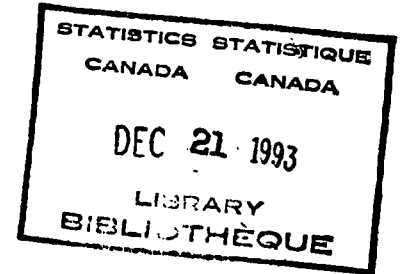


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## **ADVENTURE TRAVEL BETWEEN ATLANTIC CANADA AND NEW ENGLAND: A PROFILE**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Through the International Travel Survey (ITS), Statistics Canada collects socioeconomic and attitudinal information from a random sample of international travellers. Using data collected between 1990 and 1992<sup>1</sup>, this analysis profiles specific segments of the travelling population between Atlantic Canada and New England, focusing on adventure travel.

Adventure travel is defined in this paper as non-business travel of one or more nights' duration where at least one person in the travelling party participated in sports or outdoor activities such as:

- swimming;
- other water sports;
- hunting or fishing;
- cross country skiing;
- downhill skiing; and
- other sports.

For comparison purposes, some references are made to non-adventure travel, that is, non-business travel of one or more nights' duration where the activities participated in exclude sports and outdoor activities.

One should note that each travelling party responding to the ITS reports only one set of activities as well as one set of service quality perceptions for their entire trip. This means that:

1. the same set of responses are applied to all members of the travelling party; and
2. the responses to some questions reflect the entire trip experience, so that activities and perceptions of service quality relate to the entire trip, and perhaps not the specific region being studied.

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<sup>1</sup> The 1992 sample sizes for non-business overnight travellers were: New England to Atlantic Canada: 1,425 persons; Atlantic Canada to New England: 2,675 persons.

## TRAVEL TO ATLANTIC CANADA BY NEW ENGLANDERS

In 1992, residents of New England took 86,300 adventure trips<sup>2</sup> to Atlantic Canada, representing about a 35% share of all non-business travel (Table 1). Their expenditures totalled \$29.7 million.<sup>3</sup> Between 1990 and 1992, adventure travel increased 14% whereas non-adventure travel dropped 11%. This, in itself, makes New England adventure travellers an interesting market.

What is the typical adventure traveller's profile? According to 1992 data, he is a baby boomer on a holiday or vacation. His travelling party consists of 3 or more persons, often including both adults and children. He visits Atlantic Canada during the summer and stays 7 nights. His expenses total about \$50 per night.

This makes him different from his non-adventurous counterpart. Based on 1992 data, the average non-adventurer travels to visit friends and relatives with another adult. He visits during the summer and stays in Atlantic Canada for 5 nights, on average. He spends about \$58 per night, but, because his trip is shorter, he spends less during his trip than an adventure traveller.

## TRAVEL TO NEW ENGLAND BY RESIDENTS OF ATLANTIC CANADA

Residents of Atlantic Canada took 213,800 adventure trips to New England in 1992, totalling about one third of all non-business travel (Table 2). Their expenditures reached an impressive \$50.5 million. Between 1990 and 1992, adventure travel increased 37%, compared to a 5% drop in non-adventure travel.

A profile of the typical adventure traveller from Atlantic Canada, using 1992 data, might be as follows. She is a baby boomer on a holiday or vacation. She travels in a party of 3 or more which likely includes both adults and children. She visits New England during the summer and stays around 4 nights. Her expenses total about \$54 per night.

According to 1992 data, her non-adventurous counterpart also travels for a holiday or vacation, most likely with one other adult. Her trip takes place in the summer and includes about 3 nights in New England. She spends about \$67 per night, but since her trip is shorter, she spends less overall than an adventure traveller.

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<sup>2</sup> The term trip refers to person-trip, i.e. if 3 persons travel together, that counts as 3 trips.

<sup>3</sup> Expenditures are expressed in Canadian dollars and exclude international passenger fares throughout this paper.

## **COMPARING ADVENTURE TRAVELLERS FROM NEW ENGLAND AND ATLANTIC CANADA**

Immediately, one notices similarities and differences when comparing the two groups of adventure travellers.

