

Why Newfoundland and Labrador?

Exploring What Motivates Travellers from Around the World to Visit

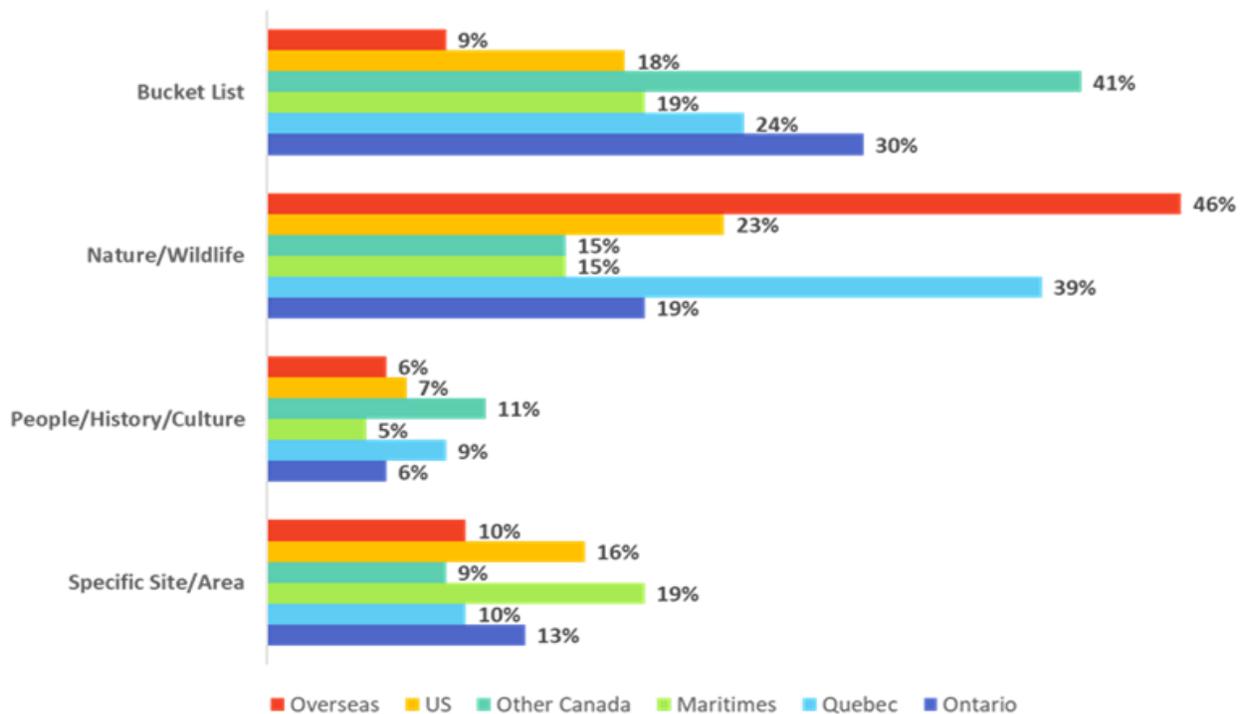
More people are travelling now than ever before. 2017 marked the seventh consecutive year of robust growth in global travel, with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) reporting that international tourist arrivals grew 7%, an increase of 84 million travellers from 2016. Travel continues to play a significant role in people's lives, not only offering them much needed rest and relaxation but also affording them the opportunity to spend quality time with friends and family. A recent global travel intentions survey found that bonding with family and loved ones, disconnecting from the daily grind, and "switching off" were top trip motivators. The majority of travellers, however, are not only looking for a relaxing vacation – they are seeking a blend of reward and achievement when they travel. For most vacationers, experiencing different cultures, visiting new or exotic destinations, pursuing passions, and experiencing popular travel trends are also important trip drivers.

In today's landscape, travellers have at their fingertips an abundance of choice and when it comes to choosing a destination, the opportunities and possibilities are endless. Understanding why people travel, and more importantly, what motivates them to choose a particular destination over thousands of others is of utmost importance to tourism destinations and operators alike as they strive to differentiate themselves and ultimately convert travellers along the path-to-purchase. Being mindful of the reasons visitors chose to vacation in Newfoundland and Labrador is fundamental to delivering on expectations and improving the visitor experience.

