



## Great Britain Tourism Survey: 2023 overall and Quarter 4 (October to December)

---

Published: 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024

 Visit  
Scotland | Alba<sup>TM</sup>

# Domestic GB Tourism Statistics (Overnight Trips) Quarter 4 2023 (October to December)

## Introduction

The statistics in this release are based on a new combined online survey that replaces the separate Great Britain Tourism Survey and Great Britain Day Visits Survey that ran until the end of 2019.

These statistics are used to monitor domestic tourism demand and measure the contribution and impact of domestic tourism on the visitor economy. A key purpose of these statistics is to uncover insights into market trends over time. Changes in survey methodology introduced in 2021, together with the interruption in data collection due to COVID-19, mean that results published in this release are not directly comparable with data published for 2019 and previous years. Please see the 2022 Methodology and Quality Report and accompanying Background Quality Report for further details.

Detailed results for England and Wales are being published by [VisitEngland](#) and [Visit Wales](#).

These statistics are labelled as ‘Official Statistics in Development’ to enable testing and further modification to meet user needs. Further information on this is available on the [Office for National Statistics website](#).

**This statistical release contains annual estimates for 2023. This series will now be subject to a methodological review. Following this review, estimates published in this release will change. Please use caution in interpreting or using the estimates published here. For further information, please see the statement on methodological review.**

## Key Points

# Overnight Tourism Performance in 2023

### Summary of GB Overnight Tourism Performance 2023 (January to December)

- In 2023, Great Britain residents took 117.3 million overnight trips in Great Britain with 339.4 million nights and £30.9 billion spend overall.
- 11% of trips taken in GB included an overnight stay in Scotland.
- The average duration of GB trips during the reporting period was 2.9 nights with an average spend of £264 per trip and £91 per night.

### Summary of Scotland's Overnight Tourism Performance in 2023 (January to December)

- During 2023, Great Britain residents took 12.6 million overnight trips in Scotland with 34.6 million nights and £3.2 billion spent during these trips.
- When compared with 2022, volume of domestic trips and nights and value of spend was lower in 2023.
- Holiday visits were the most popular type of overnight trip to Scotland during 2023, followed by visits to friends and family.
- Cities and large towns were the preferred locations for most overnight visitors to Scotland during 2023, followed by small towns.
- The average spend on an overnight trip in Scotland in 2023 was £251 compared to £264 average for an overnight trip in Great Britain.
- The average spend per night in Scotland was £92 which was higher than the GB average, of £91.

### Summary of Scotland's Overnight Tourism Performance Quarter 4 2023 (October to December)

- Great Britain residents took 3.3 million overnight trips in Scotland with 8.8 million nights and £769 million spent during these trips.

## Domestic Trips, Nights and Spend in Great Britain, January to December 2023

During 2023, Great Britain residents took 117.3 million overnight trips in Great Britain with 339.4 million nights and approximately £30.9 billion spend overall. During the same period, there were 12.6 million overnight trips to Scotland with 34.6 million nights and a total expenditure of £3.2 billion. Approximately 85% of all overnight trips by British residents were to England, 11% were to Scotland and 7% were to Wales.

### Total volume overnight trips, nights and spend to each nation of Great Britain 2023

	Great Britain	England	Scotland	Wales
<b>Trips (millions)</b>	117.3	99.2	12.6	8.6
<b>% GB trips</b>	100%	85%	11%	7%
<b>Nights (millions)</b>	339.4	279.8	34.6	24.9
<b>% GB Nights</b>	100%	82%	10%	7%
<b>Spend (£ million)</b>	£30,942	£25,733	£3,174	£2,035
<b>% GB Spend</b>	100%	83%	10%	7%

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023

Great Britain tourism performance saw a decrease in 2023 compared with 2022 across trips, nights and spend.

### Domestic overnight tourism performance to Great Britain 2022/2023

Year	Trips (millions)	Nights (millions)	Spend (£ million)
<b>2023</b>	117.3	339.4	£30,942
<b>2022</b>	125.7	383.3	£32,882
<b>% change</b>	-7%	-12%	-6%

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2022/2023

Overall, the spend per night and spend per trip in Great Britain were higher in 2023 compared with 2022. Nights per trip were reduced.

Year	Spend/trip	Nights/trip	Spend/night
<b>2023</b>	£264	2.9	£91
<b>2022</b>	£262	3.0	£86
<b>% change</b>	1%	-5%	6%

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2022/2023

**Figures are provisional pending review – caution advised**

## Domestic Overnight Tourism Performance in Scotland, January to December 2023

A total of 12.6 million overnight trips were made to Scotland by residents of Great Britain between in 2023, staying for 34.6 million nights and spending £3.2 billion. Trips, nights and spend were all reduced in 2023 when compared with 2022.

### Domestic overnight tourism performance in Scotland 2022/2023

Year	Trips (millions)	Nights (millions)	Spend (£ million)
2023	12.6	34.6	£3,174
2022	13.5	40.9	£3,410
% change	-6%	-15%	-7%

