

South Dakota Department of Tourism



Information Center Intercept Report
Summer 2011

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Methodology

From July 5 and July 14, 6,500 surveys were distributed at 12 Interstate Information Centers around South Dakota. Respondents had until July 23 to return their survey in order to be entered into a random drawing for a \$250 VISA gift card. In order to be eligible, participants had to be 18 years of age or older.

There were 1,720 travelers who responded to the survey. This number was divided into two groups: In-Target and Aggregate. The In-Target segment consists of the markets of Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Wyoming and Canada as described by the South Dakota Department of Tourism. The In-Target group is made up of 827 respondents with South Dakota residents making up 117 of these responses.

The Aggregate and In-Target groups are the two segments that will be analyzed, compared and contrasted throughout this report to highlight their differences and similarities.

Executive Summary

Question 1 – Is South Dakota your final destination on this trip?

Of the 1,720 respondents in the Aggregate group, approximately 40.3% (694 respondents) indicated they were passing through South Dakota to reach other destinations. South Dakota was reported as the final destination for 66% (546 respondents) of the In-Target group, which consisted of 827 respondents.

As with previous years, both groups indicated Rapid City as the most popular in-state city destination, while Wyoming/Yellowstone National Park remained the most common out-of-state destination.

Question 2 – How many days total will you be spending on your entire vacation?

The average total vacation days among the Aggregate group was 14.6 days, while the In-Target group stated their entire vacation lasted 8.8 days.

Question 3 – How many days of your vacation will you be spending in South Dakota?

The In-Target responders spent an average of 4 days in South Dakota, while the Aggregate group spent approximately 4.3 days.

Question 4 – What time of year did you make the decision to come to/through South Dakota?

July 2011 was the most common month for planning a vacation for both groups, followed by June 2011 and May 2011.

Question 5 – What in particular prompted you to choose South Dakota for your vacation this year?

Both groups indicated the South Dakota scenery as the main motivator for their visit. The second most popular response for both the Aggregate and In-Target was Family & Friends. This was followed by a Specific Attraction/Event with Mount Rushmore being the most commonly mentioned for the Aggregate group and the Proximity to Home for the In-Target group.

Question 6 – Which of the following describes the reason(s) for your stop at the Information Center?

This question was new for 2011. The South Dakota Department of Tourism wanted to learn more about how our visitors use our Information Centers. Visitors commonly stop at the Information Centers to use the restrooms and take a travel break. Over 1/3 of In-Target visitors and 38% of the Aggregate group stop specifically to pick up directions and maps. Over 35% of the Aggregate stop to get attraction and activity information, and 27.8% of In-Target travelers are looking for the same information.

Question 7 – Have you ever visited the South Dakota state tourism website, www.TravelSD.com?

Twenty-nine percent of In-Target travelers and 24% of the Aggregate group have visited www.TravelSD.com. Of those in the Aggregate group who had used the website, 89% indicated that all their travel questions were answered. Similarly, 89.5% of the In-Target group said their travel inquiries were addressed.

Question 8 – While traveling in South Dakota, are you using an official South Dakota Vacation Guide?

While traveling through South Dakota, 41% of the Aggregate group reported they used a Vacation Guide. Of the In-Target responses, 38.5% reported using a Guide. Of those who used an official guide, approximately 56% percent of the In-Target group and 60% of the Aggregate group obtained a Vacation Guide after arriving.

Question 9 – Are you using a travel special or vacation package that combines lodging and activities on your trip?

Very few respondents in either group indicated they used a travel package. Only 4.2% of respondents in both groups reported purchasing vacation packages that combined lodging and activities.

Question 10 – Did you book any part of this trip online? and Have you booked a previous trip online?

These questions were added to the survey in 2010 to learn more about the planning and booking process of South Dakota visitors. In 2011, 37.5% of the Aggregate group booked part of their South Dakota trip online, while approximately 48% had booked a previous trip online. The In-Target group uses the Internet less to book their trips. Thirty-two percent booked part of their South Dakota vacation online and approximately 44% had previously used the Internet to book a trip.

Question 11 – When were all your LODGING plans finalized?

This question was added this year to learn when our travelers start to plan their trip details. Approximately 41% of the Aggregate group makes all their lodging plans before their trip, while over half of the In-Target group tends to do the same.

Question 12 – When were all your ACTIVITY plans finalized?

Another new question showed that travelers in both groups tend to make some of their activity plans before arriving. The Aggregate group tends to be more spontaneous and make their activity plans on the go, while the In-Target group tends to be more prepared and make all their activity plans before arriving.

Question 13 - Have you been to South Dakota prior to this trip?

The In-Target group indicated that 77.6% had been to South Dakota before this trip with an average of 4 years and 10 months in between visits. Of the Aggregate group, 68.6% had previously been to South Dakota with an average of 6 years and 4 months in between visits.

