MIDCOAST & ISLANDS

2024 Winter Visitor Tracking Report

December 2023 – April 2024

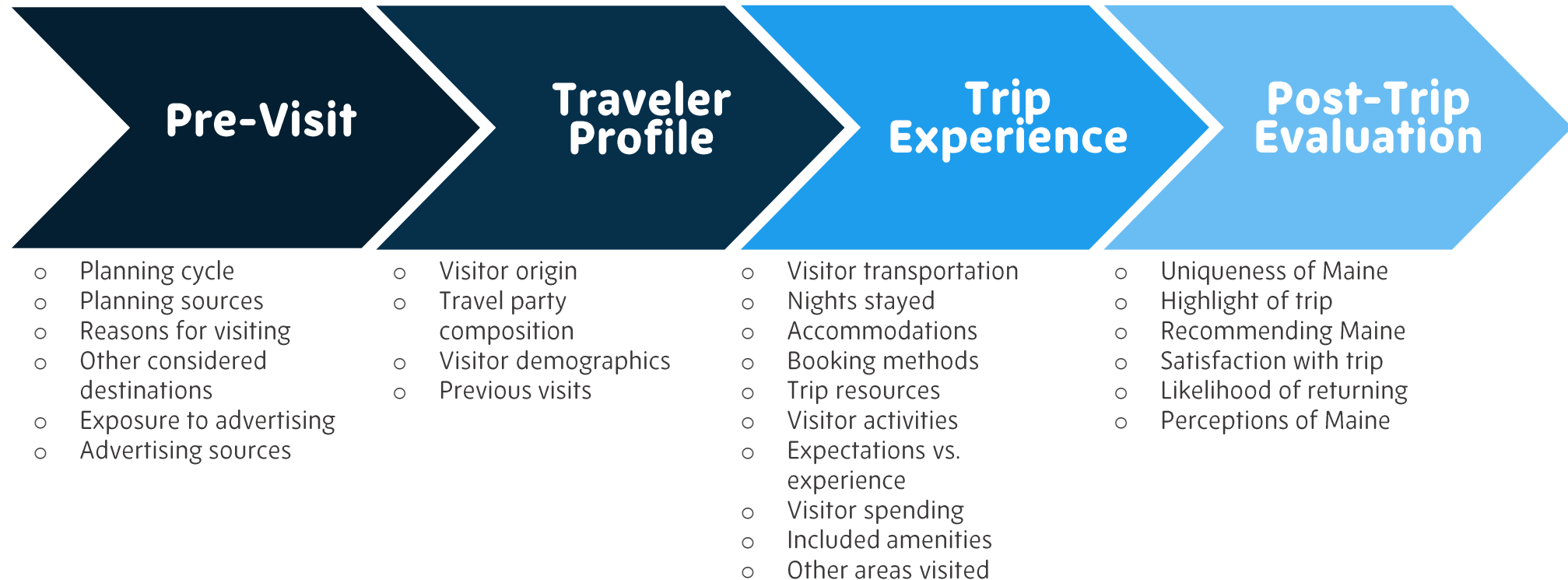MAINE.
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STUDY OBJECTIVES: VISITOR JOURNEY

This report presents information about visitors to Maine from December 2023 to April 2024.
In the report, we follow the visitors in their journeys.
Along the way, we examine profiles of visitors, their experiences in our destination, and how they evaluate experiences in Maine.

Pre-Visit
- Planning cycle
- Planning sources
- Reasons for visiting
- Other considered destinations
- Exposure to advertising
- Advertising sources

Traveler Profile
- Visitor origin
- Travel party composition
- Visitor demographics
- Previous visits

Trip Experience
- Visitor transportation
- Nights stayed
- Accommodations
- Booking methods
- Trip resources
- Visitor activities
- Expectations vs. experience
- Visitor spending
- Included amenities
- Other areas visited

Post-Trip Evaluation
- Uniqueness of Maine
- Highlight of trip
- Recommending Maine
- Satisfaction with trip
- Likelihood of returning
- Perceptions of Maine

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VISITOR JOURNEY: PRE-VISIT

Pre-Visit → Traveler Profile → Trip Experience → Post-Trip Evaluation

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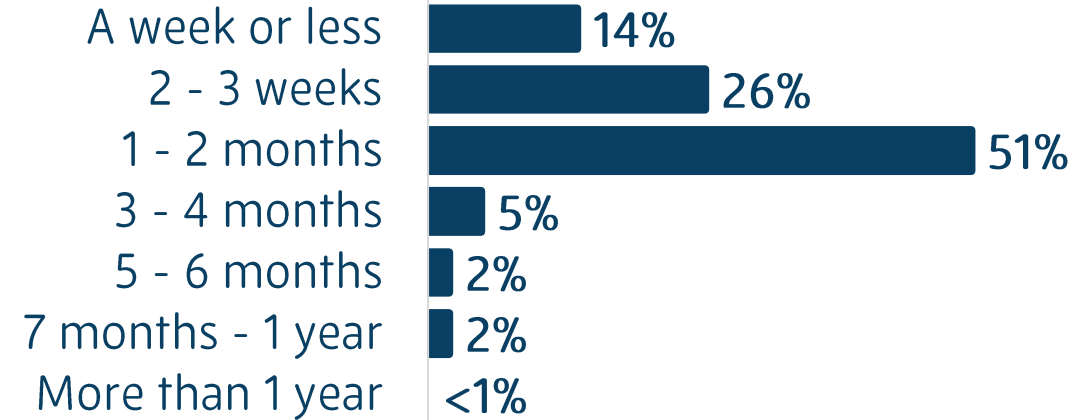
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TRIP PLANNING CYCLE

» Typical visitors began planning their trip **36 days** in advance

» **60%** of visitors started planning their trip a month or more in advance of their trip
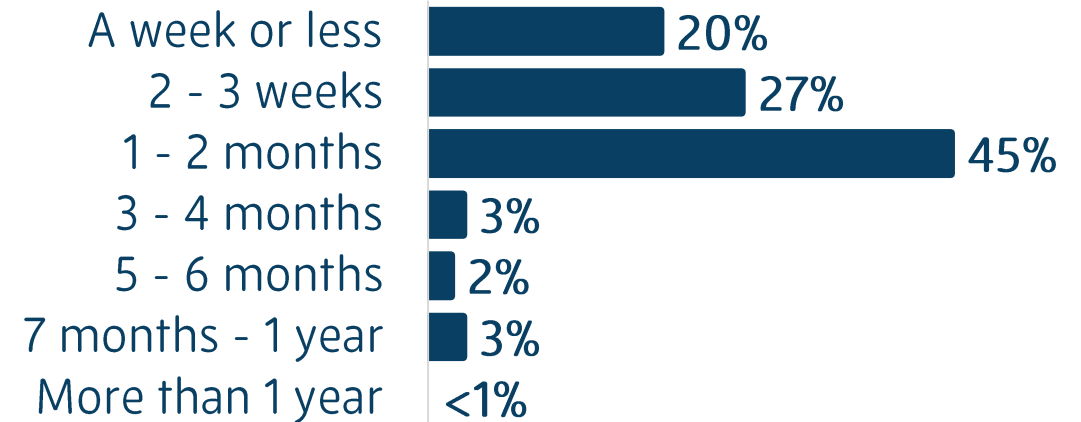
» Typical visitors booked their accommodations **32 days** in advance

» **92%** of visitors have a booking window of less than 3 months
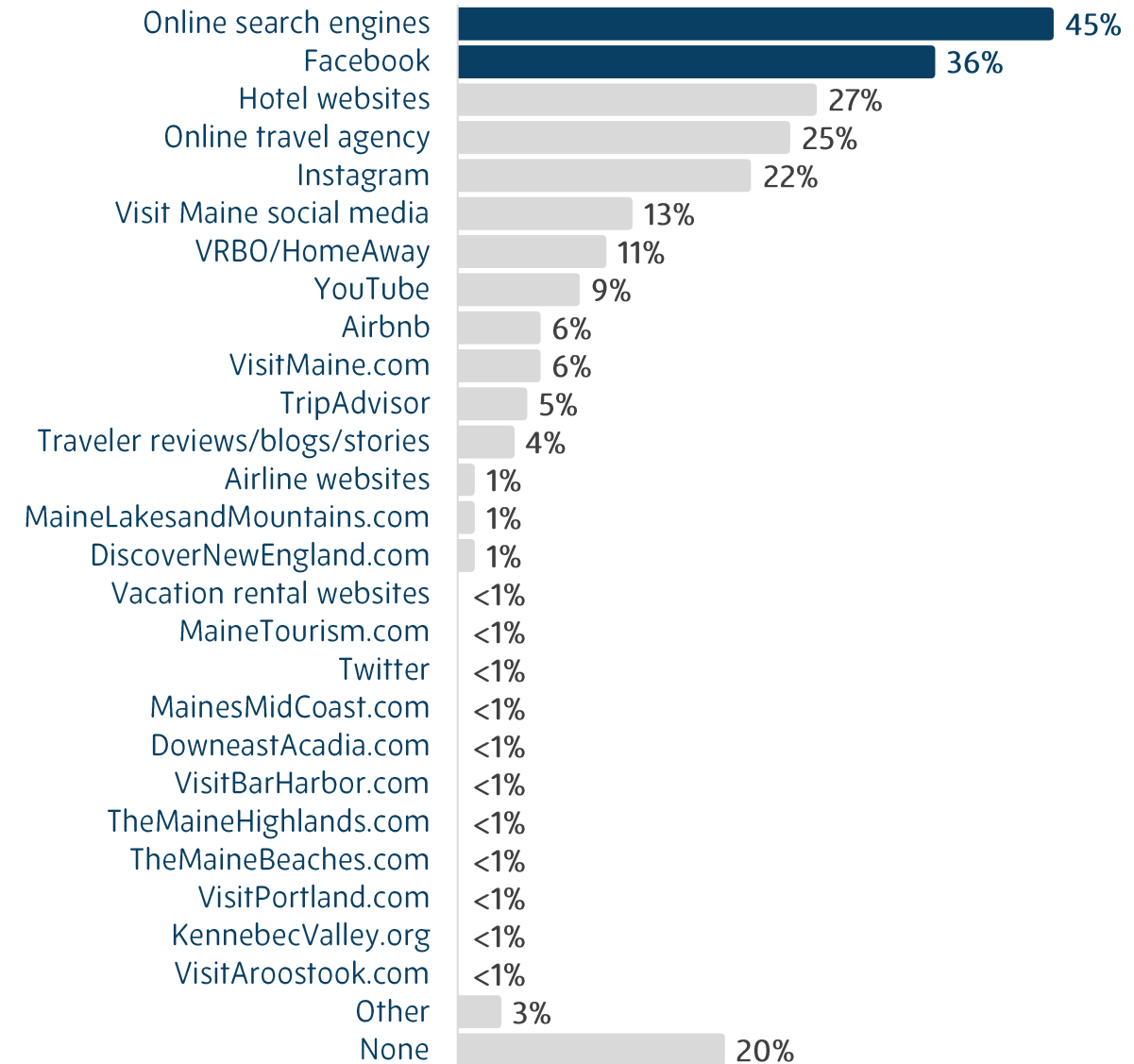
Beginning of Trip Planning Cycle

A week or less	14%
2 - 3 weeks	26%
1 - 2 months	51%
3 - 4 months	5%
5 - 6 months	2%
7 months - 1 year	2%
More than 1 year	<1%

Booked Accommodations/Made Trip Decisions

A week or less	20%
2 - 3 weeks	27%
1 - 2 months	45%
3 - 4 months	3%
5 - 6 months	2%
7 months - 1 year	3%
More than 1 year	<1%

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ONLINE TRIP PLANNING SOURCES*

» **4 in 5** visitors used one or more online resources to help them plan their trip in Maine

» Nearly **half** of visitors used an online search engine, such as Google, to help them plan their trip in Maine

Source	Percentage
Online search engines	45%
Facebook	36%
Hotel websites	27%
Online travel agency	25%
Instagram	22%
Visit Maine social media	13%
VRBO/HomeAway	11%
YouTube	9%
Airbnb	6%
VisitMaine.com	6%
TripAdvisor	5%
Traveler reviews/blogs/stories	4%
Airline websites	1%
MaineLakesandMountains.com	1%
DiscoverNewEngland.com	1%
Vacation rental websites	<1%
MaineTourism.com	<1%
Twitter	<1%
MainesMidCoast.com	<1%
DowneastAcadia.com	<1%
VisitBarHarbor.com	<1%
TheMaineHighlands.com	<1%
TheMaineBeaches.com	<1%
VisitPortland.com	<1%
KennebecValley.org	<1%
VisitAroostook.com	<1%
Other	3%
None	20%

*Multiple responses permitted.

