

# 2020 Global Tourism Watch Highlights Report

British Columbia  
November 2020

Publication date: October 2021

**CANADA**   
FOR GLOWING  
HEARTS

Canada

Vancouver  
British Columbia

 **DESTINATION  
CANADA**

# STUDY OVERVIEW

## Study Overview:

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and the renewed focus on domestic travel, the Canada study was conducted among the general population (excluding residents of the Northern Territories). A total of 9,059 Canadians participated.



### GTW Provincial Sample Distribution:

British Columbia Residents:	1,500
Alberta Residents:	1,500
Saskatchewan Residents:	500
Manitoba Residents:	500
Ontario Residents:	2,101
Quebec Residents:	1,507
New Brunswick Residents:	400
Nova Scotia Residents:	400
Prince Edward Island Residents:	250
Newfoundland & Labrador Residents:	401

At the provincial level, respondents are split into two groups based on their travel behaviour:

**Domestic Out-of-Province Travellers:** Canadian residents aged 18 years and older, who have taken a pleasure trip in Canada beyond their own province where they had stayed at least 2 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 year. These respondents evaluated destinations outside of their province.

**In-Province:** Canadian residents aged 18 years and older, who evaluated destinations within their province of residence.

## Context:

It is important to consider the results in light of the COVID-19 situation at the time of data collection. In November 2020, no vaccine was approved for use and Canada was at the start of its 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of COVID-19. Many provinces tightened restrictions in November in an effort to contain the pandemic. Non-essential travel within Canada and beyond the country was discouraged. The Canada/US border had been closed since March 2020.

For additional context around the current COVID-19 situation in Canada, please refer to Destination Canada's [COVID-19 Research page](#), which includes information on resident sentiment, travel related measures, impact and recovery, and forecasting.



**Timing of Fieldwork:** Nov 2020

This report contains a summary of key metrics about residents of British Columbia.

Results are presented for three main groups:

- Total residents: Results among the total sample of BC residents (n=1,500)
- Out-of-province: Results among out-of-province travellers in BC who evaluated destinations outside of BC (n=750)
- In-province: Results among residents of BC who evaluated destinations within BC (n=750)

Charts are colour coded to show the results among each group:

### Legend:

Total Residents

Out-of-Province Travellers

Residents evaluating in-province destinations

# KEY HIGHLIGHTS

## Key Highlights – British Columbia Market

Insight	Implication
<b>There is pent up demand for travel</b> , but British Columbians also have concerns, primarily related to health and safety in a potential destination.	<i>Illustrating that health and safety measures are in place and a destination is safe to visit are key messages that need to be communicated to encourage British Columbians to travel within the province and to other Canadian provinces and territories in 2021.</i>
<b>There is a small group of British Columbians that feel safe travelling now.</b> This group is more likely to have travelled since the start of the pandemic and is more likely to be comfortable flying domestically. The biggest barrier to travel within Canada for those who feel safe travelling is cost.	<i>Travel deals and illustrating the value of a vacation within BC or to other Canadian provinces and territories may motivate this group to travel more in 2021.</i>
<b>Leisure trips and visiting family and friends will drive British Columbians' travel in 2021.</b> There is little appetite for business or conference-related travel in 2021.	<i>Low interest in business travel is a challenge that the business events sector will need to address going forward.</i>
<b>Even when travelling out-of-province, British Columbians are following a Canada-wide trend of staying closer to home:</b> Alberta is the top out-of-province destination under consideration.	<i>Alberta has the most to gain from the British Columbia market.</i>
<b>There are mixed opinions on city travel.</b> For out-of-province travel, there is considerable interest in visiting major cities (e.g. Calgary, Toronto, and Montréal). In contrast, for travel within BC, there is a greater appetite for trips to destinations outside of the major cities.	<i>There is an opportunity for cities outside of BC to attract visitors from British Columbia, while more rural areas within BC may find a greater opportunity with the resident market.</i>
<b>Trips to familiar destinations with limited interactions are favoured.</b> British Columbians are most interested in taking trips where activities and social interactions are limited. They are also more open to re-visiting familiar destinations than travelling to new destinations.	<i>There is a greater opportunity to resonate with potential BC travellers by highlighting uncrowded yet familiar destinations.</i>
<b>British Columbians are very outdoors focused</b> , with COVID-19 likely enhancing the popularity of outdoor activities such as hiking/walking in nature, natural attractions, and viewing the Northern lights. The Northern lights are more popular in British Columbia than in any other Canadian province.	<i>Communicating the availability of popular outdoor activities in uncrowded settings, whether within BC or in other provinces or territories, will capture the attention of potential travellers in British Columbia.</i>
<b>Younger British Columbians (under 35 years) are eager to resume travelling.</b> They are less concerned about health and safety and have the strongest intent to travel both within and outside of BC. This audience is also the most open to visiting larger Canadian cities such as Toronto and Montréal.	<i>Younger British Columbians (under 35 years) represent the best immediate opportunity for BC-based operators as well as those in other provinces and territories, and in particular for larger cities.</i>
<b>Older British Columbians (55+ years) are more hesitant to travel in the near future.</b> Much of their hesitancy is related to health and safety concerns.	<i>Clearly illustrating in communications that health and safety measures are being followed and that a destination is safe is particularly important for attracting older British Columbians (55+ years).</i>