Question 14 – Including yourself, how many people are in your travel party?

The average travel party size increased slightly for both groups. The Aggregate group had an average party size of 3.2 people, up from 3 people in 2010. The In-Target group saw a similar increase with an average party size of 3.4 people, compared to a travel party of 3.1 people in 2010.

Question 15– How many children (under 18) are in your travel party?

The average child per party is less than one for both groups, which didn't vary much from previous years. However, of the respondents in the In-Target group who were traveling with children, the average number of children per party was 2.3. The Aggregate group varied very little from the In-Target group with an average of 2.2 children.

Question 16 – What are the genders and ages of the adults in your party?

The most common gender and age group for both groups were females age 35-54. The second most common traveler was female 55-64.

Question 17 – Approximately how much are you spending per day for your entire travel party?

The average travel party spending per day increased slightly for both groups this year. This year, the Aggregate travel party spent an average of \$186.78 per day, while the In-Target travel party spent an average of \$178.91 per day.

Question 18 – How did you travel to South Dakota?

Private vehicles were again the most common mode of transportation among both groups of respondents. Approximately 79% of the Aggregate group and 85.5% of the In-Target group indicated that they drove a private vehicle.

Question 19 – Which types of activities do you enjoy participating in during a vacation?

This year, a few more activity options were added to the survey. The top most popular activities travelers in both groups like to experience while on vacation are Scenic Drives, Visiting National and State Parks, and Visiting Local Attractions and Events.

Question 20 – Does your travel party use any wireless Internet enabled devices (Wi-Fi) while on vacation?

Travelers are beginning to use more Wi-Fi when they travel. This year, 60.5% of the Aggregate group and 53% of the In-Target group used Wi-Fi. Last year, 44% of the Aggregate group and 38% of the In-Target group used Wi-Fi.

Question 21 – Does your travel party access the Internet on a mobile device (cell phone, Blackberry, etc.) while on vacation?

This question was added to the survey in 2010 to learn more about cell phone web usage and measure the potential for mobile marketing. Both groups responded similarly with 53.3% of the Aggregate and 51.3% of the In-Target groups accessing the Internet on their mobile devices.

Question 22 – How satisfied are you with the South Dakota portion of your trip?

An overwhelming number of respondents in both groups answered this question with either “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied.” Ninety-six percent of both groups selected one of the two options above.

Question 23 – What did you LIKE about your South Dakota vacation?

The responses for both groups were very similar. The most common answers were “the scenery/beauty”, “hospitality/friendly people” and the “welcome centers being clean, friendly and helpful.” Attractions such as Mount Rushmore, Crazy Horse and the Badlands were also frequently mentioned.

Question 24 –Comments, Suggestions, Feedback?

The majority of respondents had very positive feedback. The most common responses among both groups included compliments about the rest areas being clean and helpful and the beautiful scenery. Negative feedback predominately revolved around the amounts of road construction, bad cell phone coverage and lodging rates in the Black Hills. A few of the suggestions include better cell phone coverage, Wi-Fi at the rest areas, and a broader reach of advertising to reach more markets.

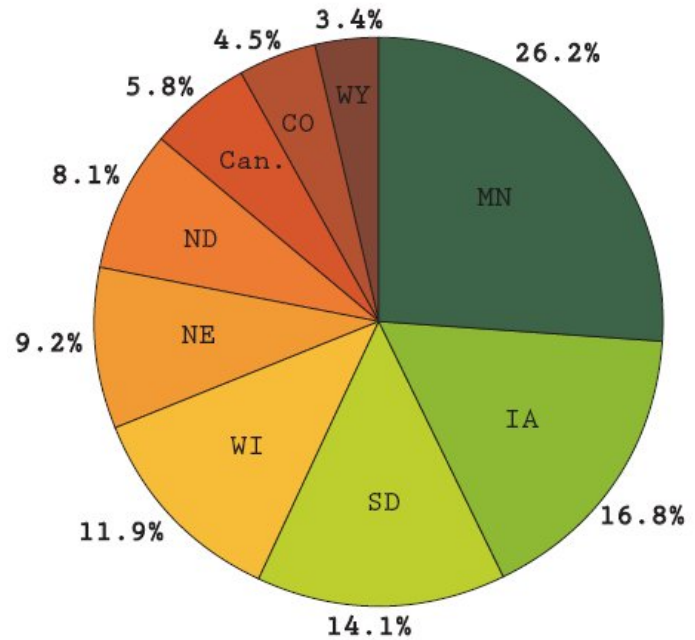
Report Findings

This year, the Intercept Survey underwent a much needed revision. A few questions were removed while a few were added (#6, #11 and #12) to learn more about new trends we have seen emerging in the past few years. For the majority, this year's survey closely mirrored 2010 results. The only major changes this year included the average number of days spent on vacation and the gender and age of the "average" traveler.

