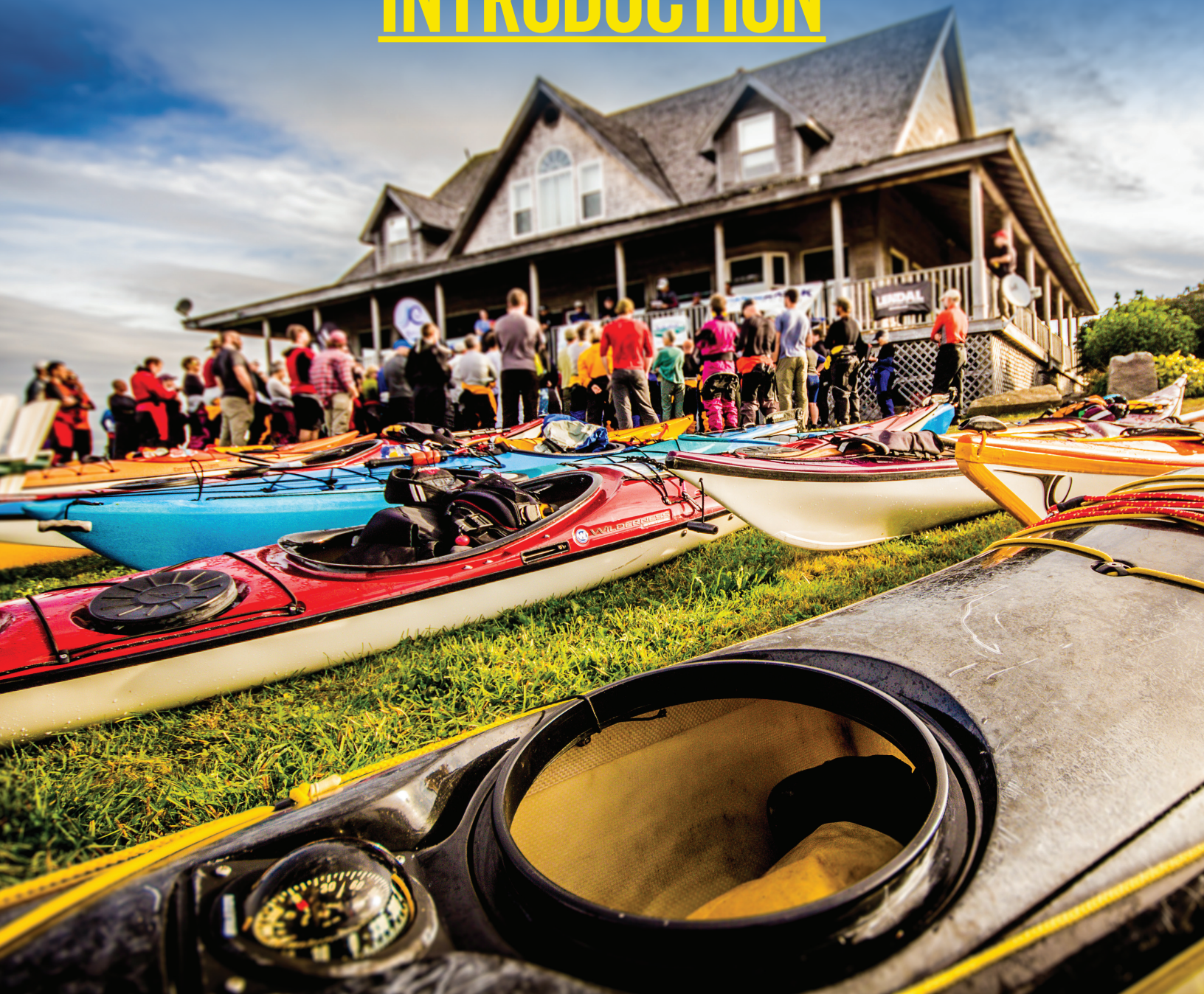


# A GUIDE TO STARTING AND OPERATING AN ACCOMMODATION BUSINESS IN NOVA SCOTIA

## INTRODUCTION



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#### **DISCLAIMER**

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The information and analysis contained in this Guide represents the research of the authors and is not definitive. This Guide is not an official or unofficial policy of any government body. Any reliance on the Guide shall be at the reader's own risk.

This document contains numerous website links. All links were active at the time of publication but some may have changed since that time.

*Cover photo: Argyle Lodge, Lower Argyle, NS*

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## **PLANNING**

## **OPERATIONS**

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*Keltic Lodge, Ingonish Beach, NS*

Tourism is growing in Nova Scotia and new markets are emerging for our province, providing increased demand for quality accommodations.

Without a doubt, operating an accommodation business is hard work, yet it can be extremely rewarding. If you decide that this business is for you, the tips and suggestions we've put together in this guide will help you work towards your vision. If you already operate an accommodation business and are seeking ideas on expanding or upgrading, or enhancing your marketing efforts, this guide is a good resource.

