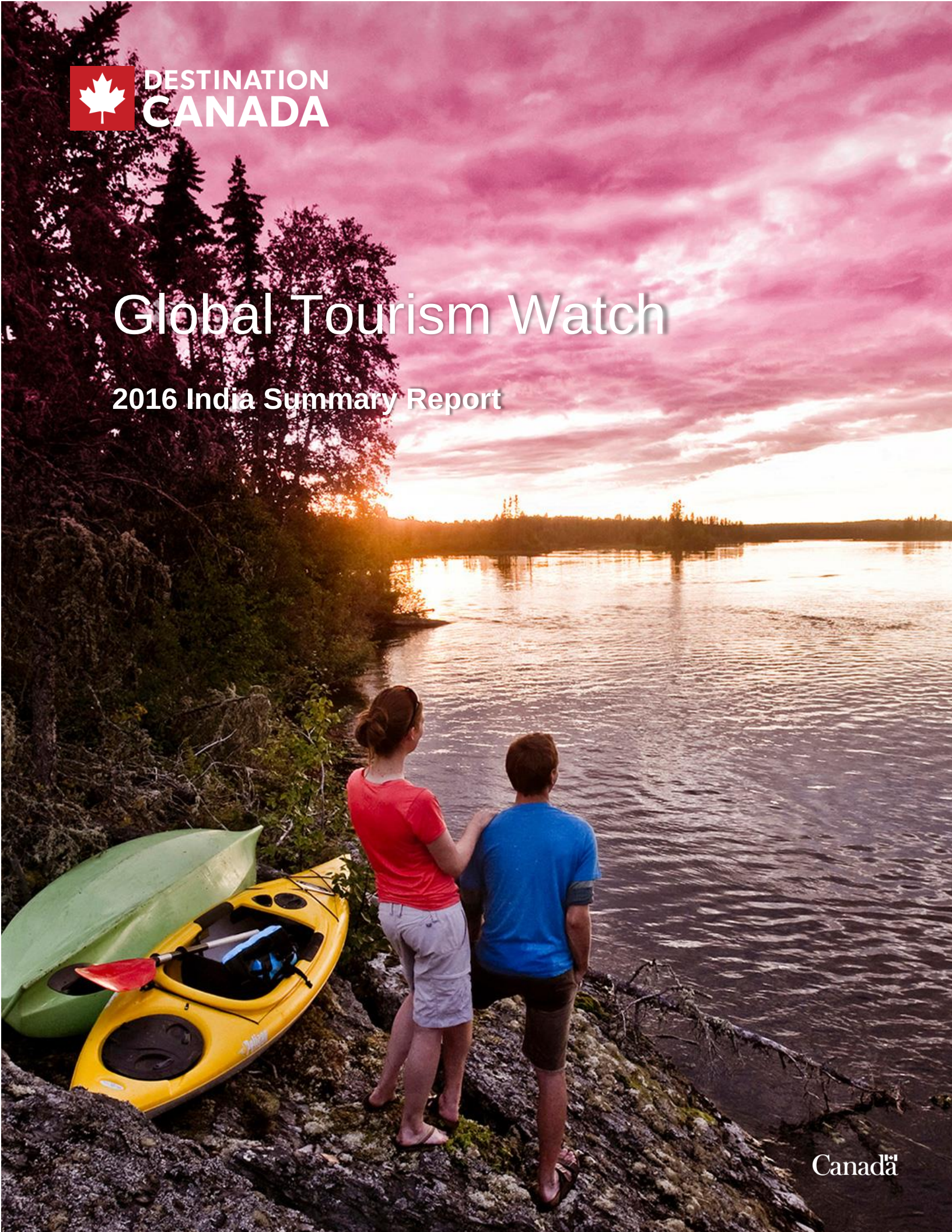

DESTINATION
CANADA
Global Tourism Watch
2016 India Summary Report
Canada

Table of Contents

1. Introduction 1
    - Methodology 1
    - Background 2

2. Market Potential 3

3. Competitive Environment – Key Performance Indicators Summary 5
    - Consideration 6
    - Knowledge 6
    - Visitation 7

4. Path-to-Purchase 7
    - Destinations 11

5. Vacation Activities 12

6. Barriers 14

7. Recent Trip Profile 16
    - Trip Purpose 16
    - Motivators 16
    - Travel Party 17
    - Booking 17
    - Type of Accommodation 18

8. Marketing Tactics 18
    - Sources Used to Look for Information 18
    - Resources, Devices Used to Plan Recent Trip 19

9. Destination Canada's Indian Target 19

1. Introduction

Destination Canada began conducting the annual Global Tourism Watch (GTW) program in 2007. The primary purpose of this research program is to provide consumer-based intelligence in 12 core markets around the world: Australia, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the domestic Canadian market.

The overall objectives of the GTW study are to:

- Monitor awareness, travel intentions, and other key market indicators for Canada and the regions;
- Assess perceptions of Canada and track brand performance against competitors over time;
- Identify the general experiences sought by travellers and identify growth opportunities;
- Identify motivators and barriers for travel to Canada; and,
- Determine the influence of various information sources on destination selection.

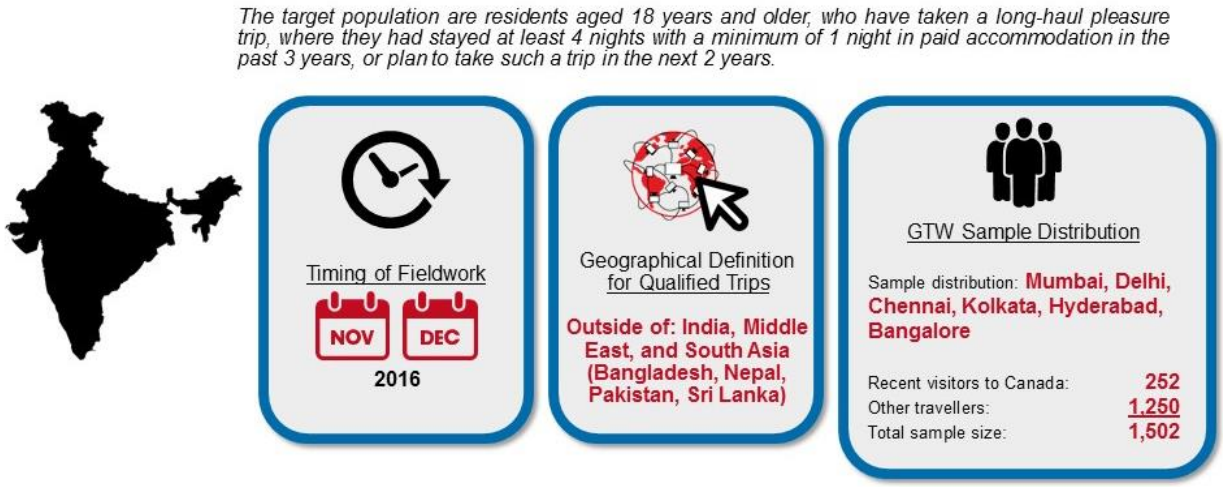
The GTW permits direct comparison of Canada to competing destinations in each market. Destination Canada has designated the following destinations as competitors in the Indian market: the US, France, the UK, Switzerland, Australia, China, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Japan, Russia, and South Africa.

Methodology

Data was collected via an online survey and has been weighted to represent the India long-haul travel population within the mid and upper SEC classifications (ABC). The target population in India was residents aged 18 years and older, who have taken a long-haul pleasure trip outside of India, Middle East, and South Asia where they had stayed at least 4 nights with a minimum of 1 night in paid accommodation in the past 3 years, or plan to take such a trip in the next 2 years. The regions of Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Mumbai were included in this survey and data has been weighted to represent the long-haul travel population within these regions.

Data was gathered from 1,502 respondents in India, including 252 recent visitors to Canada, in December 2016. In the past, data has been gathered earlier in the year (April through July), which is prime planning season for summer travel to destinations such as Canada. It is believed the timing of data collection impacts results and the later field window this wave may be responsible for some shifts in Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Figure 1.1: Study Overview: India Market



Background

India is the 7th largest economy in the world, according to the IMF GDP Nominal ranking, with 3% share of global GDP *(International Monetary Fund, October 2016)*.

