

MAR 2025

REGION OVERVIEW

In 2022, travellers in the Northern BC tourism region were hosted by 920 tourism businesses and 8,400 tourism employees.¹ Collectively, the tourism industry generated \$1 billion in gross spending in the region, accounting for approximately 5.6% of BC's total overnight spending.^{2,3}

¹BC Stats

²Destination BC Estimates, 2022—Gross Spending Less Consumer Taxes

³Destination BC



TUMBLER RIDGE

Destination British Columbia acknowledges with gratitude the x̣ẉməθḳẉəỵəm (Musqueam Indian Band), Ṣḳẉx̣ ẉú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), and sə̣ḷilwətaʔ (Tseil-Waututh Nation) on whose shared territories we operate our main office.

We further recognize with gratitude that we carry out our work on the lands of First Nations throughout the province. We honour our ongoing relationships with Indigenous Peoples and First Nation communities around BC, and we commit to continuing to work together.

ABOUT THIS TOURISM REGION

The Northern British Columbia (NBC) tourism region stretches from Tête Jaune Cache to Haida Gwaii, and Prince George to the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Alaska borders. This vast region showcases nature’s grandeur through glaciated valleys, volcanic formations, towering mountains, and a mist-shrouded coast. The region is home to over 271,600 residents, about 4.8% of the population of BC⁴, and includes over fifty First Nations. Travellers to the region enjoy unparalleled outdoor adventure and Indigenous experiences.

Regional Population 2024⁵



271,600

Population as % of BC 4.8%

Tourism Industry Snapshot	2023
Businesses (2022) ⁶	916
% of Total Provincial Tourism Businesses ⁷	5.4%
Indigenous Businesses Listed with ITBC (2024) ⁸	104
HelloBC Listings with Accessibility Features ⁹	21%
Employment (2022) ¹⁰	8,430
Regional GDP (2022) ¹¹	\$468 million
Regional Tourism Revenue (2022) ¹²	\$1.0 billion
Room revenue (000s) ¹³	\$132,300
Visitor Centre parties ¹⁴	109,400

⁴BC Stats, Development Region and Municipal Population Estimates 2024, adjusted for tourism region boundaries

⁵BC Stats, Development Region and Municipal Population Estimates 2024, adjusted for tourism region boundaries

⁶BC Stats / Pacific Analytics

⁷BC Stats / Pacific Analytics (2023 Provincial Tourism-Related Businesses: 16,839)

⁸Indigenous Tourism BC Stakeholders

⁹Destination BC, as a percentage of total HelloBC listings by region. Actual number of HelloBC listings with accessibility features: 76 (September 2024)

¹⁰BC Stats / Pacific Analytics. Please note this does not include Hospitality employment.

¹¹BC Stats / Pacific Analytics

¹²BC Stats. Please note that regional revenues do not sum up to provincial revenue due to \$0.8 billion in provincial tourism revenue that is not allocated to a region.

¹³Calculated from Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT). Only those communities subject to the MRDT are included. Annual totals should be interpreted with caution since data for a community may not be available for all months within the year. Only those communities subject to the MRDT are included.

¹⁴Destination BC

Government investment in the tourism sector in BC was \$1.2 billion in 2022, and private investment was \$1.7 billion. As an indicator of recent tourism investment in BC, Destination BC compiles a list of destination development projects that have been provided funding each year, based on the announcement date; the NBC tourism region was estimated to receive \$30,692,500 in funding for 57 projects in 2022 and \$28,173,400 in funding for 59 projects in 2023. This includes multi-year funding projects into the future.¹⁵

Destination Development Projects

	2022	2023
Number of Projects	57	59
Total Investment	\$30,692,500	\$28,173,400

The NBC region is expansive and connected, with Prince George Airport (YXS) welcoming 450,000 passengers in 2024. Fort St. John saw nearly 244,500 passengers, Terrace served 261,600 and Smithers welcomed 76,400. 59,400 cruise passengers passed through Prince Rupert.