# DOMESTIC TRAVEL INTENT AND CONSIDERATION

## Key Insights:

- As seen with residents across Canada, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted British Columbians' plans to travel in 2021.
- Relative to the Canadian average, the outlook for in-province travel in BC is slightly above average, while the outlook for out-of-province domestic travel is slightly below average.
- With BC residents following a Canada-wide trend for staying closer to home, **Alberta is the province that stands to benefit the most from the BC outbound market.**

## Vacation Outlook – Next Year vs. Past Year (% spending more time minus % spending less time)

Staying at home	<b>+38</b>
Travelling within BC	<b>-2</b>
Travelling outside of BC, but within Canada	<b>-41</b>
Travelling outside of Canada	<b>-59</b>



Total Residents (n=1500)

## Likelihood of Travelling within Canada – Next Year

### Out-of-Province Travel

Immediate Potential  
(Any trip length within Canada  
outside of own province)



Out-of-Province Travellers (n=750)

Market Size Potential  
(Out-of-Province Travellers  
considering visiting each region)



Alberta	<b>1.16 M</b>
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	<b>420,000</b>
Ontario	<b>845,000</b>
Quebec	<b>530,000</b>
Atlantic	<b>1.34 M</b>
North	<b>650,500</b>

### In-Province Travel

Immediate Potential  
(Any trip length within province)



Residents evaluating in-province destinations (n=750)

# DOMESTIC TRAVEL INTENT AND CONSIDERATION (CONT.)

## Key Insights:

- Alberta is the province most likely to be under consideration for a visit in the next year, with Banff/Lake Louise being the top destination. **Alberta stands to benefit the most from the BC outbound market.**
- Major Canadian cities (Calgary, Toronto, and Montréal) are also of interest to British Columbians. **There is an opportunity for major Canadian cities outside of BC to attract visitors from British Columbia.**
- Destinations other than major cities are most popular for travel within BC. **There is an opportunity for smaller BC destinations to capitalize on the in-province market.**

## Destinations Seriously Considering – Next Year

### Out-of-Province Travel – Top 3 Provinces

<b>45%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>21%</b>
Alberta	Ontario	Quebec

### Top 5 Destinations

<b>34%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>21%</b>
Banff & Lake Louise	Calgary	Toronto	Jasper	Montréal

Out-of-Province Travellers (n=750)

### In-Province Travel – Top 5 Destinations

Vancouver Island, not Victoria	<b>41%</b>
Vancouver Coast & Mountains	<b>39%</b>
Thompson Okanagan	<b>38%</b>
Victoria	<b>34%</b>
Metro Vancouver	<b>25%</b>

Residents evaluating in-province destinations (n=750)

## Most Appealing Destinations / Destination Knowledge

### Out-of-Province Travel – Top 3 Appealing Provinces

	Alberta	Ontario	Quebec
Most Appealing	<b>31%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>11%</b>
Knowledge (excellent/very good)	<b>39%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>17%</b>

### Top 3 Appealing Destinations

	Banff & Lake Louise	Calgary	Toronto
Most Appealing	<b>14%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>9%</b>
Knowledge (excellent/very good)	<b>36%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>32%</b>

Out-of-Province Travellers planning to travel within Canada in next year (n=595/n=591)

