

Tourism in Alberta

A Summary Of Visitor Numbers, Revenue & Characteristics – 2004

Based on the 2004 Canadian & International Travel Surveys (Statistics Canada)

Policy & Economic Analysis
Alberta Economic Development

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Introduction

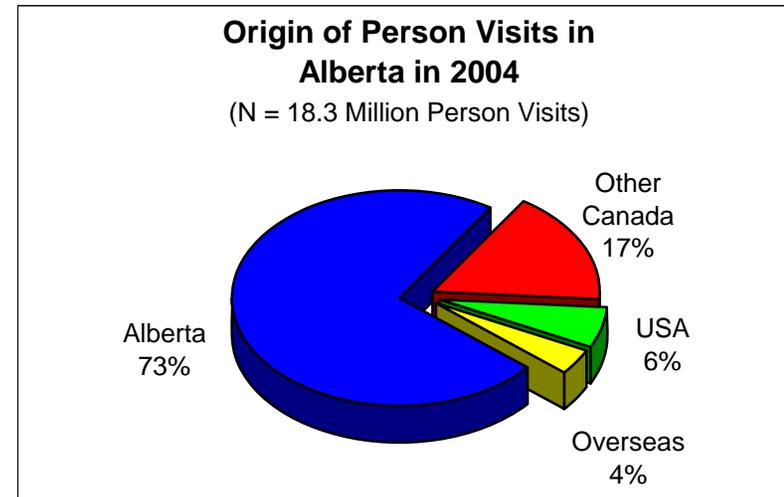
Whether to see their friends and relatives, for business or for pleasure, 18.3 million person visits were made in 2004 to destinations in the province by Alberta residents, other Canadians, and visitors from the USA and overseas (same-day and overnight trips for Alberta and other Canada, and overnight trips only for all other origins). Tourism generated \$4.96 billion in consumer spending for the province during 2004.

To better understand the size, characteristics and spending activity of these visitors, Alberta Economic Development commissioned Research Resolutions & Consulting to prepare special analyses of the 2004 Canadian and International Travel Surveys conducted by Statistics Canada. These consumer surveys provide tourism information for travel in Alberta by Canadians for trips of at least 80 km one way from home, and trips to the province made by American and overseas visitors to Canada. All same day and overnight domestic trips and all overnight trips by American and overseas visitors are included.¹

This summary highlights key findings only. For more information on tourism in Alberta, please contact Alberta Economic Development.²

Who Travels in Alberta?

All trips, all purposes: More visits in Alberta are made by residents of the province than by other Canadians, American or overseas visitors. Of the 18.3 million person visits (same-day and overnight) in the province, 13.3 million (73%) were by Albertans. Another 3.2 million (17%) were by residents of other parts of Canada. Americans made 1,026,000 visits (6%) and overseas visitors made 768,000 visits to the province in 2004 (4% of the total visits).



Albertans living in Alberta Central travel more than any other segment of the province's population. They took more than one-fifth (22%) of all person trips in Alberta in 2004. Residents of Calgary & Area took 19% of all person visits in the province, and Edmonton & Area residents took the third largest proportion (16%).

Residents in Alberta South took almost nine per cent of all person visits in the province, followed by Albertans living in Alberta North (seven per cent of all person visits) and Canadian Rockies (less than one per cent).

Overnight visits: The majority (60%) of all visits in the province included at least one overnight stop, yielding 11.1 million overnight person visits in 2004. Almost all overseas visitors (768,000) spent at least one night in Alberta, and so did most American visitors (1,026,000). Canadians were responsible for the largest proportion (84%) of all overnight travel within the province. Almost half of the visits in the province by Albertans included spending one or more nights away from home (49% or 6.5 million overnight person visits).

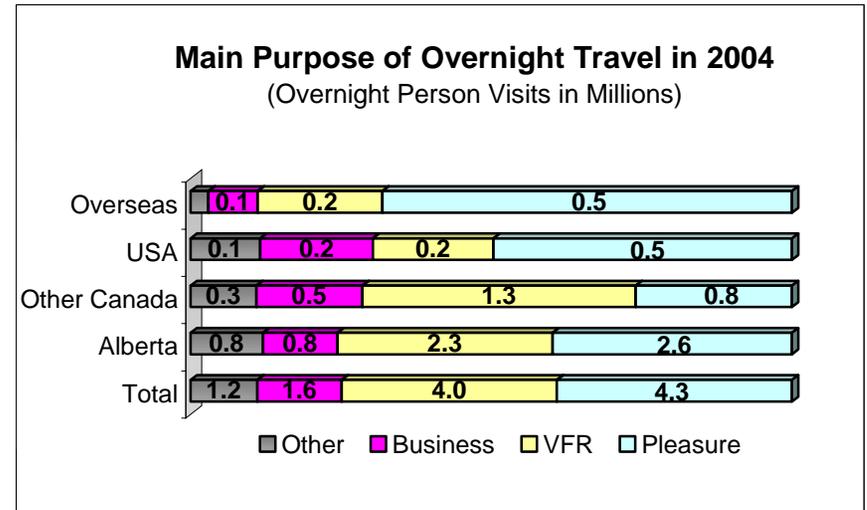
Residents of Edmonton & Area made up nearly one-fifth (18%) of all overnight travel in the province. Next were the residents of Calgary & Area (15%), followed by Alberta Central (13%). Residents of Alberta North took almost seven per cent of all overnight person visits in the province, while Alberta South residents accounted for six per cent.