¹⁵Destination BC. Note: these figures are underestimated as this list is not complete or exhaustive; there are likely additional projects.



Transportation Passengers 2024



PRINCE GEORGE
450,500¹⁶



FERRY¹⁷
44,800 (Route 10)*
54,100 (Route 11)**



FORT ST. JOHN
256,900¹⁶



CRUISE: PRINCE RUPERT¹⁸
59,400



SMITHERS
76,000¹⁶



VIA RAIL: JASPER TO PRINCE RUPERT 2023¹⁹
12,000



TERRACE
261,600¹⁶



HIGHWAY DAILY TRAFFIC VOLUMES
ALASKA HIGHWAY²⁰
6,550
720
HIGHWAY 37 2023²¹
5,480
HIGHWAY 16 2023²²

¹⁶Individual Airports
¹⁷BC Ferries
¹⁸Prince Rupert Port Authority
¹⁹VIA Rail Canada
²⁰Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, 2024 Summer Average Daily Traffic, Site: P-43-3NS, Alaska Highway, north of Dawson Creek

TERRACE

Employment



8,430

people were employed in tourism-related businesses in the NBC region in 2022 representing 5.5% of BC's total tourism employment.

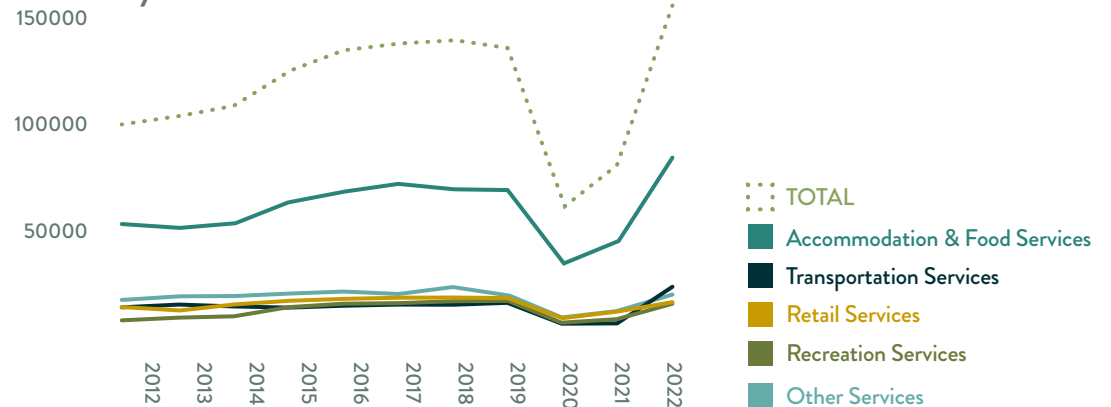


\$273M

The NBC tourism industry paid in wages and salaries.²³

The following chart illustrates the evolution of tourism employment in BC from 2012 to 2022, broken down into five key sectors. Over this period, the tourism industry demonstrated overall growth despite a significant downturn in 2020 due to the global pandemic. Accommodation and food services consistently remained the largest employer in the tourism sector, showing remarkable recovery and growth from 33,600 FTEs in 2020 to 83,100 FTEs in 2022, surpassing pre-pandemic levels and highlighting the sector's resilience and importance to the provincial economy.

Provincial Tourism Employment by Sectors (FTEs)²⁴



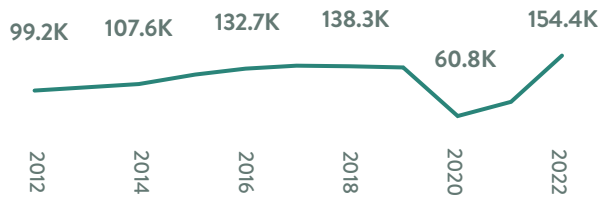
²¹Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, 2023 Summer Average Daily Traffic, Site: Meziadin Lake Junction—47-016NS, Kitimat Cassiar
²²Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, 2023 Summer Average Daily Traffic, Site: Route 27 West Junction—45-008EW, Vanderhoof
²³BC Stats
²⁴BC Stats. Note: numbers may not add up to the stated total as numbers have been rounded.

