



Sunshine Coast
TOURISM



2024 SUNSHINE COAST TOURISM
ANNUAL REPORT

sunshinecoastcanada.com

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WHO WE ARE

Sunshine Coast Tourism, a non-profit society, serves as the designated Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the region, in multi-stakeholder partnership between the tourism industry and local governments, including the Town of Gibsons, District of Sechelt, City of Powell River, Sunshine Coast Regional District, and qathet Regional District, playing a pivotal role in shaping the region's tourism landscape. The Society's mandate is to build a strong and sustainable tourism economy for the Sunshine Coast, in alignment with the values of its residents.

Through strategic initiatives, Sunshine Coast Tourism actively nurtures a dynamic and sustainable tourism sector, ensuring its vibrancy and longevity. The organization aims to align with Provincial and Municipal initiatives to ensure sustainable sector development. This approach preserves and enhances the community's quality of life, ensuring that tourism supports rather than hinders infrastructure, community culture, and other vital industries.



We promote the entire Sunshine Coast, from Howe Sound to Desolation Sound, because our visitors travel without borders—and the region is stronger when we act as one. Working together, we've created a more compelling travel destination brand, reduced duplication in administration and overhead, and built stronger market competitiveness.

2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

Measurable Impact in Destination Marketing

14M+

Ad Impressions

Driving awareness across platforms

221K

Business Referrals

Direct connections for visitors to local businesses

2.4M

Website Pageviews

+39% year-over-year increase

114M+

Media Impressions

From 36 travel media engagements

Seasonal Ad Campaigns

Our seasonal destination campaigns promote fall, winter, and spring travel, designed to highlight top sights, experiences, and attractions from throughout the region. The campaigns create a compelling urgency to visit the Sunshine Coast; to stay longer, spend more, and travel mindfully with respect for local people and the natural environment.



TikTok Prowess

18.98% click-through rate, \$0.04 CPC



Broadcast Reach

9,572 TV ad airings across BC, Alberta, Washington



Weather-Triggered Ads

Alberta campaign activated during temperature drops



Content Creation

New photography/video for food, drink, winter activities

Advertising Creative

Our branded creative is carefully curated for each placement, whether it's a full page, glossy spread in Northwest Travel and Life magazine (right), a scrolling carousel ad on Facebook (below), or a prime-time TV commercial. Our team is constantly testing and refining which images, copy, and overall designs are the most likely to resonate with our most compatible travellers.

As a small organization, we don't have nearly the budget or resources of many of our competitor destinations such as Tofino, the Fraser Valley, Parksville/Qualicum Beach, or Penticton, which means we have to remain laser-focused on our best opportunities and maximize our return on investment. Our DMO is known for consistently 'punching above our weight' and keeping our destination moving ahead.



YOU'RE GOING TO LIKE IT UP HERE

IT'S TIME TO SHINE ON BC'S SUNSHINE COAST

Just a short trip from Seattle, the Sunshine Coast feels like stepping into another world... one with fewer crowds, more trees, and the deep breath you didn't know you needed. Tucked just northwest of Vancouver, our stretch of coastal British Columbia is easy to reach but wonderfully hard to leave. And thanks to the exchange rate, your dollar goes much further here.

It's the kind of place where forest trails lead to sweeping ocean views, where art crawls take over entire communities, and music festivals fill the summer air. You'll paddle quiet coves where seals nap on rocks, hike through cedar forests, and explore towns filled with studios and cafes.

Whether you're here for a weekend or a week, you'll feel like you belong.

Accommodations range from rustic cabins hiding in the trees to boutique inns perched on rocky bluffs. Many are just steps from the beach. All are designed for slowing down. It's casual, coastal, and very Canadian.

We'd love to see you.



Download our **2025 Travel Guide**



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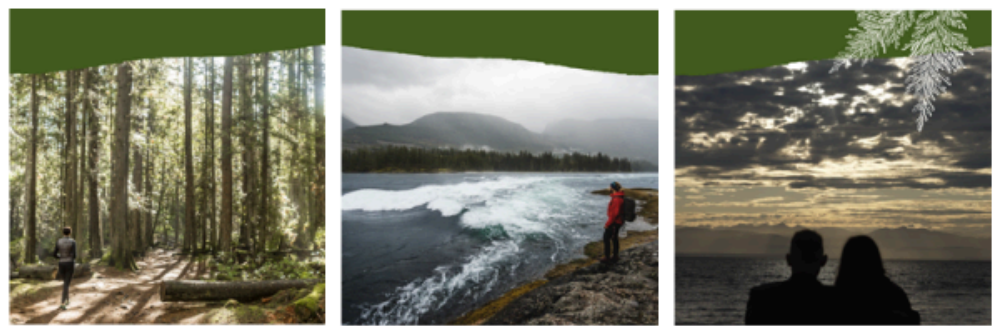


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Glide across the ocean, take a hike in the rainforest, and witness the raw power of the wild that will bring out your shine.