ORIGIN

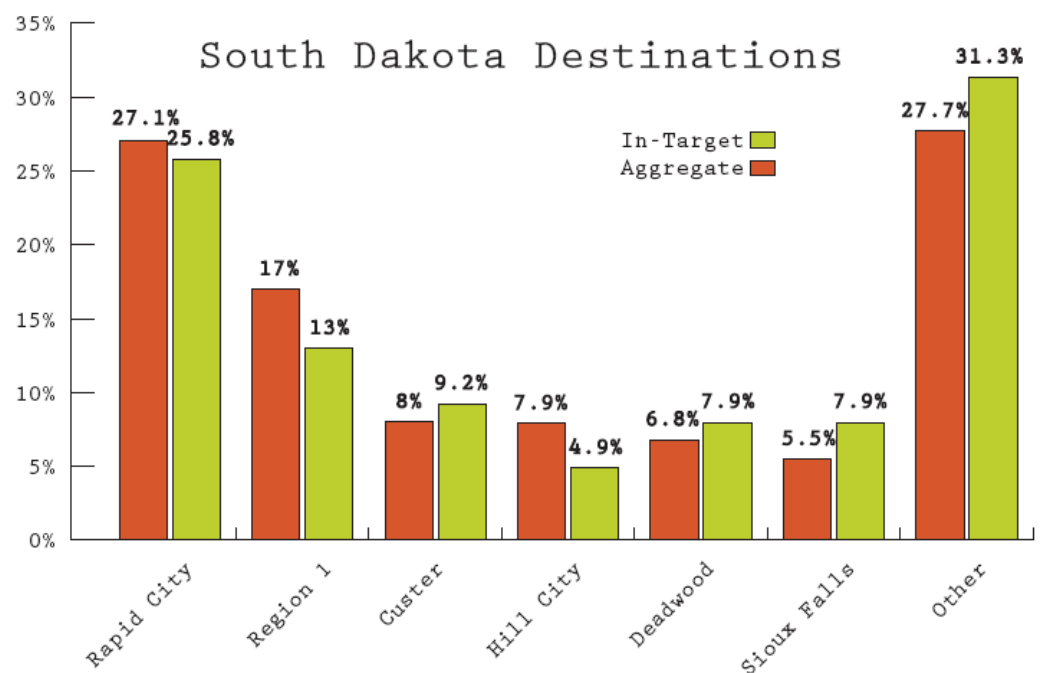
As with the previous year's results, Minnesota continues to make up the majority of both the In-Target and Aggregate groups. Of the 1,720 total respondents, 48.1% make up the In-Target group, up from 44.6% in 2010. We saw a slight increase in the number of responses from Iowa while Wisconsin and Illinois respondents were down over 2010. In 2010, the number of South Dakota respondents fell from being the second largest group to the fourth largest group of respondents in the In-Target group. This year, South Dakota residents were the third largest origin state. South Dakota continues to experience an increase in Canadian traffic each year. Foreign travelers made up 3.3% of all respondents, up from 2.7% in 2010.

In-Target
Traveler Origin



DESTINATION

Rapid City remained the number one in-state destination for travelers in both groups. The Black Hills Badlands and Lakes Region was the second most popular destination followed by Custer for both Aggregate and In-Target travelers. Deadwood and Sioux Falls were