Major inbound overnight markets: Key sources of overnight inbound travel for Alberta include neighbouring provinces, northwestern US states and major European and Asian markets.

Key Inbound Overnight Markets

(In Rank Order)	Overnight Person Visits
British Columbia	1,109,000
Saskatchewan	767,000
Ontario	580,000
United Kingdom	228,000
Manitoba	221,000
California	97,000
Montana	89,000
Japan	87,000
Washington	82,000
Germany	76,000
Taiwan	52,000
Texas	48,000
Oregon	34,000

British Columbia is a substantive source of inbound travel to Alberta (1.1 million overnight visits), followed by Saskatchewan (767,000), Ontario (580,000) and Manitoba (221,000).



With 228,000 overnight visits, the United Kingdom generated more overnight travel in Alberta in 2004 than did any US state. Major American markets included California (97,000 overnight visits), Montana (89,000 overnight visits) and Washington (82,000).

Main Purpose of Overnight Travel

Overnight visits in Alberta totalled 11.1 million person visits in 2004. Across all markets, the overnight pleasure segment represents 39% of all overnight travel in the province (4.3 million overnight person visits). More than one-third (36%) of all overnight travel in the province was to visit friends and relatives (VFR). Business travel accounted for 14% of overnight trips.

The pleasure market represents one half of overnight travel in the province by American visitors (50%) and two-thirds of overnight travel by overseas visitors (68%). Visiting friends and relatives accounted for 20% of overnight travel by US and 21% by overseas visitors.

The highly lucrative business travel segment characterises 12% of overnight travel by Albertans, and 19% of overnight travel in the province by American visitors. Business travel by overseas overnight visitors to Alberta in 2004 was more modest, at eight per cent.

Tourism Spending in Alberta

All purposes, all spending: Of the \$4.96 billion in tourism spending in Alberta in 2004, the vast majority was spent by visitors who made same-day or overnight visits to locations in the province (\$4.51 billion). The remaining \$452 million was spent by Albertans in Alberta to purchase fares and other incidentals for trips to other parts of Canada.³

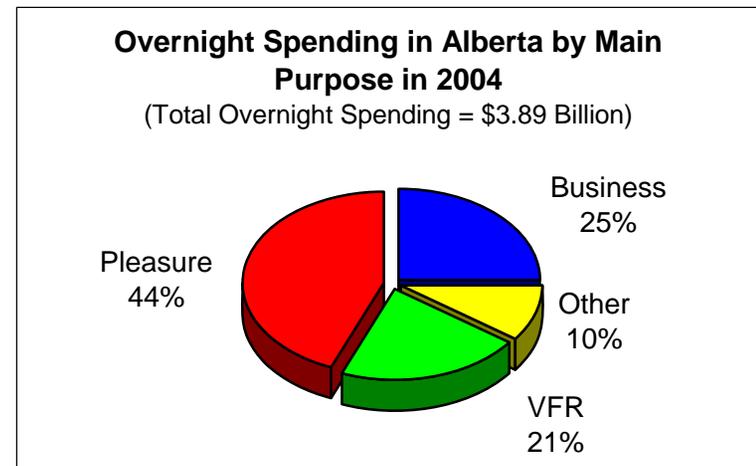
Spending on the Alberta visit: Excluding carrier fares by visitors to reach or leave the province, Albertans are the largest source of tourism spending primarily because they represent the largest market for travel in the province. Regardless of the purpose of their trip or its duration, Albertans spent the largest proportion (42% or \$1.87 billion) of the \$4.51 billion spent by visitors to locations in the province in 2004. This level of spending is nearly twice that of all other Canadians who visited the province (26% or \$1.15 billion). Americans spent \$764 million (17% of the total expenditures in Alberta) and overseas visitors spent \$713 million (16% of the total expenditures in the province) over the year.

