



C. Key Findings

1. The Current Trip, General International Travel Patterns and Experience

- In terms of the current trip destination, soft quotas were administered to make sure that the survey captured a broad spectrum of travellers, by destination. This was done to avoid a high concentration of respondents travelling to the U.S., Mexico and the Caribbean, as would likely have occurred with a more random, representative sampling approach. As such, the results are not necessarily reflective of the broader international travel patterns of Canadians. Close to one-in-five surveyed indicated they were travelling to the U.S. (20%) and Mexico/The Caribbean (22%). Just under two-thirds (60%) were travelling to other destinations mostly in Europe and Asia, including China (10%), France (7%), and the United Kingdom (7%). Smaller numbers were travelling to places such as Germany, Italy, India, Japan, Hong Kong and the Philippines (about 3% in each case).
- A significant share of respondents said they were travelling abroad on their own. Although a slightly higher proportion of men travel solo, this was also true for over one-third of women. Those travelling by themselves also tend to be somewhat younger. By contrast, people aged 55 and older were most likely to be travelling with other family members.
- In the 10+ years that has elapsed since the previous surveys were undertaken, the 2018 findings reveal that, overall, Canadians appear to be travelling abroad with greater frequency. While in 2008 just over one-quarter (27%) of respondents said they had taken 6 or more trips abroad within the last 5 years, half (50%) now say the same in 2018.
- Moreover, and as noted in other travel statistics, the more popular international travel destinations continue to be the United States, Mexico/the Caribbean, and Europe. In 2008 we noted an increase, relative to 2007, in those who cited having travelled to the U.S. and the 'sun' destinations in the last 5 years. The uptick in travel to the U.S. between 2007 and 2008 may have, in part, been driven by increased cross-border business activity. In 2018, this pattern holds. Although, overall, a small percentage of those surveyed (11%) indicated that the majority of their travel over the last 5 years was for business, this group was more likely to report having travelled to the United States.
- Beyond the U.S., destinations travelled to are also a factor of where respondents reside in Canada. This is understandable given that some destinations are easier and less expensive to travel to depending on the point of origin. For example, the 2018 results show that the Caribbean is a more popular destination among residents of central and eastern Canada, while those on the west coast are more likely to have travelled to Mexico and Northern Asia.
- Most respondents would likely consider themselves to be reasonably 'experienced travellers.' Many of those surveyed were familiar with their destination in that they had travelled to it at least a few times before. A relatively small proportion, under one-third (28%), had never travelled to their current destination before. And, fewer than one-in-ten indicated this was their first trip abroad (4%), or that they had not travelled abroad in the last 5 years (3%).
- As in 2008, the average length of trips is generally about 1 to 2 weeks, although over one-third of those travelling abroad typically plan trips which take them overseas for a period of 3 weeks or more. At the same time, we also note a slight increase in those indicating their trips abroad are usually under a week (from 3% in 2008 to 9% in 2018). Although a higher proportion of shorter trips are taken by business travellers, comments from participants in the focus groups suggested that there is a segment of the travelling public who are more inclined to plan their trips in a highly spontaneous fashion, hoping to take advantage of 'last-minute' deals for airfare and accommodation.