India's GDP growth soared by 7.6% in 2016, and the economy is projected to keep growing at the same pace in 2017. The country has seen strong growth in general since the 2008 economic crisis, when it recorded 3.9% growth. Robust economic growth has been driven mainly by structural reforms and low commodity prices, as well as deregulation measures and improvements in the ease of doing business, which have spurred foreign investment. In addition, as part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiatives to combat corruption, the black market, and tax evasion, in November 2016 the Indian government announced that high-denomination currency notes (INR 500 and 1000) would no longer be legal tender. Although this "demonetisation" caused temporary cash shortages, affecting private consumption, the long-term effects for India's economy will be positive *(Forbes, December 2016)*.

The Indian population stands at 1.3 billion, and has grown by 8% over the last five years. With this strong growth rate, the country is projected to overtake China as the most populous country in the world within the next decade. Furthermore, India is set to become the world's youngest country by 2020 with an average age of 29, which means over 60% of its population will be in the working age group *(India Times, March 2017).*

The unemployment rate dropped to 3.4% in the last quarter of 2016 and is expected to remain flat over 2017 and 2018, which is a sign of stagnation in job creation as economic growth fails to meet the employment needs of a rapidly growing population *(United Nations International Labour Organisation, 2016)*.

Inflation was 5.5% in 2016, increasing from 4.9% in 2015. It is expected to decrease marginally to 5.2% in 2017. Thanks to a prudent monetary policy, inflation in India has been decreasing since 2008, when it hit levels near 11% (*International Monetary Fund, October 2016*).

Consumer confidence is high in India, in fact, quarter four of 2016 registered an all-time high index of 136, increasing from 128 in quarter two of the same year (*Trading Economics, 2017*).

India's outbound tourism market, which ranks 13th in the world, is worth US$22.4 billion and increased by 6.7% over 2015 (*United Nations World Tourism Organization, April 2017*). There were nearly 22 million departures in 2016, an increase of 7.3% over 2015 (*Ministry of Tourism, 2017).* India has become one of the fastest growing outbound tourism markets globally, owing to strong economic growth, rising incomes, and an expanding middle class, as well as the availability of low-cost airfares and diverse travel options. The UNWTO anticipates that the current number of Indian outbound travelers will more than double to reach 50 million by 2020 *(Forbes, March 2017)*.

2. Market Potential

GTW data is used to estimate the size of the potential market for Canada. The table below provides an estimate of the size of the potential Indian market for Canada in two ways – the macro target market and the immediate potential market.

The long-haul travel market size is derived from an omnibus study of the Indian adult population. The proportion of GTW respondents who are in the dream to purchase stages for Canada (81%) is used to calculate a target market estimate of 3.9 million.

The immediate potential is a more conservative estimate based on GTW respondents who say they are either definitely or very likely to visit Canada in the next two years. This translates into a market of 2.83 million travellers with more immediate potential for conversion.

Among Destination Canada's eleven international markets, India is ranked 7th in immediate potential market size (behind the US, China, South Korea, France, the UK and Germany). However, actual visitation from India was ranked 10th among Destination Canada's international markets in 2016[1]. This means that Canada is not doing as well as it could at converting potential travellers to actual visitors in the Indian market.

For context, Canada attracted 216,000 visitors from India in 2016, an increase of 13% over 2015 and the highest number of Indian visitors ever[2]. The 216,000 arrivals represent 8% of the immediate potential market.

[1] *Destination Canada, Tourism Snapshot, December 2016.*

[2] *Destination Canada, Tourism Snapshot, December 2016.*

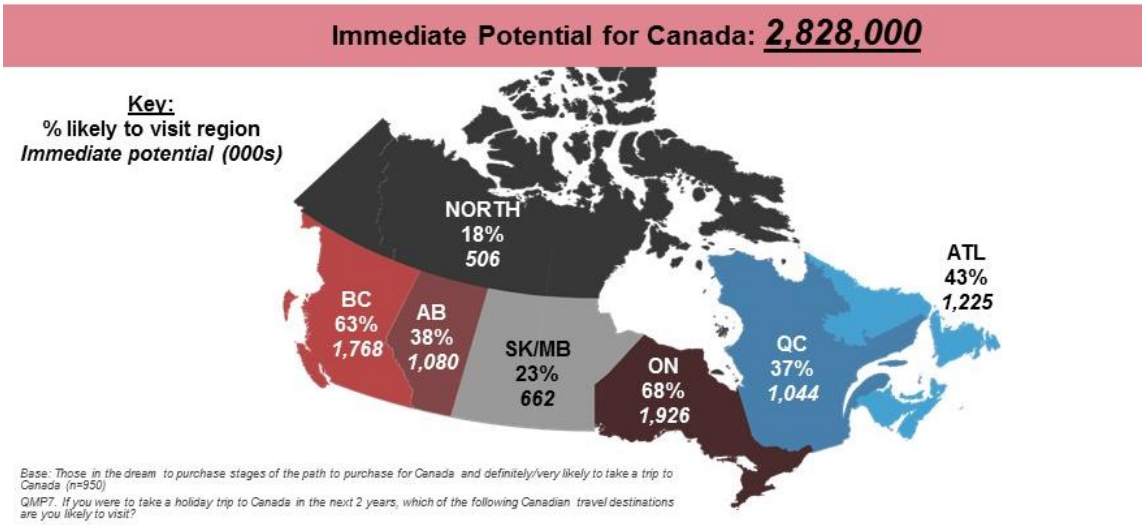
Figure 2.1: Size of Potential Market to Canada (Next 2 Years)

Measure	Size of Potential Market to Canada
Long-haul pleasure travel market	**4.79 million**
Target market for Canada (dream to purchase stage)	**81%**
Size of the target market	**3.90 million**
Immediate potential for Canada (definitely/very likely to visit in next 2 years)	**73%**
Immediate potential	**2.83 million**

Base: Target market for Canada = long-haul pleasure travellers (past 3 years or next 2 years) (n=1,502); Immediate potential for Canada = dream to purchase stages for P2P for Canada (n=1,238)
QMP1. Which of the following best describes your current situation when thinking about each of the following destinations for a holiday trip?
QMP6. Realistically, how likely are you to take a holiday trip to Canada in the next 2 years?

Also of interest is the demonstrated interest in Canada's regions among the Immediate Potential market (2.83 million). Ontario holds the greatest appeal (68% or just under 2 million potential visitors), followed closely by BC (63% or 1.8 million potential visitors), with Quebec and Alberta each appealing to about 40% of potential visitors (roughly 1 million potential visitors each).

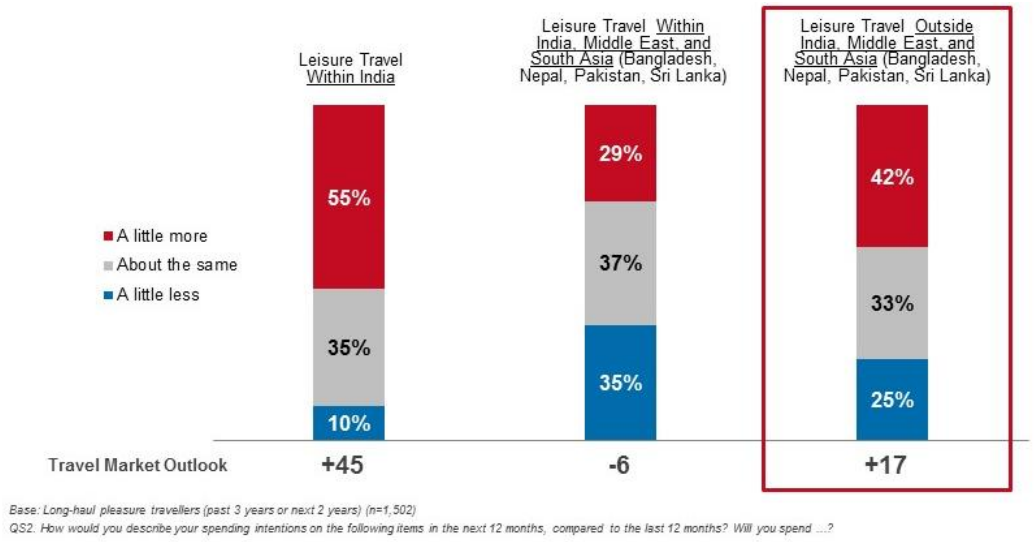
Figure 2.2: Potential Market Size for the Regions



Base: Those in the dream to purchase stages of the path to purchase for Canada and definitely/very likely to take a trip to Canada (n=950)
QMP7. If you were to take a holiday trip to Canada in the next 2 years, which of the following Canadian travel destinations are you likely to visit?

