



Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association: Huntsville Travellers Impressions of Huntsville

pollara
strategic insights

August 2020

Research Methodology

- An online survey was conducted a sample of N=804 adult (18+) between July 27th and August 5th, 2020.
- Participants were contacted from a list of people who travelled to Huntsville and stayed in local accommodation.
- Email invitations were sent to potential participants by the Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association partners (accommodations or resorts in Huntsville).
- Surveys were conducted between July 29 and August 17, 2020.



Key Findings

COVID-19 is making Huntsville visitors hesitant to travel outside of Ontario, but most are willing to make travel plans in province.

- Prior to COVID-19, a majority of visitors who have stayed in Huntsville had booked their travel plans for summer and fall. Travel within the province was most popular in the summer and fall months. In the winter these travellers were booking more international travel than in-province trips.
- Because of COVID-19, most visitors to Huntsville have cancelled summer travel plans outside of Ontario. These travellers are far more comfortable travelling within the province and a majority have not cancelled local travel. Those who have cancelled, are likely to replace cancelled plans with in-province travel either going on daytrips or travelling to destinations within Ontario.
- Travellers are hesitant about keeping fall and winter travel plans outside of Ontario and are likely to cancel destinations to other parts of Canada and abroad. Only a third believe they will still travel within Canada and few are considering travelling outside of Canada, similar to the summer months. Those who have cancelled will wait to see what happens or will consider trips within the province.
- Overall, fewer of these travellers currently have travel plans compared with before the COVID-19 outbreak. However, they are booking travel within the province at the same rate as before the COVID-19 outbreak. These travellers say they are travelling because they need to get away or outside the city.
- Covid-19 is changing the priorities of travelers and most are thinking about staying safe and taking precautions when travelling including ensuring that accommodations are following COVID-19 safety protocols and limiting plane travel. A majority, however, feel safe travelling within the province.

Huntsville meets expectations of visitors, offering a variety of outdoor activities

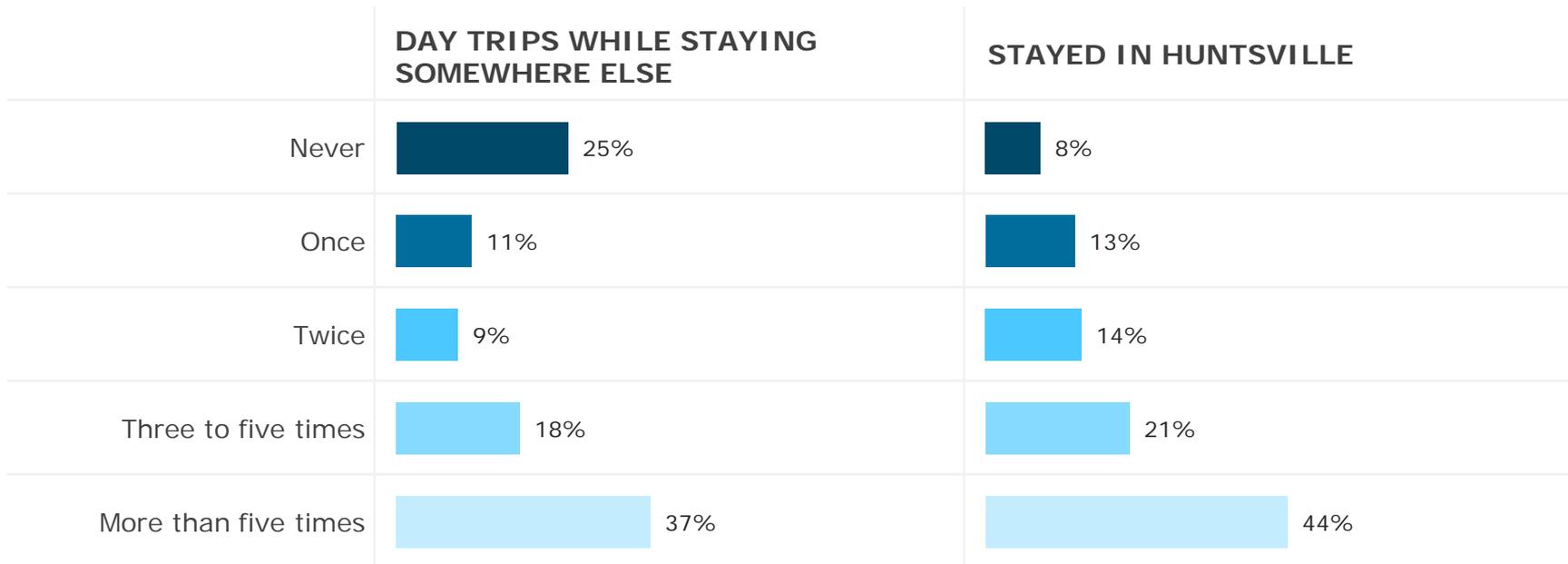
- Huntsville visitors tend to book trips that are a week to less than a week rather than long term stays. A majority have stayed in a full resort that offers dining and activities rather than other forms of accommodation. They are satisfied with what Huntsville has to offer and activities and local sites more than meet travellers' expectations.
- Huntsville is a competitive destination with many other areas of the province and is a preferred destination for these travellers. They like the area and want to return. The number of activities Huntsville has on offer and the close proximity to provincial parks are appealing to this group.
- These travellers are more familiar with downtown Huntsville for shopping, provincial parks and the ski resorts. They are less familiar with local trails for hiking and skiing, the wildlife reserve or the Lion's Lookout. While they have heard of activities such as the Group of Seven Gallery and Treetop Trekking, fewer have engaged in these activities. These travellers, however, would be interested in these lesser known activities in addition to the attractions they are familiar with, such as the provincial parks.
- These travellers are sold on Huntsville and consider it a preferred provincial destination, so hearing about the Huntsville offerings did not encourage them to consider a visit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Frequent travellers to Huntsville are sold on the area and Huntsville does not need to fight against any negative impressions among Ontario travellers. It is a popular area of Muskoka and is a preferred travel destination compared to most other areas of Ontario.
- However, these travellers would likely appreciate knowing more of what Huntsville has to offer outside the well known attractions (the provincial parks and downtown area).
- Huntsville's primary draw is its beautiful scenery and outdoor activities. This keeps travellers coming back to the area. But increasing awareness in other sides of Huntsville, such cultural activities, dining/patio options or shopping, could enhance visitor's perception of what Huntsville has to offer and make it even more desirable as a destination.
- And increased focus on the different offering of Huntsville could further differentiate it from other areas of Muskoka, increase the lengths of stay to the area and provide more reasons to travel through winter months.

Regular travellers to Huntsville tend to make multiple visits

- Travellers who stay in Huntsville tend to be frequent visitors. More than two fifths (44%) have stayed more than five times and another fifth (21%) have stayed three to five times.
- Daytrips into Huntsville are also popular with close to two-fifths (37%) saying they made a daytrip to Huntsville while staying somewhere else and another fifth (18%) saying three to five times.



Base: **Total** (N=804)

SCR6. How many times have you visited Huntsville, either as a daytrip when staying somewhere else, or while staying in Huntsville?

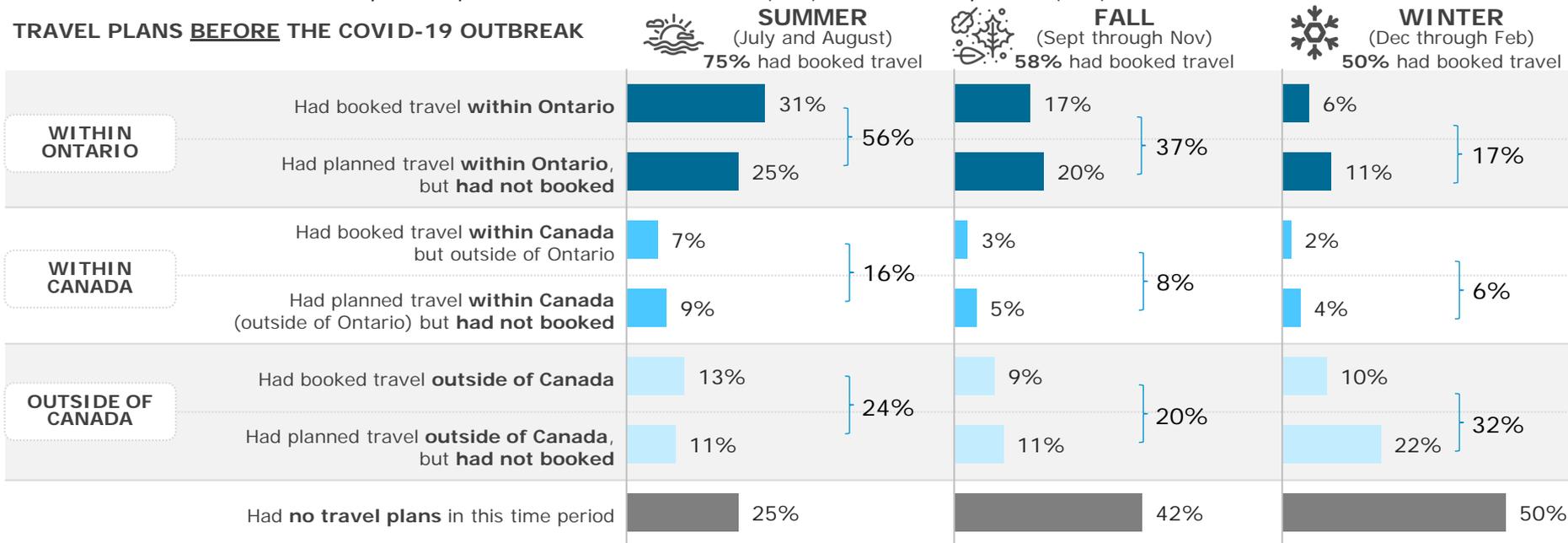


A. Travel During COVID-19

Prior to COVID-19, travellers were most likely to be traveling within Ontario in the summer or fall and outside Canada in the winter

- Prior to COVID-19 just over half (56%) of travellers had booked or planned travel within Ontario over the summer, while less than a fifth (16%) say they had booked or planned travel within Canada and a quarter (24%) outside of Canada.
- In the fall, close to two-fifths (37%) had planned travel within Ontario, very few (8%) within Canada, and only a fifth (20%) had international travel plans.
- In the winter travelers were more likely to have planned travel outside of Canada (32%) than within the province (17%).