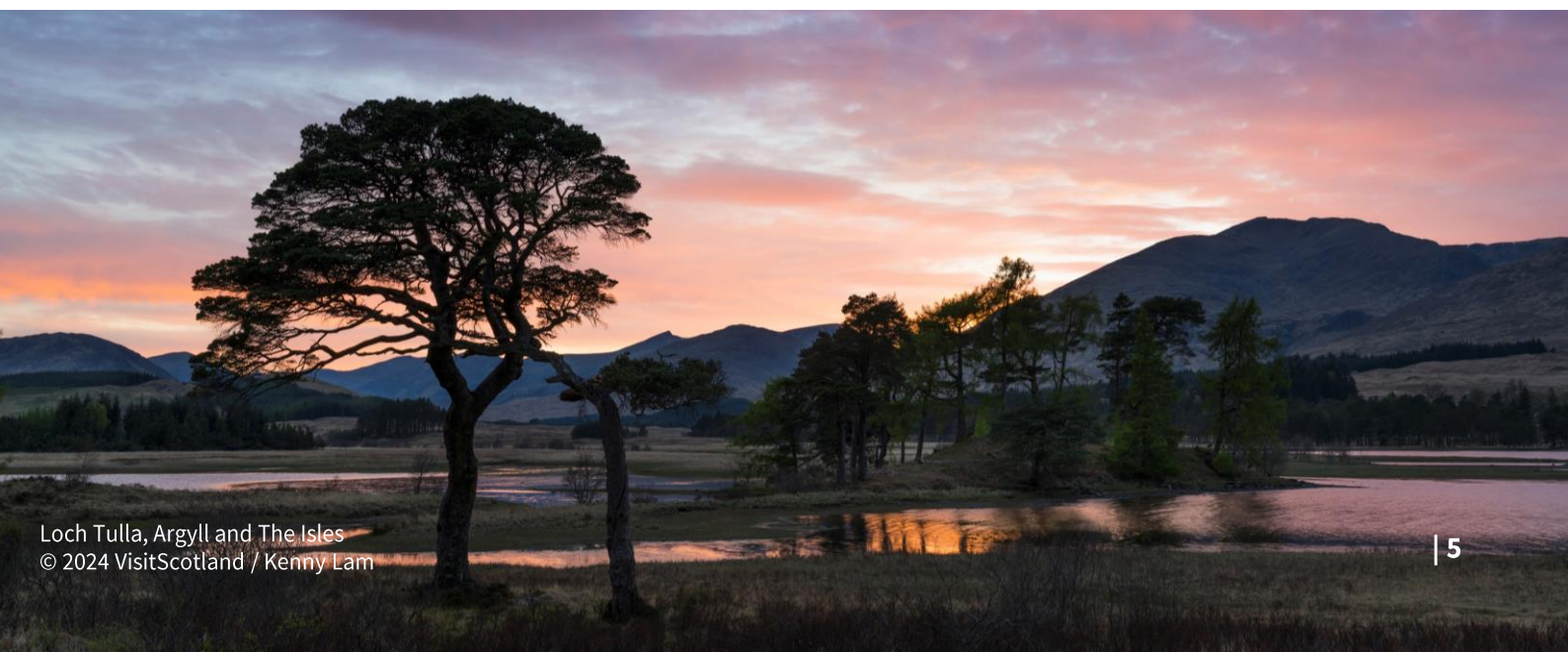
Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2022/2023

The average domestic overnight visitor in Scotland in 2023 spent a total of £251 over a 2.7 night trip with a daily expenditure of £92. The average spend per trip for domestic overnight visitors to Scotland was similar between 2022 and 2023. The average domestic overnight visitor in Scotland spent on average 10% more per night and had less nights on their trip in 2023 when compared with 2022.

Year	Spend/trip	Nights/trip	Spend/night
2023	£251	2.7	£92
2022	£253	3.0	£83
% change	0%	-10%	10%

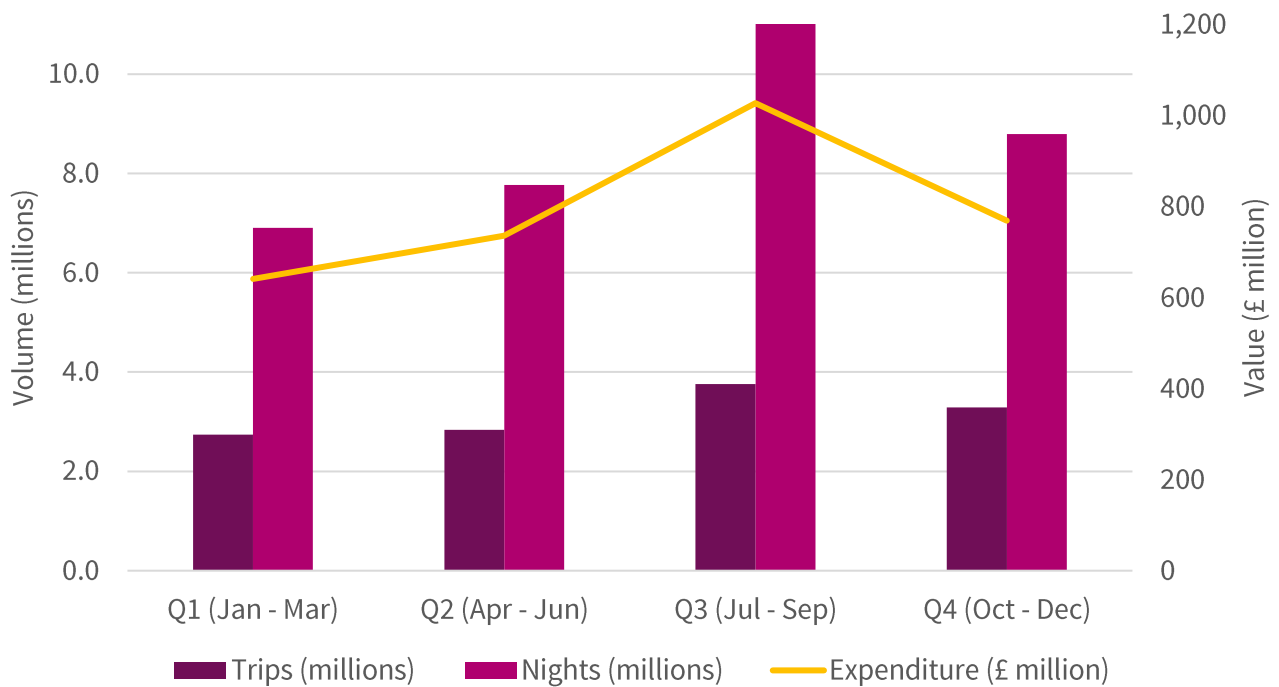
Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2022/2023

**Figures are provisional pending review – caution advised**



## Domestic Trips, Nights and Spend in Scotland by quarter, January to December 2023

The most common quarter for taking an overnight trip in Scotland was July to September 2023, which had the highest level of trips, nights and spend.