Accommodations can be small, owner-managed businesses or larger operations with hired management. Larger operations, such as chains or well-known brand properties, are not the subject of this guide. This guide is intended for small to medium-sized accommodation businesses, providing an overview of what it takes to plan and operate such a business.

Special thanks to our review panel, Nova Scotia accommodations operators, Val Stackhouse (formerly of The Hillsdale House Inn), Robert Pretty (The Halliburton, Halifax), Anne McDonah (The Belgravia Bed & Breakfast, Truro) and Joanne Veinotte (White Point Beach Resort, White Point), whose invaluable comments helped shaped this guide. The tips and best practices scattered throughout the guide are based on their experience, and that of a number of other successful operators from around the province.

We also wish to thank those who generously provided their success stories: Comfort Hotel Bayers Lake, Fox Harb'r Resort, Maison Fiset House Inn/Auberge, Oceanstone Resort, Parks Canada, Pictou Lodge Beachfront Resort, Quarterdeck Restaurant & Villas, Tattingstone Inn, The Flying Apron Inn & Cookery, The Hillsdale House Inn and White Point Beach Resort.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the making of this guide.



# 10 'DOs' OF SUCCESSFUL ACCOMMODATION BUSINESSES



*Churchill Mansion, Yarmouth, NS*

1. Have a clear understanding of your target markets and what they expect of your accommodation property. Deliver on your marketing promise and strive to exceed market expectations.
2. Build strong relationships with your clientele – repeat customers, referrals and positive reviews on social media can have a big impact on your bookings.
3. Provide outstanding customer service – know your clientele, anticipate their needs and exceed their expectations.
4. Hire well-trained, enthusiastic and energetic staff who are happy in their jobs.
5. Price your rooms carefully. Know how much revenue you need to generate to make your business feasible. Consider what the competition is charging. Today's travellers can price shop very easily.
6. Extend your operating season as long as possible. Work with partners to develop experiences. Be creative with packaging and explore opportunities to attract clients who will visit in early spring, late fall and the winter months.
7. Continually upgrade and refurbish your property (including décor, linens, furnishings, equipment and fixtures) to ensure a quality experience. Be responsive to customer expectations in today's competitive marketplace.
8. Develop a strong website (adapted for mobile devices) and a well-executed online and social media marketing strategy. Make the most of popular travel review sites, such as TripAdvisor. We recommend including a website function to accept online bookings. Online Travel Agencies (OTA), such as [Booking.com](https://www.booking.com), [Expedia](https://www.expedia.com) and [Airbnb](https://www.airbnb.com) can be very helpful.
9. Foster strong partnerships – with similar accommodation businesses, tourism operators, your community, Tourism Nova Scotia, regional tourism associations, and with the travel trade (if it is one of your distribution channels).
10. Create and implement strong operational and management procedures, including good accounting practices and controls, no matter the size of your business. Track your results and make modifications as required.



*Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort, Finland*

This guide contains valuable information, insights and tips to help you understand the accommodations sector and today's travel marketplace, get your accommodation business started, and operate and market your business. It does not provide comprehensive details on all of these subjects, but provides a good overview and links to other resources that you may find useful.

If you are thinking of starting an accommodation business, or expanding or upgrading your business, we recommend you first focus on the Introduction and the [Planning](#) section. It will help you:

- Understand Nova Scotia's tourism industry and potential opportunities.
- Decide what type of accommodation business you wish to create.
- Identify and understand your target markets.
- Decide where you want to locate.
- Prepare your business plan.
- Conduct a feasibility analysis.

- Explore financing options.
- Become aware of important rules and regulations.

The section on [Operations](#) addresses a range of topics, such as knowing your customer, pricing, reservations and payment, staffing and training, and other operational issues. The [Marketing](#) section explores preparing a marketing plan, branding and priority marketing tactics in today's business environment. These sections are helpful for those who are ready to move to the next level in planning or those already in business.

The Introduction to this guide provides some insights into today's travel marketplace.

If you are interested in helpful information on hosting a restaurant or dining room as part of your offering, check out the [Guide to Starting and Running a Restaurant in Nova Scotia](#).



# REALITY CHECK-IN

In Nova Scotia, and across Canada, tourism is on the rise. At Tourism Nova Scotia we are collaborating with our industry partners to double tourism revenues from the 2010 level of \$2 billion, to \$4 billion in 2024. This growth is creating opportunities for accommodation properties around the province.

While it's exciting to see this growth, the reality is that building and operating a small to medium-sized accommodation business in Nova Scotia is hard work and definitely has its challenges. But, if this is the right work for you, interactions with customers, positive reviews, and personal notes, such as 'you made our vacation' or 'your staff gave us the best wedding ever,' will give you great personal satisfaction.