TRAVEL PLANS BEFORE THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK



Base: **Total** (N=804)

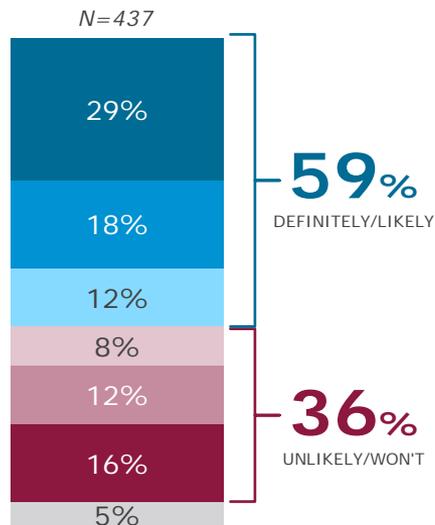
AI. Now we would like to understand how the COVID-19 outbreak in Canada has impacted your travel plans over the next few months. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, had you booked or plan any travel in the following time periods? Please include travel where you were staying at paid accommodations for at least one night (hotel/motel, resort, house/cottage rental, campground), not travel where you were staying with friends or family, at a vacation home that you own or daytrips.

Travellers who booked summer travel within the province are most likely to travel as planned

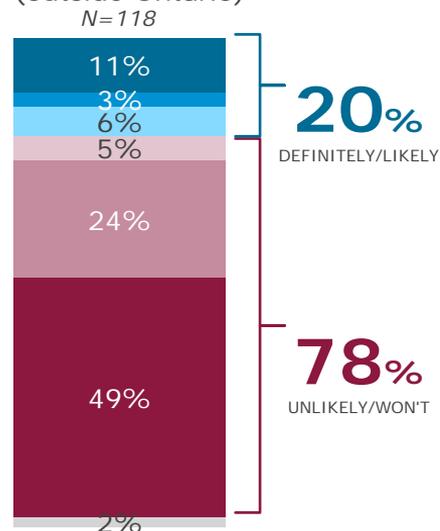
- A majority of travellers (59%) who planned travel within the province are likely to keep their plans with close to a third (29%) saying they have confirmed plans and a fifth (18%) very likely to still travel. Only a third (36%) have cancelled, or are likely to cancel, travel plans to provincial destinations.
- Eight in ten (78%) travellers planning travel within Canada (outside the province) are likely to cancel their plans.
- And most (86%) are unlikely to travel outside of Canada, with three quarters (76%) having already cancelled their plans.



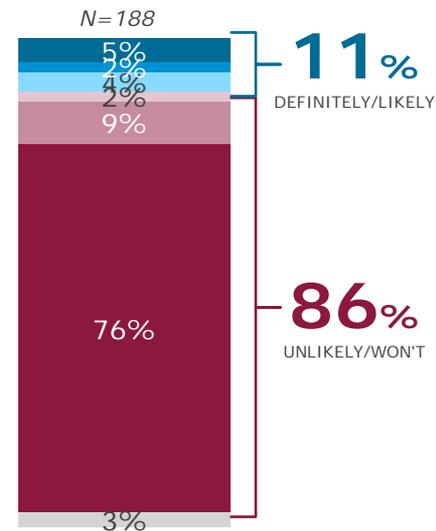
Travel within Ontario



Travel within Canada (outside Ontario)



Travel outside Canada



Base: Those Who Have Booked Or Planned Over The Summer

A2. Please consider the travel plans you had made for the summer, before the outbreak of COVID-19. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, how likely do you think it is that you will be traveling as planned?

Because of COVID-19, travel within the province will replace other travel plans

- Travellers cancelling their pre-COVID travel plans are likely to travel within the province with two fifths planning to travel to destinations within the province (44%) and/ or go on daytrips instead of longer vacations (39%).
- Less than a third say they will stay home (29%) or save money to travel when it's safe (28%) or advisable (26%).



PLANS FOR SUMMER SINCE COVID-19 OUTBREAK: Ontarians planning to travel within the province



In province options to replace travel

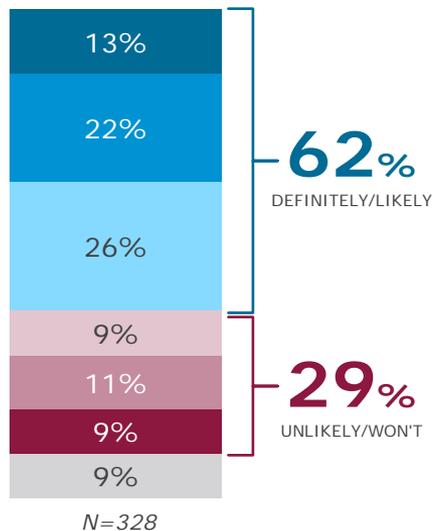
Fall/ winter travellers most likely to travel as planned within Ontario; more hesitant to travel outside the province and won't outside of country

- A majority of Ontarians (62%) who booked travel within the province for the fall/ winter are likely to keep their plans although few have confirmed plans (13%).
- Travellers are cautious when travelling outside of the province, with only a third (33%) planning to travel to other parts of Canada as planned and most (80%) are likely to not travel internationally.

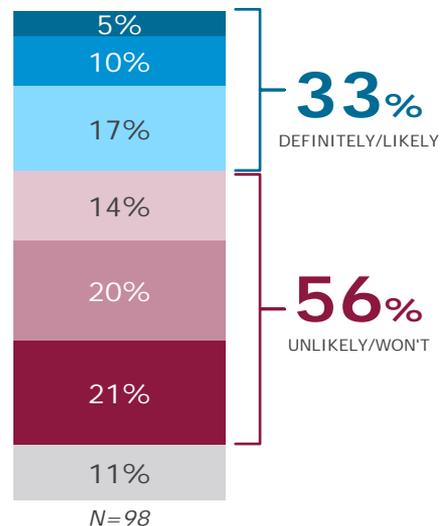
PLANS FOR THE **FALL OR WINTER**
BEFORE COVID-19 OUTBREAK



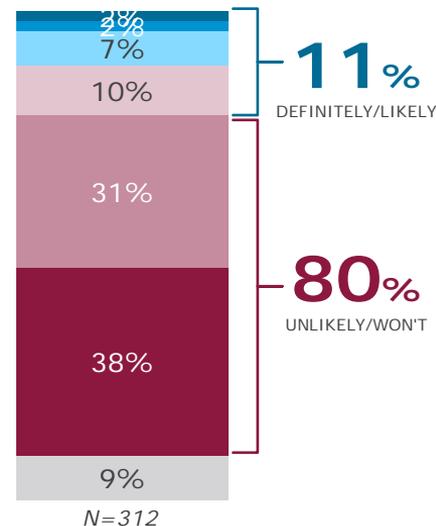
Travel within Ontario



Travel within Canada
(outside Ontario)



Travel outside Canada



Base: **Those Who Had Booked Or Planned In Fall Or Winter in A1**

A4. You mentioned that you had made plans to travel in the Fall or Winter. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, how likely do you think it is that you will be traveling as planned?

Because of COVID-19, travellers cancelling plans will stay home or wait until travel is advisable

- Just over a third of travellers will stay home (35%) or wait to see if travel is advisable at a later date (34%).
- And close to a third (29%) say they plan to travel within Ontario as an alternative and a quarter (24%) are planning daytrips.



PLANS FOR FALL/ WINTER SINCE COVID-19 OUTBREAK: A third of travellers will consider an Ontario destination



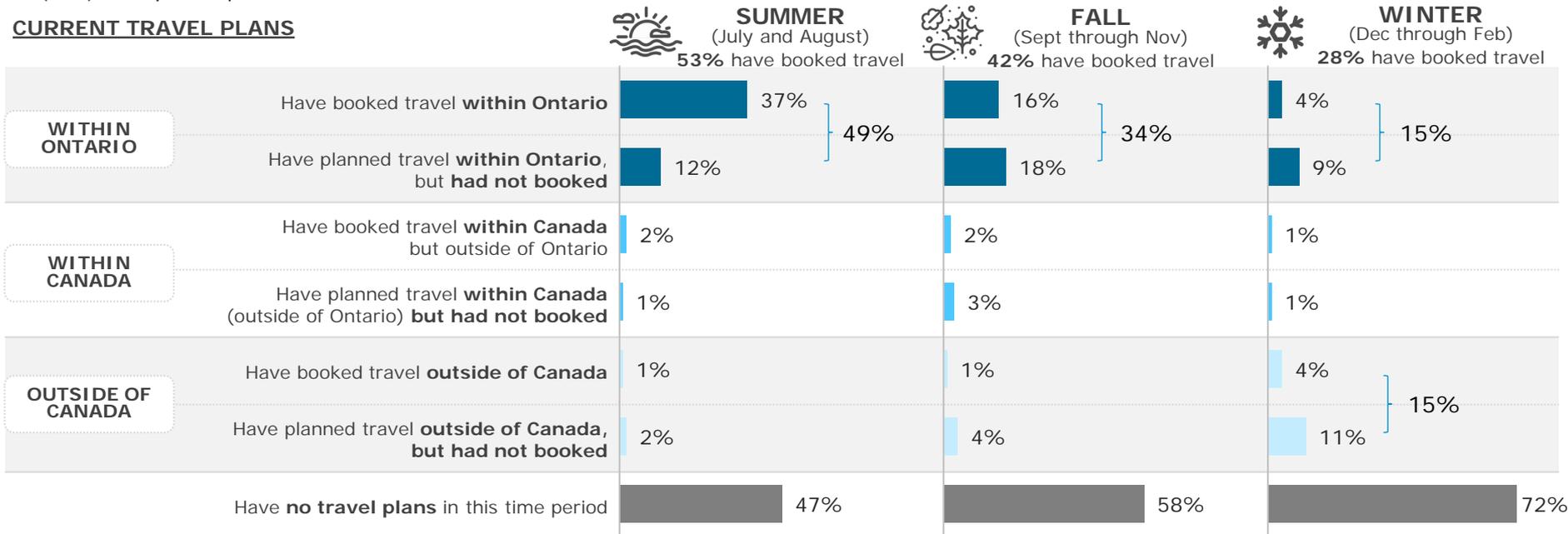
Base: **If Somewhat/Very Unlikely or Definitely Won't in A4** (N=345)

A5. What do you think you will be doing instead of your initial travel plans this Fall or Winter?

Fewer travellers have made travel plans than before COVID-19 – In-province travel most popular

- Currently half (49%) of travellers have booked or planned travel within Ontario over the summer and a third (34%) for the fall. Few (15%) in the winter months.
- Few travellers have booked travel for other parts of Canada for any season (5% or less).
- Although less than a third (28%) have winter travel plans, international travel is more popular in the winter and these travellers are just as likely to travel abroad (15%) as they are in-province.

CURRENT TRAVEL PLANS



Base: **Total** (N=804)

A6. Considering plans you made before or since the outbreak of COVID-19, do you currently have any travel plans in any of the following time periods?

Travellers booking travel because they need to get away or out of the city

- A majority (59%) of travellers who booked or are planning travel this summer say they need to get away. And just over a third would like to get out of the city (37%) or feel they are spending too much time at home (34%).
- Summer travel is important to this group with a third saying they always travel in the summer (33%) or want to do something to replace other travel (31%).
- Few are travelling because of cancellations of summer camps for kids (13%) or festivals and events (10%) because of COVID-19.