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Explore secret coves & fjords [Learn More](#)

Like Comment Send Share



Be in awe of the towering canopy [Learn More](#)

Feel the rhythm of the ocean [Learn More](#)

It's Time to Shine [Learn More](#)



Content & Storytelling

At the heart of destination marketing is storytelling—inviting people to connect with the essence of a place before they even arrive. Sunshine Coast Tourism continues to invest in rich, multi-channel content that shapes how potential visitors perceive and understand the Sunshine Coast. This includes producing our flagship 52-page travel guide, which is distributed across BC and beyond, as well as crafting compelling travel itineraries, seasonal features, and sponsored content in partnership with trusted media outlets. These longer-form materials provide inspiration, context, and practical planning tools that help convert interest into action.

On digital platforms, our storytelling efforts span blog articles, email newsletters, and both short- and micro-form content on social media. Whether it's a thoughtful blog post about off-season adventures or a 15-second video showcasing bioluminescence or a local eatery, each piece is part of a coordinated strategy to deepen the sense of place in the minds of potential travellers. This layered approach helps reinforce the Sunshine Coast's destination brand, ensuring it stays top of mind and emotionally resonant in a highly competitive travel landscape.



Travel Media Coverage

In 2024, we supported or hosted 36 media professionals, resulting in 57 published stories with over 114 million impressions, including The Amazing Race Canada, CTV Morning Live, The Boston Globe, The New York Times, MSNBC, BC Living, CARPe Diem (national broadcast), and many more.



Bright spots abound on the Sunshine Coast Trail

By Kari Bodnarchuk
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

SARAH POINT, British Columbia — The captain nosed our zodiac up to a rocky beach and held it steady as my two kids and I carefully slid overboard. Barnacles crunched underfoot as we shuttled our gear to shore: Backpacks containing food and camping gear for four of the next eight days.

We hiked up onto a nearby bluff and looked out at the clear waters of a protected marine park in Desolation Sound, a few scraggly uninhabited islands, and the snow-dusted mountains on Vancouver Island in the hazy distance.

This peaceful spot, called Sarah Point, sits at the northernmost point of the Sunshine Coast, two ferry rides and several drives northwest of Vancouver — relatively accessible (with a bit of time on your side) and yet worlds away from mainland life.

Our plan was to hike from this idyllic far-flung spot on the tip of the Sunshine Coast about 112 miles south

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Sector Consortium Partnerships

Sunshine Coast Tourism participates in several sector-specific consortia—collaborative marketing partnerships that bring together like-minded DMOs across the province to amplify campaigns, share costs, and maximize impact. These initiatives align with provincial tourism priorities and allow us to position the Sunshine Coast within thematically targeted promotions while leveraging matched funding through Destination BC. In 2024, Sunshine Coast Tourism collaborated with the BC Ale Trail, the BC Farmers' Market Trail, Paddle BC, Fishing BC, Wellness Travel BC, Mountain Biking BC.



BC Ale Trail

This campaign promotes British Columbia's world-class craft beer destinations through storytelling, events, influencer content, and print and digital media. Sunshine

Coast breweries were featured in travel itineraries and social media campaigns, connecting our region's beer scene with passionate craft beer travellers from BC, Alberta, and Washington

BC Farmers' Market Trail

This initiative encourages residents and visitors to explore BC's vibrant farmers' markets through an easy-to-navigate digital trail. Sunshine Coast markets were promoted via itineraries, blog content, and influencer visits designed to highlight local food, artisans, and community experiences.



Wellness Travel BC

Although this newer initiative is still developing, it aligns with our region's strengths in wellness travel—from spa and culinary retreats to oceanfront accommodations. Our participation ensures the Sunshine Coast is represented as this provincial partnership evolves.

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Paddle BC

Paddle BC promotes safe, bookable, and awe-inspiring paddling experiences across the province. Sunshine Coast listings and paddling itineraries were featured in social campaigns and contests that reached niche outdoor and paddling enthusiasts in BC and beyond.



