

Tourism in Alberta Central

A Summary Of Visitor Numbers, Revenue & Characteristics -- 2003

Based on the 2003 Canadian & International Travel Surveys (Statistics Canada)

Policy & Economic Analysis
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TOURISM IN ALBERTA CENTRAL

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Introduction

Whether to see their friends and relatives, for business or for pleasure, over 4.3 million person visits were made to destinations within Alberta Central by Albertans, other Canadians and visitors from the US and overseas. The trips included day trips and overnight trips. Tourism generated \$380 million in consumer spending in the region during the one-year period.

To better understand the size, characteristics and spending activity of visitors to Alberta, Research Resolutions and Consulting was commissioned to prepare a special analysis of the 2003 Canadian and International Travel Surveys conducted by Statistics Canada. These consumer surveys measure travel in Alberta by Canadians for trips of at least 80 kilometres one way from home, and trips to the province made by American and overseas visitors to Canada. Almost all trips, whether same-day or overnight, are included.¹

This report highlights travel in the Alberta Central Tourism Destination Region. For more information on tourism in Alberta, please contact Alberta Economic Development.²

Alberta Central: 2003 Overview

- Alberta Central received 24% of total person visits to Alberta.
- Seven per cent of American person visits to Alberta were to locations in Alberta Central compared to 29% for Albertans.
- The region was responsible for 9.7% of Alberta's total tourism revenues.

Comparison of Tourism Numbers

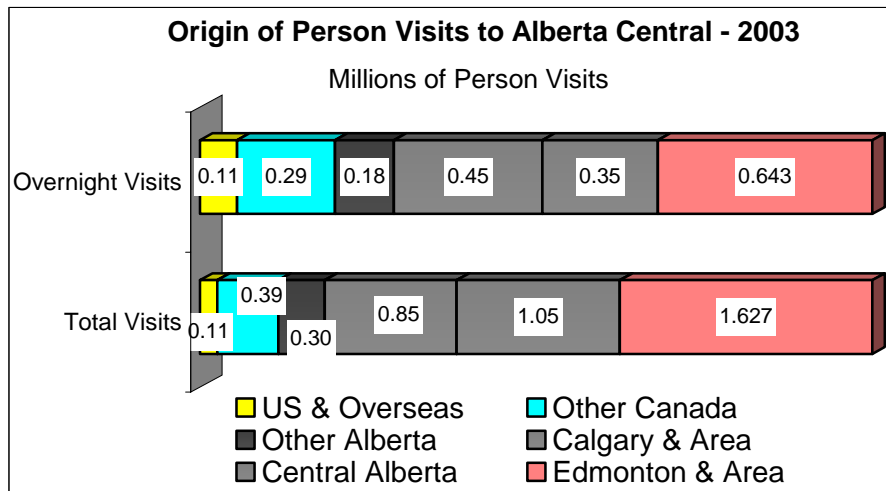
(millions)	Alberta Central	Total Alberta	Central % of Alberta
Number of Visitors			
Overnight Person Visits	2.02	9.95	20.3%
Total Person Visits	4.34	17.89	24.3%
Origin of Visitors			
Alberta	3.83	13.23	28.9%
Other Canada	0.39	3.09	12.6%
United States	0.07	0.96	7.3%
Other International	0.04	0.61	6.2%
Revenues	\$381	\$3,929	9.7%

*The reader is reminded that travellers to Alberta could visit more than one Tourism Destination Region while in Alberta

Who travels in Alberta Central?

All trips, all purposes: Nearly all (97%) of the 4,336,000 person visits in Alberta Central were by Canadians. Most of these person trips (88%) were by Albertans.

Almost two thirds of all person visits in the region were by residents of either Edmonton & Area (37%) or Alberta Central (24%). Residents of Calgary & Area accounted for an additional 20%.