REASONS FOR TRAVEL PLANS THIS SUMMER

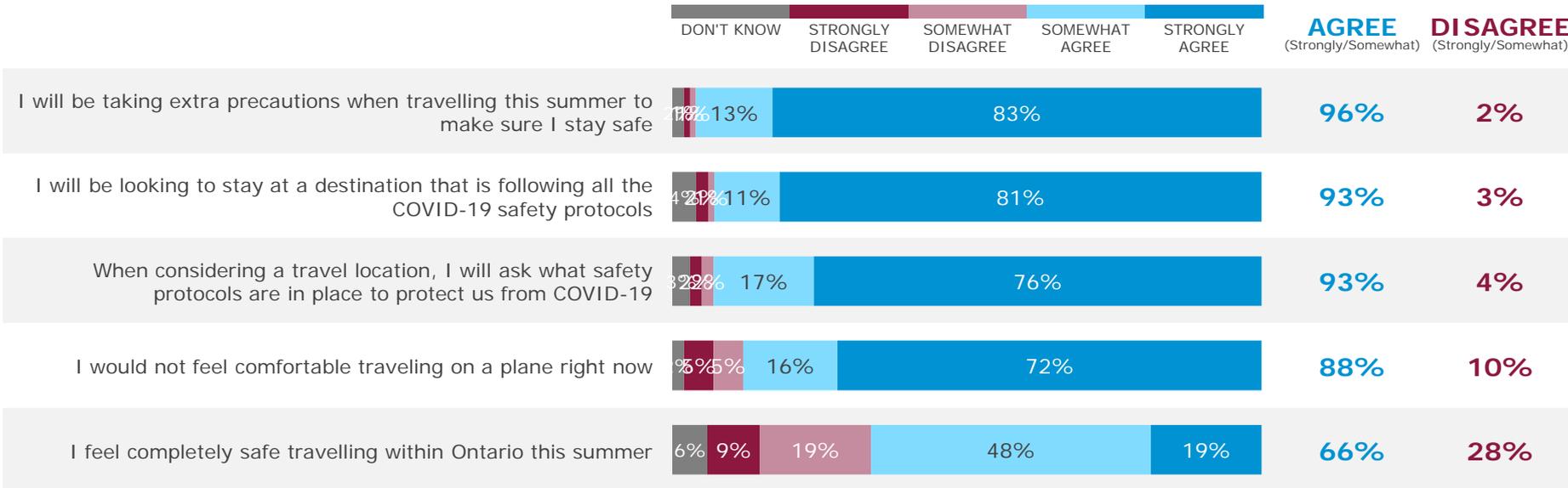


Base: **Those who Booked Or Planned Travel This Summer** (N=427)

A7. Why have you made these travel plans for this summer?

Because of COVID-19 travellers are cautious and take safety precautions when travelling

- Almost all travellers are taking extra precautions this summer to make sure they are safe when travelling (96%), will be staying at destinations that are following COVID-19 protocols (93%) and will ask what safety protocols are in place (93%).
- And most (88%) would not feel comfortable on a plane right now.
- However, despite the precautions, a majority (66%) feel safe travelling in Ontario this summer.



Base: **Total** (N=804)

A8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

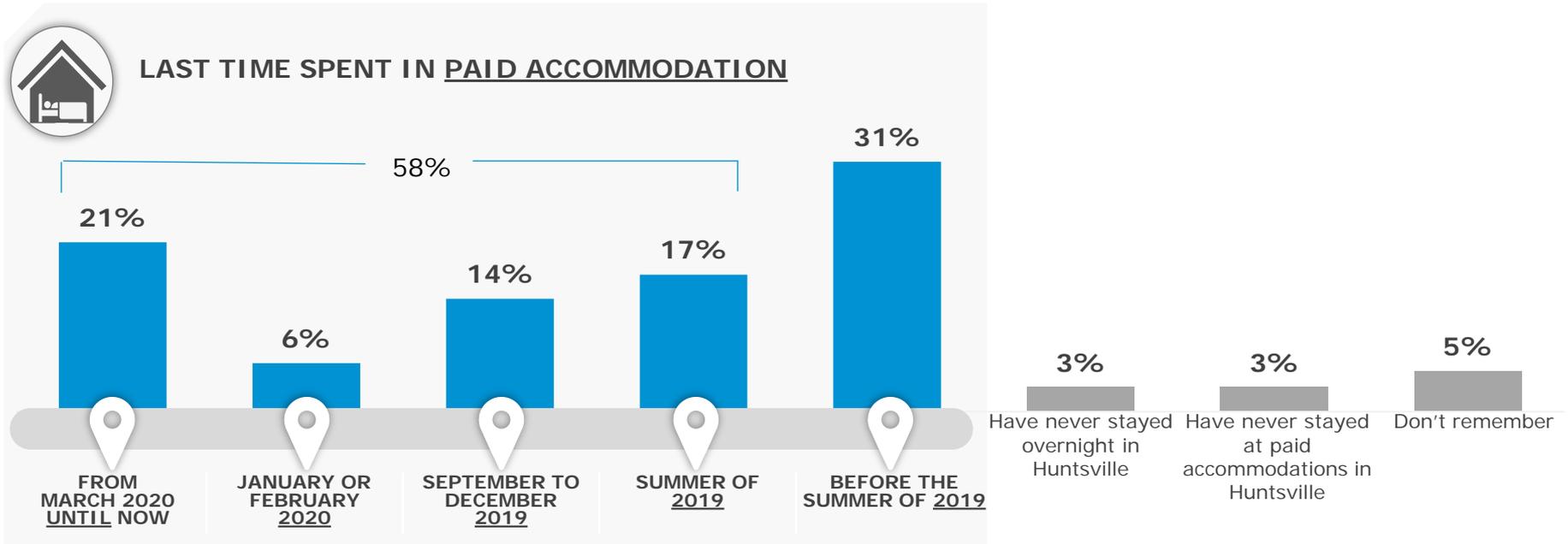


B. TRAVEL TO HUNTSVILLE

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A majority of travellers have stayed in paid accommodation in the past year

- A majority (58%) of the travellers have stayed in paid accommodation since last summer with a quarter (27%) saying they paid for accommodation in 2020.
- A third (31%) say their last stay was before the summer of 2019.

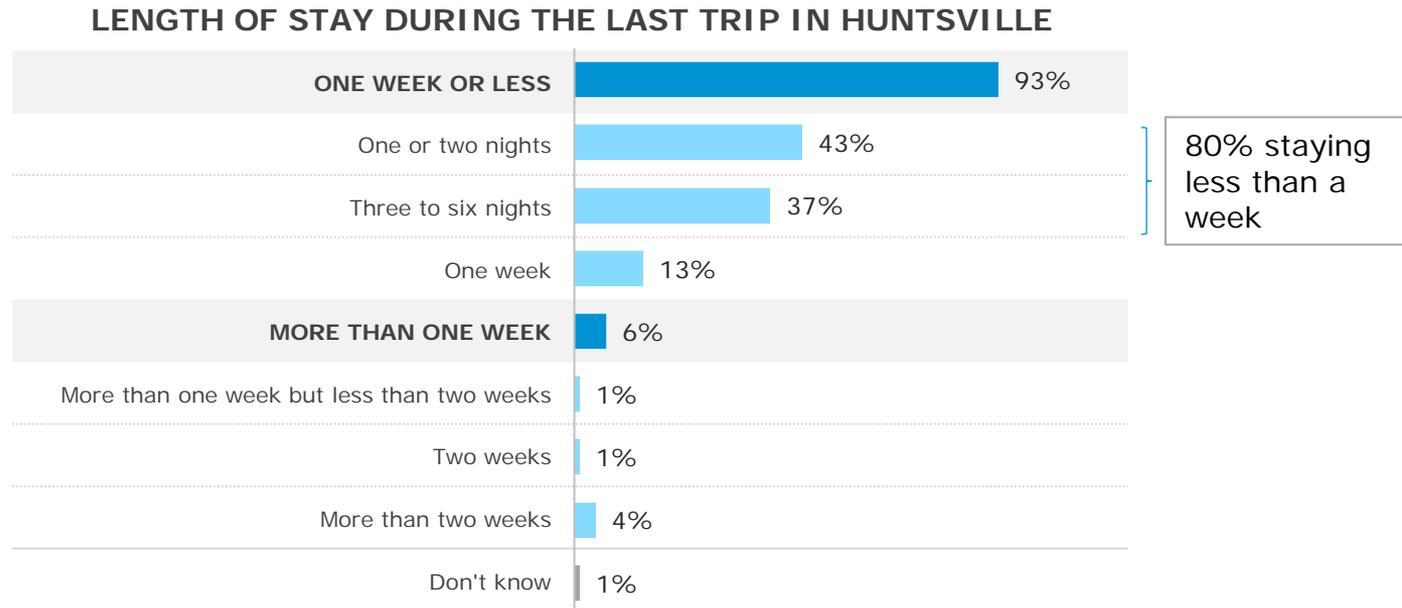


Base: **Total** (N=804)

B1. Now, we would like to understand your last trip to Huntsville Ontario. When was your last trip to Huntsville? Please consider a time when you spent at least one night in paid accommodations in Huntsville, rather than just day trips or trips where you stayed with family or friends

Most Travellers do short stays rather than extended vacations

- Almost all (93%) travellers stayed for a week or less with one in eight (80%) staying less than a week.



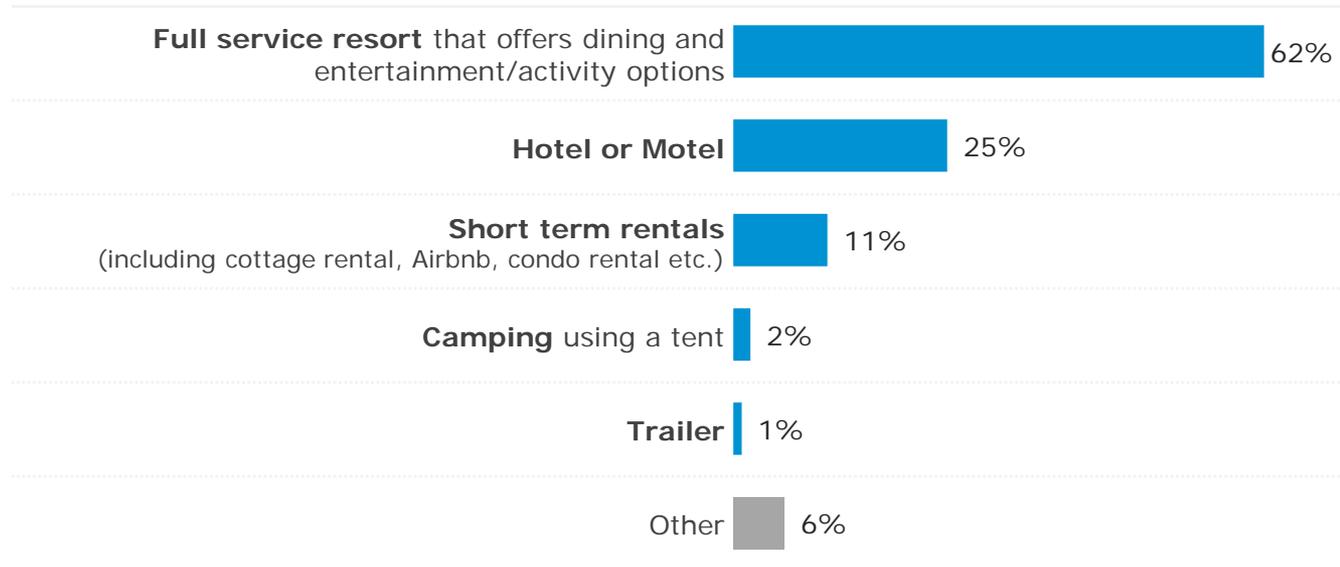
Base: **Those Answering Excluding Those Who Have Never Stayed in Huntsville In B1** (N=506)

B2. How long did you stay during your last trip to Huntsville?