One quarter of Indian travellers say they will spend less on long-haul travel, while 42% say they will spend more than last year, resulting in a favourable long-haul outlook of +17. While Indian travellers are more likely to consider long-haul travel compared to travel within the Indian sub-continent or to the Middle East (unfavourable outlook of -6), they appear even more likely to travel within India (favourable outlook of +45).

Figure 2.3: Spending Intentions (in the Next 12 Months)



Base: Long-haul pleasure travellers (past 3 years or next 2 years) (n=1,502)
QS2. How would you describe your spending intentions on the following items in the next 12 months, compared to the last 12 months? Will you spend ...?

3. Competitive Environment – Key Performance Indicators Summary

The outlook for Canada in India is mixed. Out of the 12 competitive destinations that respondents were asked to evaluate, Canada is tied for 3rd with Australia on aided consideration after the US and Switzerland, but is not among the top ranked for any other metric. Still, the size of the potential market and growth in visitor traffic to Canada in recent years warrants continued efforts to cater to the needs of this market.

The GTW tracks the following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Canada: unaided and aided destination consideration, aided destination knowledge, and past visitation. Canada's performance is tracked against key competitors for the long-haul travel market. The competitive set was updated for 2016 to reflect actual travel patterns from each market. The countries included represent 95% of the outbound travel volume to long-haul destinations which are considered direct competitors to Canada (e.g., non-beach destinations). For India, these destinations are the US, France, the UK, Switzerland, Australia, China, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Japan, Russia, and South Africa. Japan, China, Sweden, Russia, South Africa, and Germany were not in the competitive set previously. It is also important to note that 2016 data was collected in December versus earlier in the year (April to July) in previous years. Seasonality may have impacted KPI results this year, although it is impossible to know how much the results might have been affected.

Consideration

Unaided consideration represents top-of-mind presence of destinations in the consumer mindset and requires travellers to think of destinations without being prompted. Unaided consideration indicates that a strong impression has rooted in the mind of a traveller for a destination. From a marketing perspective, travellers who have Canada on their unaided consideration list may be easier to attract since they are actively thinking of Canada as a travel destination. On an unaided basis, 5% of Indian travellers mentioned Canada as a destination under serious consideration in the next 2 years, trailing the US (17%), Australia (11%), and the UK (11%), but in line with France (6%), and Switzerland (5%). Those who have visited Canada recently were more likely to mention Canada (11%) on an unaided basis. Very few specific places in Canada were mentioned by Indian long-haul travellers, with the majority just saying Canada, suggesting knowledge of specific Canadian destinations is low.

It is important to note that even though respondents are asked to list out long-haul destinations they would consider visiting on an unaided basis, many respondents still mention some short-haul destinations. This could speak to the fact that many Indian travellers are short-haul focused when thinking of travel destinations, and could represent a challenge for convincing Indian travellers to go further abroad.

Aided consideration represents the proportion of travellers who say they would seriously consider visiting a destination, but only after they are prompted with a list of competitive destinations. Travellers who have aided consideration for Canada may not be thinking of Canada top-of-mind, but they are considering a visit. Continued prompts and cues through marketing efforts could help move these considerers down the Path to Purchase. Canada fares much better on an aided basis with 36% saying they are seriously considering Canada for a leisure trip in the next 2 years, which ties Canada for 3rd spot with Australia, behind the US (45%) and Switzerland (40%), but just ahead of the UK (35%). Of note, younger travellers aged 18-34 express stronger than average interest in France, Germany, and Italy, while Canada does see not any significant differences among age groups. Both recent visitors to Canada and those considering a visit rank Canada first overall in aided consideration among all destinations in the competitive set. Knowing that past visitors are more interested in returning, it is important to attract new visitors.

Knowledge

The aided destination knowledge KPI (previously called aided awareness, but changed for clarity purposes) measures knowledge of travel opportunities in each destination. Forty-six percent of all Indian long-haul travellers rate their knowledge of travel opportunities in Canada as either excellent or very good. Among those considering Canada, destination knowledge for Canada stands at 60%, which ties Canada in fifth spot with France, after the US (70%), Switzerland (70%), the UK (68%) and Australia (64%). Efforts to boost knowledge of Canadian travel opportunities could help to move potential visitors along the path to purchase.

Visitation

In terms of past visitation, 53% of India long-haul travellers indicate that they have visited Canada on a leisure trip at some point in their lifetime. Travellers aged 18-54 are more likely to have visited Canada (18-34 years - 64%, 35-54 years - 53%) than older travellers aged 55+ (30%). Men (56%) and those living in households with children (63%) are also more likely to have visited Canada in the past. Those considering a trip to Canada are considerably more likely to have visited previously (62%). As past visitors to Canada voice considerably higher interest in returning, messaging designed to encourage a repeat visit is recommended.

Figure 3.1: Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Canada – Summary

Indicator	Definition	All Long-Haul Travellers *(n=1,502)*	Recent Visitors to Canada[1] *(n=252)*	Considering Canada[2] *(n=800)*
Intentions:				
Unaided destination consideration	% who mentioned Canada or a destination in Canada on their consideration list[3]	5%	11%	7%
Competitive positioning on aided destination consideration	Rank on the consideration list among 13 destinations	3	1	1
Destination knowledge:				
Aided awareness of travel opportunities in Canada	% with excellent/very good knowledge of travel opportunities in Canada	46%	77%	57%
Past visitation:				
Past visitation	% who have ever visited Canada for pleasure	53%	98%	62%

[1] Visited Canada in the past 3 years (pleasure trip of 4 or more nights, with at least 1 night in paid accommodations).
[2] Those in the consider to purchase stages of the path to purchase for Canada.
[3] For trips in the next 2 years.

Base: Long-haul pleasure travellers (past 3 years or next 2 years)

QS8. You mentioned that you are likely to take a long-haul holiday trip outside of India, Middle East, and South Asia (Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) in the next 2 years. Which destinations are you seriously considering? (Please list up to 3 destinations.)
QBVCf. You may have already mentioned this before, but which destinations would you seriously consider visiting in the next 2 years?
QMP3. How would you rate your level of knowledge of holiday opportunities in each of the following destinations (asked only for destinations in consideration set)?
QRT14a. Approximately, how many times have you been to Canada?

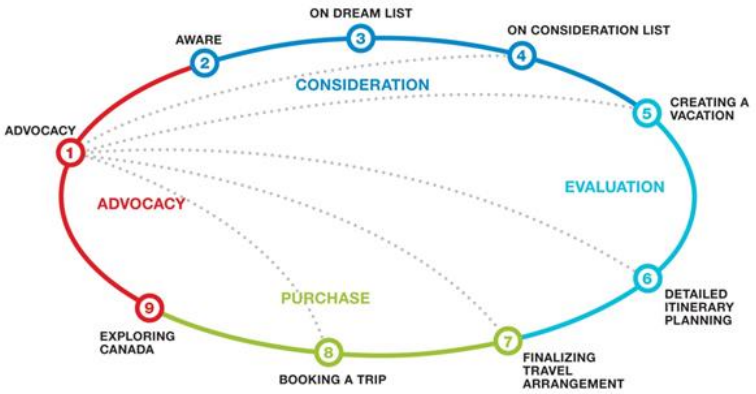
4. Path-to-Purchase

Like any other expensive and discretionary consumer product, there is a purchasing or decision-making cycle associated with long-haul travel: consumers move through progressive stages from not knowing anything about a destination to booking a trip.

Through additional research, Destination Canada has developed a nine stage Path-to-Purchase (P2P) model for long-haul travel, starting with awareness of the opportunity and interest in a destination, through to planning an itinerary, and booking travel and accommodations. The final stage, advocacy, happens during and after the actual visit.