2023	Trips (millions)	Nights (millions)	Spend (£ million)
Q1 (Jan-Mar)	2.7	6.9	641
Q2 (April-June)	2.8	7.8	736
Q3 (July-Sept)	3.8	11.1	1,027
Q4 (Oct-Dec)	3.3	8.8	769
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>3,174</b>

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023

**Figures are provisional pending review – caution advised**



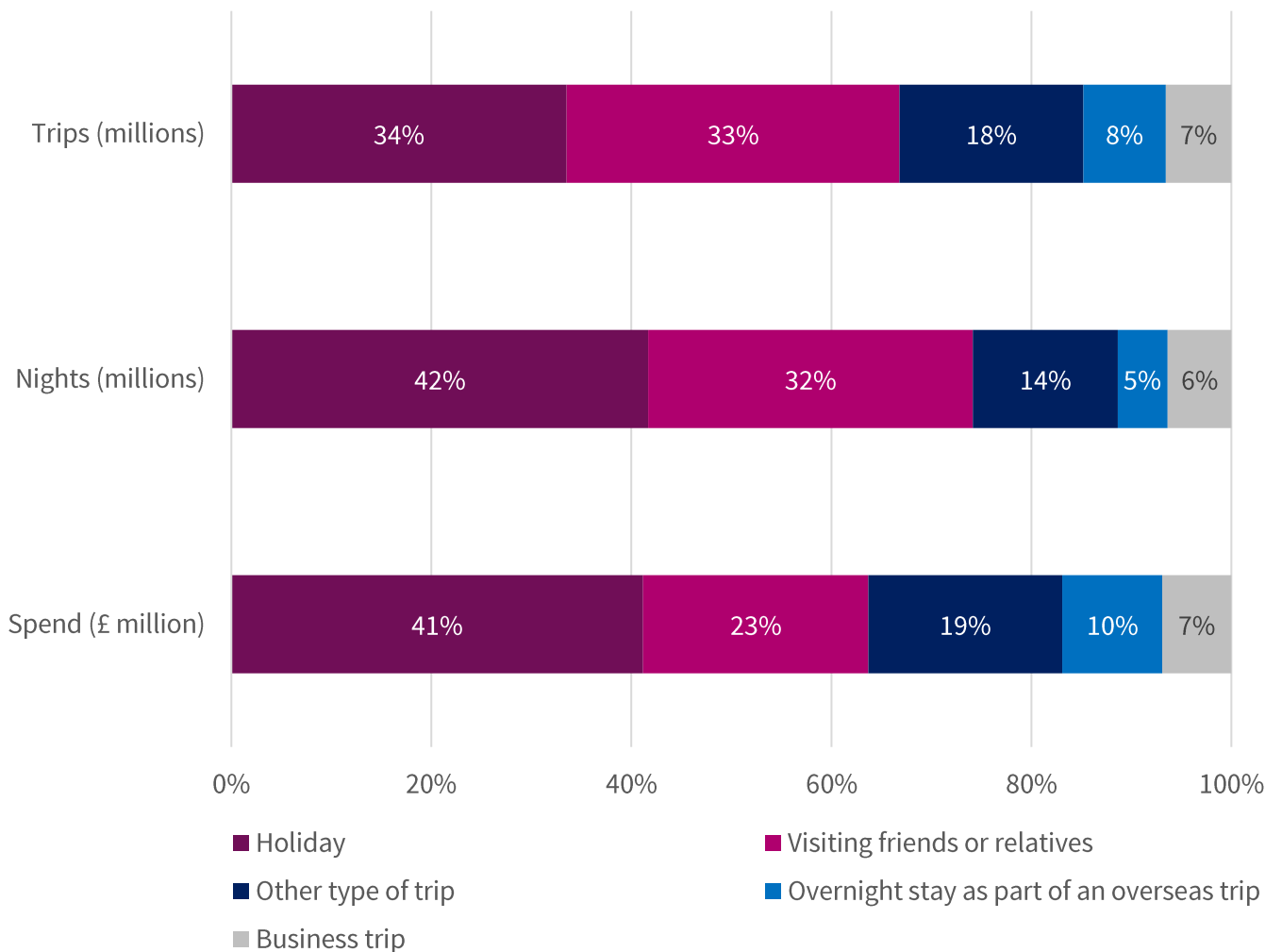
## Purpose of Domestic Overnight Trips in Scotland, January to December 2023

Holiday trips made up the largest proportion of overnight trips taken in Scotland in 2023, accounting for just over a third of total trips, 42% of total nights and 41% of spend.

Visits to friends and family made up the second largest proportion of overnight trips, making around a third of total trips and nights and 23% of total expenditure.

Other types of trips\* made up 18% of total trips, 14% of total nights and 19% of the total expenditure. Business trips and overnight stays as part of an overseas trip both made up smaller proportions of the total trips.

Domestic overnight trips, nights and spend in Scotland by purpose of trip 2023



Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023

\*Other types of trip include personal events, public events, and travel for the purposes of study, medical, religious reasons

## Domestic overnight trips, nights and spend in Scotland by purpose of trip 2023

Purpose of Trip	Trips (millions)	Nights (millions)	Spend (£ million)
Holiday	4.2	14.4	1,307
Visiting friends or relatives	4.2	11.2	715
Other type of trip	2.3	5.0	615
Overnight stay as part of an overseas trip	1.0	1.7	317
Business trip	0.8	2.2	220
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>3,174</b>

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023

Other types of trip include personal events, public events, or travel for study, medical or religious reasons.

Those taking a holiday stayed in Scotland for the longest on average (3.4 nights) and had the largest spend per trip at £309.

The shortest trips in Scotland on average were by people who were staying overnight as part of an overseas trip (1.7 nights). However, this group spent the most per night (£184).

Those who were visiting friends and relatives had the lowest average spend per trip of £170, and also spent the least per night (£64).

Purpose of Trip	Average length of trips (nights)	Average spend per night (£)	Average spend per trip (£)
Holiday	3.4	91	309
Visiting friends or relatives	2.7	64	170
Other type of trip	2.2	123	265
Overnight stay as part of an overseas trip	1.7	184	305
Business trip	2.7	99	265
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>251</b>

