

REDC

 **Ireland West
Airport**

Ireland West Airport Passenger Tracking Survey

October 2023

JOB REF: 653323



Research Context

- In 2016 seven local authorities (Mayo county council, Sligo county council, Roscommon county council, Galway city and county councils, Leitrim County Council and Donegal County Council) became shareholders in Ireland West Airport Knock acquiring a 17.5% stake on doing so.
- In 2018 RED C worked with Ireland West Airport to deliver a robust quantitative study which formed the benchmark to understanding the behaviour of incoming tourists to the region from overseas.
- The main aim was to establish the benefits that the airport brings to the region and the above counties in particular.

Research Objectives



Central Objective

Post Covid, there was a need to **update this research** and **evaluate the current position on these key metrics** among non-Irish leisure passengers to **illustrate the critically important role the airport plays** in delivering visitors to the counties who are now shareholders in the airport.



Research Objectives

More specifically the research needed to address the following:

- What counties overseas visitors are visiting when they come through the airport for a visit / holiday
- Length of stay
- Reasons for choosing the West region and specific counties
- Reasons for choosing Ireland West Airport Knock

Research Methodology

- In order to achieve these research aims, RED C interviewers interviewed n = 945 departing passengers in airport over June-September 2023.
- All respondents **are non-Irish residents**
- Before interviewing took place, the number of interviews to achieve per route was established, based on the known number of flights departing from the airport. RED C then ensured that an even spread of interviews were conducted for each route consistently over the summer.
- Interviews were spread out over the week (ensuring a fully representative sample) and took place an hour before each flight was due to depart to ensure sufficient time for interviews to take place.
- Specific routes were chosen to track across a number of destinations;
 - Birmingham
 - Bristol
 - Cologne
 - London Heathrow
 - London Stansted
 - London Luton
 - Edinburgh
 - East Midlands
 - Bergamo
 - Girona
 - Manchester
 - Liverpool
 - Milan
- Data was then weighted back to be representative of the numbers of flights for each route to ensure our data represented real life as closely as possible.





All interviews are among Non-Irish
Residents

The RED C Quality Guarantee



- RED C Interviewers were hand selected by the Field Manager to join the Airport Panel, with only those who possessed excellent attention to detail, professional appearance, diligence and of a friendly disposition being chosen.
- For this project, we also used a local supervisor. This system works very well, providing a local point of contact between Head Office and our Ireland West Airport interviewing team.
- RED C's emphasis on quality is so important that we also have our own dedicated Quality Manager, whose sole role was to monitor and train interviewers to the highest quality standards, including all back-checking.
- Quality control measures included:
 - Piloting questionnaires in-house prior to dispatch.
 - Interviewers were fully briefed for the project in person by our local supervisor with detailed briefing notes provided.
 - As standard, 10% of all work was back-checked.
 - Logical data checks were included in our analysis to ensure accuracy in interviewing.
 - Once the survey was complete, data was cleaned and edited in our analysis software

IW Airport helping to deliver almost €29 million to the economy



Ireland West Airport provides an easy and accessible gateway to the West of the Ireland, allowing visitors to bypass larger airports.

1

There has been an uplift in leisure travellers to the West of Ireland of Ireland in 2023. Travellers from outside of the UK are most likely to be leisure travellers, with Galway the top destination of choice among this cohort. On average, travellers to the West of Ireland visit two counties during their trip.

2

Accessibility remains the key benefit of IW Airport, providing an easy and convenient gateway to the West of Ireland. The cost of flying out of IW Airport has also risen in importance as a benefit. These benefits should be dialled up in comms to encourage more passengers to travel through IW Airport when visiting the West of Ireland.

3

The West of Ireland offers visitors an attractive mix of shopping and outdoor pursuits. While Westport / Clew Bay is considered the main highlight for most, shopping and other outdoor activities such as hiking, driving along the coastline and visiting gardens are also enjoyed by visitors.

4

Visitors to the West of Ireland spent an average of €479 in total during their trip, to Ireland, adding approximately €29 million to the Irish economy. Among those not staying with friends / family, accommodation is the largest expense, followed by food and drink and shopping, showcasing the value these visitors bring to the West.

5

For 1 in 10 visitors, an IW flight option was essential for making the trip to the West of Ireland. These lost passengers are worth close to €3 million in revenue to the Irish economy.



+6% uplift in holiday travellers vs 2018

Reasons for Choosing

Accessibility 89% (+1 vs 2018)
Cost of flying out 10% (+5% vs 2018)

16% felt Westport / Clew Bay was the highlight of their visit



Average spend:

- Accommodation: €538 excl. nothing
- Food & drink: €254
- Shopping: €140

Absence of Ireland West Airport:
-€2,870,300 in revenue in Irish Economy



Who is using Ireland West Airport



Ireland West Airport caters to a variety of demographics, spanning young and old, varying socio economic backgrounds and split equally across gender.