Fishing BC

This well-established campaign supports BC's tidal and freshwater fishing industry through robust storytelling, digital marketing, and education campaigns on responsible angling. The Sunshine Coast's coastal and freshwater offerings were included in microsite content and high-traffic ad campaigns targeting Canadian and US audiences



Mountain Biking BC

Through our partnership in the Sea to Sky Biking Consortium, we promoted the Sunshine Coast's authorized trails as part of a collective campaign spanning from North Vancouver to the South Chilcotins. Tactics included endemic media, digital ads, blog content, and itinerary development to position the region as a top mountain biking destination.



Visitor Education: Inspiring Conscious Travel

A key part of our role as a destination marketing organization is not just to attract visitors—but to ensure they're welcomed in a way that protects our natural environment and respects our communities. In 2024, Sunshine Coast Tourism continued to integrate visitor education across all aspects of our work, encouraging responsible, respectful travel at every stage of the visitor journey.

We embedded these messages into:

- Social media content and blog articles
- Seasonal website features and itineraries
- In-person interactions at visitor centres
- Targeted advertisements during high-traffic periods

Our focus areas included:

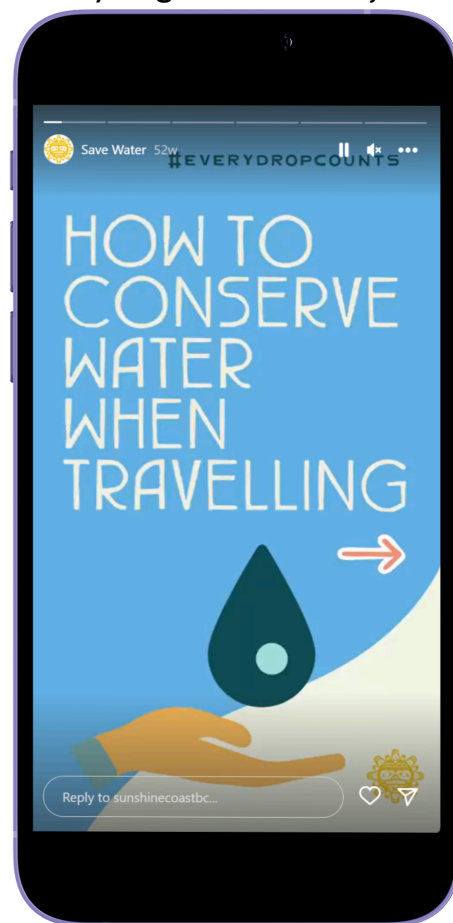
- Leave No Trace and low-impact recreation
- Drinking water conservation s
- Campfire safety and wildfire awareness
- Wildlife & marine mammal safety/viewing etiquette
- Responsible fishing & shellfish harvesting

We also partnered with the province-wide “Don’t Love It To Death” campaign, helping amplify shared values and reinforce a consistent, unified message about sustainable tourism.

In addition to educating visitors, we support our local tourism businesses in becoming sustainability leaders themselves. In 2024, we:

- Delivered stakeholder toolkits with sustainable travel messaging, tips, and resources
- Created ‘point-of-purchase’ and hotel room signage templates
- Promoted best practices through newsletters, partner calls, and events
- Shared funding and workshop opportunities focused on sustainability, emergency planning, and climate resiliency

By equipping both visitors and operators with the tools to travel better, we help ensure tourism supports—not strains—our region’s unique ecology and way of life.



Sunshine Coast Tourism is helping lead the path forward for regenerative tourism, where visitors give back more than they take, and communities thrive alongside the environment.

LOOKING AHEAD: 2025-26

In 2025, Sunshine Coast Tourism will continue to build on the momentum of the past year, with a strong focus on supporting our local tourism industry and strengthening the visitor economy in all seasons.

Fall Marketing Campaigns

We will once again run targeted fall marketing campaigns to drive visitation during the shoulder season, showcasing the region's unique experiences and reinforcing the Sunshine Coast as a year-round destination.

