

Cook Islands Visitor Survey Results

January – March 2017

Prepared for Cook Islands Tourism Corporation

by

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Executive Summary

This report focuses on the characteristics, expectations and expenditure patterns of tourists who visited the Cook Islands between 1 January and 31 March 2017. The data presented is collected from an online departure survey (<http://www.mycookislandsvisit.com>). There were 727 individual respondents to the survey - representing a total of 1,748 adults and 371 children in the expenditure analysis (this equates to 7% of all visitors during the period – based on the 2017 visitor arrival data for the January to March period from the Cook Islands Statistics Office).

The majority (56%) of visitors surveyed come from New Zealand, 20% come from Australia. Visitors are well educated (72% of visitors have some form of tertiary education) with a relatively high annual household income (51% earn over NZ\$100,000 per year). Nearly half of the visitors (47%) travel with one companion. Solo travellers are relatively rare (6%).

Over half of those surveyed (57%) are first time visitors to the Cook Islands, a further 23% have visited once or twice before. The main purpose of visit is holiday-making (76%). The average length of stay in the Cook Islands is 9.4 nights. The majority (88%) of visitors stay either one or two weeks. Twenty one percent of visitors surveyed visited Aitutaki in addition to Rarotonga.

Visitor spend prior to arrival in the Cook Islands (\$2,003 per person) has decreased slightly from the 2015/2016 annual average (\$2,121 per person). Spend on the island (per person per day) is \$147. This spend is the same as the 2015/16 annual average of \$147, and higher than the same quarter for the previous year (\$136 for January to March 2016).

The average local spend per visitor during the entirety of their stay is \$1,382. When pre-paid spend and the local spend are combined, it is estimated that each visitor brings \$2,183 to the Cook Islands economy (or approximately \$232 per day). This figure is slightly higher than the \$2,138 average for 2015/16, and the \$2,128 for the same quarter last year (January to March 2016).

Overall visitor satisfaction levels with Cook Islands services and experiences remain high, but are lower than annual averages and the same quarter of the last year. The most appealing elements are environment cleanliness and weather; local people; atmosphere; activities, attractions, entertainment and events; food and beverage. The least appealing elements are rubbish and natural environment care – Muri lagoon; the lack of public services, facilities and infrastructure; food and beverage; attractions and activities; price of goods and services; accommodation; and attractions and activities.

The future intentions of visitors remained very similar to the previous year: 93% of those surveyed state that they want to return to the Cook Islands, and 98% would recommend the Cook Islands to friends or family.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	iii
Introduction	1
Visitor Characteristics	2
Information Sources and Purchasing Behaviour	10
Visitor Expenditure	13
Visitor Satisfaction	17
Most appealing aspects of the Cook Islands.....	21
Least appealing aspects of the Cook Islands.....	27
Suggestions to improve the visit to the Cook Islands	33
Reasons to return to the Cook Islands and recommend to others.....	34
Final observations	38
Appendix – Cook Islands Visitor Survey	39

Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Country of origin (n=656).....	2
Figure 2: New Zealand visitors (n=362)	2
Figure 3: Australia visitors (n=129)	3
Figure 4: Distribution of age and gender (n=660)	3
Figure 5: Highest qualification (n=657).....	4
Figure 6: Annual household income in NZD (n=523).....	4
Figure 7: Main purpose of visit (n=727).....	5
Figure 8: Travelling with whom? (n=726)	5
Figure 9: Number of companions on trip (n=716).....	6
Figure 10: Number of visits to the Cook Islands (n=655).....	6
Figure 11: Number of previous visits to the Cook Islands – country breakdown	7
Figure 12: Length of stay in nights (n=722)	7
Figure 13: Mode of transport (n=725).....	8
Figure 14: Visited Islands (n=725).....	9
Figure 15: Average length of stay in the Cook Islands and on each island (n=725)	9
Figure 16: How did you find out about Cook Islands as a destination (n=726).....	10
Figure 17: How did you find out about Cook Islands as a destination – country breakdown.	11
Figure 18: Importance of information source used when planning your trip (n=545)	11
Figure 19: How did you purchase your travel to the Cook Islands (n=725)	12
Figure 20: Amount of money spent per person prior to arrival (n=538).....	13
Figure 21: Items included in money spent prior to arrival	14
Figure 22: Overall satisfaction with experience of the Cook Islands (n=666)	17
Figure 23: Degree of participation in activities (n range=18-698).....	18
Figure 24: Degree of satisfaction in activities participated in (mean score out of 5)	19
Figure 25: Degree of satisfaction with Cook Islands services (mean score out of 5)	20
Table 1: Average visitor expenditure in the Cook Islands (per person per day)	15
Table 2: Average expenditure per visitor per day by country of origin.....	15
Table 3: Most appealing aspects of the Cook Islands (n=562)	21
Table 4: Least appealing aspects of the Cook Islands (n=513)	27

Introduction

The Cook Islands government, local businesses and communities require a clear picture of the characteristics, expectations and expenditure patterns of visitors to the nation. This information enables effective planning and development of the tourism industry and highlights its crucial role within the broader Cook Island economy.

Visitors to the Cook Islands are asked to complete a web-based survey within two weeks of completion of their visit. The Cook Islands online International Visitor Survey has run since mid-2012 and is continuing through 2017.

This report presents the results from January to March 2017. Over this three-month period, 4,127 visitors were contacted by email to take part in the survey, and 727 responses were received: a conversion rate of 18%. These responses cover a total of 1,748 adults and 371 children. The conversion rate for this period is lower than the 2015/16 annual average (30%) and also the January to March 2016 quarter (23%). This reduction is simply a reflection of the fact that a tick box indicating desire to participate in the survey was removed from arrival cards in November 2016 – thus we get more email addresses originally but a lower response.

The data presented includes detailed information on:

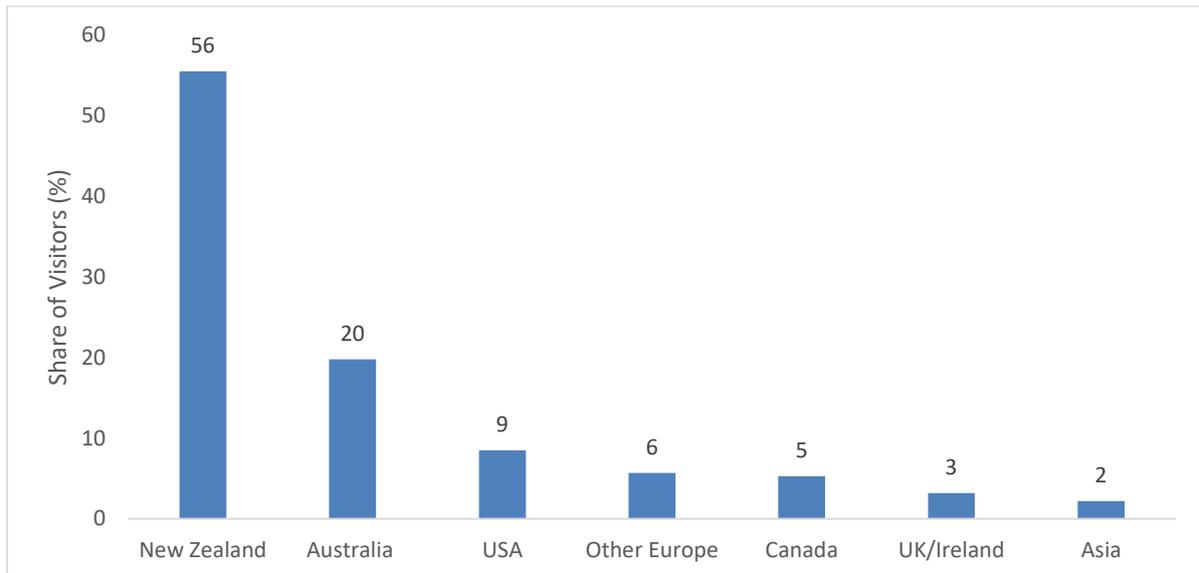
- The characteristics of visitors to the Cook Islands (age, gender, education, country of origin, income, purpose of visit, travelling companions, number of previous visits, length of stay, airline used, islands visited)
- Visitor information obtained about the Cook Islands, the factors influencing in the travel decision making process, and booking information.
- Visitor expenditure (amount of money spent prior to arrival and while in the Cook Islands, items of spending)
- Visitor satisfaction (most and least appealing elements of the visit, overall satisfaction, satisfaction with activities)

Wherever there are significant and/or notable variations from the 2015/16 annual averages or the 2015/16 January – March quarterly findings these figures are highlighted in the discussion that follows.

Visitor Characteristics

The majority (56%) of the visitors surveyed come from New Zealand (Figure 1). The second largest visitor group is from Australia, with 20% of respondents. USA, Europe, Canada, Great Britain, and Asia represent the other main source markets.

Figure 1: Country of origin (n=656)



Auckland, Canterbury, Wellington, Waikato, and Bay of Plenty account for 75% of New Zealand visitors. For visitors from Australia, the regions of New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria generate the highest numbers of arrivals (89%) (Figure 2-3).

Figure 2: New Zealand visitors (n=362)

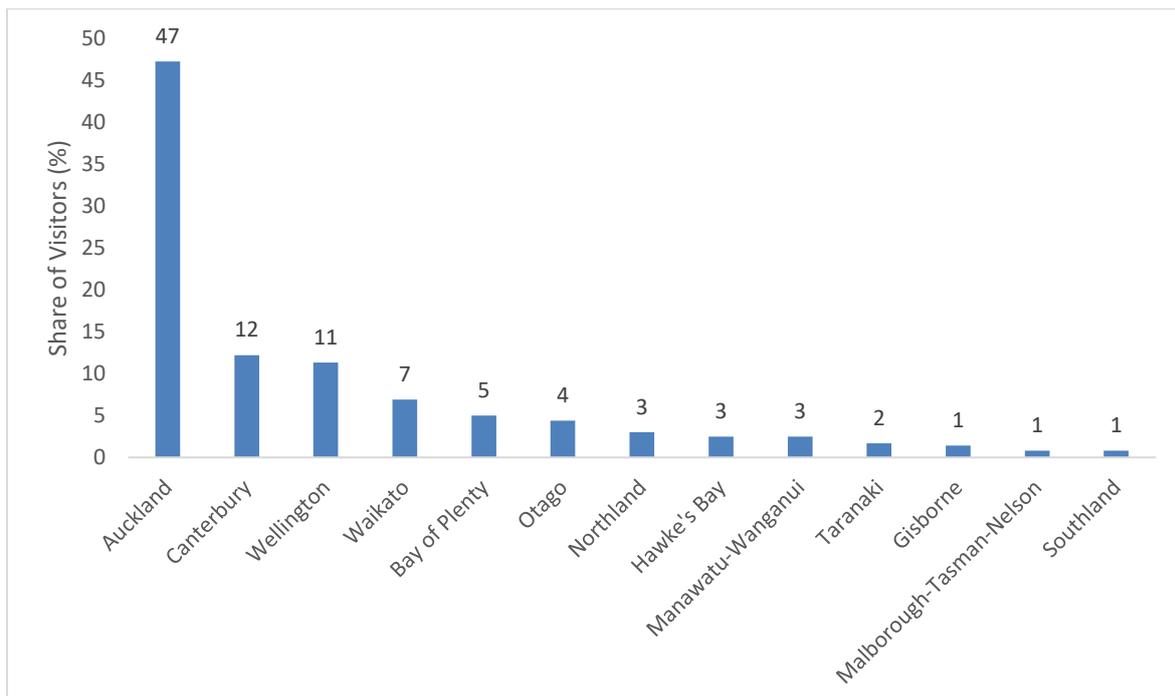
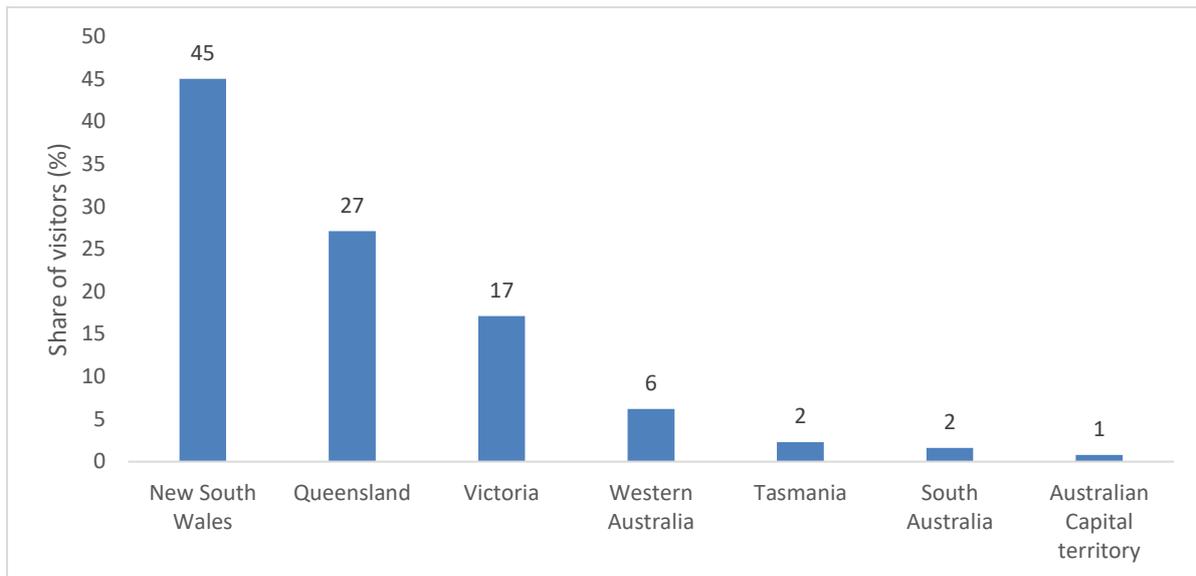
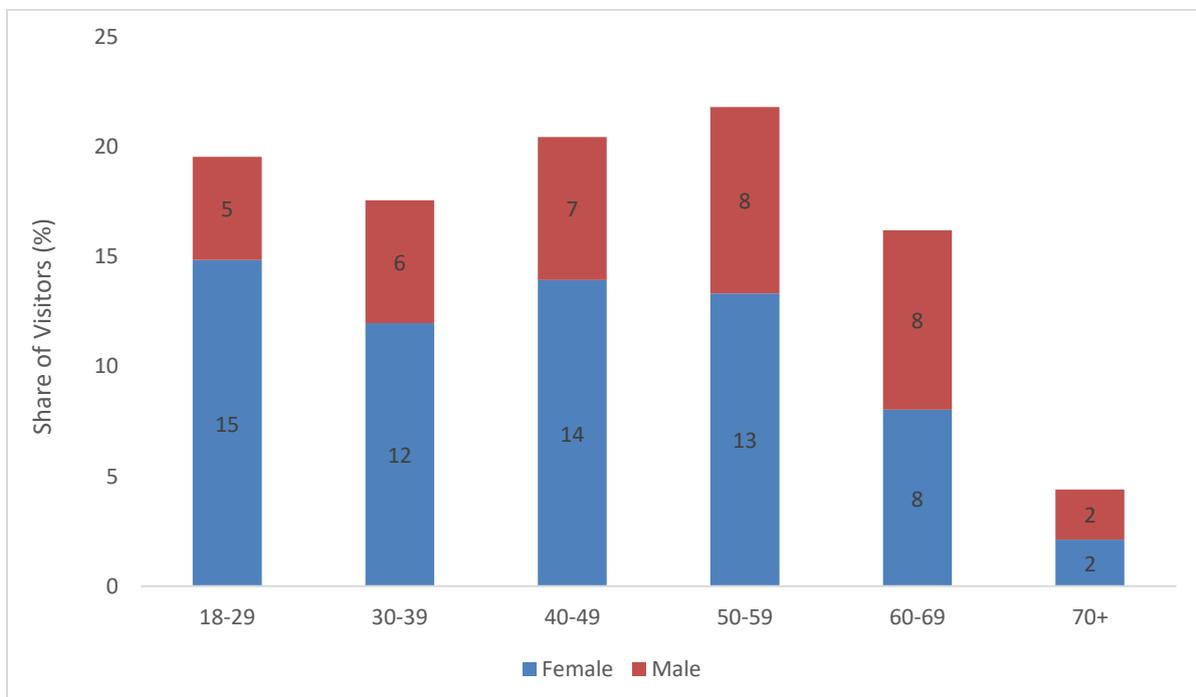


Figure 3: Australia visitors (n=129)



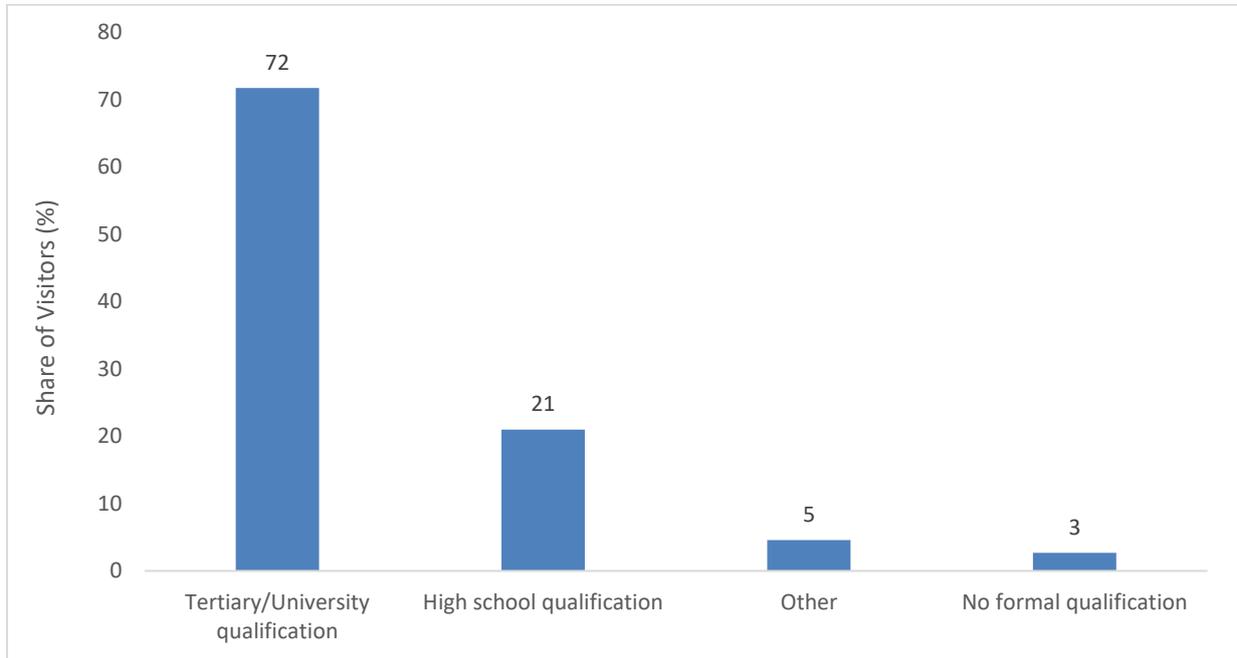
More women (64%) than men (36%) completed the survey (Figure 4). The most significant age categories are the 40 to 49 year (21%) grouping and the 50 to 59 year (21%) grouping, followed by those aged 18 to 29 (20%) and 30 to 39 (18%). There are relatively few travellers in the 70 plus age bracket (4%).

Figure 4: Distribution of age and gender (n=660)



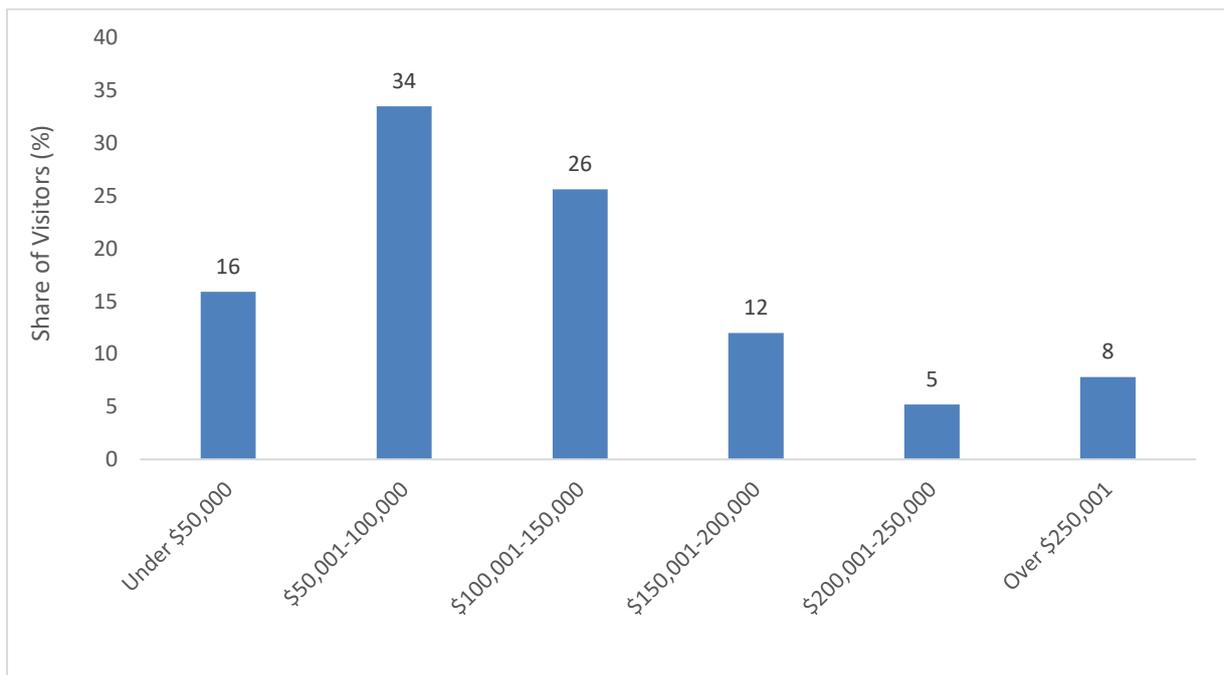
Visitors are well educated: more than two-thirds (72%) of those surveyed have some form of tertiary qualification, with a further 21% having completed a high school education (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Highest qualification (n=657)



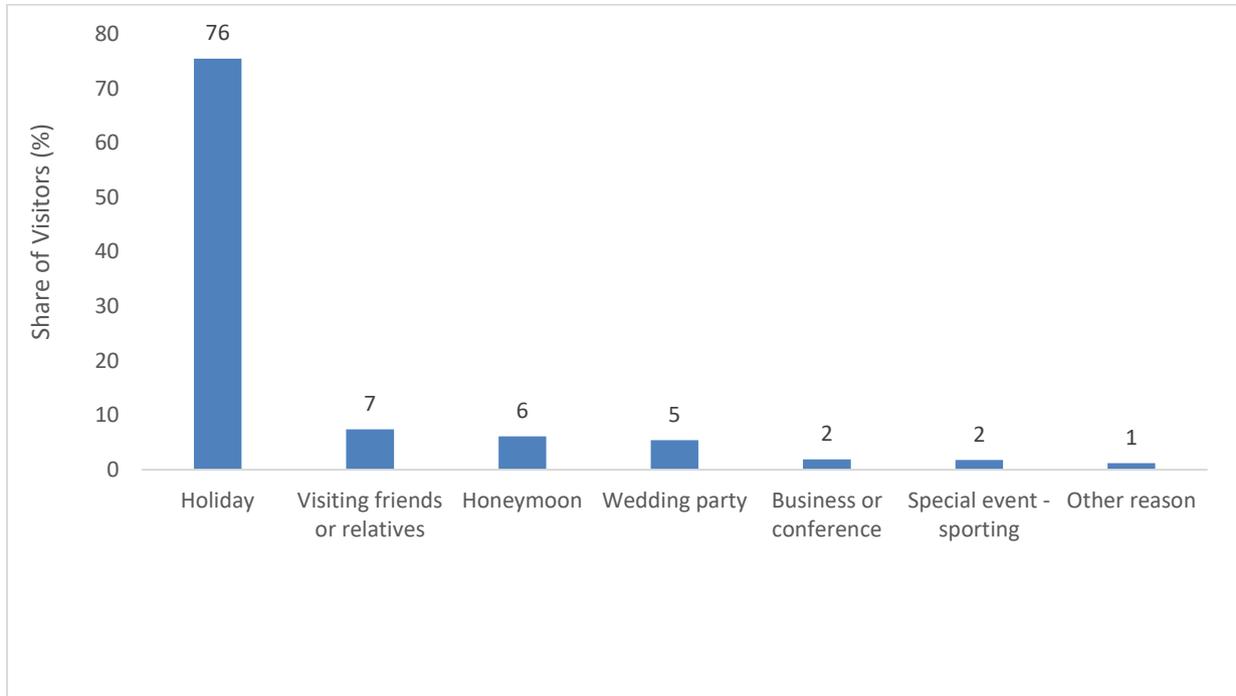
Over a third of visitors (34%) have an annual household income of between NZ\$50,001 and NZ\$100,000. Just over a quarter (26%) of those surveyed earn between NZ\$100,001 and NZ\$150,000. A further 25% of respondents have a household income of over NZ\$150,000 per year (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Annual household income in NZD (n=523)



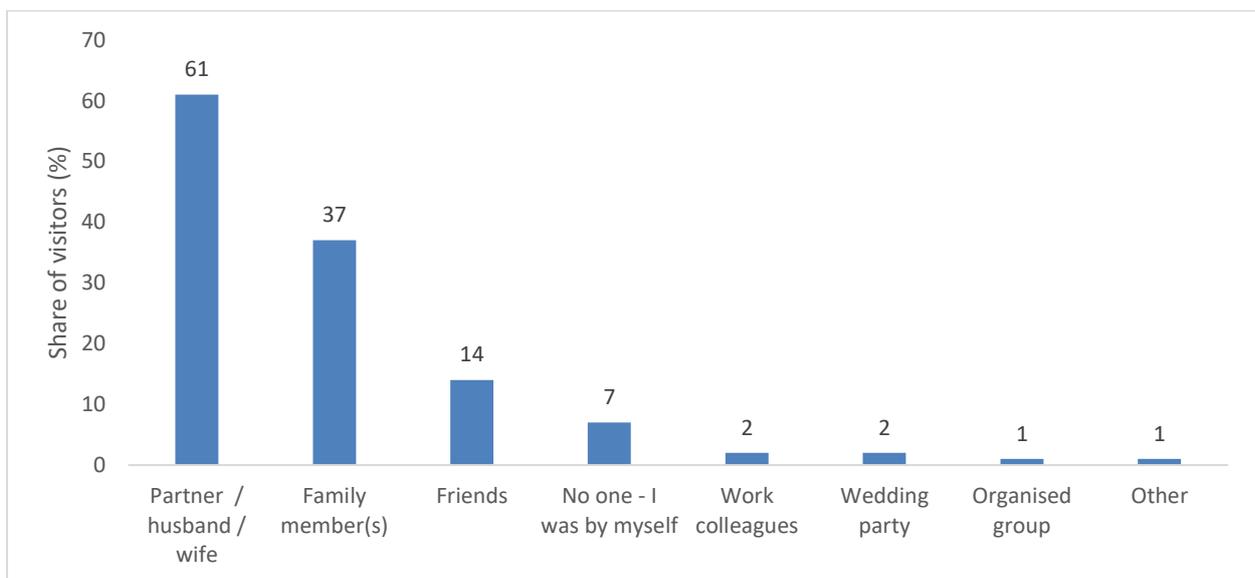
More than three quarters of visitors surveyed come to the Cook Islands for a holiday (76%). Other reasons given include visiting friends and relatives (7%), a honeymoon (6%), attending a wedding (5%), for business and conference (2%), and attending a special event (2%).

Figure 7: Main purpose of visit (n=727)



Most visitors (61%) surveyed travel to the Cook Islands with a partner or spouse. Visitors also travel with other family members (37%), with friends (14%), or travel alone (7%). Those travelling with colleagues, in an organised group, in a tour group or as part of a wedding party represent a smaller share of the sample (Figure 8).

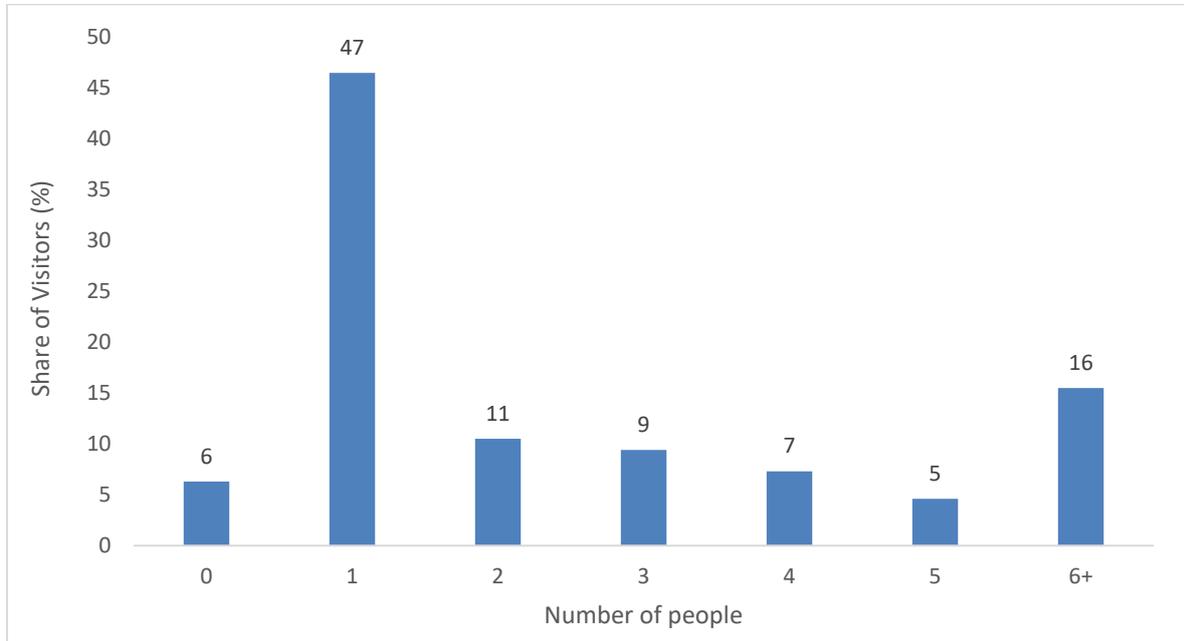
Figure 8: Travelling with whom? (n=726)



Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

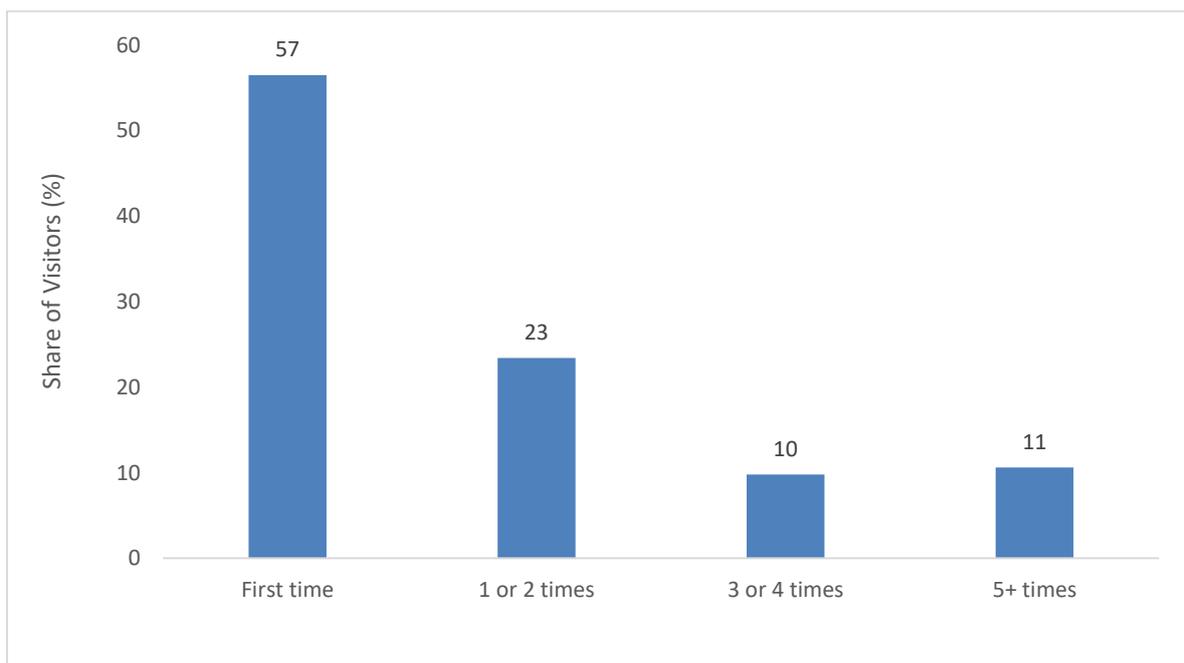
Nearly half of the visitors (47%) travelled with one companion on their visit to the Cook Islands (Figure 9). Travel groups larger than four people are not very common, with the exception of wedding parties.

Figure 9: Number of companions on trip (n=716)



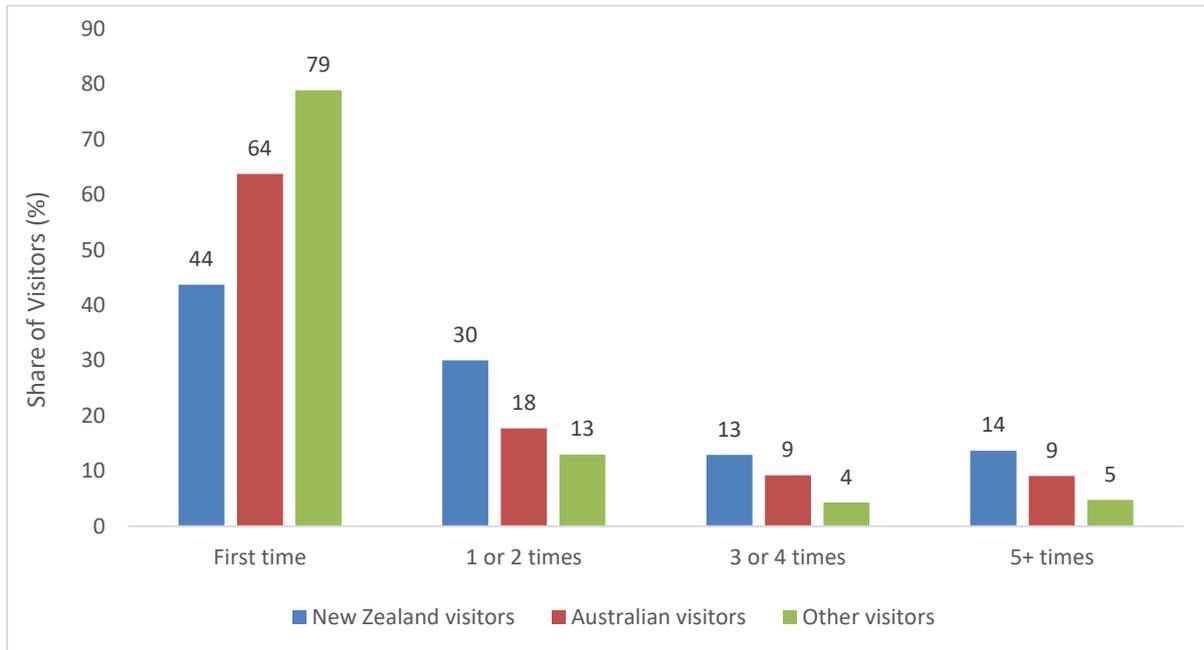
Over half of the visitors (57%) are on their first visit to the Cook Islands. A further 23% have been to the Cook Islands once or twice before. A smaller group (21%) have visited three or more times (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Number of visits to the Cook Islands (n=655)



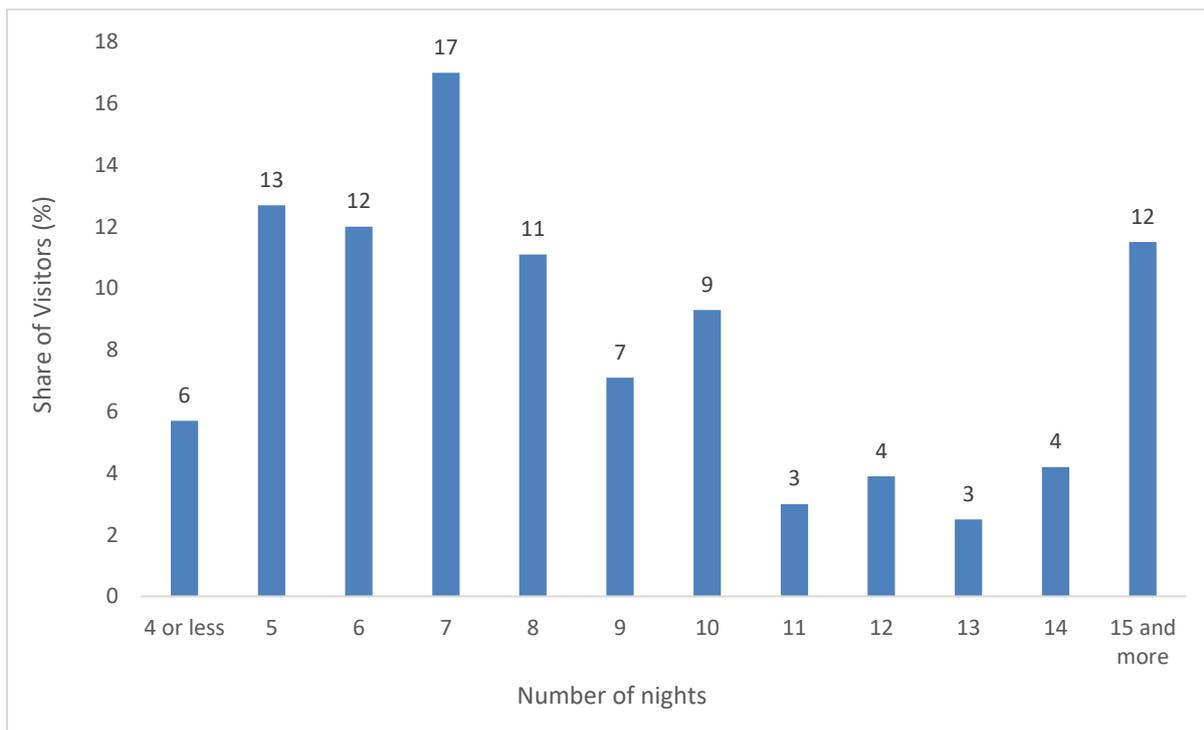
New Zealanders are more likely to be repeat visitors than those from other source markets (Figure 11). Over half of the surveyed visitors from New Zealand (57%) have visited the Cook Islands before compared to only 36% of visitors from Australia and 22% from other countries.

Figure 11: Number of previous visits to the Cook Islands – country breakdown



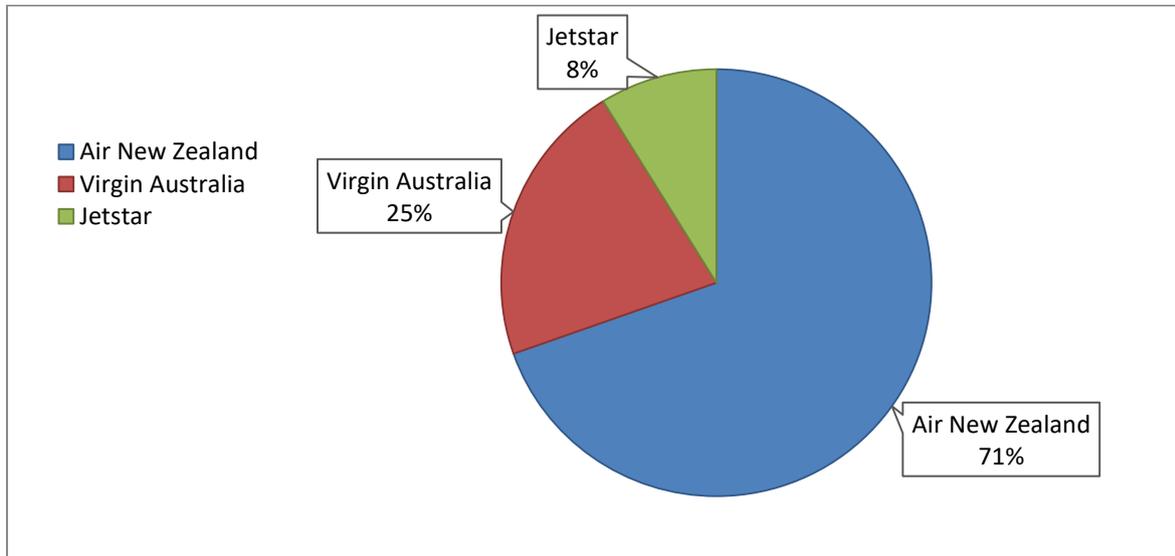
The average length of stay in the Cook Islands is 9.4 nights with 75% of visitors spending 10 or fewer nights in the country (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Length of stay in nights (n=722)



The majority of visitors (71%) travel to/from the Cook Islands with Air New Zealand, a further 25% visitors fly with Virgin Australia (Figure 13), followed by eight percent of visitors travelling with Jetstar. Visitors that arrived by Air Tahiti or private charter flights make up less than 1% of air arrivals.

Figure 13: Mode of transport (n=725)

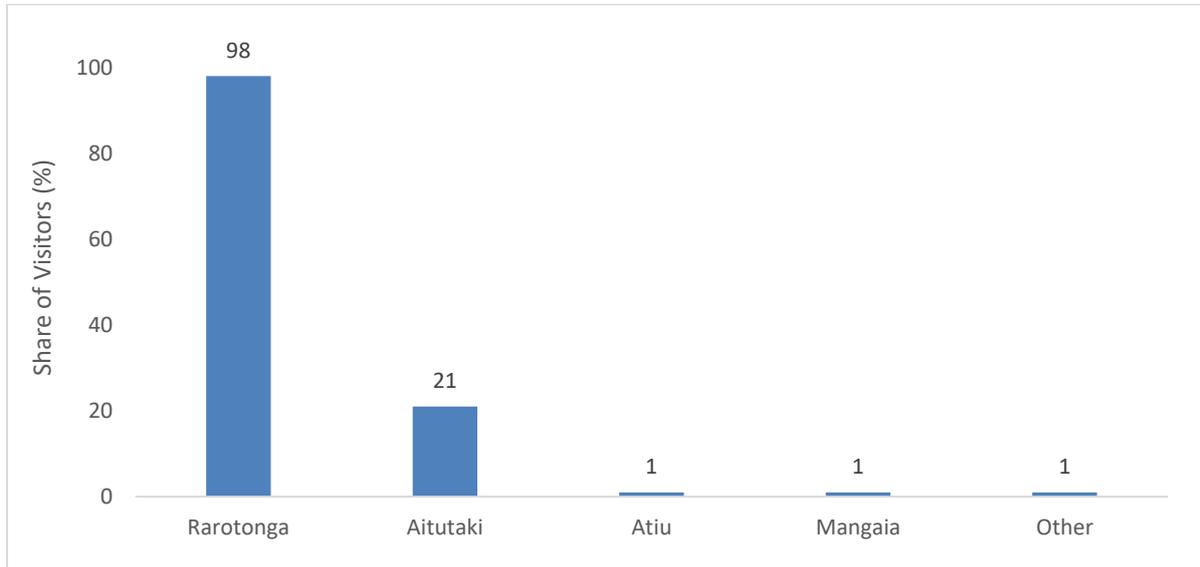


Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

For 80% of visitors, the Cook Islands is the sole destination for their trip. For 20% of the visitors surveyed the Cook Islands is part of a larger journey, including some visitors who are on an around-the-world trip. For those travelling to other countries as part of their trip, the top destination mentioned was New Zealand (82%), followed by travel to Australia (23%), Asian countries (14%), other pacific countries (11%), and North America (10%).

The vast majority (98%) of visitors to the Cook Islands spend time on Rarotonga, with Aitutaki being the second most visited island (21%) (Figure 14). Other islands rarely feature in the survey responses, with Atiu for example receiving only 1% of visitors.

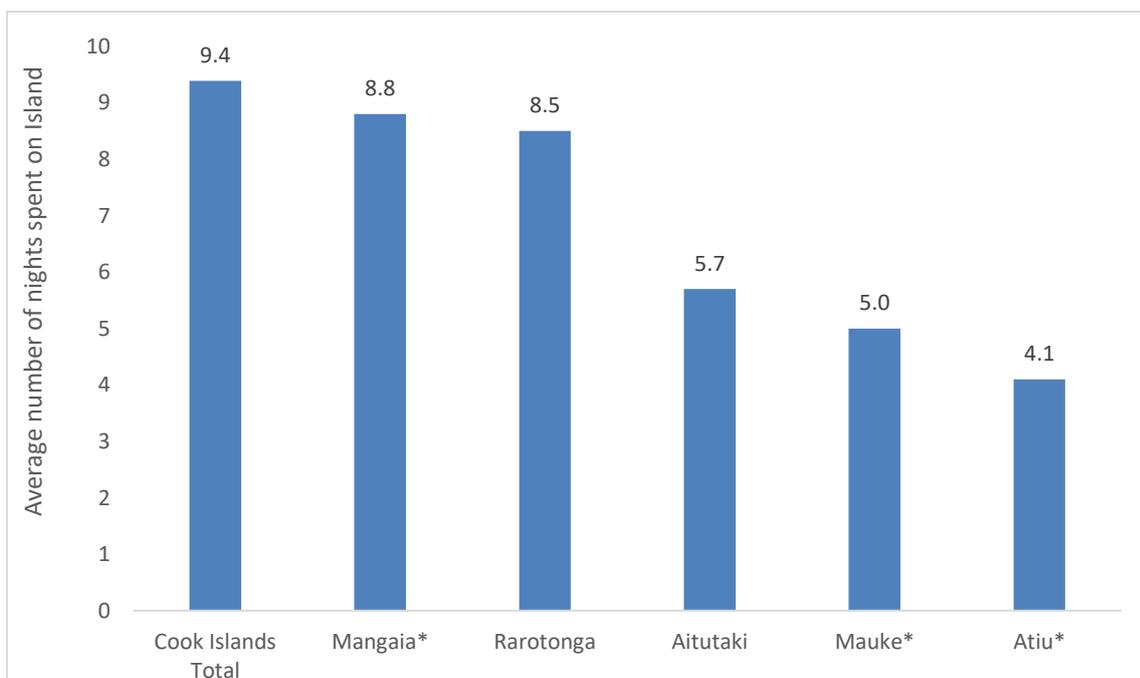
Figure 14: Visited Islands (n=725)



Note: Respondents could visit more than one island, so total may do not add up to 100%.

The average length of stay on Rarotonga is 8.5 nights (Figure 15). For the visitors that went to Aitutaki, the average number of nights spent on the island itself is 5.7. Visitors to Atiu spent an average of 4.1 nights.

Figure 15: Average length of stay in the Cook Islands and on each island (n=725)

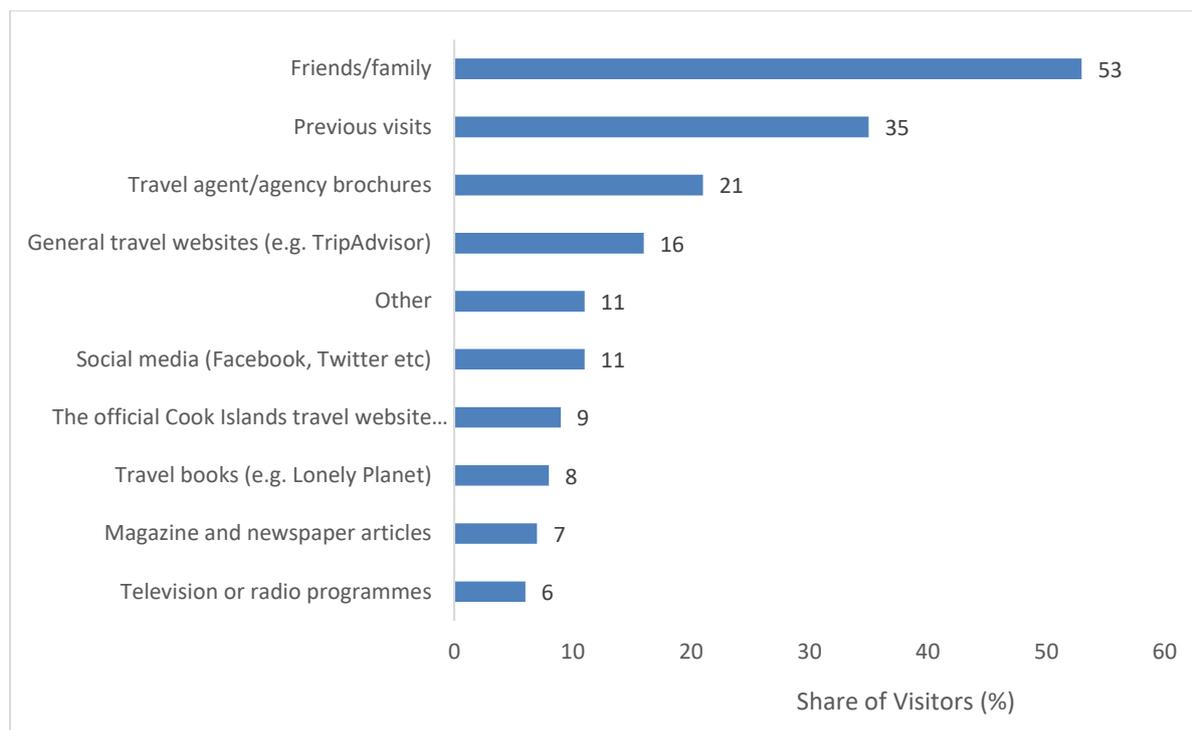


*Note: *n<10*

Information Sources and Purchasing Behaviour

Participants were asked how they had found out about the Cook Islands as a holiday destination for this trip, and to rank the three sources of information that were most important (Figure 16). Over half (53%) of respondents ranked word of mouth from friends and family members as the most important influence, followed by previous experience (35%), travel agents (24%), and general travel websites (e.g. Tripadvisor) (16%).

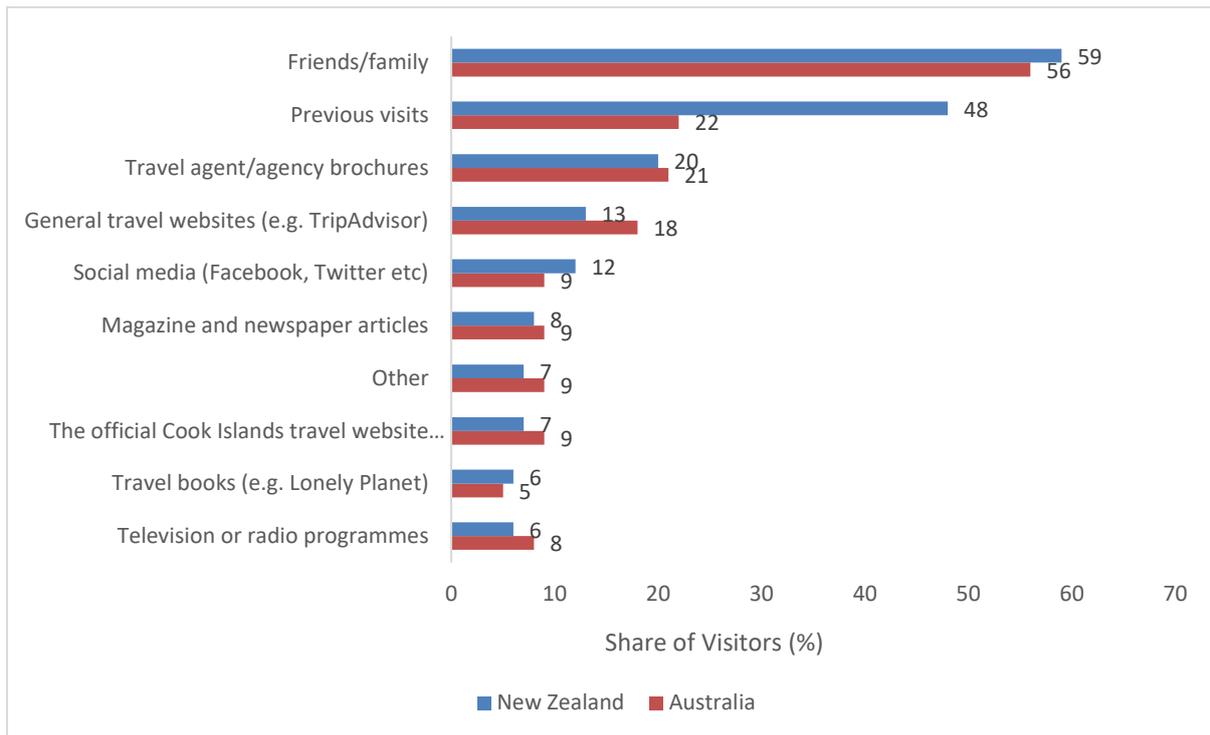
Figure 16: How did you find out about Cook Islands as a destination (n=726)



Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

Visitors from New Zealand are more likely to seek information about the destination via word of mouth from friends and family members (59%). There are more repeat visitors from New Zealand than Australia and this is reflected by the fact that nearly half of visitors from New Zealand (48%) ranked their previous visits as the most important information source (Australian visitors 22%). Australian visitors were more likely to rank travel websites, and travel books as the most important influence.

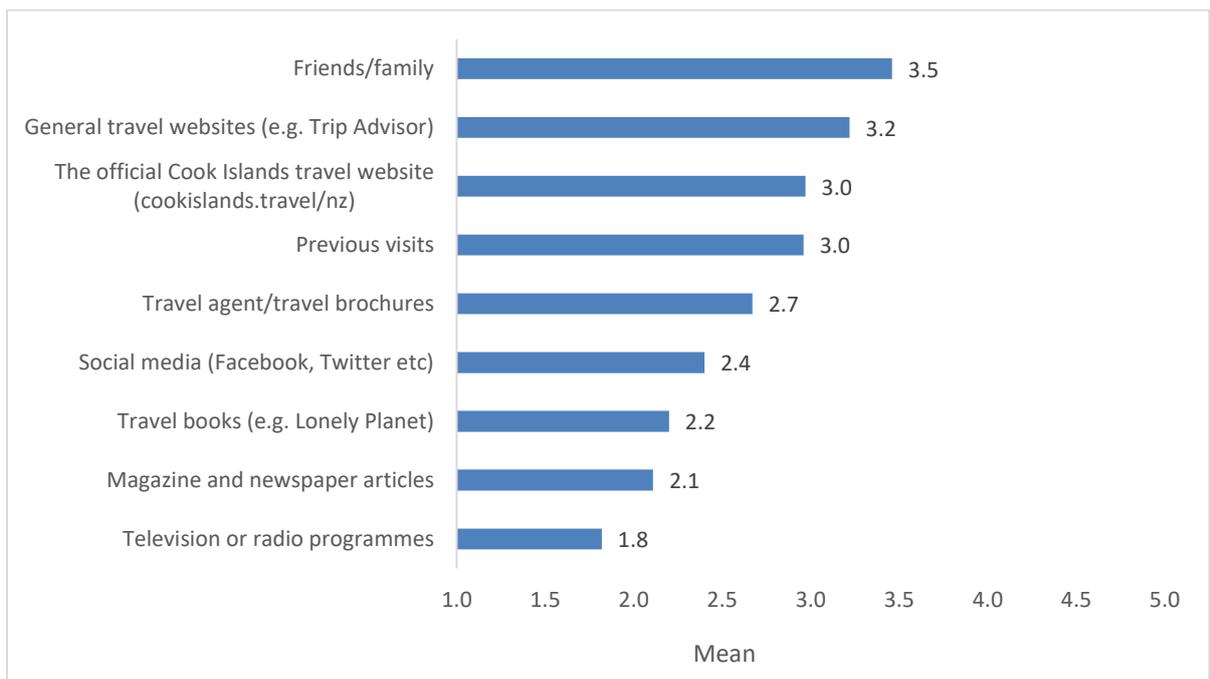
Figure 17: How did you find out about Cook Islands as a destination – country breakdown



Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

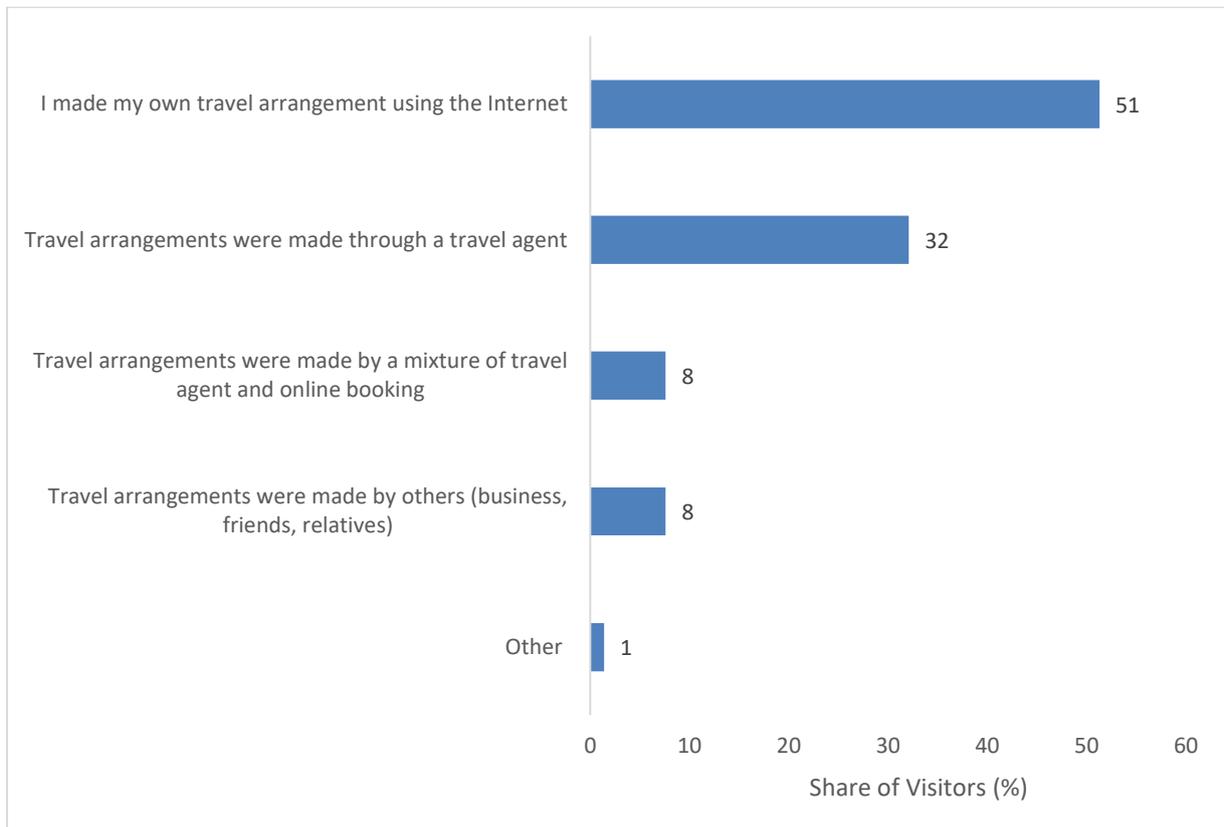
When visitors were asked to rank the importance of the listed information sources used to plan their trip, friends and family members are ranked as the most important source (3.5) (Figure 18). Other important information sources are general travel website (3.2), the official Cook Islands travel website (3.0), previous visits (3.0), and travel agent/travel brochures (2.7).

Figure 18: Importance of information source used when planning your trip (n=545)



Over half of visitors surveyed (51%) make their own travel arrangements through online websites or have booked directly with hotels or airlines (Figure 19). A smaller group of visitors surveyed (32%) purchased a pre-paid trip through travel agents, followed by 8% of visitors whose travel arrangements were made by a mixture of travel agent and online booking.

Figure 19: How did you purchase your travel to the Cook Islands (n=725)

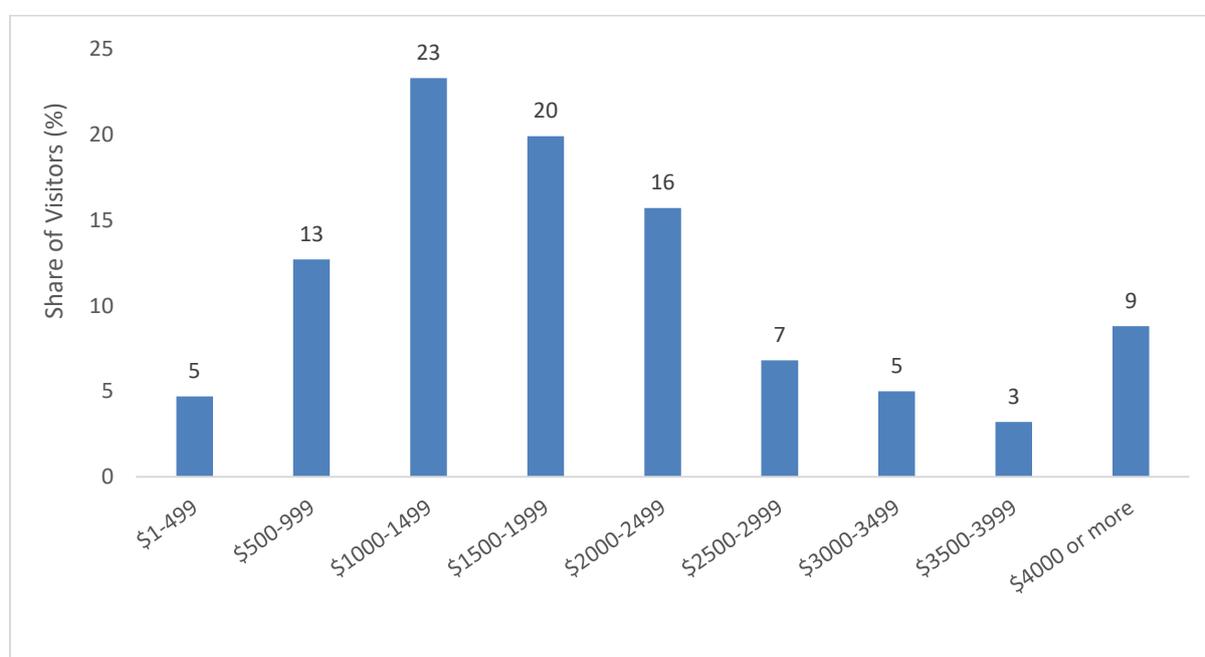


Visitor Expenditure

The survey asks a range of questions about visitor expenditure, both prior to arrival and while in the Cook Islands. All the figures below are based on respondent estimates of their own spending and any others they spent money on (e.g. spouse, children). The following pre-paid expenditure section is based on the number of adults and children that respondents included in their cost estimates: 2,119 people comprising 1,748 adults and 371 children.

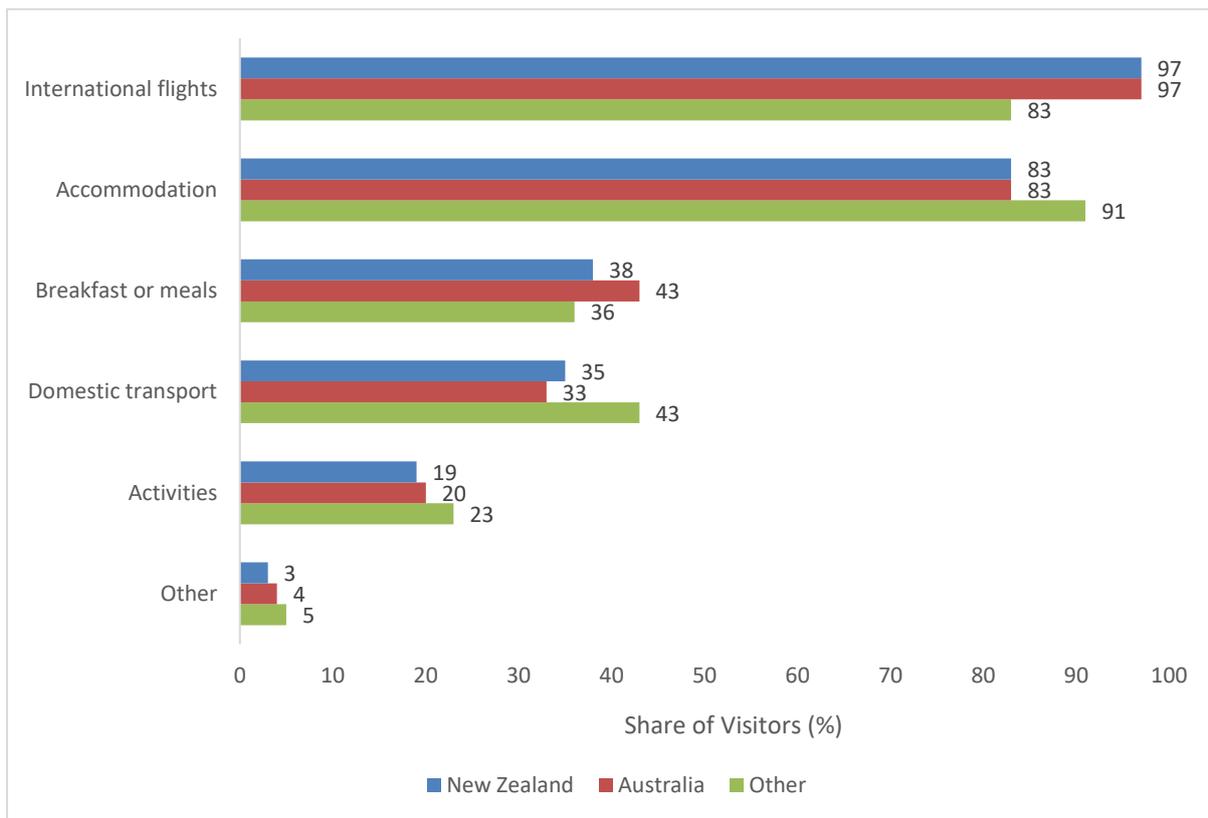
On average, visitors to the Cook Islands spend NZ\$2,003 per person prior to arrival. Over half (51%) of the visitors spend between NZ\$1,000 and NZ\$2,499 prior to arrival. These figures are slightly lower than the data from the previous year (average spend of NZ\$2,121 for 2015/16) and in the same quarter for 2015/16 (NZ\$2,158) (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Amount of money spent per person prior to arrival (n=538)



In addition to international flights and domestic transport, spending prior to arrival usually includes accommodation: in 83% of the cases for New Zealand and Australian visitors, and for 91% of visitors from other countries (Figure 21). Under half of visitors prepaid for breakfast and meals prior to arrival (38% for New Zealand, 43% of Australian visitors, and for 36% of visitors from other countries) which is slightly lower than the data from the previous year and in the same quarter for 2015/16. As with previous years activities are less likely to be included in pre-paid expenses.

Figure 21: Items included in money spent prior to arrival



Note: Multiple responses, therefore total does not add up to 100%

It is difficult to estimate accurately the proportion of the pre-paid spend that flows to the Cook Islands. For the purposes of this study, and based on previous research in the region, we conservatively estimate that 50% of the pre-paid spend is allocated to airfares. Of the remaining 50% of the pre-paid spend, 80% of this flows back to local operators. In total this means that for every pre-paid dollar, 40 cents flows to the Cook Islands. We assess that the pre-paid spend figure per day flowing back to local operators, excluding flights, is NZ\$85 and for the average total visit is NZ\$801 (over 9.4 nights).

The total spend per visitor per day while in the Cook Islands (excluding any pre-paid expenditure) is NZ\$147 (Table 1). This figure is the same as overall spend figure for 2015/16 (NZ\$147) and higher than same quarter in 2015/16 (NZ\$136). The majority of money spent locally is on accommodation (41%), restaurants, cafes and bars (21%), and shopping (8%). These per person expenditure figures are based on 600 survey responses covering a total of 1,654 people (1,393 adults and 261 children).

By multiplying daily spend by the average stay (9.4 nights) we can see that each visitor spends on average NZ\$1,382 during their time in the Cook Islands. The total figure of what is spent locally and what flows back to the Cook Islands from pre-paid expenses is therefore NZ\$232 per visitor per day (\$147+\$85), or NZ\$2,183 (\$1,382+\$801) for each visitor.

Table 1: Average visitor expenditure in the Cook Islands (per person per day)

Expenditure Items	N=600	
	Mean (NZ\$)	(% of spend)
Accommodation	60	41
Restaurant, cafes and bar	31	21
Shopping	12	8
Domestic flights	10	7
Activities	10	7
Vehicle rental	8	5
Groceries	7	5
Other	3	2
Cruising	2	1
Petrol	2	1
Internet cost	2	1
Public transportation	1	1
Total Expenditure	147	100

Table 2 provides an overview of the in-country expenditure by the visitor's country of origin. Visitors from Australia have the highest average spend per day at NZ\$198. By comparison, New Zealand visitors spend on average NZ\$70 less per day (NZ\$128).

Table 2: Average expenditure per visitor per day by country of origin

Expenditure Items	n=82	n=114	n=336	n=47
	USA/ Canada	Australia	New Zealand	Europe
Accommodation	65	96	48	71
Restaurant, cafes and bar	30	37	29	31
Shopping	13	14	11	16
Activities	12	13	9	7
Domestic flights	11	14	9	8
Groceries	9	7	7	6
Vehicle rental	9	7	9	4
Other	4	3	2	3
Internet cost	2	2	2	2
Petrol	2	2	2	1
Cruising	1	2	2	3
Public transportation	1	1	1	1
Total spend (NZ\$)	158	198	128	153

Average Australian spend per person for this quarter (NZ\$198) was higher compared to the 2015/16 average of NZ\$168 and the same quarter in 2015/16 (NZ\$163). New Zealanders' spend of NZ\$128 per person per day was lower than the average of \$143 for 2015/16, and the same quarter in the previous year (NZ\$131). European visitor spend at NZ\$153 per person per day was slightly down from the average for 2015/16 of NZ\$159, but higher than the same quarter in the previous year (NZ\$152). The average spend of NZ\$158 for visitors from USA/Canada for this period was higher than the 2015/16 average of NZ\$155, and the figure for same quarter in 2015/16 (NZ\$130).

Visitor Satisfaction

Visitors were asked to indicate their overall satisfaction with their experience of the Cook Islands on a scale from 1 'very dissatisfied' to 5 'very satisfied' (Figure 22). Approximately two thirds (64%) of the visitors surveyed were 'very satisfied' with their overall experience of the Cook Islands. Very few visitors (3%) were unsatisfied (a score of 2 or lower out of 5) with their visit.

Figure 22: Overall satisfaction with experience of the Cook Islands (n=666)

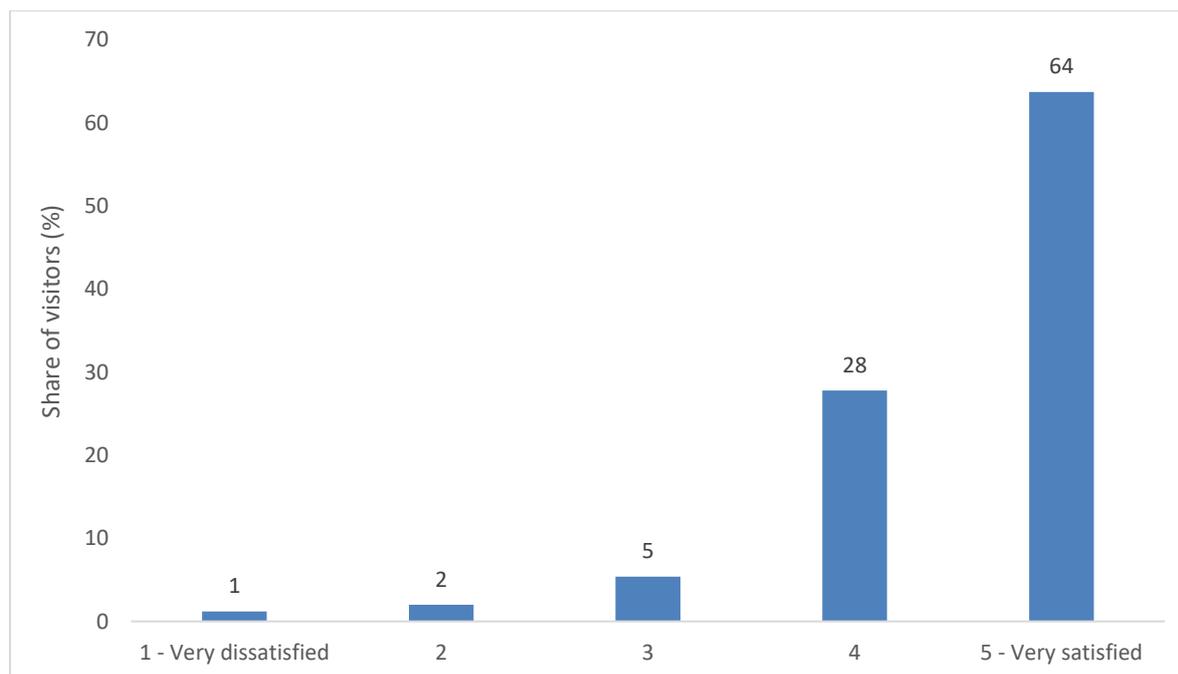


Figure 23 shows the percentage of respondents who undertook specific activities while on their visit to the Cook Islands. Almost all visitors participate in water activities and visit at least one restaurant or café during their trip. Most of the respondents (85%) visit a local market, and 61% of visitors experience an Island Night and Feast Show.

Visitor satisfaction is generally high for all activities undertaken (almost all registering more than 4 out of a possible high of 5) (Figure 23). Activities involving cultural interaction (average satisfaction of 4.4) and land-based products (4.4) rank the highest, followed by water-based experiences (4.3), and shopping (4.2). It should be noted that some activities e.g. kitesurfing, whale watching are characterised by relatively low numbers of participants (n=18-34). Notably, the average level of satisfaction figures for activities during this quarter tend to be 0.2 points lower than the 2016 average (cultural interaction 4.6, land-based 4.5, water-based 4.5, shopping 4.4) and the same quarter of 2016 (cultural interaction 4.6, land-based 4.5, water-based 4.6, shopping 4.4).

Figure 23: Degree of participation in activities (n range=18-698)

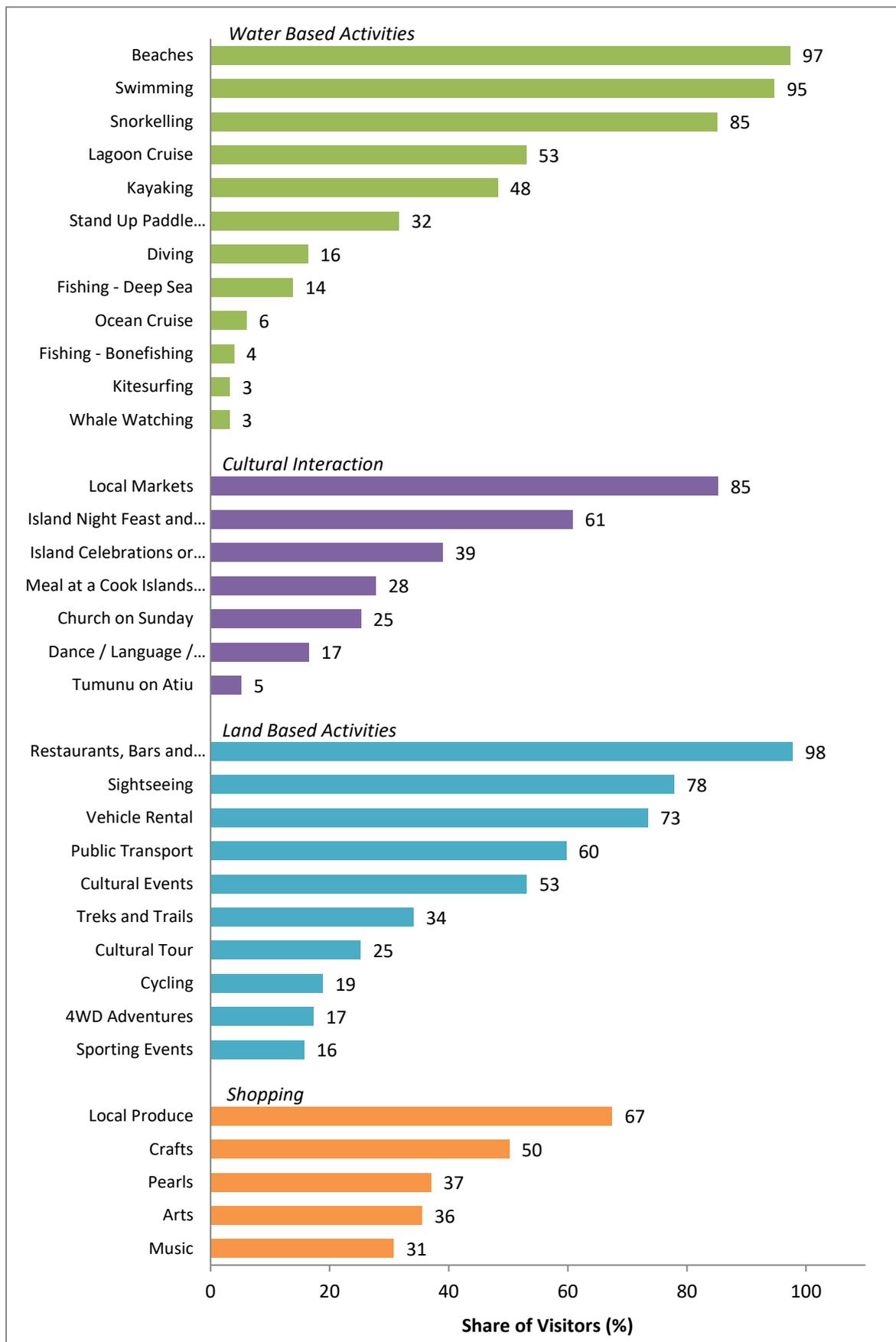
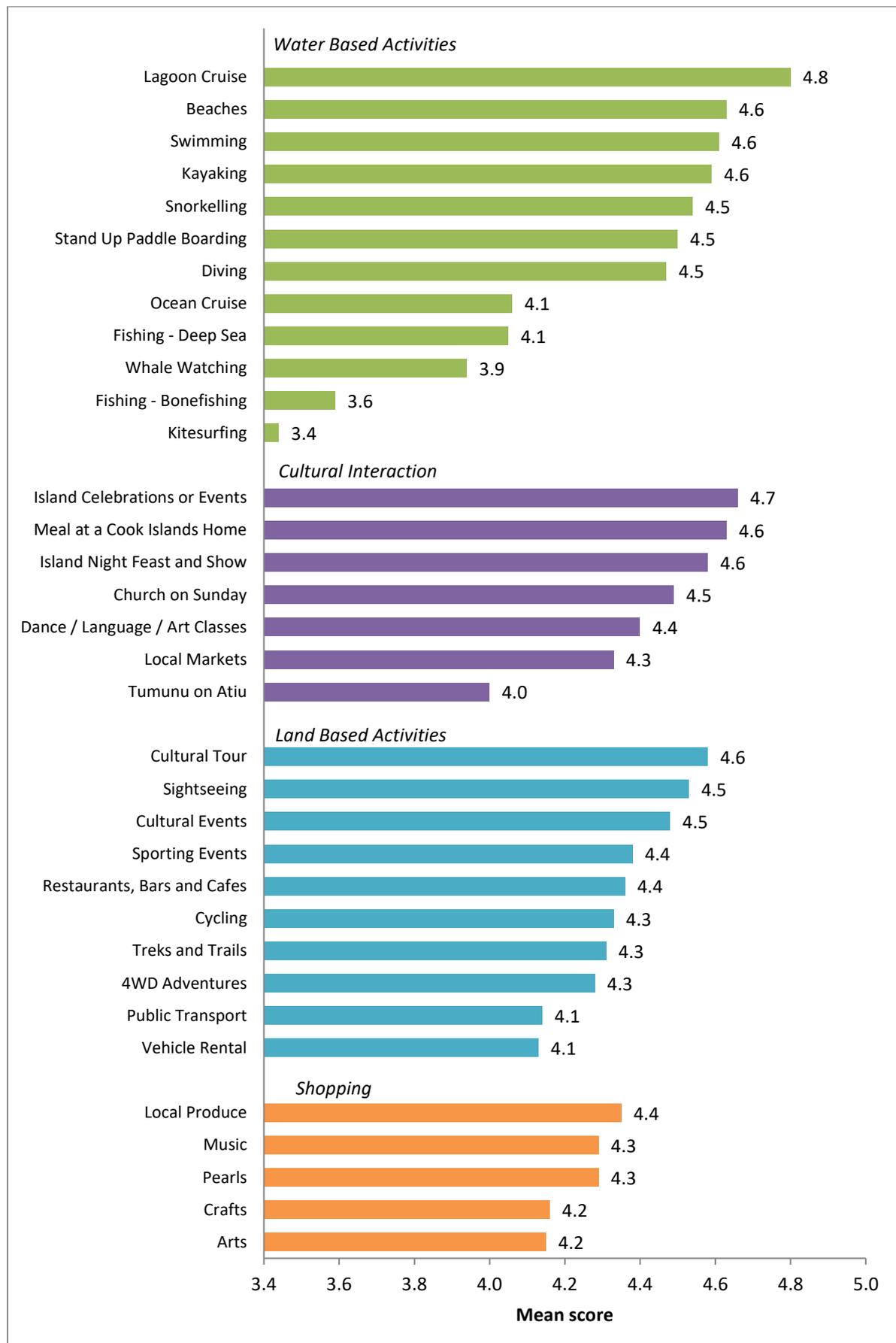


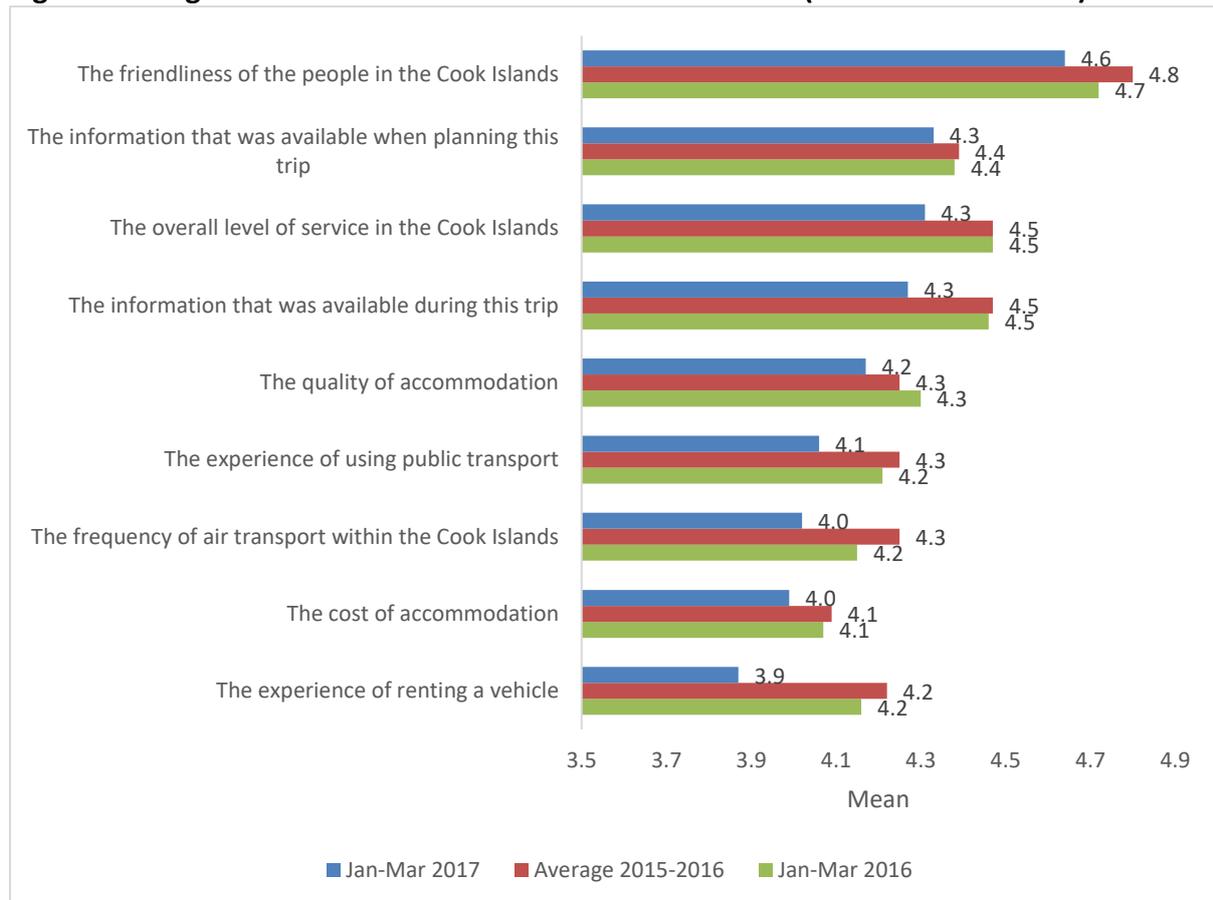
Figure 24: Degree of satisfaction in activities participated in (mean score out of 5)



Visitors were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with nine different statements relating to their most recent visit to the Cook Islands. Responses from the period of January to March are compared to the annual average for 2015/16, and the same quarter for 2015/16 (Figure 25). Respondents have consistently given the friendliness of the people in the Cook Islands the highest score.

As can be seen from Figure 25, Visitor satisfaction level with all the items are lower than last year's average and the same quarter of 2015/16.

Figure 25: Degree of satisfaction with Cook Islands services (mean score out of 5)



Most appealing aspects of the Cook Islands

Visitors were asked “What did you find most attractive or appealing about the Cook Islands on your most recent visit?” (Table 3). The most appealing elements of the Cook Islands experience are the beautiful and clean natural environment, the friendly and welcoming local people, the peacefulness and relaxing atmosphere of the islands, and the tourist attractions and activities on offer. Smaller numbers of visitors mentioned aspects such as food and beverage (14%), the level of service experienced (6%), the convenience and safety of the Cook Islands (5%), accommodation (5%), and culture (4%).

Table 3: Most appealing aspects of the Cook Islands (n=562)

Themes	Share of respondents (%)
Environment, cleanliness & weather	55%
Local People	39%
Atmosphere	27%
Activities, attractions, and entertainment & events	25%
Food and Beverage	14%
Level of service	6%
Culture	6%
Accommodation	5%
Convenience & Safety	5%
Un-commercial	5%
Overall good experience	3%

* Share of respondents who made a comment that falls into each theme. Respondents could give more than one answer, so total does not add up to 100%.

Environment, cleanliness & weather

Over half of the respondents (55%) considered the destination’s beautiful scenery, natural environment, and the warm waters and climate to be the most appealing aspects of their Cook Islands experience. Visitors used words such as ‘colourful’, ‘spectacular’, ‘wonderful’, ‘clean’, ‘stunning’, ‘breath-taking’, ‘amazing’, ‘and ‘unspoilt’ to describe the environment. Most comments here focused on the beauty and the cleanliness of the beaches and lagoons, the weather, the warm and clear water, and the beauty of the islands in general. Comments included:

“The beaches and water can only be compared to that of a picture perfect post card.”

“The amazingly beautiful natural scenery, so many beautifully coloured flowers and plants! The sea was really good too and the colourful fish we spotted snorkelling were really beautiful too!”

“Spectacular lagoon and reef ecology and sights, island geology and vegetation.”

“Aitutaki was stunning! Fits my picture of tropical paradise. Next trip I would like to stay there.”

“The raw nature of it. Its untouched beauty seen through its beaches and natural land marks is gorgeous.”

“Breath-taking beauty of the Islands and the beaches, the water the sunsets the warmth.”

Local people

Over one third of the respondents (39%) noted that the most appealing part of their visit was their interaction with local people in the Cook Islands with comments about the friendliness, welcoming nature of local people. Key words that dominated the responses included ‘friendly’, ‘beautiful’, ‘welcoming’, ‘helpful’, ‘lovely’, ‘accommodating’, and ‘approachable.’ Comments included:

“Locals' approach to visitors, genuine friendliness (non-commercial as in other countries nearby (Tahiti).”

“The happy people and all willing to help and engage with you.”

“The Cook Island People are very helpful, friendly and kind in every way, I love the cultural experience the dance, the language, etc....breath taking and a total Paradise!”

“The friendliness and respect for other cultures by the Cook Island people, while being very proud of and welcoming to their culture.”

“The locals on the island were very friendly and welcoming. Everyone we interacted with was very proud of their culture and history and willing to answer any and all questions we had.”

Atmosphere

Over one fourth of visitors surveyed (27%) focused on the relaxed atmosphere of the Cook Islands. They considered the Cook Islands to be very peaceful, quiet, relaxing, and laid-back, which made it a good destination to ‘rest’ and ‘unwind’. Respondents used words such as ‘peaceful’, ‘relaxing’, ‘laid back’, and ‘slow pace’ to describe the overall atmosphere of the Cook Islands. The notion of ‘island time’ was also mentioned. Comments included:

“The peacefulness and beauty that the Cook Islands offer.”

“The island that gave us an escape from the commercial business world we are used to.”

“A great place to relax after a very heavy year - although we actually went for a wedding.”

"We loved our trip and the relaxed nature of the island it was wonderful. I loved being able to drive around the island and participate in what we wanted to."

"The chance to just relax at the beach and beachfront bars in some warm weather!"

"Quiet. Island time. No stress."

"Laid back life style, peace and quiet of the island of Mauke."

Activities, attractions, entertainment & events

Activities, attractions, entertainment and events were mentioned by 25% of respondents as the most appealing elements of their visit to the Cook Islands. Most comments in this category focus on water-based activities such as swimming, snorkelling, fishing, and lagoon cruises. Land-based activities that respondents mentioned included hiking, walks, cultural tours, visiting local churches, and local markets. Comments included:

"We did the overland trek over the mountains in Rarotonga, which was the highlight of the whole trip."

"The ocean and the activities offered - fishing was reasonable price, boat staff made activities fun, food was great."

"Snorkelling in the lagoon was the highlight of the trip, and we enjoyed the trek across the island - the trail was very well maintained with good information."

"Loved to take my family snorkelling for the first time and enjoyed the walk over the island and up the rock so much we did it twice."

"We went to Mitiaro and it was beautiful and relaxing. The two water caves are beautiful especially the Fresh Water Cave with the amazing Stella like formation and very traditional Island love it so much."

"When I arrive in Raro I love going to the Saturday markets and having waffles at the Waffle Shack. It is also great walking along the beaches and looking at the coral reefs, and going to markets and other parts of the island. The lagoon cruise is outstanding and have highly recommended it on Trip Adviser. The Cook Islands have something for everyone - single people, families and people wanting to do things or just relax."

"Cultural Events around Christmas in Rarotonga. We went to many of these and they were all so much fun if you are expecting to go with the flow, and really extra fun if you have kids. We started with attending the end of school event in Arorangi, which was one of my favorites. Filled with families covered in flowers they gave student awards and had student performances. We also went to the evening Christmas concert at the National Auditorium celebrating the school and the alumni and students with

excellent quality performances and lots of good cheer and the kids had a brilliant time. We enjoyed the santa parade which was so tropical and a great time."

Food and beverage

Just over one in ten respondents (14%) mentioned food and beverages as the most appealing aspect of their trip. Their comments focused on the quality and range of fresh food available in the Cook Islands. They used words such as 'great', 'excellent', 'high standard', and 'fresh' to describe the food. Many visitors commented on the selection of good cafes and restaurants, and on the availability of fresh seafood and tropical fruit. Comments included:

"We were really pleased how much the Restaurant and takeaway food around the island had improved since our last visit 12 years ago. Now as good if not better than NZ!"

"The abundance of fresh food choices from restaurants to local markets."

"People beaches food awareness of importance of gluten free food."

"The fact that actually the meat and produce isn't overly expensive to buy there. Prime Foods was great for us as we were staying for so long."

"Amazing cocktail bars on the ocean and excellent food!"

"We adored the small businesses, local food and drink and the island life. The restaurants overlook in the lagoon felt magical especially during the gorgeous sunsets!"

Level of service

Another six percent of visitors commented on the service they encountered while in the Cook Islands. Respondents had positive comments on the local hospitality they experienced, especially mentioning the friendly and helpful staff at the restaurants, bars, hotels, and resorts, helpful shop assistants, excellent service from local police station, and humour bus drivers. Visitors also emphasised the lack of pressure to buy which made them feel comfortable. Comments included:

"Everyone was friendly and helpful, from the driver who picked us up to the shop keepers and people in bars."

"Atiu Villas - The hostess was friendly, knowledgeable and anticipated our needs."

"Was very thankful when I found my bag that my kids had left at the waterfall had been handed in at the main Police Station and still had everything in it including sun glasses, money and a phone. It was handed in by Richard Williams, Nikao 54 767."

"The awesome bus driver especially Mr. hopeless ...love him."

Culture

The island's unique local culture was mentioned by five percent of respondents as an appealing aspect of their Cook Islands visit. Respondents referred to the local events, and performance in addition to referencing the overall enjoyable aspects of Cook Islands culture. Comments included:

"In Aitutaki the locals make you feel welcome and not like a tourist. How original the landscape still feels and the traditional methods of living (e.g. the way they prepare meals and wash clothes) is amazing."

"The Cook Island People are very helpful, friendly and kind in every way, I love the cultural experience the dance, the language, etc....breath taking and a total Paradise."

"People and their culture and language."

Accommodation

Another 5% of respondents noted that the accommodation they stayed in was an appealing aspect of their visit to the Cook Islands, referring to the quality of the offering, the location, the setting, the level of service, and the warm welcome from their hosts. Comments included:

"Our quiet, peaceful, convenient location at Muri Beach Villas."

"We rented a house on the beach just south of Arorangi which was an excellent location – halfway between Muri and Avarua and nothing was too far."

"Accommodation we stayed at the Paradise Villas. The helpfulness of the people especially if a problem arose (which was rare)."

"Our accommodation. We stayed at the Terevaki Estate and it was perfect for our 3 generation family."

Not too commercialised

Another five percent of respondents mentioned the Cook Islands as being a place that is not over-commercialised or too touristy. Some visitors also emphasised the importance of preserving the destination from mass tourism development and keeping it the way it is. Comments included:

"It's authenticity. Other islands are overly commercialized and cater to tourists. I like how I felt as if I were invited into someone's home. I hope that never changes :)"

"Low level development was great as it was quiet and relaxing."

"The relaxed, informal, friendly, safe and "non" touristy atmosphere."

"...and especially that it wasn't too touristy and overdeveloped (less is more)."

Convenience and safety

The convenience and safety of the Cook Islands as a holiday destination were mentioned by five percent of respondents. In particular, they referred to the ease of getting to the Cook Islands, and also of getting around the islands and the convenience of using the New Zealand dollar. Comments included:

“The small island was easy to navigate, and while still being small had plenty to offer in regards to food, entertainment, and shopping.”

“It was great to have a non-stop flight from Los Angeles on Air New Zealand.”

“A lovely place to be and not to have to worry about having the right money (NZ dollars) made it so much easier and stress free.”

“The safety of walking the street at nights.”

Overall good experience

Three percent of visitors surveyed simply stated that their whole experience was a good one, and that they ‘loved everything’. Some visitors expressed their desire to visit the Cook Islands again in the future. Comments included:

“Everything - I love coming to the Cook Islands - there is a lovely feel about the islands.”

“Overall experience was fantastic!”

“We were looking for somewhere tropical and in a way, off the grid for our honeymoon. I had actually didn't even know where the Cook Islands were when I initially started my search. We originally were looking at going to the Caribbean, but were very happy with our decision to go to the Cook Islands.”

“Everything! I love Rarotonga and I would move there tomorrow if I could!”

Least appealing aspects of the Cook Islands

Visitors were asked: “What did you find least attractive or appealing about the Cook Islands on your most recent visit?” Over a quarter (20%) of the visitors surveyed, found “nothing” unattractive, with more than one person saying “not a thing I can say that I found unattractive about the Cook Islands” and “having to leave” was considered the least appealing aspect. Table 4 summaries key themes respondents felt were unappealing. Comments ranged from issues with public services and facilities, accommodation conditions, rubbish and natural environment care through to disappointment with the weather.

Table 4: Least appealing aspects of the Cook Islands (n=513)

Themes	Share of respondents %*
Rubbish and natural environment care	17%
Muri lagoon	7%
Public services and facilities and infrastructure	16%
Price of good and service	12%
Accommodation	12%
Attractions and activities	11%
Food and beverage	9%
Stray animals and mosquitos	9%
Rental cars or scooters	9%
Customer service	6%
Poor weather	6%
Flight related issues	6%
Local people	5%
Law and Legislation	2%
Too touristy	1%

* Share of respondents who made a comment that falls into each theme. Respondents could give more than one answer, so total does not add up to 100%.

Rubbish and natural environment care

Rubbish and natural environment care was up 2% percent from the last quarter (15%). In this quarter, we also added Muri lagoon as a sub theme of the rubbish and natural environment care. Muri, lagoon and algae made up 7% of the total comments in the overall data set and 10% of the comments in the rubbish and natural environment care theme. Visitors commented on the quality of the lagoon, the beaches and the water. Visitors also disliked the rubbish and the algae, and were concerned about coral and reefs.

“Algae in the Muri Lagoon.”

“The condition of the lagoon by Muri. Won't swim or snorkel anymore.”

“Really sad to see the level of contamination and in a place where the lagoon is a major draw to tourists.”

“The rubbish that is laying around the island especially on the inland road.”

“The water quality and marine life has drastically reduced over the ten years we've been visiting, really sad to no longer see such a vibrant reef.”

“The rubbish people dump anywhere for example the black rock look out.”

“Some glass on the beach; smelly smoke from burning garbage; ecological damage caused by quads.”

“Something needs to be done about the deterioration of the reef and coral.”

“Some areas of the ocean were quite polluted especially around Muri and a lot of sea slugs. Looks like a lot of the coral is dying.”

Public services, facilities and infrastructure

One of the least appealing aspects for visitors was the lack of public services, facilities and infrastructure in the Cook Islands (16%). Comments included the condition of local roads, particularly potholes. Some people also complained about the “poor state of the main road”. Others expressed their disappointment with the cost of Internet access, poor public transport and facilities, and the bus services. Comments included:

“Downtown looks a bit tired and worn”

“Public transport not great.”

“Not many public toilets available or no map/signs to point this out”

“Infrequent public transport.”

“The roads, the surface in particular could do with some urgent attention”

“The fact that there has been much larger scale development since our previous visit.”

“Internet connections and cost.”

“No one knew where to find an open café, shop or bank”

Price of goods and services

Visitors (12%) also disliked the price of goods and service. Comments about the expense of food and restaurants, accommodation, internet, scooters and transport were common.

“How expensive everything is. Especially bank fees for withdrawals.”

"Charging to see the waterfall."

"Cost of services and food at restaurants and cafes."

"The price of food is a bit expensive, but this is in most cases unavoidable due to the difficulty of bringing it to Rarotonga!"

"The hotels/accommodations were much too expensive for what you get. So were the restaurants."

"Night time travel taxis very expensive."

"The cost to get a scooter licence - this is extortionate and took 2 days to do!!!! Absolutely over-kill! I understand the need for safety, but there needs to be a mid-range option."

"It's not value for money compared to other "paradise" islands destinations."

Accommodation

Eleven percent mentioned accommodation as appealing. Visitors surveyed mentioned that the service and cost of accommodation, as well as some properties being "tired", were important factors as to why they disliked their accommodation.

"The accommodation was really expensive and the quality was lacking."

"The resort was very tired. They are charging 5 star prices and giving 3 star facilities. I felt it was misrepresented. On the day we checked in it was difficult to get a meal. We were told we needed to book- not easy when we had just arrived. Eventually we were told we could have the left over scraps from a buffet meal. The choices were very limited but we were still charged a full price. Totally unsatisfactory."

"The accommodation was a bit dated and all of the bedrooms apart from 1 had open ceilings so there was no privacy for the people in those rooms - this wasn't noted on the info."

"Nothing spoilt our enjoyment, however the accommodation was a bit "tired" in places and needed some maintenance."

"Poor standard of information at Resort. No compendium of services and important information for guests, no phone in the room, but apparently available on request, but how would we know that??? Certainly not a 4 star resort - the same as Resort in Rarotonga - I don't think so!!!! Very poor service at breakfast in the restaurant. Pool failed health tests for 2 days while we were there!"

"The outdoor breakfast at our accommodation was not safe - raided by chickens and birds, food sat out too long without being refrigerated."

Attractions and activities

Five percent of responses complained about attractions and activities. Visitors mentioned the lagoons, shopping, the markets and the unavailability of tours as unappealing.

"Sad to see the lagoon corals and habitat in such a poor state."

"It was a bit difficult finding places to buy local art or local crafts."

"Muri night market not open when advertised."

"Not much in the way of shopping."

"Not enough rental cars / availability of tours. Staff at accommodation and locals often gave false information instead of saying they didn't know."

"It was disappointing when I tried to book tours only to find they were fully booked."

Food and Beverage

Issues with food and beverages made up 9% of comments. Cost, lack of local produce, food service, and quality of food were problems for many.

"Groceries and beer were very expensive and the selection was minimal."

"The lack of fresh produce. Most of the fruit and vege seemed old and not very good quality."

"The inaccessibility of lots of fruit and vegetables."

"Restaurants are starting to fill and struggle to cater to tourists."

"Cost of food and also not much good fresh tropical fruits available at a reasonable price."

Stray animals and mosquitos

The stray dogs, noisy roosters, mosquitoes and ants continue to be an annoyance or a worry for 9% of respondents during their time spent on the islands. Respondents mentioned disturbed sleep, noise, and animal welfare.

"The incessant crowing of roosters. Way too loud and too often. Disturbed our sleep a fair bit."

"Dogs hanging around accommodations that loved to settle on sand beside one and their smell most unpleasant."

"The treatment of the dogs. They are so trusting of people and friendly.....I heard they're not treated very well which upsets me. But I love having them around.....Part of the charm of Raro!"

“Mosquitos and ants!!!!”

“The bloody roosters.”

Rental cars and scooters

Nearly ten percent of visitors mentioned the unpleasant experiences of renting a car or scooter. Visitors complained about the price, the poor quality of the vehicle, the licensing process, and the difficulties of rent a car or scooter during their holiday, especially Christmas season.

“It was incredibly difficult and expensive to obtain a motorbike license on Rarotonga. The experience was so cumbersome that we decided not to rent one which made our time on Raro much less pleasurable.”

“The fact that we were unable to hire a car as there were none available. This meant we missed all the Christmas church services which we had wanted to attend.”

Customer service

Six percent of visitors surveyed complained about the poor customer service received during their visit in the Cook Islands, notably in hotels, restaurants and shops. Customer service was considered to be rude, slow and appalling. Comments included:

“Organisation levels or hotel. Hospitality is appalling even when paying through the roof in hotels. Public transport RAR, drivers rude to customers unwell to talk and help tourists.”

“Service and attitude of staff at some accommodation and restaurants was a little lacking. At times I felt my requests were an inconvenience.”

“The service level overall is quite appealing...the locals just don't seem to value to tourist dollar and it concerns me how much they could be missing out on with so many competing destinations who provide excellent customer service.”

“The staff were unable to give accurate information about dive shop opening hours, rent a bike availability or anything outside of their specific job.”

“Lazy people that can't really be bothered working.”

“Rude employees in hotels and shops.”

Other unappealing aspects

Other unappealing aspects mentioned by visitors include: poor weather (the amount of rain and the wind), rental cars and scooters (quality, cost, service and the process of getting driving licenses), becoming too commercialised/touristy, flight/airline-related issues (influent, cost,

arrival and departure times), local people (unfriendly, hard to get involved with them), and law and Legislation.

Comments included:

Poor weather

"Rained and ruined market day."

"Weather was unseasonably hot."

Flight-related issues

"Air travel is inconvenient arriving and departing in the early hours."

"The nonstop flight from LAX didn't allow us to participate in the Saturday market."

"Airport needs faster customs, more services if your plane is delayed."

Local people

"I don't find the Rarotongans friendly until you are interacting personally with them. You get the feeling that they would prefer tourists not to be there. Understandable that they would prefer to keep their beautiful island to themselves."

"Often didn't feel very welcome by the locals."

"A number of people seemed very tired of tourists, attitude was slightly sullen or resentful or seemed fake, not always very genuine."

"Everybody on the island seemed sick of tourists and very unfriendly. It seemed that all they cared about was money tourists had."

Law and legislation

"The low wages paid to locals / resort staff."

"Local cook islanders fishing in reserves. Reported this to the police. We were told by the offenders that this was their cultural right. One lady was showing her toddlers how to fish with a net for small fish in this area."

Becoming too commercialised/touristy

"Definitely the pub crawl bus. This absolutely did not fit with the tranquillity of the island!"

"Over commercialisation."

"Over population of Rarotonga and the amount of tourists that break rules or do stupid things or die that affect the ways of living in Rarotonga."

Suggestions to improve the visit to the Cook Islands

When asked if there was anything that could have improved their visit to the Cook Islands, just under half (46%) of respondents said 'yes'. Of the group that made suggestions 19% focused on Entertainment, activities and transport, public services and infrastructure (14%), attitude of locals and service levels (12%), environment/safety/animal care also received attention (11%). a longer stay (9%), accommodation (8%), flight schedules in and out of Cook Islands (7%), quality/cost of food and beverages (5%), weather (4%), and information (3%). Comments on these themes included:

"Our only disappointment was being unable to get in touch with operators of kitesurfing and bone fishing so we were disappointed to not be able to do these things. One main reason to go to Aitutaki was plan to do six days of kitesurfing. Did none."

"More hikes and walking tours to learn more about sustainable farming."

"Due to the Christmas holidays, we were not able to shop."

"The ability to hire a scooter in the public holiday season when you arrive during this time."

"The conditions of the roads, and also the rules of the roads; parking, driving, the emphasis of the general road safety."

"Wifi is expensive and not dependable speed."

"Smiles from hotel staff would have been a start, there is too much to list."

"Stray dogs were quite scary when riding my bike to a start point of a hike. The aggressive dogs made me cancel my hike which has been a major disappointment otherwise from a very nice trip."

"A sustainable solution to algae in Muri Lagoon."

"Resort with higher standards of cleanliness and better service."

"Ensure locals who rent beach houses, are equipped/trained with the process of NOT double booking."

"Connection to the world - better timetables. Very tiring arrivals and departures."

"Jetstar should cease flying there! Never again. We got stuck for four days without luggage which really impacted our trip. Nobody's fault except Jetstar of course!"

"We found the cost for everything was high."

"Less expensive rental cars that are in better shape. Affordable travel to outer islands."

"I would have like more choice in food. Takeaway food was all deep-fried or covered in really unhealthy toppings."

"A lot more signage especially for people off the ships showing them what is open on a Sunday and where they can shop and eat and change money. Everything was fine for me."

Reasons to return to the Cook Islands and recommend to others

The majority of visitors (91%) indicated that they would consider re-visiting the Cook Islands in the future. This figure is slightly lower than the 2015/16 annual average of 94% and the identical quarter in 2016 (93%). The main reasons given by the visitors to return to the Cook Islands are the beauty of the islands (30%), peacefulness and relaxing atmosphere of the islands (29%), the overall great experience that the islands offer (17%), friendly local people (17%), attractions and activities (9%), and to visit family members and friends (9%).

The beautiful natural scenery and the warm climate of the islands are mentioned by nearly one third (30%) of the visitors as a reason to return to the Cook Islands. Key words used to describe the scenery include 'beautiful', 'warm', 'stunning', and 'paradise'. Comments include:

"It's beautiful & we thoroughly enjoyed our stay. Breath taking scenery & it's so relaxing."

"It is the most beautiful and peaceful place I have been."

"It was such a beautiful place and all the pictures were all so true it was amazing!"

"So clean, beautiful weather and beaches."

Nearly one third (29%) of the visitors commented that the slow pace, the relaxed nature, the peacefulness, and the Cook Islands 'lifestyle' are other reasons for visitors to revisit the Cook Islands. Comments included:

"I enjoyed the peace and quiet there and nature."

"I love the relaxing time I have in the Cook Islands. We were married here in 2011 so it holds a special place in my heart. It feels like you drop out of the hustle and bustle of our busy lives and can just relax."

"Gorgeous tidy quiet humble island."

"Relaxing lifestyle - no traffic jams!!"

"I have now been twice, and would go back in a heartbeat! Nothing beats escaping the city to go to the Cook Islands to unwind on holiday."

The overall great experience is the major attraction for visitors to return to the Cook Islands, 17% of the comments by visitors were about how much they enjoy their experiences, that they just 'loved it' and that the Cook Islands are a great holiday destination. Comments included:

"It was AMAZING. It was such a fun, laid back, and unique experience. I don't think that you could find this anywhere else in the world."

"It's an awesome place in every single way."

"Have visited over 15 times. We love Raro and will continue to return as long as pollution doesn't get worse."

The friendly local people are mentioned by 17% of the visitors as an important reason for their return. The visitors mentioned the kindness and helpfulness of the local people during their stay on the islands. Words used to describe the local people of the Cook Islands are 'friendly', 'awesome', 'beautiful', and 'lovely'. Comments include:

"People are friendly & awesome to socialise with."

"The hospitality of people on the islands will be the reason. We love everyone on Aitutaki!"

"The hospitality is amazing. Beautiful people and would love to bring my family to experience the amazing culture."

Attractions and activities that can be done 'next time' in the Cook Islands or the wish to explore the islands further are also mentioned as reasons to return. Some visitors are inspired by their trip to come back and visit other islands or undertake more activities on their next visit to the Cook Islands.

"Mitiaro especially love the layback culture and fresh water caves."

"I would love to return to Rarotonga to see the cultural performance on water at Muri beach."

"Amazing snorkelling and scenery. Would luv to go deep sea fishing and perhaps visit another island on my next visit."

Another reason to come back to the Cook Islands is friends and family members. Visitors mentioned they planned to be back because of attending friend's wedding, visiting family members who is living in the Cook Islands, being able to see friends during holiday..

"My recent trip was my first trip to visit my partner's family. I enjoyed my time in the Cook Islands and plan to return once my baby is born."

"This was our 10th trip. We were married there in 2000. We have friends living on the islands after so many visits."

“It such a beautiful place to relax and forget the other parts of the world do not exist and visit our friends.”

Other reasons to revisit the Cook Islands mentioned by smaller numbers of visitors are that it is the convenience of a holiday in terms of flight times from New Zealand, a safe, clean and family friendly destination, local culture, food and beverage, affordable, and that the Cook Islands are still ‘unspoiled’ and not too commercialised.

Of the 9 percent of visitors who added reasons why they would not want to return to the Cook Islands, the majority simply stated that they wanted to visit other destinations. Some visitors commented that a holiday to the Cook Islands is expensive compared to other destinations. Other factors included the long distance to the Cook Islands (from long haul markets) and that some had a bad experience on this visit. Comments included:

“As world travellers we have seen plenty of similar beauty without the indifference of the people and the extreme cost of going from island to island. If we found a deal to Aitutaki or another island we would consider a return. We wanted to like Cook Island more than we did.”

“Though I really loved it I don't feel the need to return for a third time, I would rather spend money going somewhere else for different experiences.”

“Too far away from England. Travel time prohibitive.”

“Our experience overall was due to hotel staff and not the island. We feel like friendliness of the people unfortunately wasn't good and although we are happy to have said we've done it would not go back.”

Under half (48%) of the visitors mentioned that they would definitely include the outer islands in their next visit. A further 49% of visitors indicated they will “maybe” visit outer islands next time. Most (89%) of the visitors surveyed in this quarter mentioned they would like to include ‘Aitutaki’ in their next visit to the Cook Islands. ‘Atiu’ was the second most mentioned island at 31%; another 22% of visitors stated that they would like to visit Mangaia, 18% of the respondents would like to visit Mauke. A small number of visitors mentioned Manihiki, Palmerston, Penrhyn, Pukapuka, Mitiaro, or as many as they can visit. Four percent mentioned the high cost of visiting outer islands as a barrier for not visiting. A number of respondents were not sure which other islands to visit and needed to do some research before deciding.

Nearly all visitors surveyed (98%) said that they would recommend the destination to their family and friends which is consistent with previous survey periods. Thirty-eight percent of respondents said that the ‘beautiful’ and ‘clean’ natural environment of the Cook Islands was a reason to recommend the island nation to others – including the beautiful scenery, great beaches and lagoons, the warm climate, and its unspoilt natural attractions.

Thirty six percent of surveyed visitors stated they would recommend the Cook Islands to others because of the ‘atmosphere’. Respondents felt that the Cook Islands was a great place to ‘relax’ and ‘unwind’, and said they would recommend the Cook Islands as a good holiday destination for those who are looking for a ‘relaxing atmosphere’ and an ‘easy going holiday’.

Twenty-four percent of respondents mentioned the 'friendly' local people as a reason to recommend the Cook Islands to friends and relatives. Other words used to describe the local Cook Islanders included 'lovely', 'wonderful', 'great', 'happy', 'warm' and 'amazing'.

Nearly one quarter (21%) of visitors surveyed stated that they would recommend the Cook Islands to others based on their own 'great experience'. These visitors described their trip to the Cook Islands as a 'wonderful place to visit, 'the perfect holiday', and said that they just 'loved everything' about it. These respondents also often described the Cook Islands as a 'paradise' and 'the best place on Earth'.

Other themes that were mentioned included the attractions and activities available (13%), the convenience of the islands as a destination – especially for New Zealanders and Australians (11%), value for money (8%), food and beverage options (5%), not being commercialised (5%), the ease of using the New Zealand dollar and English language (4%), a safe destination (4%), the culture of the island (3%), the islands being a family-friendly destination (2%), and good accommodation options (2%). Comments on why visitors would recommend the Cook Islands to others included:

"Because it's a beautiful, relaxing and amazing place and the locals are friendly. There is no place like it, its beauty takes your breath away."

"Good weather, great choice of self-contained accommodation. Most people are friendly. Availability of fresh fish and tropical fruits."

"Yes I would because it is a beautiful place to go on holidays but you will have to save money it is a bit expensive."

"People and culture are awesome always something to do people to visit especially family we give a lot of money to family who are struggling but the people are proud."

"Such value for money and ability to use New Zealand currency is such a bonus."

Only 2% of visitors would not recommend the Cook Islands to others and this is largely based on the high prices and lack of environmental care.

Final observations

This report shows that the Cook Islands tourism industry generally performed well during the January to March 2017 Quarter. Visitor satisfaction levels and the desire for return visitation have remained very high, and it is clear that the destination is making a generally positive impression on visitors. Visitor yield has remained strong and it will be important to see if this trend is sustained for the rest of the year.

Despite the overall positive performance and growth in visitor spend this report again highlights that there is room to enhance the visitor experience and to increase the economic yield and broader community benefits associated with tourism. As with previous reports, this quarter's research highlights issues around environmental degradation. Perhaps most worrying is the increased level of comment and feedback around the water quality and general cleanliness of Muri lagoon. It is clear that Muri lagoon algae issue is having a negative impact on the visitor experience. The findings reinforce the importance of factoring the impact of algal blooms into the development of broader tourism development and management strategies. Overall visitor satisfaction and willingness to return are high, however, the overall visitor satisfaction levels with Cook Islands services and experiences are lower than last year.

Appendix – Cook Islands Visitor Survey



简体中文

Cook Islands Visitor Survey

Information for participants

Kia Orana and warm Pacific greetings to you. As a recent visitor to the Cook Islands, we invite you to participate in research designed to improve the visitor experience as well as support us to make good decisions for tourism in our beautiful island nation. The research is funded by the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation and conducted by the New Zealand Tourism Research Institute at AUT University, Auckland, New Zealand.

If you are a permanent Cook Island resident, thank you for your interest but this Survey is focused on non-resident visitors to the Islands.

We would like to know about your most recent visit to the Cook Islands and ask you to complete this Visitor Survey within two weeks of your trip if possible.

Participation is entirely voluntary. To participate in this research, simply click on the button below. The Survey asks a number of questions where you select your answer from a range of options given. Some questions ask you to type your comments in your own words into the box provided. We would appreciate it if you could fill this survey out as accurately as possible. All questions are optional. The survey will run until the end of 2017.

This survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

[Take the survey](#)

All answers are confidential and can in no way be linked to your personal details. By taking the survey you are giving consent to be part of this research.

Aggregated results of this research may be used in journal and conference publications. A summary of the results of this research will also be available on www.nztri.org in 2017.

ABOUT YOUR VISIT:

This survey is about your most recently completed visit to the Cook Islands. We would ask you to complete this survey within two weeks of your return home if possible.

(If you are a permanent Cook Islands' resident, thank you for your interest but this survey is focused on non-resident visitors to the Cook Islands)

By completing the survey you are giving consent to participate in this research.

1. When did you arrive in the Cook Islands on your most recent visit? (format dd/mm/yyyy, e.g. 26/06/2015)

2. How many nights did you spend in the Cook Islands on your most recent visit?

3. What was the main purpose of your visit?

- Holiday (1)
- Wedding party (2)
- Business or conference (3)
- Visiting friends or relatives (4)
- Honeymoon (5)
- Te Maeva Nui 2015 (50th Constitution Celebrations) (12)
- Special event - sporting (6)
- Special event - cultural (7)
- Volunteering (9)
- Education (8)
- Other reason, please specify (11) _____

4. How did you get to the Cook Islands? (tick as many as apply)

- Airline - Air New Zealand (1)
- Airline - Virgin Australia (2)
- Airline - Air Tahiti (3)
- Ferry (4)
- Private charter plane (5)
- Private boat (6)

5. Who were your travelling companions? (tick as many as apply)

- a) No one - I was by myself
- b) Partner / husband / wife
- c) Family member(s)
- d) Friends
- e) Work colleagues

- f) Tour group
- g) Organised group (e.g. school, sports etc)
- h) Wedding party
- i) Other _____

6. How many people accompanied you on this trip?

- a) 0 - travelled by myself
- b) 1
- c) 2
- d) 3
- e) 4
- f) 5
- g) 6
- h) 7
- i) 8
- j) 9
- k) 10+

7. How did you find out about the Cook Islands as a destination? (tick as many as apply)

- Previous visits (1)
- Friends/family (2)
- Travel agent/agency brochures (3)
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter etc) (4)
- Television or radio programmes (5)
- Travel books (e.g. Lonely Planet) (10)
- Magazine and newspaper articles (6)
- The official Cook Islands travel website (cookislands.travel/nz) (7)
- General travel websites (e.g. TripAdvisor) (8)
- Other (9) _____

8. How important were the following sources of information when planning your trip to the Cook Islands?

Previous visits (1)

Friends/family (2)

Travel agent/travel brochures (3)

Social media (Facebook, Twitter etc) (4)

Television or radio programmes (5)

Travel books (e.g. Lonely Planet) (9)

Magazine and newspaper articles (6)

The official Cook Islands travel website (cookislands.travel/nz) (7)

General travel websites (e.g. Trip Advisor) (8)

9. How did you purchase your travel to the Cook Islands?

- Travel arrangements were made through a travel agent (1)
- I made my own travel arrangement using the Internet (2)
- Travel arrangements were made by a mixture of travel agent and online booking (5)
- Travel arrangements were made by others (business, friends, relatives) (3)
- Other - please specify (4) _____

10. Which islands did you visit on this trip? Please provide additional information when prompted on the following page.

- a) Rarotonga
- b) Aitutaki
- c) Atiu
- d) Mangaia
- e) Mauke
- f) Other

11. How many nights did you spend on each island?

- a) Rarotonga
- b) Aitutaki
- c) Atiu
- d) Mangaia
- e) Mauke
- f) Other

12. Please select the accommodation(s) you stayed in the Cook Islands? (Hold down the Ctrl key to choose more than one accommodation)

13. How satisfied were you with the following aspects in terms of your recent visit?

The level of service provided at this accommodation (1)

The quality, availability and maintenance of facilities provided at this accommodation (2)

The overall value for money (3)

14. On your most recent visit to the Cook Islands, please indicate below (on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'very dissatisfied' and 5 being 'very satisfied') the activities that you engaged in and how satisfied you were with your experience.

Water based activities:

- a) Beaches
- b) Swimming
- c) Snorkelling
- d) Diving
- e) Kayaking
- f) Fishing - Deep Sea
- g) Fishing - Bonefishing
- h) Lagoon Cruise
- i) Ocean Cruise
- j) Whale Watching
- k) Kitesurfing
- l) Stand Up Paddle Boarding

Cultural interaction:

- a) Island Night Feast and Show
- b) Meal at a Cook Islands Home
- c) Church on Sunday
- d) Island Celebrations or Events
- e) Tumunu on Atiu
- f) Local Markets
- g) Dance / Language / Art Classes

Land based activities and Touring:

- a) Restaurants, Bars and Cafes
- b) Cultural Events
- c) Sporting Events
- d) 4WD Adventures
- e) Cultural Tour
- f) Treks and Trails
- g) Cycling
- h) Sightseeing
- i) Vehicle Rental
- j) Public Transport

Shopping:

- a) Pearls
- b) Arts
- c) Crafts
- d) Music
- e) Local Produce e.g Coffee, Coconut Oil etc

Please tell us about any other activities you participated in:

SPECIAL EVENTS

As part of the survey, we are helping the Ministry of Cultural Development to better understand the impact of the Te Maeva Nui 2015 (50th Constitution Celebrations). If you participated, please answer the following questions in this section.

What did you attend in Te Maeva Nui 2015 (50th Constitution Celebrations)? Please select all that apply.

- Float parade (1)
- Cultural performances (2)
- Trade days (3)
- Other, please specify (4) _____

Answer If Did you attend Te Maeva Nui 50th National celebration while in the Cook Islands? Yes Is Selected

Q77 Did you make any purchases at the Te Maeva Nui 2015 (50th Constitution Celebrations) this year?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Did you make any purchase at Te Maeva Nui this year? Yes Is Selected

Q78 How much did you spend at Te Maeva Nui 2015 (50th Constitution Celebrations) (in NZ\$)?

Answer If Did you attend Te Maeva Nui 50th National celebration while in the Cook Islands? Yes Is Selected

Q79 Overall how satisfied were you with your experience of Te Maeva Nui 2015 (50th Constitution Celebrations):

9. On your most recent visit, how satisfied were you with the following (on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'very dissatisfied' and 5 being 'very satisfied')?

- a) The information that was available when planning this trip?
- b) The information that was available during this trip?
- c) The cost of accommodation?
- d) The quality of accommodation?
- e) The experience of renting a vehicle?
- f) The experience of using public transport?
- g) The frequency of air transport within the Cook Islands?
- h) The overall level of service in the Cook Islands?
- i) The friendliness of the people in the Cook Islands?

15. What did you find most attractive or appealing about the Cook Islands on your most recent visit?

16. What did you find least attractive or appealing about the Cook Islands on your most recent visit?

17. Is there anything that could have improved your visit to the Cook Islands?

- a) No
- b) Yes

EXPENDITURE

Information on how much money you spent during your visit helps the planning and development of the Cook Islands economy.

We would appreciate it if you could fill out this section as accurately as possible.

18. In the expenditure estimates you will provide below, how many people are included (including yourself)?

- a) Adults
- b) Children (0- 16 years old)

18.1 Please indicate below the total value of what you paid prior to your arrival to the Cook Islands (including purchases made via travel agents or the internet), in the currency specified below:

- a) NZD
- b) AUD
- c) GBP
- d) USD
- e) EUR
- f) CAD
- g) Other - please specify: _____

18.2 What does this amount above include? (tick as many as apply)

- a) International flights
- b) Accommodation
- c) Meals
- d) Domestic transport
- e) Activities
- f) Other

19.1 After you arrived in the Cook Islands, how much do you estimate that you spent in each island (Rarotonga, Aitutaki and Other island(s)) in local currency (NZ\$)?

- a) Accommodation
- b) Restaurants, Cafes & Bars
- c) Vehicle Rental
- d) Petrol
- e) Domestic flights
- f) Public transport
- g) Cruising
- h) Groceries
- i) Shopping (e.g. souvenirs, clothes)
- j) Activities (e.g. water sports, sightseeing)
- k) Internet cost
- l) Other

20. Was your recent visit to the Cook Islands part of a bigger trip?

- a) Yes

b) No

21. Would you return to the Cook Islands? Why?

a) Yes

b) No

If yes, would you include the following outer islands? (tick as many as apply)

Aitutaki (1)

Atiu (2)

Mangaia (3)

Mauke (4)

Other (5) _____

22. Would you recommend the Cook Islands to others? Why?

a) Yes

b) No

23. How satisfied were you with your overall experience of the Cook Islands (on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'very dissatisfied and 5 being 'very satisfied')?

24. Please add any comments you would like to make about your overall experience of the Cook Islands.

ABOUT YOU

25. How many times have you been to the Cook Islands prior to your most recent visit?

26. Your age group:

a) 18-29

b) 30-39

c) 40-49

d) 50-59

e) 60-69

f) 70+

27. Your gender:

a) Female

b) Male

28. What is your highest qualification?

- a) No formal qualification
- b) High school qualification
- c) Tertiary/University qualification
- d) Other

28.1 What is your approximate annual household income in your home currency? Please use the following format: e.g. 50,000 and specify currency in question below:

- a) NZD
- b) AUD
- c) GBP
- d) USD
- e) EUR
- f) CAD
- g) Other - please specify

29. Where do you live? (Please select from list of all countries)

Survey Powered By Qualtrics