Full service resorts are popular with frequent travellers

- A majority (62%) of travellers stayed at a resort that offered activities and dining while only a quarter (25%) stayed at a hotel or motel.

TYPE OF ACCOMMODATIONS

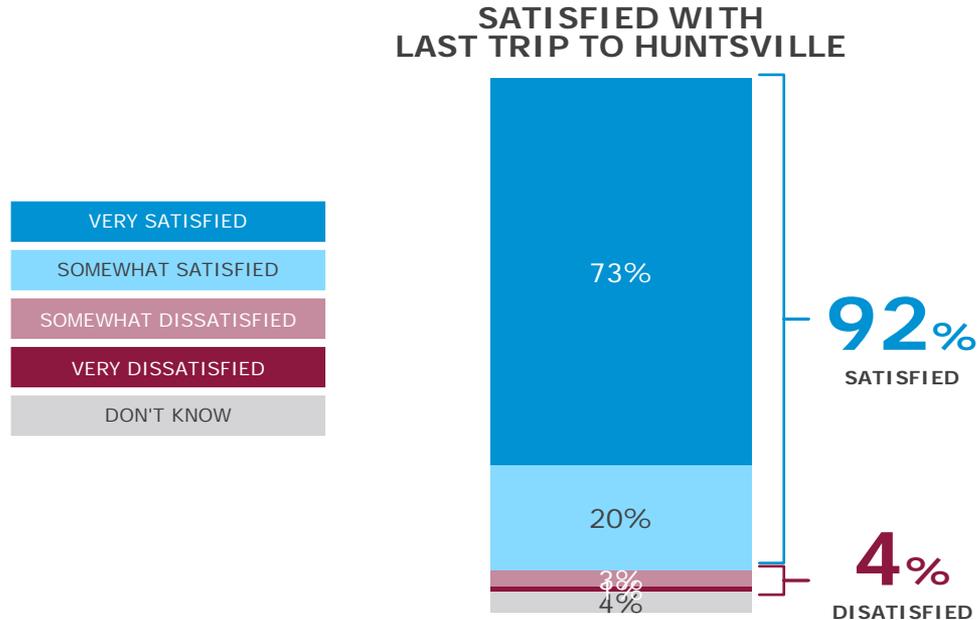


Base: **If Stayed Overnight Or Paid Accommodations In B1** (N=755)

B3. And what type of accommodations did you stay at during this trip?

Travellers to Huntsville are satisfied with their last trip

- Almost all (92%) travellers to Huntsville were satisfied with their last trip with three quarters (73%) saying they were very satisfied.



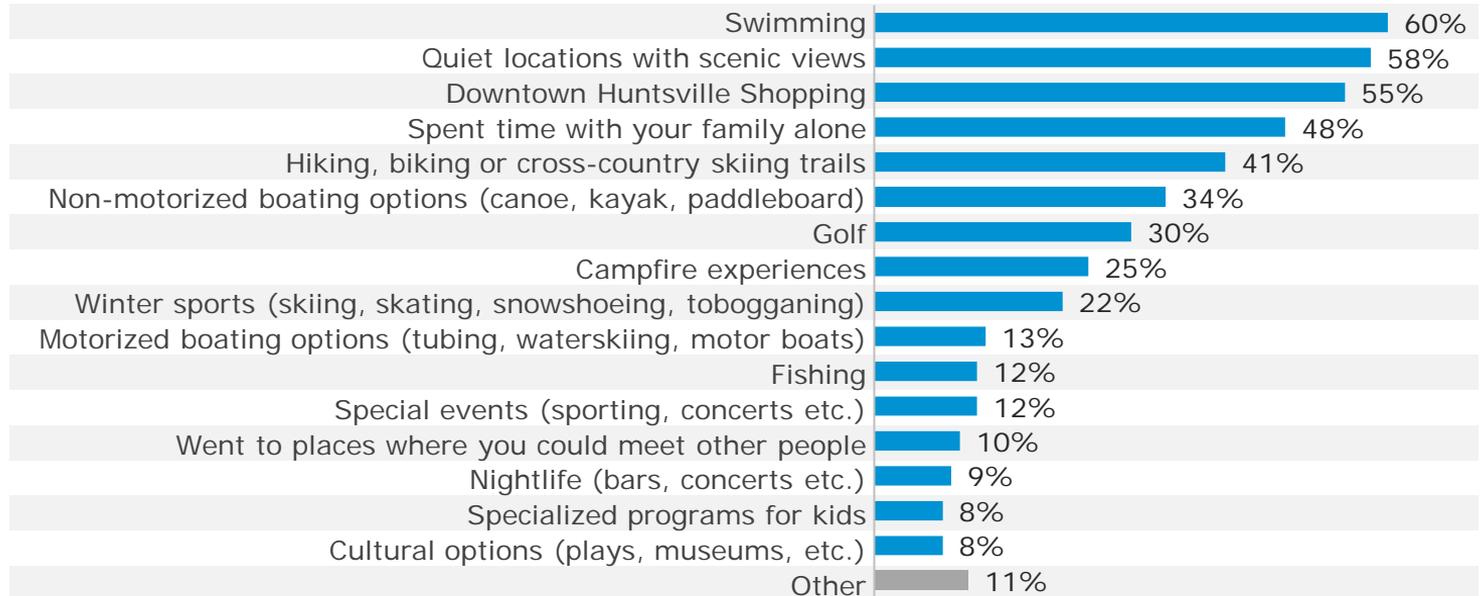
Base: **Total** (N=804)

B4. Overall, how satisfied were you with your last trip to Huntsville? (Again please consider the last time where you stayed overnight in Huntsville at paid accommodations).

Travellers enjoyed swimming, scenic views and shopping

- A majority of travellers say that while in Huntsville they took part in swimming (60%), the quiet location and views (58%) and the downtown Huntsville shopping area.
- Fewer of these frequent travellers say they used the trails (41%) or non-motorized boating (34%).

ACTIVITIES DONE IN HUNTSVILLE

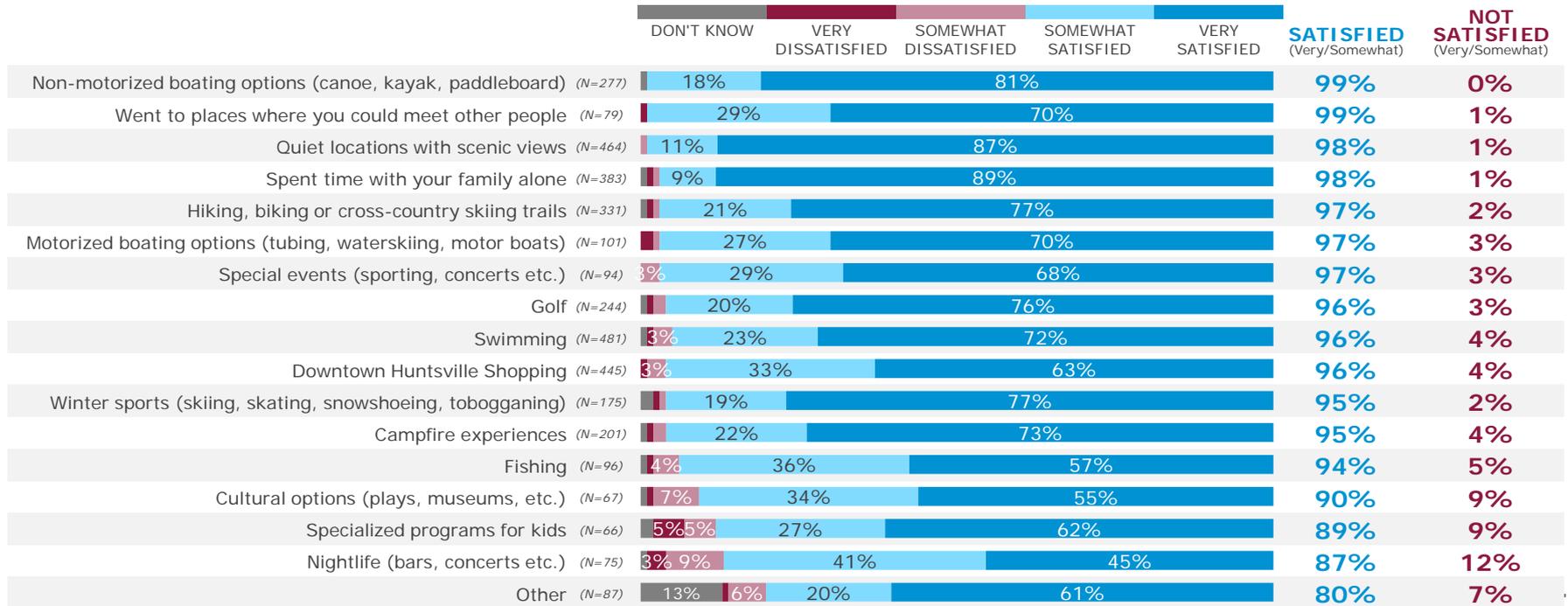


Base: **Total** (N=804)

B5. Which of the following activities have you taken part in, on your trips to Huntsville?

Activities in Huntsville met travellers' expectations

- Almost all travellers are satisfied with what Huntsville has to offer whether choosing to use the lakes for boating, quiet locations with scenic views, or engaging in activities such as hiking or special events.



