

2009 Canadian Travel to the Capital Region USA

Arrivals

Canadian travelers took 947,900 person-trips¹ to the Capital Region USA in 2009. This was a 1.8% increase compared to 2008. The number of person-trips to each individual area was:

Virginia:	552,900 (1.0% decrease)
Maryland:	236,200 (1.0% decrease)
Washington, DC:	158,800 (5.9% decrease)

Visitation to the Capital Region USA in 2008 represented 5.3% of the total 18 million person trips Canadian travelers took to the U.S. during the same time period. This regional share of total U.S. visits provides a gauge of the region's relative position in the U.S but is not a true share of the U.S. because of cross-visitation among CRUSA members. The total U.S. visitation estimate of 18 million, which does not include cross-visitation, represents a decrease of 4.9% from 2008.

The average number of nights Canadians spent in the region varied by area. The average for DC was 4.1 nights, compared to 3.1 nights in VA, and 3.4 nights MD. The average for the CRUSA region, not accounting for cross-visitation, was 3.3 nights while the national average was 7.3 nights. Historically, the U.S. average has been highly influenced by four states, Florida, California, Arizona, and Hawaii, where large numbers of Canadians stay for periods that average two to three weeks. The averages for these states include the influence of "snowbirds" that may stay for several months during the winter. Multiplying total person-visits by average length of stay produces the number of total person-nights. More than 2.0 million person-nights were spent in the CRUSA region in 2009, a decrease of 37.1%.

¹ A person-trip is defined as any time a Canadian traveler visits Virginia, Maryland, or Washington, DC. A person that visits both Maryland and Virginia on a single trip would count as two person-trips.

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Popularity of Trip Activities

Table 1 shows the relative popularity of numerous types of activities in which Canadian visitors to the U.S. participated during their trip. Shopping, sightseeing, visiting friends or relatives and participating in sports/outdoor activities were the most popular activities. The popularity of activities in 2009 is consistent with those of 2008 and earlier.

Table 1	Percentage of Canadian Travelers Including Activity on U.S. Trip
Go shopping	73%
Go sightseeing	45%
Visit Friends or relatives	37%
Participate in sports/outdoor activities	32%
Got to a bar or night club	23%
Visit a historic site	22%
Visit a national or state nature park	17%
Visit a museum or art gallery	16%
Attend cultural events (plays, concerts)	13%
Visit a theme or amusement park	12%
Got to a casino	13%
Visit a zoo, aquarium, or botanical garden	11%
Golfing	9%
Attend a sports event	9%
Attend a festival or fair	8%
Boating - motor/sail boat/kayak/canoe/other	6%
Downhill skiing or snow boarding	2%
Fishing	2%
Hunting	0%
No activity stated	10%

Spending

Total Canadian visitor spending in the Capital Region USA was \$284 million in 2009. The estimated spending by Canadian travelers in VA was \$118 million, compared to \$97 million in DC and \$70 million in MD. The 2009 regional total represents 2.2% of the \$12.7 billion Canadian travelers spent in the U.S. in 2009. The U.S. total spending was up 4.1% while the regional total decreased by 0.3%. The Canadian dollar posted a slightly stronger exchange rate in 2009 meaning Canadians could spend less of their own currency to purchase the same value of American goods compared with the year before.

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The average per-person per-day spending – which takes into account total spending, party size, and length of stay – varies by area. MD's average of \$55 and VA's average of \$56 compare to DC's average of \$128. The 2009 U.S. average per-person per-day spending was \$85².

Mode of Transportation

Canadian visitors to the region traveled predominantly by automobile (73%). Twenty-three percent traveled by airplane, 2% by bus, and 2% by rail, boat and other modes. Arrivals to the region by airplane decreased 4% from 2008 to 2009, while travel by automobile increased 1%. Sixty percent of the travelers to DC arrived by airplane with only 35% arriving by automobile. The percent of airplane travelers to DC decrease from 2008 when 69% of Canadian visitors to DC arrived by air. This figure also contrasts with travelers to VA and MD who arrived predominantly by automobile, 82% and 77%, respectively, and 14% and 18%, respectively, by airplane. Rail, boat, and miscellaneous other modes represented very small percentages.

Type of Lodging

Hotel/motel was the predominant type of accommodation used by Canadian travelers to the region (based on survey respondents who stated their accommodation type). Hotel/motel lodging represented 73% of the person-visits in the region in 2009 – with some variation among the three states. Staying with friends and/or relatives represented 11% and camping represented 4% of the total person-visits in the region. Other types of lodging represented a small share of visits.

Trip Purpose

Traveling for vacation was the primary trip purpose for 61% of the travelers to the region in 2009. However, the purpose of travel varied across the region. Holiday/Vacation represents 7% of total visits to VA, compared to 59% to MD, and 42% to DC. Business travel represented 13% of visits to the region, but varied for each CRUSA member: 7% to VA, 12% to MD, and 38% to DC.

² Averages were determined by dividing the average spending by average trip days and average travel party size for each region.

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Visits to friends or relatives represented 13% of the regional person-visits. Twelve percent of all person-visits were for other purposes.

Season of Travel

Table 2 shows the seasonal pattern of visitation to the three regions of CRUSA. The first quarter was the most visited for the region as a whole while the remaining quarters received similar overall visitation. Washington, DC, Maryland and Virginia all showed a decrease in first quarter visitation compared with historical visitation. Washington, DC showed a large increase in third quarter visitation while Maryland showed a large increase in the fourth quarter.

	Quarter			
	1 st (Jan - Mar)	2 nd (Apr - Jun)	3 rd (Jul - Sep)	4 th (Oct - Dec)
US				
2009	22	24	32	22
1999-2008	22	25	33	21
CRUSA				
2009	25	24	26	25
1999-2008	28	27	23	22
Virginia				
2009	27	28	23	22
1999-2008	31	28	21	21
District of Columbia				
2009	19	21	35	25
1999-2008	20	30	29	21
Maryland				
2009	24	19	26	31
1999-2008	26	24	24	26

Province of Residence

The Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec were the origins for approximately 87% of the visitors to the region. Ontario represented 59%, and Quebec provided 28% of the 2009 visitation to the region. Ninety percent of VA and 90% of MD visitors came from these provinces compared to 74% from DC. Canada's other ten provinces represent the remaining sources of visitors to the region. For perspective, 62% of U.S. visitation came from these two provinces.

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For more information

Please contact Vice President of Sales & Promotions, Diane Béchamps at (804) 545-5542 for further information about this report and how to access the international marketing opportunities.