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LIARD RIVER HOT SPRINGS

Provincial Tourism Employment by Year (FTEs)



The hospitality workforce in BC—including those working in tourism—demonstrates significant diversity, with 40% of workers identifying as visible minorities and 31% as immigrants, both higher than provincial population averages of 35% and 31% respectively. The sector employs workers across accommodation, food & beverage, recreation & entertainment, and transportation services, with food & beverage being the largest employer. While Indigenous representation in the workforce matches the provincial average at 5%, the sector shows particularly strong multicultural employment in accommodation and food & beverage services, demonstrating tourism’s role in providing significant employment opportunities for diverse communities.²⁵

Top Regional Markets

Most travellers to NBC in 2023 were from BC and Alberta. The region also receives international travellers from Alaska, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Germany.²⁶

Visitor Nights* – Canada



BC

44%



Alberta

36%



Ontario

4%

Visitor Nights* – US



Alaska

1%



Oregon

<1%



Colorado

<1%

Visitor Nights* – International



UK

1%



Australia

1%



Germany

1%

*As a % share of nights spent by all visitors in the region.

²⁵go2HR
²⁶Environics Analytics Data Tabulation (2022 to 2023), Destination BC

How do Residents View Tourism?

NBC residents value tourism's impact on their communities, especially the economic benefits: 79% say they value the contribution visitors make to their local economy. Residents who value visitors' economic contributions are most likely to feel that tourism improves their quality of life and that its benefits outweigh any drawbacks.

Resident Perceptions of Tourism 2024

79%

Residents that value the contribution visitors make to their local economy.
VS. BC RESIDENTS 80%

77%

Residents that agree the positive impacts of tourism in their community outweigh the negative impacts.
VS. BC RESIDENTS 74%

76%

Tourism brings people from diverse backgrounds / cultures.
VS. BC RESIDENTS 83%

75%

Residents that take pride in making visitors feel welcome.
VS. BC RESIDENTS 74%

71%

Tourism supports local businesses in their community.
VS. BC RESIDENTS 80%

66%

Residents that agree tourism contributes positively to the quality of life of their community.
VS. BC RESIDENTS 71%

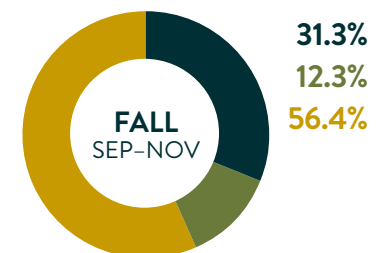
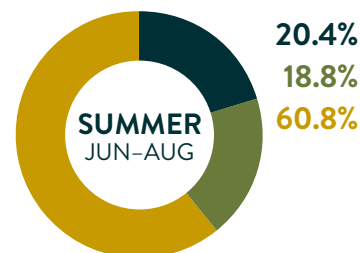
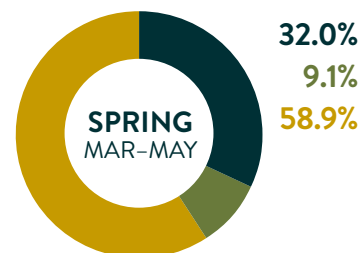
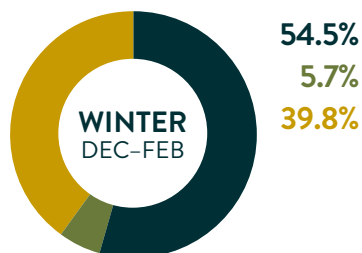
61%

Residents that agree their community is a desirable place to visit.
VS. BC RESIDENTS 78%