## Before you take the plunge, make sure you know what you are getting into.

- Do your homework. Travel around Nova Scotia, and outside the province, to experience operations similar to your concept. Talk to the owners/operators about their businesses, successes and challenges.
- This is a people business. To succeed, you must build strong relationships with your clientele. That means you have to like people and enjoy socializing with them.
- It's hard work and a huge commitment. If you are a seasonal business, this might require doing a year's worth of work in six months and keeping a close eye on things, such as reservations, even when the business is closed.
- Sourcing financing for an accommodation business can be difficult. If you don't have all the capital yourself, you will need a business loan, and the terms will be quite different than a mortgage (a much higher percentage down with shorter amortization period). You may also end up paying a higher interest rate than you expected because new businesses can be considered risky.

- It can take a long time to establish your property – up to three to five years to develop your market and reach your target occupancy levels. That means you'll need working capital to carry you through the period when the business's revenue may not cover all expenses.
- Know what you are buying. If you are purchasing an existing business, look closely at the financial statements and make sure you understand the expenses, along with the opportunities to increase revenues.
- If your property is larger (say 40 rooms or more), operates year round and has strong demand, you may be able to afford to bring in a manager. If not, you will be the manager, with responsibility for business planning, marketing, human resources, administration and overseeing the day-to-day operations of the property.

## Before you go any further, ask yourself the following questions... and answer honestly.

- ☐ Do I really know what kind of business I am getting into?
- ☐ Do I have any experience in the industry?
- ☐ Am I okay working 60-80 hours a week (at least for part of the year)?
- ☐ Am I ready to make this lifestyle choice?
- ☐ Can I handle opinions and feedback without getting defensive?
- ☐ Do I have the leadership and management skills to run an operation like this?
- ☐ Can I manage employees – both the good ones and the not-so-good ones?
- ☐ Do I have the personality, strength and support of my family to run an accommodation business?
- ☐ Am I well organized?
- ☐ Can I get the financing needed?

If you think starting an accommodations business is for you, read on.

**“WHEN YOU CAN IMPACT PEOPLE AND THEIR LIVES, AND MAKE THINGS SO WONDERFUL FOR THEM, THIS IS AN AMAZING THING TO DO.”**

*Lizzie Moore, Oceanstone Resort*

# OVERVIEW OF TOURISM IN NOVA SCOTIA

If you are considering getting into the accommodation business, it's important to do your research. Learning about Nova Scotia's tourism industry, the people travelling around the province, and the accommodation sector is a good place to start. This introductory section provides an overview, with links to more details.

## Overview of Tourism in Nova Scotia

Tourism is big business in Nova Scotia:

- There were 2.3 million visitors to Nova Scotia in 2019, a decline of 5% (112,300 fewer visitors) compared with 2018.
- These visitors, combined with Nova Scotians travelling around the province, spent an estimated \$2.6 billion in 2019. Tourism revenue declined by 3.3%, about \$100 million, from 2018. The decline in revenues reflects fewer non-resident visitors to Nova Scotia in 2019, which is attributed to three external events - the grounding of the Boeing MAX aircraft resulting in lower air capacity from domestic and overseas markets; the Maine-Nova Scotia ferry not operating in 2019; and the impact of Hurricane Dorian. About \$529 million of the 2019 tourism revenues was spent on overnight accommodation, including commercial properties and private rentals, 2.7 million licensed room nights were sold in 2019, down 1% from 2018.
- Approximately 5% of Nova Scotians work in the tourism industry.

## TOURISM INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS

**Tourism Nova Scotia (TNS)** ([www.tourismns.ca](http://www.tourismns.ca)) is a private sector-led provincial Crown corporation that develops and implements strategies to achieve tourism growth in Nova Scotia. Our primary activities are marketing to attract visitors from outside the province, sector development, including tourism business and experience development, and research.

We offer [partnership programs](#) that can help you grow your business, as well as a wide range of resources and information. Check our website regularly and subscribe to our industry [newsletter](#) for up-to-date information and upcoming opportunities.

### Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS)

[www.tians.org](http://www.tians.org) is a membership-based organization representing the tourism sector in Nova Scotia. Its mandate includes advocacy on behalf of the sector, supporting the development of a competitive business environment, and representing the best interests of the industry.

There are four **regional tourism associations** in Nova Scotia; all are membership/partnership-based organizations. Their primary role is to market their region for tourism. Some are also involved in tourism product development.

- Discover Halifax: [www.discoverhalifaxns.com](http://www.discoverhalifaxns.com)
- Destination Cape Breton: [www.cbisland.com](http://www.cbisland.com)
- Destination Eastern and Northumberland Shores: [www.coastalnovascotia.ca](http://www.coastalnovascotia.ca)
- Yarmouth and Acadian Shores Tourism Association: [www.yarmouthandacadianshores.com](http://www.yarmouthandacadianshores.com)

There are also a number of organizations geared specifically to the accommodation sector. You can find them, along with contact information, in [Tourism Organizations in Nova Scotia](#).