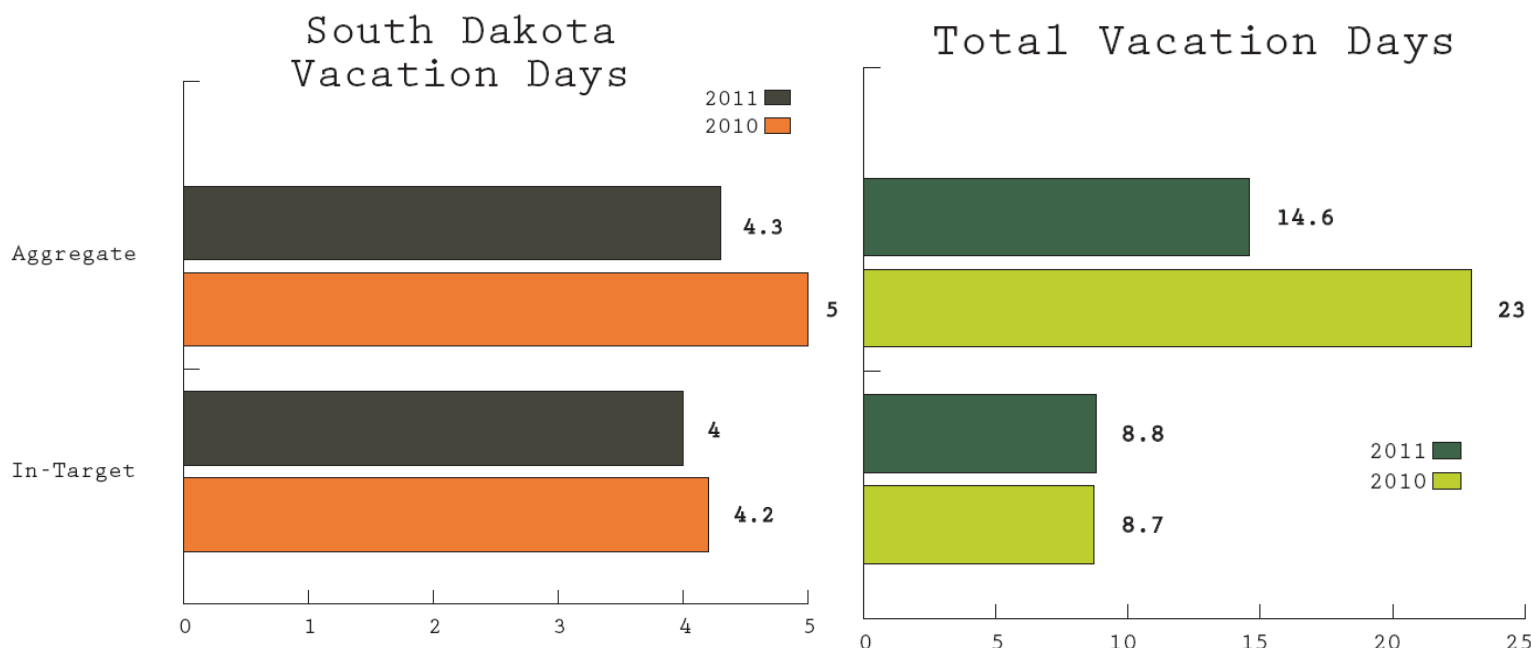
also highly mentioned among In-Target respondents while Hill City and Deadwood were common among the Aggregate

This year, both groups experienced a higher percentage of respondents who indicated that South Dakota was their final destination than in 2010. In 2011, 59.7% of the Aggregate group chose South Dakota as their final destination, which is up considerably from last year's 43%. More In-Target responders (66%) indicated they chose to vacation in South Dakota than last year (59.6%).

Once again, Wyoming/Yellowstone National Park was the top out-of-state destination for travelers in both groups. The second most common out-of-state destination for Aggregate travelers was Montana/Glacier National Park. Minnesota, North Dakota, Washington, Colorado and Canada were also highly mentioned. The second most common out-of-state destination for In-Target travelers was Minnesota followed by Montana/Glacier National Park, North Dakota, Colorado, Canada and Nebraska.

Last year, travelers took longer vacations as they saw the economy begin to recover. In 2010, the average vacation lasted 23 days for the Aggregate group; but in 2011, travelers begin to shorten their trips to the lengths we saw in 2009. In 2009, the average vacation lasted roughly 18.3 days while this year the average vacation was 14.6 days. The In-Target group saw very little change in total vacation days this year. In 2011, the average vacation lasted approximately 8.8 days, compared to 8.7 days in 2010.

The number of days travelers spent in South Dakota decreased slightly from 2010. In 2011, In-Target respondents spent an average of 4 days in South Dakota, down slightly from 4.2 days in 2010 and a larger decrease from 5.4 days in 2009. The Aggregate group also saw a decline in the number of days vacationers spent in South Dakota. This year, they spent 4.3 days compared to 5 days in 2010. The average number of days spent in South Dakota in 2009 was also 4.3 days.



VACATION PLANNING

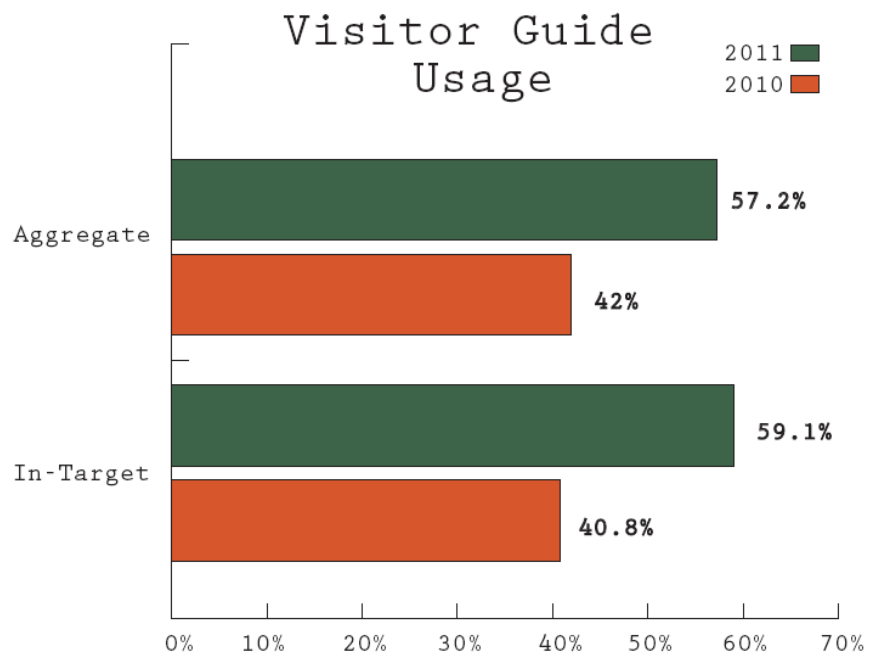
July 2011 was the most common month for making the decision to come to/through South Dakota for both groups. Respondents who completed this survey traveled from July 5 through August 3. June 2011 and May 2011 were also popular months for vacation planning. These findings align with the national trend of vacationers planning more last minute trips this year. According to the recently released *Ypartnership/Harrison Group 2011 Portrait of American Travelers* study, nearly 1/3 of leisure travelers have taken a last-minute trip (booked, on average, six days prior to departure) during the past 12 months.

The South Dakota scenery was the main motivating factor for travelers visiting in both groups, followed by visiting family and friends. A specific attraction/event was the third most common factor with Mount Rushmore being the most commonly mentioned. The most common event mentioned was the Black Hills Corvette Classic. Other highly mentioned factors for vacationing in South Dakota with the In-Target crowd were wanting to return and the proximity to home.

A majority of visitors stop at the Information Centers to use the restrooms and take a travel break. Over 37% of the Aggregate and 33.5% of the In-Target stop to pick up directions and maps. Over 25% of the In-Target group stops at the Information Centers looking for Attraction and Activity information while 35.5% of the Aggregate are looking for the same information. The least commonly requested information was Events and Festivals.

This year saw a slight decrease in the use of www.TravelSD.com among survey respondents. Approximately 29% of the In-Target respondents had visited the state tourism website, down from approximately 33% of In-Target respondents in 2010. Again, the Aggregate group saw a decrease in usage with 24.2% of respondents having visited the website in 2011, down from 27% last year.

The number of travelers who used a visitor guide is up from last year. This year, 57.2% of Aggregate respondents reported using a guide, compared to just 42% percent of travelers in 2010. Vacation guide usage is up considerably in the In-Target group as 59.1% reported using a guide, compared to 40.8% last year. Picking up a guide after arriving to the state continues to be popular with tourists. Over 60% of the Aggregate group and 55.7% of the In-Target group reported picking up a travel guide after arriving in South Dakota.



RESERVATIONS

Travelers using a vacation package that combined lodging and activities were a very small percentage. In 2011, only 4.2% of both groups indicated they used these packages, down from 5% of the Aggregate and 4.3% of the In-Target last year.

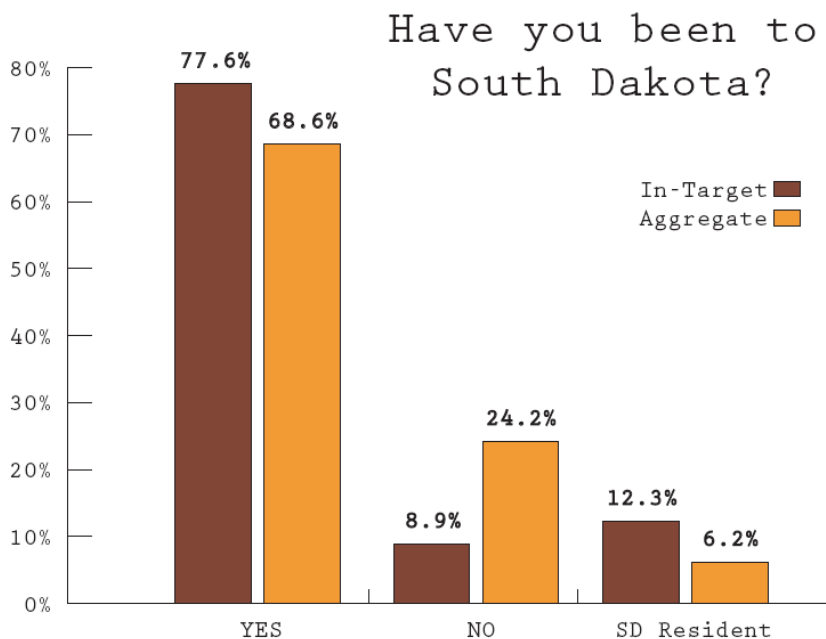
A new question added this year was aimed at learning when travelers finalize their lodging plans. Both groups indicated they tend to make all lodging arrangements before traveling. Over 26% of the Aggregate and 20.3% of the In-Target make all their lodging arrangements after arriving at their destination.