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023

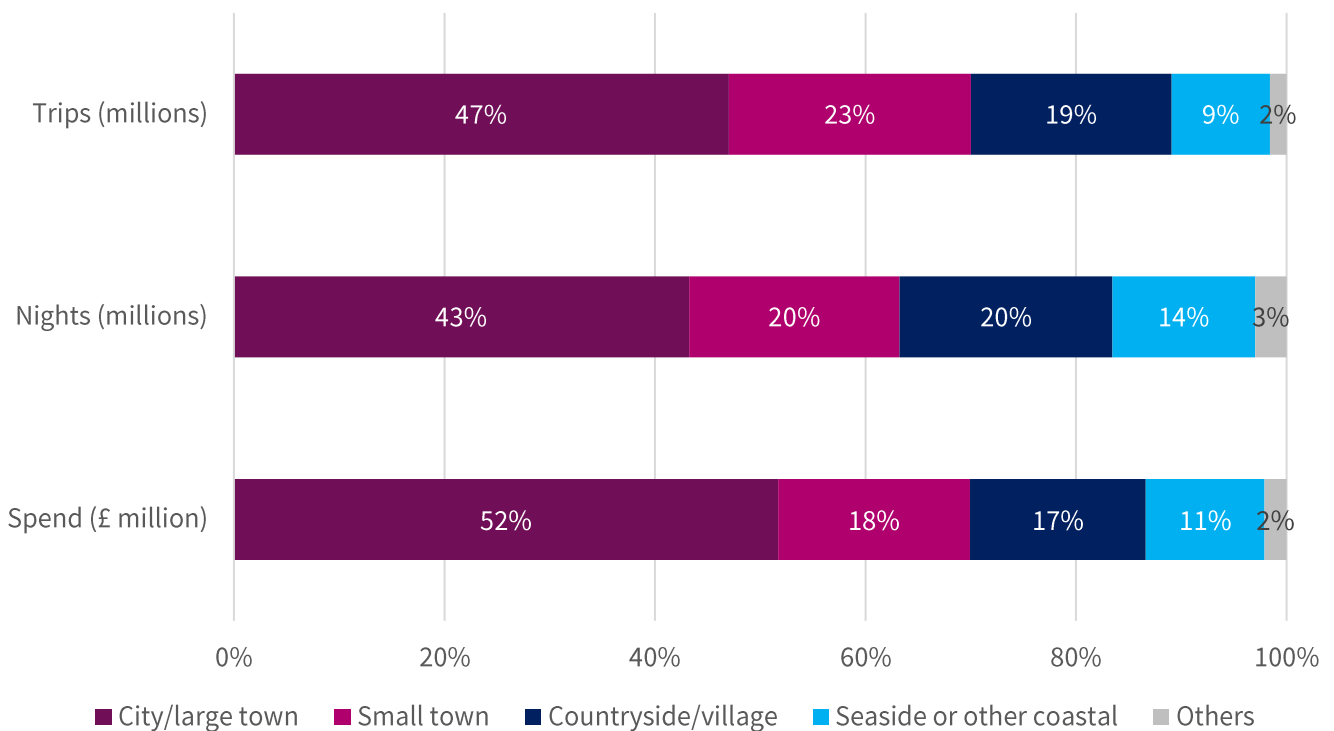
Other types of trip include personal events, public events, or travel for study, medical or religious reasons.



## Main Location visited in Scotland, January to December 2023

Almost half of overnight trips in Scotland in 2023 were to cities and large towns. Trips to cities and large towns also made up 43% of the total nights and 52% of the total expenditure. Around a quarter of all overnight trips were to small towns, making up a fifth of the total nights and 18% of the total expenditure. Trips to countryside/village locations made up 19% of the total, a fifth of the total nights and 17% of total expenditure. An additional 9% of overnight trips in Scotland took place in seaside or coastal locations.

### Main location type visited by domestic overnight visitors to Scotland 2023



Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023

Main Location Type	Trips (millions)	Nights (millions)	Spend (£ million)
City/large town	5.9	15.0	1,641
Small town	2.9	6.9	578
Countryside/village	2.4	7.0	530
Seaside or other coastal	1.2	4.7	358
Others*	0.2	1.0	67
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>3,174</b>

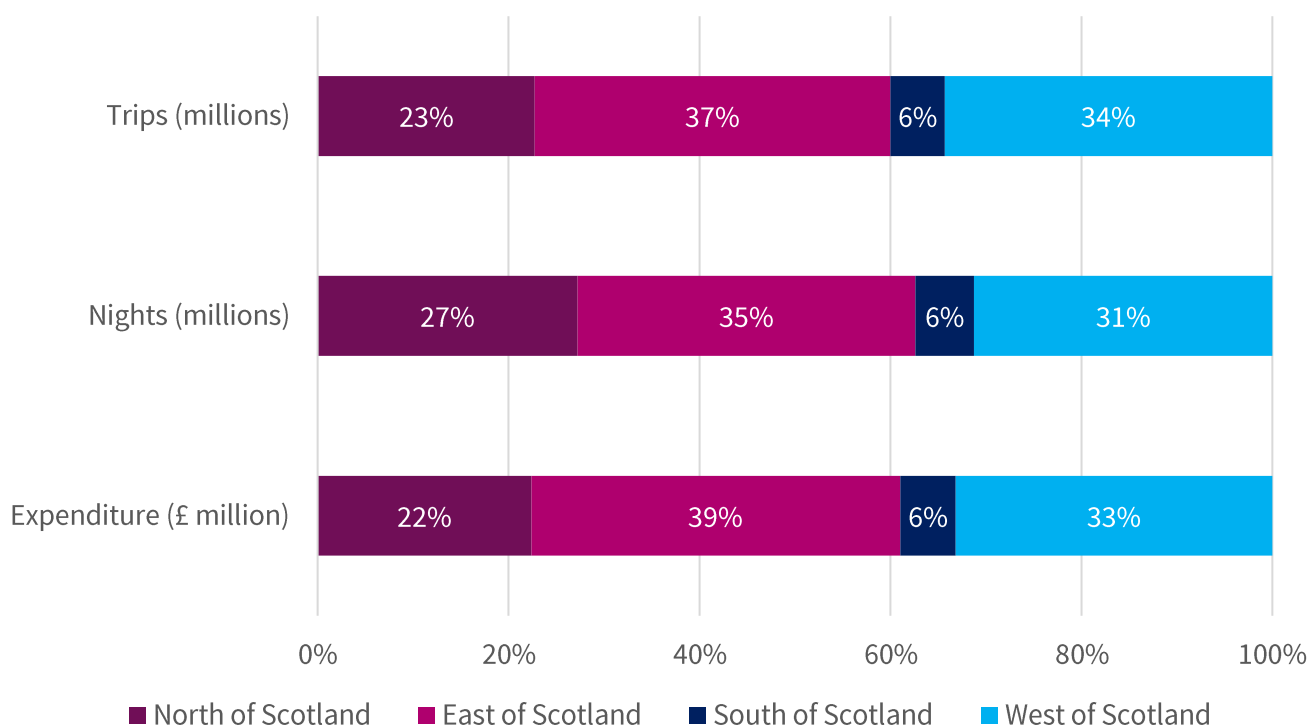
Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023

\*Data based on a sample size lower than 30

## Main Region Visited in Scotland, January to December 2023

The East of Scotland was main region visited on overnight trips in Scotland during 2023, representing 37% of total trips. This region also had the highest proportion of nights (35%) and spend on overnight trips (39%). Around a third of overnight trips, nights and spend to Scotland had the West of Scotland as their main region. Domestic overnight trips to Scotland had 23% of trips, 27% of nights and 22% with the North of Scotland as the main region visited.