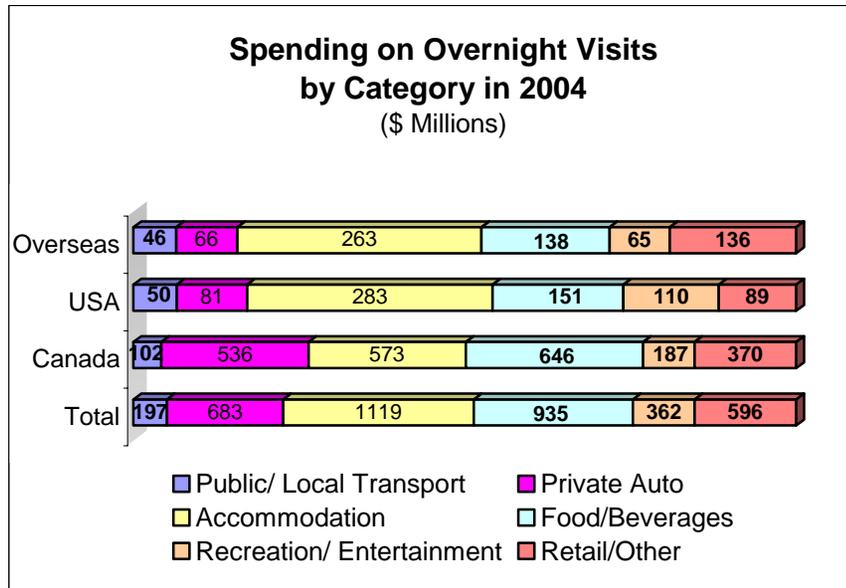
Tourism Spending in Alberta – 2004			
	All Visits	Overnight Visits	Overnight Pleasure Visits
Alberta	\$1.87 billion	\$1.30 billion	\$499 million
Other Canada	\$1.15 billion	\$1.12 billion	\$301 million
USA		\$764 million	\$437 million
Overseas		\$713 million	\$480 million

Overnight spending: Spending in Alberta on overnight trips in 2004 totalled \$3.89 billion.

The largest proportion (44%) of all spending on overnight visits in Alberta is associated with trips made for pleasure purposes (\$1.72 billion). Business travel accounted for 25% (\$989 million), trips to visit friends and relatives 21% (\$809 million) and trips for other purposes 10% (\$378 million).

Within the overnight travel segment, Albertans outspent visitors from all other markets (\$1.3 billion).





Spending by Category: Of the \$3.89 billion spent by overnight visitors in Alberta, 29% (\$1.1 billion) was spent on accommodation and 24% (\$935 million) was spent on food and beverages.

Eighteen per cent of overnight visitor spending (\$683 million) was on private vehicle operation or vehicle rental, and 15% (\$596 million⁴) was spent in the retail sector. Overnight visitors spent nine per cent (\$362 million) on entertainment and recreation and even less on public/local transportation (\$197 million).

Within the overnight travel segment, Canadians are the largest contributors to spending in all categories. They account for 78% of private vehicle expenses, 69% of all food/beverage spending, and 51% of the spending on accommodations.

The remainder of the money spent on lodging was divided fairly equally between American visitors (25%) and those from overseas (24%). These inbound markets also accounted for almost one half of the recreation/entertainment spending on overnight visits in Alberta (USA 30% and overseas 18%).

Spending patterns by market: American visitors spent more money per travel party per night in 2004 than overseas or Canadian visitors in the province. For every night that an American travel party spent in Alberta, \$308 changed hands. This per party per night average is two-thirds higher than for overseas visitors (\$184) and nearly two and a half times as much as per party per night spending by Canadians travelling in Alberta (\$131).