Another new question added this year discovered when travelers made their activity plans. Over 39% of the Aggregate and 35.3% of the In-Target groups make some of their activity plans before arriving. Over 21% of the Aggregate said they tend to make all their activity plans once they arrive at their destination. The In-Target group likes to be more prepared before they reach their destination, as 26% make all their activity plans before arriving.

Online vacation research and bookings are becoming more popular, which were mentioned many times during focus groups conducted in January 2010. Online booking was a new question added to the survey in 2010. The In-Target group is less likely to use the Internet to book their vacation. Thirty-two percent of the In-Target group booked part of this trip online, up from 28% last year. Approximately 44% previously used the Internet to book a trip, up slightly from 40.3% last year. In 2011, 37.5% of the Aggregate used the Internet to book part of this trip, up considerably from 29.6% in 2010. An increase was also seen in the number of travelers who have booked a previous trip online. In 2011, approximately 48% of Aggregate users had booked a trip online, compared to 43% last year.

TRAVEL PARTY

A majority of respondents had previously been to South Dakota. Both groups saw an



increase in the number of return visitors to the state. Over 77% of the In-Target group had visited South Dakota, which is up 1.3% over last year. In 2011, 68.6% of the Aggregate group had been to South Dakota, up slightly from 68% 2010.

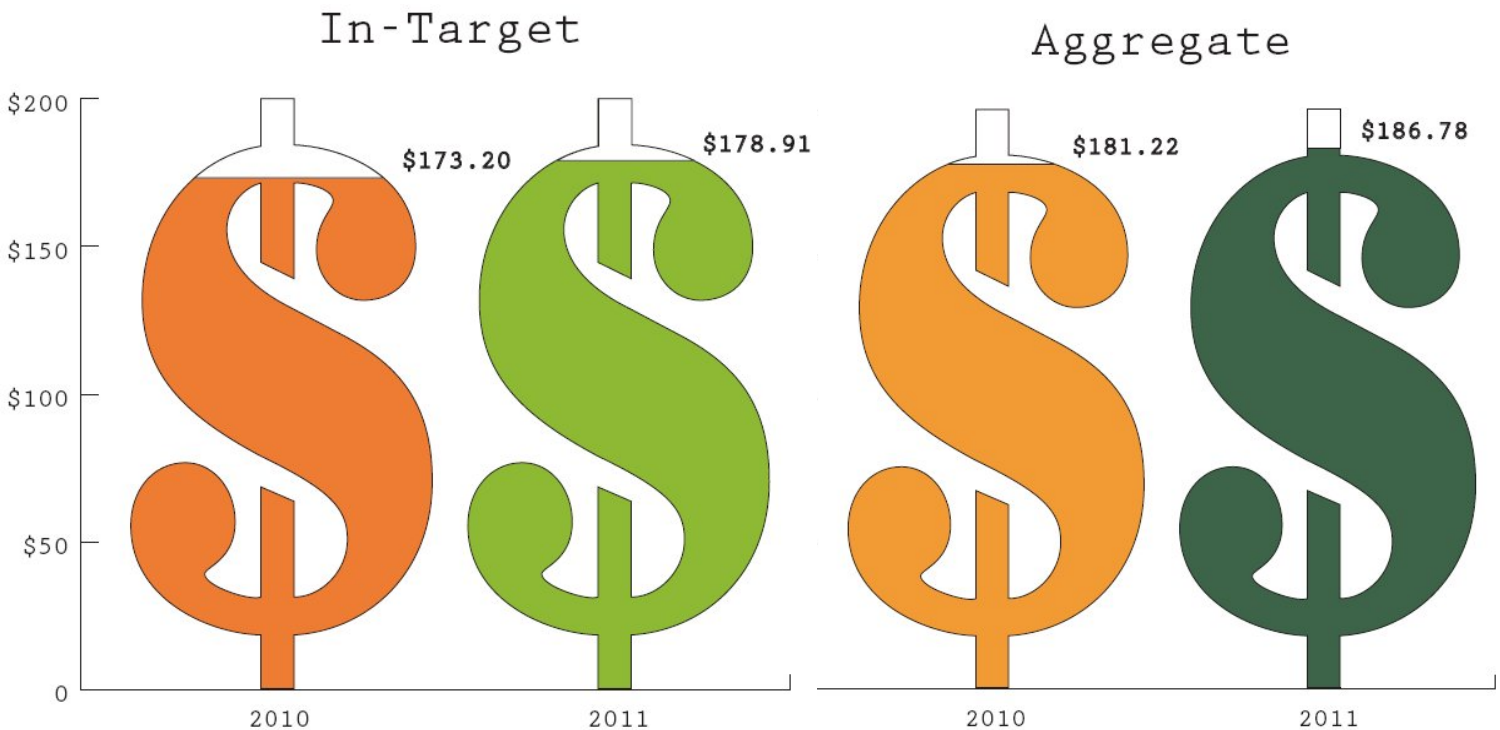
Return visitors are starting to visit South Dakota more frequently. In 2011, the Aggregate group indicated it had been 6.3 years since