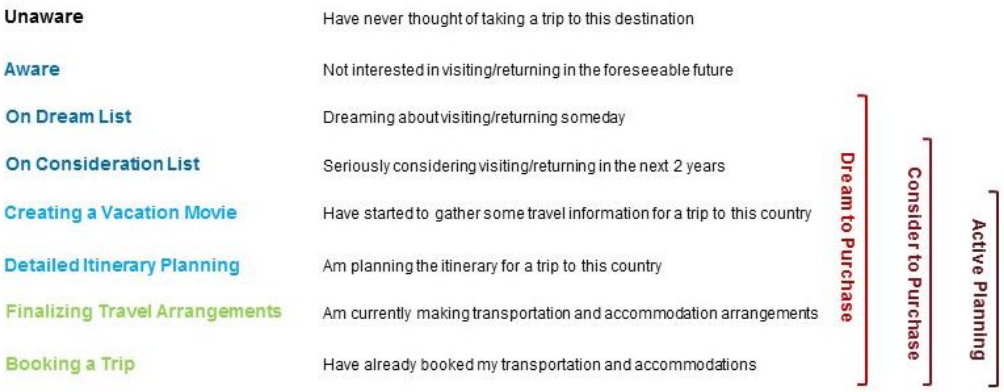
Destination Canada wants to understand where the organization can have the greatest influence in converting those with interest in Canada to actual visitors.

Figure 4.1: DC's Path-to-Purchase Model



In addition to looking at individual stages of the P2P, Destination Canada has identified phases travellers move through in the purchase cycle. Key phases are defined below and are referenced throughout this report.

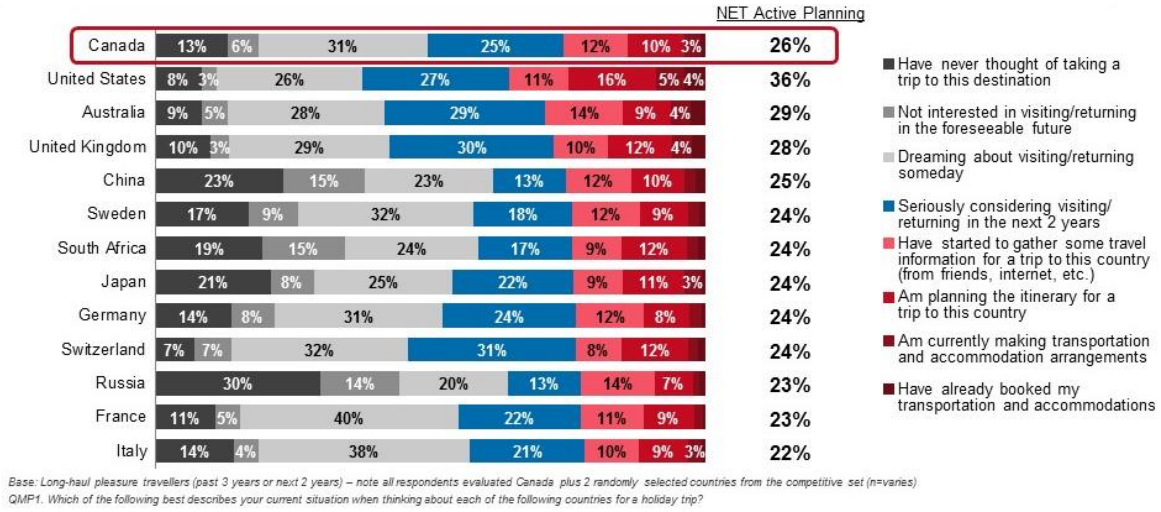
Figure 4.2: DC's Path-to-Purchase Model



In looking at results for India, the dominance of the US is apparent, with 36% of Indian long-haul travellers actively engaged in planning a visit to the country and an additional 27% seriously considering a trip. In contrast, 26% are actively planning a trip to Canada, placing it in 4th spot, behind Australia (29%) and the UK (28%) and only just ahead of all other competitive destinations. Once again, results may be impacted by the timing of data collection in 2016 (respondents may have been thinking of winter trips). For this reason, 2016 results should not be compared with previous years.

An additional 25% of Indian travellers are seriously considering a visit to Canada, but a similar proportion are also considering other countries such as Switzerland (31%), the UK (30%), Australia (29%), the US (27%), and Germany (24%). Travellers aged 35+ are over-represented in the dream phase, while travellers aged 18-34 are more likely to be in the evaluation stage. This suggests that increasing urgency among younger travellers is key to moving them through to actual booking.

Figure 4.3: Stage in the Purchase Cycle by Country



Base: Long-haul pleasure travellers (past 3 years or next 2 years) – note all respondents evaluated Canada plus 2 randomly selected countries from the competitive set (n=varies)
QMP1. Which of the following best describes your current situation when thinking about each of the following countries for a holiday trip?

Getting travellers to move through the purchase cycle to booking a trip is critical. The charts below show Canada's progress converting travellers at crucial steps in the purchase cycle relative to top competitors (determined by past 3-year visitation) and other destinations in the competitive set. For reference, also shown is the average across the entire competitive set. 'Strong' and 'weak' conversion ratios were derived through statistical analysis, specifically if a conversion ratio is greater than one standard deviation from the average, then it is considered 'strong' and if a conversion ratio is lower than one standard deviation from the average, then it is marked as 'weak'.

At the dreaming stage Canada's performance is average, trailing behind the US and the UK, which demonstrate strong performance. As noted earlier, Canada has a disproportionate number of travellers aged 35+ in the dreaming stage.

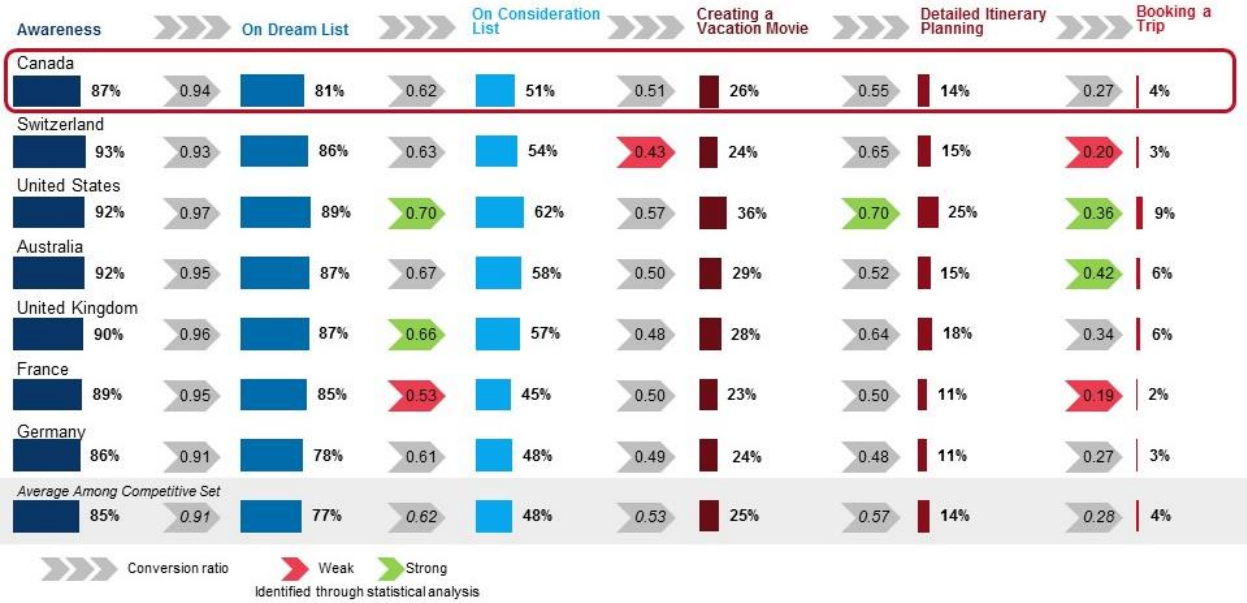
Canada's performance continues to be average at the creating a vacation movie stage (where Switzerland is weak). Since this stage is focussed on information gathering, ensuring prospective visitors can find the information they seek is paramount. The key to helping prospective visitor move further along in the purchase cycle is to provide information which presents a full picture of what a trip to Canada could look like e.g., a focal point to anchor a trip or itinerary suggestions.