A spread of passenger profiles were interviewed



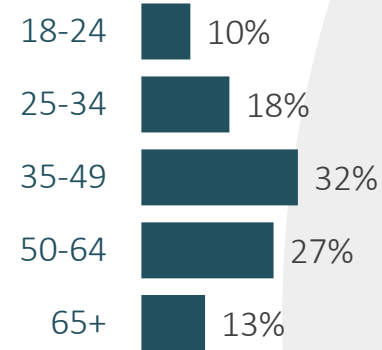
Profile of Passengers

All passengers interviewed
live outside Ireland

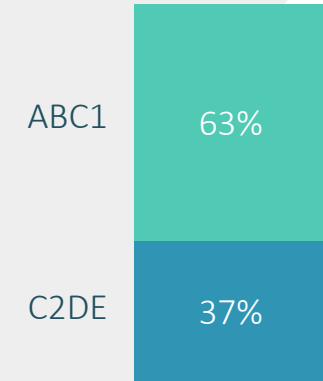
Gender



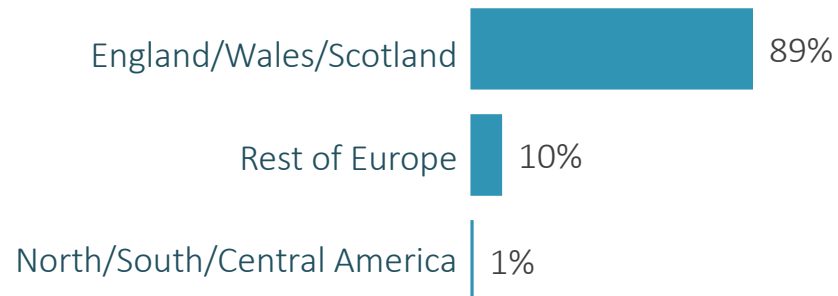
Age



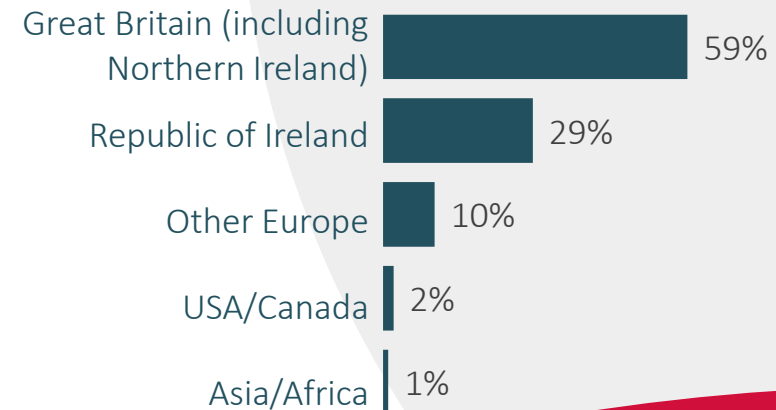
Social Class



Country of Residence



Passport Held

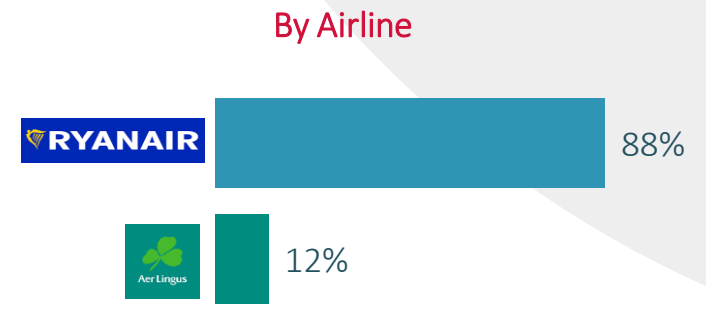
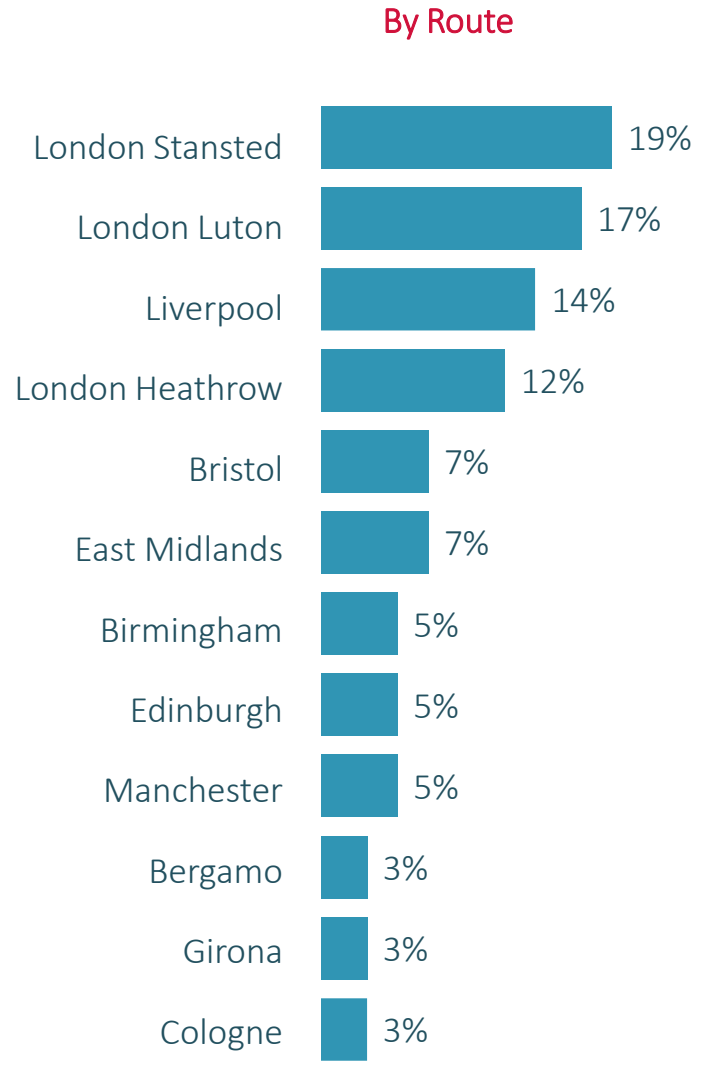


A spread of UK and European destinations were interviewed, with 88% of routes being operated by Ryanair

Analysis of Sample – Routes Targeted



Circa 75 interviews were conducted on each target destination to ensure sufficient sample for analysis. However, within the data these were weighted back to known proportions.



Final Destination - Yes
(All Travelling to Heathrow via Aer Lingus)

N=125

90%

(Base: All Passengers; n=945)

Why are Passengers choosing Ireland West Airport?



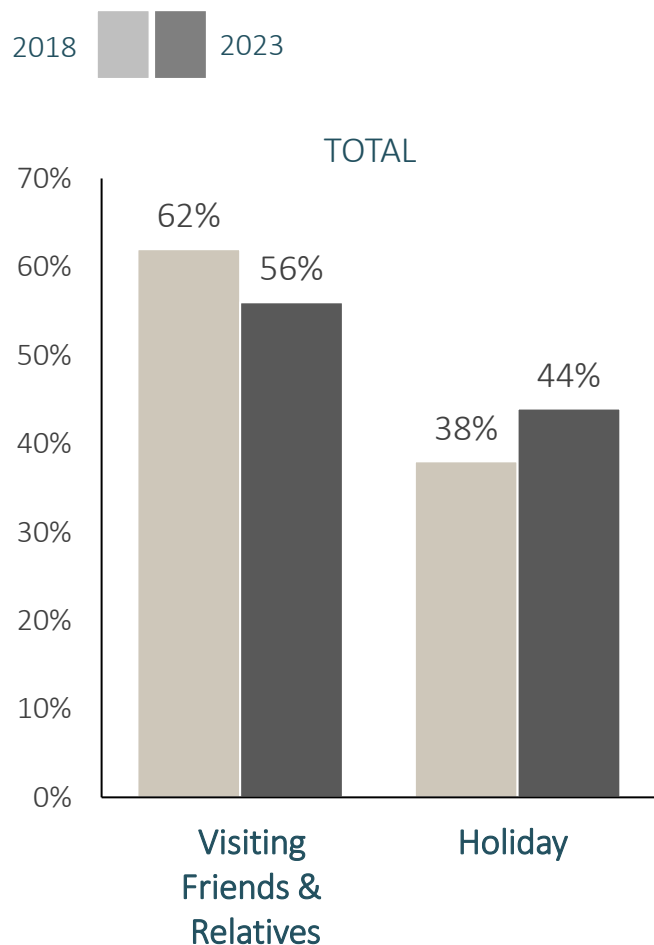
Ireland West Airport provides an easy and accessible gateway to the West of Ireland.

