

**AVSP 7 – Summer 2016**

**Section 16:**  
**Summary Profiles –**  
**Independent, Small Ship,**  
**Independent Cruise, B&B,**  
**and Group Markets**

# Summary Profiles: Independent, Small Ship, Independent Cruise, B&B, and Group Markets

This chapter profiles a number of niche markets of interest to Alaska’s travel industry. Definitions for each community and sample sizes are provided in the table below.

**TABLE 16.1 - Market Definition and Sample Size  
Selected Visitor Markets**

Market	Definition	% of Alaska Market	Estimated Market Size	Sample Size	Maximum Margin of Error
Independent	Did not purchase multi-day package	36%	662,000	3,242	±1.7%
Independent Cruisers	Spent nights in Alaska on their own before or after a cruise or cruise/tour package	6%	110,000	339	±10.8%
Small Cruise Ship	Overnighted for at least one night on a cruise ship under 250 passengers in capacity	1%	12,000	82	±5.3%
B&B	Spent at least one night in a B&B	4%	82,000	401	±4.9%
Group Travelers	Traveling in a group of six or more people	17%	318,000	796	±3.5%

Independent travelers made up 36 percent of the Alaska visitor market in 2016. Besides not purchasing a multi-day package, they had a number of characteristics that made them unique.

- They were more likely to be travelling to visit friends/family, and more than a third stayed in a private home while in Alaska.
- A third rented a vehicle while in Alaska and another quarter used a personal vehicle.
- Independent travelers were more likely to visit Southcentral and the Interior and less likely to visit Southeast. Only 9 percent visited Juneau, while 71 percent visited Anchorage.
- Their activities were less likely to include a train, shopping, city/sightseeing tours, and day cruises – but more likely to include fishing, hiking/nature walk, and wildlife viewing.
- Six in ten had been to Alaska previously.
- They were more likely to book parts of their travel online and few used travel agents. Almost half waited until April through June 2016 to book their Alaska trip.
- Independent travelers were generally younger, less likely to be retired, and travelled in slightly smaller group, compared to the average Alaska traveler.

Independent cruisers spent additional time in Alaska before or after their cruise. This market had a number of interesting characteristics.

- Their average length of stay in Alaska was 10.9 nights, somewhat longer than the overall market.
- Independent cruisers were more likely to participate in all activities except fishing (only 7 percent fished).
- They reported higher levels of satisfaction compared to the overall market, and 88 percent said they were very likely to recommend Alaska. However, only 28 percent said they were very likely to return to Alaska in the next five years.
- Compared to the average Alaska visitor, they were more likely to be from the Southern U.S. (30 percent vs. 21 percent) and less likely to be from the Western U.S. (20 percent vs. 38 percent).
- On average, they were older and wealthier than the overall Alaska market. Over half were retired or semi-retired.

The small cruise market includes those that spent at least one night on a cruise ship with fewer than 250 passengers.

- The small cruise market averaged 61.0 years old, with an annual household income of \$147,000 and a high percentage of college graduates. Only ten percent had children in their household.
- This market tended to book their travel early, with over a third booking by December 2015.
- Only 8 percent of small cruisers had been on an Alaska cruise before, compared to 16 percent of the overall market. Only 20 percent said they were very likely to return within 5 years.
- They were less likely to say their trip was a much better value compared to other destinations, but more likely to report being very satisfied.
- Wildlife viewing and hiking/nature walk were the most commonly reported activities for this market.

The B&B market differed from the overall Alaska market in several ways.

- Four out of five traveled to Alaska by air and only 13 percent were cruise travelers.
- They were much more likely to use a rental vehicle or state ferry to travel between communities and more likely to participate in a number of activities, including fishing, wildlife viewing, and hiking/nature walking.
- Only one-quarter purchased a multi-day package while in Alaska.
- Southcentral was the most common region they visited, followed by the Interior. Only a third went to Southeast.
- B&B travelers spent an average of \$2,194 on their Alaska trip, more than double the overall average.

“Group Travelers” are those traveling in a group of six or more.

- The group travel market is dominated by vacation/pleasure travelers (90 percent). Almost three-quarters were cruise travelers.
- On average, they stayed only 8.2 nights in Alaska, a shorter stay than is typical in the overall market.
- Eighty percent of group travelers that did not travel by cruise purchased other multi-day packages. The most common type was fishing packages, followed by motorcoach packages.
- Almost a third of group travelers lived in households with children. They were also more wealthy, with an average household income of \$125,000.
- Forty-two percent of group travelers booked their travel through travel agents.
- Group travelers spent an average of \$895 per person while in Alaska.