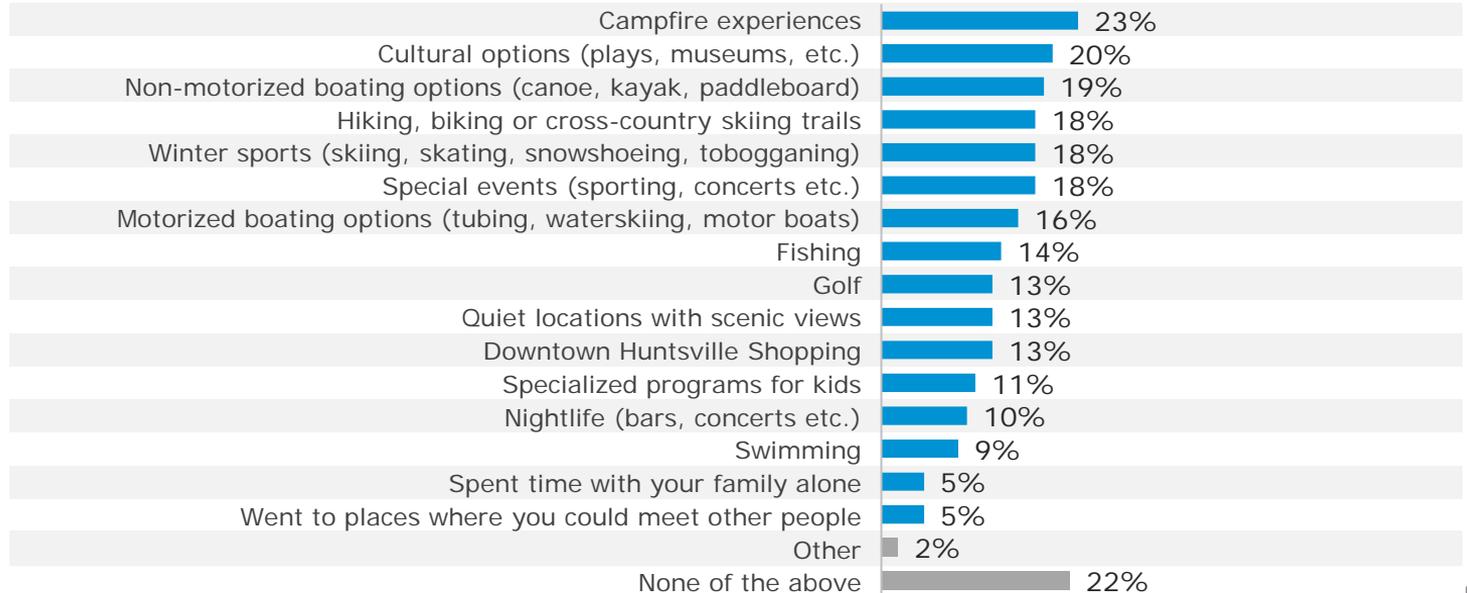
Base: **Those Answering** (N=varies)

B6. And how satisfied were you with each of the following in Huntsville?

Travellers open to participating in other activities offered in Huntsville

- Travellers to Huntsville are open to a number of activities they haven't participated in during previous visits. A quarter (23%) would be interested in a campfire experience and a fifth in cultural events (20%), non-motorized boating (19%), the trails (18%) or winter sports (18%).

ACTIVITIES WOULD BE INTERESTED IN DOING IN HUNTSVILLE

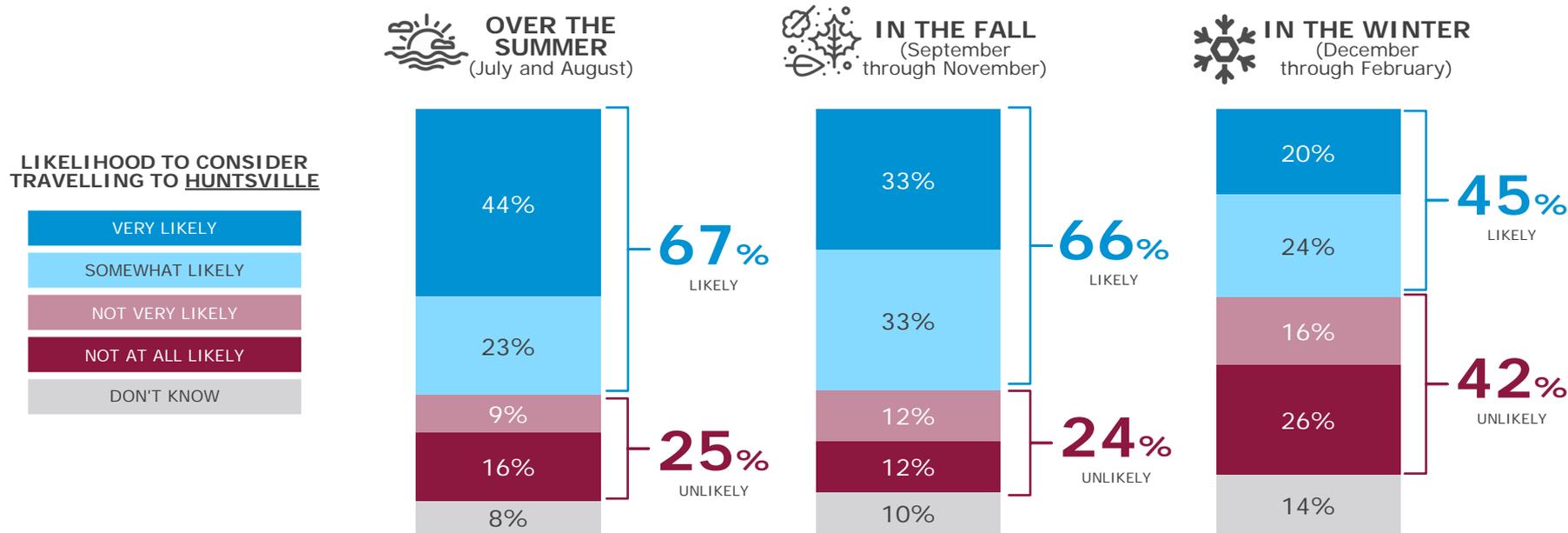


Base: **Total** (N=804)

B7. Are there any activities that you did not take part in on past trips, but that you would be interested in doing in Huntsville? Please select all that apply

Summer/ fall most popular season for visiting Huntsville

- A majority of travellers are likely to consider Huntsville as a destination in the summer (67%) and fall (66%) while only two-fifths would consider Huntsville in the winter.

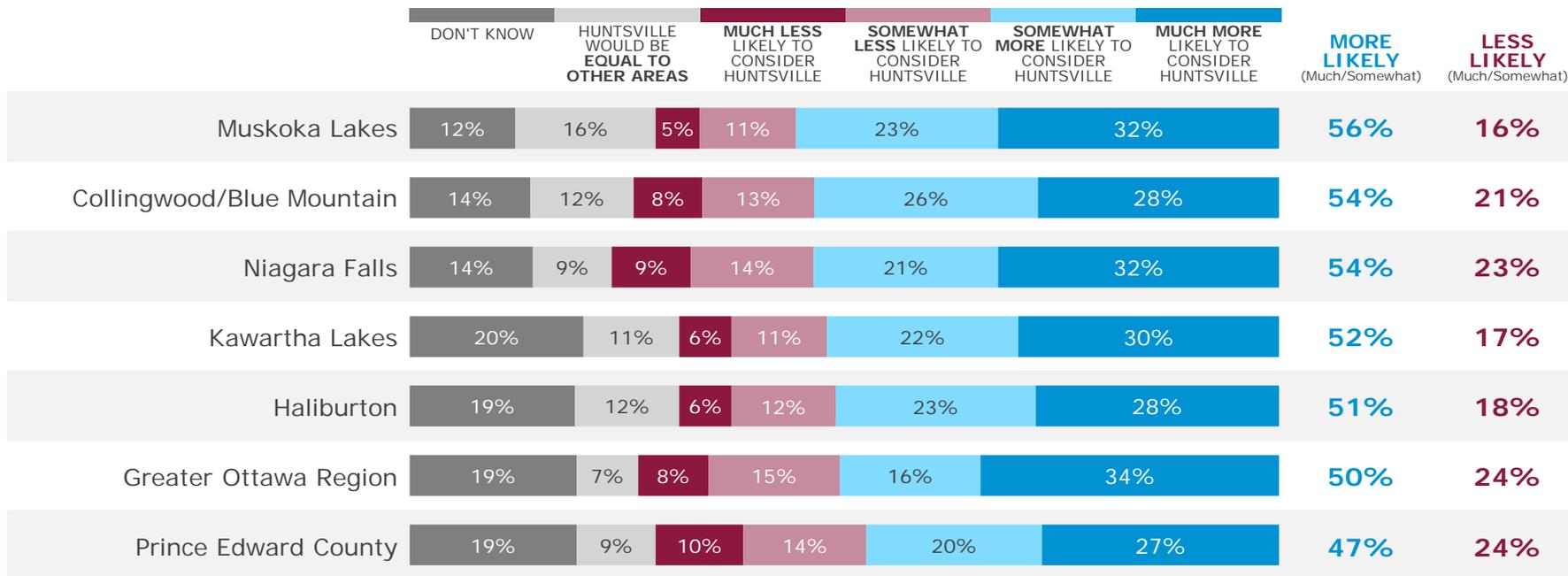


Base: **Total** (N=804)

B8. How likely would you be to consider a trip to Huntsville Ontario in each of the following time periods?

Travellers prefer Huntsville over other areas in Ontario

- When given a choice between Huntsville and other areas in Ontario, frequent travellers to the area are more likely to choose Huntsville. More than half prefer Huntsville over Muskoka Lakes (56%), Collingwood/ Blue Mountain (54%) or Niagara Falls (54%).



Base: **Total** (N=804)

B9. How likely would you be to consider a trip to Huntsville over each of the following travel destinations if you were planning a trip within Ontario?

Travellers who prefer Huntsville have multiple reasons including familiarity and scenery

- A fifth of travellers who prefer Huntsville say their preference is because of past experience (21%), close proximity (19%) and scenic beauty (18%).
- Activities are not as top-of-mind with less than ten percent saying outdoor activities (9%) or water activities (5%).