Just over 2 in 5 passengers visited Ireland for a holiday



While the majority of passengers surveyed came to visit friends and relatives, just over 2 in 5 were holiday travellers, rising upon last wave. Those travelling from outside the UK are most likely to be holiday travellers.

Main Purpose of Visit to Ireland



Main Purpose of Visit – Holiday

BY COUNTY VISITED

| County | Sample Size (n) | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------------|------------|
| Donegal | 53 | 56% |
| Galway | 358 | 63% |
| Sligo | 156 | 44% |
| Mayo | 746 | 43% |
| Roscommon | 103 | 22% |
| Leitrim | 47 | 33% |

BY ROUTE

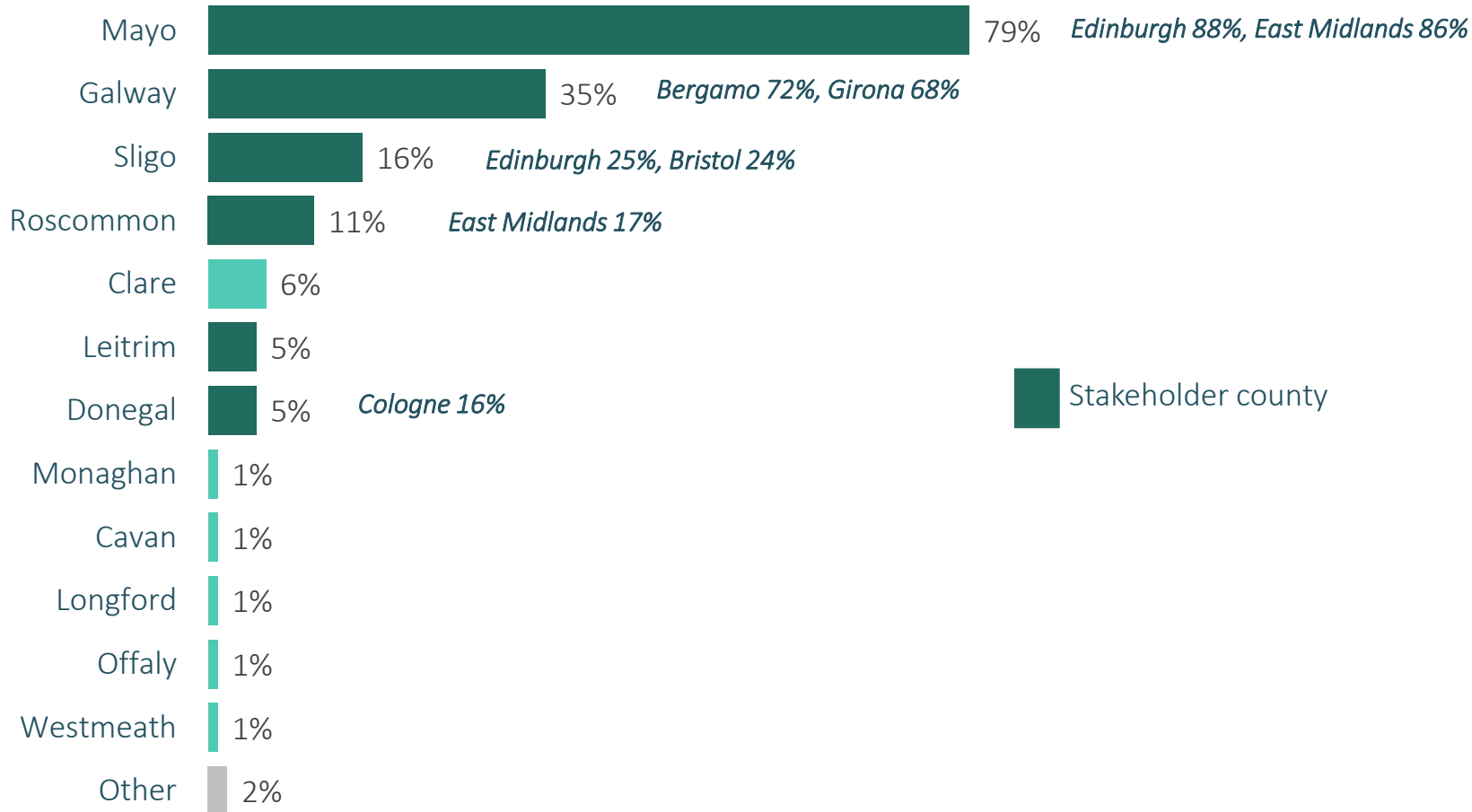
| Route | Sample Size (n) | Percentage |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| Birmingham | 59 | 49% |
| Bristol | 92 | 45% |
| London Heathrow | 125 | 40% |
| London Stansted | 89 | 29% |
| London Luton | 83 | 43% |
| Edinburgh | 76 | 43% |
| East Midlands | 66 | 36% |
| Bergamo | 65 | 92% |
| Girona | 40 | 65% |
| Manchester | 71 | 41% |
| Liverpool | 106 | 47% |
| Cologne | 73 | 75% |



Mayo is the top visited county

Galway is the next most visited county and is most popular among those travelling from Bergamo and Girona.