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OTHER TRIP PLANNING SOURCES*

» Nearly **9 in 10** visitors relied on advice from their friends and family to help them plan their trip in Maine

» **1 in 8** visitors did not use any other resources to help them plan their trip in Maine

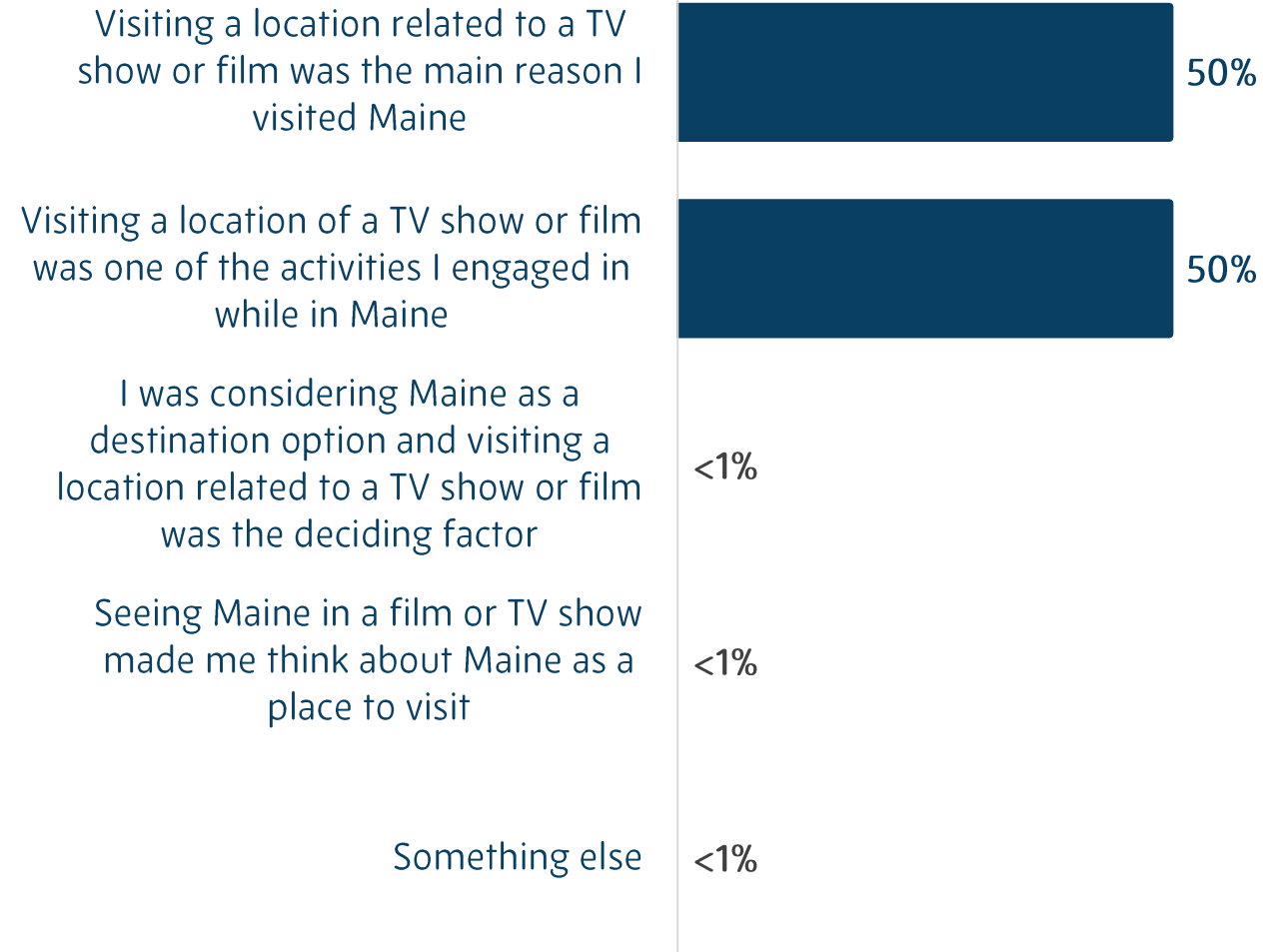| Source	%
Advice from friends/family	85%
Articles or travelogues	16%
AAA	8%
Travel planning apps	5%
Called local Chambers of Commerce	3%
Travel agent	1%
Travel guides/brochures	<1%
Travel books & magazines	<1%
Visitor Guide	<1%
Visit Maine e-newsletter	<1%
Called the Maine Office of Tourism	<1%
Called local convention and visitors bureaus	<1%
Called another Maine Tourism/Lodging Association	<1%
Other	3%
None	12%

*Multiple responses permitted.

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REASONS FOR VISITING*

» **7 in 10** visitors came to Maine to visit friends and relatives

Visiting friends/relatives — 70%
Shopping — 31%
Special event — 26%
Special occasion — 24%
Relax and unwind — 18%
Conference/meeting — 14%
Culture/museums/history — 10%
Nature & bird watching — 8%
Snow activities — 7%
Sightseeing/touring — 7%
Sporting event — 5%
April 8th, 2024 Solar Eclipse — 4%
Beach — 2%
Attractions — 1%
Active outdoor activities — 1%
Water activities — <1%
Astrotourism — <1%
Other — 19%

*Multiple responses permitted.

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TV SHOWS & FILM*

» **1%** of visitors said a TV show or film inspired their trip to Maine

» **50%** of visitors who were inspired by a TV show or film said visiting a related location was the main reason they visited Maine or one of the activities they engaged in while in Maine

» **13%** of visitors who were NOT inspired by a TV show or film to visit Maine said they visited the location of a TV show or film while in Maine

Visiting a location related to a TV show or film was the main reason I visited Maine	50%
Visiting a location of a TV show or film was one of the activities I engaged in while in Maine	50%
I was considering Maine as a destination option and visiting a location related to a TV show or film was the deciding factor	<1%
Seeing Maine in a film or TV show made me think about Maine as a place to visit	<1%
Something else	<1%

*Questions were not asked until January 2023.

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OTHER STATES & PROVINCES CONSIDERED*

» Over **half** of visitors considered visiting **ONLY** Maine while planning their trips

» Visitors were more likely to consider visiting nearby U.S. states rather than visiting Canadian provinces

Category	Percentage
No other states/provinces	51%
New Hampshire	33%
Massachusetts	18%
Rhode Island	5%
Connecticut	4%
Vermont	3%
New York	3%
Quebec	1%
Ontario	1%
Nova Scotia	<1%
Newfoundland and Labrador	<1%
New Brunswick	<1%
Prince Edward Island	<1%
Other	<1%

*Multiple responses permitted.

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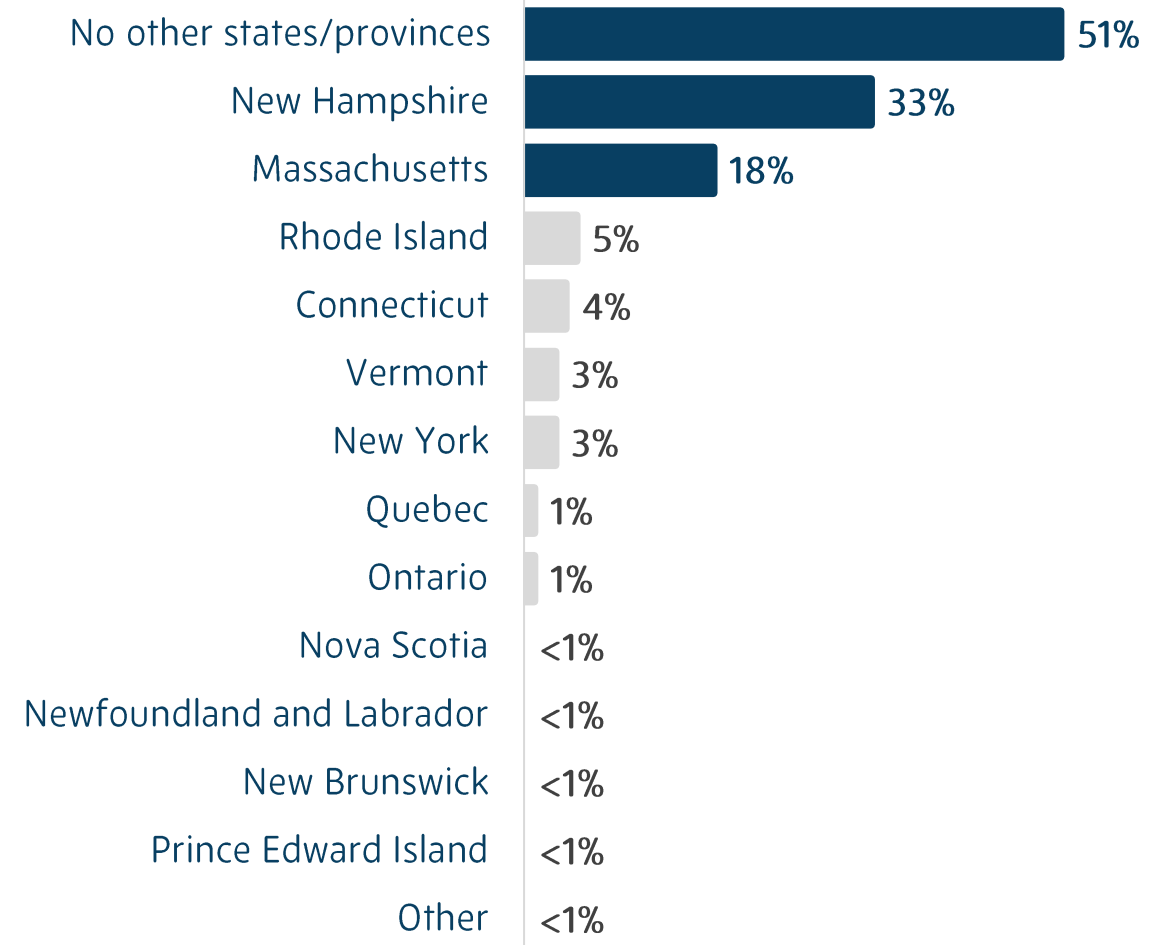
PRE-TRIP RECALL OF ADVERTISING*

Base: 72% of visitors who noticed advertising

» Over **7 in 10** visitors noticed advertising or promotions for Maine prior to their trip

» Visitors who recalled this advertising primarily saw it on social media or the internet

» This information influenced **42% of all** visitors to visit Maine

Social media	83%
Magazine	33%
Radio	23%
Internet	18%
Newspaper	11%
AAA	7%
VisitMaine.com	6%
Cable or satellite television	5%
Traveler reviews/blogs	2%
Brochure	1%
Online streaming service	<1%
Maine travel/visitor guide	<1%
Billboard	<1%
Music/podcast streaming	<1%
Deal – based promotion	<1%
Other	1%

*Multiple responses permitted.

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VISITOR JOURNEY: TRAVELER PROFILE

Pre-Visit

Traveler Profile

Trip Experience

Post-Trip Evaluation

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VISITOR ORIGINS

Maine
37%

New England
39%

Mid-Atlantic
13%

Southeast
5%

Southwest
2%

Midwest
1%

West
1%

Canada
1%

Other Intl
1%

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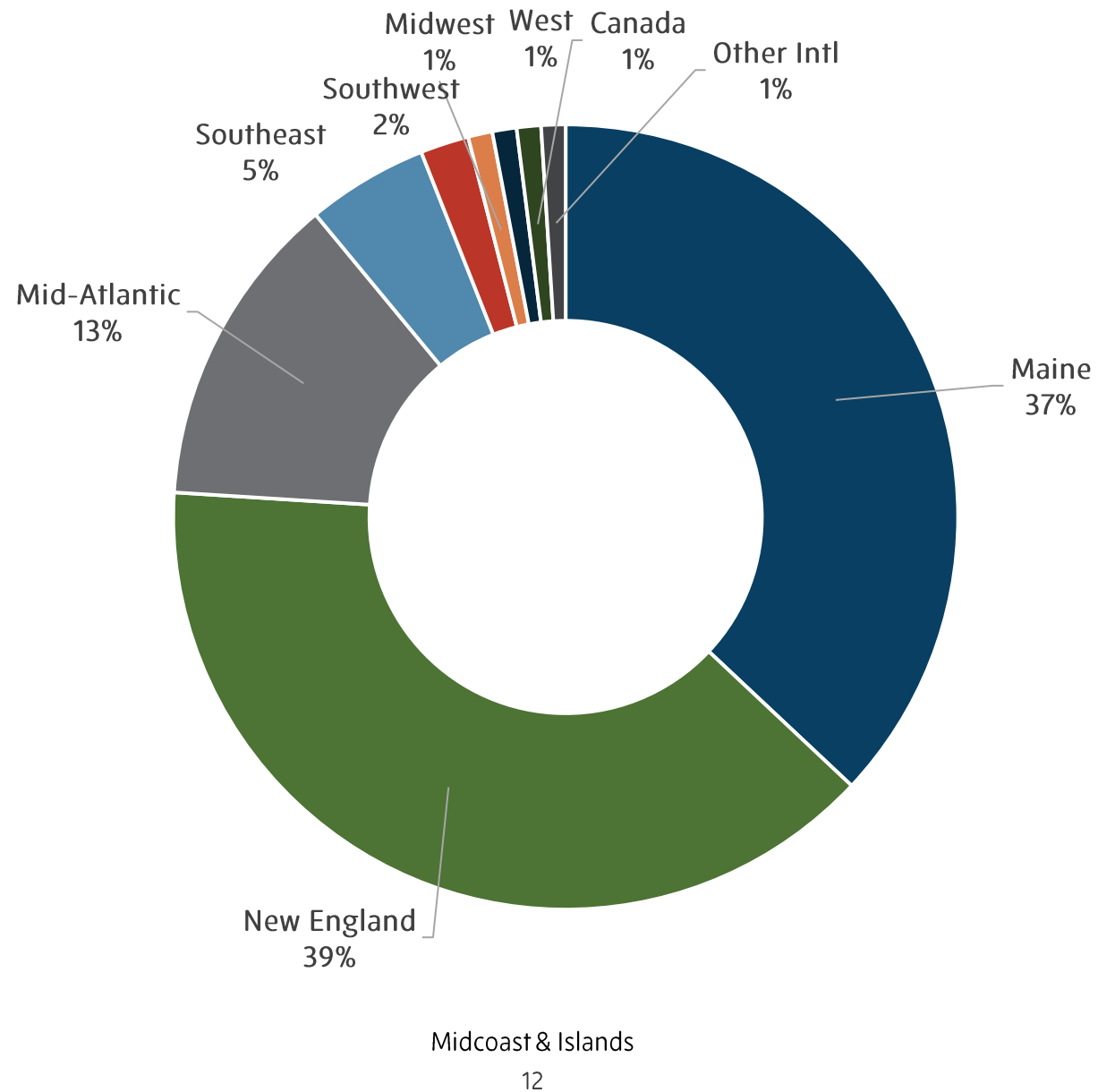
TOP ORIGIN STATES & PROVINCES

» **91%** of visitors traveled to/within Maine from 11 U.S. states and Canadian provinces

» Nearly **2 in 5** visitors were residents of Maine traveling throughout the state

State	Percent
Maine	37%
Massachusetts	18%
New Hampshire	10%
Connecticut	6%
New York	5%
Florida	3%
New Jersey	3%
Vermont	3%
Pennsylvania	2%
Maryland	2%
Rhode Island	2%

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TOP ORIGIN MARKETS

» Nearly **48%** of visitors traveled from **12** U.S. markets

» **18%** of visitors traveled to Maine from Boston or New York City

Market	Percent
Boston	12%
New York City[1]	6%
Portland, ME	5%
Augusta	5%
Belfast, ME	4%
Auburn - Lewiston	3%
Manchester, NH	3%
Washington DC - Baltimore[2]	2%
Bangor	2%
Providence, RI	2%
Rochester - Portsmouth, NH	2%
Waterville	2%

[1] Includes some markets in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut.
[2] Includes some markets in Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia.