### In-Province Travel – Top 3 Appealing Destinations

	Most Appealing	Knowledge (excellent/very good)
	Vancouver Island, not Victoria	<b>24%</b> <b>34%</b>
	Thompson Okanagan	<b>19%</b> <b>31%</b>
	Vancouver Coast & Mountains	<b>17%</b> <b>31%</b>

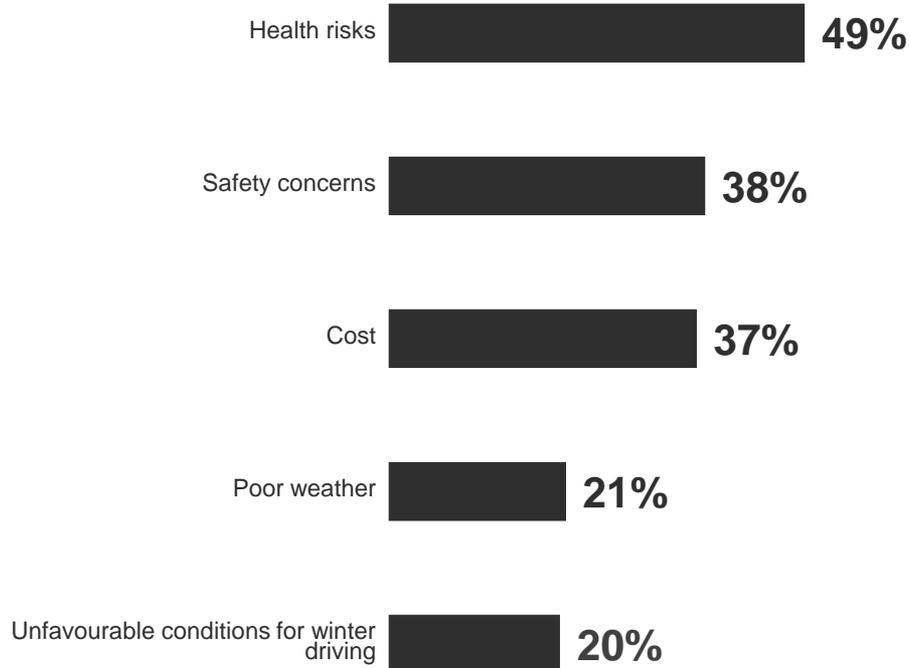
Residents evaluating in-province destinations planning to travel within Canada in next year (n=597)

# BARRIERS TO TRAVEL WITHIN CANADA

## Key Insights:

- Health risks are the top barrier to travel within Canada. Concerns about health risks increase with age and may be linked to the availability of a vaccine for COVID-19 (as this study was fielded in November 2020). As more British Columbians are vaccinated, health risks may decline as a barrier to travel; meanwhile, **demonstrating that health and safety measures are in place and a destination is safe to visit are key messages that need to be communicated to encourage British Columbians to travel within the province and to other Canadian provinces and territories.**
- Just 15% of British Columbians feel safe travelling now. This group is more likely to have travelled during the pandemic and more likely to say they are comfortable flying domestically. The top barrier for this group is cost, so **travel deals could motivate those already comfortable with travelling to take more trips.**

## Top 5 Barriers to Travel



Feel safe travelling now

15%



Total Residents (n=1500)

# COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS

## Key Insights:

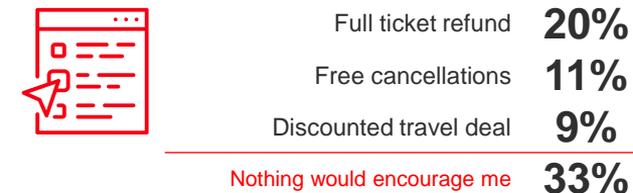
- There is pent up demand for travel, with nearly two-thirds of British Columbians indicating that they are eager to travel again.
- British Columbians are most interested in taking trips where activities and social interactions are limited, and with more outdoor-based activities and attractions. They are more open to re-visiting familiar destinations than travelling to new destinations. **There is a greater opportunity to resonate with potential BC travellers by highlighting uncrowded and familiar destinations.**
- While one-third of British Columbians say nothing could encourage them to book a trip in the near future, the other two-thirds are open to a variety of booking incentives. **Flexible options and travel deals may encourage some British Columbians to book sooner.**
- When choosing a destination, health and safety measures and COVID-19 case counts are the most important considerations for potential BC travellers. **To reassure potential visitors, it is important to communicate that health and safety protocols are in place.**

