

MAR 2025

## REGION OVERVIEW

In 2022, travellers in the Vancouver Island tourism region were hosted by 2,700 tourism businesses and 26,300 tourism employees.<sup>1</sup> Collectively, the tourism industry generated \$3.2 billion of gross spending in the region, accounting for approximately 18% of BC's total overnight spending.<sup>2,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>BC Stats

<sup>2</sup>Destination BC Estimates, 2022—Gross Spending less Consumer Taxes

<sup>3</sup>Destination BC



VICTORIA

Destination British Columbia acknowledges with gratitude the x̄w̄m̄əθk̄w̄əȳəm (Musqueam Indian Band), S̄k̄w̄x̄w̄ú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), and sə̄l̄ilw̄ətāł (Tsleil-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 Vancouver Island (VI) tourism region has 16.6% of the population of BC, about a million residents.<sup>4</sup> Popular destinations in the region include Victoria, Nanaimo, Parksville / Qualicum Beach, Tofino, and Ucluelet, and the numerous surrounding islands. Many travellers enjoy outdoor activities and adventure experiences as well as festivals, events, and conferences. The region is known for its beautiful and varied parks and coastlines.

### Regional Population 2024<sup>5</sup>



947,200

Population as % of BC 16.6%

Tourism Industry Snapshot	2023
Businesses (2022) <sup>6</sup>	2,700
% of Total Provincial Tourism Businesses <sup>7</sup>	15.9%
Indigenous Businesses Listed with ITBC (2024) <sup>8</sup>	114
HelloBC Listings with Accessibility Features <sup>9</sup>	16%
Employment (2022) <sup>10</sup>	26,300
Regional GDP (2022) <sup>11</sup>	\$1.5 billion
Regional Tourism Revenue (2022) <sup>12</sup>	\$3.2 billion
Room revenue (000s) <sup>13</sup>	\$776,500
Visitor Centre parties <sup>14</sup>	127,200
Resort Municipality Initiative Communities <sup>15</sup>	Tofino, Ucluelet

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

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

<sup>6</sup>BC Stats / Pacific Analytics

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

<sup>8</sup>Indigenous Tourism BC Stakeholders

<sup>9</sup>Destination BC, as a percentage of total HelloBC listings by region. Actual number of HelloBC listings with accessibility features: 174 (September 2024).

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

<sup>11</sup>BC Stats / Pacific Analytics

<sup>12</sup>BC 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.

<sup>13</sup>Calculated 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.

<sup>14</sup>Destination BC

<sup>15</sup>The Resort Municipality Initiative (RMI) program is intended to support small, tourism-based municipalities to enhance their tourism infrastructure, visitor experiences, and sustainable tourism practices and products. Funding is provided by the Province of British Columbia.

Government investment in the tourism sector in BC was \$1.2 billion in 2022, and private investment was \$1.7 billion.<sup>16</sup> 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 announcement date; the VI tourism region was estimated to receive \$38,101,200 in funding for 78 projects in 2022 and \$354,018,500 in funding for 75 projects in 2023. This includes multi-year funding projects into the future.<sup>17</sup>

### Destination Development Projects

	2022	2023 <sup>18</sup>
Number of Projects	78	75
Total Investment	\$38,101,200	\$354,018,500

The VI region is well-connected to the mainland and abroad. Major airports include Victoria (YYJ), Comox (YQQ), Nanaimo (YCD), and Campbell River (YBL). BC Ferries, operating three primary routes within the region, transported over 11 million passengers in 2023. Additionally, almost a million cruise passengers passed through Victoria in 2024, highlighting the region's role as a major transportation hub.

<sup>16</sup>Destination BC

<sup>17</sup>Destination BC. Note: these figures are underestimated as this list is not complete or exhaustive; there are likely additional projects.

<sup>18</sup>Includes the announcement from BC and federal governments in the redevelopment of the Belleville terminal in Victoria, an investment totalling \$304 million.