### Main region visited on trips taken by domestic overnight visitors to Scotland 2023



Source: Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023

Main Region visited	Trips (millions)	Nights (millions)	Spend (£ million)
North of Scotland	2.6	9.0	676
East of Scotland	4.3	11.7	1,166
South of Scotland	0.7	2.0	175
West of Scotland	4.0	10.3	1,002
<b>Total*</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>3,019</b>

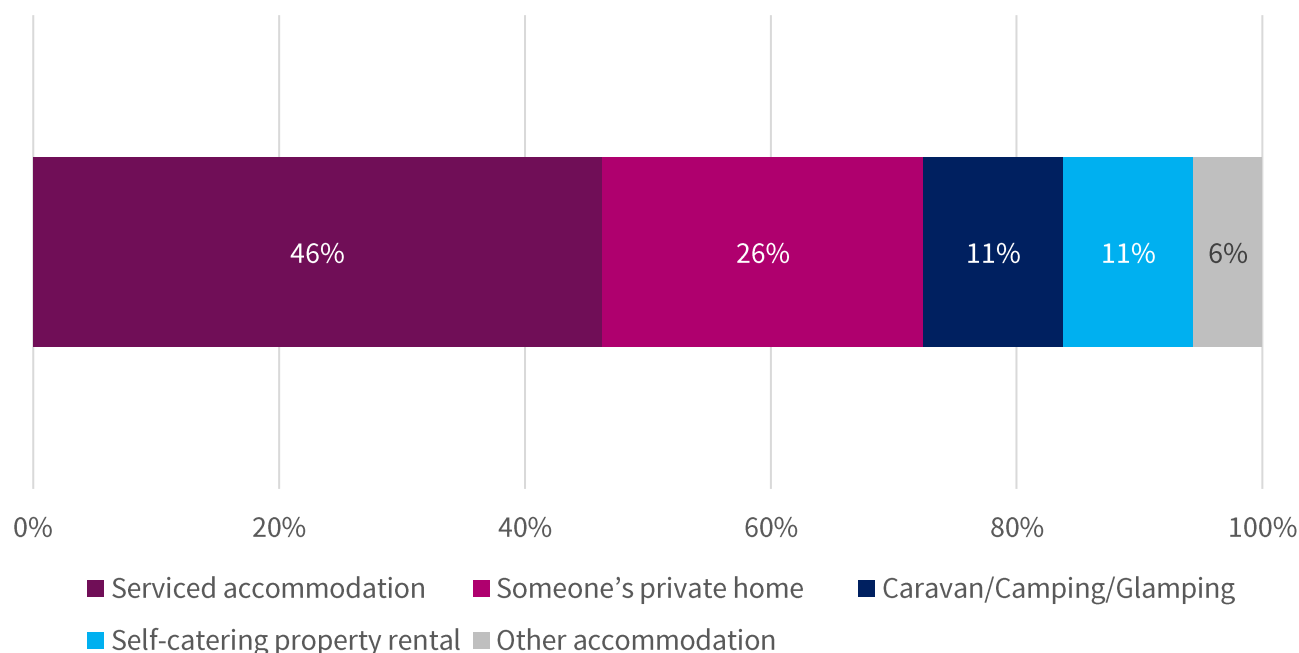
Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023

\*Please note main region visited may have been outside of Scotland

## Accommodation Used on Overnight Trips Taken in Scotland, January to December 2023

Over two fifths of all overnight trips to Scotland were in serviced accommodation. Around a quarter chose to stay in someone’s private home, which includes the home of friends or relatives as well as second homes. Caravan/camping/glamping was the choice for 11% of trips, as was the self-catering property rental.

Accommodation type used on overnight trips taken in Scotland 2023



Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023

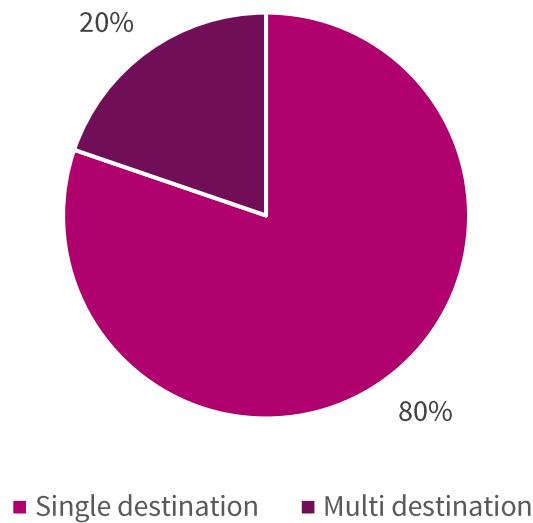
Accommodation Type	Trips (millions)
Serviced accommodation	5.8
Someone's private home	3.3
Caravan/Camping/Glamping	1.4
Self-catering property rental	1.3
Other accommodation	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.6</b>

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023

## Number of Places visited on Overnight Trips in Scotland, January to December 2023

The majority of overnight trip in Scotland during 2023 were single destination trips, with a fifth visiting two or more places.