For example, both New Englanders and Canadians from the Atlantic provinces were likely to travel for adventure during the summer (Chart 1). However, their propensities to do so were quite different. In 1992, three quarters of New England's adventure travellers visited Atlantic Canada between July and September, with springtime ranking a distant second choice. At the same time, half of the Atlantic Canadians chose summer travel while 1 in 5 travelled between April and June.

Average trip duration, at 7 nights in 1992, was notably higher for New England adventure travellers than for their Atlantic Canadian counterparts, who averaged only 4 nights. In fact, 61% of the New Englanders reported trips of 4 to 9 nights' duration with only 22% recording shorter visits. Meanwhile, Atlantic Canadian adventure travellers were evenly divided between trip durations of 1 to 3 nights and 4 to 9 nights at 47% each.

Due to the difference in trip duration, there was a substantial difference in average trip spending. At \$344 per adventure trip in 1992, New Englanders spent nearly 50% more on average than their Atlantic Canadian counterparts (\$236). Actually, one third of the travellers in both groups spent at least \$1,000 during their trip. However, where one third of New Englanders spent less than \$500, 44% of Atlantic Canadians fell into this spending range.

Both groups of travellers tended to travel in groups of 3 or more. If we consider the age distribution of these travelling parties, we again find similarities. Both sets of adventurers were most likely to fall into the same age group - baby boomers. Beyond this, however, there were significant differences. In 1992, for example, 25% of the adventurers travelling from New England to Atlantic Canada were between 45 and 54 years of age, whereas only 11% of the travellers in the opposite direction were middle aged.

## **PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY**

In 1990, Statistics Canada began collecting data from travellers on perceived service quality. All respondents to ITS are now asked the following question:

"In comparison with your country, generally how would you rate the following aspects of your trip?"

The five aspects to be rated are:

1. transportation services;
2. accommodation services;
3. hospitality of local people;
4. value for your money; and
5. variety of things to see and do.

The respondent can rate each of the 5 items as being better, the same or not as good as in his/her own country (Tables 3,4).

### **1. Transportation Services**

Most adventurers in both directions travelled by car. In 1992, 67% of New England adventure travellers visiting Atlantic Canada rated the transportation services there as being better or the same as in the U.S. On the other hand, 82% of Atlantic Canadian adventure travellers rated New England's transportation services as being better or the same as in Canada.

The information collected through ITS has generally followed this pattern, with visitors to Canada ranking the transportation services lower than Canadians rank these services in the countries they visit.

### **2. Accommodation Services**

In terms of preferred accommodation type, adventure travellers between New England and Atlantic Canada differed (Chart 2). In 1992, 29% of adventurers from New England camped or stayed in trailer parks while travelling in Atlantic Canada. Although 19% of Atlantic Canadian adventure travellers in New England also chose camping or trailer parks, the majority (37%) stayed in motels.

Regarding perceived service quality, 76% of the New Englanders rated accommodation in Atlantic Canada as better or the same as in the U.S. in 1992. There was a downtrend from 1990, when 83% of these travellers gave this same ranking. Meanwhile, the accommodation ratings by Atlantic Canadians were fairly stable over time, with 87% rating New England's accommodation services as being better or the same as at home in 1992.

### **3. Hospitality Services**

Canada tends to rate highly in terms of hospitality. New England adventurers supported this view in 1992 with 67% reporting that the hospitality was better in Canada than at home and only 1% assigning a negative rating. In all, 95% believed that hospitality was better or the same in Atlantic Canada. These were the best service ratings awarded by New Englanders.

Atlantic Canadian adventurers also rated their neighbours' hospitality services highly, with 83% stating they were better or the same as in Canada. The portion of Atlantic Canadians saying these services were better, at 25%, however, was considerably smaller than for residents of New England.

#### **4. Value for Your Money**

Among the 5 services rated, considerably more New England adventurers rated value for their money as "not as good" than any of the other aspects they rated. In 1992, 38% felt that value for their money was not as good in Atlantic Canada as at home. This was, however, an improvement from 1991, when 50% assigned this same rating.