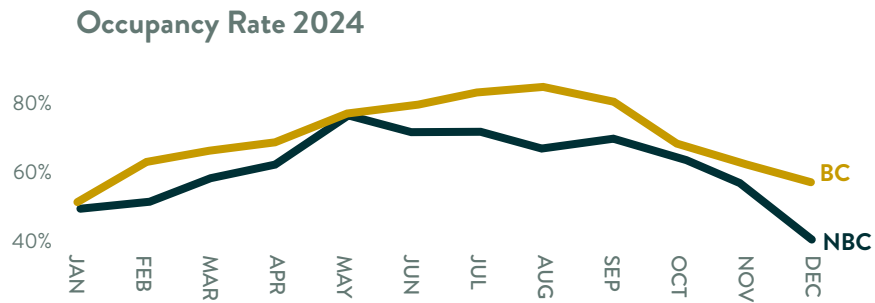
Do you think your community has too few, too many, or the right amount of tourism throughout the year?

TOO FEW TOO MANY JUST RIGHT

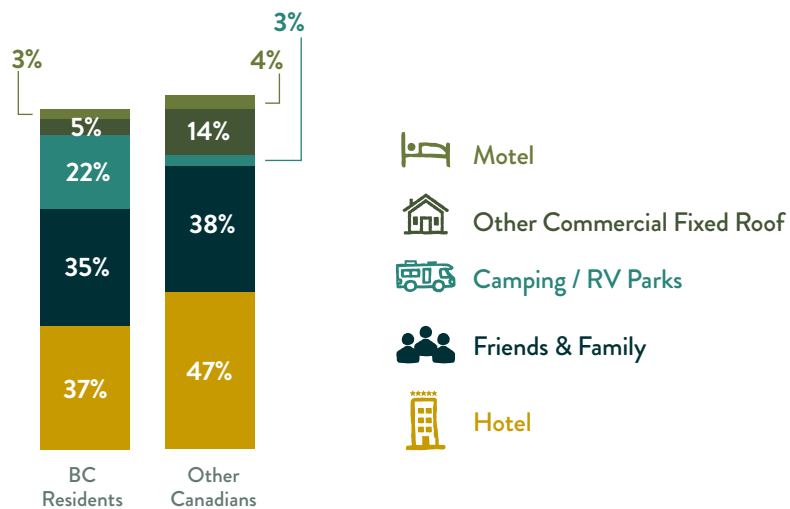
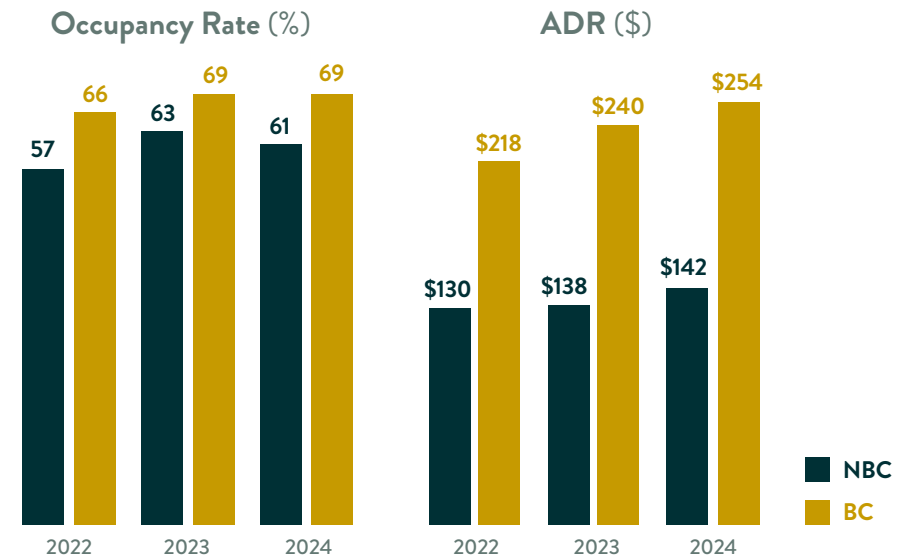