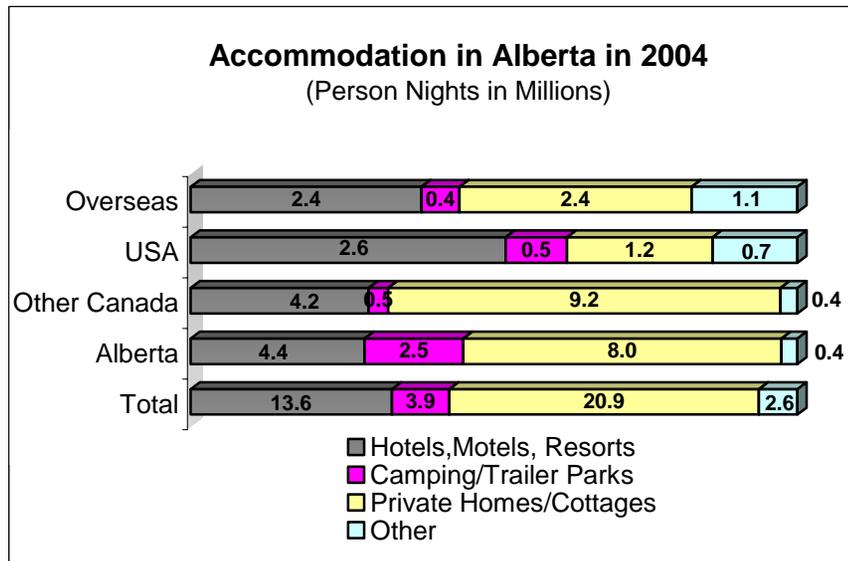
Average Overnight Tourism Spending In Alberta – 2004		
(Per Party Per Night)	All Overnight	Overnight Pleasure
Canada	\$131	\$151
Alberta	\$146	\$156
B.C.	\$102	\$144
Saskatchewan	\$142	\$193
Ontario	\$133	\$144
USA	\$308	\$434
Overseas	\$184	\$276

Within the overnight pleasure market segment, Americans are the highest per diem spenders (\$434 per party per night), followed by overseas visitors (\$276) and Canadians (\$151).

The substantially lower spending by Canadians relative to American and overseas visitors is likely a function of the comparatively low rate of use of paid, roofed accommodation within the domestic market. Canadians are much more likely to stay with friends or relatives or in campsites on their overnight trips than are visitors from other countries (see section on Accommodation in Alberta).

Accommodation in Alberta

Over the course of 2004, visitors spent 41.0 million person nights in Alberta. Thirty-three per cent of these nights (13.6 million) were spent in the province's hotels, motels, resorts, housekeeping cottages, bed and breakfast establishments and other commercial roofed properties. A further nine per cent were spent in campgrounds and trailer parks in the province (3.9 million). One-half (51%) of all nights spent in Alberta were spent in the homes of friends and relatives, private cottages and other non-commercial accommodation (20.9 million).



Albertans spent 8.0 million person nights in the homes of their friends and relatives or their cottages. They also spent 4.4 million person nights in the province's hotels, motels and other commercial roofed properties.

This figure represents 33% of all nights spent in commercial properties. Other Canadians (31%), Americans (19%) and overseas visitors (18%) used the remaining nights at roofed commercial rooms in 2004.

Canadians tend to dominate Alberta's campgrounds. They account for 77% of all camping nights spent in the province: of the 3.9 million person nights spent in this type of accommodation, the Alberta resident market accounts for 2.5 million and Canadians from other provinces account for another 0.5 million. The remaining camping nights in the province are split between Americans (507,000) and overseas visitors (396,000).

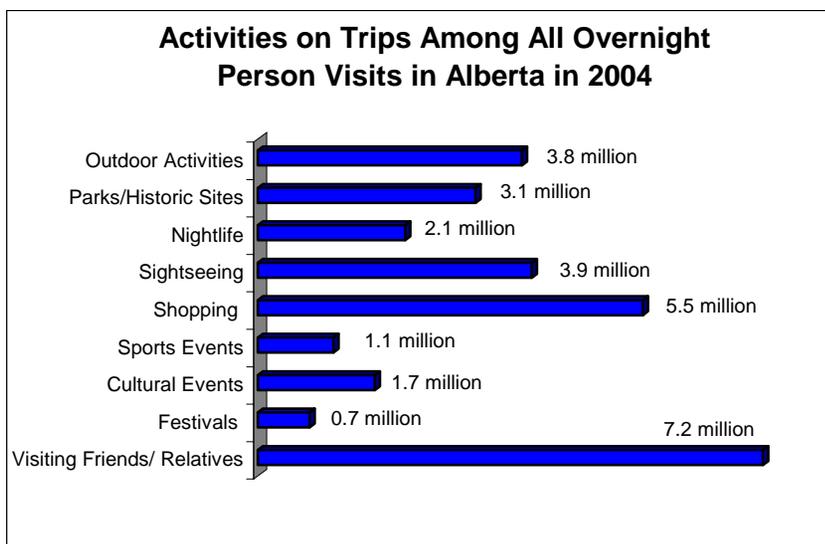
Activities on Overnight Trips

Overnight visitors in Alberta visit friends and relatives, shop, sightsee, and engage in outdoor sports and activities including skiing, hiking, fishing, hunting and water sports. Many also visit parks and historic sites on their trips in Canada.⁵

Activities vary by market among overnight pleasure visitors to Alberta. For example, Canadians are especially apt to visit friends and relatives, shop and engage in outdoor activities whereas American and overseas pleasure visitors are particularly interested in sightseeing, shopping, and visiting parks and historic sites.