Atlantic Canadians agreed with this assessment, with 72% reporting that value for their money was better in New England than at home in 1992, more than for any other service rated. This was a decrease from the 78% who gave this rating in 1991.

#### **5. Variety of Things to Do**

In terms of variety of things to do, the vast majority of New Englanders and Atlantic Canadians rated the other's homeland as better or the same as at home (88% and 92% respectively). There was a marked difference, however, in the awarding of a "better" rating. Only 16% of the adventurers from New England gave Atlantic Canada this highest rating whereas 47% of Atlantic Canadians granted the same to New England. The two flows of travellers had the same propensity to visit more than one province/state and both averaged 6 activities per trip.

The universal activity among adventure travellers, by definition, was participating in sports or outdoor activities. Swimming was the most popular of the activities in this category (Chart 3), with 57% of New Englanders who travelled to Atlantic Canada and 70% of Atlantic Canadians who travelled to New England reporting swimming as one of their activities in 1992. Among the New Englanders, 24% participated in hunting and fishing compared to only 5% of the adventure travellers from Atlantic Canada. A significant number of adventure travellers, about 3 in 10, in both directions reported participation in sports other than water sports, hunting and fishing, and skiing.

Non-sports activities were also important to adventure travellers. For residents of Atlantic Canada, the most significant non-sports activity in New England was shopping, with more than 9 out of 10 participating in 1992. In contrast, only half of the New Englanders shopped while in Atlantic Canada. In both directions, about 7 in 10 participated in sightseeing.

## CONCLUSION

In studying adventure travel between Atlantic Canada and New England, one of the most prominent features is the difference in volume. Atlantic Canadians make nearly 2.5 times as many person-trips to New England for adventure as vice versa. This, of course, impacts on the money spent.

One should keep in mind, however, that residents of New England made 270,400 adventure trips to Canada in 1992, only 10% less than the 296,700 adventure trips to the U.S. taken by Atlantic Canadians. The difference is that only one third of the New England adventurers included nights in Atlantic Canada in their trip to Canada during 1992, giving it a third place ranking behind Quebec and Ontario as region of destination. Meanwhile, 72% of adventure travellers from Atlantic Canada included at least one night in New England in their trip to the U.S.

Having taken this into consideration, the imbalance is still evident when one considers the population base in the 2 regions. In 1992, the population of New England stood at 13.2 million<sup>4</sup>, more than 5 times the 2.4 million residents of Atlantic Canada<sup>5</sup>.

The growth in adventure travel between New England and Atlantic Canada from 1990 to 1992 is impressive, especially considering the decline in non-adventure travel during the same period. Part of the decrease in non-adventure travel was likely due to a shift toward adventure travel.

The data collected through the International Travel Survey can help the adventure travel industries on both sides of the border. By monitoring changing service quality perceptions and responding to them, the travel industry can encourage continued growth in the adventure travel market.

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (population at July 1, 1992).

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada (population at July 1, 1992).

Table 1  
 Non-business Trips of One or More Nights, Residents of New England  
 to Atlantic Canada, 1990-1992

Year	Adventure Trips	Annual % Change	Non-adventure Trips	Annual % Change	Total Trips	Annual % Change
1990	75,900		180,900		256,800	
1991	79,200	4.3	201,700	11.5	280,900	9.4
1992	86,300	9.0	160,500	-20.4	246,800	-12.1

Source: International Travel Survey, Statistics Canada.

Table 2  
 Non-business Trips of One or More Nights, Residents of Atlantic Canada  
 to New England, 1990-1992

Year	Adventure Trips	Annual % Change	Non-adventure Trips	Annual % Change	Total Trips	Annual % Change
1990	156,200		440,900		597,100	
1991	215,600	38.0	554,700	25.8	770,300	29.0
1992	213,800	-0.8	419,300	-24.4	633,100	-17.8

Source: International Travel Survey, Statistics Canada.