## Transportation Passengers 2024



VICTORIA  
1,872,000<sup>19</sup>



COMOX  
402,800<sup>19</sup>



NANAIMO  
359,500<sup>19</sup>



CAMPBELL RIVER  
26,900<sup>19</sup>



FERRY (Routes 1 / 2 / 30)  
11,624,100<sup>20</sup>



CRUISE: VICTORIA  
970,000<sup>21</sup>

COMOX

## Employment



26.3K

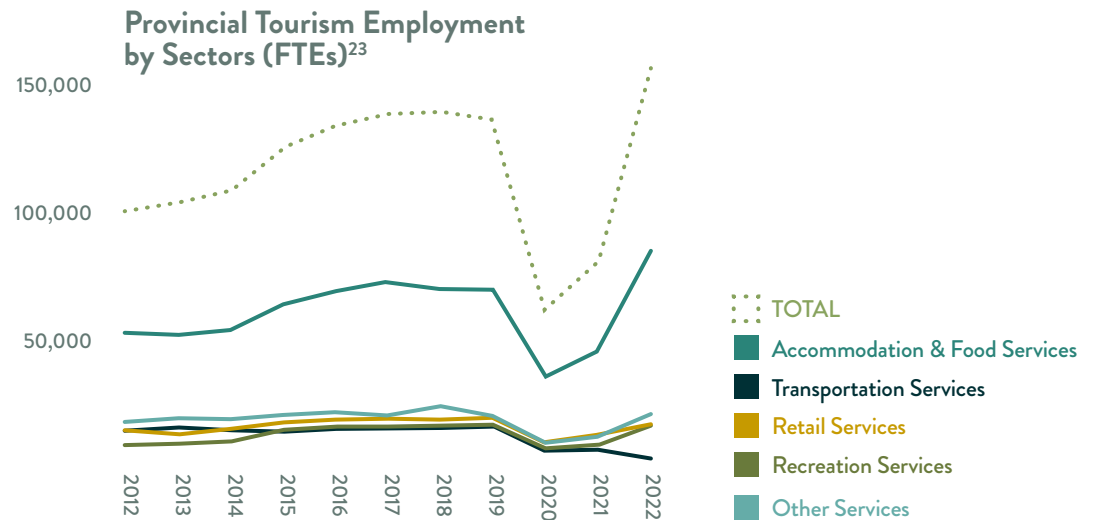
people were employed in tourism-  
related businesses in the VI region  
in 2022 representing 17% of  
BC's total tourism employment.



\$886M

The VI tourism industry  
paid in wages  
and salaries.<sup>22</sup>

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.



<sup>19</sup>Individual Airports

<sup>20</sup>BC Ferries

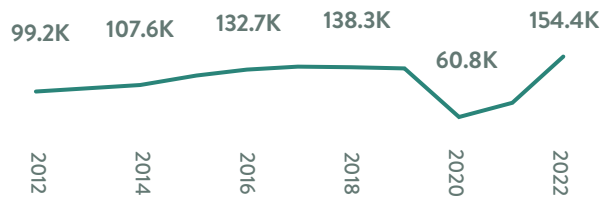
<sup>21</sup>Greater Victoria Harbour Authority

<sup>22</sup>BC Stats

<sup>23</sup>BC Stats. Note: numbers may not add up to the stated total as numbers have been rounded.



### Provincial Tourism Employment by Year (FTEs)



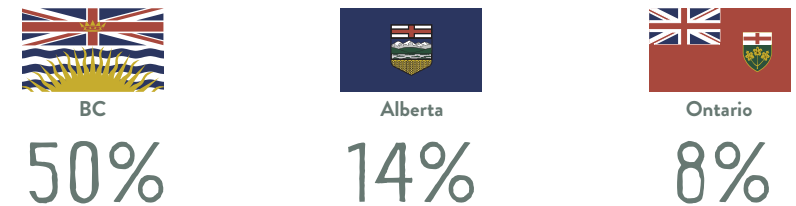
The hospitality workforce in BC—including those working in tourism—demonstrates significant diversity, with 40% of workers identifying as visible minorities and 31% as immigrants, both higher than provincial population averages of 35% and 31% respectively. The sector employs workers across accommodation, 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.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup>go2HR  
<sup>25</sup>Environics Analytics Data Tabulation (2022 to 2023), Destination BC