Accommodation

Occupancy for the NBC region peaks in May at 75%, compared to 74% for BC. December is the lowest month at 41%, compared to 56% for BC.²⁷



NBC's occupancy rate increased from 57% in 2022 to 63% in 2023, then stayed consistent in 2024. Average Daily Rate (ADR) shows steady growth from \$130 in 2022 to \$142 in 2024.²⁸



In NBC, hotels are the top accommodation, especially among other Canadians, with 47% opting for them compared to 37% of BC residents. Friends and family are also a common option for both groups, while BC residents show a higher preference for camping / RV parks (22%) compared to only 3% of other Canadians.²⁹

²⁷CoStar Data Tabulation (2022-2024), Destination BC

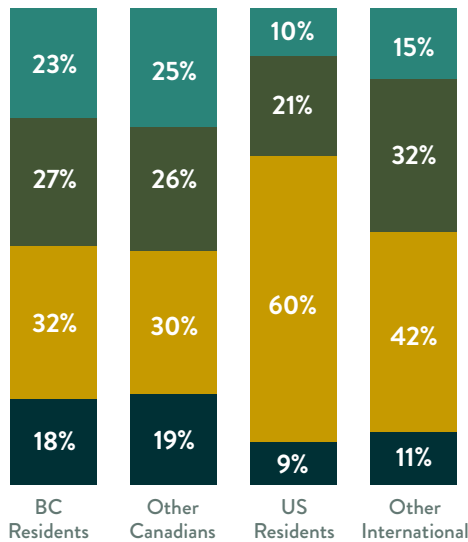
²⁸CoStar Data Tabulation (2022-2024), Destination BC

²⁹Statistics Canada—National Travel Survey 2022

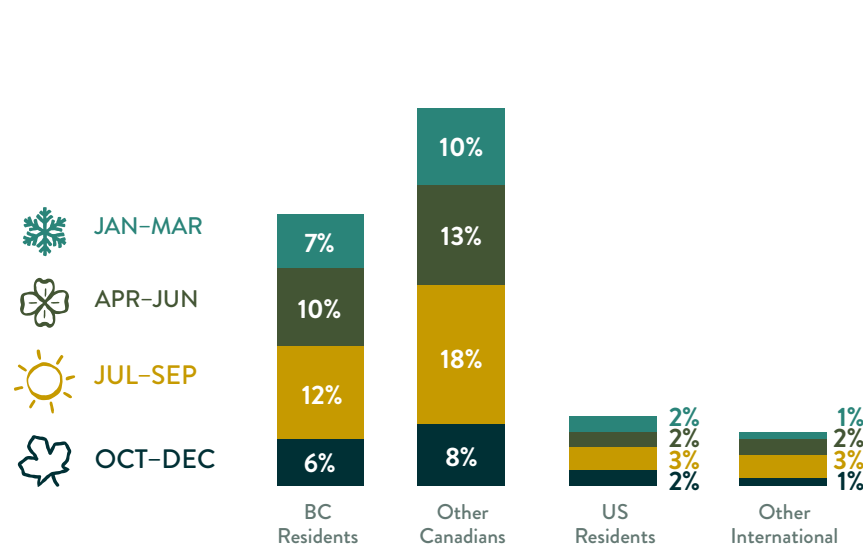
Seasonality

Tourism in the NBC region is less characterized by seasonal variations than other regions. The majority of international travellers visit during July to September, though these represent a smaller representation of travellers. Domestic travellers are much more likely to visit in spring and winter, though less likely to visit in the fall.³⁰

Season of Travel 2023



Provincial Seasonality 2023



Tourism activity in BC peaks during the summer months of July to September with 36% of total visitor nights (18% from other Canadians, 12% from BC residents, 3% each from US and other international travellers), while maintaining consistent visitor nights from domestic markets throughout other seasons.³¹

Trip Characteristics by Origin

Travellers to NBC have diverse origins, with the highest average total trip length compared to other regions. The average length of stay varies, with international travellers typically staying longer than domestic travellers.