REASONS FOR VISITING HUNTSVILLE

21%	Have been before/visited in the past/familiar with area/good experience
19%	Close/proximity/not to far/easy drive
18%	Scenic/northern landscape/Canadian Shield/it is pretty/beautiful
12%	Family/friends near/know people there/family cottage/own property/rent a cottage/time share
12%	Good/great/interesting/nice/like/love it (unspec)
12%	Deerhurst Resort/love/like
11%	Accommodation/resorts/hotels/cottage rentals
9%	Outdoor activities/great outdoors/adventure/camping/hiking/trails/cycling/golf/skiing
9%	Small town/quaint/charming/quiet/laid back



8%	Close to parks/provincial parks/Arrowhead/Algonquin
6%	Less crowded/less busy/safer/can social distance/less Covid
6%	Variety/many options/choices/activities (unspec)
5%	Water activities/fishing/boating/kayaking/the lakes/close to water
5%	Good restaurants/bars/breweries
4%	Nature/nature setting/green
4%	Good shopping/variety of shops
2%	Have never been/like to discover new areas/something new
2%	Fall colours/foliage/colour change/fall destination

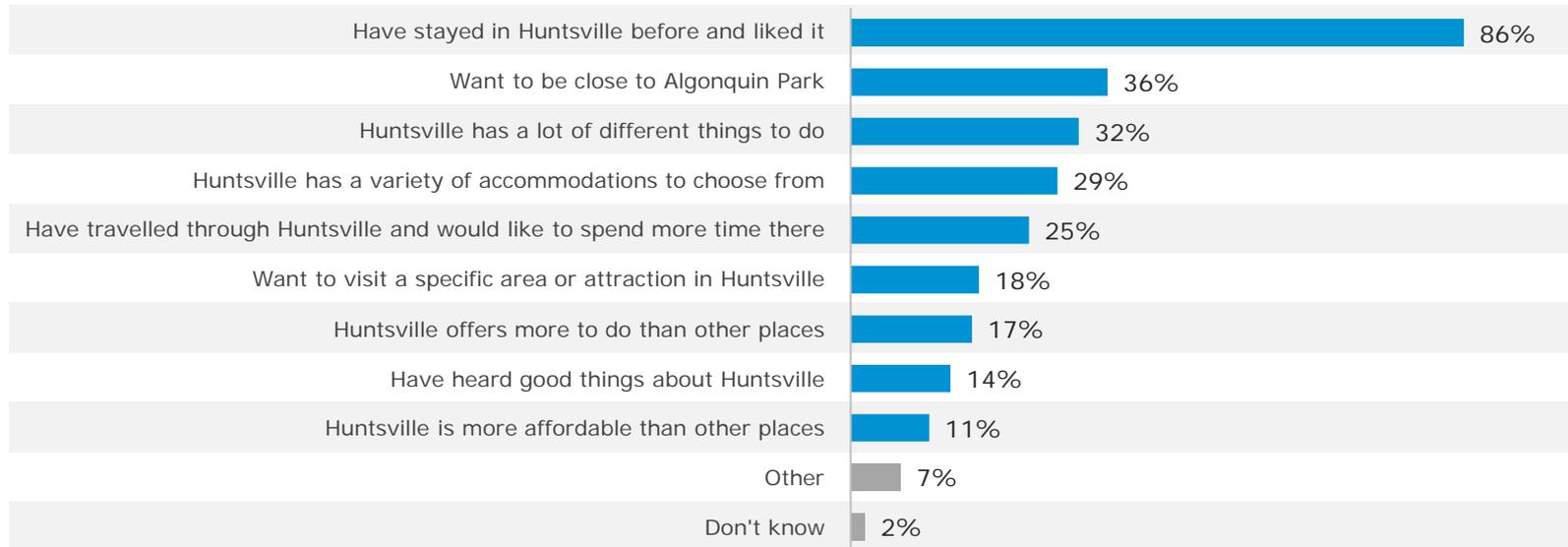
Base: **If Much/Somewhat More Likely To Consider Huntsville Than Any Other In B9** (N=667)

B10. Why are you more likely to visit Huntsville compared to their areas of the province? Please be as specific as possible.

Familiarity and exposure to Huntsville drives travel to the area

- Most (86%) travellers who are more likely to consider Huntsville say it is because they stayed in Huntsville before and liked it while another quarter (25%) say they travelled through Huntsville before and would like to spend more time there.
- In addition to familiarity, a third want to be close to Algonquin Park (36%) or say that Huntsville has a lot of different things to do (32%).

REASONS FOR MORE LIKELY TO CONSIDER HUNTSVILLE

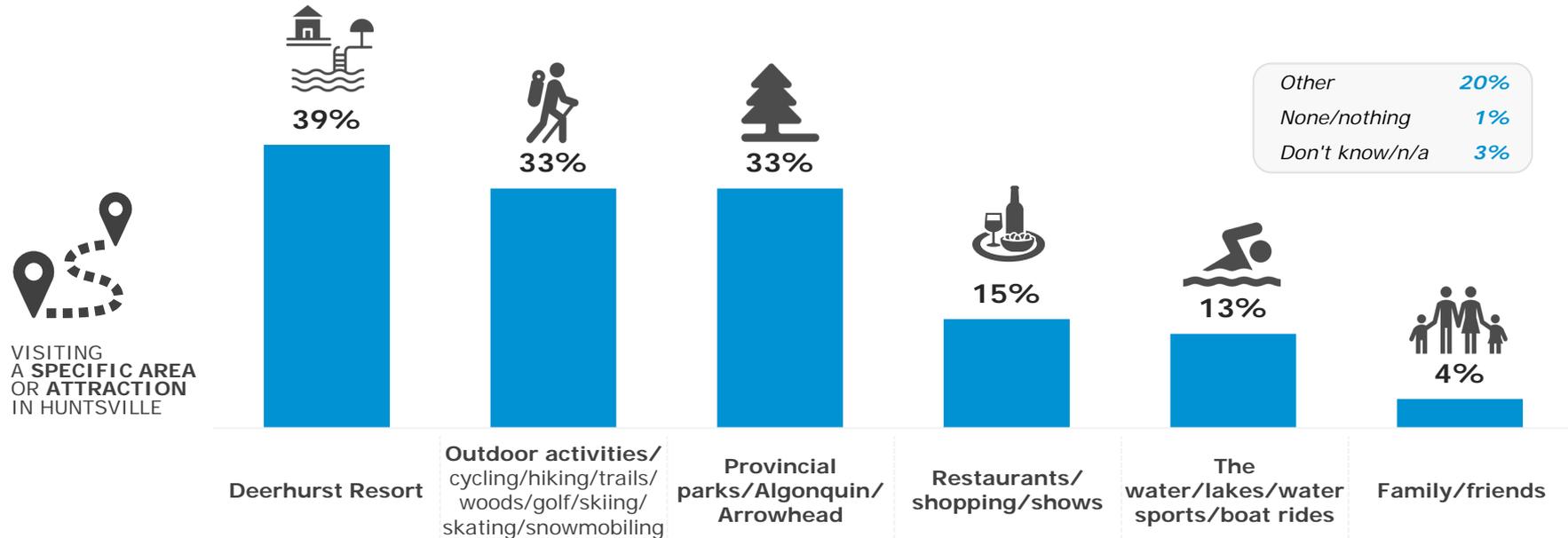


Base: **If Much/Somewhat More Likely To Consider Huntsville B9** (N=667)

B11. Which, if any, are reasons that you are more likely to consider Huntsville compared to other areas of the province?

Travellers seek out Deerhurst resort, outdoor activities and provincial parks

- Two fifths (39%) of travellers who say they are seeking out a specific area or activity mention the Deerhurst Resort.
- As well, a third are interested in outdoor activities (33%) and the close proximity to provincial parks (33%).



Base: **If Want To Visit A Specific Area Or Attraction In Huntsville In B11** (N=117)

B12. You mentioned that you are likely to visit Huntsville to see a specific area or attraction. What specifically would you like to see?

Travellers not choosing Huntsville because they want to try other destinations in the province

- Travellers are less likely to choose Huntsville because they are interested in other destinations either because they believe another destination may have more to offer (27%) or they have already visited Huntsville and would like to try something new (16%).



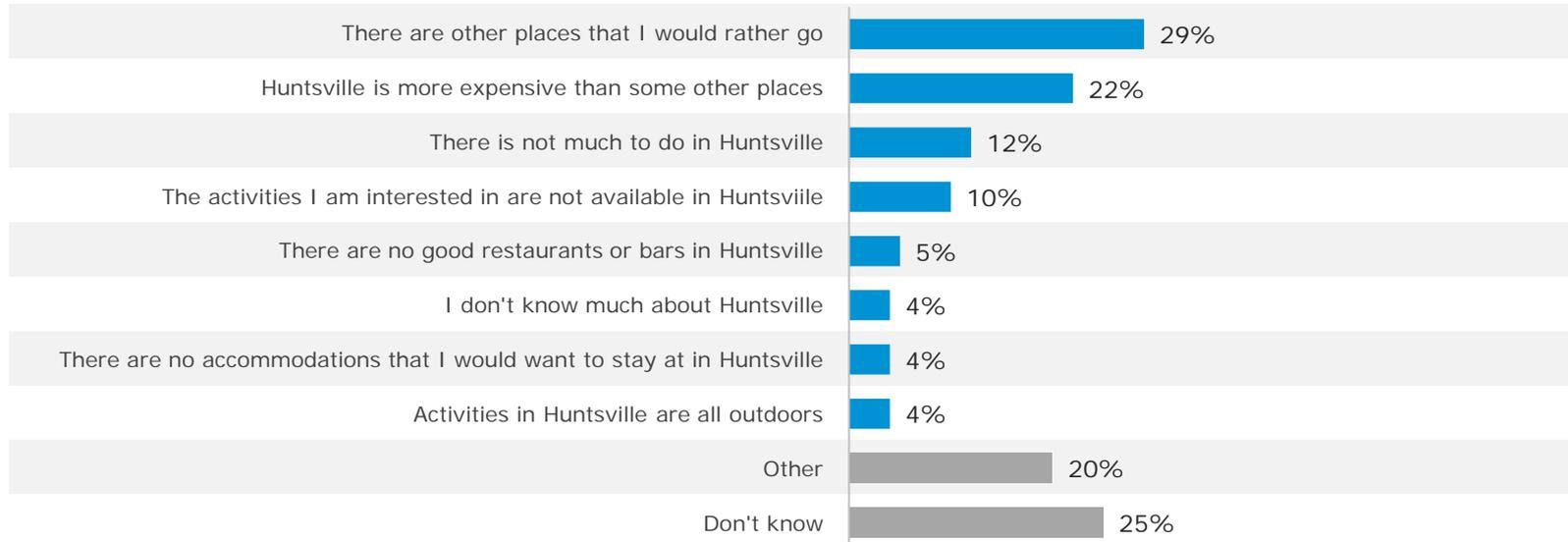
Base: **If Somewhat/Much Less Likely To Visit Huntsville Than Any Other Place In B9** (N=407)

B13. Why are you less likely to visit Huntsville compared to other areas of the province? Please be as specific as possible.

When presented with reasons, travellers are interested in other destinations instead of Huntsville

- Close to a third (29%) of travellers did not choose Huntsville because there are other places they would rather go.
- Another fifth (22%) believe Huntsville is too expensive.