Table 3  
 Rating of Services in Atlantic Canada Compared to the U.S.  
 by New England Adventure Travellers, 1992

	Better	Same	Not as Good	Not Stated
	%			
Transportation	21.6	45.6	14.7	18.2
Accommodation	11.1	64.6	11.1	13.3
Hospitality	67.4	27.6	1.0	4.2
Value for Money	36.8	22.4	37.7	3.1
Variety of Things to Do	16.0	72.0	3.8	8.1

Source: International Travel Survey, Statistics Canada.

Table 4  
 Rating of Services in New England Compared to Canada  
 by Atlantic Canadian Adventure Travellers, 1992

	Better	Same	Not as Good	Not Stated
	%			
Transportation	42.5	39.3	5.6	12.7
Accommodation	23.7	63.2	7.4	5.6
Hospitality	25.3	57.6	14.1	3.0
Value for Money	71.7	19.3	6.6	2.4
Variety of Things to Do	46.7	45.6	2.8	5.0

Source: International Travel Survey, Statistics Canada.

Chart 1  
**Adventure Travel in 1992**  
 by Quarter

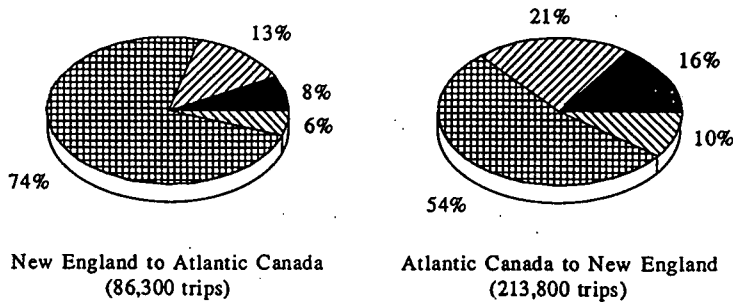
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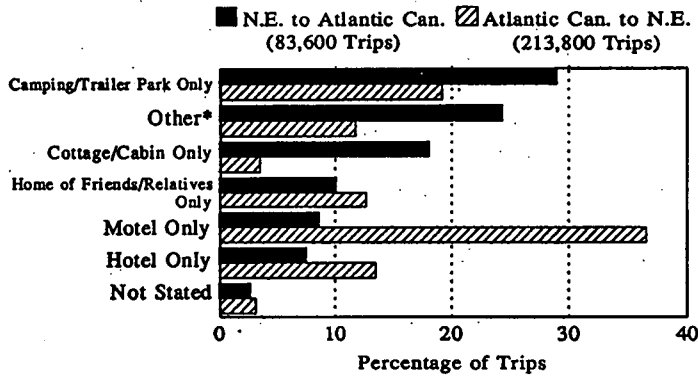
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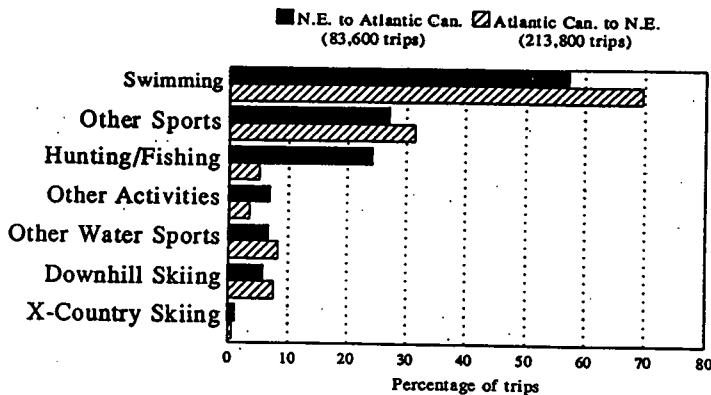
Source: International Travel Survey, Statistics Canada.

Chart 2  
**Type of Accommodation**  
 During Adventure Travel In 1992



\* Includes combined types of accommodation.  
 Source: International Travel Survey, Statistics Canada.

Chart 3  
**Adventure Travel**  
 Sporting Activities, 1992



Source: International Travel Survey, Statistics Canada.