Counties Visited – All Ireland



Average number of counties visited:

2

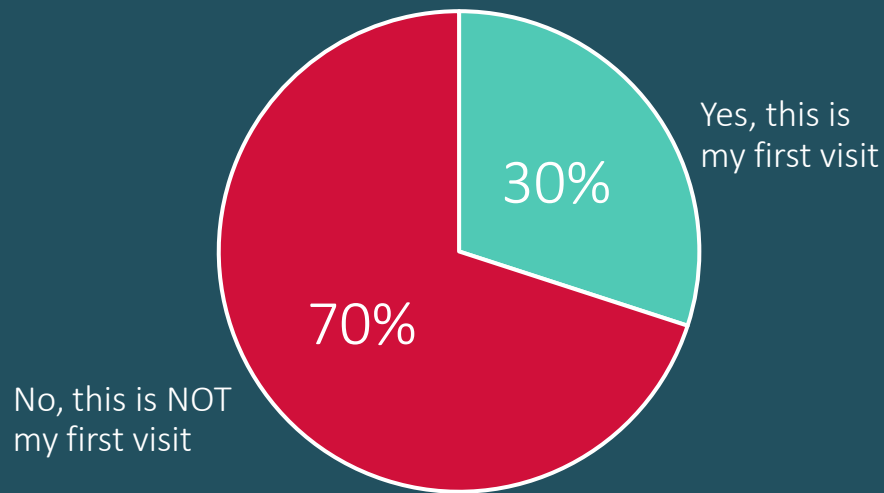
Q.1 Which of the following counties did you visit during your trip to Ireland?

(Base: All Passengers; n=945)

3 in 10 passengers are first time visitors to the West of Ireland

While there is a high level of repeat visits, 30% of passengers were visiting the West of Ireland for the first time this summer.

Incidence Of Being First Trip to the West of Ireland



Q.9 Is this your first trip to the West / North West of Ireland?

Q.10 Including today, how many times have you travelled through Ireland West Airport Knock in the past 3 years?

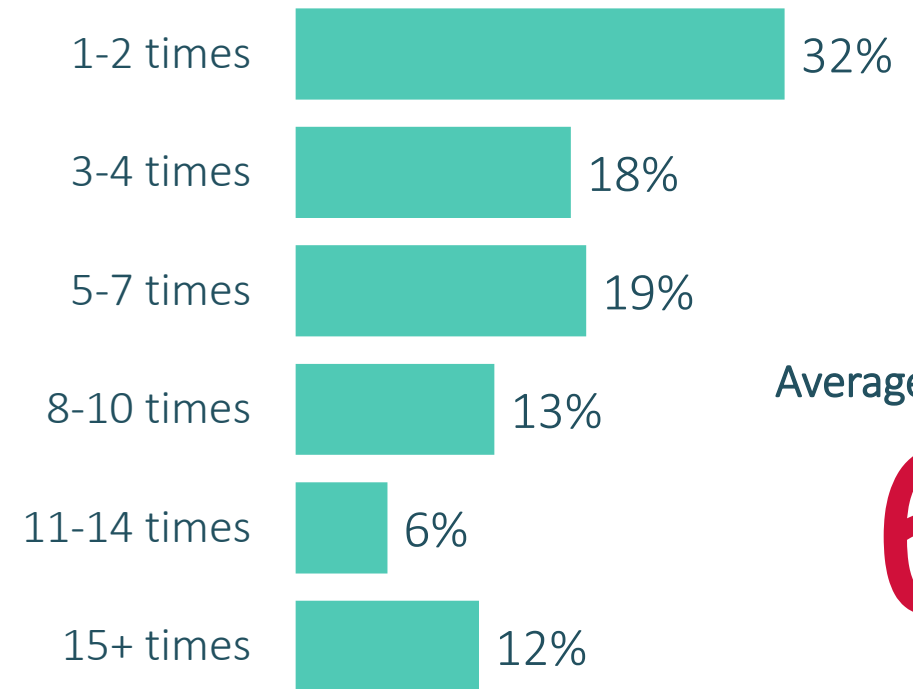
(Base: All Passengers; n=945)

Repeat passengers have visited an average of 6 times



Incidence Of Visiting Ireland West Airport in past 3 years

All who have visited IW Airport Before (n=628)



Average No. Visits

6

Accessibility considered the main benefit of using IW Airport



The ease of travelling through a smaller airport has also risen in importance as a benefit, as well as the costs of flying out from IW Airport.

Reasons For Choosing Ireland West (IW) Airport

2023
2018



Q.11 Why did you decide to use Ireland West Airport Knock today?

(Base: All Passengers; n=945)