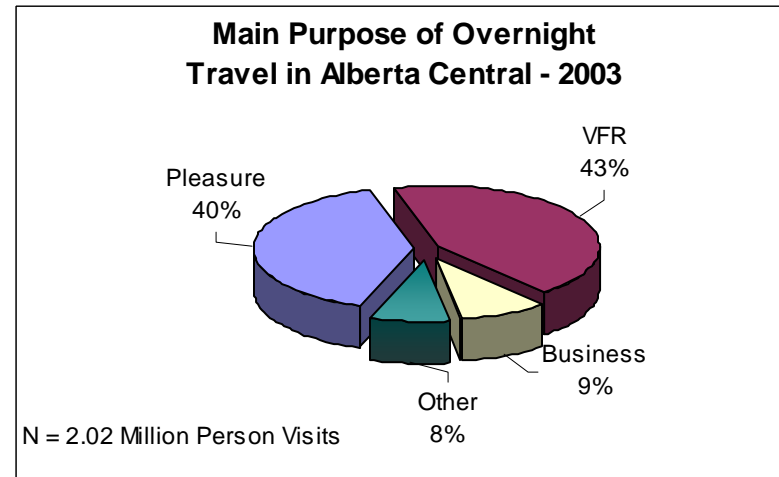
Overnight visits: Overnight visits to Alberta Central totalled 2.02 million person visits, accounting for slightly less than one half (46%) of all visits to the region. The majority of these trips (80%) were by Albertans.

Overnight visits by Albertans were primarily by residents of Edmonton & Area (32% of all overnight person visits), Calgary & Area (22%) and Alberta Central (17%).

* Interpret with caution due to small sample size

Main purpose of overnight travel

The two most often reported purposes for a trip with an overnight visit in Alberta Central were trips to visit friends/relatives (VFR) (43%) and pleasure trips (40%). Business travel ranked third at nine per cent.



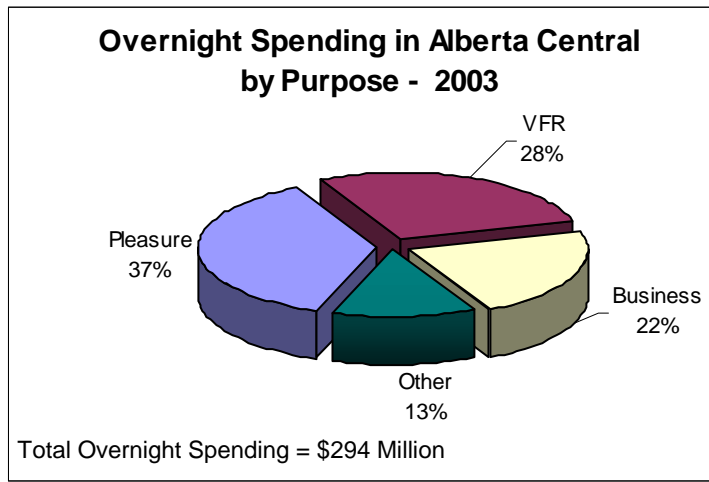
Spending in Alberta Central

All purposes, all spending: As reported in the provincial summary, tourism spending in Alberta in 2003 totalled \$4.33 billion. Of this, \$3.93 billion was spent by visitors who made same-day or overnight visits to locations in the province. The remaining \$405 million was spent by Albertans in Alberta to purchase fares and other incidentals for trips to other parts of Canada³. It is not possible to allocate the \$405 million to any of the province's Tourism Destination Regions.

Total spending in Alberta by all travellers in 2003 was \$3.93 billion. Of this amount, \$380 million was spent in Alberta Central. Canadians spent \$329 million (86%) in the region, while American visitors spent \$33 million (nine per cent)* and overseas visitors \$18 million (five per cent)*.

Pleasure trips accounted for 37% of all overnight trip expenditures in the region, followed by trips to visit friends and relatives (28%) and business trips (22%).

* Interpret with caution due to small sample size



Length of stay in region: Same-day trips to Alberta Central accounted for 23% of all money spent in the region (\$86 million). Spending by visitors staying one or more nights totalled \$294 million or 77% of all money spent in the region.

When spending took place: The largest proportion of all visitor expenditures in the region (35%) were spent in the third quarter (July to September). The fourth quarter accounted for an additional 28%. Close to one quarter (22%) of expenditures in Alberta Central were made between April and June, and the remaining 15% of spending took place between January and March.

Overnight spending: Of the \$294 million spent in the region by overnight visitors, \$88 million (30%) was spent on vehicle operations/car rental, while \$75 million (26%) was spent on food and beverages. Visitors spent 21% (\$61 million) on accommodations in the region, 12% (\$38 million) on retail purchases and ten per cent (\$30 million) on recreation/entertainment. The remaining one per cent* (\$2 million) was spent on local / public transport.