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TRAVEL PARTIES

» Typical visitors traveled to Maine in parties of **2.2** people

» Nearly **2 in 5** visitors traveled as a couple

» Over **1 in 4** traveled alone

» **12%** of visitors traveled with one or more children in their travel party
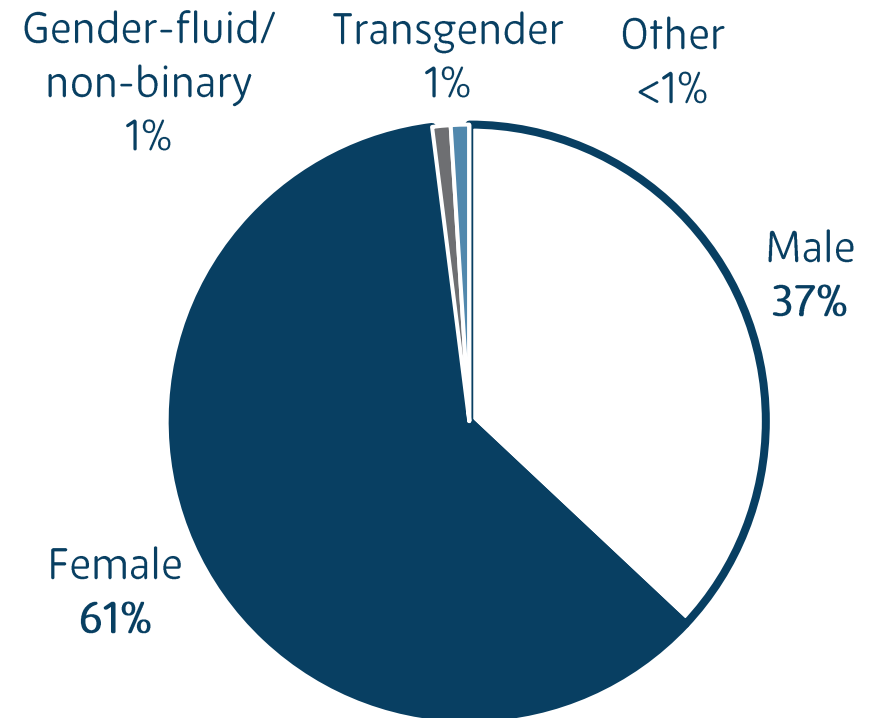
Travel Party Composition

As a couple	37%
Traveled alone	26%
As a family	17%
With other couples/friends	15%
With business associates	5%
In a tour group	<1%
Other	<1%
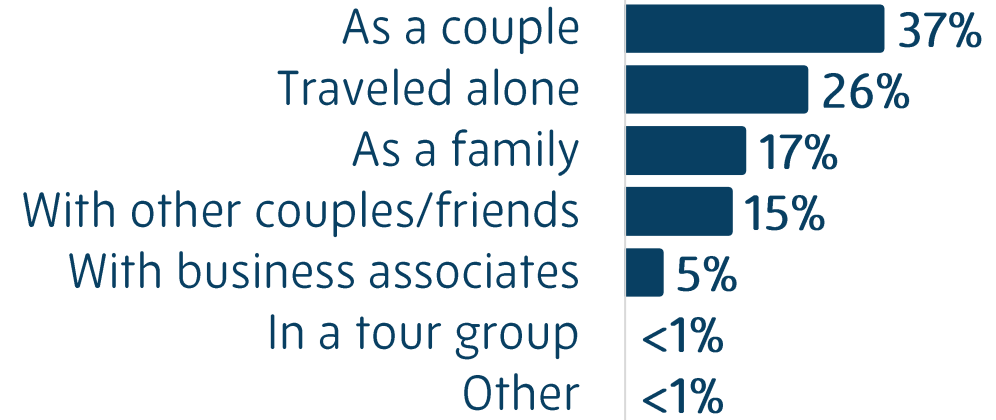
Children in Travel Party*

No children	88%
Children younger than 6	4%
Children 6 – 12	6%
Children 13 – 17	6%

*Multiple responses permitted.

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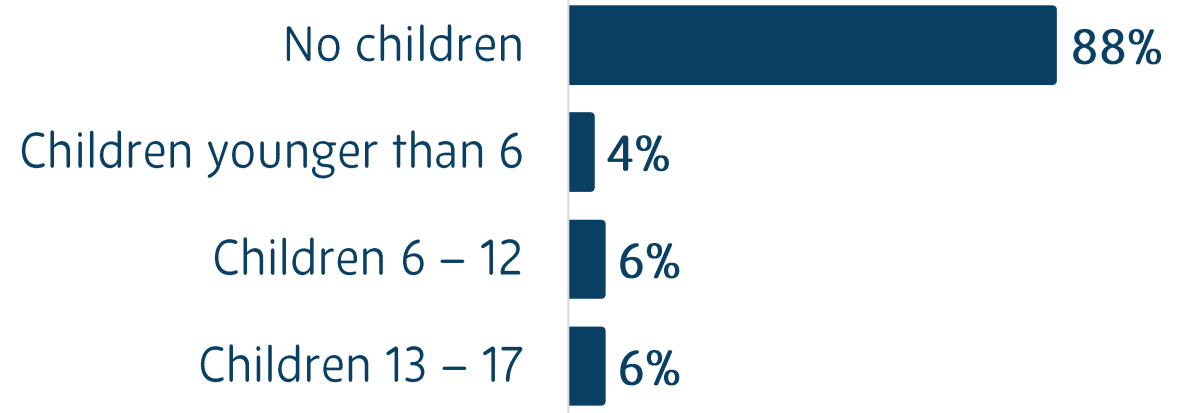
GENDER

» Over **3 in 5** visitors to Maine interviewed were females

Gender-fluid/
non-binary
1%

Transgender
1%

Other
<1%

Male
37%

Female
61%

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AGE

» The average age of visitors to Maine is **49** years old

Age	Percentage
Under 25	2%
25 - 34	8%
35 - 44	29%
45 - 54	27%
55 - 65	26%
Over 65	8%

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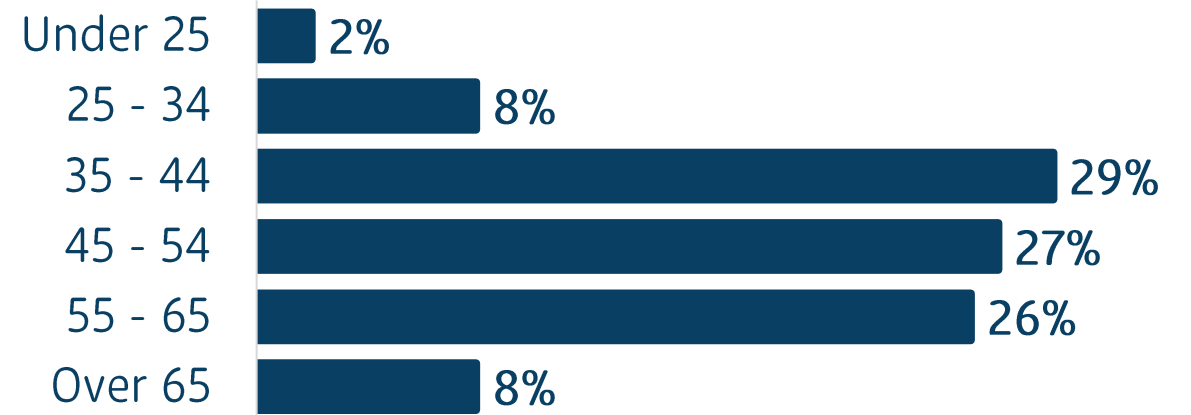
RACE & ETHNICITY

» Nearly **9 in 10** visitors to Maine were white

White **89%**
Asian **4%**
Black **4%**
Hispanic **1%**
Indigenous **<1%**
Other **2%**

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EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

» Nearly **9 in 10** visitors have a college/technical school degree or higher

High school or less — 1%

Some college or technical school — 12%

College or technical school graduate — 81%

Graduate school — 6%

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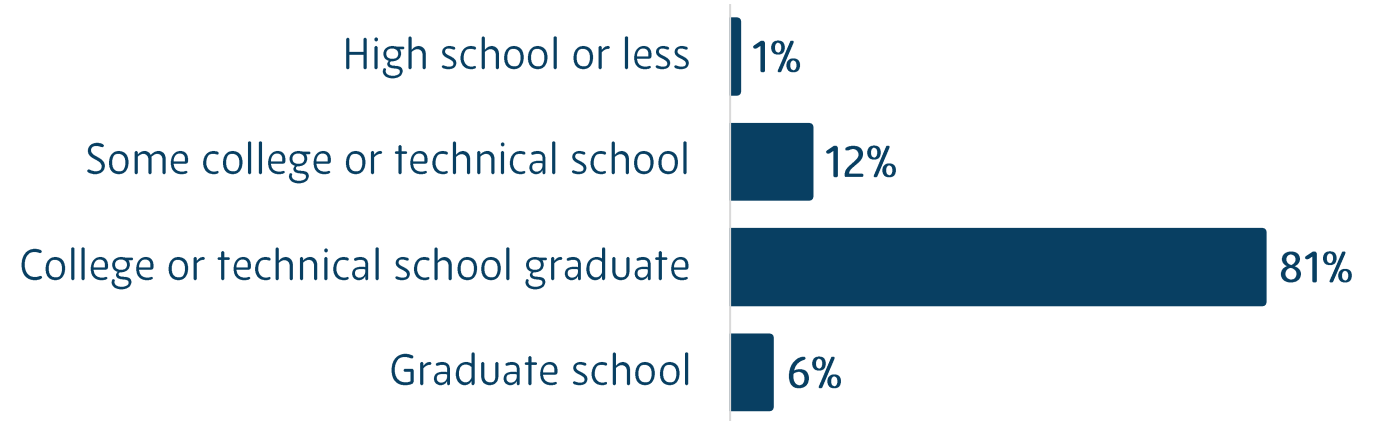
MARITAL STATUS

» Over **7 in 10** visitors to Maine were married or living with their partner

Single/widowed
29%

Married/living with partner
71%

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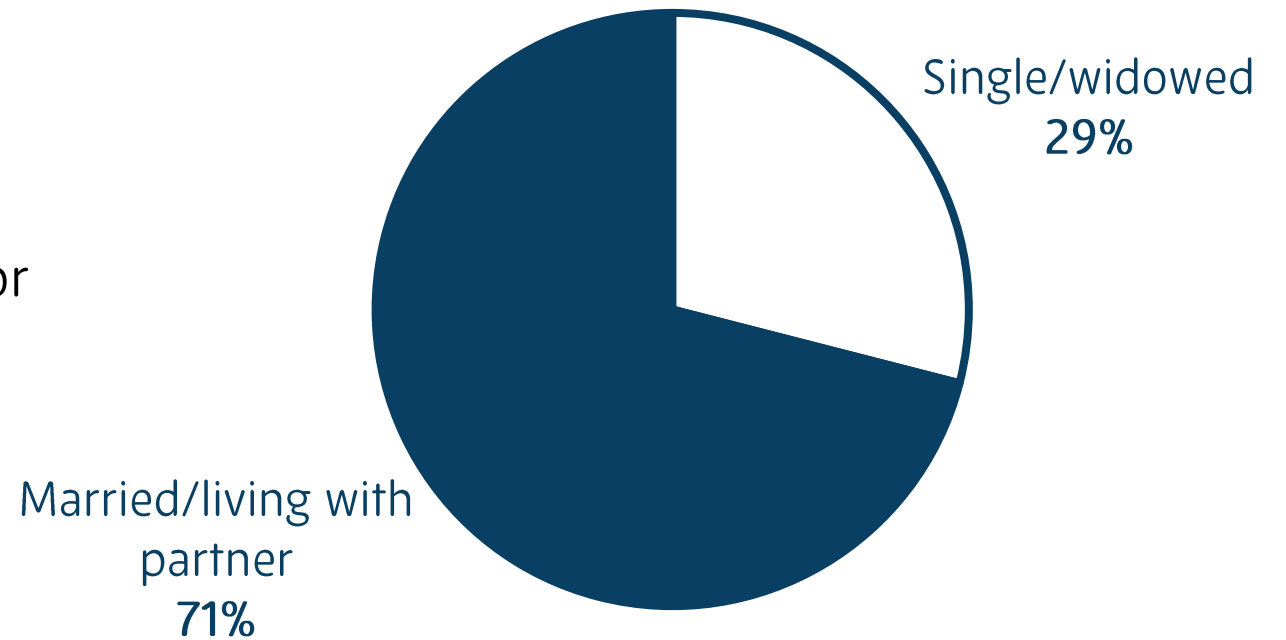
EMPLOYMENT STATUS

» Nearly **9 in 10** visitors to Maine were employed, most full-time

Employed full-time **61%**
Employed part-time **12%**
Contract/freelance/temporary employee **13%**
Retired **8%**
Not currently employed **4%**
Student **2%**

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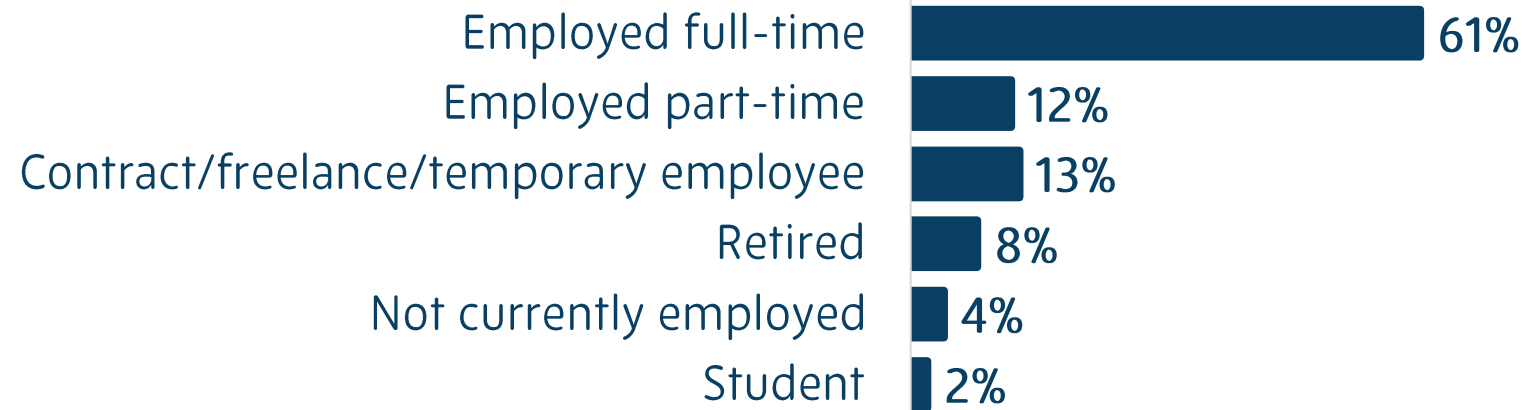
HOUSEHOLD INCOME