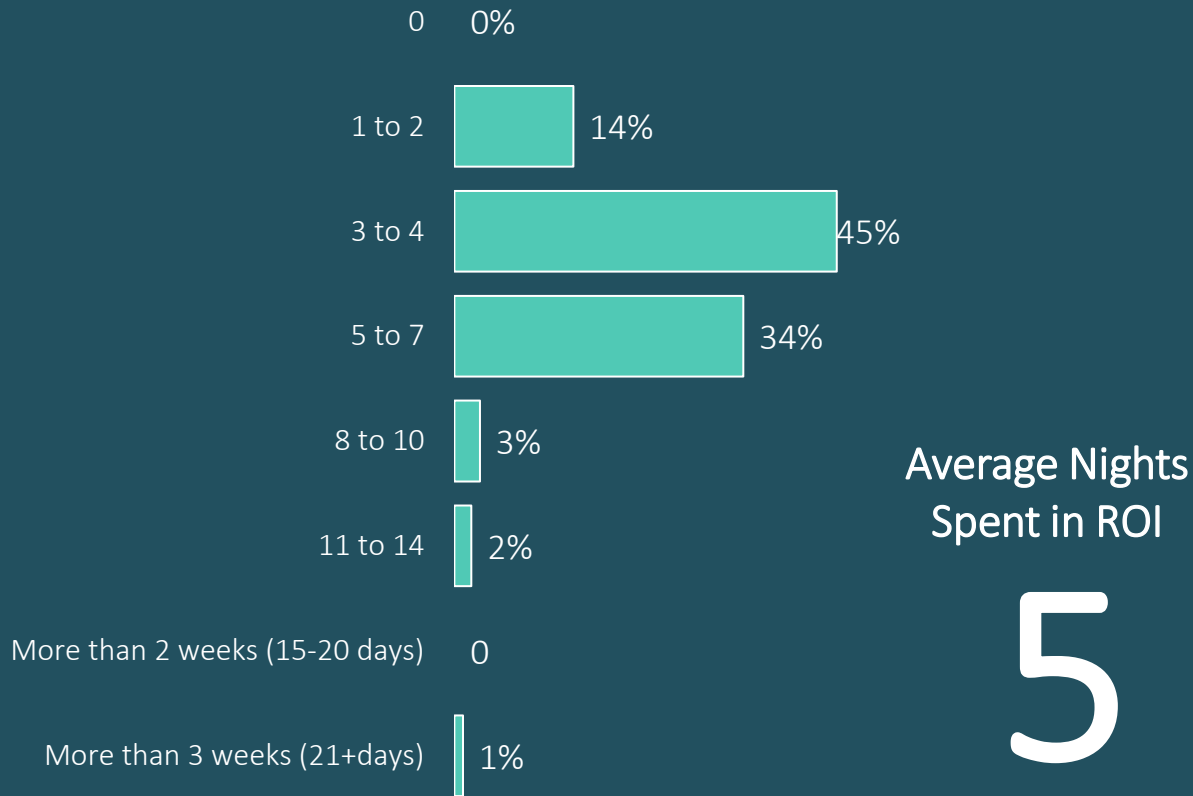
Visiting the West of Ireland



The West of Ireland offers visitors an attractive mix of shopping and outdoor pursuits

Passengers are spending an average of 5 nights on this trip

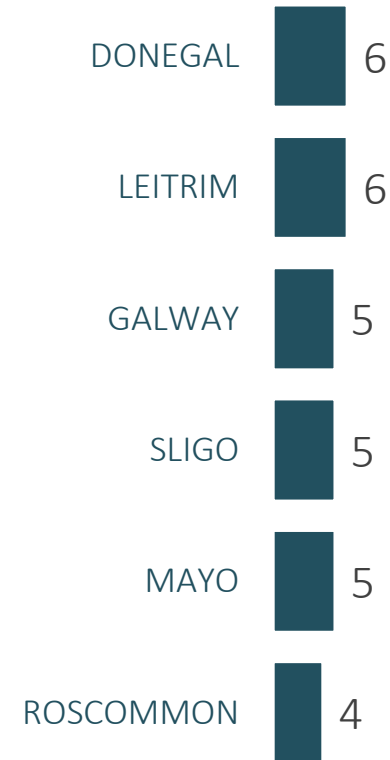
Duration of Stay



Visitors to Donegal and Leitrim spent the most nights on average



Average Nights Spent in each Stakeholder County



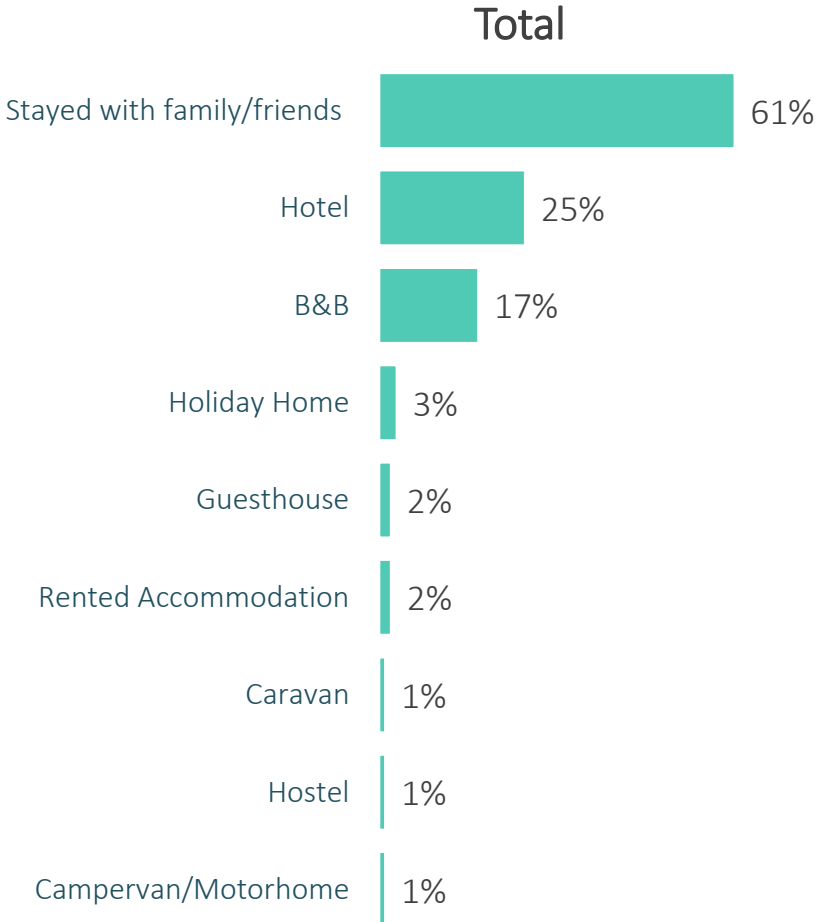
Q.3 How many nights did you spend in each of the counties mentioned previously?

(Base: All Passengers; n=945)