At the final stage, booking a trip, Canada has converted 4% of Indian travellers into actual visitors, on par with the average. The US leads all competitive destinations, converting 9% of prospective visitors to actual visitors, followed by Australia and the UK (each with 6%).

For context, in 2016, the US recorded 1.2 million arrivals from India, while the UK saw 415,000 visitors, Australia logged 245,000, and Canada welcomed 216,000.[3]

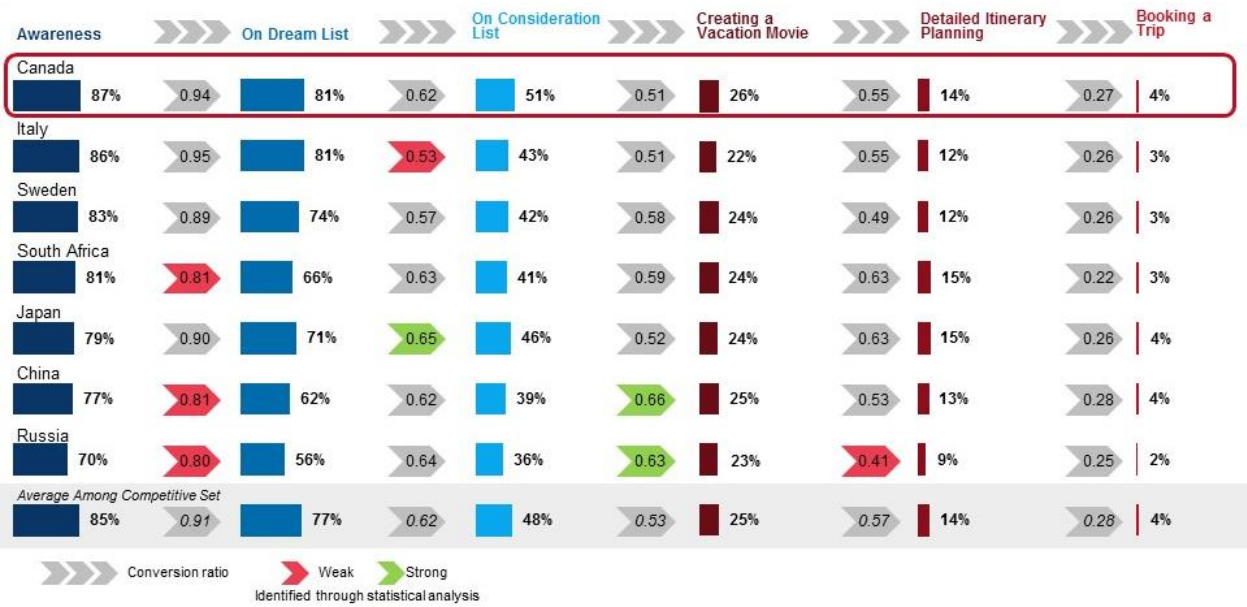
[3] *Destination Canada, US National Travel and Tourism, Australian Bureau of Statistics, and VisitBritain.*

Figure 4.4: Path-to-Purchase Conversion – Top Competitors



Examining purchase cycle results for destinations visited less frequently by Indian travellers is also informative. While Japan, China and Russia have strong performances during early stages, all of these other competitive destinations have very similar conversion proportions to Canada at the final booking stage.

Figure 4.5: Path-to-Purchase Conversion – Rest of Competitors

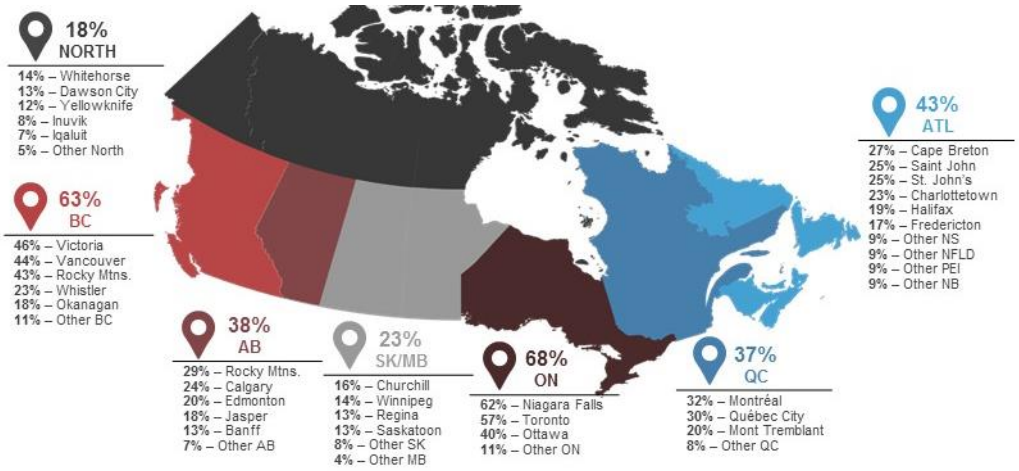


Destinations

Indian travellers in the dream-to-purchase stages and indicating they are definitely/very likely to visit Canada in the next 2 years were asked which parts of the country they would likely visit. Ontario is the most popular province (cited by 68%), with Niagara Falls (62%) and Toronto (57%) as the top destinations. British Columbia (63%) is close behind, with Victoria (46%), Vancouver (44%), and the BC Rocky Mountains (43%) being the major attractions. Atlantic Canada (43%) has higher interest among Indian travellers than the provinces of Alberta (38%) and Quebec (37%). While Atlantic Canada and Alberta trace their popularity to multiple destinations, Montreal (32%) and Quebec City (30%) are the primary draws in the province of Quebec.

There is a clear interest in visiting the Rocky Mountains, with 43% of probable visitors heading to BC for this experience and 29% saying they would go to Alberta for this. The relatively high level of interest in ski destinations (Whistler, Banff, Jasper and Mont Tremblant) may be in part linked to the timing of data collection, which occurred in December 2016.

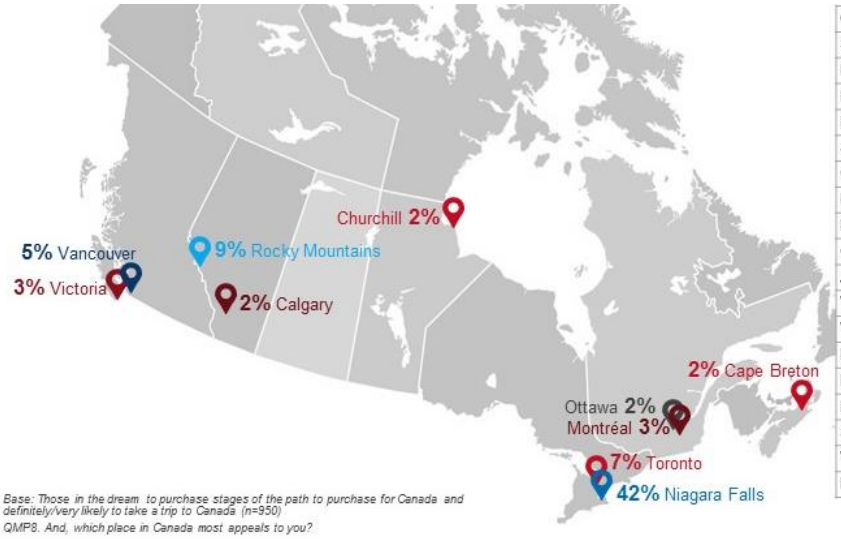
Figure 4.6: Canadian Destinations Likely to Visit (Among those definitely/very likely to visit)



Base: Those in the dream to purchase stages of the path to purchase for Canada and definitely/very likely to take a trip to Canada (n=950)
QMP7. If you were to take a holiday trip to Canada in the next 2 years, which of the following Canadian travel destinations are you likely to visit?
QMP7a-g. Within [province/region], which travel destinations are you likely to visit?

