

# Northern British Columbia

# REGIONAL TOURISM PROFILE

## Overview

In 2012, overnight tourism in British Columbia generated 17.9 million person-visits\* and \$8.6 billion in related spending. Northern British Columbia, one of six tourism regions in the province, represents 5% of provincial overnight visitation and 5% of related expenditures.

This profile provides a general overview of the region and summarizes the latest data available about overnight travellers visiting Northern British Columbia.

## Top markets for Northern BC

British Columbia residents make up the largest share of overnight visitation (69%) and spending (55%) in Northern British Columbia. Those familiar with the region will not be surprised that German travellers are included in the top markets for visitation and spending, one of two regions that have this market in their “top five” list.

Top five markets of origin (2012)		Share in Northern BC	
		Visitation	Spending
1	British Columbia	69%	55%
2	Alberta	13%	20%
3	Alaska	2%	1%
4	Germany	1%	2%
5	California	1%	4%

## About this tourism region

British Columbia's largest tourism region covers 569,000 km<sup>2</sup> of the province, and has more than 60 provincial, national and marine parks, and wildlife refuges that offer access to globally unique ecosystems and priceless cultural heritage treasures. The population of Northern British Columbia has remained virtually unchanged from 2006 and continues to be characterised by a younger demographic than the province as a whole, with 60% aged 44 years or younger compared to the province average of 54%.

JANUARY 2015



The region	2011	% change (2006-11)
Population <sup>1</sup>	253,521	-0.1%
Population as % of BC	6%	+0.4 point change
Unemployment rate (2013) <sup>2</sup>	6%	n/a

Age groups <sup>1</sup>	2011	% change (2006-11)
0-19 years	27%	-7%
20-44 years	33%	-5%
45-64 years	29%	6%
65+ years	11%	20%

Tourism industry	2013	% of BC
Businesses <sup>3</sup>	1,204	6%
Employment (2012) <sup>3</sup>	6,900	5%
Accommodation sector revenue (2012) <sup>3</sup>	\$327M	10%
Room revenue (2012) <sup>3</sup>	\$50.7M	n/a
Campsites		
Private/municipal <sup>13,4</sup>	43	13%
Provincial <sup>5</sup>	2,011	16%
National <sup>6</sup>	0	0%
Custom entries <sup>7</sup>	43,097	1%
Visitor centre parties <sup>8</sup>	103,501	8%

Transportation	2013	% change (2012-13)
Airport passengers <sup>9</sup>		
Fort St. John	186,045	37%
Prince George	426,709	2%
Smithers	79,872	2%
Alaska Ferry passengers <sup>10</sup>	254,437	-3%
BC Ferries passengers <sup>11</sup>		
Route 10/40	43,104	-4%
Route 11	37,636	6%
Highway traffic volume (000s) <sup>12</sup>		
Route 16***	824	6%

\* A traveller may visit several locations on one trip to British Columbia; a person-visit represents a stay within each region visited.

\*\* Number of campgrounds.

\*\*\* Data not available for the months of February, March, April and May.

## Trip characteristics by origin

Northern British Columbia received 1 million overnight person-visits in 2012 and generated \$392 million in related spending. Domestic overnight travellers accounted for 85% of visitation and 79% of related spending. International travellers accounted for 15% and 21%, respectively.

On average, domestic travel parties in Northern British Columbia stayed 3.8 nights and spent \$125 per night during their trip. US travel parties stayed 3.1 nights and spent \$229 per night during their trip, and Other international travel parties stayed 9.0 nights and spent \$130 per night during their trip in Northern British Columbia.

## OVERNIGHT VS SAME-DAY TRAVEL

Same-day travel encompasses travellers who enter and leave a destination (i.e. region) in less than 24 hours.