## Transportation Mode Likely to Use – Top 3



Total Residents (n=1500)

## Incentives to Book in the Near Future – Top 3



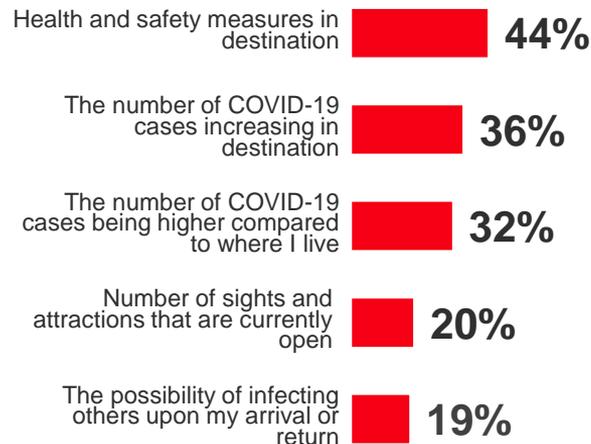
Total Residents (n=1500)

## Attitudes Towards Travel – Top2Box



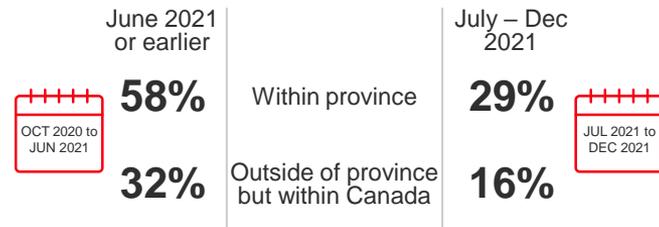
Total Residents (n=1500)

## COVID Specific Factors to Consider when Selecting Destination – Top 5



Total Residents (n=1500)

## First Time Comfortable Travelling



Total Residents (n=1500)

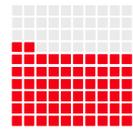
# KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF NEXT CANADA TRIP

## Key Insights:

- Travelling for vacation purposes and visiting family and friends will drive travel in 2021. There is little interest in business or conference-related travel in 2021, **which is a challenge that the business events sector will need to address going forward.**
- In the next year, domestic travel parties will largely be made up of immediate family, with friends being more likely to travel together within British Columbia. **Couples and families represent the greatest potential markets for travel within and outside of British Columbia.**

## Trip Purpose

### Out-of-Province Travel



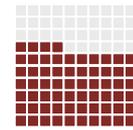
Vacation  
**62%**



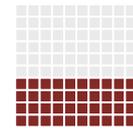
Visit family and friends  
**46%**

Out-of-Province Travellers answering (n=620)

### In-Province Travel



Vacation  
**64%**



Visit family and friends  
**40%**

Residents evaluating in-province destinations answering (n=599)

## Trip Length – Top 1 / Travel Party – Top 3 / Accommodation – Top 3

### Out-of-Province Travel

**43%**

4-6 nights



Spouse or partner



**64%** → **42%**

Would travel with spouse/partner only

Child (under 18 years)

**19%**

Alone/solo

**16%**



**44%**

Mid-priced hotel/motel

**35%**

Home of friends or family

**27%**

Rented house, apartment or condo

Out-of-Province Travellers answering (n=620)

### In-Province Travel

**56%**

2-3 nights



Spouse or partner



**54%** → **33%**

Would travel with spouse/partner only

Friend(s)

**19%**

Child (under 18 years)

**15%**

Alone/solo

**15%**



**45%**

Mid-priced hotel/motel

**31%**

Home of friends or family

**25%**

Rented house, apartment or condo

Residents evaluating in-province destinations answering (n=599)

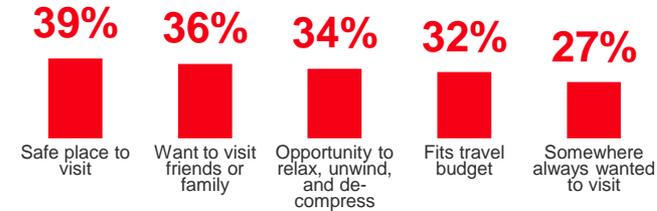
# KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF NEXT CANADA TRIP (CONT.)

