Tourism Seasonality

Presented to UNWTO
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TOTA
THOMPSON OKANAGAN TOURISM ASSOCIATION
Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

The Thompson Okanagan region lies on the unceded, ancestral, and traditional territory of three Interior Salish nations: the Syilx, Nlaka’pamux, and Secwépemc peoples, where we are honoured to live, work, and play.

Learn More: IndigenousBC.com
Thompson Okanagan Region
British Columbia, Canada

- Southern Interior of British Columbia, Canada
- Diverse area covering approximately 71,600 km², 27,644 mi², named for two major geographic features: the Thompson River and Okanagan Lake.
- Home to over 90 communities, 33 Indigenous communities, and over 4,500 tourism businesses.
Not-for-profit society governed by an elected Board of Directors representing business and community tourism interests throughout the Thompson Okanagan region.

Guided by the Regional Tourism Strategy, Embracing Our Potential 2.0, TOTA is committed to fostering a sustainable and resilient tourism region, focused on broadening the story of the region, minimizing seasonality, and dispersing visitors throughout the region.

TOTA's goals reflect the strategic direction of Province of British Columbia Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture, and Sport (MTACS), Destination British Columbia (DBC), and the needs and priorities of the Thompson Okanagan tourism stakeholders.
Regional Strategy - 2012

In 2012, TOTA completed the 10-year Regional Tourism Strategy – Embracing Our Potential.

18 months
1,800 stakeholders
90 communities + 33 Indigenous Communities Engaged
48 input sessions
Regional Strategy - 2012

The Seasonality Challenge

The primary challenge for the region coming out of 2012 was that 80% of regional tourism revenue was realized in 45 days, largely July to September.
Regional Strategy - 2012

While widely recognized as a “sun and fun destination,” this seasonality was not economically sustainable for the Thompson Okanagan tourism industry or for individual businesses, especially in the case of a fire, flood, or poor weather conditions.
Regional Strategy - 2012

The goal was to flatten the curve and move from 80% of regional tourism revenue generated in 45 days to a much more viable 200 days annually.
Regional Strategy - 2012

Pre pandemic - 2019, the Thompson Okanagan Region was on track to reach our goal, having attained a rate of 80% of revenue in 110 days annually.
How did we address the challenge of seasonality?

The Regional Strategy was based on five core experience-based themes:

- Identifying the Iconic
- Revealing the Story
- Enriching Local Flavours
- Expanding Personal Horizons
- Building Authenticity

Right Guest, Right Time, Right Reason
2020 Updated Regional Strategy

In 2020, TOTA completed an updated version of the Strategy: Embracing our Potential 2.0

Regional roll up from 7 planning corridor strategies

Over 300 tourism stakeholders engaged

7 working committees established

Presentations to city councils
2020 Updated Regional Strategy

March 2020

The updated strategy was released in March 2020. At that time it was evident that the Region was on track to meet its goal.

The refreshed strategy, continued to build on similar themes as those identified in 2012 however with more focus on sustainability.
COVID-19 Impact

- No International visitation since March 2020
- Domestic visitation enabled certain parts of region to generate revenue quicker than others, especially in summer and in autumn (as restrictions allowed).
- Visitors are seeking longer stays, more in depth experiences.
- Many are discovering the region for the first time or rediscovering the region with a new mindset.
Measurement

Ongoing measurement from a variety of sources helps to understand progress and opportunities:

- Canadian Travel Patterns
- Visitor Spend & Intelligence
- Market Segmentation & Consumer Insights
- Hotel Performance
- Destination Sentiment
Canadian Visitation - Annual Comparison
Canadians travelling to the Thompson Okanagan by Month

- 2018
- 2019
- 2020

Jan  | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec

0    | 100,000 | 200,000 | 300,000 | 400,000 | 500,000 | 600,000 | 700,000 | 800,000

Seasonal trends show a peak in August, with significant declines in the winter months.
Canadian Visitation - Annual Comparison

Canadians travelling to the Thompson Okanagan by Month

- 2019
- 2020
- 2021

Jan: 196,900
Feb: 202,300
Mar: 214,300
Apr: 252,100
May: 384,500

Jan: 186,800
Feb: 191,600
Mar: 170,600
Apr: 121,200
May: 151,500
Looking Forward

Regional Data Platform - Development

Tourism Industry & Arrivals

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total people in region (census data)</th>
<th>Total employment in region</th>
<th>Employment in tourism</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4,648,055</td>
<td>2,616,200</td>
<td>302,700</td>
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Looking Forward

Canadians Welcomed Back to Province as of July

Preparing to Welcome Back Americans for leisure in August

Looking forward to welcoming international visitors to Canada in September
Thank You

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Industry Website: TOTABC.org
Visitor Website: ThompsonOkanagan.com