

**AVSP 7 – Summer 2016**

**Section 8:  
Summary Profiles –  
Trip Purpose**

# Summary Profiles: Trip Purpose

In this chapter, the overall visitor market is examined by trip purpose. Over three-quarters of visitors (79 percent) indicated the primary purpose of their trip was for vacation/pleasure, while 13 percent were visiting friends or relatives (VFRs). The remaining 8 percent travelled for business-related purposes. Definitions for each of these markets and sample sizes are provided in the table below.

**TABLE 8.1 - Market Definition and Sample Size  
Trip Purpose**

Market	Definition	% of Alaska Market	Estimated Market Size	Sample Size	Maximum Margin of Error
Vacation/pleasure	Main purpose of trip is vacation or pleasure	79%	1,466,000	4,138	±1.5%
Visiting friends/relatives	Main purpose of trip is to visit friends or relatives	13%	240,000	1,112	±2.9%
Business only/ business and pleasure	Main purpose of trip is business only or business and pleasure	8%	152,000	676	±3.8%

Markets defined by trip purpose differ significantly from each other.

- While 79 percent of vacation/pleasure visitors purchased a multi-day package, few VFRs or business travelers purchased tour packages (4 percent and 5 percent, respectively).
- Almost three-quarters (72 percent) of vacation/pleasure visitors were cruise visitors, 24 percent were air visitors (entered and exited Alaska by air), and 5 percent were highway/ferry visitors (entered or exited the state by highway or ferry). In contrast, the VFR and business markets traveled almost exclusively by air.
- Those traveling for business-related purposes were most likely to travel between communities by rental vehicle or by air (30 and 27 percent did so, respectively). Vacation/pleasure travelers were most likely to travel within Alaska by tour bus/van and/or train (35 percent did so). Almost half (45 percent) of VFR travelers used personal vehicles to travel within the state.
- Business travelers reported staying in Alaska longer than those traveling for other purposes, averaging 11.9 nights. VFR travelers stayed an average of 10.4 nights, followed by vacation/pleasure travelers at 8.7 nights.
- Nearly three-fourths of business travelers stayed in a hotel/motel, compared to just over one-third of vacation/pleasure travelers and just over one-quarter of VFRs. VFRs were much more likely to stay with friends and family at 76 percent (compared to 4 percent of vacation/pleasure and 16 percent of business visitors).
- Those traveling for vacation/pleasure were significantly more likely to visit Southeast Alaska (80 percent), compared to 19 percent of VFRs and 17 percent of business travelers. VFRs and business

travelers were more likely to visit Southcentral Alaska (75 percent and 76 percent, respectively), versus 45 percent of vacation/pleasure travelers.

- Shopping maintains the highest participation rates for activities in the state (excluding obvious visiting friends and family and business activities among those groups), though just 40 percent of business travelers reported shopping, compared to 80 percent of vacation/pleasure travelers and 66 percent of VFRs.
- Seven out of ten VFRs and business travelers said they are very likely to return to Alaska in the next five years, in contrast to 31 percent of vacation/pleasure travelers. Similarly, more than two-thirds of VFRs and business travelers have been to Alaska previously, while just 32 percent of vacation/pleasure travelers have prior experience in the state. Among repeat travelers, VFRs have the highest average previous vacation experience, at 6 trips.
- VFRs and business travelers made their decision to come to Alaska, and booked their travel arrangements, much later than vacation/pleasure visitors. For example, 48 percent of VFRs and 49 percent of business travelers booked their trip between April and June of 2016, compared to only 24 percent of vacation/pleasure visitors.
- VFRs were most likely to use the internet to research their trip (84 percent) and to book a portion of their trip online (80 percent). Airline websites were by far the most common online tool used to book travel.
- One in five vacation/pleasure parties visited the official State of Alaska website ([travelalaska.com](http://travelalaska.com)) while planning their trip. Fewer VFR (14 percent) and business (10 percent) travelers used the website. Use of the official State of Alaska Vacation Planner followed a similar pattern, with 13 percent of vacation/pleasure, 8 percent of VFR, and 5 percent of business travelers reporting receiving the Planner.
- Nearly two-thirds of business travelers and over half of VFR travelers were from the Western U.S., compared to only a third of vacation/pleasure travelers. For all trip purpose markets, the next most popular regions of origin were Southern U.S. and Midwestern U.S.
- VFRs averaged the lowest group size of 2.8 people, compared to 2.9 people among business and 4.6 people among vacation/pleasure travelers.
- Business travelers reported the highest average annual income of \$123,000, versus vacation/pleasure travelers reporting \$117,000 and VFRs reporting \$90,000.
- Business travelers spent the most in Alaska at \$1,362 per person per trip, on average. Vacation/pleasure travelers spent \$1,085, and VFRs spent the least at \$743.