Number of places visited on overnight trips in Scotland 2023



Number of places visited	Trips (millions)
Single destination	10.1
Multi destination	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.6</b>

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023

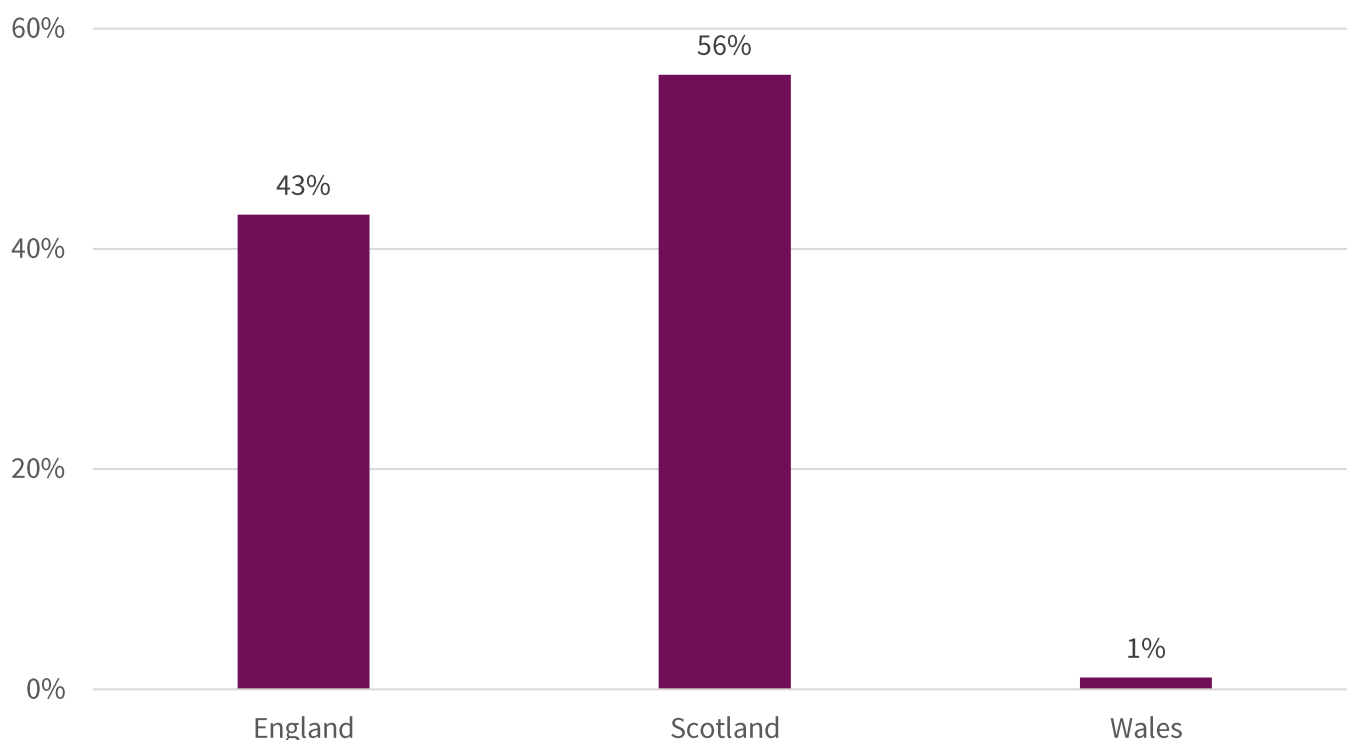
**Figures are provisional pending review – caution advised**



## Who Took Domestic Overnight Trips in Scotland, January to December 2023

Residents of Scotland generated the highest volume of overnight trips and nights in Scotland in 2023, accounting for 56% of trips and 49% of nights. Residents of England generated almost all remaining trips (43%), nights (49%) and had the highest proportion of spend (50%). Welsh residents accounted for just 1% of overnight trips and 2% of nights and spend.

### Percentage of overnight trips taken in Scotland by region of residence 2023



Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023

### Trips, nights and spend in Scotland by region of residence 2023

Region of residence	Trips (millions)	Nights (millions)	Spend (£ million)
England	5.4	17.1	1,592
Scotland	7.1	17.0	1,519
Wales*	0.1	0.5	63
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>3,174</b>

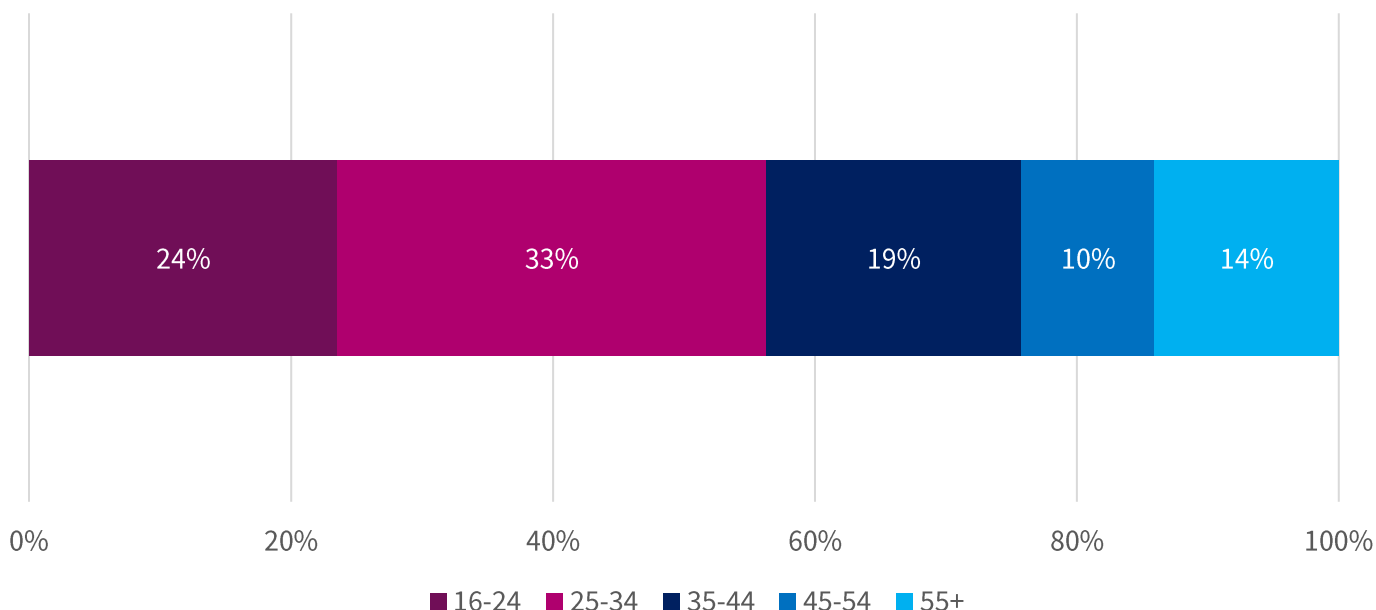
Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023

\*Data based on a sample size lower than 30

## Age Range of Overnight visitors to Scotland, January to December 2023

Over eight out of ten overnight trips during 2023 were taken by visitors under the age of 55 (86%). Visitors aged between 16 and 34 generated over half of overnight trips (56%), while those aged 35-54 generated almost a third of overnight trips (30%).

