

# Scotland Visitor Survey 2023

## Introduction

The Scotland Visitor Survey was conducted by Progressive Partnership on behalf of VisitScotland to enhance understanding of visitor behaviour and experience in Scotland. In total, 11,573 visitors were interviewed in Scotland between March and October 2023, with 3,011 responding to an online survey on their return home.

Overall, **160** overnight visitors to Shetland completed the online survey. The results shown below are based on these visitors to Shetland.

## Profile of overnight visitors to Shetland



**67% Domestic visitors**

- 21% Scotland (residents)
- 46% Rest of UK



**33% International visitors**

- 15% Europe
- 18% Long haul including:
  - 11%: North America
  - 7%: Australasia

*Base: Stage 2 online survey Shetland visitors 160*



**Average number in travel party: 2.3**

**Children (under 16) in party: 7%**

*Base: Stage 2 online survey Shetland visitors 160*

**Life Stage**

Pre-nesters	9%
Families	7%
Older Independents	46%
Retirement Age	38%

*Base: Stage 2 online survey Shetland visitors excl. n/a 159*

## Profile of trip



Shetland visitors stayed on average: **11.8 nights in total in Scotland including 7.0 nights in Shetland**

*Base: Stage 2 online survey Shetland visitors 160*



**65% of visitors to Shetland toured around Scotland, staying in two or more places**



**First time visitor: 14%**  
**Repeat visitor: 86%**

Average proportion of first-time visitors to Scotland: 25% (Scotland-wide sample)

*Base: Stage 2 online survey Shetland visitors 160*

**Examples of Type of Trip**

- A trip of a lifetime: 8%
- A special holiday/short break: 13%

*Base: Stage 2 online survey Shetland visitors excl. Scotland residents 134*

## Reasons for choosing Scotland

Rank	Top ten reasons for choosing Scotland	Shetland sample
1	The scenery and landscape	81%
2	The history and culture	56%
3	Outdoor activities available	40%
4	Visiting friends or family	22%
5	Scotland's people	19%
6	A particular experience found in Scotland	18%
7	A Scottish attraction	15%
8	My or my family's Scottish ancestry	13%
9	An event or festival	11%
10	Scotland's food and drink	8%
Base: All visitors to Shetland (stage 2 online survey)		160

Rank	Top ten reasons for choosing Scotland	Scotland-wide sample
1	The scenery and landscape	70%
2	The history and culture	48%
3	Outdoor activities available	27%
4	Visiting friends or family	22%
5	Scotland's people	21%
6	A Scottish attraction	19%
7	My or my family's Scottish ancestry	16%
8	Scotland's food and drink	15%
9	It's easy to get to or close to home	15%
10	An event or festival	9%
Base: All visitors to Scotland (stage 2 online survey)		3,011

## Type of accommodation used in Shetland

**42% stayed in serviced accommodation**



**22%**

Hotel, motel, inn



**22%**

Guest house, B&B



**6%**

Hostel

Base: Stage 2 online survey Shetland visitors (priority region) 144

Note: serviced and non-serviced adds to more than 100% due to some people staying in more than one accommodation type.

**62% stayed in non-serviced accommodation**



**44%**

Self-catering/commercial non-serviced rentals



**14%**

Camping, caravan, motorhome

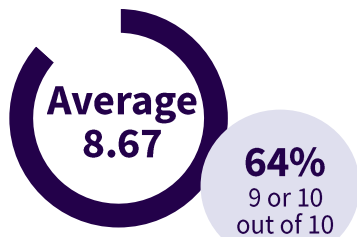


**12%**

Friend's or relative's home

## Satisfaction with accommodation in Shetland

**Satisfaction with...** (Scored out of 10)



**Overall welcome provided to you**

Scotland-wide sample - 62%  
(9 or 10 out of 10)



**The knowledge of staff/host (at accommodation) about things to do in the area**

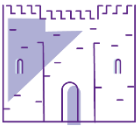
Scotland-wide sample - 53%  
(9 or 10 out of 10)



**The value for money of accommodation**

Scotland-wide sample - 42%  
(9 or 10 out of 10)

**Attractions and activities undertaken in Shetland**



**Top 5 attractions or activities undertaken/visited in Shetland**

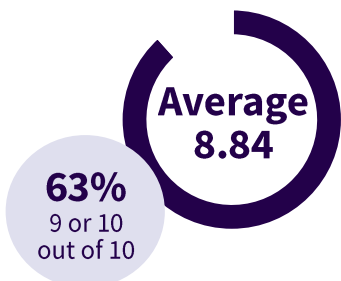
Rank	Attractions and activities undertaken in Shetland	Shetland sample
1	A museum or art gallery	69%
2	A visitor or heritage centre	68%
3	An archaeological site	64%
4	Hill walk, mountaineering, hike or ramble	60%
5	Watching wildlife, bird watching	58%
Base: Took part in activities/attractions in Shetland		143

Rank	Attractions and activities undertaken in Scotland	Scotland-wide sample
1	A castle or fort	59%
2	Viewed architecture and buildings	52%
3	A museum or art gallery	50%
4	A historic house, palace, stately home	49%
5	Shopping	47%
Base: Took part in activities/attractions in Scotland		3,011

**Satisfaction with attractions in Shetland**

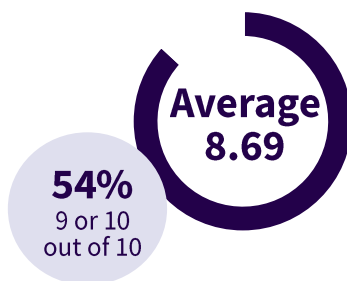
*Satisfaction with...* (Scored out of 10)