REASONS FOR LESS LIKELY TO CONSIDER HUNTSVILLE

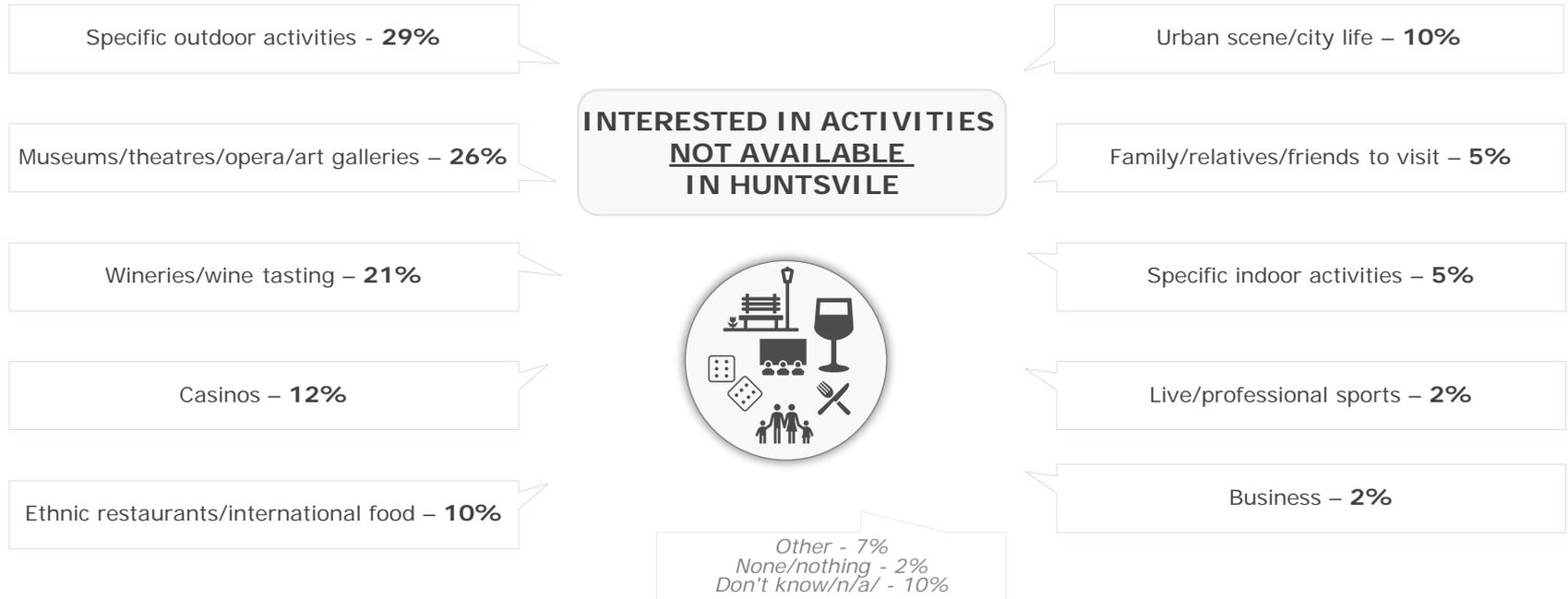


Base: **If Somewhat/Much Less Likely To Consider Huntsville In B9** (N=407)

B14. Which, if any, are reasons that you are less likely to consider Huntsville compared to other areas of the province?

Travellers not interested in Huntsville are seeking out specific outdoor or cultural activities

- Close to a third (29%) of travellers who say the activities they are interested in are not in Huntsville are seeking out specific outdoor activities (26%) or they are interested in cultural activities such as museums or art galleries.
- Another fifth (21%) are interested in wine tasting and visiting wineries.

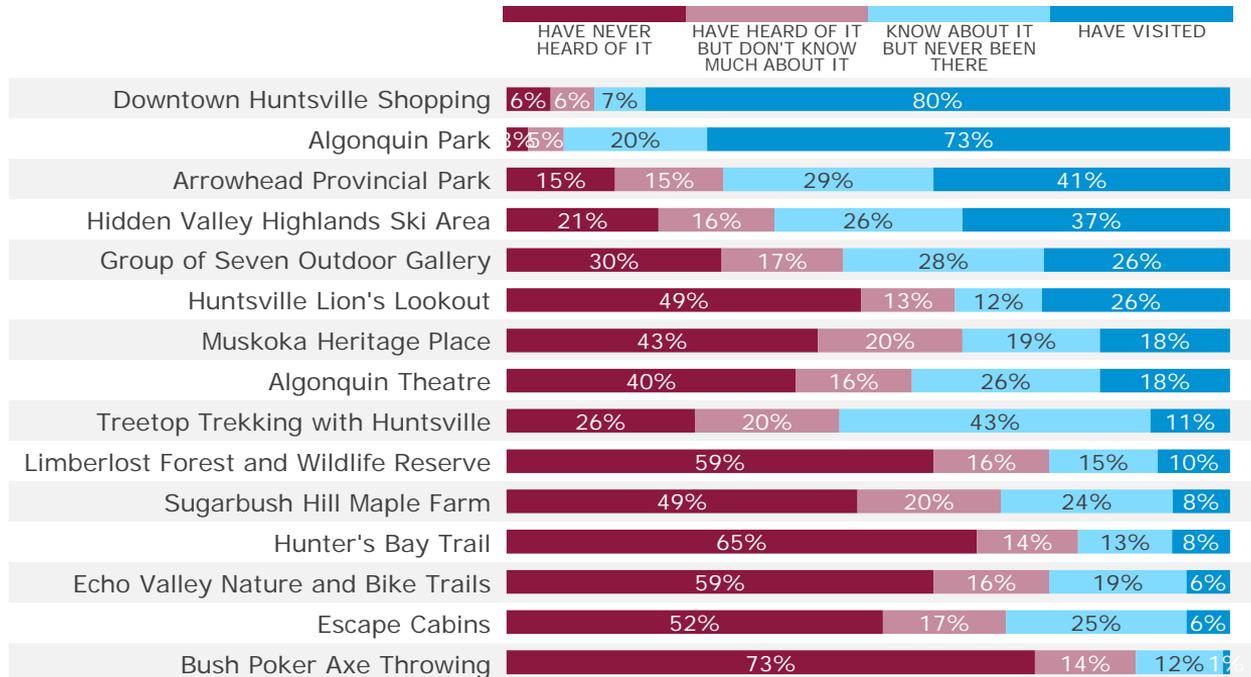


Base: **If The Activities I Am Interested In Are Not Available in Huntsville** (N=42)

B15. What activities are you interested in that would not be available in Huntsville?

Downtown Huntsville is the most visited area followed by nearby provincial parks

- Eight in ten (80%) travellers have visited downtown Huntsville shopping district and almost all have heard of it.
- Algonquin Park is also a popular destination with three quarters (73%) saying they have visited. Although Arrowhead provincial park is not as well known as Algonquin, two-fifths (41%) have visited and most (85%) have heard of it.
- Close to two-fifths (37%) have visited Hidden Valley ski area and a majority have at least heard of it.

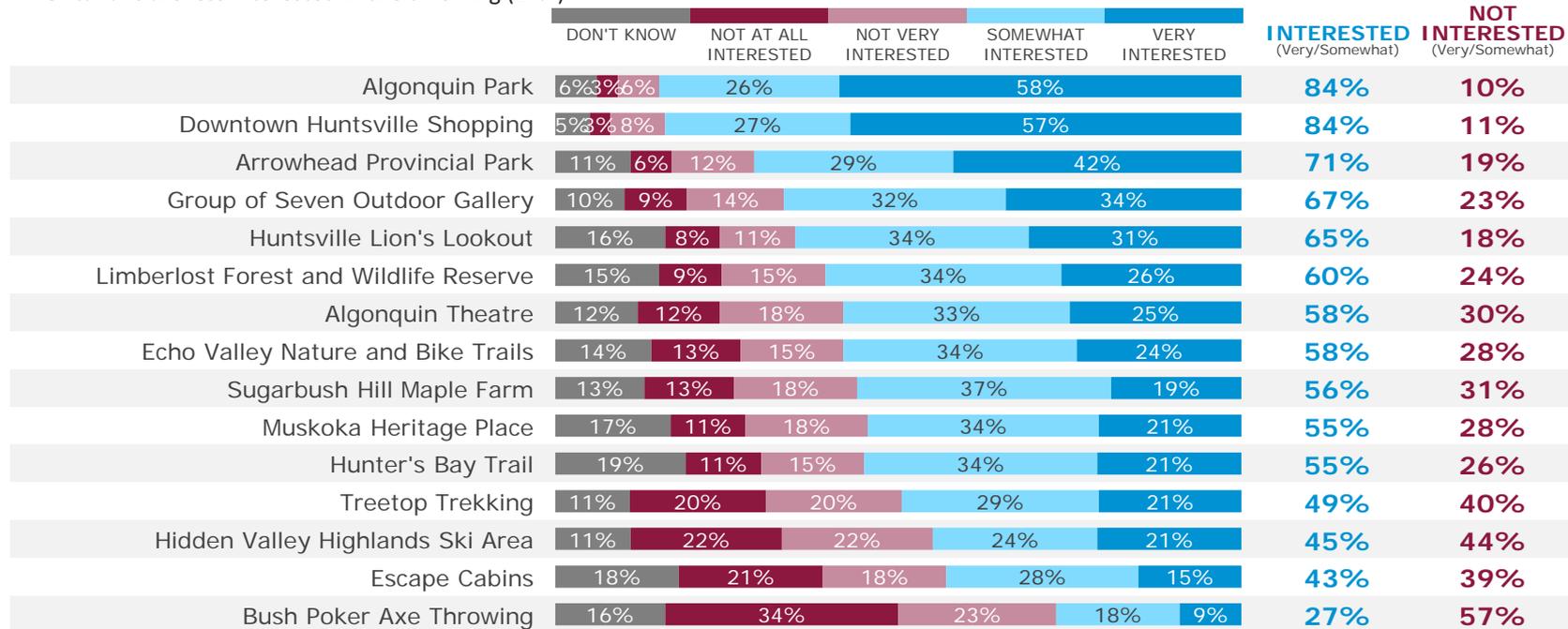


Base: **Total** (N=804)

B16. How familiar are you with each of the following:

Provincial parks and downtown Huntsville are appealing to travellers as a place to visit

- Most (84%) travellers are interested in visiting Algonquin Park and a majority (71%) are interested in visiting Arrowhead Provincial Park.
- Downtown Huntsville shopping is as appealing to travellers as Algonquin with most (84%) saying they would be interested in visiting.
- A majority would also be interested in the Group of Seven Outdoor Gallery (65%) and the Lion's Lookout (60%).
- Ontarians are less interested in axe throwing (27%).