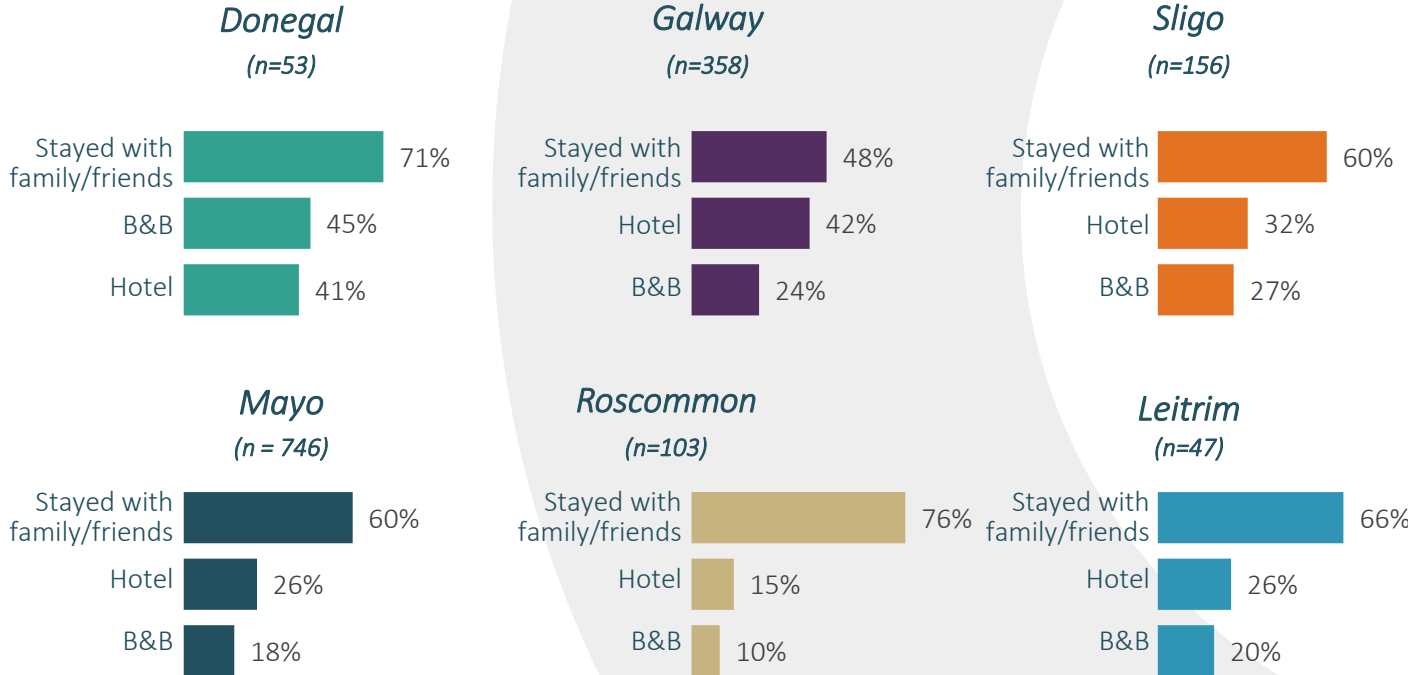
1 in 4 stay in a hotel, 1 in 6 in B&B but majority with family/friends

Hotel and B&B accommodation is particularly strong among visitors to Donegal and Galway.

Types of Accommodation Used



TOP THREE ACCOMODATION TYPE BY COUNTY VISITED

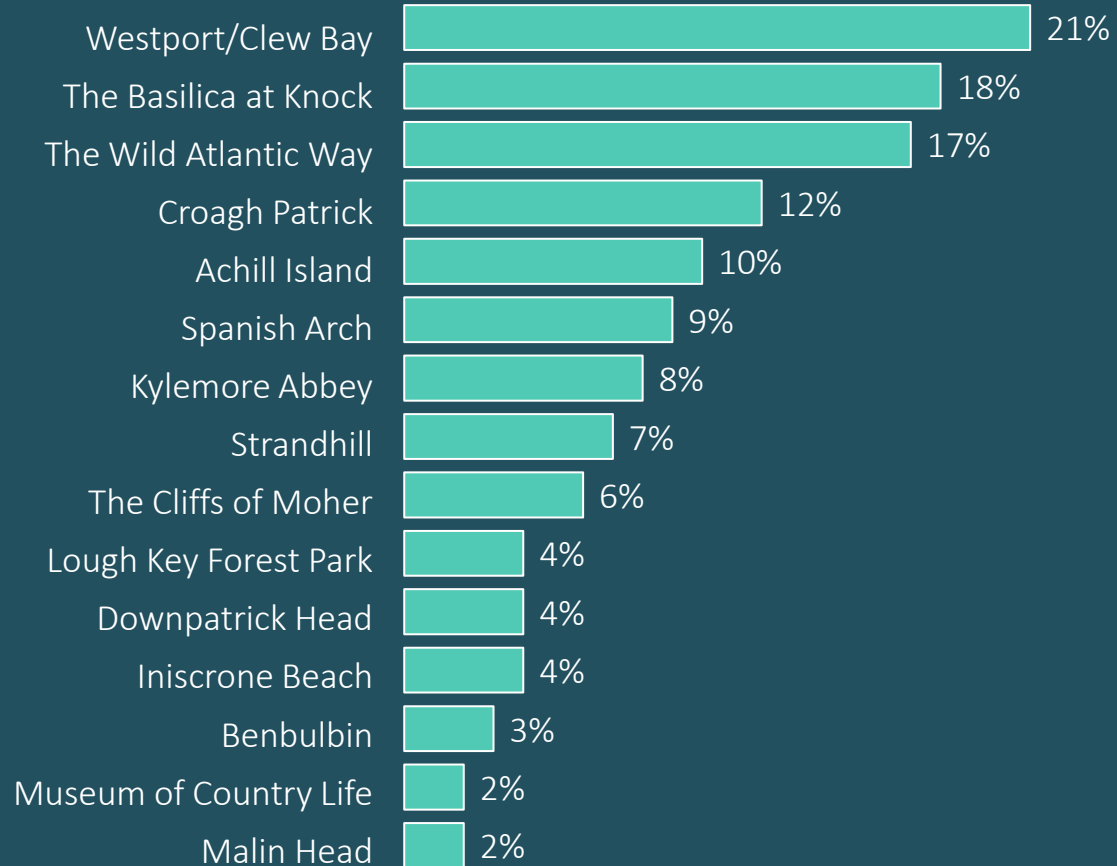


Q.4 What type of accommodation did you stay in during your trip to Ireland?
 (Base: All Passengers; n=945)