## TOURISM STRATEGY AND PRIORITIES

Tourism Nova Scotia's strategic goal is to collaborate with industry stakeholders to reach \$4 billion in tourism revenues by 2024. To achieve this, our strategy is based on four key pillars:

1. Attract first-time visitors to Nova Scotia
2. Invest in markets of highest return – those who will spend the most money while visiting
3. Focus on world-class experiences that build the cachet of Nova Scotia as a vacation destination and motivate travel by target markets
4. Build tourism confidence

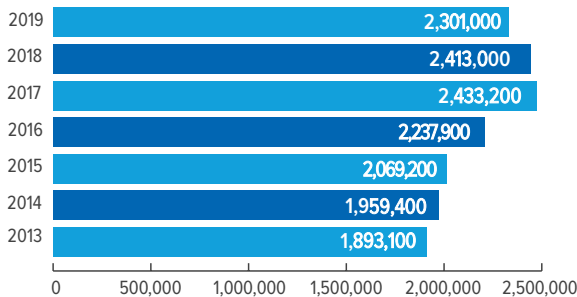
Please review our [strategy](#) for more detail.



# TOURISM ACTIVITY IN NOVA SCOTIA

Tourism activity includes visitors from outside Nova Scotia and residents travelling around the province.

## VISITORS TO NOVA SCOTIA; 2013 TO 2019



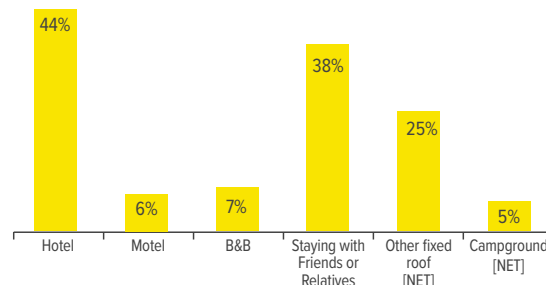
## VISITORS FROM OUTSIDE NOVA SCOTIA

- In 2019, 2.3 million visited, the second straight year of declining visitation since the record-setting year of 2017, when 2.4 million visited.
- 48% of all visitors in 2019 came from Atlantic Canada and 25% were from Ontario.
- In 2019, 70% of visitors arrived between May and October.
- On average, visitors to Nova Scotia spend \$353 to \$1,615 per person, depending on origin and length of stay.
- Visitors from further away stay longer and spend more.
- Key characteristics of visitors to Nova Scotia in 2019:

- 67% arrived by road; 33% arrived by air (and increasing).
- On average, air visitors stayed 7 plus nights; road visitors stayed 4 plus nights.
- 45% travelled for pleasure; 36% to visit friends and relatives; 13% for business; and 6% for other reasons.

The most popular types of accommodation used by visitors are hotels, followed by staying with friends or relatives, as illustrated in the following graph.

## % NON-RESIDENT VISITORS STAYING AT LEAST ONE NIGHT AT EACH TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION



Check out the [research page](#) on our website for up-to-date results on visitor statistics, origin, and demographics.

## NOVA SCOTIANS TRAVELLING WITHIN THE PROVINCE

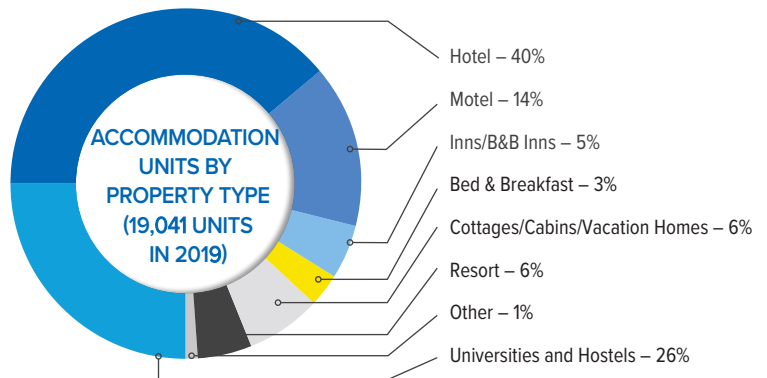
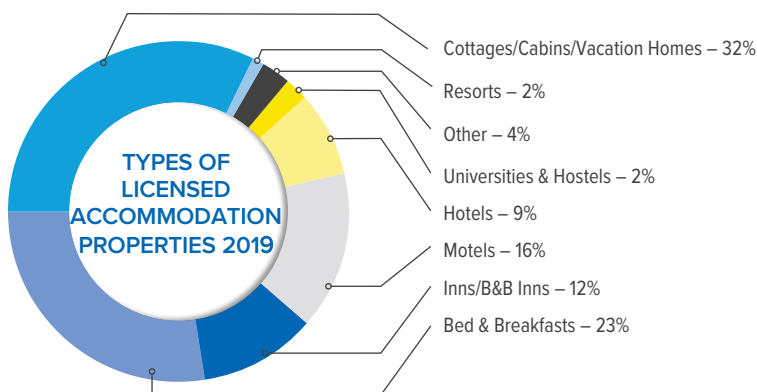
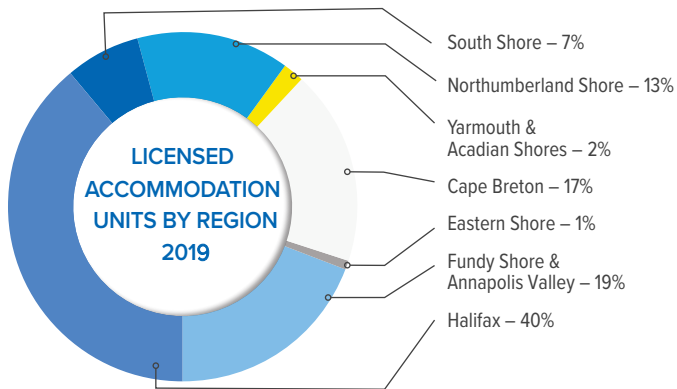
- Nova Scotians make over 2 million overnight trips within the province each year.
- In 2016, 40% of these overnight trips were for pleasure; 48% were to visit friends and relatives.
- Trips last two nights on average.
- Nova Scotians use commercial accommodations for vacations, getaways and business-related trips, sports tournaments, festivals and events, and on trips to visit friends and relatives.
- Nova Scotians are an important market for accommodations throughout the year, and the primary