**TABLE 8.2 - Trip Purpose and Packages  
Trip Purpose (%)**

	All Visitors	Vacation/ Pleasure	Visiting Friends/ Relatives	Business Only/ Business & Pleasure
<b>Trip Purpose</b>				
Vacation/pleasure	79	100	-	-
Visiting friends or relatives	13	-	100	-
Business	5	-	-	61
Business and pleasure	3	-	-	39
<b>Purchased multi-day package (including cruise)</b>				
Yes	64	79	4	5
<b>Package type (Base: non-cruise, purchased package)</b>				
Fishing lodge	49	50	*	*
Rail package	11	12	*	*
Wilderness lodge	10	11	*	*
Adventure tour	9	9	*	*
Motorcoach tour	8	7	*	*
Rental car/RV package	6	6	*	*
Hunting	2	2	*	*

\*Sample size too small for analysis

**TABLE 8.3 - Transportation Modes  
Trip Purpose (%)**

	All Visitors	Vacation/ Pleasure	Visiting Friends/ Relatives	Business Only/ Business & Pleasure
<b>Transportation Market</b>				
Cruise	55	72	2	2
Air	40	24	91	95
Highway/ferry	5	5	6	3
<b>Used to Travel Between Communities</b>				
Tour bus/van	15	18	1	4
Rental vehicle	14	12	18	30
Alaska Railroad	14	17	4	3
Personal vehicle	9	4	45	10
Air	9	7	11	27
Rental RV	2	2	2	<1
State ferry	2	2	2	2
Personal RV	1	1	3	<1

**TABLE 8.4 - Length of Stay, Destinations and Lodging Type  
Trip Purpose (%)**

	All Visitors	Vacation/ Pleasure	Visiting Friends/ Relatives	Business Only/ Business & Pleasure
Average length of stay in Alaska	9.2	8.7	10.4	11.9
<b>Regions Visited</b>				
Southeast	67	80	19	17
Southcentral	52	45	75	76
Interior	29	29	31	25
Southwest	4	4	5	11
Far North	2	1	2	6
<b>Destinations Visited, Top 10</b>				
Juneau	61	74	10	12
Ketchikan	58	72	8	6
Skagway	48	60	3	3
Anchorage	47	41	69	71
Glacier Bay Nat'l Park	29	36	1	1
Denali Nat'l Park	23	26	15	6
Seward	23	25	21	12
Fairbanks	17	16	20	22
Hoonah/Icy Strait Point	13	16	1	1
Talkeetna	11	12	9	6
<b>Lodging Types Used</b>				
Cruise ship	57	71	2	2
Hotel/motel	37	35	29	70
Friends/family	15	4	76	16
Lodge	15	17	7	8
Campground/RV	6	6	9	2
B&B	4	4	6	4
Vacation rental	3	2	6	4
Wilderness camping	2	2	3	3
State ferry	1	1	1	1

**TABLE 8.5 - Visitor Activities – Top 10  
Trip Purpose (%)**

	All Visitors	Vacation/ Pleasure	Visiting Friends/ Relatives	Business Only/ Business & Pleasure
Shopping	75	80	66	40
Wildlife viewing	45	45	56	34
Cultural activities	39	43	33	17
Day cruises	39	46	20	9
Hiking/nature walk	34	32	48	32
Train	32	40	5	3
City/sightseeing tours	31	37	12	7
Fishing	16	14	33	14
Flightseeing	13	16	6	4
Tramway/gondola	13	15	6	4

**TABLE 8.6 - Satisfaction Ratings  
Trip Purpose (%)**

	All Visitors	Vacation/ Pleasure	Visiting Friends/ Relatives	Business Only/ Business & Pleasure
<b>Satisfaction with overall Alaska experience</b>				
Very satisfied	75	76	73	64
Satisfied	23	22	24	32
<b>Compared to expectations</b>				
Much higher	29	30	22	*
Higher	36	36	34	*
About as expected	32	30	43	*
<b>Value for the money, compared to other destinations</b>				
Much better	15	16	15	*
Better	23	24	21	*
About the same	45	45	46	*
<b>Likelihood to recommend and return to Alaska</b>				
Very likely to recommend Alaska as a vacation destination	79	80	80	71
Very likely to return to Alaska in the next five years	40	31	70	73

\*Business visitors were screened out of these questions.

