THE INTERNATIONAL OVERNIGHT TOURIST IN VERMONT

Prepared for
The Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing

Prepared by
Vermont Tourism Data Center, School of Natural Resources, University of Vermont

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Research available through a partnership between the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing (VTDM) and Vermont Tourism Data Center (VTDC), School of Natural Resources, University of Vermont

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

• This project is funded through the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing and the Vermont Tourism Data Center. This report will summarize results from August 2000 through January 2002. The next report will be issued in January 2003.

• The purpose of this study is to better understand the characteristics of international overnight tourists to Vermont.

• The goal of this research is to understand the frequency, activities, and expenditures of visitors coming international destinations, including Canada.

• International visitors to Vermont stay longer and spend more than domestic visitors.

• On average, the international visitor stays in Vermont one night more than domestic visitors, spending 4.3 nights as opposed to 3.37\[1\].

• 36.1% of respondents stated that visiting Vermont was their primary purpose for traveling to the United States.

• The average international visitor to Vermont spent $470.00 on lodging per visit, more than the average domestic visitor.

• Automobile touring is the most popular activity among international tourists, followed by visiting historic sights and viewing fall foliage.

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction:

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- The purpose of this study is to better understand the characteristics of international overnight tourists to Vermont.

- The goal of this research is to understand the frequency, activities, and expenditures of visitors coming international destinations, including Canada.

Methodology:

- A questionnaire was constructed in August 2000 to survey overnight international visitors. The questionnaire was designed to mirror the questions on the VTDC domestic visitor study to facilitate comparison between the two visitor groups (see Appendix A).
• Lodging establishments were chosen as the data collection site. This is the most cost effective method for intercepting international visitors to Vermont (a non-gateway international destination).

• Individual lodging properties were chosen based on their reported number of international visitors in the 1999 Vermont Lodging Study. Additional participants have been identified by Regional Marketing Organizations (RMOs). Properties that reported having both 10% Canadian and 10% international visitors, or 15% or higher for one of the two groups were selected as survey sites.

• A pilot sample of 18 properties was selected based on their percentage of international visitors and industry recommendations. Nine properties participated in the initial pilot study (August 2000-December 2000). The number of participating lodging properties was expanded to 19 by January 2002.

• Surveys and labels were mailed to the State Department of Tourism and Marketing who then packaged them with either a free sample of Vermont maple syrup or Vermont Country Soap to be given out to those international visitors who completed the surveys and returned them to the hotels.

• Lodging properties then mailed the postage paid surveys back to VTDC for analysis.

• SPSS statistical software was then used to analyze the data.

• This report is based on 130 surveys received from August 2000-January 2002.
PRIMARY PURPOSE OF VISIT

- 12% of respondents were business travelers, while 83% were traveling for pleasure.

![Pie chart showing 88% for Pleasure and 12% for Business]

PRIMARY REASON FOR VISITING THE UNITED STATES

- 36% of respondents said visiting Vermont was the primary purpose for their trip to the United States.

![Pie chart showing 36% Yes and 64% No]
• Most respondents entered the United States through airports in Boston, New York, or Newark, or via automobile from Canada.
TRANSPORTATION

What form(s) of transportation did you use to *arrive* in Vermont?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transportation</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rental car or truck</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airplane</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private car or truck</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferry</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi</td>
<td>.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour Bus/Motor Coach</td>
<td>.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Most respondents reached their Vermont destination by rented car or truck. Far fewer respondents flew into their Vermont destination.

- As would be expected, far fewer international visitors than domestic visitors used private automobiles to arrive in Vermont.