## Top Regional Markets

Most travellers to VI in 2023 were from BC. BC residents contributed to 50% of the total nights spent in the region. The top international markets were Washington, California, and the United Kingdom.<sup>25</sup>

### Visitor Nights\* – Canada



### Visitor Nights\* – US



### Visitor Nights\* – International



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

# How do Residents View Tourism?

VI residents value tourism's impact on their communities, especially the economic benefits: 81% 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.<sup>26</sup>

## Resident Perceptions of Tourism 2024

85%

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

84%

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

83%

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

81%

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

75%

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

73%

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

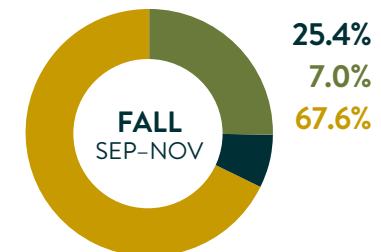
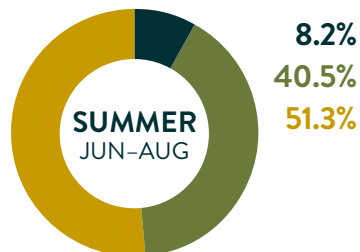
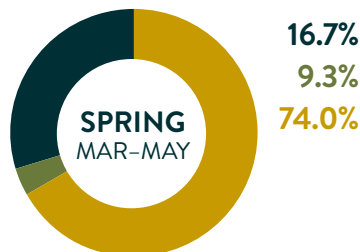
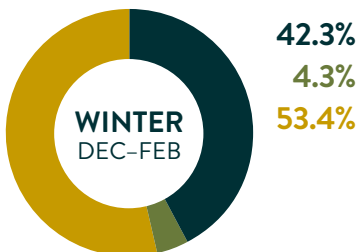
71%