An additional question asked potential visitors to identify the one Canadian destination holding the greatest appeal. Niagara Falls, selected by 42% of potential visitors, is clearly the top attraction followed by the Rocky Mountains (9%), while the top cities are Toronto (picked by 7%) and Vancouver (5%). This would suggest Canada's landscape-based icons (Niagara Falls and Rocky Mountains) still clearly hold greater appeal for India travellers than Canada's city destinations. There is an opportunity to use well known natural landscapes as anchors and highlight their proximity to cities and lesser known/desirable destinations to attract Indian travellers.

Figure 4.7: Most Appealing Canadian Destination – Top 10 Mentions



Québec City	1.9%	Other NS	0.5%
Saint John	1.7%	Other BC	0.5%
Edmonton	1.7%	Other SK	0.4%
Halifax	1.3%	Other NFLD	0.4%
Mont Tremblant	1.2%	Other North	0.3%
St. John's	1.2%	Other PEI	0.3%
Charlottetown	1.2%	Other NB	0.2%
Dawson City	1.1%	Other ON	0.2%
Banff	1.0%		
Okanagan	0.9%		
Jasper	0.9%		
Whistler	0.8%		
Winnipeg	0.7%		
Iqaluit	0.6%		
Regina	0.6%		
Fredericton	0.5%		
Saskatoon	0.2%		
Whitehorse	0.2%		
Inuvik	0.1%		

5. Vacation Activities

Indian travellers were asked about which activities and experiences they seek while on holidays in general, regardless of the destination. The chance to connect with natural attractions (nature parks, waterfalls or mountains) and hiking or walking are the most sought-after holiday experiences. This is followed by camping, viewing wildlife or marine life, and sampling local cuisine and drink. The desire to connect with natural surroundings holds stronger appeal for Indian travellers aged 35+.

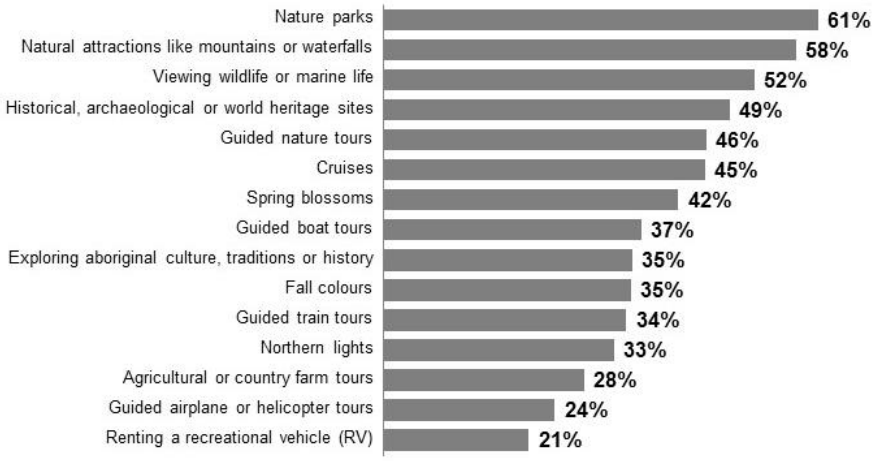
These results bode well for Canada, which can offer a full range of outdoor experiences Indian travellers say they seek.

Figure 5.1: General Activities/Places Interested In – Top 10



In terms of things to see & do, Indian travellers are most interested in nature parks (61%) and natural attractions like mountains and waterfalls (58%). They also show a strong interest in viewing wildlife (52%), visiting historical, archaeological or world heritage sites (49%) and taking guided nature tours (46%) and cruises (45%). Several of the activities are of more interest to travellers aged 55+ than those under 55, including natural attractions, viewing wildlife, and guided nature tours.

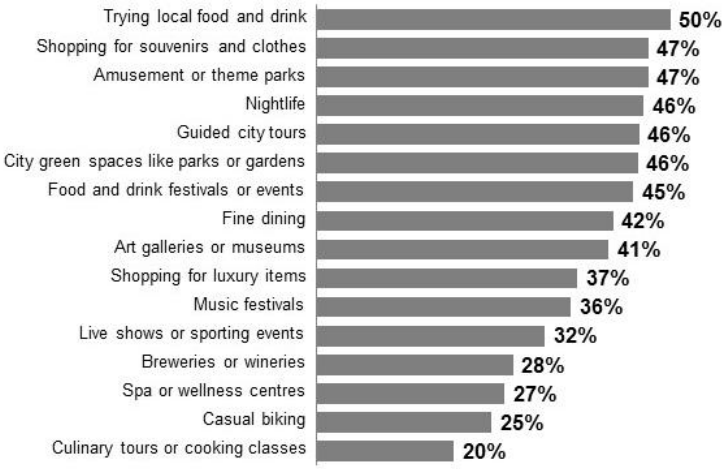
Figure 5.2: General Activities/Places Interested In – Things to See & Do



Base: Long-haul pleasure travellers (past 3 years or next 2 years) (n=1,502)
QMP10. In general, what activities or places are you interested in while on holiday?

Among city activities specifically, trying local food and drink holds the greatest appeal for Indian travellers (50%). The next most frequently selected city activities are shopping for souvenirs and clothes (47%), visiting amusement parks (47%), enjoying the nightlife (46%), taking guided city tours (46%), visiting city green spaces (46%), and attending food and drink events (45%). Some city activities, such as local food and drink, museums, guided city tours, and city green spaces, are of more interest to older travellers aged 55+ while others are of more interest to younger travellers aged 18-34, such as nightlife and casual biking.

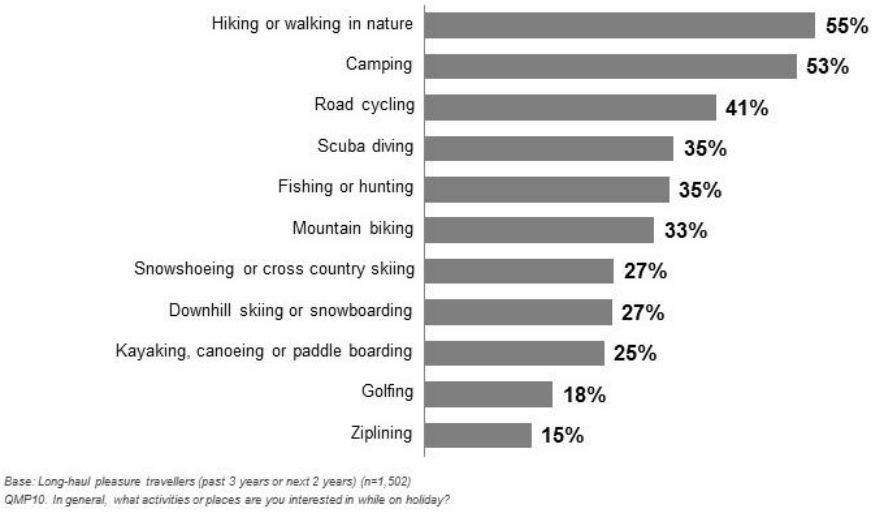
Figure 5.3: General Activities/Places Interested In – City Activities



Base: Long-haul pleasure travellers (past 3 years or next 2 years) (n=1,502)
QMP10. In general, what activities or places are you interested in while on holiday?

In terms of outdoor activities, Indian travellers are most interested in hiking or walking in nature (55%) and camping (53%). Also popular are road cycling (41%), scuba diving (35%), fishing or hunting (35%) and mountain biking (33%). Generally, older travellers aged 55+ are the least interested in outdoor activities while those 18-34 are the most interested.

Figure 5.4: General Activities/Places Interested In – Outdoor Activities



Base: Long-haul pleasure travellers (past 3 years or next 2 years) (n=1,502)
QMP10. In general, what activities or places are you interested in while on holiday?

6. Barriers

All Indian long-haul travellers were asked to identify barriers that could prevent them from visiting Canada. Cost is the primary deterrent, followed by visa requirements, the length of the flight and poor weather. Older travellers aged 55+ are more likely to mention cost and the length of the flight as a barrier, as well as there is no reason to visit Canada anytime soon. Secondary concerns include the unfavourable exchange rate, health risks, safety concerns, not having enough time to take a vacation, not knowing enough about the country and attractions being too far apart. Travellers aged 18-54 are most likely to have concerns over safety.