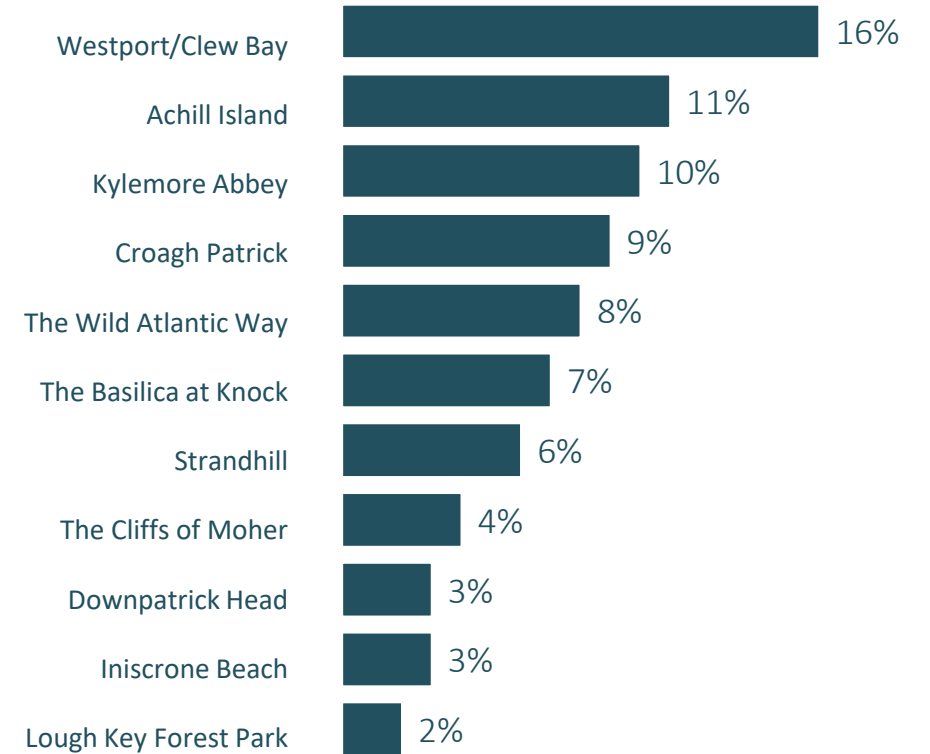


Westport / Clew Bay, Basilica and WAW are high on attractions visited

Attractions Visited



Main Highlight of Visit (amongst visitors)



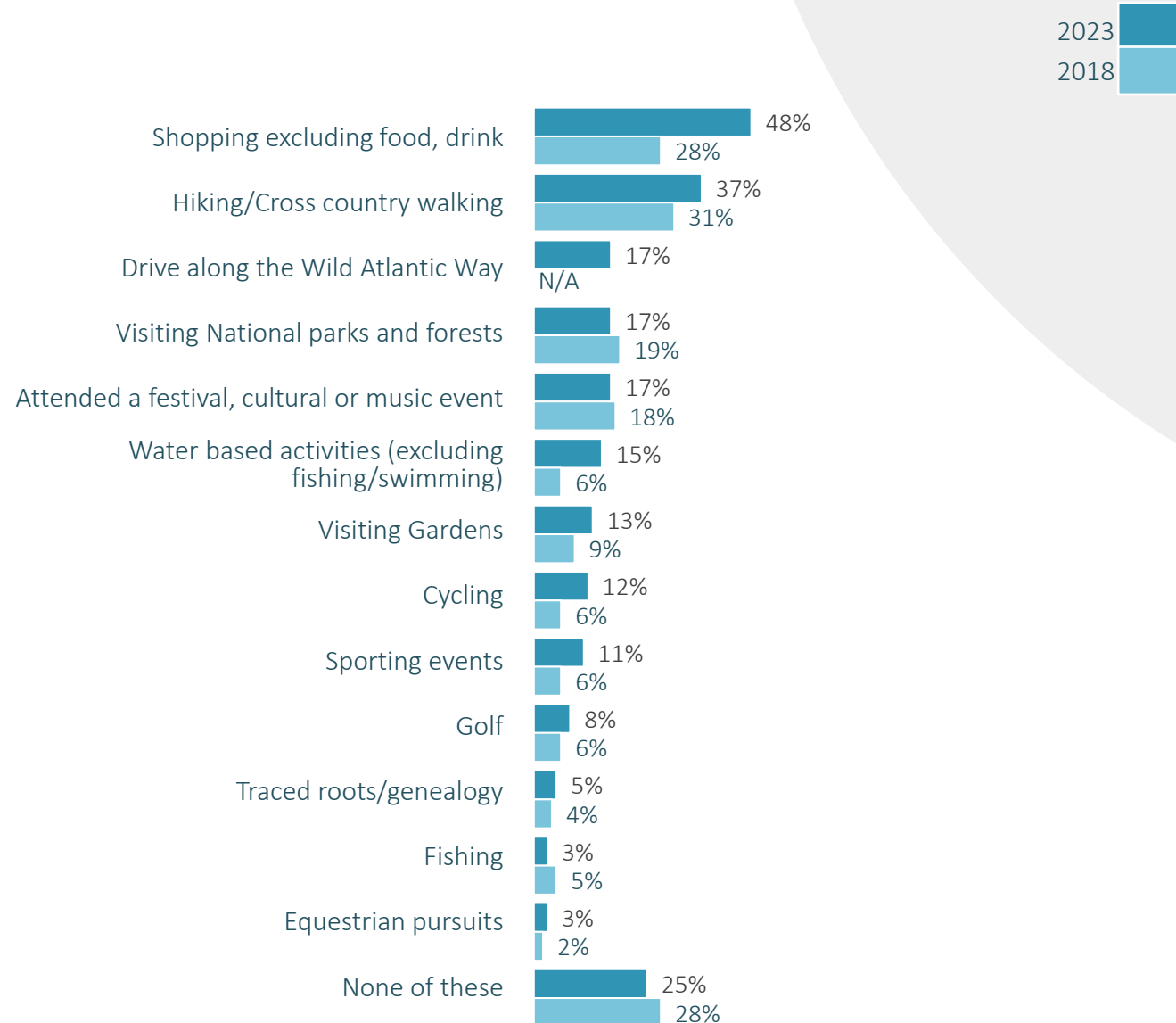
Q.5c What attraction was your highlight of your visit to this region?

(Base: All Passengers; n=945)

Shopping has become a more popular activity when visiting

Hiking, water-based activities, visiting gardens and sporting activities have also risen in popularity in 2023 and showcasing the wide range of activities the West of Ireland has to offer.

Activities Engaged in



Q.5 I am going to read out a list of events or activities. Could you let me know if you engaged in any of them during this trip to the Republic of Ireland?