Total Average Trip Length³²

3.9 Nights



BC's Total Average Trip Length is 3.6 Nights

Average Nights per Trip

	NBC	Provincial Average
BC Residents	3.4	2.9
Other Canadians	4.5	4.0
US Residents	2.3	3.7
Other International	6.2	11.6

³⁰Enviroics Analytics Data Tabulation (2022 to 2023), Destination BC

³¹Enviroics Analytics Data Tabulation (2022 to 2023), Destination BC

³²Enviroics Analytics Data Tabulation (2022 to 2023), Destination BC

Top Trip Activities

The most popular activities for travellers in NBC include visiting friends or family, shopping, and dining out. For BC residents, sightseeing and downhill skiing or snowboarding are popular activities, while other Canadians frequently attend sports events as spectators and play individual or team sports.³³

While this information includes both leisure and business travel by Canadian residents, the top trip activities reported tend to reflect leisure purposes.

BC Residents

	Visiting friends or family
	Dine out / go to restaurant, bar, or club
	Shopping
	Sightseeing
	Downhill skiing or snowboarding

Other Canadians

	Visiting friends or family
	Dine out / go to restaurant, bar, or club
	Sports event as a spectator
	Play individual or team sports
	Shopping

Spending

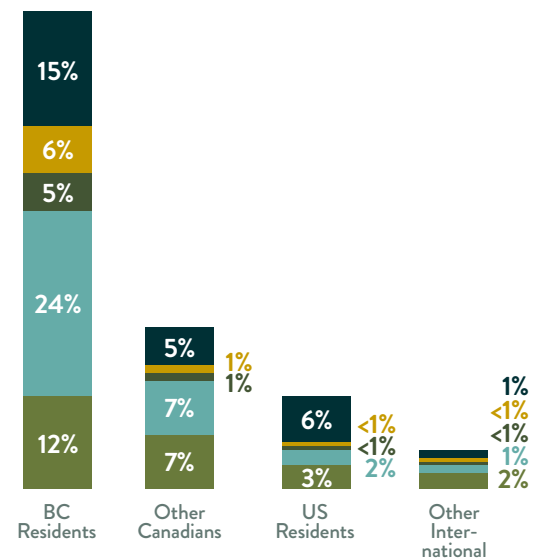
Spending in the Northern BC region varies across categories and traveller origins. Food and beverage accounts for the largest share of tourism spending at 34%, followed closely by transportation at 27%, and accommodation at 24%. Retail represents 8% of expenditures, while recreation and entertainment contributes 7%.

Spending by Category 2024³⁴

	Food & Beverage	34%
	Transportation	27%
	Accommodation	24%
	Retail	8%
	Recreation & Entertainment	7%

When looking at tourism spending by market, BC residents are the primary contributors in the NBC region. They lead in food and beverage spending at 24% and transportation at 15%. Other Canadians make notable contributions in food and beverage (7%) and accommodation (7%). US residents show significant spending in transportation (6%).

Spending by Market 2024³⁵



³³Statistics Canada, National Travel Survey 2022

³⁴Destination Canada—2024 Canadian Tourism Data Collective, Lodging Aligned Spend Reporting (LASR)

³⁵Destination Canada—2024 Canadian Tourism Data Collective, Lodging Aligned Spend Reporting (LASR)

Regional Comparisons

Travel Characteristics by Region ^{36*}	% Change 23 vs 22	Regional Share of Total (2023)
	NIGHTS	NIGHTS
All travellers in BC	2%	—
Cariboo Chilcotin Coast	-5%	2%
Kootenay Rockies	-3%	10%
Northern BC	7%	9%
Thompson Okanagan	-10%	19%
Vancouver, Coast & Mountains	8%	42%
Vancouver Island	<1%	18%

*Please note the trips of all regions will not equal the provincial total as travellers can visit multiple regions on one trip.



FORT NELSON

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³⁶EnviroNics Analytics Data Tabulation (2022 to 2023), Destination BC