Strategic Plan Rollout

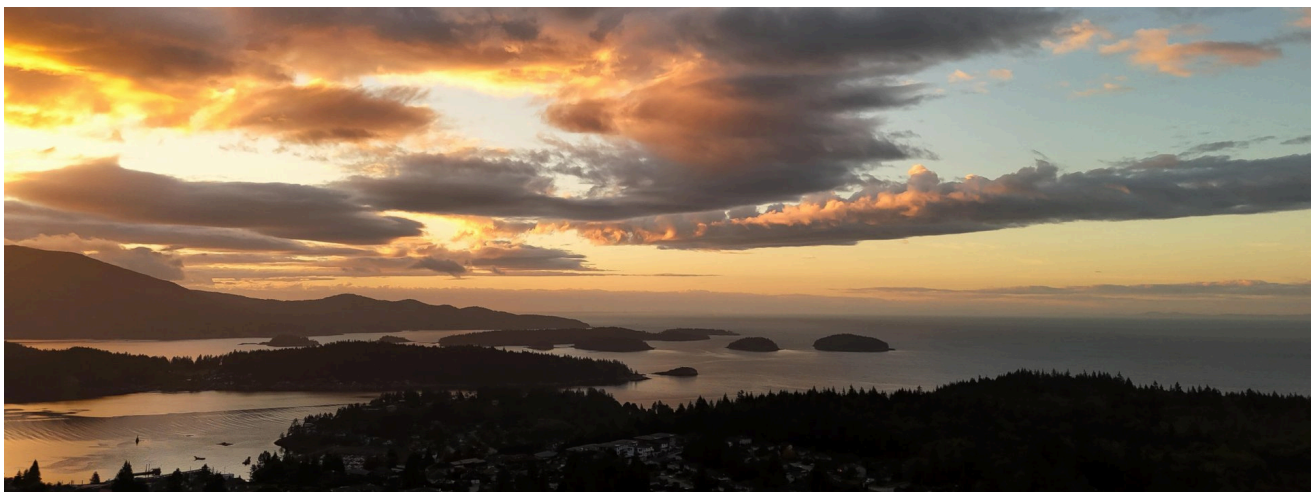
We'll begin implementing key elements of our new five-year strategic plan, including developing strategies to grow opportunities in corporate travel (small meetings and corporate retreats), film and sport tourism—areas with strong potential for economic impact and alignment with our regional strengths.

Industry Workshops & Training

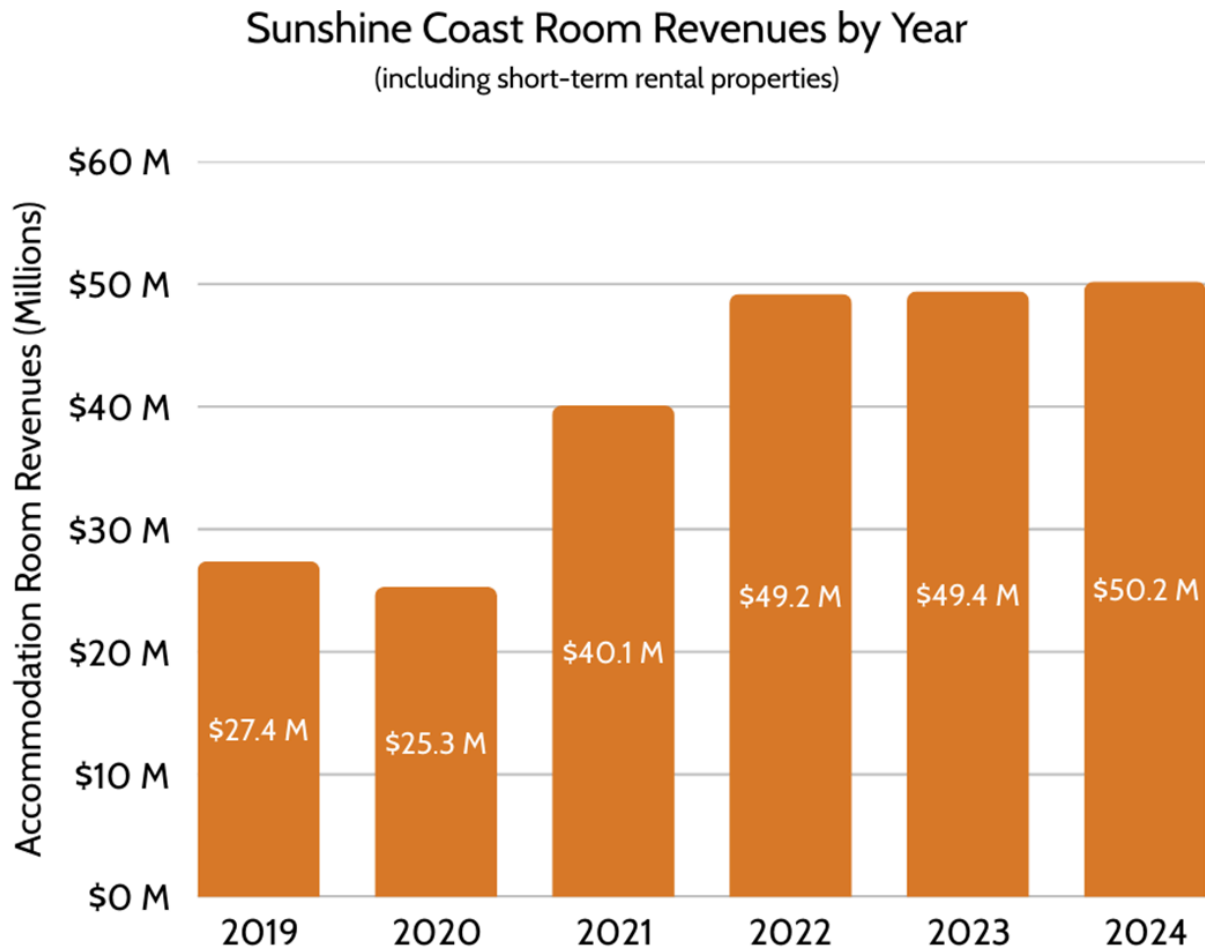
We'll continue to deliver workshops and training sessions for local businesses, helping them stay competitive, build capacity, and adapt to shifting market trends and visitor expectations.