### Age of visitors on domestic overnight trips taken in Scotland 2023



Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023

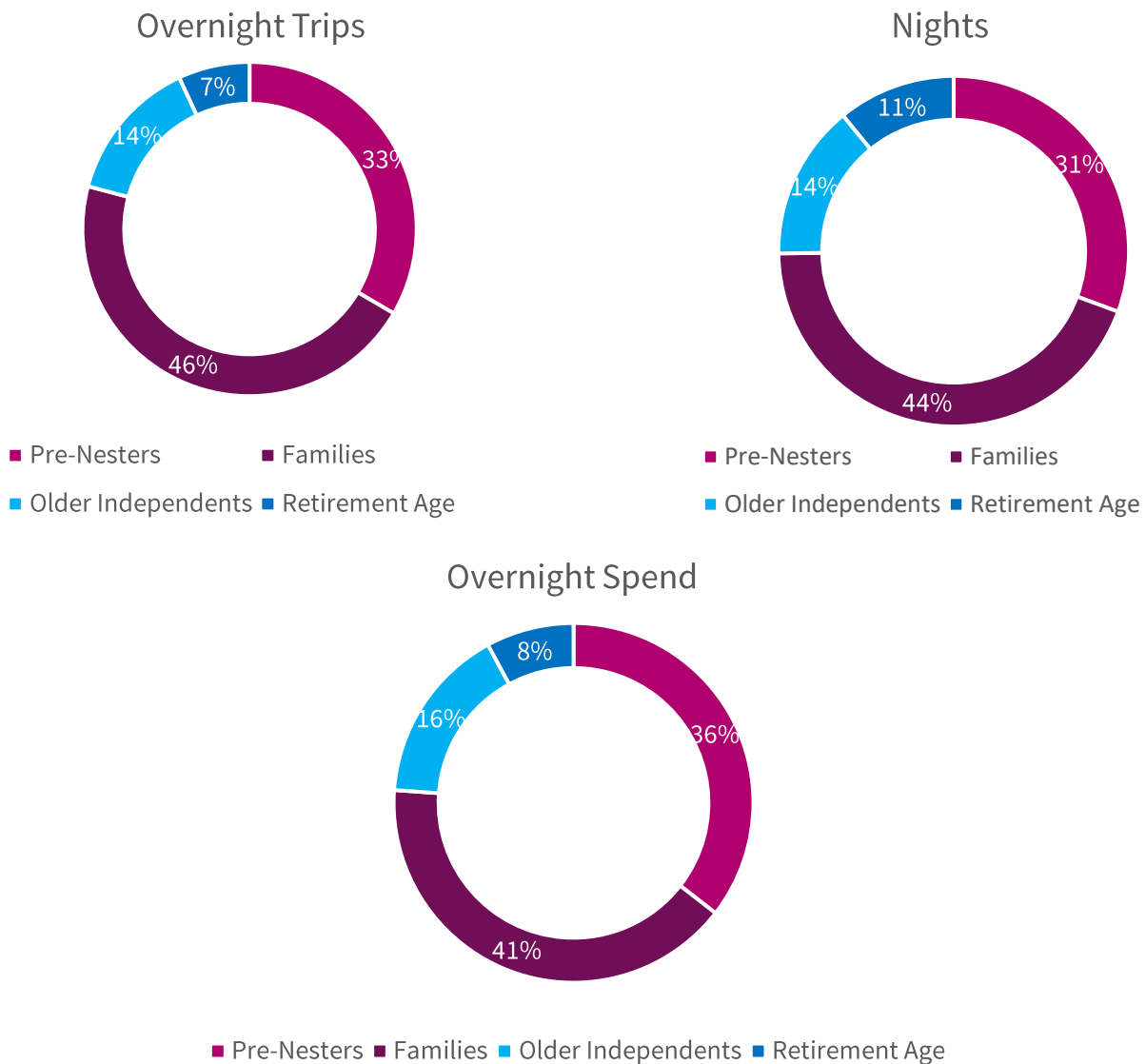
Age group	Trips (millions)
16-24	3.0
25-34	4.1
35-44	2.5
45-54	1.3
55+	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.6</b>

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023

## Life Stage of Overnight Visitors\* to Scotland, January to December 2023

Families accounted for the highest proportion of overnight trips (46%), nights (44%) and spend (41%) in Scotland. Pre-nesters represented around a third of Scottish trips (33%), nights (31%) and spend (36%). Respondents of retirement age represented the lowest proportion of overnight trips (7%), nights (11%) and spend (8%).

Definitions of segments	
Pre-Nesters	16-34, no children
Families	16-64, with children
Older Independents	35-64, no children
Retirement Age	65+



Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023

Life stage of visitors on domestic overnight trips taken in Scotland 2023

Life stage	Trips (millions)	Nights (millions)	Spend (£ million)
Pre-nesters	4.2	10.6	1,127
Families	5.8	15.3	1,289
Older independents	1.7	5.0	506
Retirement Age	0.9	3.8	251
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>3,174</b>

Source: Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023

**Figures are provisional pending review – caution advised**





## **Appendix: Methodology and Quality**

## Definitions

---

To qualify as an eligible GB Domestic Overnight Trip the following criteria must be met:

- involved a stay of at least one night in the nations of Great Britain
- not taken on a frequent basis –takes place less often than once a week
- GB Domestic Overnight Holiday Trips – the main purpose of the trip was for holiday, pleasure or leisure
- GB Domestic Overnight VFR Trips –the main purpose of the trip was for visiting friends and relatives, including VFR trips that were combined with a holiday.
- GB Domestic Overnight Business Trips – the main purpose of the trip was for business
- GB Domestic Overnight Miscellaneous Trips – the main purpose of the trip was for any other type of trip taken not covered by the above classifications including personal events, public events, study, medical, religious reasons and any overnight stays in the UK as part of any overseas trip.
- **Volume** - an estimate of what the grossed-up number of overnight trips undertaken by the population within the time would be if the quota sample is representative of the whole GB population
- **Value** - an estimate of what the total expenditure relating to the volume of overnight visits undertaken by the population would be if the quota sample is representative of the whole GB population
- **Bednights** - an estimate of what the grossed-up number of nights spent on overnight trips undertaken by the population would be if the quota sample is representative of the whole GB population.