## Key Insights:

- Destination safety and relaxation opportunities are the top factors British Columbians consider when choosing a destination. **Communicating that health and safety measures are in place will help to reassure potential visitors.**
- Along with an affinity for a variety of outdoor activities, British Columbians are particularly drawn to the Northern lights, which are more popular among out-of-province travellers in British Columbia than in any other province. **British Columbia represents a good potential market for trips that include Northern lights viewing.**

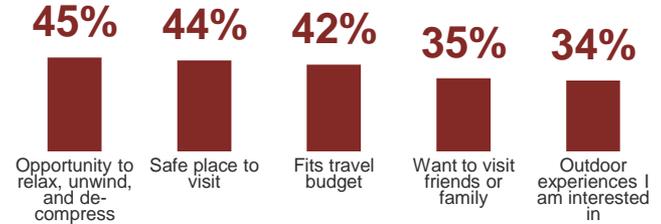
## Destination Selection Factors – Top 5

### Out-of-Province Travel



Out-of-Province Travellers answering (n=620)

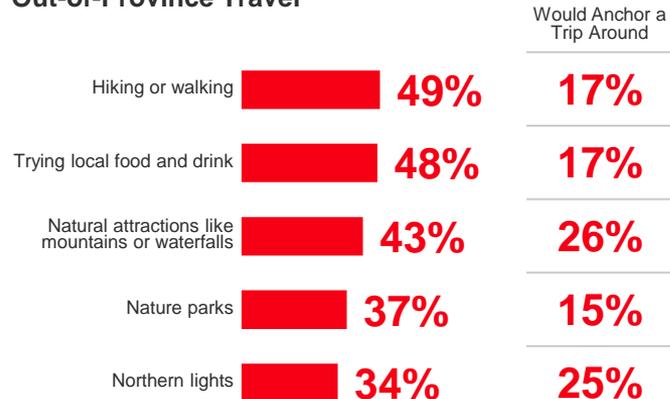
### In-Province Travel



Residents evaluating in-province destinations answering (n=599)

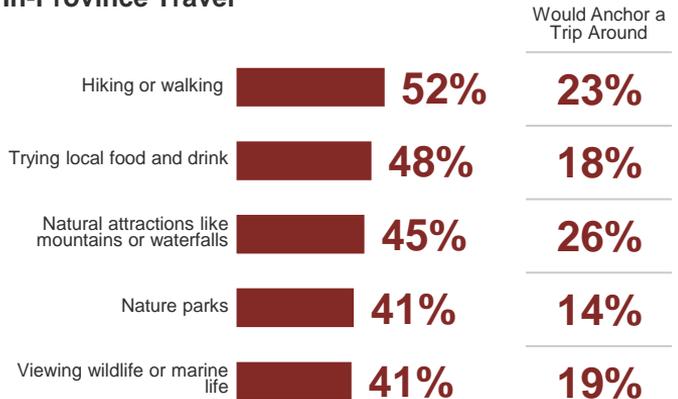
## Vacation Activities – Top 5

### Out-of-Province Travel



Out-of-Province Travellers answering (n=620/n=712)

### In-Province Travel



Residents evaluating in-province destinations answering (n=599/n=694)

# BOOKING

## Key Insights:

- There is a role for travel agents supporting domestic travel in the British Columbia market, especially for travel outside of the province.
- When deciding to work with a travel agent for any part of the trip planning process, British Columbians are typically looking for a good deal or expert destination knowledge. **The greatest opportunity for travel agents to engage with potential travellers in British Columbia is by highlighting those offerings at the booking stage.**

## Accommodation Booking – Top 3

### Out-of-Province Travel



Out-of-Province Travellers answering (n=620)

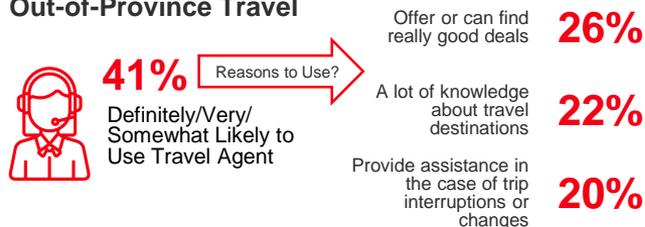
### In-Province Travel



Residents evaluating in-province destinations answering (n=599)