Deeper Data & Insights

Through visitor surveys, website analytics, and tourism data platforms, we will deepen our understanding of visitor behaviour and motivations, providing valuable insights to both our partners and local governments.



TOURISM INDICATORS



Source: Ministry of Finance via MRDT Receipts.

One of the clearest indicators of tourism success is room revenue. As shown in the graph above, from 2019 to 2024, there has been significant growth in the sector, with revenue increasing from less than \$30 million annually to a new record high (again) of \$50.2M.

Though the overall trajectory is positive, the growth has slowed, in part due to the implementation of additional short-term rental regulations. In 2024, short-term rental revenues decreased by 7% across the region, whereas traditional accommodations were up 10%. In some areas of the Sunshine Coast, particularly within the municipalities, the effects were more pronounced. The spillover impact on other types of tourism businesses, such as tour operators and restaurants, was significant in some cases, leading to declines in revenue, temporary and even permanent closures. Generally, the loss of short-term rental units creates periods of compression in the remaining accommodations where there is little to no available occupancy.

2023-2024 Visitor Survey Highlights

Sunshine Coast Tourism conducted a detailed, two-stage, multi-location intercept survey to approach visitors at key exit points, including Langdale and Westview ferry terminals and airports, over a span of twelve months. Based on the results of the survey, the findings indicate that the Sunshine Coast's visitors are primarily repeat travellers from British Columbia, with a strong preference for outdoor recreation, local dining, and extended stays during non-peak seasons. Key takeaways from the survey include:

Trip Characteristics:

- Visiting Friends and Family is a **primary year-round motivation** for 31% of trips to the Sunshine Coast, and 54% of all visitors reported visiting friends/family during their trip.
- Staying with friends and family is the primary accommodation preference (41%), compared to paid accommodation (33%) and camping (9%). **In the peak summer season, 47% of all visitors are staying with friends and family.**
- 88% of visitors stay overnight, with an average stay of 3.3 nights.
- The average travel party size is 2.7 people.
- 65% are extremely likely to return within the next two years, with even higher likelihood among non-peak visitors (67%).

Visitor Experience:

- 93% of visitors rated their overall experience positively.
- 19% are dissatisfied with transportation, primarily ferry availability.
- 43% of peak-season visitors modified their travel plans due to unavailable ferry reservations.
- 83% have visited before, with an average of 5.3 overnight trips in the past two years.
- The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is strong at 57.4, meaning many visitors actively recommend the Sunshine Coast to others.
- Visitors want more public washrooms, accommodations, and community events.

Visitor Activities:

- Outdoor activities are the biggest draw, with 51% participating in hiking, 23% paddleboarding, and 21% kayaking.
- Nearly seven-in-ten visitors reported visiting beaches, lakes, and/or rivers.
- 46% of peak summer season visitors visited a farmers market
- 56% of visitors dine at local restaurants, and 47% shop for groceries, showing strong engagement with local businesses.
- Beach visits, breweries, shopping, and cultural attractions are also popular.

Visitor Spending:

- The average visitor spends \$245 per person per trip; (this includes day trippers and those staying with friends/family)
- Overnight visitors staying in paid accommodations spend an average of \$379 per person per trip.
- **Total direct visitor spending is estimated at \$256 million from July 2023 to June 2024.**



Questions or Comments?

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