

FOCUS ON: VISITABERDEENSHIRE'S LEISURE CONSUMER DATABASE



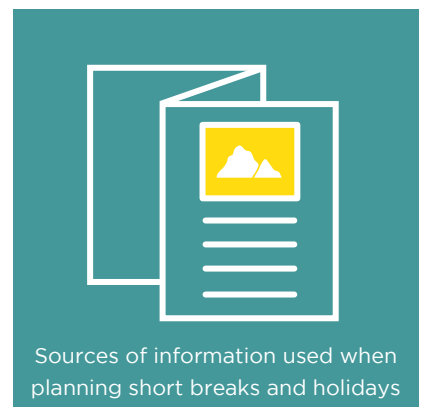
WHY DID WE CARRY OUT THIS WORK?

VisitAberdeenshire is committed to learning and understanding as much as we can about our current and future visitors. This deeper understanding helps inform our own activity and that of the businesses within the region.

With this in mind, VisitAberdeenshire worked with an external market research agency to design a survey that would go out to our leisure consumer database. The purpose of this research was to further understand our database, to directly inform our marketing activity and content within campaigns and social postings. As with all of our own, and commissioned, research, this forms only part of the Insights picture, and we try to draw upon as many relevant sources as possible in our decision making.

THE SURVEY

Aswell as gathering respondent demographics (age, gender, etc), we took our respondents through 5 key themes.



WHAT DID WE FIND OUT?

DEMOGRAPHICS OF OUR RESPONDENTS

The majority of our respondents were from England and Scotland, followed by clusters of respondents from USA, Germany, Norway, Canada and The Netherlands.

More females than males completed the survey, and the most represented age categories of respondents to this survey was **55-64** and **65-74**. Other research has shown that those who are 55 and over spend 18% more per trip than younger visitors, making it all the more important to seek the views from these particular age groups.

Our respondents knew Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire well, with the majority having visited before and the most popular response being "I have visited within the last 2 years".



TYPES OF HOLIDAY/SHORT BREAKS THEY ENJOY

We gave the respondents a list of 20 typical types of holidays and short breaks. **The favourites emerged as...**

A holiday to enjoy the landscape (top spot)

A holiday mainly to enjoy the culture and heritage

Touring by car

City-break

A holiday mainly to enjoy local food and drink

A rural retreat

Less popular types of holiday, with this particular group, were:

- Sports holiday
- Enjoying the local nightlife
- Pursuing self-development goals
- Camping

We asked respondents to share any other types of holidays they enjoyed that weren't in our list. Here's what they shared:



Favourite types of activities

Moving on to focus on the types of activities they like to undertake when on holiday, our respondents gave us their stand out top 4 (based on being "extremely likely" to take part in such activities):

Sightseeing by car/
coach/on foot

Short walks/strolls –
up to 2 miles/1 hour

Visiting historic
houses/stately
homes/castles

Enjoying local food
and drink

Those activities least likely to appeal to this particular group of respondents are:

Playing Golf

Mountain Biking

Going to Nightclubs

A follow on question asked the degree to which they feel Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire offers these activities. Positively, **there was broad agreement that the region does offer the holiday activities they enjoy participating in**, for the full breakdown of results for these questions, please see our research slide deck, available on our Industry Website Insights section (linked at the end of the Factsheet).

WHICH WORDS/PHRASES BEST DESCRIBE OUR REGION?

We always ask our respondents to tell us which key words/phrases they feel best and least describes the region. This time we had the opportunity to break it down to focus on the city, and then rural Aberdeenshire.

City of Aberdeen: Top 3:

friendly **BEAUTIFUL** **TRADITIONAL**

Aberdeenshire: Top 4:

BEAUTIFUL **TRADITIONAL** **friendly** *breath-taking*

The **city** scored less well on **“romantic”, “easy to get to”** and **“for all seasons”**.

And the **rural parts** of the region scored less well on **“stylish”, “easy to get to”** and **“upmarket”**.

We invited our participants to compare Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire to other cities and rural locations within the UK. The results are very interesting but too complex for this summary factsheet. Do review the results by clicking into the full slide deck linked later in this Factsheet.