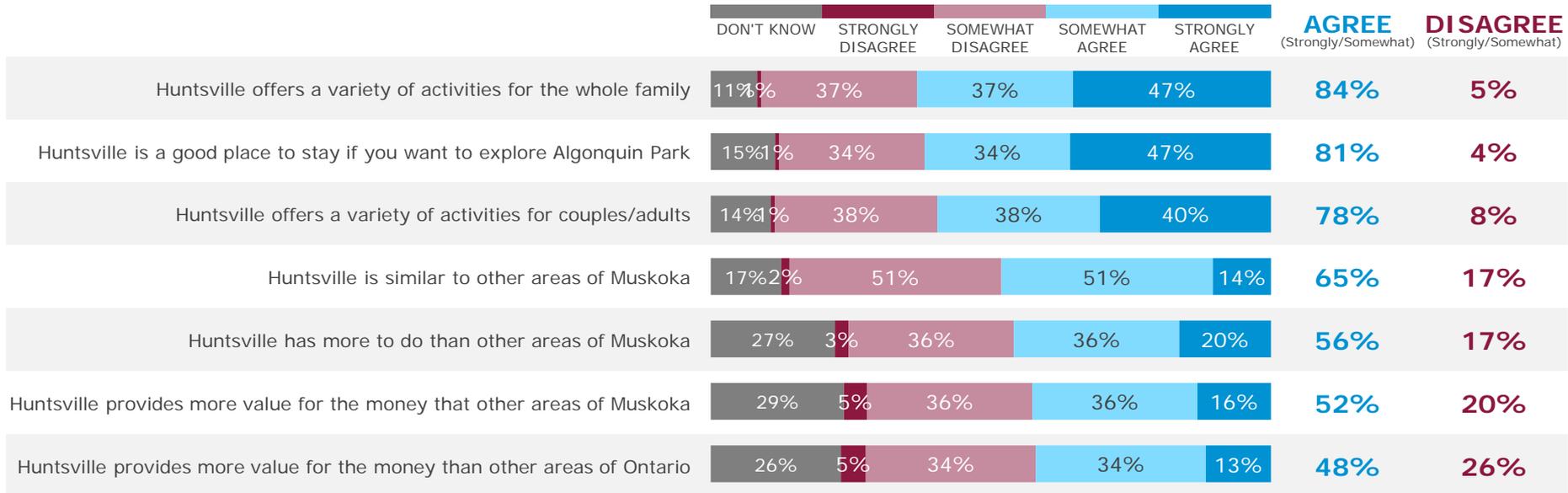


Base: **Total** (N=804)

B17. And how interested would you in visiting each of the following? If you have visited it in the past, please indicate your interest in visiting it again.

Among travellers Huntsville is known for activities and close proximity to Algonquin

- Eight in ten agree that Huntsville offers a variety of activities for both the family (84%) or for adults/ couples (78%).
- And most (81%) see Huntsville as a good place to stay if visiting Algonquin Park.
- Frequent travellers are less likely to agree that Huntsville offers more than close by areas: Only just over half believe that Huntsville has more to do than other areas of Muskoka (56%) or is better value for money (52%).

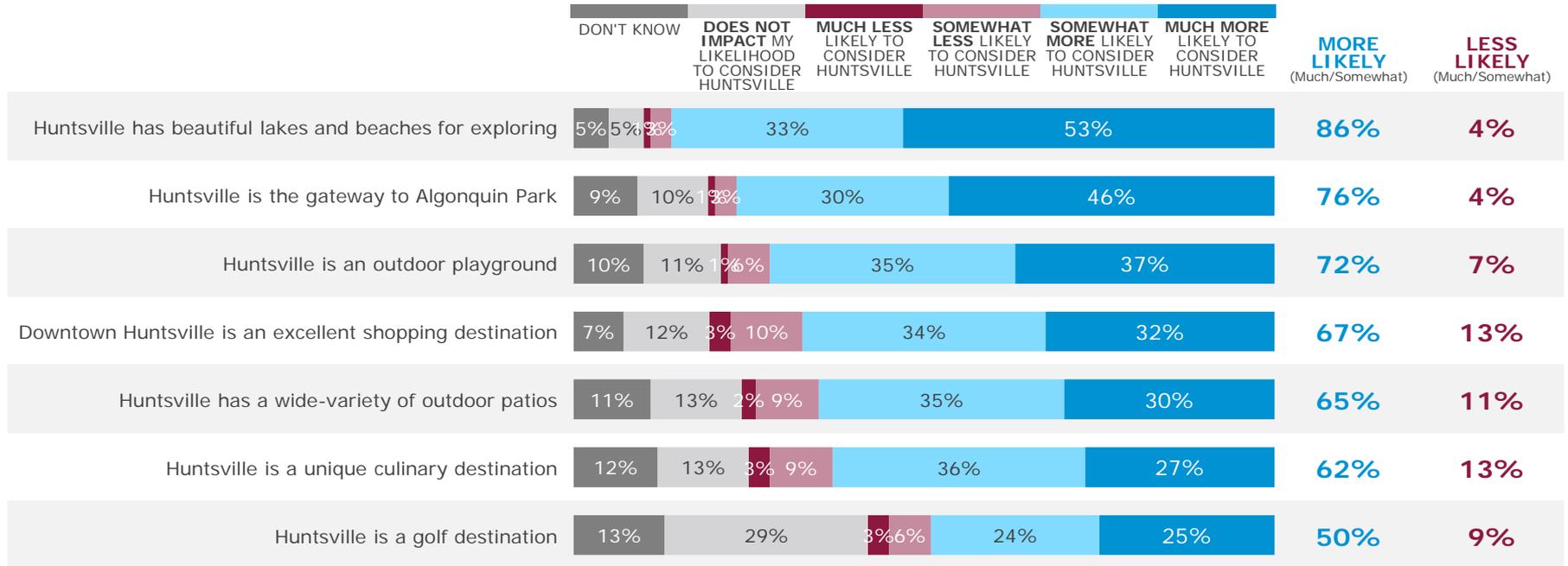


Base: **Total** (N=804)

B18. Based on what you may have seen, read or heard about Huntsville, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Huntsville as a 'beaches and lake' destination and 'gateway to Algonquin' resonate with travellers

- Most (84%) travellers responded to 'Huntsville has beautiful lakes and beaches for exploring' saying they are more likely to consider Huntsville as a vacation destination after reading the description.
- 'Gateway to Algonquin Park' also resonated with three quarters (76%) of travellers, followed by 'Huntsville is an outdoor playground' (72%).



Base: **Total** (N=804)

B19. The following are statements that are about Huntsville. For each of the following, how does this statement impact your likelihood to consider Huntsville as vacation destination?

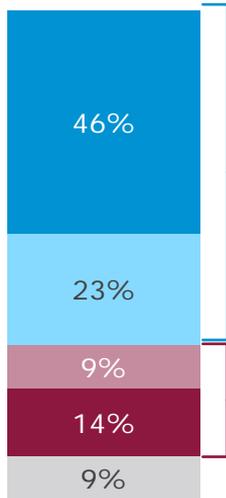
Frequent visitors are sold on Huntsville and are likely to consider another visit

- Hearing about Huntsville during the survey did not significantly increase the number of travellers who would consider a trip to the area. A majority would still consider visiting in the summer (69%) or the fall (70% - a small increase of 4%) and two fifths in the winter.
- Just over half (56%) would consider a trip next spring.

Prior to hearing about Huntsville:

67% LIKELY

 **OVER THE SUMMER**
(July and August)

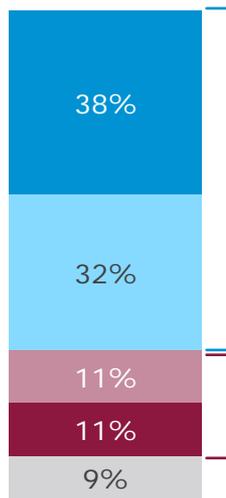


69% LIKELY

23% UNLIKELY

66% LIKELY

 **IN THE FALL**
(September through November)

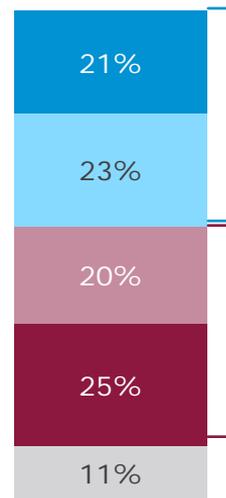


70% LIKELY

22% UNLIKELY

45% LIKELY

 **IN THE WINTER**
(December through February)

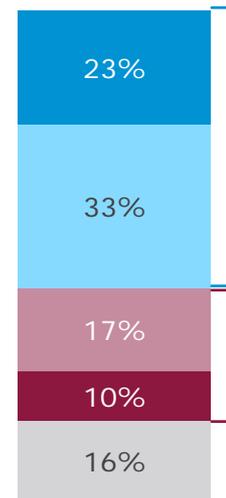


44% LIKELY

45% UNLIKELY

56% LIKELY

 **SPRING 2021**



56% LIKELY

28% UNLIKELY

Base: **Total** (N=804)

B20. Thinking about all you have heard about Huntsville today, how likely would you be to consider a trip to Huntsville in each of the following time periods?

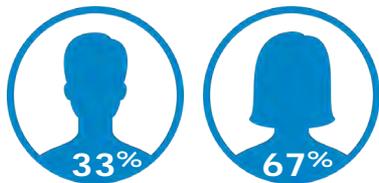


Demographics

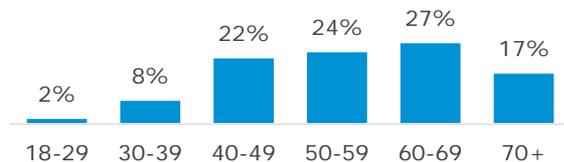
pollara
strategic insights

Demographics

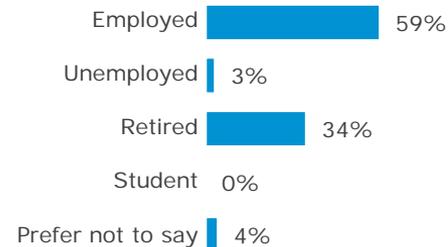
GENDER



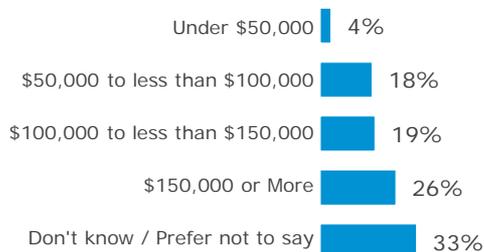
AGE



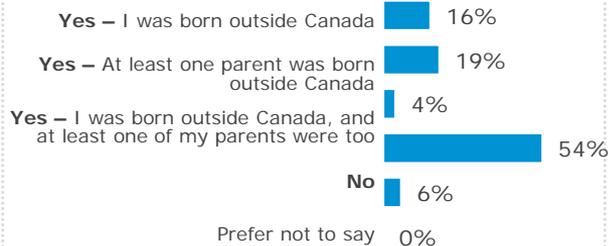
EMPLOYMENT STATUS



INCOME



BORN IN/OUTSIDE CANADA



CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD

