

TIP SHEET #8

LONG-STAY PACKAGE APPEAL

Long-stay packages can help businesses attract new travellers, minimize costs to host when visitors stay longer, and encourage travel at off-peak times of year. While most visitors stay in the province for one to six nights, research shows strong interest in longer stays.

Tourism Nova Scotia (TNS) surveyed potential Canadian visitors from outside Atlantic Canada to better understand what would motivate them to book long-stay travel packages in Nova Scotia and what activities and offers they would prefer in packages. Our long-stay visitor research shows that 70% of travellers are interested in staying seven days or more, including 30% who would come for two weeks or more.



Why create long-stay packages?

Long-stay packages can inspire visitors to stay longer to explore their interests, preferred activities, and compelling destinations in Nova Scotia. Although summer is the most popular time for visiting Nova Scotia, long-stay travellers demonstrate strong interest in visiting during fall and some interest in spring travel. Visiting smaller towns and communities is also most appealing to long-stay travellers.

Packages are most appealing to first-time, pleasure visitors—a higher-spending traveller that TNS targets in our marketing activities. According to the [TNS Visitor Exit Survey](#), first-time visitors tend to stay longer, explore more of Nova Scotia, and spend almost twice as much as return visitors! As outlined in [Tip Sheet #1: Experiences Can Grow Your Business](#), packages that include a uniquely Nova Scotia experience, such as a guided tour with a local expert, or a differentiating cultural experience featuring local flavours, can help your business stand out to travellers and motivate visits. Packages can attract a new type of traveller, increase the spend per visitor, set you apart from the competition, and/or increase demand for your business.

PACKAGES DEFINED

Packages include two or more tourism experiences, products, or activities, sold for one price, such as accommodations + winery tour or lunch + cultural attraction tickets. Packages provide convenience and ease of booking, as well as inspiration for travelling to your region and staying in the area.

Long-stay travellers will explore multiple destinations within Nova Scotia, dine at restaurants, shop, participate in arts and cultural activities, and seek out coastal and outdoor experiences during their extended visits, creating more demand and revenue opportunities for local businesses, attractions, and tourism operators.

What do long-stay travellers want in a package?

'Long-stays' are defined as visits ranging from seven to 21 days or more. A long-stay package includes a minimum of six nights and some meals and/or activities for a single price. Based on [2021 research](#), businesses wanting to attract the long-stay traveller can leverage these market insights:

Who they are and where they stay

- 61% would travel as a couple; 11% would travel as a family
- The majority (41%) prefer trips of 7-13 days
 - 22% would stay for 14-20 days
 - 8% would stay for 21 days or more
- Visitors from further away are more likely to stay longer
- When asked about their top three preferred paid accommodations:
 - 61% prefer small hotels/motels
 - 51% prefer private rentals (i.e., cottages, tourist homes/apartments)
 - 50% prefer B&Bs/inns
 - 48% prefer large hotel chains
- Visitors aged 54 and younger and those travelling with children are more likely than others to prefer private accommodations
- Visitors aged 65 years and older are more likely than younger travellers to prefer B&Bs/inns
- Visitors staying seven-13 days are more likely than those staying longer to prefer small and large hotels
- Visitors staying 14 days or more are more likely than those staying fewer days to prefer private accommodations. They are also less likely to stay in a city and to book an extended stay at a large hotel
- Visitors from Quebec are more interested than others in both RV and camping and are less likely to choose private accommodations and B&Bs/inns
- About 70% of visitors prefer to stay in small towns and rural areas
- Accommodations with an ocean view are most important for visitors staying in rural locations and those travelling as a family



Top interests and activities

- Historical sites and tours
- Closeness to the ocean and beach access
- Self-driving tours
- Nature and outdoor activities, such as beach visits, walking/hiking
- Arts and cultural experiences
- Food, beverage, and culinary activities
- Food take-out options and/or having a pub or fine dining on-site at their accommodation



Travelling as a couple vs. family

- Couples are more likely than families to prefer small hotels and B&Bs/inns
- Couples are more likely than families to be interested in alcohol-related attractions (such as a brewery or winery), pubs and fine dining
- Families are more interested than other types of travel parties in nature, walking/hiking, boating, ocean adventure, fishing, cycling, geology/fossil tours, pools, farmers' market food boxes, food delivery to their room, and hot tubs/saunas
- Visitors from Quebec are more interested than others in fine dining, boating, ocean adventure, and cycling, and are less interested in golf and fishing

Package Considerations

When creating long-stay packages, flexibility is key! Visitors are less interested in all-inclusive packages with set accommodations, meals, and activities. Instead, they prefer about one activity or experience every other day. So, a six-night package could include one to three activities. To increase package appeal, offer options: can guests select or customize their menu, including local options? What activities or attractions can they choose? Can visitors pre-book the date and time of their guided tour or cultural experience?

It's also important to note that 90% of those surveyed want to visit multiple parts of Nova Scotia—choosing to spend time in at least three tourism regions. Cape Breton, Bay of Fundy and Annapolis Valley, and Halifax were the most popular tourism regions—each selected as regions where they were most likely to stay by over 50% of those surveyed. When building your package, consider your location and region's unique activities, as well as hub and spoke travel options within an easy drive, such as a local picnic lunch for a coastal hike or tickets to a guided tour of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Travellers also expect to spend between \$200 - \$400 per day (excluding transportation).

Packages are a good way to inspire travel and communicate the range of experiences you offer. Packages could be offered solely through your business, or through a partnership with another business or attraction. What uniquely Nova Scotian elements you can include? Can you introduce guests to flavours that are unique to your area? What activities or tours can be offered in your package? What special experiences or destinations could your package feature?

When packaging up great local experiences, how can you showcase Nova Scotia's culture, heritage, and coast? What flexible and compelling package can your business offer long-stay travellers?