» The average household income of visitors to Maine is **$78,600** per year

» **20%** of visitors to Maine earned more than $100,000 per year

Income	Percentage
Less than $25,000	2%
$25,000 - $49,999	9%
$50,000 - $74,999	34%
$75,000 - $99,999	35%
$100,000 - $149,999	16%
$150,000 - $199,999	4%
$200,000 - $249,999	<1%
$250,000 or more	<1%

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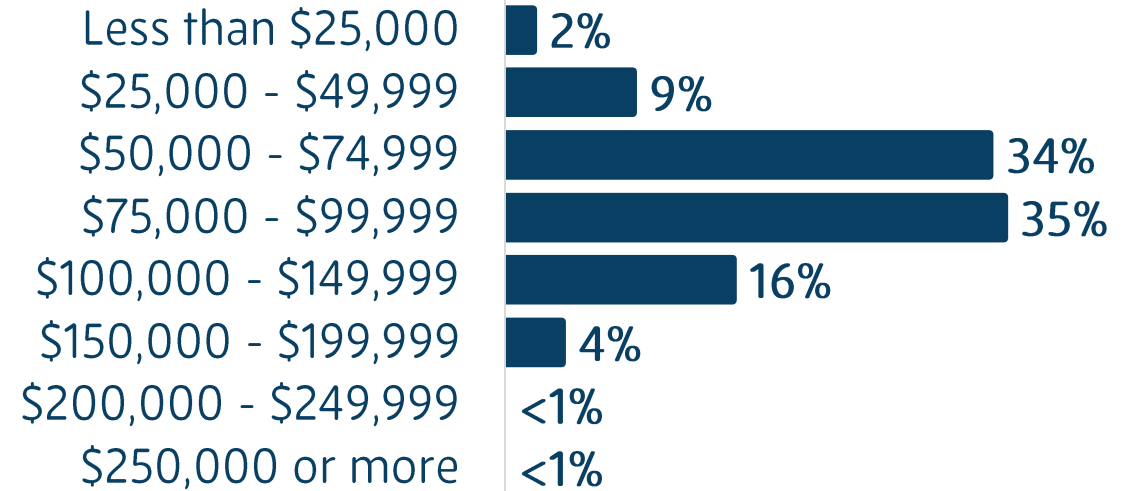
NEW & RETURNING VISITORS

» **4%** of visitors were traveling in Maine for the first time

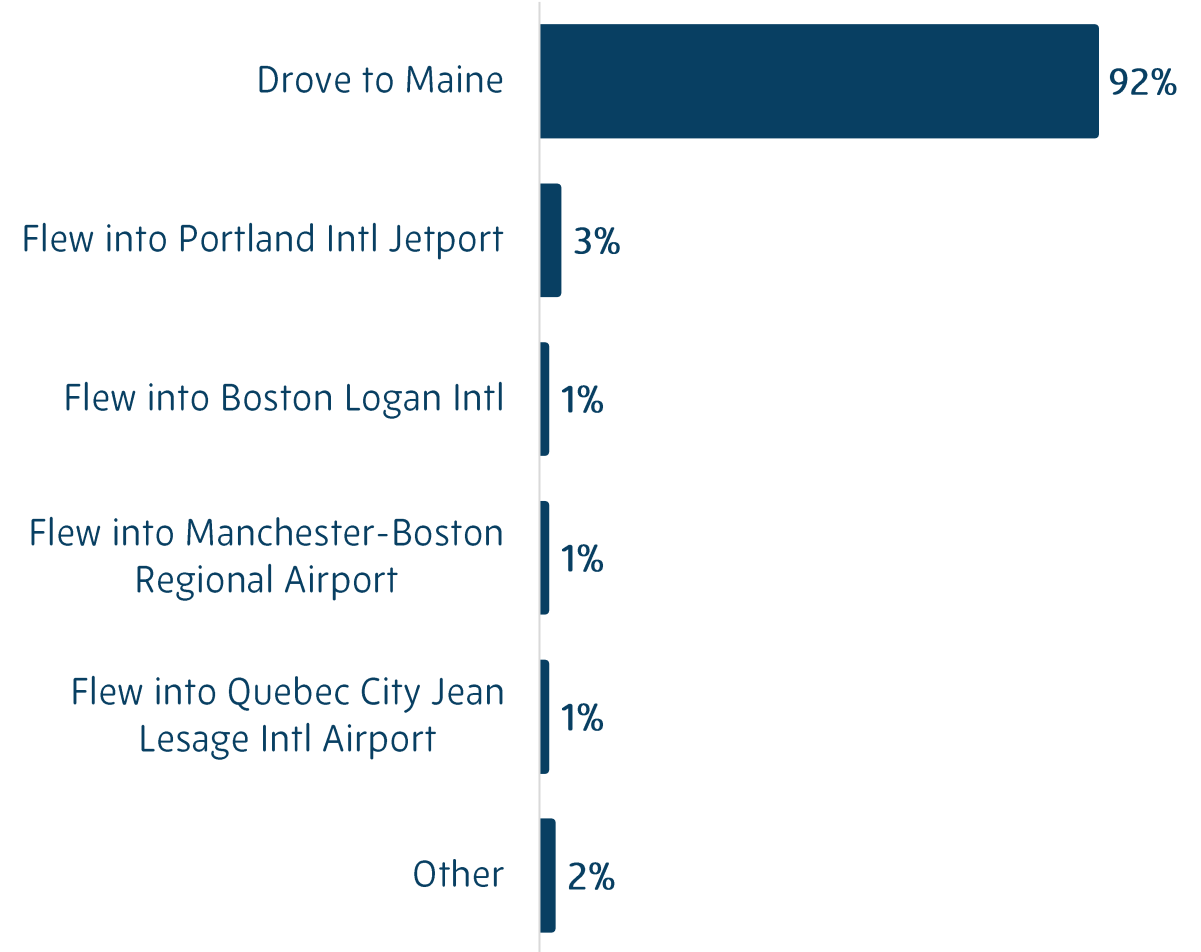» Maine has high repeat and loyal visitors, as **32%** had previously traveled in Maine more than 10 times

This is my first time ▮ 4%

2 - 5 times ▮▮▮ 25%

6 - 10 times ▮▮▮▮▮ 39%

11+ times ▮▮▮▮ 32%

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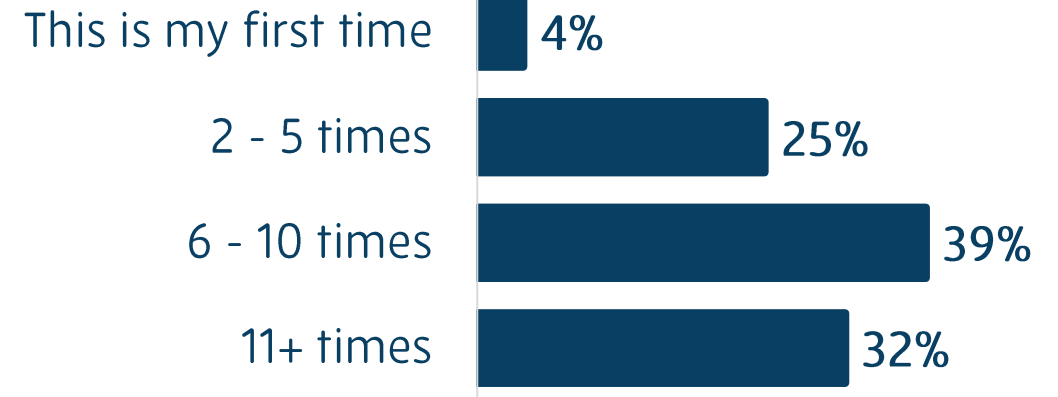
VISITOR JOURNEY: TRIP EXPERIENCE

Pre-Visit

Traveler Profile

Trip Experience

Post-Trip Evaluation
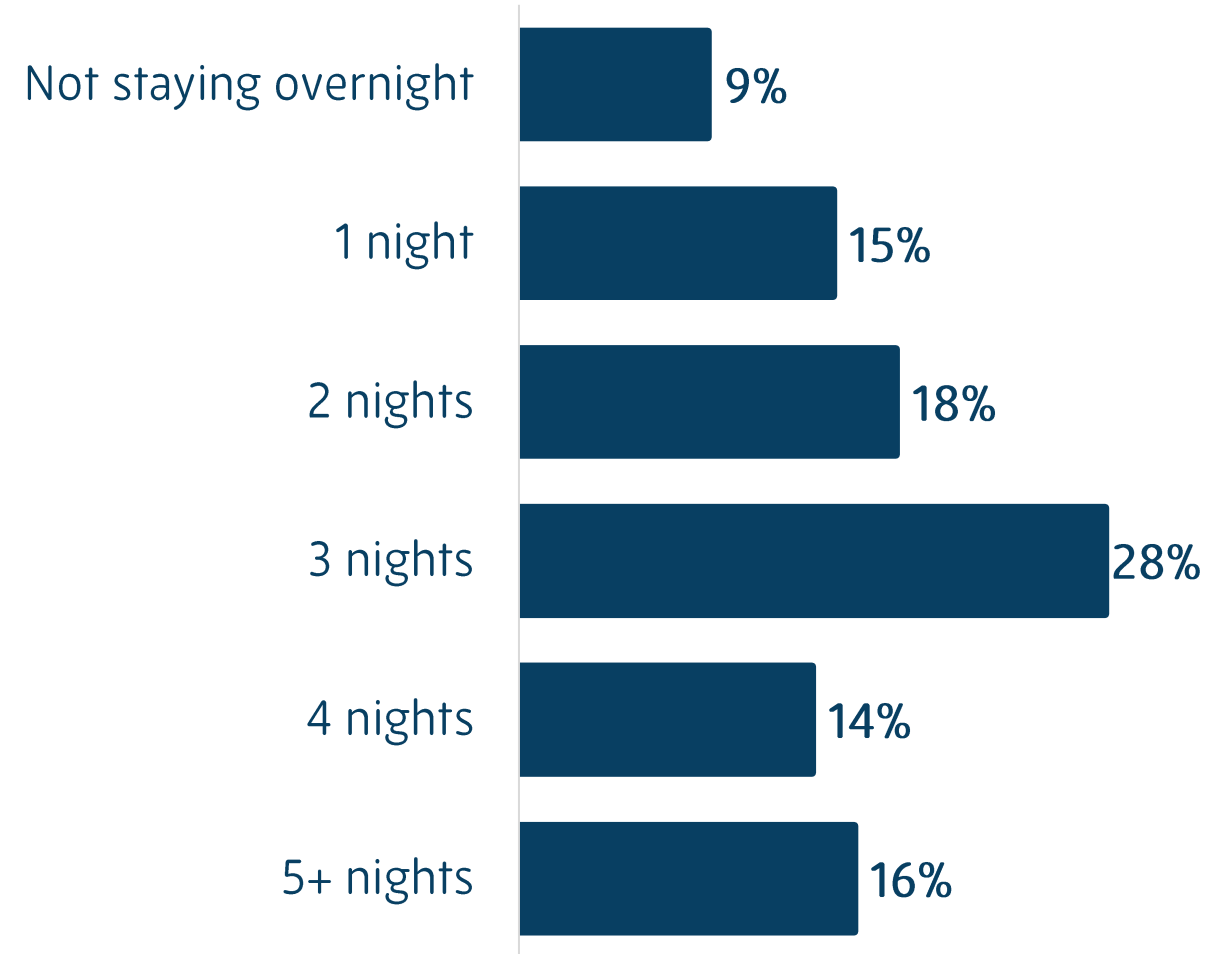
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MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

» Maine is a drive-market for most visitors, with **92%** choosing to travel by car over plane, motor coach/bus, or train

» Most visitors who flew to Maine arrived at Portland International Jetport

Mode	Percentage
Drove to Maine	92%
Flew into Portland Intl Jetport	3%
Flew into Boston Logan Intl	1%
Flew into Manchester-Boston Regional Airport	1%
Flew into Quebec City Jean Lesage Intl Airport	1%
Other	2%

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NIGHTS STAYED

» **91%** of visitors stayed one or more nights in Maine on their trip

» Typical visitors stayed **3.7*** nights in Maine on their trips

» Typical visitors staying overnight in paid accommodations stayed **3.4** nights in Maine on their trips
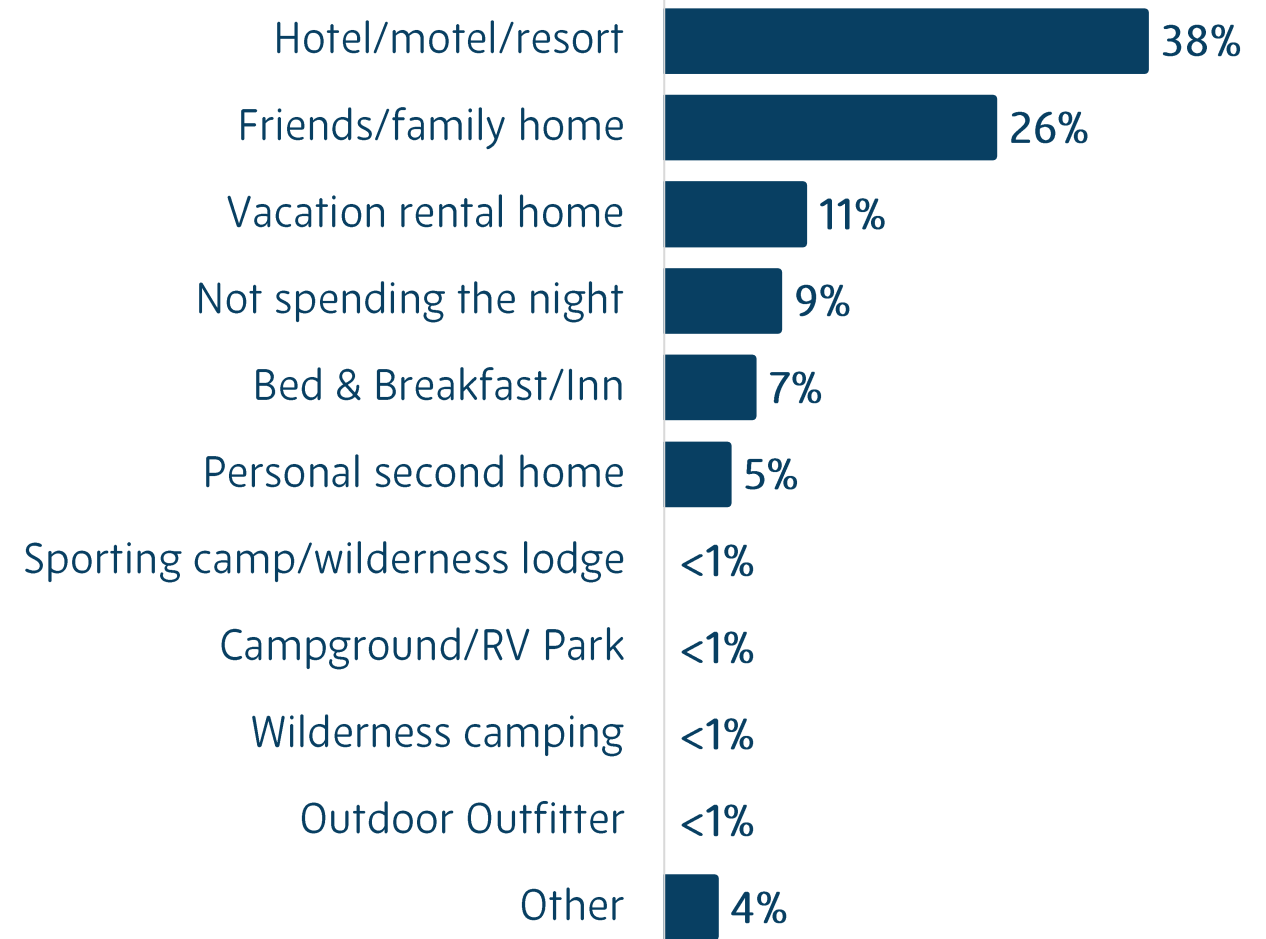
Not staying overnight 9%

1 night 15%

2 nights 18%

3 nights 28%

4 nights 14%

5+ nights 16%

*Includes visitors staying overnight in paid accommodations, visiting friends & relatives, and day trippers.

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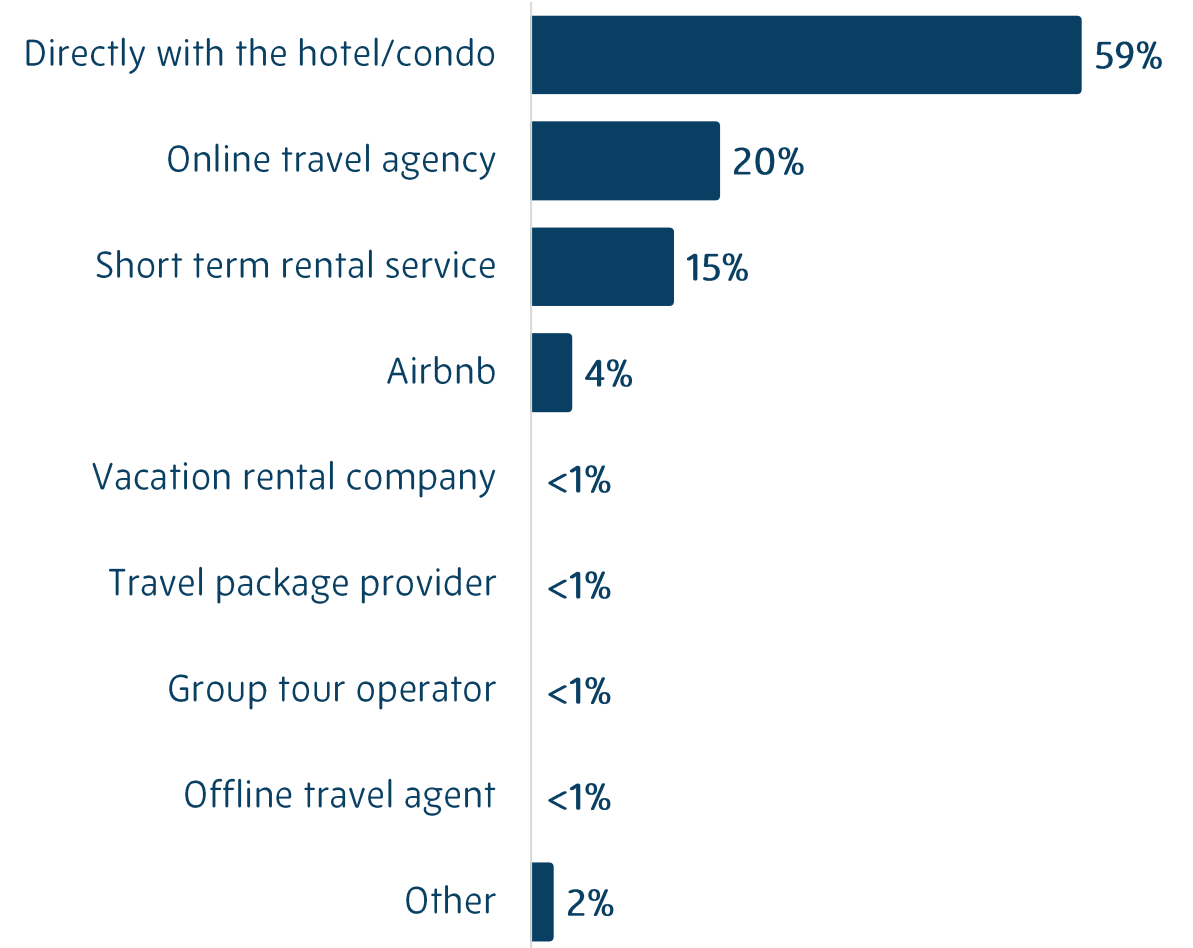MAINE.
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ACCOMMODATIONS

» Nearly **2 in 5** visitors stayed in a hotel/motel/resort while in Maine

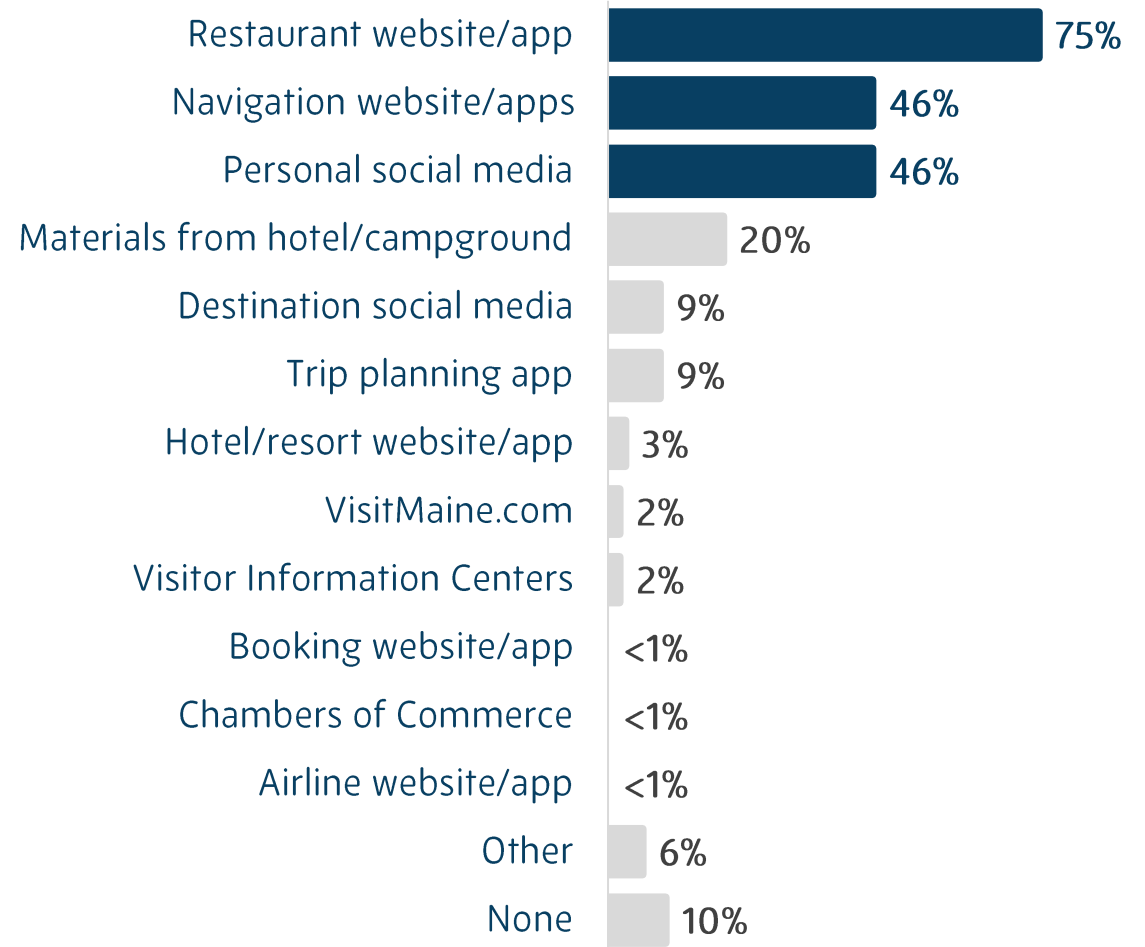» Over **1 in 4** visitors stayed with friends and relatives on their trip to Maine

Hotel/motel/resort	38%
Friends/family home	26%
Vacation rental home	11%
Not spending the night	9%
Bed & Breakfast/Inn	7%
Personal second home	5%
Sporting camp/wilderness lodge	<1%
Campground/RV Park	<1%
Wilderness camping	<1%
Outdoor Outfitter	<1%
Other	4%

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BOOKING METHODS

» Nearly **3 in 5** visitors who stayed in paid accommodations during their trip booked their lodging directly with the hotel/condo
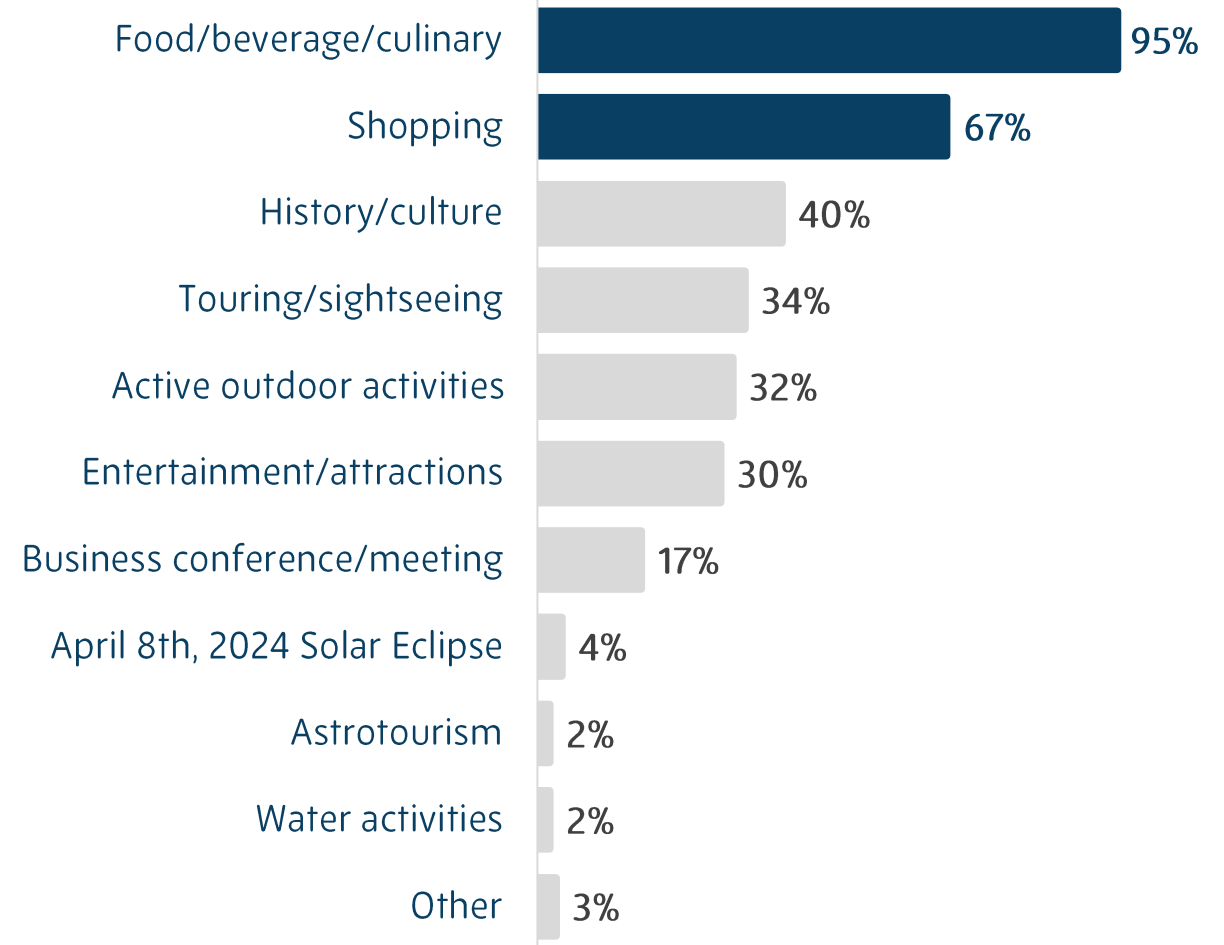
Directly with the hotel/condo	59%
Online travel agency	20%
Short term rental service	15%
Airbnb	4%
Vacation rental company	<1%
Travel package provider	<1%
Group tour operator	<1%
Offline travel agent	<1%
Other	2%

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IN-MARKET VISITOR RESOURCES*

» Visitors were most likely to rely on restaurant websites/apps (i.e., Google Maps, etc.) to plan activities in–market

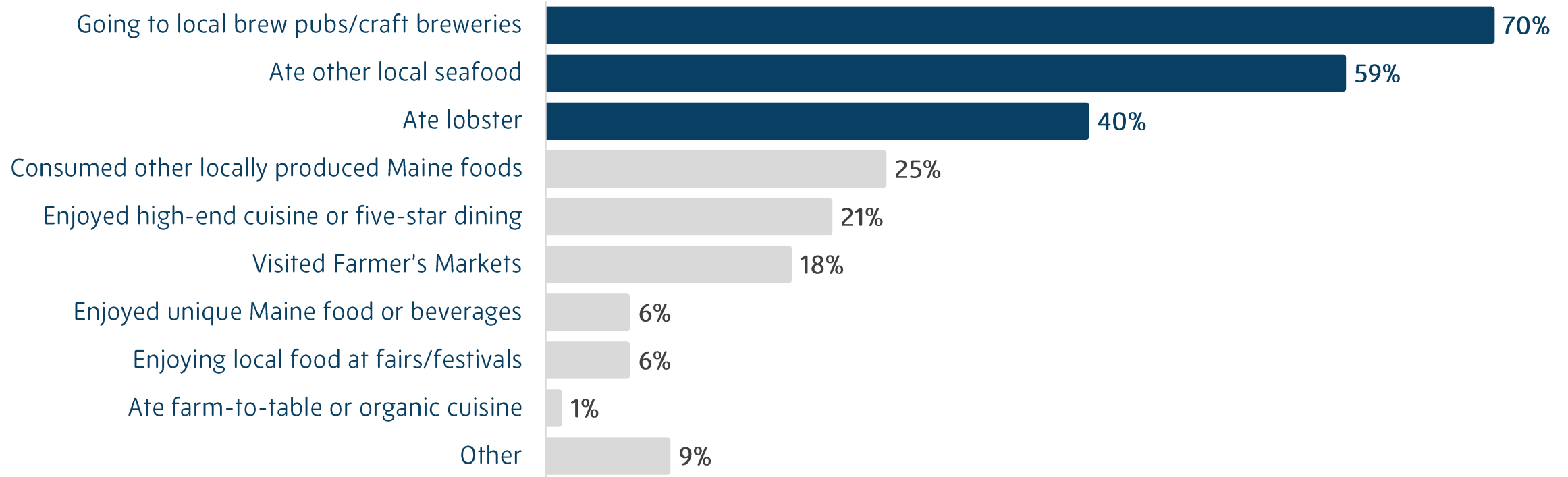» **1 in 10** visitors did not use any resources to plan activities while they were in-market

Resource	Percentage
Restaurant website/app	75%
Navigation website/apps	46%
Personal social media	46%
Materials from hotel/campground	20%
Destination social media	9%
Trip planning app	9%
Hotel/resort website/app	3%
VisitMaine.com	2%
Visitor Information Centers	2%
Booking website/app	<1%
Chambers of Commerce	<1%
Airline website/app	<1%
Other	6%
None	10%

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VISITOR ACTIVITIES*

» **95%** of visitors engaged in food/beverage/culinary activities during their trip to Maine

Activity	Percentage
Food/beverage/culinary	95%
Shopping	67%
History/culture	40%
Touring/sightseeing	34%
Active outdoor activities	32%
Entertainment/attractions	30%
Business conference/meeting	17%
April 8th, 2024 Solar Eclipse	4%
Astrotourism	2%
Water activities	2%
Other	3%

*Multiple responses permitted.

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FOOD & BEVERAGE ACTIVITIES*

Activity	Percentage
Going to local brew pubs/craft breweries	70%
Ate other local seafood	59%
Ate lobster	40%
Consumed other locally produced Maine foods	25%
Enjoyed high-end cuisine or five-star dining	21%
Visited Farmer's Markets	18%
Enjoyed unique Maine food or beverages	6%
Enjoying local food at fairs/festivals	6%
Ate farm-to-table or organic cuisine	1%
Other	9%

*Multiple responses permitted.

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SHOPPING ACTIVITIES*

Activity	Percentage
Shopping in downtown areas	56%
Outlet shopping	42%
Shopping for gifts/souvenirs	21%
Shopping for antiques/local arts and crafts	20%
Shopping for unique/locally produced goods	18%
Shopping for "Made in Maine" products	13%
Shopping at malls	7%
Other	9%

*Multiple responses permitted.

HISTORICAL & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES*

Attend popular music concerts/events — 24%
Visit art museums/local artisan studios — 19%
Visit historic sites/museums — 14%
Attend plays/musicals/theatrical events — 4%
Get to know the local people and/or culture — 3%
Painting/drawing/sketching — <1%
Attend operas/classical music events — <1%
Other — 17%
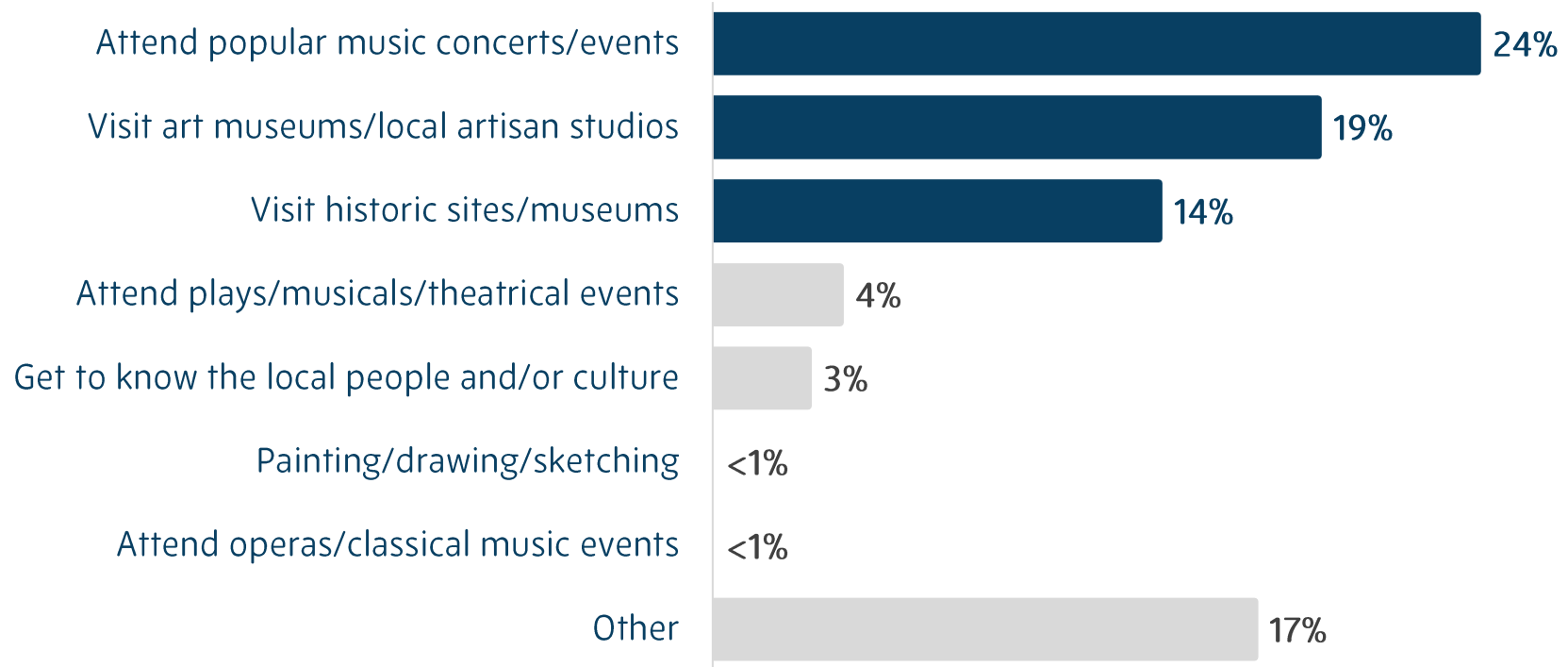
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TOURING & SIGHTSEEING ACTIVITIES*

Activity	Percentage
Enjoying the ocean views/rocky coast	32%
Sightseeing	25%
Driving for pleasure	21%
Tours of communities/local architecture	19%
Photography	12%
Enjoying the mountain views	11%
Wildlife viewing/bird watching	7%
Nature cruises or tours	<1%
Other	4%

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ACTIVE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES*

Activity	Percentage
Hiking/climbing/backpacking	17%
Alpine skiing/snowboarding	7%
Exploring State and National Parks	5%
Snowshoeing	2%
Snowmobiling	1%
Nordic skiing	1%
Bicycling touring	<1%
Camping	<1%
Mountain/Fat Biking	<1%
Riding all-terrain vehicles	<1%
Hunting	<1%
Other	13%

*Multiple responses permitted.

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ENTERTAINMENT ACTIVITIES*

Activity	Percentage
Attend sporting events	9%
Bars/nightlife	5%
Outdoor fun centers	<1%
Horseback riding	<1%
Summer camps	<1%
Amusement/theme parks	<1%
Children's museums	<1%
Animal parks/zoos	<1%
Agricultural fairs	<1%
Water parks	<1%
Other	25%

*Multiple responses permitted.
**Other includes visiting the Botanical Gardens and special events.

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WATER ACTIVITIES*

Activity	Percentage
Canoeing/kayaking	1%
Going to the beach	1%
Outdoor swimming	1%
Fishing	<1%
Pool swimming	<1%
White water rafting	<1%
Motor boating	<1%
Sailing	<1%
Water skiing/jet skiing	<1%
Surfing	<1%
Other	<1%

*Multiple responses permitted.

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DAILY TRAVEL PARTY SPENDING

	All Visitors
Accommodations	$146
Transportation	$23
Groceries	$28
Restaurants	$107
Shopping	$133
Activities & Attractions	$30
Other	$3
Daily Spending	**$470**

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TOTAL TRAVEL PARTY SPENDING

	All Visitors
Accommodations	$540
Transportation	$86
Groceries	$102
Restaurants	$396
Shopping	$492
Activities & Attractions	$110
Other	$10
Total Spending	**$1,736**

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LODGING AMENITIES*

» An amenity, e.g., food, resort fee, recreation fee, parking, etc., was included in the room price for nearly **all** visitors

» Price for accommodations included parking for over **9 in 10** visitors

» Food was included in accommodations' pricing for nearly **7 in 10** visitors

Parking **95%**

Food **69%**

Recreation **3%**

Resort fee **1%**

Other **6%**

None **2%**

*Multiple responses permitted.

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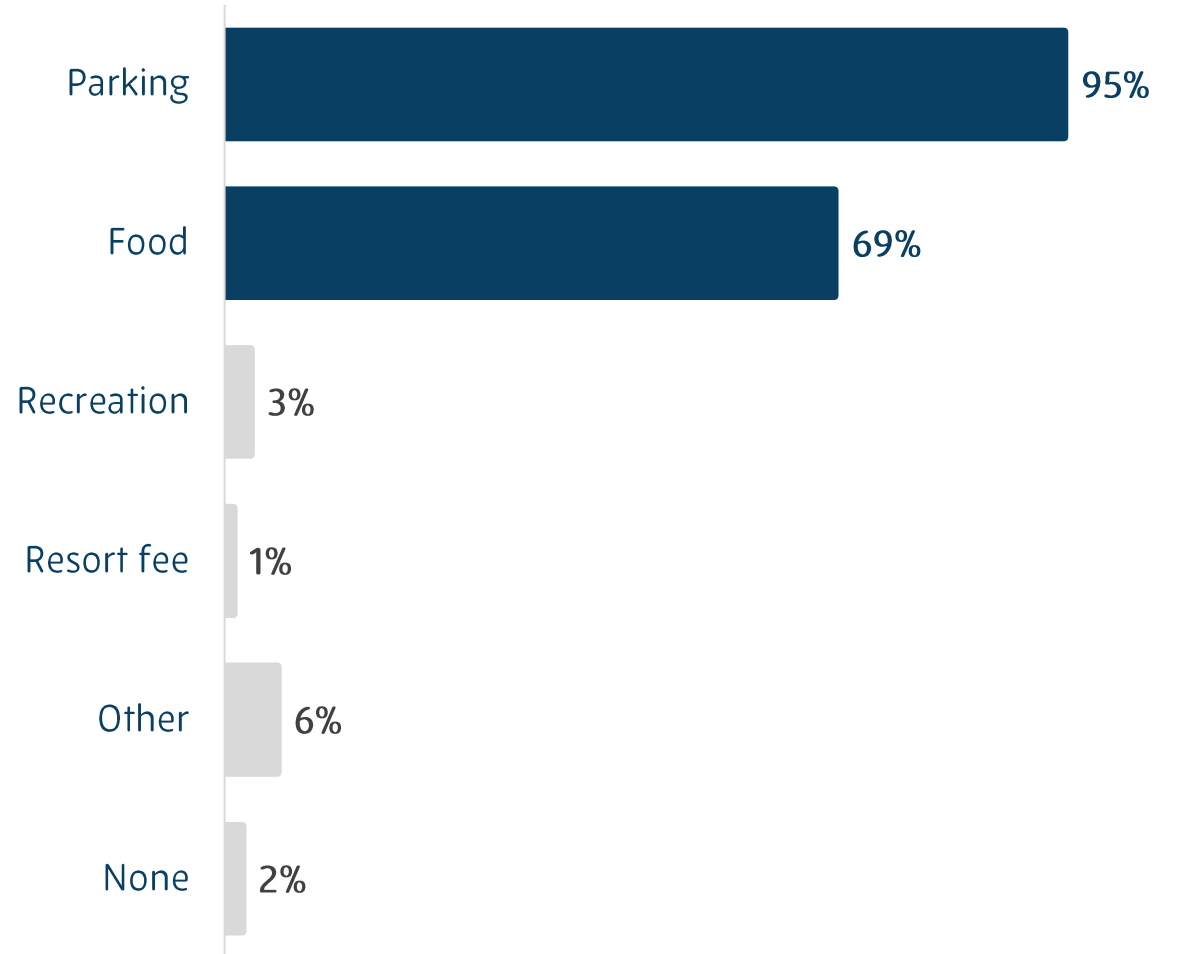
» Nearly **7 in 10** visitors did not visit any other U.S. state or Canadian province during their trip

» Visitors were more likely to visit U.S. states near Maine than they were to visit a Canadian province during their trip

State/Province	Percentage
No other states/provinces	68%
New Hampshire	21%
Massachusetts	11%
Connecticut	3%
Rhode Island	3%
Vermont	2%
New York	2%
Ontario	1%
Quebec	1%
New Brunswick	<1%
Nova Scotia	<1%
Prince Edward Island	<1%
Newfoundland and Labrador	<1%
Other	<1%

*Multiple responses permitted.