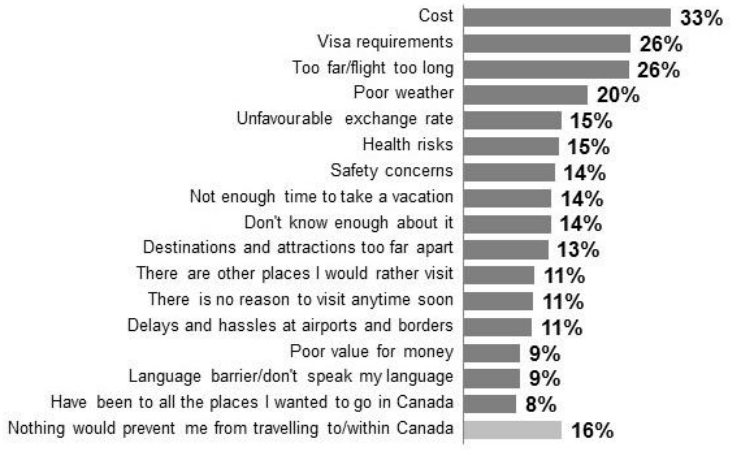
While the cost barrier is challenging to address, it can be indirectly dispelled through messaging about the value offered by a Canadian vacation experience. Highlighting the increasing availability of direct flights between India and Canada (up 63% over 2015[4]) and similar travel times relative to other long-haul destinations such as South Africa and Australia, may help address issues around distance to travel to Canada. Barriers such as visa requirements, health risks and safety concerns are issues for the Canadian government to address, while perceptions of poor weather and lack of knowledge about Canada can be addressed through advertising.

[4] *Destination Canada, Tourism Snapshot, December 2016.*

Indian travellers aged 18-54 represent the best immediate opportunity as they are less concerned about some of the key barriers like cost and length of the flight, and are father down the path-to-purchase. Also, from a lifetime value standpoint, attracting younger travellers may have a greater payoff. From a strategic marketing viewpoint, Destination Canada could consider focusing tactical efforts on younger travellers and split branding awareness efforts in collaboration with partners between the younger and older generation.

While cost remains the top barrier among those who visited Canada in the past (27%), they are much less likely to cite it as a barrier compared to those who have never been (38%). Also, length of flight is less likely to be a barrier to those who have travelled to Canada previously (21%) than those who have not (32%). However, past visitors are much more likely to mention health risks (19%) and safety concerns (19%) than those who have not visited Canada (11% and 9% respectively).

Figure 6.1: Key Barriers for Visiting Canada

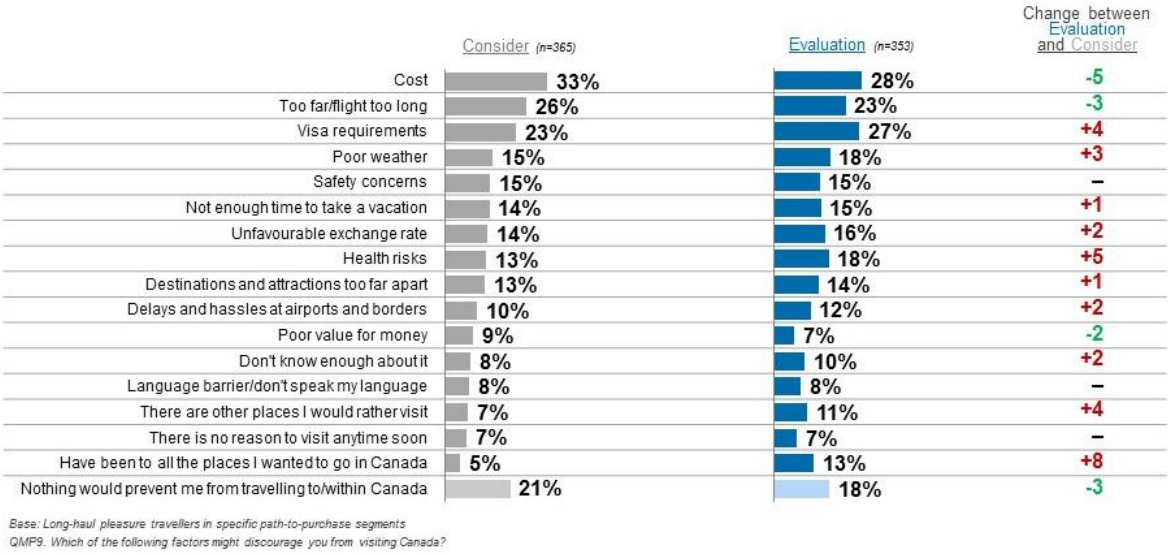


Base: Long-haul pleasure travellers (past 3 years or next 2 years) (n=1,502)
QMP9. Which of the following factors might discourage you from visiting Canada?

Examining barriers at key path-to-purchase stages provides some additional insight. For those considering a visit, cost is an acute barrier, followed closely by length of flight and visa requirements. Canada struggles in moving travellers from the consideration phase to latter stages in the purchase cycle, so finding ways to emphasize where Canada can offer value and to dispel concerns about flight length is paramount.

Those at the evaluation stage (gathering information or planning a visit) also cite cost and flight length as primary barriers, but to a lesser degree. Concerns over visa requirements increase during the evaluation stage, overtaking flight length as the 2nd most common barrier. Also, concerns over health risks rise for those in the evaluation stage.

Figure 6.2: Key Barriers for Visiting Canada – by Path-to-Purchase Segments



7. Recent Trip Profile

The following section provides details on the most recent long-haul trip taken by Indian travellers to competitive set destinations in the past 3 years (73% took such a trip). If the most recent trip encompassed more than one destination, the data reflects where the most time was spent.

Trip Purpose

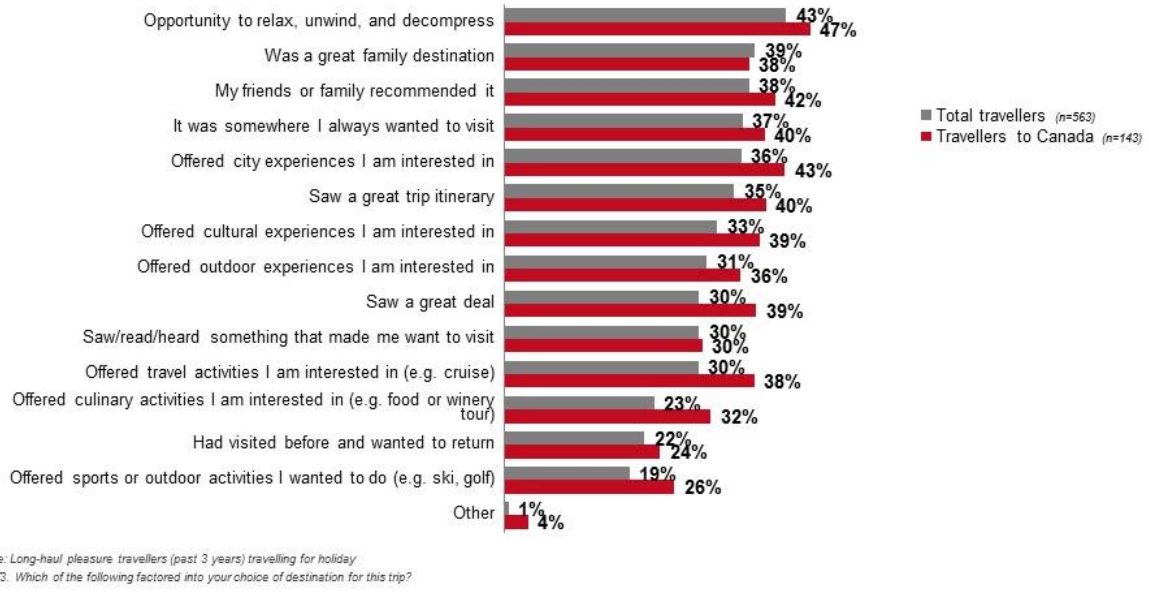
The primary reason for travelling among all Indian long-haul travellers was for holiday purposes (cited by 49% of all travellers). In Canada's case, 57% cited holiday as the primary purpose. While visiting family and friends is the second most important reason for all travellers (cited by 24% for all travellers), this is under-represented in the case of Canada (cited by only 16%).