their last visit, down from 7 years in 2010*. On average, the In-Target group had previously been to South Dakota 4.8 years ago, down from 5.4 years ago in 2010. This trend may be influenced by marketing South Dakota as an affordable vacation destination.
 * Methodology was changed in 2011. 2010 numbers were recalculated using new method for comparison purposes.

The size of travel parties to South Dakota increased slightly from last year's results. The Aggregate travel party averages 3.2 people while the In-Target party average is 3.4 people. Last year, the Aggregate averaged 3 people per party while the In-Target averaged 3.1 people per party.

Parties in both groups were not traveling with children. The Aggregate group averaged 0.7 children per party and the In-Target group similarly averaged 0.8 children per party in 2011. This is consistent with previous year's data, with the In-Target group slightly higher than 2010's average of .63 children. Of parties traveling with children, 2 children was the most common response for both groups, which is up over 2009's average of 1 child per party.

Even though we saw the average vacation shortened by about a week, per day spending was similar to last year. Travelers in the Aggregate group spent an average of \$186.78 per day per party this year, compared to \$181.22 in 2010. The In-Target travelers' spending was slightly lower at \$178.91 per day in 2011, compared to \$173.20 in 2010.

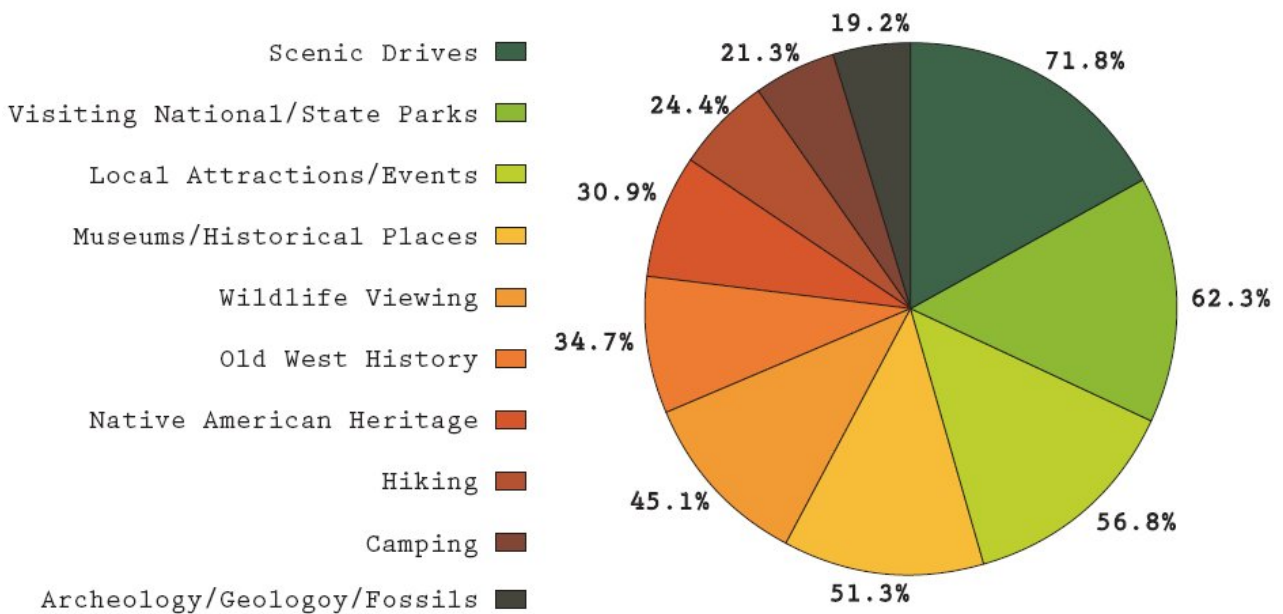


The average traveler in 2011 changed a great deal from a year ago as the average traveler was younger females in both groups. In the Aggregate group, travelers tended to be females age 35-54; while in 2010, they tended to be males 65 and older. The second most common age and gender for the Aggregate group this year were females age 55-64. Last year, the second most common traveler was female age 65 and older. The In-Target group saw the same results in 2011 as 2010 with females age 35-54 as the most common vacationer. Females age 55-64 were close behind as the second most common traveler in 2011, as opposed to males age 35-54 in 2010.

