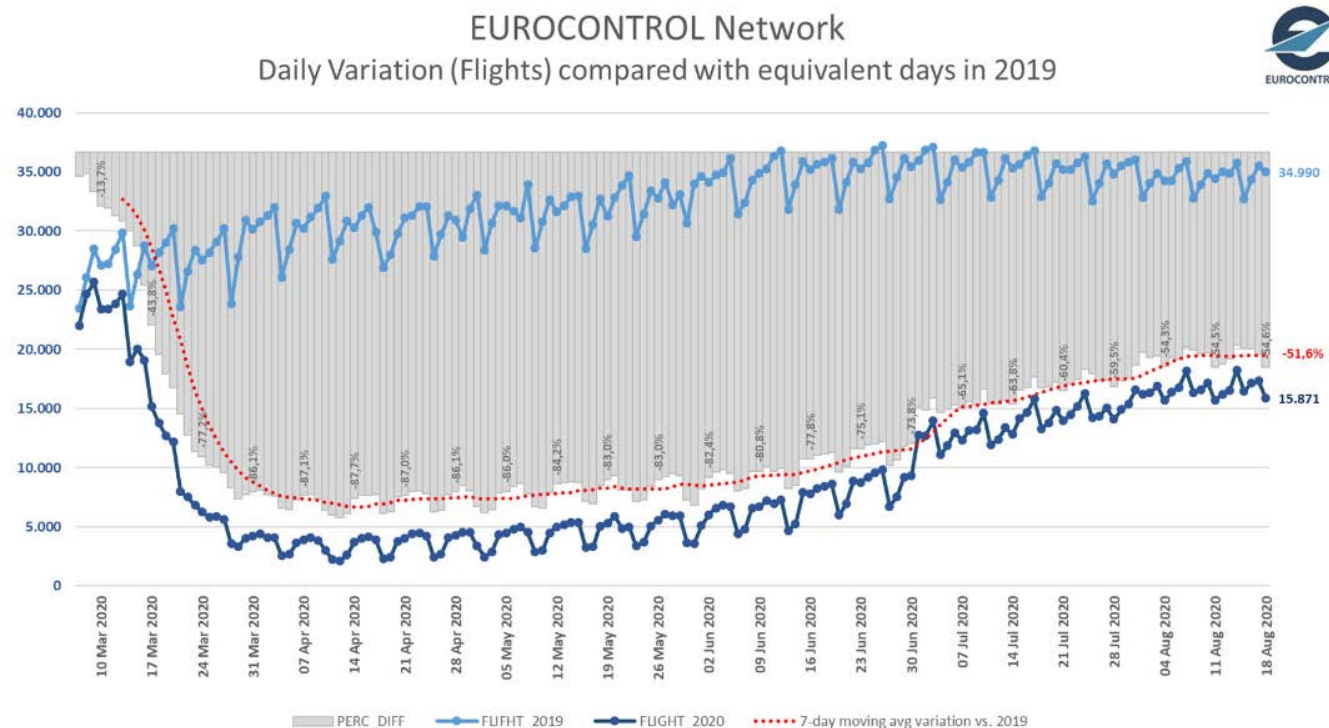


Source: 2020 Global Tourism Watch COVID Special Survey Wave 2, Destination Canada, July 2020



Air traffic in Europe continues to improve

- According to Eurocontrol's draft traffic scenarios, European air traffic is down -52% in August 18, 2020, yet is on track to regain 80% of 2019's flights by November 2020.
- August 18, 2020 saw 15,871 flights in Europe, 45% of the flights compared to 2019. This is an increase of 206 more flights than two weeks prior, an increase of 1.3%.
- Air traffic for US and China:
 - US domestic traffic is -46%
 - US international traffic is -77%
 - China domestic traffic is -25%
 - China international traffic is -70%



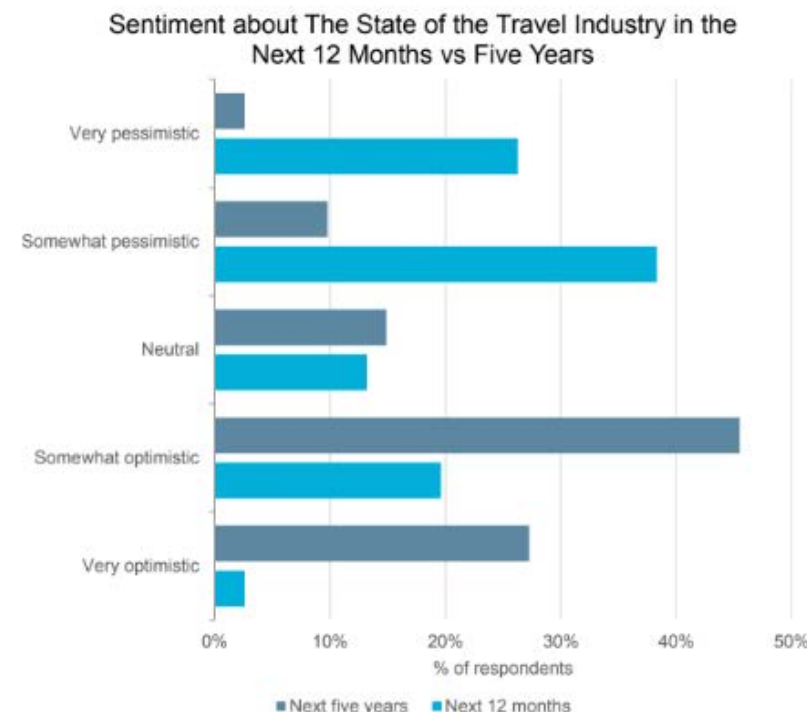
Source: [Eurocontrol COVID-19 Impact on European Air Traffic, August 19, 2020](#)



Travel industry remains pessimistic towards the next 12 months

- According to Euromonitor's Voice of the Industry: Travel and Tourism survey, 65% of the travel industry has a pessimistic view towards the next 12 months. 74% are more optimistic towards the next five years.
- 76% of travel professionals expected COVID-19 to push their customers towards sustainability concerns. This is 7% above average across all industries.
- Big data, analytics, and AI are seen as the key investment areas for digital transformation in the travel industry, considered to have the largest impact in the next five years.

State of the travel industry in the short to long term



Source: Euromonitor International Voice of the Industry - Travel and Tourism, April 2020

Expert Commentary



"The majority of the travel industry is feeling pessimistic, with a share of 64.6%, illustrating the devastating impact of COVID-19 on the confidence level among travel professionals."

The industry has been decimated by the global shutdown of economies and consumers confined due to their homes during lockdown with mass travel restrictions and bans imposed to curb the spread of disease."

Caroline Bremner
Head of Travel Research



Source: Euromonitor Voice of the Industry: Travel After Coronavirus, Passport, August 2020



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This report can be found online on the [Destination BC COVID-19
Research & Insights](#) webpage

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