WHAT ABOUT ONCE IN DESTINATION?

We then went on to ask what were the main sources for information once in their chosen holiday/short break destination. Topping the table was **local events/what’s on guides**. Advocacy from others still plays a key part with **“recommendations from family and friends”** coming in third place.



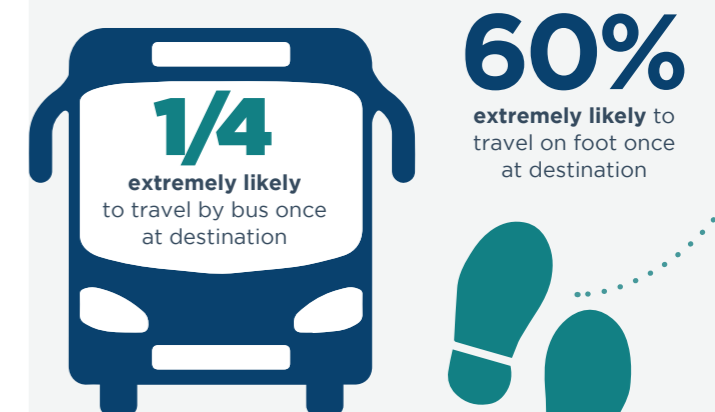
VISITOR PERSONALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

Beyond the type of sources respondents would use when in destination, we also wanted to get a feel for the types of personalities and characteristics that helped define them when on holiday/short break. Having provided a set of statements against an agreement scale, we found the statements that attracted the strongest levels of agreement were **“I love to taste and experience local food and drink”, “I enjoy spending time in the outdoors and in nature landscapes”** and **“I am happy to go back to places I have visited in the past.”**



Those statements which attracted less agreement included **“I prefer holidays full of action and excitement”** and **“I am more of a city person”**.

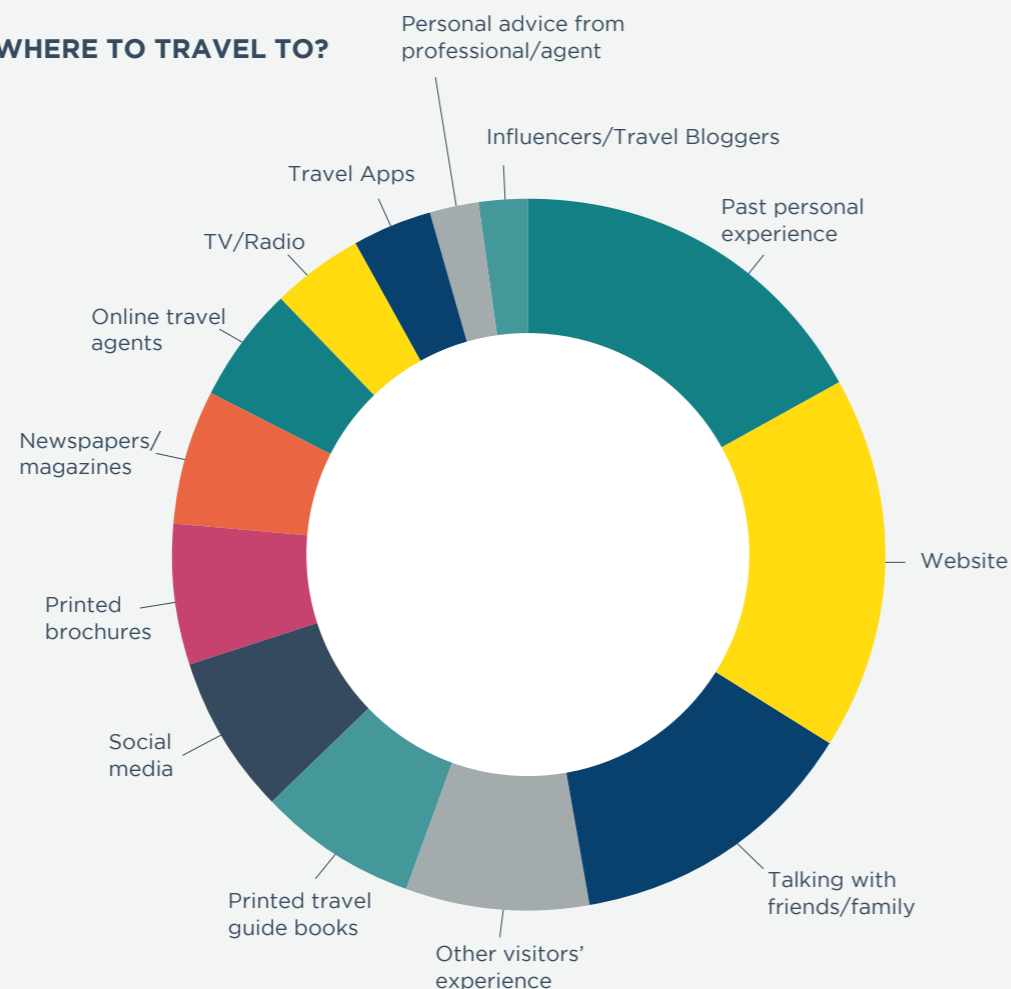
Returning to focusing on once in-destination, the top method of transportation chosen by our respondents was to explore the destination **on foot**, a positive finding for Aberdeen given the walkable nature of the city. It was also positive to see public transport provision (trains/trams/public bus) being rated more positively than a year or so ago – where the focus was very much on COVID concerns relating to public transportation.