Private vehicles remained the most popular way to travel to South Dakota for both groups. The second most common mode of transportation was a RV/camper. This is consistent with the previous year's data.

Visitors in both groups like to participate in a variety of activities while on vacation. The top activities that members of both groups like to experience were Scenic Drives, Visiting National and State Parks, and Visiting Local Attractions and Events.

Top Vacation Activity Interest



The use of Wi-Fi while on vacation is becoming more common. Fifty-three percent of the In-Target group and 60.5% of the Aggregate group used a wireless Internet device while vacationing. Last year, 55% of the Aggregate travelers and 49% of the In-Target group used Wi-Fi while traveling.

The number of people who utilize mobile Internet was another new question added to the survey last year. Cell phones, Blackberrys, etc. have developed Internet applications, thus increasing the number of people who use their phones for information. Over 51% of the In-Target crowd used mobile Internet, up from 44% last year. A large increase in mobile Internet was seen in the Aggregate. Over 53% of the Aggregate reported using mobile Internet, compared to 45.5% last year.

Conclusion

For the majority of the questions asked, the responses were very similar to past years. The major differences we saw in 2011 were the age and gender of the “average” traveler and the number of total vacation days. South Dakota saw a larger number of respondents who indicated the state as a primary destination. This year, we also saw a decrease in the number of respondents who have visited TravelSD.com. A few modifications and changes were made to the survey and methodology, along with the addition of Questions 6, 11 and 12. Overall, there were about 280 fewer responses this year.

A majority of the comments, suggestions and feedback were positive from travelers about their time spent in South Dakota. Many responses praised the Information Centers for their help in planning their vacations as well as having clean facilities. A large amount of negative feedback focused on things outside our control, such as road construction and cell phone reception.

AGGREGATE TRAVELER SUMMARY

Profile of Aggregate Traveler, 2010

- 3.03 people in travel party
- Average traveler was Male 65 and older
- Entire vacation lasted 23 days
- Spent an average of 5 days in South Dakota
- Approximately 68% had previously been to South Dakota
- Last visit to South Dakota was 7 years ago
- Spent an average of \$181.20 per day, per travel party
- South Dakota was the final destination for 43.2% of respondents
- Top non-South Dakota destination was Yellowstone National Park, Glacier National Park and Seattle, WA
- Top activities travelers liked to do while on vacation: Visit National and State Parks, General Sightseeing and Visiting Local Attractions and Events
- Approximately 97% of travelers were satisfied with their South Dakota portion of their trip

Profile of Aggregate Traveler, 2011

- 3.2 people in travel party
- Average traveler was Female 35-54
- Entire vacation lasted 14.6 days
- Spent an average of 4.3 days in South Dakota
- Approximately 68.6% had previously been to South Dakota
- Last visit to South Dakota was 6.3 years ago
- Spent an average of \$186.78 per day, per travel party
- South Dakota was the final destination for 59.7% of respondents
- Top non-South Dakota destinations were Yellowstone National Park, Glacier National Park and MN
- Top activities travelers liked to do while on vacation: Scenic Drives, Visit National and State Parks and Visiting Local Attractions and Events
- Approximately 96% of travelers were satisfied with their South Dakota portion of their trip

IN-TARGET TRAVELER SUMMARY

Profile of In-Target Traveler, 2010

- 3.1 people in travel party
- Average traveler was Female 35-54
- Entire vacation lasted 8.7 days
- Spent an average of 4.2 days in South Dakota
- Approximately 76.4% had previously been to South Dakota
- Last visit to South Dakota was 5.4 years ago
- Spent an average of \$173.20 per day, per travel party
- South Dakota was the final destination for 59.3% of respondents
- Top non-South Dakota destination was Yellowstone National Park
- Top activities travelers liked to do while on vacation: Visit National and State Parks, General Sightseeing and Visiting Local Attractions and Events
- Approximately 97% of travelers were satisfied with their South Dakota portion of their trip

Profile of In-Target Traveler, 2011

- 3.4 people in travel party
- Average traveler was Female 35-54
- Entire vacation lasted 8.8 days
- Spent an average of 4 days in South Dakota
- Approximately 77.6% had previously been to South Dakota
- Last visit to South Dakota was 4.8 years ago
- Spent an average of \$178.91 per day, per travel party
- South Dakota was the final destination for 66% of respondents
- Top non-South Dakota destinations were Yellowstone National Park/WY
- Top activities travelers liked to do while on vacation: Scenic Drives, Visit National and State Parks and Visiting Local Attractions and Events
- 96% of travelers were satisfied with their South Dakota portion of their trip