# ACCOMMODATIONS IN NOVA SCOTIA

market for November through April.

In 2019, there were 819 licensed<sup>1</sup> accommodation properties in Nova Scotia, with some 19,041 units of accommodation. 40% of these units are located in Halifax; 17% are in Cape Breton.

There are also a growing number of alternative accommodations available through the sharing economy, such as Airbnb, VRBO, and Homeaway. In 2019, Airbnb partnered with more than 1,000 hosts in Halifax alone, where Airbnb properties received more than 50,000 guest check-ins. Some licensed B&Bs and cottage rentals list their properties on Airbnb.



## TYPES OF ACCOMMODATIONS

There are various types of roofed accommodation establishments. Most establishments are cottages/cabins/vacation homes, B&Bs or motels. However, most rooms are found in hotels, with the smallest proportion of rooms in B&Bs.

The main types of accommodations are:

### HOTEL

- Internally accessible units
- Ensuite bathrooms
- Provide food service

### INN

- May have heritage or historic characteristics
- Three or more bedrooms
- Ensuite
- Dining room for breakfast and evening meals
- Personalized hospitality by owner or operator

### COTTAGE/CABIN/VACATION HOME

- Free standing units with one or more bedrooms, a bathroom and usually a kitchen and living area

<sup>1</sup> Nova Scotia regulations required accommodation properties to be licensed by the provincial government up to March 31, 2020, when regulations changed. Information on the new regulations can be found at <https://novascotia.ca/touristaccommodation/>



**B&B**

- Up to four bedrooms in a private home
- Increasingly ensuite private bathrooms
- Breakfast included
- Common living room
- Owner lives on the premises

**B&B INN**

- Five or more rooms, some with inside access
- Increasingly ensuite, also private or shared bathrooms
- Personalized hospitality by owner or operator

**RESORT**

- Rooms and/or cottages/cabins with ensuite bathrooms
- Food service available
- Extensive on-site recreational facilities

**MOTEL**

- External access to each unit
- Ensuite bathrooms

**BUSINESS PERFORMANCE AT NOVA SCOTIA ACCOMMODATIONS**

The common ways of reporting on business at accommodations are rooms sold (or room nights sold) and occupancy rates. Accommodations also look at average nightly rates and REVPAR (see next page).

Licensed accommodations are required to report their rooms sold and rooms available to Tourism Nova Scotia on a monthly basis. This data provides insights into the performance of licensed accommodations across the province. Summary data can be found on our [research page](#).

Recent highlights of accommodation performance include:

- 2.74 million room nights sold in 2019, down 1% from 2018
- Room nights sold increased slightly in the Halifax region, while the remaining regions experienced declines compared with 2018
- 44% of room nights sold in 2019 were outside the Halifax region
- Summer season occupancies went down across Nova Scotia, averaging 68% in 2019 compared with 70% in 2018.

- Occupancy rates range from 33-66% annually, with the highest rates in Halifax
- July/August occupancy rates in 2019 ranged from 49% to 82%
- May to October occupancy rates ranged from 42% to 76% in 2019, depending on region and property type

The following table provides data on recent occupancy rates by type of property and region.