HOW DO VISITORS DECIDE WHERE TO TRAVEL TO?

As can be seen from the chart right, **the top 3 sources** were **“past personal experience”, “website”** and **“talking with friends/family”**. These results mirror those from other past surveys.

The full slide deck delves further into social media channels and websites used to drive travel decisions.



USING THESE RESULTS

As mentioned at the beginning, this work was undertaken to better understand our leisure consumer database. The results can:

- Directly inform our Marketing team's planned content and messaging, both within campaigns and via our social channels;
- Highlight areas tourism development team can focus on within industry communications.

HOW CAN BUSINESSES USE THESE RESULTS?

Several elements of the research lend themselves to practical actions:

- Review the “types of holiday” to ensure your own content and imagery reflects those listed at the top, including **the landscape, culture and heritage, local food and drink**.
- Reflect on the “other types of holiday” word cloud to see which trending visitor experiences you could promote or tap into, for example crafts, history, photography.
- Consider the “words/phrases” people associate with the City and the Shire and weave them into your own content, eg. **Beautiful, Friendly, Traditional**, mirroring engaging words back to the visitor/potential visitor.
- Review the “Information sources” league table and check your coverage/representation in the top 5, including **websites** and **other visitors' experiences**. Are you encouraging past visitors to share their experiences on your social channels and review websites?
- Revisit the “Deciding what to do in the destination” slide and consider ways to raise awareness of your own business within the top choices selected, including **local events/what's on guides** (if applicable) and **local official tourism websites** (for example, a listing with VisitAberdeenshire).

ABOUT THE SURVEY

As stated at the beginning of the Factsheet, the purpose of this self-completion survey was to gain a deeper understanding of our leisure consumer database. Here are the details of the research:

- Invitation to participate distributed to 50% of “subscribers”, some **37,643** contacts.
- Responses received from **1,075**, although many were partial in nature.
- Overall response rate was **2.9%**.

It is important to highlight identified limitations of the study, including:

- Those participating are minded to interact with a tourist board;
- They are also predisposed to show some interest in Aberdeen/Aberdeenshire.

Therefore, we cannot assume respondents to be fully representative of the wider population in either their opinions or behaviours.

INSIGHTS & EVALUATION AT VISITABERDEENSHIRE

VisitAberdeenshire has an ongoing commitment to learning and understanding as much as we can about our current and future visitors. This deeper understanding helps inform our own activity and that of the businesses within the region.

To discuss the findings within this Factsheet in more detail, or any aspects of Insights in relation to your business do contact us on insights@visitabdn.com