**Knowledge and passion of the staff at attractions**



Scotland-wide sample - 64% (9 or 10 out of 10)

**Quality of experience at attractions**



Scotland-wide sample - 57% (9 or 10 out of 10)

**Value for money of paid for attractions**



Scotland-wide sample - 47% (9 or 10 out of 10)

Base: Stage 2 online survey Took part in activities/attractions in Shetland excl. n/a 132-137

**Food and drink experiences in Shetland**



**30% took part in food and/or drink experiences in Shetland**

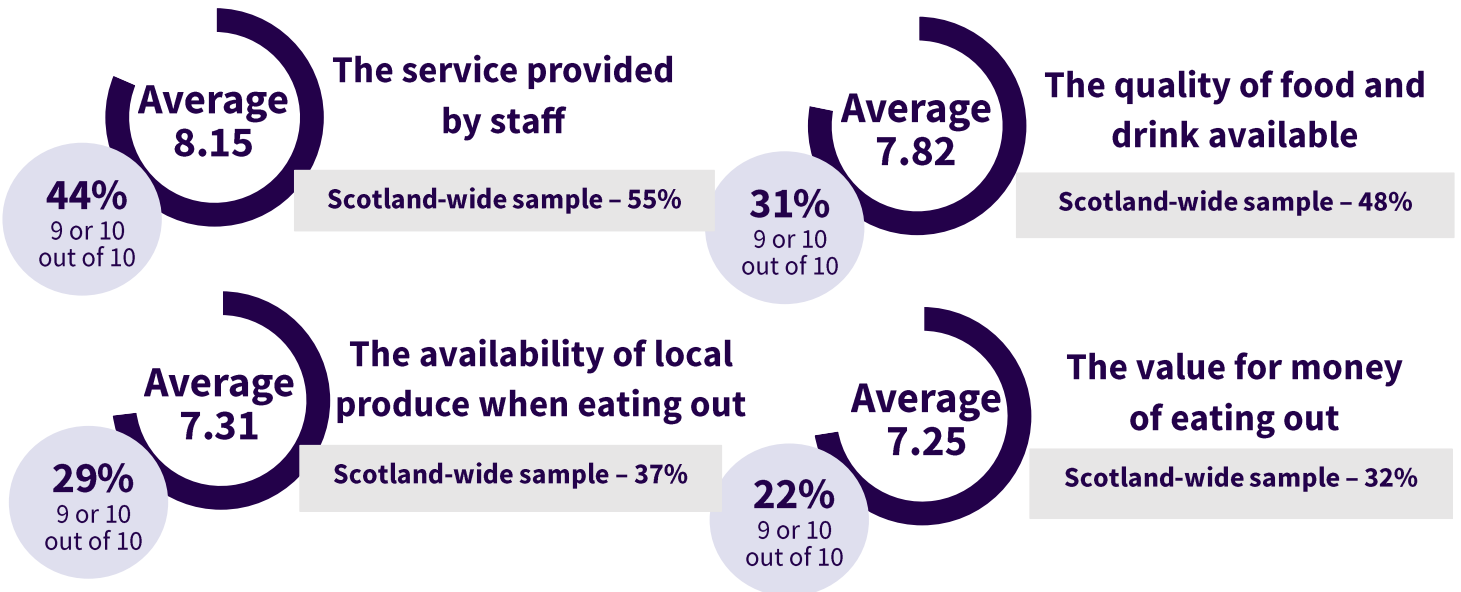
Key food and drink experiences included:

- 13% visited a farm shop/farmers market
- 8% visited a fine dining restaurant
- 3% visited a food or drink event or festival
- 2% undertook a food or drink activity e.g. cookery class

Base: Stage 2 online survey Took part in activities/attractions in Shetland 143

**Satisfaction with food and drink experiences in Shetland**

*Satisfaction with..... (Scored out of 10)*



Base: Stage 2 online survey Shetland visitors excl. n/a 146-155

**Overall experience and likelihood to recommend Shetland**



Base: Stage 2 online survey Shetland visitors (priority region) 144

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### Appendix – Interpreting the results

- The Scotland Visitor Survey should not be viewed in isolation.
- The survey collates views on a wide range of topics to understand visitor attitudes and behaviours.
- This data supplements data on tourism in Scotland which is gathered by the annual statistical surveys undertaken at a national level by;
  - The Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS) which estimates the volume and value of domestic tourism - from within Scotland and the rest of Great Britain
  - The International Passenger Survey (IPS) which provides details of tourism from abroad
- The Scotland Visitor Survey is undertaken during spring, summer and autumn seasons only, based on a need to gather visitor views in an efficient manner. This means the results reflect the views of those visiting Scotland between March and October 2023 only.
- The sample comprises leisure overnight visitors only, and as such the following are excluded: visitors on a day trip from home, those on a business trip, cruise ship visitors.
- The base size varies across questions. Visitors could have stayed in multiple locations, therefore the questionnaire was designed to ask specific questions about accommodation and satisfaction with their experience overall in up to two priority regions. Where the base size of 160 is used this includes all visitors who stayed in Shetland during their trip. Where the base size is 144 this shows results for the visitors who were allocated Shetland as their priority region.
- Figures may not always add to 100% as this may be due to rounding within the data analysis or where respondents have answered more than one category.
- Both face-to-face and online data were weighted to reflect the profile of visitors measured by the GBTS and the IPS.
- The Scotland Visitor Survey does not provide data on how many visits are made to Scotland or a specific region.
- Browse our [Scotland Visitor Survey page](#) on [visitscotland.org](#) for more information on this survey.

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