**TABLE 8.7 - Previous Alaska Travel  
Trip Purpose (%)**

	All Visitors	Vacation/ Pleasure	Visiting Friends/ Relatives	Business Only/ Business & Pleasure
Been to Alaska before	40	32	68	70
Average # of vacation trips (base: repeat travelers)	4.1	3.8	6.0	3.3
Previously traveled in Alaska by cruise ship	16	18	11	10

**TABLE 8.8 - Trip Planning  
Trip Purpose (%)**

	All Visitors	Vacation/ Pleasure	Visiting Friends/ Relatives	Business Only/ Business & Pleasure
<b>Trip Decision, by Quarter</b>				
Before July 2015	14	16	6	3
July-Sept 2015	17	19	11	7
Oct-Dec 2015	17	19	11	6
Jan-Mar 2016	23	23	29	17
Apr-Jun 2016	20	16	33	40
July-Sept 2016	8	6	10	26
<b>Trip Booking, by Quarter</b>				
Before July 2015	6	7	1	<1
July-Sept 2015	11	13	2	2
Oct-Dec 2015	15	18	7	3
Jan-Mar 2016	27	29	25	11
Apr-Jun 2016	29	24	48	49
July-Sept 2016	13	10	18	35
<b>Internet and Travel Agent Usage</b>				
Used internet	68	66	84	68
Booked over internet	58	53	80	60
Used travelalaska.com	18	20	14	10
Received Official State Vacation Planner	12	13	8	5
Booked through travel agent	35	42	5	15
<b>Other Sources – Top 10</b>				
Friends/family	51	47	76	45
Prior experience	23	19	42	35
Cruise line	22	28	2	2
Brochures	15	16	12	10
AAA	8	9	4	1
Other travel/guide book	6	7	3	3
Tour company	5	6	<1	2
Magazine	5	5	4	3
Television	4	5	3	2
Milepost	4	4	4	2

**TABLE 8.9 - Top 10 Websites/Apps Used to Plan/Book  
Trip Purpose (%)**

	All Visitors		Vacation/ Pleasure		Visiting Friends/ Relatives		Business Only/ Business & Pleasure	
	Plan	Book	Plan	Book	Plan	Book	Plan	Book
Airline websites	50	50	46	46	70	69	56	59
Cruise line websites	35	27	45	36	3	2	1	<1
Google	28	4	30	4	18	2	19	5
Trip Advisor	23	3	28	4	9	2	12	2
Expedia	14	10	14	9	15	12	10	8
Hotel/lodge/RV Park	11	10	12	9	8	6	17	19
Tour company websites	11	8	13	9	5	3	6	4
Car/RV rental websites	10	9	9	8	10	7	18	17
Travelocity	7	2	8	2	7	4	5	3
Facebook	7	<1	8	<1	3	<1	5	<1

**TABLE 8.10 - Demographics  
Trip Purpose (%)**

	All Visitors	Vacation/ Pleasure	Visiting Friends/ Relatives	Business Only/ Business & Pleasure
<b>Origin</b>				
Western US	38	33	55	64
Southern US	21	22	19	17
Midwestern US	15	16	15	8
Eastern US	10	10	7	6
Canada	7	9	1	2
Other International	9	11	3	3
<b>Other Demographics</b>				
Average party size	2.4	2.5	2.1	1.5
Average group size	4.2	4.6	2.8	2.9
Male/female	49/51	48/52	49/51	68/32
Average age	53.7	55.2	50.2	45.7
Children in household	23	22	22	38
Retired/semi-retired	44	48	39	11
College graduate	63	65	50	63
Average income	\$114,000	\$117,000	\$90,000	\$123,000

**TABLE 8.11 – Average Spending in Alaska, Per Person, Per Trip  
Excluding Transportation to/from Alaska  
Trip Purpose**

	All Visitors	Vacation/ Pleasure	Visiting Friends/ Relatives	Business Only/ Business & Pleasure
Average per-trip spending	\$1,057	\$1,085	\$743	\$1,362