Motivators

Those travelling for holiday purposes were asked about factors which influenced their choice of destination.

The opportunity to relax, unwind and de-compress was the primary reason for choosing the destination, both among travellers generally and visitors to Canada. The next most important motivators for Indian travellers in general are a great family vacation, recommendations from friends or family, and a longstanding desire to visit that destination. City, cultural, and outdoor experiences, seeing a great trip itinerary, seeing a great deal, travel activities such as cruises, and culinary activities were all relatively more important as motivators to choose Canada.

Figure 7.1: Factors Influencing Destination Selection



Travel Party

Regardless of destination, Indian travellers are most likely to be accompanied by their spouse (58%). This is particularly common among travellers aged 35-54 (75% travelled with their spouse) and older travellers aged 55+ (74%). Twenty-six percent of Indian travel parties included children under the age of 18, most common among those aged 35-54 (45%). Indian travellers visiting Canada are even more likely to travel with children under 18 years (36%), suggesting that there is some opportunity in the family market. Younger travellers aged 18-34 are more likely to have travelled with either parents or their friends.

Organized group tours are popular among Indian travellers (49% travelled as part of a group), and even more so for those who visited Canada (55%).

Booking

Fifty percent booked their flights using online travel agencies, followed by travel agents (41%) and directly with the airline (28%). Younger travellers aged 18-34 are more likely to book through an online travel agency. Those who visited Canada recently were even more likely to book flights through online travel agencies (57%) compared to travel agents (53%) and airlines (35%).

Accommodation bookings follow the same pattern with online travel agencies being most popular (46%), followed by travel agencies (32%) and directly with the provider (25%). Older travellers aged 55+ are less likely to book accommodation using an online travel agency. Once again, those who visited Canada were more likely to have used an online travel agency (58%), followed by a travel agent (38%), and directly with the provider (33%).

Type of Accommodation

Regardless of destination, Indian travellers show a preference for luxury hotels (39%) followed by mid-priced hotels (30%) and budget hotels (27%). A similar pattern is true among recent visitors to Canada where 48% opted for a luxury hotel, 36% for a mid-price property, and 36% for a budget hotel. Of note, while VFR (Visiting Friends and Relatives) is a less important reason for visiting Canada than for travel in general, Indian travellers to Canada are more likely to stay with friends and family (26% versus 20% for all destinations).

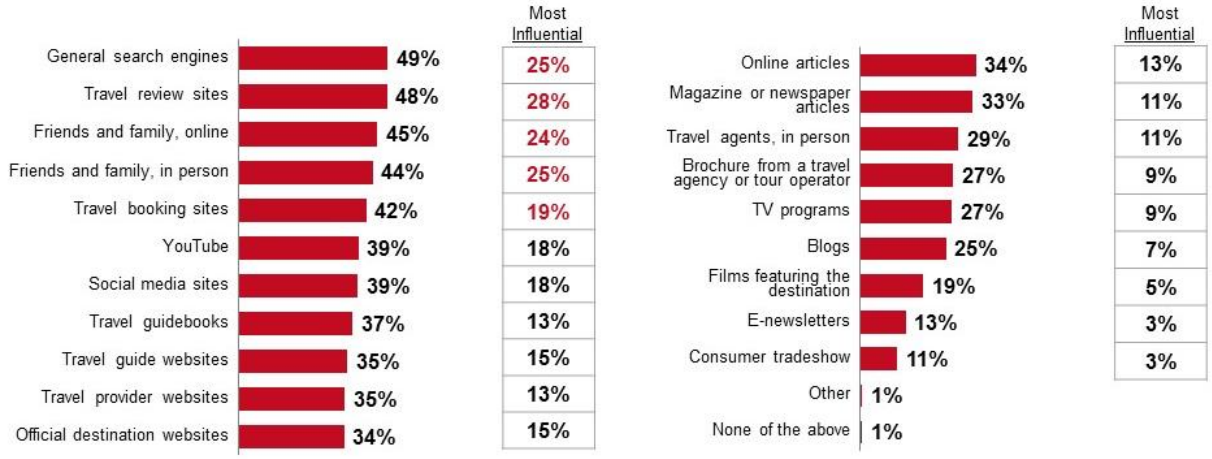
8. Marketing Tactics

Sources Used to Look for Information

Indian long-haul travellers rely heavily on online sources, including general search engines (49%), travel review sites (48%), and friends and family online (45%), for finding information on potential vacation destinations. The most popular information sources used by Indian long-haul travellers are almost exclusively online sources, apart from personal interactions with friends and family (44%).

Travel review sites are deemed the most influential information source by the largest number of Indian long-haul travellers (28%), followed by general search engines (25%), and interactions with friends and family, both in person (25%) and online (24%). Travellers aged 35+ are more likely to be influenced by opinions from family and friends, both online and in-person.

Figure 8.1: General Source of Destination Information / Most Influential Source



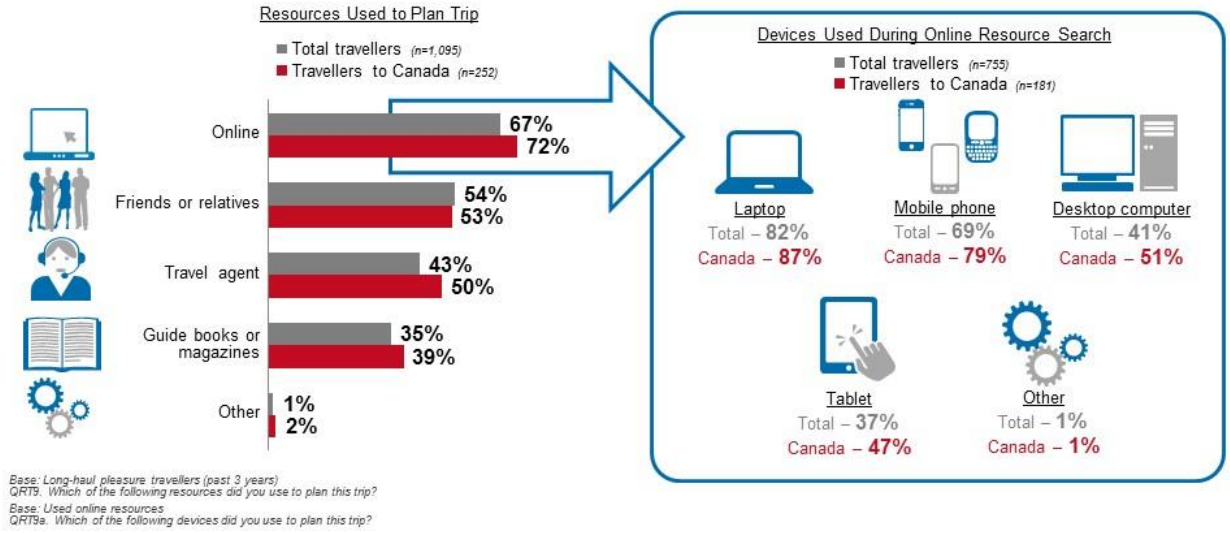
Base: Long-haul pleasure travellers (past 3 years or next 2 years) (n=1,502)
QMT1. When you research possible vacation destinations for your next trip, what sources do you use to look for information?
Base: Long-haul pleasure travellers (past 3 years or next 2 years) who mentioned an information source (n=1,492)
QMT2. Please select the 3 most influential information sources.

Resources, Devices Used to Plan Recent Trip

As noted above, Indian long-haul travellers rely heavily on online resources to plan vacations, with laptops and mobile phone being most prevalent. Travellers under 55 years are more likely to use mobile devices to plan the trip. Given heavy reliance on mobile devices among Indian travellers, particularly among those who travelled to Canada, it would be important to ensure that the online content is mobile friendly.

Friends and family were cited as a resource for planning roughly half of trips (54%). Travel agents (43%) are also popular for planning, ahead of guidebooks or magazines. Indian travellers visiting Canada are even more likely to use travel agents for planning purposes (50%).

Figure 8.2: Resources and Devices Used to Plan Trip



9. Destination Canada's Indian Target

Destination Canada has identified a more defined target for marketing efforts in India. Analysis and findings on this target are available to Destination Canada's marketing partners; for more information, please contact Destination Canada to become a marketing partner.