**NOVA SCOTIA ACCOMMODATION OCCUPANCY RATES BY REGION AND TYPE OF PROPERTY<sup>(1)</sup> 2014 - 2017**

	JULY AND AUGUST				MAY TO OCTOBER			
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>BY TOURISM REGION</b>								
Halifax Metro	77%	82%	78%	82%	71%	76%	75%	76%
Cape Breton	76%	79%	74%	73%	61%	64%	60%	58%
South Shore	71%	72%	71%	68%	53%	56%	55%	54%
Eastern Shore	51%	58%	53%	51%	40%	44%	43%	39%
Northumberland Shore	46%	52%	57%	52%	41%	48%	48%	45%
Bay of Fundy & Annapolis Valley	48%	55%	57%	49%	41%	46%	46%	42%
Yarmouth & Acadian Shores	76%	71%	77%	52%	57%	59%	66%	47%
Province Overall	66%	71%	70%	68%	58%	62%	62%	60%
<b>BY TYPE OF PROPERTY</b>								
Cottages/Cabins/ Vacation Homes	72%	74%	71%	70%	50%	53%	51%	48%
B&B Inns/Inns	77%	80%	76%	75%	62%	65%	45%	59%
B&Bs	60%	62%	61%	57%	45%	47%	46%	42%
Hotels	84%	88%	85%	79%	74%	79%	78%	74%
Motels	72%	76%	75%	69%	58%	62%	61%	56%
Resorts	75%	76%	74%	71%	59%	62%	59%	57%

<sup>1</sup> The regional data includes universities, which make their rooms available for rent for May through August. Their occupancy rates tend to be low, which has an impact on the average occupancy rates in Halifax Metro, Northumberland Shore and the Bay of Fundy & Annapolis Valley.



The Halliburton, Halifax, NS

- **ROOMS SOLD IS THE NUMBER OF ROOMS SOLD DURING A GIVEN PERIOD.**
- **OCCUPANCY IS THE NUMBER OF ROOMS SOLD DIVIDED BY THE NUMBER OF ROOMS AVAILABLE DURING THAT PERIOD.**
- **AVERAGE NIGHTLY RATE IS TOTAL ROOMS REVENUE DIVIDED BY NUMBER OF ROOMS SOLD IN A GIVEN PERIOD.**
- **REVPAR IS AVERAGE DAILY ROOM RATE MULTIPLIED BY OCCUPANCY RATE.**

place around specific data that can be released in order to protect confidential business information.

## The Tourism Marketplace

With the rise of international travel, tourism has become a global phenomenon over the past twenty-five years. Emerging markets and destinations, geo-political events, shifting demographics, evolving visitor interests, and new technologies are all impacting the tourism marketplace. We've provided a brief overview of the tourism marketplace, along with recent trends in the accommodation sector.

## THE GLOBAL AND NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

There has been significant growth in global travel in recent years.

In 2019, international travel arrivals reached 1.5 billion globally, having increased annually by about 4% since 2015. Canada has benefited from this rise in tourism, with increases across its core markets. Canada received a record 22.1 million international visitors in 2019 (up from 18 million in 2015), breaking the 22 million mark for the first time.

2019 was also the sixth consecutive year of increased tourist arrivals to Canada, with growth in arrivals both from the United States and overseas - particularly China, South Korea and Mexico.

Nova Scotia has shared in this success. In 2019, there were 318,000 international, overnight visitors to Nova Scotia, up from 275,000 in 2015, an increase of more than 15% over the four-year period.

Changes in the global marketplace, combined with developments in technology, have led to a buyer's market, offering both significant opportunities and challenges for your accommodation.

<sup>2</sup> Source: United Nations World Tourism Organization, UNWTO Tourism Towards 2030



## EXPLORER QUOTIENT OR EQ®

**EQ®, DESTINATION CANADA'S MARKET SEGMENTATION APPROACH, WHICH ANALYZES MARKETS ACCORDING TO THEIR TRAVEL VALUES, HAS BEEN LICENSED BY TOURISM NOVA SCOTIA. EQ® FOCUSES ON TARGETING THE RIGHT CUSTOMER WITH THE RIGHT PRODUCT AT THE RIGHT TIME.**

**CHECK OUT THE EQ® TOOLKIT**

### TRAVEL MARKET SEGMENTS

Travellers are usually segmented according to various characteristics:

- Geographic segments – by origin
- Demographic segments – by age group, family structure
- Purpose of trip – pleasure, business, visiting friends and family
- Mode of travel – air, auto, motor coach
- Channel of distribution – online booking, travel agent, phone, tour operator

One of the primary ways of segmenting travellers today considers psychographics – the travel values, interests and preferences of the consumer. This approach is most commonly used by destination marketing organizations, such as Tourism Nova Scotia, but it also gives individual businesses a better understanding of their customers and visitor expectations.

Canada and Nova Scotia use EQ® to evaluate psychographics.

Tourism Nova Scotia began using EQ® as our lead market segmentation tool in 2015. EQ® has helped us to identify who is most drawn to our unique landscapes, cultures and experiences, and to tailor our marketing approach to appeal to these potential visitors. The three EQ® types that offer the best fit with what Nova Scotia has to offer as a tourism destination are:

[Authentic Experiencers](#)  
[Cultural Explorers](#)  
[Free Spirits](#)

Knowing which EQ® types are most likely to be interested in your product or service can help you tailor your offering to these groups. Use EQ® as a guide to design

experiences around what your customers enjoy and target your marketing copy and visuals in a way proven to appeal to their particular travel drivers. Nova Scotia's three priority EQ types and their accommodation and other interests are summarized on page 13.