To help better understand the travel motivations of recent vacation travellers, the province's exit survey asked visitors what one factor influenced them to visit Newfoundland and Labrador. Our vacation visitors were motivated to visit by a number of factors, but most notably, they came to fulfil a longstanding desire to visit – 27% of vacation visitors overall indicated that they always wanted to visit and that Newfoundland and Labrador was on their bucket list. A significant share of vacationers (21%) came specifically to see the abundance of nature and wildlife – the natural environment, icebergs, whales, and puffins. Many travellers (13%) identified a specific site, place or area that lured them here, while 7% credited the province's rich culture and friendly people with motivating them to visit.

Visitors from Canada, the United States, and overseas differ in their motivations for choosing Newfoundland and Labrador as their vacation destination of choice (see chart). Compared to all vacation visitors, Canadian visitors overall were slightly more likely to say they visited Newfoundland and Labrador because it was on their bucket list (30% vs. 27%), with slightly fewer Canadians overall identifying nature and wildlife as a motivator (19% vs. 21%). From a regional origin perspective, the motivators of vacation visitors from Ontario, the province's largest source market, tend to mirror the motivations of Canadian vacation visitors overall. Visitors from BC, Alberta, the Prairies, and the Territories ("Other Canada") were significantly more likely to say they visited to fulfil a longstanding desire to check Newfoundland and Labrador off their bucket list (41% vs. 27%). They are also more likely than vacationers overall to be motivated to visit by culture, people and heritage (11% vs. 7%). For visitors from these provinces, viewing nature and wildlife and visiting specific sites/areas played less of a role in their decision to visit Newfoundland and Labrador compared to vacation visitors overall. Interestingly, visitors from Other Canada are also more likely to be visiting the province for the first time.

Trip Motivators by Origin



Source: Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation: 2016 Provincial Visitor Exit Survey

Nature and wildlife are big draws for travellers from Quebec who were almost twice as likely (39% vs. 21%) as visitors from elsewhere to cite scenery, icebergs, whales and seabirds as motivators for their trip. Perhaps unsurprisingly – given the proximity and higher share of repeat visitors – Maritimers are least likely to view Newfoundland and Labrador as a bucket list trip (19% vs. 27%) and also least likely to be motivated to visit by culture and people (5% vs. 7%). Instead, vacationers from the Maritimes are more likely to be drawn to the province to see a specific site or area (19% vs. 13%), with Gros Morne the top mentioned attraction.

For international vacation travellers, the allure of nature and wildlife takes centre stage. The desire to see the province’s natural environment, scenery, and wildlife (23%) also drives visitation from the United States, outranking other reasons for visiting such as a ticking Newfoundland and Labrador off the bucket list (18%), and to see specific sites or areas (16%). Among specific sites of interest to American visitors, L’Anse aux Meadows (33%) tops the list, followed by Gros Morne (21%). Compared to other vacation visitors, overseas travellers are notably less likely to view Newfoundland and Labrador as a bucket list destination (9% vs. 27%). For these visitors, the appeal of nature and wildlife plays the largest role in their decision to vacation in Newfoundland and Labrador as nearly half (46%) of them said that the natural environment, wildlife and icebergs were the main reason for their visit. For overseas travellers who are motivated to visit by a specific site, the East Coast Trail was the top mentioned motivator, ahead of Gros Morne and St. John’s.

For tourism destinations and operators, knowing what drives visitation to Newfoundland and Labrador and how motivations differ by origin is an integral part of helping to deliver the type of journey visitors are expecting. Visitors who travel to the province to fulfil a bucket list trip, often visiting for the first

time, are looking to sample what the province has to offer and take in a range of experiences. They are looking for the total package - experiencing top destinations, nature, wildlife, culture and hospitality. For visitors from overseas and Quebec, who are much more likely to be drawn to the province for its nature, highlighting the natural environment and wildlife are key to both attracting these markets and helping create a fulfilling travel experience once they arrive. In today's travel landscape, knowing your visitor and personalizing their experience goes a long way towards delivering on expectations and encouraging repeat visitation.