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

“

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

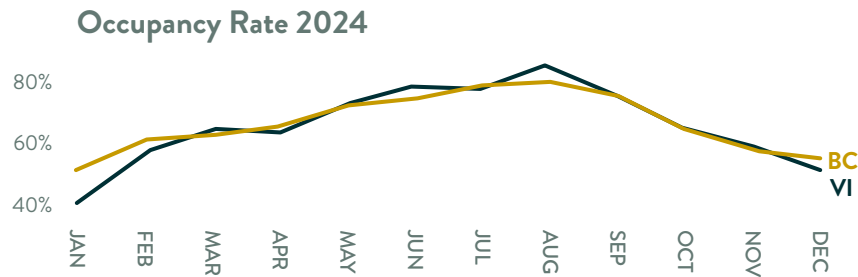
■ TOO FEW ■ TOO MANY ■ JUST RIGHT



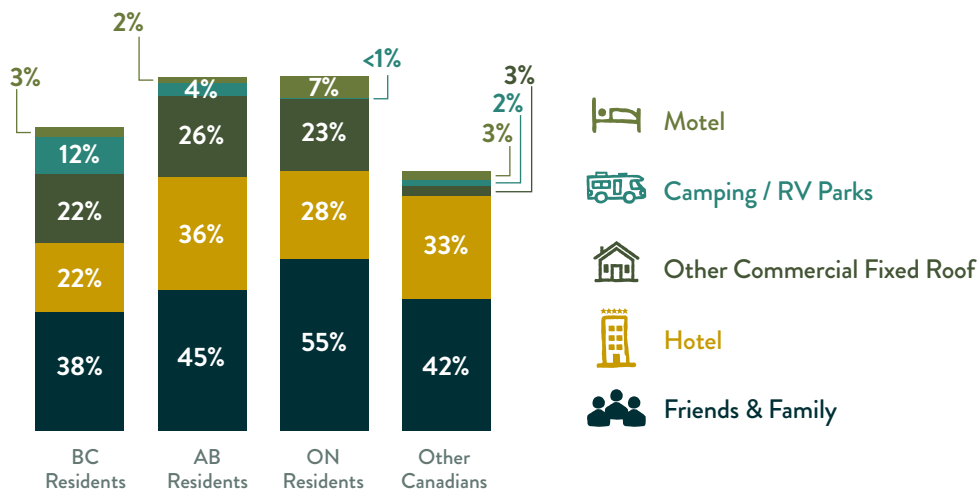
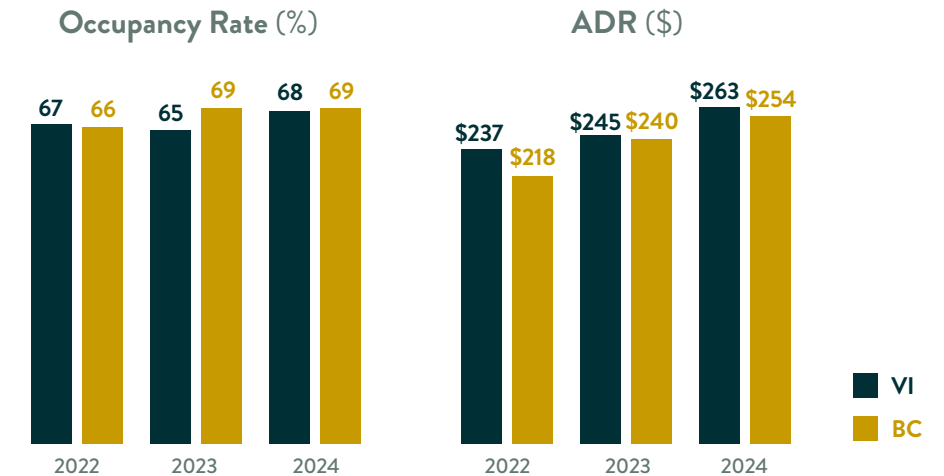
<sup>26</sup>Destination BC

# Accommodation

Occupancy for the VI region peaks in August at 88%, compared to 82% for BC. January is the lowest month at 41%, compared to 52% for BC.<sup>27</sup>



VI's occupancy rate decreased from 67% in 2022 to 65% in 2023, then increased to 68% in 2024. Average Daily Rate (ADR) shows steady growth from \$237 in 2022 to \$263 in 2024.<sup>28</sup>



VI travellers primarily stay with friends and family; residents of ON (55%) and AB (45%) as well as other Canadians (42%) also choose this option. Hotels are the second most popular accommodation type among other Canadians, with a higher preference (33%) compared to BC residents (22%).<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup>CoStar Data Tabulation (2022-2024), Destination BC

<sup>28</sup>CoStar Data Tabulation (2022-2024), Destination BC

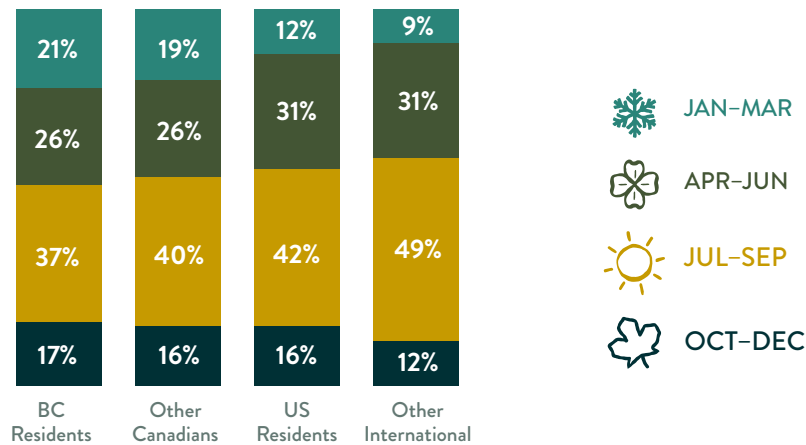
<sup>29</sup>Statistics Canada—National Travel Survey 2022