## Trends Impacting Travel and Tourism

### THE INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Exponential growth in online, digital and mobile technology has significantly impacted how travellers research, plan and book their trips, forcing tourism businesses to keep up. Here are some important things you can do to meet online visitor expectations:

- Your website is your most important tool. To be ready, you can:
  - Be mobile friendly (website and booking functions).
  - Maximize search-engine optimization.
  - Use high-quality content – text, images and video.
  - Stay up-to-date and accurate.
  - Promote clear 'calls to action' and 'paths to purchase,' including online booking capabilities.
  - Track your results to understand your customers.
- Social media is a critical tool in reaching your potential customers. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and other platforms are heavily used by almost all markets to connect with peers, share content and post reviews, all of which influence travel. To be ready, you can:
  - Implement a strong social media strategy within your marketing plan.
  - Promote engagement with customers through meaningful content.
  - Keep up-to-date with trends in social media and where to connect with your markets.



Quarterdeck Restaurant & Villas, Summerville, NS

- Travellers have unlimited access to amazing content and information from destinations around the world, with the ability to price and book through numerous channels (your website, [Expedia](#), [Booking.com](#), etc.). To be ready, you can:
  - Deliver engaging, useful content through all available channels.
  - Partner with your destination marketing organizations (Tourism Nova Scotia and your regional association) to gain exposure for your property.
  - Explore and evaluate the distribution channels available, with consideration to the commissions they charge.

## HUMAN INFLUENCE ON TRAVEL

Travellers share both their good and bad experiences through social media, which has a huge impact on the choices their friends and family make. [A Skift Trends Report](#) outlines the enormous influence of social media on decision making:

- 63% of consumers look at social channels when booking a vacation
- 70% of Americans express that they're more inclined to make a purchase after seeing relatable consumers post online
- 89% of marketers expect customer experience to be their primary differentiator

Research has shown that positive TripAdvisor rankings and reviews have an impact on bookings. Management

response to TripAdvisor reviews can also impact bookings and increase engagement with travellers. You can learn more about TripAdvisor in our [Marketing](#) section.

To influence your reviews, you can:

- Create exceptional, personalized and memorable experiences for your guests.
- Encourage guests to share their experiences and post reviews.
- Respond to reviews, both negative and positive to show that you are engaged.
- Build relationships with your guests, and maintain them to encourage repeat visits and referrals.

## THE SHARING ECONOMY

The sharing economy allows people to share resources – such as equipment, services, and skills – with one another, often at a significantly lower cost than traditional retail or employment arrangements. You can now get a cab from Uber or Lyft, share the same office space with dozens of different companies, or stay at someone's house, instead of a hotel, when you're travelling.

In the accommodation sector, there are many platforms to choose from, including Airbnb, HomeAway, VRBO and HomeStay. Airbnb hosts typically rent out their house or apartment for limited periods of time, usually during peak travel seasons. The units are marketed online through Airbnb, and the host pays a commission (3% in 2016) on rentals.

# EQ SUMMARY

	AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCERS	CULTURAL EXPLORERS	FREE SPIRITS
<b>Overall Characteristics/ Travel Motivations</b>	Understated travellers looking for authentic, tangible engagement with the destinations they visit.	Defined by their love of constant travel and continuous opportunities to embrace, discover, and immerse themselves in the culture, people and settings of the places they visit.	Love everything about travel. Experimental and adventurous, they prefer to indulge in high-end experiences that are shared with others. Part of the joy of travel is learning about life in other cultures and connecting with locals.
<b>Types of Trips that Appeal</b>	Trips that allow them to learn about and connect meaningfully with a destination's history and culture.	Trips that take them “off the beaten path”, allow them to connect with locals and other travellers and have fun, but also teach them something.	Trips that offer fun, exciting experiences with some learning on the side. Trips that allow them to see the major attractions.
<b>Accommodation Preferences</b>	Country Inns, B&Bs, hotels and other accommodations that allow them to connect with local history and culture.	Adventurous travellers who enjoy accommodations that reflect the destination's personality.	Aspire to stay in high-end accommodations, but some will scrimp on accommodations in order to afford other high-end experiences.
<b>Food &amp; Drink Preferences</b>	Restaurants that offer local ingredients. Farmers' markets, local food and beverage producers.	Restaurants that offer local ingredients. Farmers' markets, local food and beverage producers.	Restaurants that offer local ingredients. Fine dining, gourmet experiences.
<b>Activity Interests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interacting with locals</li> <li>- Visiting well-known historic sites and buildings</li> <li>- Attending museums</li> <li>- Self-directed outdoor activities that involve sightseeing and soaking in what a destination has to offer</li> <li>- Visiting small towns and villages</li> <li>- Visiting national and provincial parks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interacting with locals</li> <li>- Hands-on learning</li> <li>- Visiting well-known historic sites and buildings</li> <li>- Attending museums</li> <li>- Taking in musical shows/performances and street festivals</li> <li>- Sightseeing in urban and rural areas, including small towns and villages</li> <li>- Also enjoy the more active outdoor activities</li> <li>- Visiting world heritage sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visiting health or wellness spa</li> <li>- Shopping for clothing/jewelry</li> <li>- Shopping for gourmet foods at retail stores</li> <li>- Drawn to more active outdoor activities</li> </ul>



