

Tourism Industry Research

May 2007

Mexican Travellers



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In 2006, Mexican inbound tourism to Canada grew to a very respectable 19% compared to October 2005. Only 1 in 5 ever travel to British Columbia. If BC wants to attract more Mexicans a CTC market research report suggests promoting our **provincial identity**:

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES: Mexicans tend to value the educational aspect of travel. In fact, more than 8 in 10 target travellers consider international travel an investment in their children’s education. BC boasts a wide range of first-rate educational attractions, such as museums, hands-on nature interpretation centers that can be promoted to those travelling with children as well as to adults travelling alone or with other adults.

SKIING & RESORTS: Skiing has become very popular among upscale Mexicans—45.9% of target travellers would like to try downhill or cross-country skiing on a trip to Canada. Highlighting the après-ski experience, luxury spa services, top-notch restaurants, and world class hotels & resorts would be of interest to Mexicans new to skiing. Mexican family ski travellers are especially good targets for BC. They are more inclined to spend on vacation than other travellers.

NATURE & WILDERNESS: Target Mexican travellers show a keen sense of adventure and a desire to get out and try different outdoor activities. Many might try hiking, kayaking, or canoeing in BC. It would be important to stress that experiencing the great outdoors can be arranged with no sacrifice of comfort and amenities. Highlighting that nature is everywhere, even in cities is key. Photos of cities with water and mountains in the background, information on parks and beaches communicate the feeling of ‘nature all around’.

CRUISING: Despite high interest in cruising, only 15.2% of target travelers have ever taken an ocean cruise of three or more nights. A cruise along the west coast of Canada can speak to Mexican travellers’ interest in scenery, whale watching, the outdoors, and the new and different.

Source—Mexico Market Profile: <http://www.tourismvi.ca/research/pdf/Mexico.pdf>

Cruising

This year, 12.62 million people will take a cruise, according to a study by the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA). That’s a half million more cruisers than in 2006! This trend is expected to continue to grow with the precipitated arrival of exciting new ships, an aging population, and general marketing prowess.



In BC, the 2006 cruise season contributed more than \$1.25 billion to the BC economy and almost \$90 million in direct and indirect taxes. Almost 1.3 million passengers visited BC ports as 2006 continued the trend of growth for ports along the West Coast. In a survey of Celebrity Cruises’ passengers, nearly 80% of respondents indicated that their experience generally exceeded their expectations. Visiting sights and attractions was top passenger activity. Shopping, visiting parks and historic sites, dining out, and outdoor activities were also popular activities. Many comments mentioned the beauty and cleanliness of the towns and cities of BC, the friendliness of the people, and the sights and attractions that were visited during port calls as the most memorable aspects of their trips. In all ports, the majority of passengers rated their port experiences as “good” or “excellent”. Finally, and most promising, **73% of respondents expressed a high level of interest in returning to BC!**

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Everyone needs
a little Island time.

Green Accommodation Trends

Recently, the American Hotel & Lodging Association identified **43 million “environmentally minded domestic travelers”** who sought significant cultural interchange and new ways to help the planet while traveling. Another report by the U.S. Travel Data Centre, revealed very similar findings: **43 million travellers consider themselves “ecologically concerned”**. A third survey by Orbitz revealed **67% of Americans Stress Importance of Eco-friendly Travel**.

Travelers are reassessing how they travel, where they stay and the impact they leave behind when on vacation. Travellers will be renting hybrid cars, picking eco-friendly destinations and choosing zero-impact packages. At the fringes of the trend, travellers will even be checking up on “green” ratings for their hotels and airlines. The Orbitz survey supports this trend:

- ◆ More than half (65%) state it would somewhat impact their decision to stay at a hotel if they knew the hotel was using solar or wind energy to supplement the powering of the building.
- ◆ A strong majority (63%) state they would pay a little more to rent a hybrid vehicle or stay at a “green” hotel.
- ◆ More than half (52%) of Americans state they would be willing to donate a small portion of their vacation budget to help save the environment when booking a trip.

It's been shown time and again across the marketplace that there is business and profit in being green. It's past time for the industry to hear and learn that lesson and to boldly, prominently, and proudly display their green seal. If a green accommodation doesn't want to participate in a certification program, they would be wise to share their exact green actions with the public and promote their own green label.

There are two aspects to being a green building -- hotel or otherwise. One involves the physical aspects of the building and site (such as water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality). Are the paints nontoxic? Are the systems low energy and do they involve recyclable or reusable materials? The second aspect involves the actual operations of the physical plant. How is it run? Is it environmentally friendly? Is it carbon neutral? What are the soaps, shampoos and water heads? What kind of lighting products do you use? How do you run your operations to be environmentally friendly?

In the US the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is now required to ask hotel and convention center personnel who are bidding for EPA business a list of questions. The questions touch on recycling programs, energy efficiency, paperless billing and the reuse of linens and towels. The agency considers the answers when it evaluates bids. The General Services Administration (GSA), which sets policy for all US government travel, is also amending its own rules to suggest that meeting planners throughout the government consult the EPA checklist. That could affect a significant chunk of the \$13.5 billion in annual US federal spending for travel.

The Hotel Association of Canada (HAC) is the national organization representing the accommodation industry in Canada. Its membership encompasses the provincial and territorial hotel associations, the corporate hotel chains, independent hotels, motels and resorts and the many suppliers to the hotel industry. The **HAC Green Key Ecommodation Rating Program** is designed to recognize hotels, motels and resorts that are committed to improving their fiscal and environmental performances. The government of Canada endorses the program and is requiring many of its employees to stay at Green Key hotels. Currently on Vancouver Island there are 7 such Green Key hotels.

For more info please visit: http://www.hotelassociation.ca/site/programs/green_key.htm