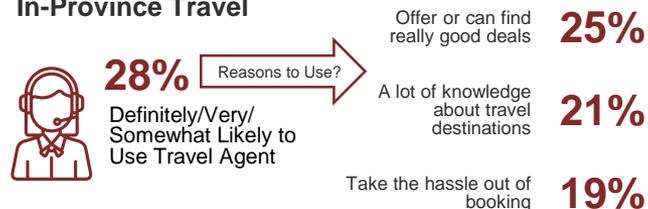
## Likelihood to Use Travel Agents/Reasons to Use Agent – Top 3

### Out-of-Province Travel



Out-of-Province Travellers answering (n=620)  
Out-of-Province Travellers likely to use agent (n=299)

### In-Province Travel



Residents evaluating in-province destinations answering (n=599)  
Residents evaluating in-province destinations likely to use agent (n=219)

## Travel Agent Tasks – Top 3

### Out-of-Province Travel



Out-of-Province Travellers likely to use agent (n=254)

### In-Province Travel



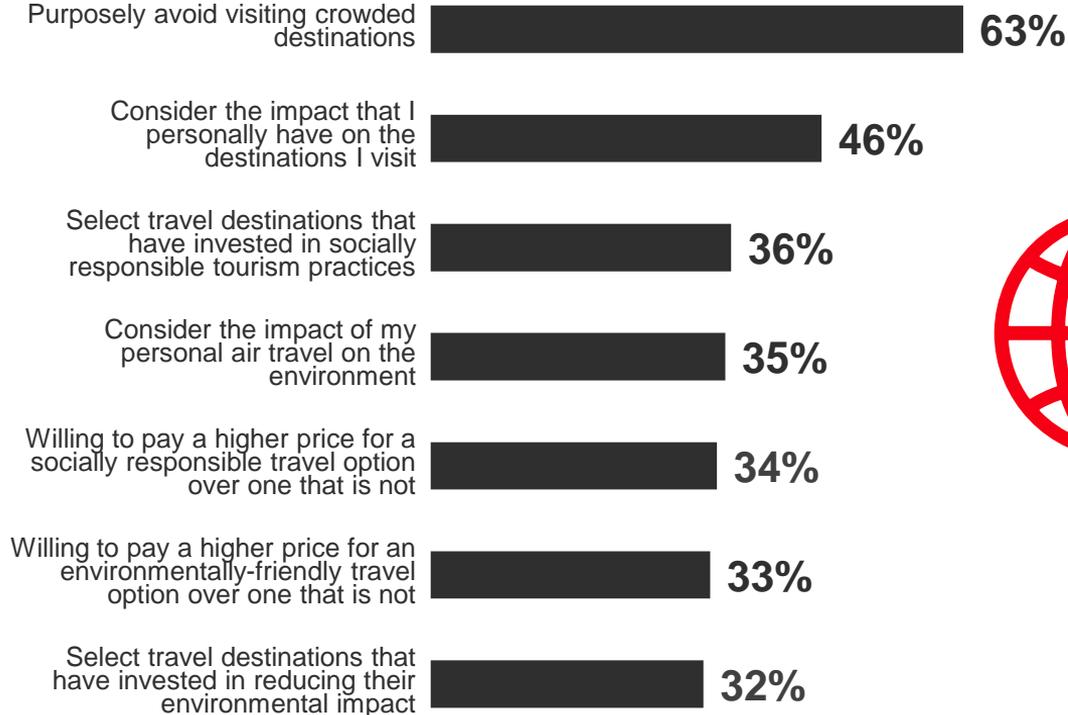
Residents evaluating in-province destinations likely to use agent (n=168)

# SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

## Key Insights:

- British Columbians are intentionally seeking out less crowded destinations, which may be related to concerns about COVID-19.
- At least one-third of British Columbians say they consider various aspects of sustainability when selecting travel destinations, and they may be willing to pay for more responsible options. However, just 5% mention the availability of eco-friendly travel activities as a top factor influencing their destination choice. ***This suggests that while sustainability is a consideration for potential BC travellers, there are other factors that play a greater deciding role in destination selection.***

## Attitudes About Sustainable Travel



Total Residents (n=1500)

## DOMESTIC TRAVEL INTENT AND CONSIDERATION

### Vacation Outlook – Next Year vs. Past Year

**S2.** How do you plan to spend your vacation time in the next 12 months compared to the last 12 months? Will you spend your vacation time ...