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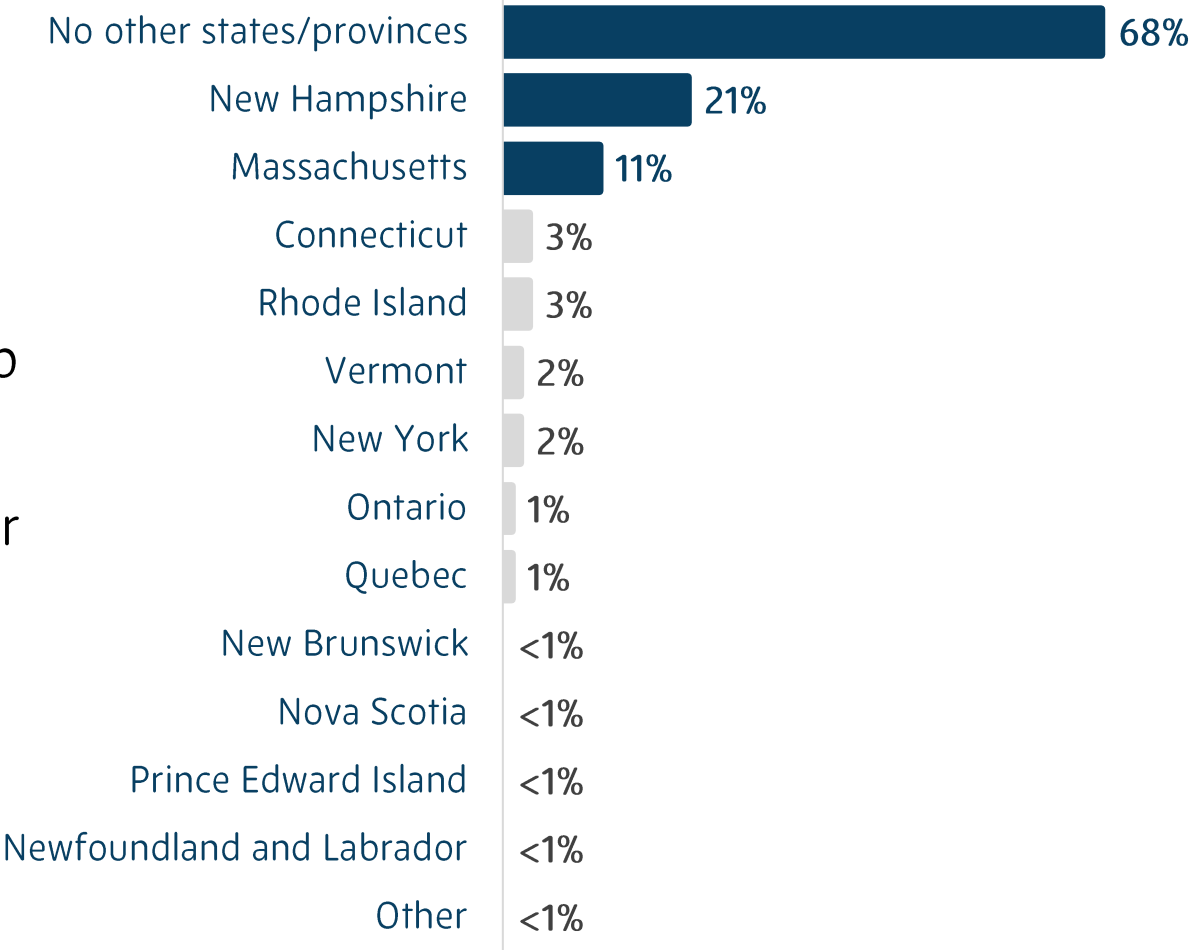
TRAVELING WITHIN MAINE*

» **53%** of visitors visited Greater Portland & Casco Bay in addition to their primary destination within Maine

Greater Portland & Casco Bay — 53%
No other regions — 38%
The Maine Beaches — 20%
Kennebec Valley — 16%
Maine Lakes & Mountains — 13%
Downeast & Acadia — 6%
The Maine Highlands — 3%
Aroostook County — 1%
Other — <1%
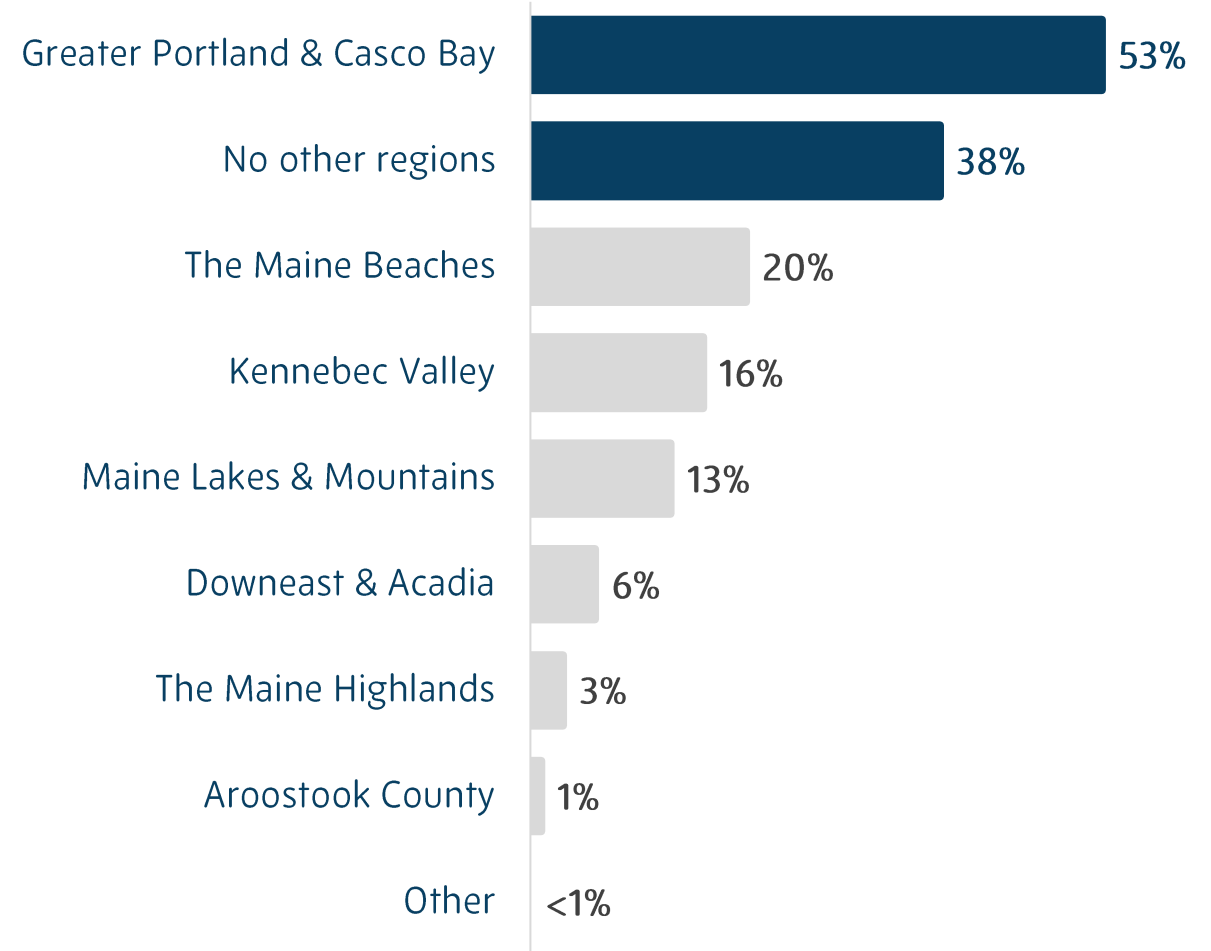
*Multiple responses permitted.

VISITOR JOURNEY: POST-TRIP EVALUATION

Pre-Visit

Traveler Profile

Trip Experience

Post-Trip Evaluation

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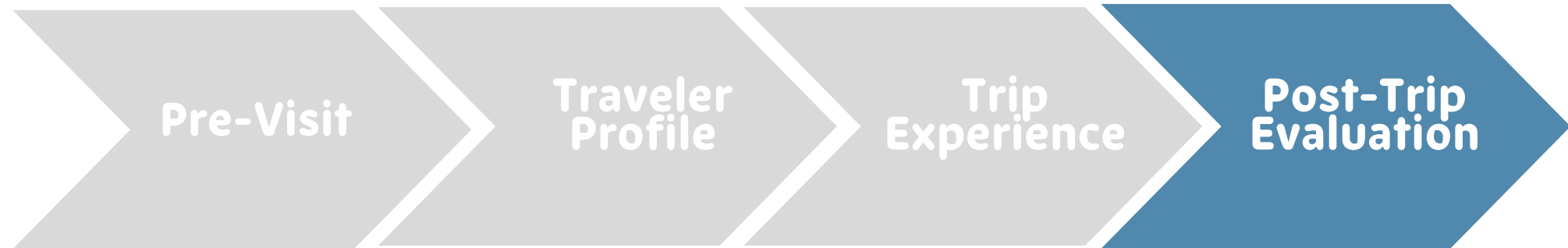
RECOMMENDING MAINE & ITS REGIONS

Likelihood of Recommending Maine

Would recommend Maine	98%
Would not recommend Maine	1%
Not sure	1%

» **98%** of visitors would recommend that their friends and family choose Maine as their destination for a future visit or vacation

» **99%** of visitors would recommend that their friends and family visit the specific region of Maine that they traveled to on their trip – **45%** would definitely recommend
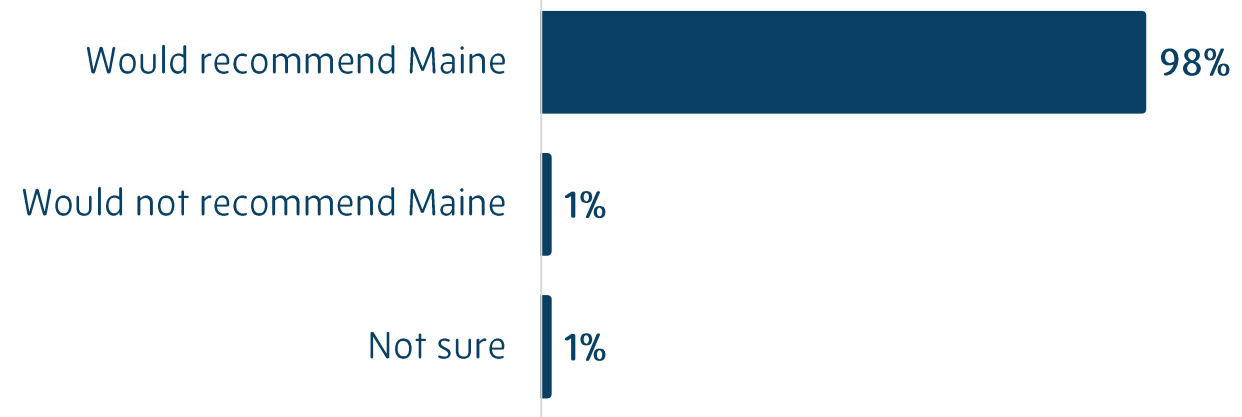
Likelihood of Recommending Region Visited

Definitely recommend region	45%
Probably would recommend region	54%
Would not recommend region	1%
Not sure	<1%

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R E S E A R C H
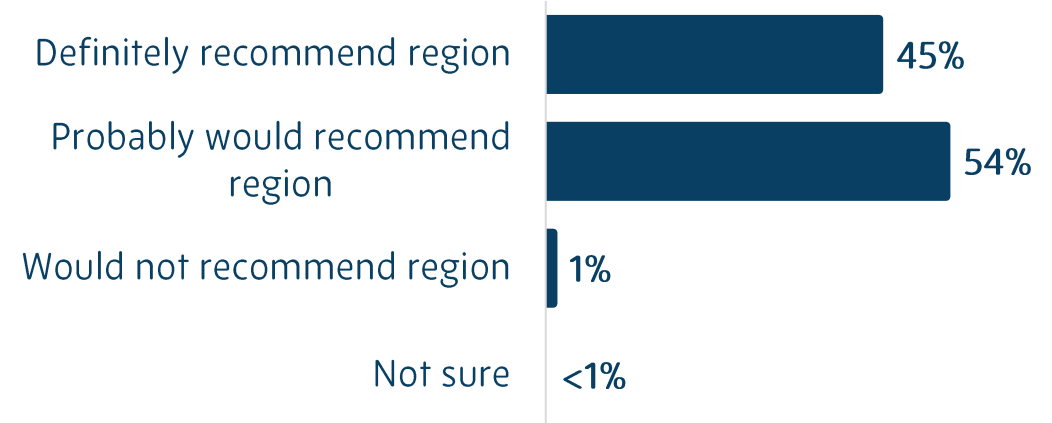
LIKELIHOOD OF RETURNING TO MAINE