# TRENDS IN THE ACCOMMODATION SECTOR

## TRENDS IN VISITOR DEMAND

Local  
Authentic  
Experiences  
Personalized  
Memorable  
Food and beverage  
Convenience  
Ease of booking  
Connected  
Part of the community

## Trends in the Accommodation Sector

With shifting markets and the rise of technology, the accommodation sector is constantly adapting to meet ever-changing visitor expectations and demands. While these trends pertain largely to the hotel sector, they also have deep implications for your smaller accommodation property.

### Current trends:

- Small, intimate boutique hotels. May be independents or ‘collections’ from major brands
- Personalized, outstanding customer service
- Lobbies and other common areas re-imagined as high-tech, multi-use, interactive spaces, offering a mix of public and private spaces, with access to Wi-Fi and power
- More natural elements and materials in design and amenities, reflecting concerns about the environment and sustainability
- Focus on bringing ‘local’ and ‘community’ into properties:

- Local art
- Local and regional cuisine
- Encouraging locals to visit for dining, entertainment
- Integrating into the community – participating in community events, partnering with other businesses, supporting charities, etc.
- High-quality hotel restaurants, featuring fresh, locally-sourced food
- Free Wi-Fi throughout the property

The look, functionality and amenities of guest rooms are continually evolving:

- Creative furnishings, with minimalist design and furniture
- Textures rather than patterns in décor
- Lots of white, with a few bright colours. White demands immaculate cleaning – important for guests
- Quality bedding and bath linens
- Flat screen TVs
- Accessible, convenient outlets for charging multiple devices and charging stations
- Larger, spa-like bathrooms with spa-like features, including rain-shower heads
- Smaller, more efficient rooms; lobby or common areas for work and social activities
- High-tech features, such as adjustable LED lighting and controlling air conditioning and room access with smart phones or a touchscreen

Historic inns have their own appeals and are very popular with Nova Scotia’s travellers. For these types of properties, guests are much less interested in high-tech features; instead they look for:

- Period antiques and furnishings.
- Quality art work.
- Overall décor that is tastefully done and fits with the period of the property.
- Quality bedding and bath linens.

In this competitive marketplace, accommodation properties are working hard to differentiate themselves. This is particularly important for smaller, independent properties without a significant brand presence. Being creative, unusual and fun can create a buzz on social media and help you generate bookings. Even traditional motels can be reimagined.

### GLAMPING AND OTHER UNIQUE ACCOMMODATIONS

As travellers increasingly seek out the new and exotic, accommodations around the world are responding by creating unique destination accommodations.

In the campground sector, the most notable trend is 'glamping,' or glamorous camping. This gives travellers a luxury camping experience. Parks Canada's new 'oTENTiks,' cocoons and yurts are very popular. Campgrounds are also offering small, rustic cabins with the basics, such as bunks, a sink and microwave.

These types of units are easily added to roofed accommodation businesses (e.g., resorts, cottages/ cabins, inns) with sufficient land to provide an alternative in peak summer periods, in order to expand capacity.



*Blomidon Inn, Wolfville, NS*





1. The Mohican Treehouses, Ohio, US
2. Hotel Zed, Victoria, BC
3. Glamping on George's Island, NS
4. Natura Vive, Peru





## SUCCESS STORY

**PARKS CANADA**  
Kejimikujik National Park  
National Historic Site &  
Cape Breton Highlands National Park

### **IMPORTANCE OF INNOVATION:**

It's about offering new and memorable ways to connect with nature, to expand and diversify what we can offer, and get ahead of visitor expectations.

### **BIGGEST CHALLENGE:**

Balancing testing product while maintaining a good experience. We also have to think about having the staff and resources to maintain product and experience.

### **KEY TO SUCCESS:**

Doing our homework. The data has been enlightening, and we are being responsive to that.

### **BEST ADVICE:**

Do the research and know your customer and market. It gives you confidence to move forward. Plus working and sharing in collaboration is invaluable!

### **GAME CHANGER:**

Connecting visitors with memorable experiences that are based in knowledge-based decisions.

### **FUTURE THINKING:**

We'll be presenting a lot more innovative product in the next couple of years – all rooted in research, product development and marketing. And we are open to feedback.