### Likelihood of Traveling Within Canada – Next Year

**MP6.** Realistically, how likely are you to take a vacation trip outside of your own province, but within Canada in the next year?

Market Potential – Calculated value: Total out of province travellers (S3, S5) seriously considering visiting a province (BVC1a)

### Destinations Seriously Considering – Next Year

**BVC1a.** You may have already mentioned this before, but which destinations would you seriously consider visiting in the next year? (Select all that apply)

**BVC1b.** You may have already mentioned this before, but which destinations would you seriously consider visiting in the next year? (Select all that apply)

### Most Appealing Destinations – Top 3 / Destination Knowledge

**MP8a.** Earlier, you mentioned you would seriously consider visiting the following provinces in the next year. Which place most appeals to you? (Select one)

**MP8b.** Earlier, you mentioned you would seriously consider visiting the following destinations in the next year. Which place most appeals to you? (Select one)

**MP3.** How would you rate your level of knowledge of vacation opportunities in each of the following destinations? (Select one for each)

## BARRIERS TO TRAVEL WITHIN CANADA

### Top 5 Barriers to Travel

**MP9.** Which of the following reasons might prevent you from travelling within Canada? (Select all that apply)

## COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS

### Transportation Mode Likely to Use – Top 3

**COV16.** As government restrictions related to COVID-19 are relaxed, how likely are you to use the following modes of transportation?

### Incentives to Book in the Near Future – Top 3

**COV17.** Which one of the following offerings would most encourage you to make a travel booking in the near future? (Select one)

### Attitudes Toward Travel – Top2Box

**COV13.** Thinking of your next vacation, as government restrictions related to COVID-19 are relaxed, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

### Factors to Consider when Selecting Destination (COVID Specific) – Top 5

**NEWQ4.** When thinking about taking a vacation trip to [within province / outside your own province, but within Canada], which of the following are the most important considerations in selecting your travel destination? (Select up to 3 options)

### First Time Comfortable Travelling

**COV5.** Given the current situation with COVID-19, when is the first month that you would feel comfortable travelling to the following destinations?

## KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF NEXT CANADA TRIP

### Trip Purpose

**FT2.** Thinking of your next trip to [within province / outside your own province, but within Canada], what would be the main purpose of this trip?

### Trip Length – Top 1 / Travel Party – Top 3 / Accommodation – Top 3

**FT4.** Thinking of your next trip to [within province / outside your own province, but within Canada], how many nights do you think you would spend?

**FT5.** Thinking of your next trip to [within province / outside your own province, but within Canada], who would you travel with? (Select all that apply)

**FT10.** Thinking of your next trip to [within province / outside your own province, but within Canada], which types of accommodation would you consider staying at? (Select all that apply)

### Destination Selection Factors – Top 5

**FT3.** Thinking of your next trip to [within province / outside your own province, but within Canada], which of the following would factor into your choice to travel to that destination? (Select all that apply)

### Vacation Activities – Top 5

**FT11.** Thinking of your next trip to [within province / outside your own province, but within Canada], what activities would you be interested in participating in? (Select all that apply)

**MP12.** Among these activities are there any that are important enough that you would base an entire trip around that activity? (Select all that apply)

## BOOKING

### Accommodation Booking – Top 3

**FT8.** Thinking of your next trip to [within province / outside your own province, but within Canada], which methods would you be likely to use to book your accommodation? (Select all that apply)

### Likelihood to Use Travel Agents / Travel Agent Tasks – Top 3

**FT6.** Travel agents offer personalized service to help individuals, groups, and business travellers plan and organize their travel schedules, from purchasing tour packages to booking flights and hotels. Examples of travel agents include Flight Centre or Transat Travel, they do not include online booking engines like Expedia or Travelocity. Thinking of your next trip to [within province / outside your own province, but within Canada], how likely are you to use a travel agent or tour operator to help you research or book your trip?

**NEWQ2.** Which of the following reasons is the most important consideration for using a travel agent to book your next vacation trip?

### Travel Agent Tasks – Top 3

**FT7.** Which of the following would you have a travel agent or tour operator help you with? (Select all that apply)

## SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

### Agreement with Statements – Top2Box (Strongly/Somewhat Agree)

**PC31.** Sustainable travel refers to “travel that minimizes any negative impacts on the destination’s environment, economy and society, while making positive contributions to the local people and conserving the destination’s natural and cultural heritage”. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements ...