

# BRANDJUICE

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VISIT DENVER

REGIONAL MARKETS MOTIVATORS // MARCH 7, 2019





As Denver continues to evolve, the opportunity grows along with it to capture new travelers. VISIT DENVER is primed to make more of an immediate impact in underserved areas, in turn increasing hotel occupancy and length of stay.

Leveraging a two-pronged approach, BrandJuice uncovered insights that will serve to strengthen future investments by clearly defining the wants and needs of flexible, regional travelers.

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## PHASED APPROACH

### QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Conducted qualitative research with **37** respondents in regional markets

### ANALYZED LEARNINGS

### QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Conducted quantitative online research with **844** respondents in regional markets

COLORADO | UTAH | WYOMING | ARIZONA | KANSAS | NEW MEXICO | NEBRASKA



INSPIRATION &  
CONSIDERATION

# DRIVERS TO DENVER



## KEY DRIVER: OUT OF THE ORDINARY

Many travelers prioritize a breadth of options to create customized experiences, preferring to fill their time in Denver with events that keep their schedules action-packed. The city offers up the thrill of new experiences unique to Denver.

### ELEVATED EXPERIENCE

Those in more remote destinations such as Albuquerque and Cheyenne view Denver as a metropolitan area offering luxuries not found at home.

“Close proximity to the mountains, unique shopping, five star restaurants, urban activities we don't have in Albuquerque.”  
- *Albuquerque*

### THE MOUNTAINS ARE CALLING

Some visitors value the proximity to short day trips and outdoor activities in the mountains—for warmer weather hiking and fishing, and as a stop on the way to skiing in the winter.

“Denver is unique in the sense that you can land in a city and drive 2hrs/4hrs/6hrs and really isolate yourself in beautiful mountain surroundings.” – *Salt Lake City*

### SUPERIOR STAYCATION

Other travelers migrate to Denver as an elevated “staycation”—allowing them to experience novel entertainment close by without having to take time off or incur high travel expenses.

“It’s easy to access and we love getting away. Every time, it feels like a trip away even though it's so close.” – *Eagle County/Summit County*



## KEY DRIVER: SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Being in close proximity, travelers appreciate opportunities to convene with family and friends in a way that appeases the whole group—offering up avenues for both relaxation and entertainment that speak to any demographic.

### TASTE DRIVEN EXCURSION

Travelers without kids enjoy the city as a cultural destination with enticing drinking and dining opportunities.

“There is always a new restaurant to check out. They have so many that aren’t chains and feel like you can experience more world foods.”  
– *Cheyenne*

### MEET ME IN THE MIDDLE

Families enjoy surprising ways to ‘meet in the middle’ providing fun for both parents and kids alike, such as going to Union Station or the Highlands outdoor areas.

“It's attractive for me because it's close to my kids and I can drive there. To me, Denver is a place where I can create special memories with my family. We have many memories from Broncos games and I love passing those on to my grandkids.” - *Albuquerque*

### GROUP GAMEPLAN

Many view concerts and sporting events are as perfect opportunities for group fun, while more remote travelers note an abundance of shopping options as the major draw.

“Denver is a big city with a lot to do, but it isn't overwhelming. There are parts of Denver where you can relax and slow down, and others where you can take in big city life.”  
– *Albuquerque*



## KEY DRIVER: PROXIMITY PREVAILS

Easy access was a key driver to visiting Denver—whether the accessibility of a quick drive or flight, or proximity to activities during travelers’ stay—connected experiences that save time maximize the appeal of a weekend getaway.

### CLOSE CONNECTIONS

When seen as a quick getaway in particular, travelers appreciate safe and convenient transportation options to quickly connect their experiences throughout the stay.

“It’s compact and easy to navigate. Everything is ‘just 20 mins’ from the next” – *Cheyenne*

Denver is unique in the sense that you can land in a city and drive 2/4/6 hours and really isolate yourself in beautiful mountain surroundings.” – *Kansas City*

### BUY BACK TIME

From walking, to easy mass transit, to Uber availability, to proximity to the mountains—ease of accessibility is a win, buying back time and maximizing weekend value.

“It’s attractive for me because it’s close to my kids and I can drive there. To me, Denver is a place where I can create special memories with my family. We have many memories from Broncos games and I love passing those on to my grandkids.” – *Albuquerque*

### HOME(BASE)

Many spend their time in—our just outside of—the city with the focus on friends and family.

“We like to take trips to Boulder to hike and nice to be able to quickly get on the highway and go.” – *Kansas City*



## WHAT MAKES DENVER AN ATTRACTIVE DESTINATION BY LOCATION

The majority of travelers migrate towards entertainment-based trips to make the most out of their weekend getaway—each time leaving the city with an added experience under their belt, or a destination checked off the list.

TOP 1 BOX	Total	CO N=27%	KS & MO N=22%	NM N=14%	NE N=13%	AZ N=10%	WY N=7%	UT N=7%
Sports	28%	27%	25%	33%	28%	25%	29%	33%
Arts & Culture	15%	18%	14%	16%	8%	15%	20%	19%
Concerts	19%	25%	13%	22%	21%	11%	18%	19%
Dining & Nightlife	16%	17%	16%	11%	15%	20%	2%	9%
Shopping	7%	7%	8%	6%	9%	7%	9%	4%
Other	15%	6%	24%	12%	19%	22%	22%	16%





## WHAT MAKES DENVER AN ATTRACTIVE DESTINATION BY AGE

Across the age groups, there are many similar drivers bringing travelers Denver. The discrepancies can most likely be attributed to life stage, and either the strains or freedoms allowed during that chapter of life.

TOP 1 BOX	Total	30-39 N=20%	40-49 N=22%	50-59 N=32%	60-69 N=26%
Sports	28%	30%	32%	23%	29%
Arts & Culture	15%	8%	11%	16%	24%
Concerts	19%	24%	22%	17%	14%
Dining & Nightlife	16%	19%	11%	14%	12%
Shopping	7%	7%	9%	10%	6%
Other	15%	12%	15%	20%	15%

9 | Please rank the following reasons as to why Denver is attractive for a WEEKEND getaway. Please rank your answers from 1-6 with 1 being the most important, 6 being the least. Sports; Arts & culture / performing arts; Concerts; Dining & nightlife; Shopping; Other



PRE-  
BOOKING

# THE TIMELINE TO TRAVEL



## TIME TO PLAN

36% 1 WEEK OR LESS

42% 2 - 4 WEEKS

22% 5 - 6 WEEKS

## ATTRACTING THE SPONTANEOUS TRAVELER

The majority of travelers need less than a month to book their travel. These groups currently present the greatest opportunity for repeat visits—they have a mindset and a lifestyle that make them the ideal target.

The fact that travelers are ready to travel without much advance notice does not surprise us given the ever-increasing demand for instant gratification.



## READY TO GO (1-2 WEEKS)

Travelers who are quickly ready to go tend to share a spontaneous attitude making them a prime candidate for spur of the moment getaways—rooted in geographic centricity, lifestyle flexibility, or for some, solely attitudinal.

### THE GO-GETTERS

#### EASY PREP

Denver is a low-key city with a “come as you are” spirit that makes it inviting, and easy to pack for.

“It’s not like going to LA or somewhere I have to bring a crazy wardrobe. It’s kind of like ‘Come as you are in Denver’.”  
— *Colorado Springs*

#### RETIRED & READY

Unsurprisingly, retirees are an ideal target for short-term travel. Without the obligations of work or young children at home, they are freed up and ready to go.

“I’m retired and I love to do road trips with my husband.” - *Salt Lake City*

#### LIVING SPONTANEOUSLY

For many short term travelers, there is an emotional benefit that stems from booking spur of the moment. Many noted the thrill of the unexpected when they decide to head to Denver on a whim.

“I prefer impulsiveness to long range planning. It’s more exciting.”  
- *Phoenix*



## NEED A LITTLE MORE TIME (2+ WEEKS)

Travelers who need a little time tend to have more obligations that are directly related to home and work life. Ensuring that things are taken care of on the home front is paramount.

### THE RATIONALIZERS

#### WORK RULES

The primary hurdle is work for many who do not have flexible time off or run demanding, season-driven jobs such as farming, there is rigidity that does not allow them to spontaneously plan.

“ I farm and you can’t always take off!” - *Cheyenne*

“My job requires a month notice for days off.” - *Albuquerque*

#### FAMILY FACTOR

For those with kids, their needs take a priority over those of the parents. From scheduling around school and sports to finding the activities their kids want to do—traveling with the family is never cut and dry.

“ I have to make sure we’re planning it around an event that will keep the little ones entertained.” - *Kansas City*

#### COST-CONSCIOUS

For those concerned with price, they require additional time to weigh the options, also holding out with the possibility of rates lowering on lodging or events.

“ I can’t afford to just up and leave to Denver when I want. If I could afford it I’d visit a lot more often” - *Albuquerque*



# FINDING THE RIGHT LODGING



COMPLETING  
THE BOOKING



## HOTEL STAY FREQUENCY

14%

**NEVER** stay in hotels

35%

Stay in hotels **SOME** of the time

21%

Stay in hotels **MOST** of the time

30%

Stay in hotels **ALL** of the time

## HOTELS DRIVE HABIT

Nearly all travelers spend some portion of their trips to Denver in a hotel. Those who do not stay in hotels are outliers who most frequently stay with family and friends. The hotel experience is preferred, elevating the stay to a true vacation where travelers can find a restful escape.

## HOTEL VERSUS HOME

Factors that play a role in the decision to stay at a hotel include: 1) price; 2) purpose of trip; 3) location; and, 4) duration of the trip.



## HOTEL STAY DURATION

17%

**ONE** night

46%

**TWO** nights

27%

**THREE** nights

10%

**FOUR OR MORE** nights

## WORKING FOR THE WEEKEND

A winning majority of travelers stay in hotels for an average of two nights, reinforcing the frame of reference that Denver makes the for the ideal getaway over the weekend.



HOTEL AMENTITIES RANKING

MORNING MANDATORIES

Enhancing the morning routine with a complimentary breakfast is a great way to start the day—it’s an essential to fueling the trip, whereas other amenities such as car service and gym are not.

TOP TWO BOX	Total
Drink Coupons	16%
Free Parking	52%
Car Service	6%
Swimming Pool	31%
Gym	7%
Complimentary Breakfast	70%
Other	18%



BEYOND AMENITIES

While amenities are seen as a ‘nice to have’ travelers voice a greater concern for more macro drivers that envelop the hotel experience.

LOCATION & ACCESSIBILITY

Proximity to events, food, beverage and shopping all play a driving role in where to stay and how easy travelers can connect from one destination to the next. Safety also lends itself to walkability, day or night.

“Location, location, location. Denver can be hard to navigate with the traffic and I want to quickly get from A to B.” – *Salt Lake City*

CLEANLINESS & COMFORT

Whether a plush bed or a restorative spa experience, travelers are looking for a hotel with the cleanliness, comfort and overall and tranquility that helps them escape from the chaos of everyday life.

“My dream is for hotels to have a clean easy place to wash bottles and sippy cups in the rooms. Hand washing those things in hotel rooms is difficult.” – *Grand Junction*

SPACIOUSNESS

Travelers put a premium on having space to spread out. For parents, larger room accommodations were desired to fit the entire group without an up-charge.

“It would be great to have more options of suites that don’t cost an arm and a leg, or options to begin with.” – *Phoenix*

WELCOMING PETS

In addition to planning, pets present an integral part of the family and their owners’ overall happiness. If hotels are able to offer an experience clears the hurdle of arranging pet-care, while also creating an experience that can be shared by all, increased opportunities to travel open up.

“Pet friendly-without an exorbitant fee, or any fee. Our pups love Denver so any chance to visit with them makes it better!” – *Eagle*



# KEY TAKEAWAYS



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

### GET UP AND GO

Regional travelers don't need an extensive amount of time to plan a weekend getaway to Denver. The short-term traveler is practical, yet expresses enjoyment in the spontaneity and excitement that accompanies a quick escape from reality.

2

### LIGHTS, CAMERA...

Travelers are drawn into the action of the city—without being overbearing and overwhelming. Activities abound, eliciting a sense of wonder and amusement when it comes to their next entertainment opportunity.

3

### AN EXPERIENCE YOU CAN COUNT ON

Travelers often have a soft spot for the friendly, safe and accessible nature of Denver lending ever familiar, yet always evolving options that entertain all ages.

4

### THE CONNECTIVE HEART OF THE CITY

With quick planning and even quicker trips, travelers embody a sense of responsibility, ensuring their children and/or pets are well taken care of during trips. With Denver already having a strong base in accommodating family-friendly fun, an experience that is seamless and less stressful adds significant value.

5

### WEEKEND WARRIORS

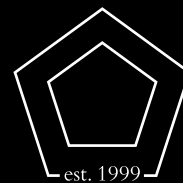
Majority of travelers report they stay in hotels 'some of the time' when visiting Denver (most often for two nights), extending the opportunity to increase the length of stay and reimagine the possibilities with a weekend-focused audience.

6

### INCREASING CONGESTION

Traffic and cost are ever-present concerns throughout the year when it comes to planning a trip to Denver. While somewhat unavoidable, they must be uniquely addressed to create solutions that can shift perceptions.

THANK YOU



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# WHAT MAKES DENVER AN ATTRACTIVE DESTINATION BY INCOME

TOP 1 BOX	Total	\$50-75K N=51%	\$75-100K N=30%	\$100K+ N=19%
Sports	28%	28%	31%	25%
Arts & Culture	15%	15%	15%	19%
Concerts	19%	18%	19%	20%
Dining & Nightlife	16%	13%	13%	19%
Shopping	7%	8%	6%	6%
Other	15%	18%	16%	11%



## NEED MORE TIME (5-6 WEEKS)

Majority of these travelers come from out-of-state locations. Many don't see Denver as a spur-of-the-moment, two-day trip and require more thought around budgeting and travel time. Others plan trips around large events, needing advanced booking time for tickets and group travel.

### THE OVER-THINKERS

#### SCHEDULING COMPLEXITY

While work presents a primary concern, what makes it difficult is all of the other factors in tandem that add complexity.

“ I need enough time to request time off from work and figure out what to do with my kids in school.”  
- Omaha

#### EXTENDED FAMILY PLANNING

Beyond the nuclear family, many take into account other members that require their care and planning such as the sick or elderly, along with four-legged family members.

“ Arranging around the care clock for my mother with Alzheimer's.”  
*Albuquerque*  
“I need to make sure I can board them and have quality animal care.”  
- Kansas City

#### CONCERT FOCUSED

For those who plan Denver trips around musical events there are many different factors to be considered: purchasing far in advance to avoid selling out, exorbitant fees at large venues, and confirming the group size attending.

“ I need to space out the expenses – I have to pay a lot up front for tickets and then I know there will be additional costs along the way.”  
- Kansas City