Definitely will return **69%**

Probably will return **27%**

Probably will not return* **<1%**

Not sure* **4%**

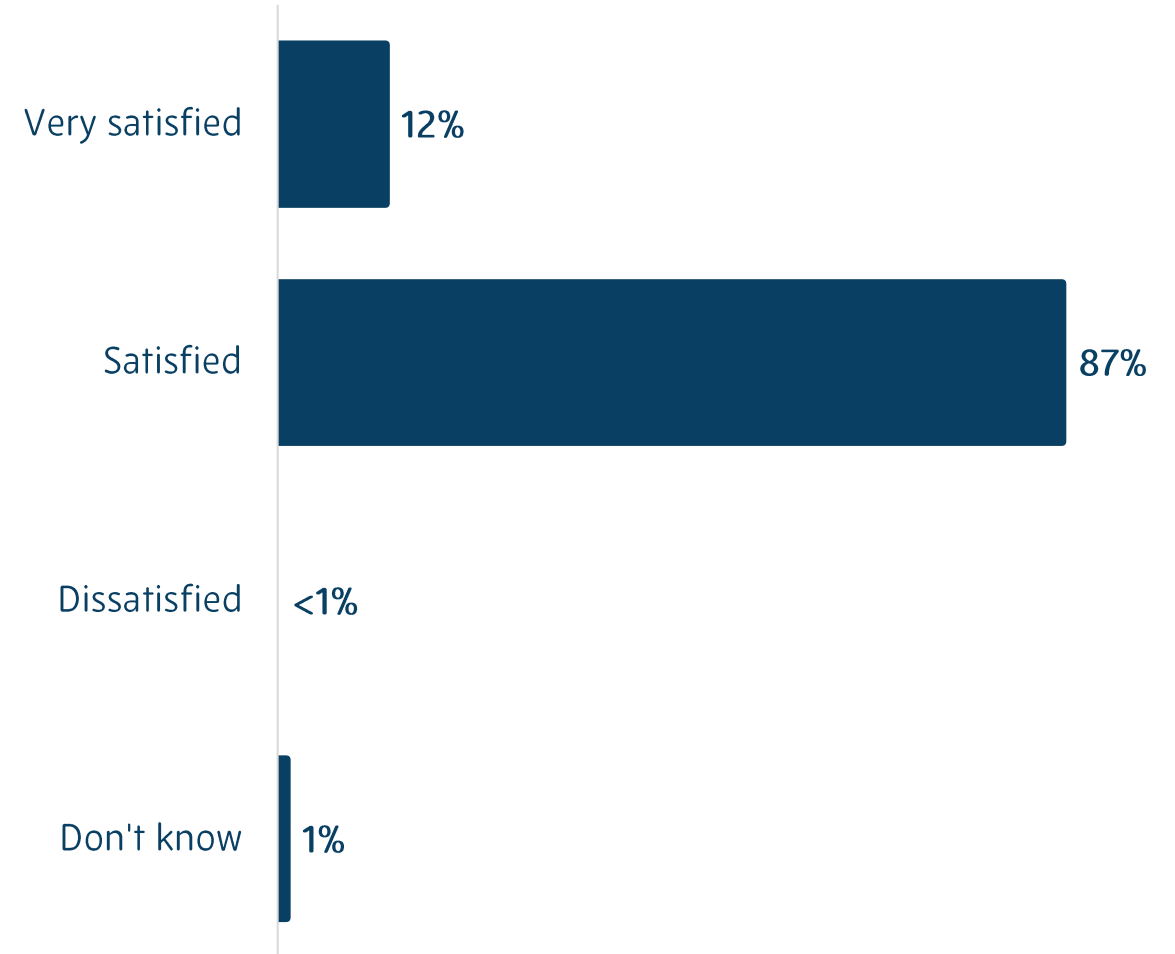» **96%** of visitors will return to Maine for a future visit or vacation
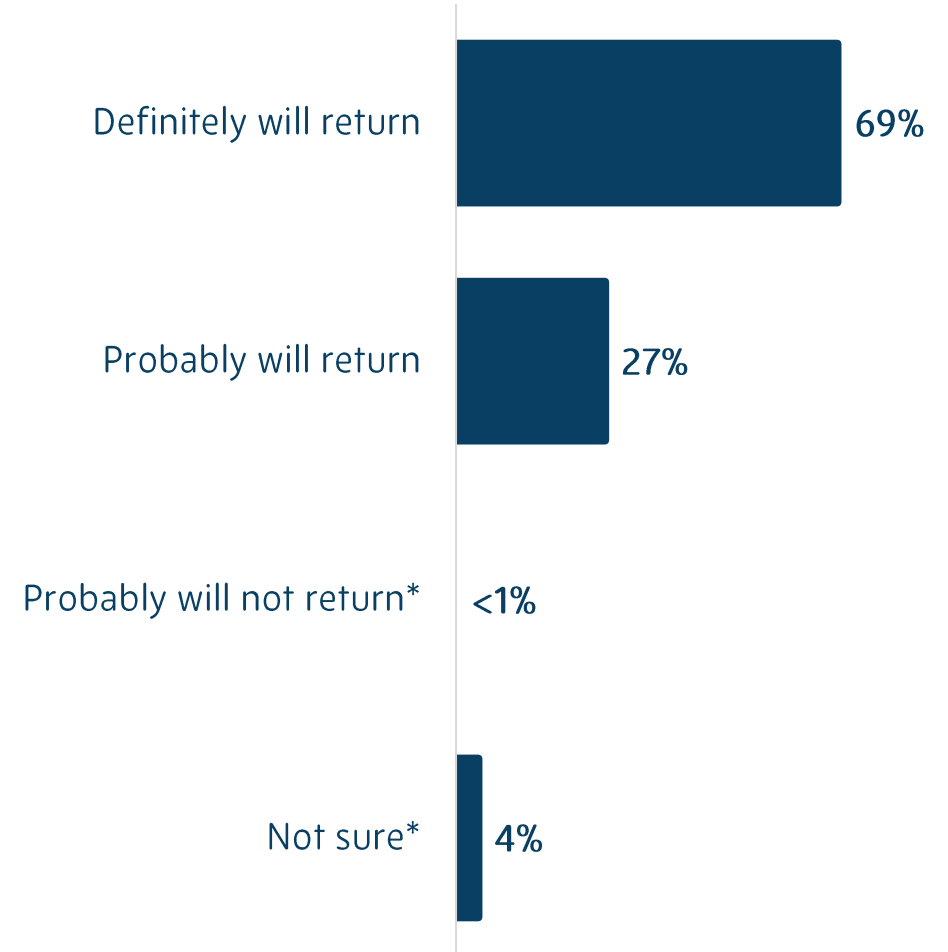
*4% of all visitors are not sure or will probably not return to Maine for the following reasons:
1. Traffic/difficult drive 2. Airline service is too limited/too expensive 3. Too cold/bad weather.
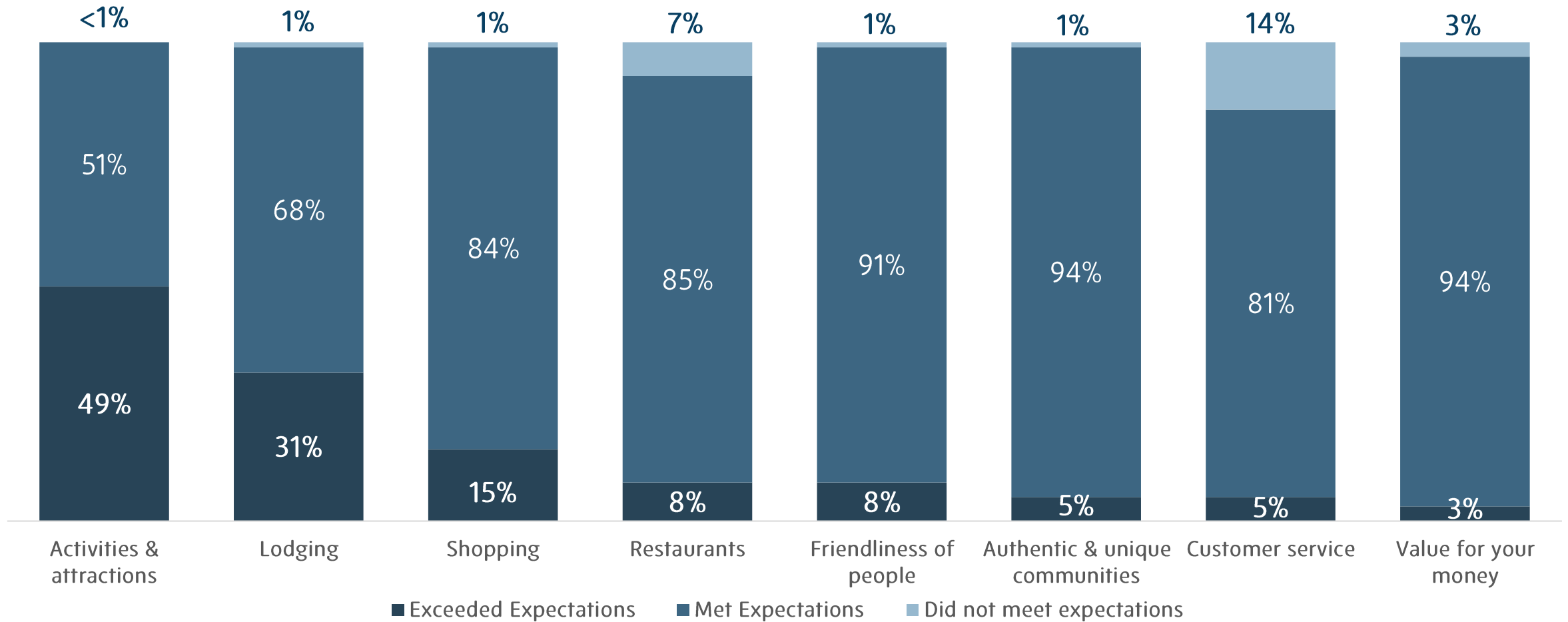
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SATISFACTION

» **99%** of visitors were satisfied with their trip to Maine

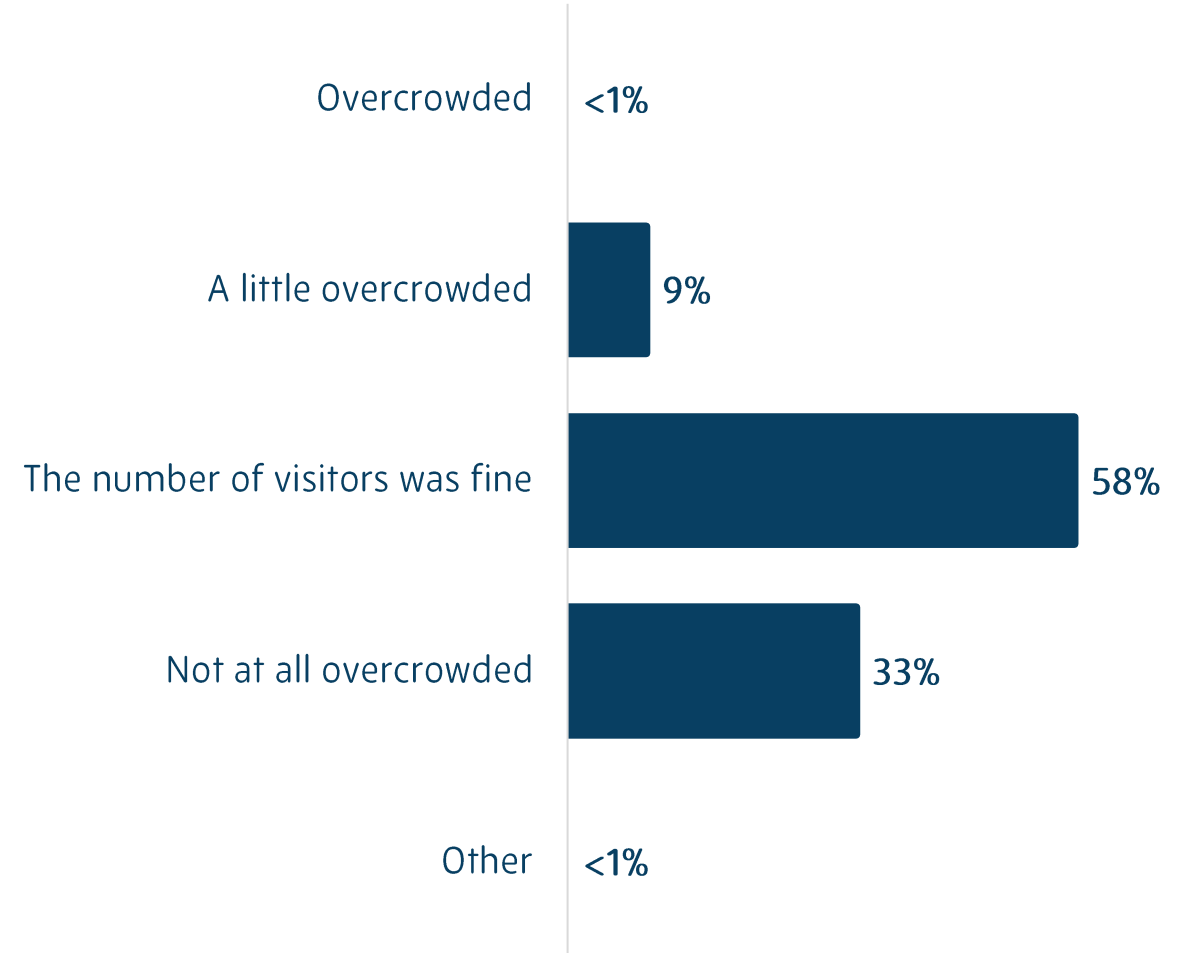» About **1 in 8** visitors were very satisfied with their trip to Maine

Very satisfied — 12%

Satisfied — 87%

Dissatisfied — <1%

Don't know — 1%

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TRIP RATINGS

Midcoast & Islands

47

OVERCROWDING

» **58%** of visitors thought the number of visitors during their trip to Maine was fine

» **9%** of visitors though it was a little overcrowded

Overcrowded **<1%**

A little overcrowded **9%**

The number of visitors was fine **58%**

Not at all overcrowded **33%**

Other **<1%**

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STUDY METHODS

METHODOLOGY

Visitor Tracking

465 interviews were completed with visitors to the Midcoast & Islands online and in-person at local attractions, parks, hotels, visitor centers, Service Plazas, shops, downtown areas and events between December 1st, 2023 and April 30th, 2024.

MIDCOAST & ISLANDS
2024 Winter Visitor Tracking Report
December 2023 – April 2024

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