### **Life stage Segment definitions (revised\*)**

- Pre-nester: Age 16-34, no children
- Families: Age 16-64, with children
- Older independents: Age 35-64, no children
- Retirement Age: 65+

These qualifying criteria and definitions have been revised to align with agreed international standards which impacts on comparability of the published domestic overnight tourism estimates for 2021, 2022 and 2023 with those published for 2019 and previous years.

\*Please note the definition of life stages has been amended from reports previously published to bring consistency between Scotland, England and Wales reporting. Pre-Nesters remains the same, but changes have been made to the definition of Families, Older Independents and Empty Nesters (terminology has also been changed to Retirement Age).

## Methodology

---

In 2019, the producers of the domestic tourist statistics, VisitScotland, Visit Wales, and VisitEngland, undertook a review of the requirements and methods for producing the statistics to help future-proof the data collection methods, whilst maintaining the reliability and robustness of the information reported. As a result, substantial changes were introduced as part of a new combined online survey method collecting data on both domestic overnight trips as well as domestic day trips. This represents a fundamental change in the way data is collected for overnight visits including moving to an online-panel, non-probability survey methodology from the previous face-to-face non-probability methodology.

The sample for the combined online survey is sourced from 4 ESOMAR accredited online panel providers and includes quotas for key demographic variables and region of residence to make the overall sample as representative as possible of GB population. The target annual sample size for GBTS is 60,000 completed interviews. For the Quarter 3 2023 survey, fieldwork started in England, Scotland and Wales in July 2023 and the number of interviews achieved for the period July-September 2023 is 16,618 interviews for GB residents including 2,207 interviews with Scottish residents.

As part of the survey changes, a revised weighting scheme has been introduced to improve efficiency, whilst making the results as representative as possible of the GB population. However, the use of a non-probability online sample limits the extent to which the survey responses are truly representative of the full GB population, a limitation of all online sample surveys.

Further details of the changes to survey method, sample design and estimation approaches are also available in the **GBTS 2022 Background Quality Report**. A 2023 report will be produced when all 2023 data is available.

## Comparability and coherence

Statistics for domestic overnight tourism have been collected in a broadly similar way since 1989, initially through the United Kingdom Tourism Survey (UKTS), and since 2011 through the Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS). However, the changes in survey methodology introduced in 2021, together with the interruption in data collection in 2020 and early 2021 due to Covid-19, means that results published from April 2021 onwards are not directly comparable with data published for 2019 and previous years.

As part of the survey, respondents are asked about any overnight trips they have taken in the 4 full weeks prior to their date of interview (reference period). Estimates are reported for individual calendar months as well as for quarterly and annual periods. As the interview reference periods do not exactly correspond with calendar months and each month may contain a 4- or 5-week reporting period, an adjustment is made using a seasonal smoothing factor to improve monthly comparisons within and between years. The monthly estimates are subject to limitations on sample size and seasonal fluctuations in trip taking across the year.

## Comparability and coherence (continued)

The new combined survey includes revised questions to help align the key measures of trips, nights and expenditure with internationally agreed definitions for overnight tourism trips. This will enable more accurate reporting of tourism specific trips and improve comparability with trips reported by other destinations using the internationally agreed definitions. The new combined GBTS and GBDVS survey collects information on specific destinations visited in GB. This enables trips and spend estimates to be calculated for Great Britain, the individual nations of Scotland, England and Wales, and sub-national geographies, subject to sample size limitations.

## Accuracy

The statistics produced from the Great Britain Tourism Survey in 2019 and previous years have been designated as official statistics, which provides reassurance to users that the statistics are produced to the very highest professional standards of trustworthiness, quality and value, set out in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). Due to the changes in methodology and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the survey results for 2021, 2022 and 2023 have been badged as Official Statistics in Development. The intention is to return to official statistics status in the near future.

As the statistics are produced using a non-probability online survey method, they are subject to the limitations and potential sources of bias and error associated with such surveys. These include:

Coverage error due to the small part of the GB population that does not have online access.

Sample bias including differences due to those with online access and those that are online panel members compared to those who are not.

Measurement error due to respondents entering incorrect values.

Non-response error including survey refusals and drop-outs and the availability of don't know and prefer not to say options.

The GBTS data are weighted to correct for any imperfections in the achieved sample that might lead to bias and to rectify any differences between the sample and the target population. The survey uses a mix of panel partners to mitigate for possible panel specific biases, and keeping this panel mix consistent over time.

The survey script and data processing includes bespoke checks to verify the accuracy of responses. Imputation is used to cover missing data and caps are used to minimise the impact of extreme values that are entered. It is not possible to measure standard sample errors due to the non-probability sample being used, but base sizes are reported for eligible trip takers and users are advised to consider and be cautious of small base sizes particularly for monthly data and lower-level geographies when drawing inferences from the statistics.



Disclaimer: This publication is provided in good faith to update VisitScotland stakeholders on its activity. The publication is provided “as is” and VisitScotland accepts no responsibility for any error or omission. We do not provide any guarantees, conditions or warranties that the publication is current, secure, accurate, complete or free from bugs or viruses. This publication, including all data and other information contained within it, is not intended to amount to advice on which any reliance should be placed. VisitScotland is not responsible for how the publication is used or interpreted. We therefore disclaim all liability and responsibility arising from any reliance placed on this publication by anyone who may use any of its contents. VisitScotland may add, change, improve or update this publication at any time without notice. Images © VisitScotland

## CONTACT US

**Insight Department**  
[visitscotland.com](https://visitscotland.com)  
[visitscotland.org](https://visitscotland.org)  
[research@visitscotland.com](mailto:research@visitscotland.com)

**Front Cover:** Dunnottar Castle, Aberdeenshire

© 2024 VisitScotland / Kenny Lam

**Back Cover:** Highland Coo Safari, Cairngorms National Park

© 2023 VisitScotland / Kenny Lam

**Published: April 2024**