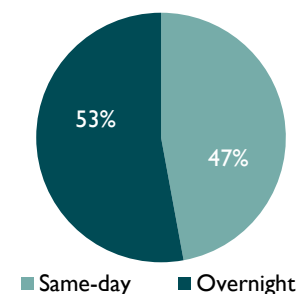
Same-day travellers accounted for 47% of visitor volume and 16% of visitor expenditures in Northern British Columbia.

	Overnight visitors (000s)	Total		% change (2011-2012)			Share of total		
		Spending (\$000s)	Nights (000s)	Overnight visitors	Spending	Nights	Overnight visitors	Spending	Nights
*All travellers in Northern BC	1,027	\$391,778	4,048	-2%	-4%	17%	100%	100%	100%
BC residents	711	\$214,380	2,130	3%	-19%	1%	69%	55%	53%
Other Canadian residents	163	\$94,576	1,165	-14%	46%	85%	16%	24%	29%
US residents	106	\$50,437	329	-15%	-12%	-26%	10%	13%	8%
**Other international residents	47	\$32,386	423	0%	36%	61%	5%	8%	10%
Leisure travellers in Northern BC	394	\$200,708	1,400	-2%	28%	-3%	100%	100%	100%
BC residents	247	\$89,430	820	5%	22%	2%	63%	45%	59%
Other Canadian residents	61	\$55,074	223	8%	134%	2%	15%	27%	16%
US residents	54	\$32,531	161	-24%	-16%	-33%	14%	16%	11%
**Other international residents	33	\$23,673	196	-18%	11%	8%	8%	12%	14%

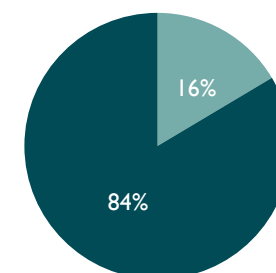
\*Travellers main purpose of the trip to Northern British Columbia is classified as either Leisure (38%), Visiting Friends and Relatives (32%), Business (13%), and Other (16%).

\*\*Due to small unweighted sample size, please use extreme caution when interpreting

Traveller volume  
(Total = 1.9 million)



Traveller expenditures  
(Total = \$469 million)



## Accommodation

Over 40% of all traveller nights in Northern British Columbia were spent in the residences of friends and family for all markets of origin, except US residents. US residents spent more of their nights at camping or RV park facilities than travellers from other markets of origin.

Primary accommodation*	BC residents	Other Canadians	US residents	Other international
Friends and family	47%	60%	17%	47%
Hotel	16%	10%	25%	32%
Motel	6%	1%	13%	4%
Other commercial fixed roof	11%	4%	14%	6%
Camping/RV parks	11%	4%	30%	11%

\*Please note the sum will not equal 100% for each market as other non-paid accommodation is not included in the table.

## Seasonality

Most people travelled in Northern British Columbia during the peak summer months, particularly Other international travellers (66%), US residents (49%) and other Canadians (46%). More British Columbians travelled from January to March compared to other markets of origin, particularly in the months of February and March.

Season of travel	BC residents	Other Canadians	US residents	Other international
January to March	34%	8%	8%	7%
April to June	15%	22%	33%	22%
July to September	24%	46%	49%	66%
October to December	26%	24%	11%	5%

## Trip activities

Overnight travellers who spent one or more nights in Northern British Columbia took part in a number of outdoor activities during their trip, including visiting national/provincial parks, hiking/backpacking, camping, and wildlife viewing.\* Some cultural activities, including visiting museums/art galleries and historic sites, also ranked as top trip activities among non-British Columbia residents.

	BC residents	Other Canadians	**US residents	**Other international
1	Beach	National, provincial or nature park	Historic site	National, provincial or nature park
2	Camping	Hiking or backpacking	National, provincial or nature park	Historic site
3	Hiking or backpacking	Camping	Camping	Museum or art gallery
4	National, provincial or nature park	Boating/canoeing/kayaking	Museum or art gallery	Camping
5	Wildlife viewing or bird watching	Beach	Fishing	Zoo or aquarium

\*Please note that the activities listed could have taken place anywhere on the trip, not just in the Northern British Columbia.

\*\*Please note that the following activities were not included in this analysis: visit friends or family, shopping, sightseeing, bar/night club, sport/outdoor activity unspecified.

### Data sources for travellers in Northern British Columbia

The International Travel Survey (ITS) and the Travel Survey of Residents of Canada (TSRC) are ongoing surveys conducted by Statistics Canada in partnership with the Canadian Tourism Commission and some provinces, including British Columbia.

The ITS and TSRC provides statistics on the volume and demographics of domestic and international travellers and on characteristics of their trips such as activities, expenditures, places visited, accommodations and length of stay.

The data are based on the 2012 results for those who travelled in Canada and spent at least one night in Northern British Columbia. For more information, please visit [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca).

Other data sources are noted where appropriate and listed on page 4.

## Regional comparisons

Travel characteristics by region	Total			% change (2011-2012)			Regional share of total		
	*Overnight visitors (000s)	*Spending (\$000s)	Nights (000s)	Overnight visitors	Spending	Nights	Overnight visitors	Spending	Nights
All travellers in BC	17,905	\$8,614,261	52,294	1%	-2%	-33%			
Cariboo Chilcotin Coast	549	\$118,508	1,851	6%	-8%	12%	3%	1%	2%
Kootenay Rockies	1,815	\$607,379	6,758	1%	15%	8%	9%	7%	8%
Northern BC	1,027	\$391,778	4,048	-2%	-4%	17%	5%	5%	5%
Thompson Okanagan	3,827	\$1,140,998	13,598	0%	-8%	1%	20%	14%	17%
Vancouver, Coast & Mountains	8,266	\$4,658,547	40,370	0%	2%	9%	43%	57%	50%
Vancouver Island	3,821	\$1,326,817	14,364	-5%	-11.6%	-4%	20%	16%	18%
Leisure travellers in BC	8,707	\$4,591,925	34,357	1%	1%	-1%			
Cariboo Chilcotin Coast	303	\$83,163	1,130	6%	13.5%	25%	3%	2%	3%
Kootenay Rockies	1,129	\$432,746	4,377	0%	11.8%	5%	12%	10%	13%
Northern BC	394	\$200,708	1,400	-2%	28%	-3%	4%	5%	4%
Thompson Okanagan	1,759	\$688,392	6,395	-8%	-4%	-8%	18%	15%	19%
Vancouver, Coast & Mountains	4,094	\$2,333,585	14,306	4%	6%	2%	43%	52%	42%
Vancouver Island	1,901	\$714,351	6,454	-0.7%	-14%	-3%	20%	16%	19%

\*Please note the visitation of all regions will not equal the provincial total as travellers can visit multiple regions on one trip and the spending of all regions will not equal the provincial total as the "unspecified" region is not included in the table.

### Sources

1. 2011 Census, Statistics Canada
2. BC Stats
3. Tourism Statistics, BC Stats
4. Hello BC
5. BC Parks
6. Parks Canada
7. Statistics Canada
8. Destination BC
9. Individual airports
10. Alaska State Ferry
11. BC Ferries
12. BC Ministry of Transportation

Data tables are based on Statistics Canada microdata which contain anonymised data collected in the Travel Survey of Residents of Canada (pooled) and/or the International Travel Survey 2011/2012. All computations on these microdata were prepared by Research Resolutions & Consulting Ltd. on behalf of Destination BC and the responsibility for the use and interpretation of these data is entirely that of the author(s).

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[www.travelnbc.com](http://www.travelnbc.com) (corporate)

Mobile: [m.nbctourism.com](https://m.nbctourism.com)

[www.facebook.com/NorthernBC](https://www.facebook.com/NorthernBC)

[www.twitter.com/TourismBCNorth](https://www.twitter.com/TourismBCNorth)

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