



# YUKON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

GROWING TOURISM. OUR FUTURE. OUR PATH.





## Tourism in Yukon

### WHAT DOES TOURISM CONTRIBUTE TO THE YUKON ECONOMY?

Tourism is a major contributor to the local economy, responsible for between 3.9% and 7.2% of the Yukon's GDP each year.

In 2016, business revenue from tourism activity grew by 6.4%, significantly outpacing revenue from non-tourism activity which was up 4.0%. Revenues from tourism increased by 5.1% which was the third highest rate of growth in Canada and also 1.2% higher than the national average.

It is also a major driver of jobs, with just over 1 in 10 Yukon workers directly employed in the tourism sector including airlines, hotels, restaurants, souvenir sales and tour operators. Many more are employed by companies that supply goods and services to the tourism sector.

Tourism generates revenue for a wide variety of businesses both directly and indirectly through a trickledown effect. In 2016, visitors to the Yukon spent \$303 million, an increase of 6.7% over 2015. Visitor spending has grown by a healthy 131.3% in the past five years.


A growing tourism industry means higher employment and improved wages, leading to more disposable income which in turn benefits all local businesses. It stimulates new business enterprises while also raising revenue through taxation, both on the income from tourism employment and tourism businesses as well as through sales taxes on goods and services used by visitors.

Development and enhancement of local facilities and infrastructure driven by tourism needs also provides tangible benefits for residents.

### VISITOR PROFILE

How many visitors does the Yukon receive and where are they from?

In 2016, 419,244 visitors arrived in the Yukon which was an increase of 6.7% over 2015. Of that number, 72% were from the US, 18% from Canada and 11% from other countries. The number of visitors coming to the Yukon has been rising steadily - since 2004 visitor numbers have increased 26%, or 3% per year.



In 2017 looks set to be another year of healthy growth. Between January and June 2017, border crossings into the Yukon were 1% higher than at the same time in 2016. Crossings through Canadian Border Services Agency ports of entry were 5% higher than the five year average from 2012 to 2016.

What do visitors do while they're here?

Topping the list of activities undertaken by visitors, is enjoying the Yukon's natural scenery. Nearly half of all visitors (48%) identified natural scenery as a key element of their trip. The second most popular activity is visiting museums or historic sites with 42% of visitors including these in their itinerary. Following these activities are shopping (41%), wildlife or bird viewing (37%) and community walking tours (34%).

With the Yukon's spectacular natural scenery being a major attraction, many visitors include outdoor activities on a visit here. The top outdoor experiences undertaken by visitors are wildlife viewing or bird watching (58%), hiking (48%), camping (41%), visiting Tombstone Territorial Park (38%) and driving the Dempster Highway (36%).


In terms of the Yukon's top cultural activities or attractions, of those visitors who included a cultural activity, 81% visited an historic site. The next most popular cultural activities were visiting a museum (64%), visiting the Danoja Zho Cultural Centre (50%), experiencing First Nations Culture or traditional ways of life (33%) and visiting an art gallery (27%).

How does tourism impact communities and the environment?

The impacts of tourism on host communities, both positive and negative, can be significant.

Positive social and cultural impacts include

- Fostering cultural revitalization, appreciation and pride;
- Infrastructure improvement and better local facilities including leisure facilities;
- Preservation and regeneration of local heritage;
- Increased social events, improving the lifestyle of locals;
- Education;
- Creation of local jobs enabling more people to live and work in their community while also lowering rural emigration to larger urban centres; and
- Strengthening communities.



Conversely tourism growth that is not well-managed can lead to undesirable impacts on communities such as

- The inability for infrastructure to cope with the increased number of people;
- The commercialization of sacred sites, objects and traditions which become “goods to trade”, leading to changes in order to conform to visitor expectations, This may, in turn, create staged authenticity and cultural erosion;
- Threatening of the indigenous identity due to changes in value systems; and
- Visitors failing to respect local customs and moral values.

The environment is critical to the success of the tourism sector, particularly in a destination such as the Yukon where wilderness areas and pristine nature are key attractions for visitors.

Sustainable tourism can positively impact the environment through:


- A significant contribution to environmental protection and conservation;
- Serving as a means to finance protection of natural areas and increase their economic importance; and
- Raising awareness of environmental values and concerns both with visitors and locals.

However, the relationship between tourism and the environment needs to be carefully managed to avoid negative environmental impacts that can include:

- Destruction of habitat and wilderness areas due to overdevelopment and the construction of infrastructure such as roads, airports and hotels;
- Increased pressure on natural resources with a growing number of people; and
- Pollution and waste disposal challenges.

#### WHAT STRATEGIES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED BY LARGER ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TO GROW TOURISM?

Tourism is responsible for 10% of the world’s GDP and in 2016 grew faster than the global economy as a whole. It’s one of the world’s largest and fastest-growing economic sectors with more than 1.2 billion people travelling for tourism in 2016. Globally, the industry is valued at over CDN\$2 Trillion.



The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has identified that in order for future growth and success, tourism businesses will need to recognise the trends that will drive the travel habits and expectations of travelers in the future. Businesses need to navigate a global climate of rapid technological innovation, geo-political unrest, pandemics and rising consumer demands, all of which are likely to transform tourism.

Sustainable tourism development is a major guiding principle of the United Nations. To that end, 2017 was declared the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. As the number of people traveling continues to increase, issues of sustainability, both environmental and cultural, are becoming more critical.


Nationally, the Government of Canada has identified three key pillars to grow the tourism sector:

1. Through marketing, continue to build Canada's strong international brand and develop new markets using both traditional and innovative new media
2. Improve access to Canada for international travellers
3. Support the renewal and innovation of products and services with a focus on the authentic experiences being sought by travelers

#### WHAT ARE THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TOURISM, ARTS AND CULTURE?

The tourism and cultural sectors have a close and mutually beneficial relationship that can strengthen the competitiveness of a destination. Cultural activities are becoming an increasingly important part of the tourism product with many travelers now seeking out cultural institutions or special events such as festivals. In fact, the OECD states that cultural tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing tourism markets globally.

When it comes to making a destination unique, local culture plays an important role. The arts and culture of a region create authenticity and distinctiveness in an increasingly crowded global marketplace. Even destinations such as the Yukon that have traditionally relied upon natural assets for promotion, are becoming more reliant on all forms of culture to market the destination.



Tourism in turn brings larger audiences for local events, visitors to galleries and museums and helps to support local artists. Small entrepreneurs such as artists and crafters have the opportunity to grow their sales. All of which creates a more sustainable arts and culture sector.