Activities Among Overnight Pleasure Visitors - By Market

Overnight Person Visits Activity	Canada %	USA %	Overseas %
Visit Friends/Relatives	54	15	33
Attend Festivals/Fairs	9	10	10
Attend Cultural Events	19	46	48
Attend Sports Events	14	7	10
Shopping	48	77	92
Sightseeing	46	81	93
Nightlife	18	28	36
Visit Parks/Historic Sites	35	78	91
Outdoor Sports/Activities	53	40	45



Seasonality

The warmer summer months are more likely to generate travel in Alberta than are the colder seasons. The lure of July through September is especially evident for American and overseas overnight travellers, with close to one-half of all overnight visits (47% for the US and 44% for the overseas market) taking place in this three-month period. Ontarians also concentrate their overnight travel to Alberta in the warmer months, with 43% of trips taking place between July and September. Albertans and their neighbours in British Columbia and Saskatchewan spread their travel in Alberta somewhat more evenly through the seasons, but are still more apt to take overnight trips in Alberta between July and September than they are to travel in Alberta during any other calendar quarter.

Calendar Quarter of Overnight Visits in Alberta – 2004

		Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec
All Overnight	(%)	17	20	38	26
By Market					
Canada	(%)	18	18	36	28
Alberta	(%)	18	17	35	30
B.C.	(%)	15	20	40	25
Saskatchewan	(%)	18	22	32	28
Ontario	(%)	15	24	43	17
USA	(%)	10	26	47	17
Overseas	(%)	11	33	44	13

Overnight Tourism in Alberta's Regions

Major urban areas are magnets for overnight travel in Alberta. Over the course of 2004, one-quarter (26%) of all person nights spent in the province were spent in Calgary & Area. Edmonton & Area (22%), Canadian Rockies (17%) and Alberta Central (15%) were each responsible for about one-fifth of the nights spent by visitors in the province, whereas 10% of all person nights were spent in Alberta South and eight per cent in Alberta North.

The Rockies, Edmonton and Area and Calgary & Area are the most widely visited tourism regions in Alberta for American and overseas visitors. More than one third (38%) of all person nights spent in the province by overseas visitors and 30% of all nights spent here by American visitors are spent in the Canadian Rockies Tourism Destination Region.

Canadians, on the other hand, spend comparatively few of their nights in Canadian Rockies (11%), concentrating more heavily on Calgary & Area (27%), Edmonton & Area (22%) and Alberta Central (18%).

Person Nights in Alberta's Regions -- By Market (All Purposes)

	Canada	USA	Overseas
Person Nights	29.6 million	5.0 million	6.3 million
	%	%	%
Alberta North	10	5	1
Alberta Central	18	7	7
Edmonton & Area	22	30	18
Canadian Rockies	11	30	38
Calgary & Area	27	17	31
Alberta South	11	9	4
Region Unspecified	2	1	1

Notes

¹ The Canadian Travel Survey (CTS) is a monthly telephone survey among Canadians 15 years of age or over. The study captures travel in the previous month by the respondent for all trips 80 km or more one way from home, for purposes other than commuting to work or school, crews, and moving to a new residence.

The International Travel Survey is a self-completion survey, distributed at ports of entry for completion by USA and overseas visitors to Canada at the end of their trip. The survey excludes border workers, visitors travelling on military or diplomatic orders, and students. Questionnaire data are projected to Canada Customs information on total entries to Canada. For more details of the survey designs, please contact Statistics Canada.

The information provided in this report is based on special tabulations of Statistics Canada data, using data management principles developed by Research Resolutions & Consulting Ltd. in conjunction with provincial partners (Alberta Economic Development, Tourism Saskatchewan, Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism, and Tourism and Culture, Government of Yukon).

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³ Total spending on tourism goods and services in Alberta in 2004 includes money spent in Alberta locations by people who visited these locations (\$4.51 billion) and transportation fares and other incidental expenditures paid by Alberta residents in Alberta to travel to locations elsewhere in Canada (\$452 million). According to the International Monetary Fund rules, air carrier fares for non-domestic visitors who use a domestic carrier are allocated to the country of the airline's head office. Thus an additional \$26.4 million for Americans and \$275.8 million for overseas visitors who used domestic air carriers to travel to Canada are allocated in Alberta. These domestic carrier fares for non-residents are not included in the \$4.51 billion in total tourism spending in the province (see Table 81-1 of detailed USA and overseas tabulations).

⁴ Includes "Other" spending.

⁵ Activities reported are for the entire trip in Canada and may or may not take place in Alberta.