# Seasonality

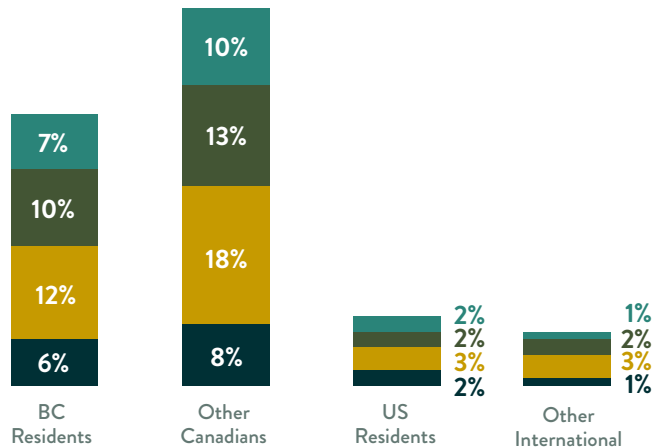
Travel trends in the VI region follow seasonal variations. The majority of overnight travellers visit during the warmer months of July to September. The shoulder season from April to June accounts for a considerable portion of visitor nights as well.<sup>30</sup>

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.<sup>31</sup>

## Season of Travel 2023



## Provincial Seasonality 2023



## Trip Characteristics by Origin

Travellers to VI have diverse origins. The average length of stay varies, with non-US international travellers staying over seven nights. In 2023, the average trip length was 3.4 nights.<sup>32</sup>

### Total Average Trip Length

# 3.4 Nights



BC's Total Average Trip Length is 3.6 Nights

### Average Nights per Trip

	VI	Provincial Average
BC Residents	2.9	2.9
Other Canadians	4.3	4.0
US Residents	3.2	3.7
Other International	7.4	11.6

<sup>30</sup>Environics Analytics Data Tabulation (2022 to 2023), Destination BC

<sup>31</sup>Environics Analytics Data Tabulation (2022 to 2023), Destination BC

<sup>32</sup>Environics Analytics Data Tabulation (2022 to 2023), Destination BC



# Top Trip Activities

The most popular activities for travellers in VI are the same for both BC residents and other Canadians, including visiting friends or family, dining / going out, and sightseeing.<sup>33</sup>

## BC Residents

	Visiting friends or family
	Dine out / go to restaurant, bar, or club
	Sightseeing
	Shopping
	National, provincial, or nature park

## Other Canadians

	Visiting friends or family
	Dine out / go to restaurant, bar, or club
	Sightseeing
	Shopping
	National, provincial, or nature park

# Spending

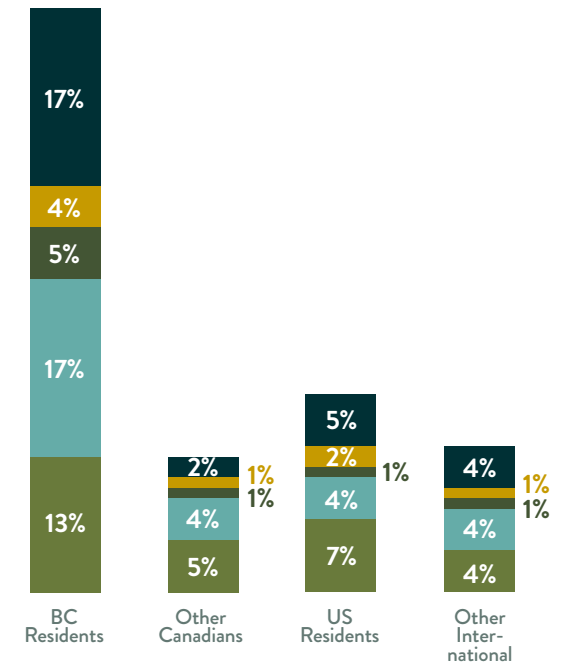
Spending in the VI region varies across categories and traveller origins. Accommodation accounts for the largest share of tourism spending at 29%, followed closely by food and beverage at 28%. Transportation represents 27% of expenditures, while followed by recreation & entertainment at 9% and retail at 8%.

## Spending by Category 2024<sup>34</sup>

	Accommodation	29%
	Food & Beverage	28%
	Transportation	27%
	Recreation & Entertainment	9%
	Retail	8%

When looking at tourism spending by market, BC residents are the primary contributors in the region. They lead in transportation spending at 17% and food and beverage at 17%. US residents make a significant contribution in accommodation (7%). Overall, other Canadians have similar spending percentages compared to international travellers.