**TABLE 16.2 - Trip Purpose and Packages  
Selected Visitor Markets (%)**

	All Visitors	Independent	Ind't Cruisers	Small Cruise Ship	B&B	Group Travelers
<b>Trip Purpose</b>						
Vacation/pleasure	79	44	99	96	75	90
Visiting friends/rel.	13	35	1	3	18	7
Business only	5	13	<1	-	4	1
Business/pleasure	3	8	<1	1	2	2
<b>Purchased multi-day package (including cruise)</b>						
Yes	64	-	100	100	26	80
<b>Package type (Base: non-cruise, purchased package)</b>						
Fishing lodge	49	-	-	-	*	58
Rail package	11	-	-	-	*	6
Wilderness lodge	10	-	-	-	*	5
Adventure tour	9	-	-	-	*	7
Motorcoach tour	8	-	-	-	*	11
Rental car/RV package	6	-	-	-	*	4
Hunting	2	-	-	-	*	1

\*Sample size too small for analysis.

**TABLE 16.3 - Transportation Modes  
Selected Visitor Markets (%)**

	All Visitors	Independent	Ind't Cruisers	Small Cruise Ship	B&B	Group Travelers
<b>Transportation Market</b>						
Cruise	55	-	100	100	13	73
Air	40	88	-	-	81	26
Highway/ferry	5	12	-	-	6	1
<b>Used to Travel Between Communities</b>						
Tour bus/van	15	3	43	25	13	15
Rental vehicle	14	31	19	15	60	11
Alaska Railroad	14	5	43	23	17	12
Personal vehicle	9	25	2	-	12	5
Air	9	15	8	35	25	6
Rental RV	2	5	1	1	1	2
State ferry	2	4	<1	1	7	1
Personal RV	1	4	<1	-	<1	1

**TABLE 16.4 - Length of Stay, Destinations and Lodging Type  
Selected Visitor Markets (%)**

	All Visitors	Independent	Ind't Cruisers	Small Cruise Ship	B&B	Group Travelers
Average length of stay in Alaska	9.2	10.4	10.9	12.4	10.8	8.2
<b>Regions Visited</b>						
Southeast	67	21	99	90	31	78
Southcentral	52	76	95	47	85	41
Interior	29	40	44	36	54	22
Southwest	4	6	1	6	8	3
Far North	2	4	1	8	4	1
<b>Destinations Visited, Top 10</b>						
Juneau	61	9	98	81	24	75
Ketchikan	58	6	94	34	13	73
Skagway	48	5	87	12	11	61
Anchorage	47	71	89	45	82	37
Glacier Bay Nat'l Park	29	1	24	32	8	35
Denali Nat'l Park	23	25	42	34	43	19
Seward	23	28	66	23	47	21
Fairbanks	17	23	16	13	23	11
Hoonah/Icy Strait Point	13	<1	46	18	2	12
Talkeetna	11	15	22	13	29	10
<b>Lodging Types Used</b>						
Cruise ship	57	-	97	100	12	72
Hotel/motel	37	49	91	87	59	28
Lodge	15	11	20	19	25	15
B&B	4	9	8	19	100	2
Vacation rental	3	7	3	-	7	4
VFR	15	38	2	3	17	6
Campground/RV	6	15	3	4	6	4
Wilderness camping	2	5	<1	-	6	2
State ferry	1	2	<1	<1	3	<1

**TABLE 16.5 - Statewide Activities – Top 10  
Selected Visitor Markets (%)**

	All Visitors	Independent	Ind't Cruisers	Small Cruise Ship	B&B	Group Travelers
Shopping	75	61	77	56	66	78
Wildlife viewing	45	55	62	90	77	38
Cultural activities	39	33	57	54	48	39
Day cruises	39	26	60	36	44	43
Hiking/nature walk	34	47	47	78	65	29
Train	32	7	61	27	24	35
City/sightseeing tours	31	13	50	36	21	39
Fishing	16	30	7	7	30	18
Flightseeing	13	9	25	17	17	18
Tramway/gondola	13	7	18	11	11	18

**TABLE 16.6 - Satisfaction Ratings  
Selected Visitor Markets (%)**

	All Visitors	Independent	Ind't Cruisers	Small Cruise Ship	B&B	Group Travelers
<b>Satisfaction with overall Alaska Trip</b>						
Very satisfied	75	71	86	87	76	77
Satisfied	23	26	13	12	22	22
<b>Compared to expectations</b>						
Much higher	29	26	31	40	19	29
Higher	36	35	41	40	49	39
About as expected	32	36	25	18	28	30
<b>Value for the money, compared to other destinations</b>						
Much better	15	13	12	8	5	16
Better	23	20	24	29	20	22
About the same	45	46	44	45	46	50
<b>Likelihood to recommend and return to Alaska</b>						
Very likely to recommend Alaska	79	78	88	85	82	80
Very likely to return to Alaska in next five years	40	62	28	20	40	35