- Rental vehicles are international tourists most popular transportation choice for reaching their Vermont destinations.
Automobile touring was the most reported activity among respondents.
 Visiting historical sights, taking foliage tours, and wildlife watching were also very popular.
 33.1% of respondents said that they purchased products made in Vermont.
AVERAGE VACATION EXPENDITURES WHILE IN VERMONT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lodging</td>
<td>$470.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage</td>
<td>$231.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>$118.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>$246.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation/Entertainment</td>
<td>$72.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1139.23</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Per Household Expenditures

- Lodging: 37%
- Food & Beverage: 18%
- Transportation: 13%
- Shopping: 4%
- Recreation & Entertainment: 28%

- These figures represent expenditures associated with the Vermont portion of the respondent’s trip.
- Mean expenditures for international visitors are greater than those of domestic visitors. The average expenditure per trip for domestic visitors in Vermont totaled $990 for the 1999-2000 season. International mean expenditures are 13% higher.
Impacts of information sources on decision to visit Vermont

1 = Definitely did not influence desire to visit — 5 = Definitely influenced desire to visit

Recommendations from friends, co-workers, or relatives had the greatest impact on international visitor’s decision to visit Vermont.
The majority of respondents described their experience in Vermont as either Very Good or Excellent.
No respondents rated their experience as Poor.
• Canada is under-represented due to difficulty in discerning nationality of visitors based on accent.
LIKELIHOOD OF VISITING VERMONT IN THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Definitely will not visit</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Definitely will visit</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Average response** was 3.02.
- About one third of international visitors think they “will definitely visit” within the next 12 months.
Appendix A

International Visitor Survey
1. What country are you from? _____________________________

2. Is this your first visit to the United States? 
   Yes ____ No ____

3. Through which city or town, airport or highway did you enter the United States? _____________________________

4. What is the primary purpose for your visit to Vermont? 
   Business ____ Pleasure ____

5. Is this your first visit to Vermont? 
   Yes ____ No ____ If NO, how many previous visits? _______

6. How many nights will you be staying in Vermont? _______

7. Is visiting Vermont your primary reason for visiting the United States? 
   Yes ____ No ____

8. Are you traveling as part of an organized tour group? 
   Yes ____ No ____
   If Yes, how many people are in your group? _______

9. Including yourself, how many adults and/or children are in your travel party? (Exclude your tour group members)
   Number of adults _____ Children or youths under 18 years old _____

10. What form (s) of transportation did you use to arrive in Vermont? 
    (“X” all that apply)
    Your own car or truck ____ Rented car or truck ____
    Tour bus /Motor Coach ____ Ferry ____
    Airplane ____ Train ____
    Taxi ____ Other (specify) _____________________________

11. What activities did you take part in while visiting Vermont? 
    (“X” all that apply)
    Visiting friends ____ Visiting family ____
    Auto-touring ____ Power boating ____
    Sailing ____ Wildlife watching ____
    Canoe & Kayaking ____ Fishing &/or hunting ____
    Hiking &/or camping ____ Biking ____
    Bought VT made products ____ Visited historical sites ____
    Attended cultural events ____ Attending sporting events ____
    Visited farms, picked fruit ____ Fall foliage touring ____
    Downhill skiing ____ Cross-country skiing ____
    Snowmobiling ____ Other (specify): _____________________________

12. Approximately how much money would you estimate was spent in total by you and your travel party while in Vermont? (Exclude your tour group members)

   Lodging ________ (hotel, inn, resort etc.)
   Transportation ________ (taxi, bus, ferry, gas etc.)
   Shopping ________ (souvenirs, gifts, clothing etc.)
   Recreation/Entertainment ________ (museum, tours, shows etc.)
   Food & Beverage ________ (restaurant, bar, grocery etc.)

13. How important were each of the following information sources in influencing your decision to visit Vermont? (“circle” one for each)

    1 = Definitely did not influence desire to visit  5 = Definitely influenced desire to visit
    Friend, co-worker or relative 1 2 3 4 5
    Newspaper article 1 2 3 4 5
    Advertising 1 2 3 4 5
    Magazine article 1 2 3 4 5
    The Internet 1 2 3 4 5
    Travel Agent 1 2 3 4 5
    Tour Operator 1 2 3 4 5

14. What is the likelihood that you will visit Vermont again (in the next 12 months)? ("X" ONE)

    Definitely Will Not Visit 1 2 3 4 5
    Definitely Will Visit 1 2 3 4 5

15. OVERALL, how would you rate your recent vacation experience in Vermont relative to other vacation experiences? ("X" ONE)

    Poor ____ Fair ____ Good ____ Very Good ____ Excellent ____ Perfect ____

16. DATE____________________________

    Please return survey to hotel front desk or drop in any mailbox.