## Spending by Market 2024<sup>35</sup>



<sup>33</sup>Statistics Canada, National Travel Survey 2022

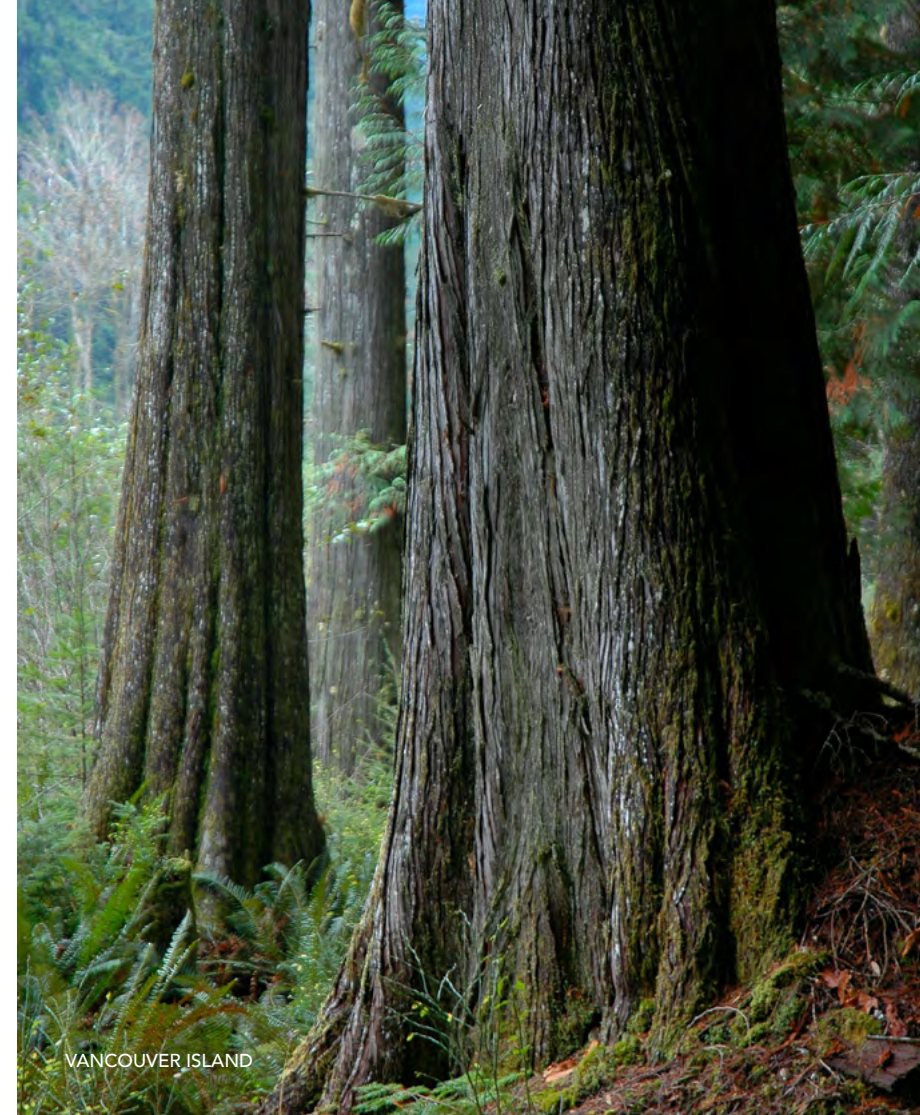
<sup>34</sup>Destination Canada—2024 Canadian Tourism Data Collective, Lodging Aligned Spend Reporting (LASR)

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

# Regional Comparisons

Travel Characteristics by Region <sup>36*</sup>	% 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.



VANCOUVER ISLAND

## CONTACT

Destination BC Research & Insights



[TourismResearch@DestinationBC.ca](mailto:TourismResearch@DestinationBC.ca)



[destinationbc.ca/research-insights](https://destinationbc.ca/research-insights)

<sup>36</sup>EnviroNics Analytics Data Tabulation (2022 to 2023), Destination BC