**TABLE 16.7 - Previous Alaska Travel  
Selected Visitor Markets (%)**

	All Visitors	Independent	Ind't Cruisers	Small Cruise Ship	B&B	Group Travelers
Been to Alaska	40	59	25	24	42	35
Average # of vacation trips (base: repeaters)	4.1	5.5	1.9	2.1	4.6	4.3
Previously traveled in Alaska by cruise ship	16	11	15	8	13	19

**TABLE 16.8 - Trip Planning  
Selected Visitor Markets (%)**

	All Visitors	Independent	Ind't Cruisers	Small Cruise Ship	B&B	Group Travelers
<b>Trip Decision, by Quarter</b>						
Before July 2015	14	7	30	35	13	18
July-Sept 2015	17	12	19	25	14	25
Oct-Dec 2015	17	11	16	19	14	21
Jan-Mar 2016	23	24	14	14	28	19
Apr-Jun 2016	20	32	17	6	21	13
July-Sept 2016	8	14	5	1	9	4
<b>Trip Booking, by Quarter</b>						
Before July 2015	6	1	14	13	2	7
July-Sept 2015	11	3	20	18	7	17
Oct-Dec 2015	15	8	21	37	13	21
Jan-Mar 2016	27	23	18	25	31	26
Apr-Jun 2016	29	44	19	6	33	20
July-Sept 2016	13	23	7	1	14	9
<b>Internet and Travel Agent Usage</b>						
Used internet	68	80	73	78	89	64
Booked over internet	58	73	61	70	80	48
Used TravelAlaska.com	18	20	30	18	34	16
Received Official State Vacation Planner	12	12	19	15	20	13
Booked through travel agent	35	7	52	36	16	42
<b>Other Sources – Top 10</b>						
Friends/family/co-workers	51	57	45	43	55	53
Prior experience	23	34	15	12	25	20
Cruise line	22	1	36	39	5	27
Brochures	15	17	14	23	24	16
AAA	8	6	9	4	10	6
Other travel guide/book	6	7	11	15	14	5
Tour company	5	2	6	10	4	6
Magazine	5	5	4	4	7	5
Television	4	3	4	1	3	5
Milepost	4	9	3	-	9	2

**TABLE 16.9 - Top 10 Websites/Apps Used to Plan/Book Selected Visitor Markets (%)**

	All Visitors		Independent		Ind't Cruisers		Small Cruise Ship		B&B		Group Travelers	
	Plan	Book	Plan	Book	Plan	Book	Plan	Book	Plan	Book	Plan	Book
Airline websites	50	50	60	62	50	51	55	61	64	57	51	54
Cruise line websites	35	27	3	2	60	48	54	38	12	8	42	33
Google	28	4	27	6	41	2	30	5	36	7	30	3
Trip Advisor	23	3	18	4	34	4	33	8	36	8	25	5
Expedia	14	10	15	12	18	14	11	9	20	16	13	10
Hotel/lodge/RV Park	11	10	14	12	20	19	11	11	20	17	11	10
Tour company websites	11	8	9	6	16	8	28	16	18	14	14	8
Car/RV rental websites	10	9	18	17	13	9	10	6	27	24	9	7
Travelocity	7	2	6	3	9	5	5	4	5	2	7	2
Facebook	7	<1	4	<1	8	-	2	-	7	<1	10	-

**TABLE 16.10 - Demographics Selected Visitor Markets (%)**

	All Visitors	Independent	Ind't Cruisers	Small Cruise Ship	B&B	Group Travelers
<b>Origin</b>						
Western US	38	51	20	27	43	31
Southern US	21	17	30	20	16	21
Midwestern US	15	13	16	19	15	19
Eastern US	10	7	16	13	10	11
Canada	7	5	4	-	3	7
Other International	9	6	14	21	14	10
<b>Other Demographics</b>						
Average party size	2.4	2.1	2.6	2.3	2.2	3.6
Average group size	4.2	2.8	3.9	4.4	2.7	13.2
Male/female	49/51	55/45	46/54	45/55	51/49	49/51
Average age	53.7	49.0	57.0	61.0	52.4	51.0
Children in household	23	25	21	10	18	31
Retired/semi-retired	44	32	51	65	40	39
College graduate	63	60	72	79	76	66
Average income	\$114,000	\$106,000	\$138,000	\$147,000	\$116,000	\$125,000

**TABLE 16.11 – Average Spending in Alaska, Per Person, Per Trip Excluding Transportation to/from Alaska Selected Visitor Markets**

	All Visitors	Independent	Ind't Cruisers	Small Cruise Ship	B&B	Group Travelers
Average per-trip spending	\$1,057	\$1,162	\$1,124	\$1,350	\$2,194	\$895