

# South Dakota Department of Tourism



**Mount Rushmore On-Going Survey**  
**November 2010 – April 1, 2011**

## Methodology

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The South Dakota Department of Tourism wanted to expand our Summer Intercept survey to learn more about our international visitors and their spending habits. We decided to launch our survey at Mt. Rushmore since it is the major tourist attraction in South Dakota. The survey was open to all visitors so that, in addition to international visitor data, we could compare habits of winter tourists to tourists visiting during the peak and shoulder seasons. As of now, this is an ongoing survey. The winter portion of the survey ran from November 2010 to April 1, 2011. The next portion of the survey concludes October 7, 2011.

Respondents could choose two methods to take the survey. Paper surveys and cards with the URL for the online survey were located near the checkout at the gift shop.

South Dakota Tourism worked with Xanterra Parks and Resorts at Mt. Rushmore to give a \$150 gift credit to Mount Rushmore National Memorial's gift shop or online gift store to a randomly chosen respondent.

There were 270 respondents to this first go of the survey. We can contribute the low number of surveys due to the timing of the launch (off-season). We expect a large number of respondents during the peak survey.

## Findings

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### **Question 1 – How many days did you or will you spend on your ENTIRE VACATION?**

The average total vacation days was 10.7 days. In comparison, the Summer Intercept study reported the average total vacation lasted 23 days during peak season. This can be contributed to the large number of retirees who responded to the Summer Intercept and stated their vacations consisted of many months.

### **Question 2 – How many days of your vacation will you/did you spend IN SOUTH DAKOTA?**

The average number of days spent in South Dakota was 4.5 days. The Summer Intercept was slightly higher with an average of 5 days in the state.

### **Question 3 – Have you been to South Dakota prior to this trip?**

Slightly over 46% of respondents stated they had never been to South Dakota before. A lower number (32%) of Summer Intercept respondents had never been to South Dakota. By comparing this report with the Summer Intercept, we learn that summer trips are more likely to be repeat visits.

Of those who had previously been to South Dakota, the average length between visits was 9 years 3 months. This closely mirrors the Summer Intercept results of 9 years 7 months between visits.

### **Question 4 – Have you ever visited the South Dakota state tourism website, [www.TravelSD.com](http://www.TravelSD.com)?**

A large majority of respondents (84.4%) had never visited TravelSD. This is up considerably over the Summer Intercept's 73%.

### **Question 5 – While traveling in South Dakota, are you using or did you use an official South Dakota Vacation Guide?**

Travelers during the winter months are less likely to use a vacation guide than travelers during the summer months. Only 26% of vacationers said they used a guide while 42% of Summer Intercept respondents indicated the same. Of those who used a guide, 48.6% picked a guide up after arriving in South Dakota.

### **Question 6 – Did you book a vacation package that included any combination of lodging, activities or air?**

Results from this question are similar to those found in the Summer Intercept. A small number of travelers use a vacation package when traveling. Only 4.1% of survey respondents indicated they did, comparable with the Summer Intercept's result of 5%.

### **Question 7 – How did you book your trip?**

A majority of the respondents (30%) indicated they booked online. Of those who booked online, a few websites were specifically called out: AAA, kayak.com, orbitz.com and BlackHillsBadlands.com.

**Question 8 – How did you travel to South Dakota?**

Private vehicles were the most common mode of transportation with 61.9%. A large number of respondents reported flying as their main mode of transportation. A little over 21% flew while only 5.3% reported the same mode of transportation during the Summer Intercept.

**Question 9 – How many people are in your travel party?**

The average travel party consisted of approximately 2.9 people. This remained virtually unchanged from the Summer Intercept where the average travel party size was three.

**Question 10 – How many children (under 18) are in your travel party?**

A majority of parties are not traveling with children. The average number of children per party was less than one (0.4).

**Question 11 – What are the genders and ages of the ADULTS in your party? (number of people/age group)**

The most common gender and age group was females age 35-54. The second most common traveler was men age 35-54. Females in this group comprised approximately 31% of total respondents.

In comparison, the most common gender and age group during the Summer Intercept was males 65 and older. The second most common traveler was females 65 and older. These results show us older travelers are more likely to travel during warmer months.

**Question 12 – Approximately how much are you spending per day for your entire travel party? (including fuel, accommodations, meals, attractions, extras)**

The average travel party spends approximately \$190.98 per day. This is slightly higher than the average of \$181.22 reported during the Summer Intercept.

**Question 13 – Comments, Suggestions and Feedback?**

A majority of the comments left were praising the state and the people they met along the way. A few respondents mentioned they would be returning soon with their children.