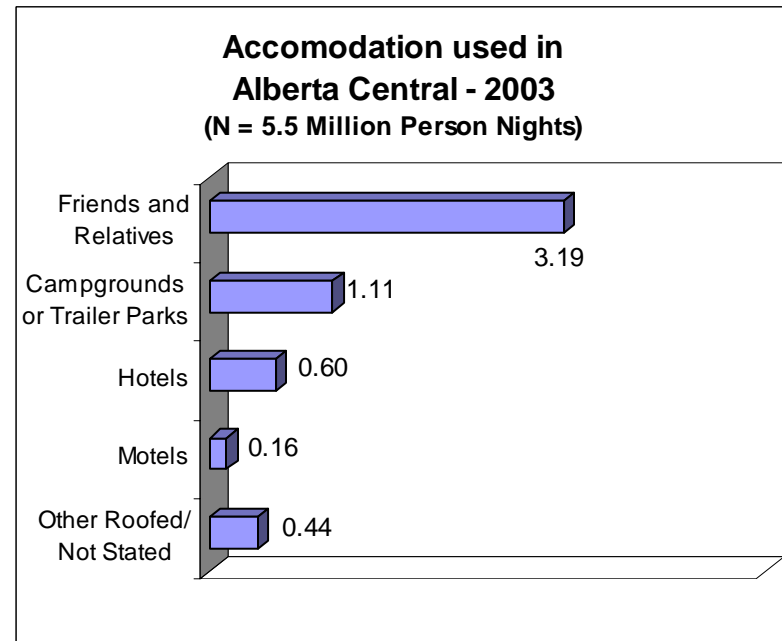
Accommodation used in the region

In 2003, overnight visitors to Alberta spent a total of 37.2 million person nights in the province. Of these, 15% (5.5 million person nights) were spent in Alberta Central. Visitors stayed with friends and relatives for 58% of the person nights spent in the region. Camping was the second most popular form of accommodation, accounting for 20% of nights spent. Eleven per cent of person nights were spent in hotels, and three per cent* in motels.

Of the nights spent in the region, Canadians spent 89%, US visitors five per cent* and overseas visitors six per cent*.

The average length of stay in the region by overnight visitors was 2.7 nights.

* Interpret with caution due to small sample size.



Activities on overnight trips

Overnight visitors to Alberta Central participated in the following activities while travelling in Canada: visiting friends and relatives, attend cultural events, attend sports events, shop, sightseeing, take in nightlife/entertainment, visits to parks/historic sites and participation in outdoor sports/ activities.

Seasonality

When do people visit Alberta Central? The largest proportion of overnight persons (39%) took place between July and September, while one quarter (25%) took place in the second quarter (April to June). Almost one quarter (22%) of the overnight visits took place between October and December, and the remaining 14% took place in the first quarter (January to March).

Notes

¹ The Canadian Travel Survey (CTS) is a monthly telephone survey among Canadians 15 years of age or over. The study captures travel in the previous month by the respondent for all trips 80 km or more one way from home, for purposes other than commuting to work or school, crews, and moving to a new residence.

The International Travel Survey is a self-completion survey, distributed at ports of entry for completion by USA and overseas visitors to Canada at the end of their trip. The survey excludes border workers, visitors travelling on military or diplomatic orders, and students. Questionnaire data are projected to Canada Customs information on total entries to Canada. For more details of the survey designs, please contact Statistics Canada.

The information provided in this report is based on special tabulations of Statistics Canada data, using data management principles developed by Research Resolutions & Consulting Ltd. in conjunction with provincial partners (Alberta Economic Development, Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation and Tourism Saskatchewan).

² Sid Nieuwenhuis, Alberta Economic Development, Phone: 780 422-1058; Fax: 780 422-0061; email: sid.nieuwenhuis@gov.ab.ca

³ Total spending on tourism goods and services in Alberta in 2003 includes money spent in Alberta locations by people who visited these locations (\$3.93 billion) and fares paid and some other incidental expenditure items by Alberta residents in Alberta to leave the province (\$405 million). According to the International Monetary Fund rules, air carrier fares for non-domestic visitors who use a domestic carrier are allocated to the country of the airline's head office. Thus an additional \$26.9 million for Americans and \$224.3

million for overseas visitors who used domestic air carriers to travel to Canada are allocated in Alberta. These domestic carrier fares for non-residents are not included in the \$3.93 billion in total tourism spending in the province (see Table 81-1 of detailed USA and overseas tabulations).