(Base: All Passengers; n=945)

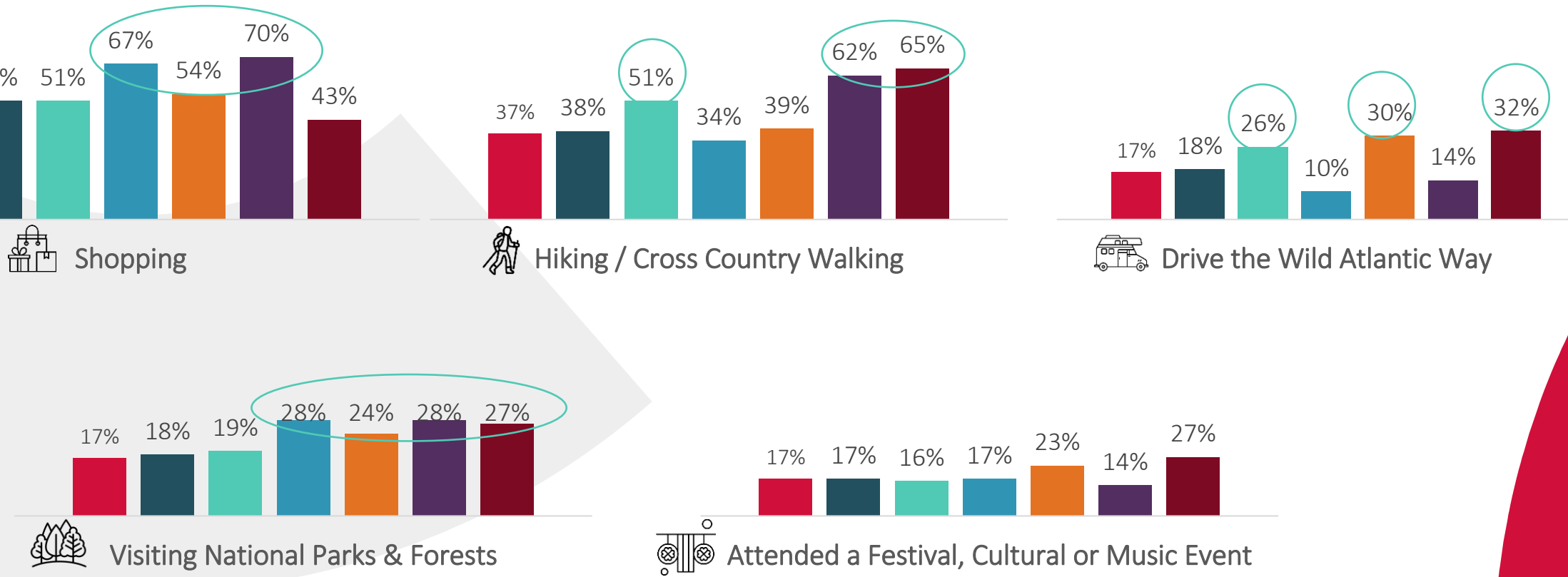
Shopping is a popular activity across all stakeholder counties



Meanwhile, the smaller counties are visited more so for outdoor activities.

Activities Engaged in x Stakeholder County

■ TOTAL ■ MAYO ■ SLIGO ■ ROSCOMMON ■ GALWAY ■ LEITRIM ■ DONEGAL



Q.5 I am going to read out a list of events or activities. Could you let me know if you engaged in any of them during this trip to the Republic of Ireland?

(Base: All Passengers; n=945)

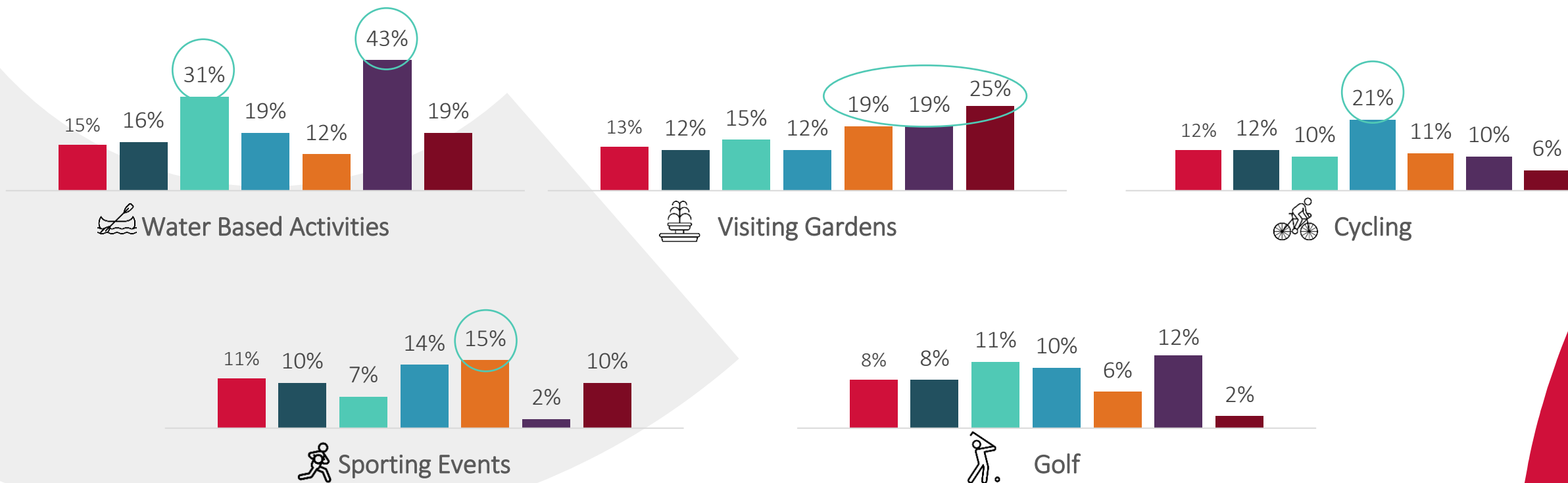
Water based activities are most popular in Leitrim



Meanwhile Donegal is admired for its gardens while cycling activities are popular in Roscommon.

Activities Engaged in x Stakeholder County

■ TOTAL ■ MAYO ■ SLIGO ■ ROSCOMMON ■ GALWAY ■ LEITRIM ■ DONEGAL



Q.5 I am going to read out a list of events or activities. Could you let me know if you engaged in any of them during this trip to the Republic of Ireland?

(Base: All Passengers; n=945)



Economic Impact of Ireland West Airport

Visitors to the West of Ireland spend an average of €450 after they arrive in Ireland, contributing €29 million to the economy during Summer months alone.



Average value per passenger is circa €450 once arriving in Ireland

Spend before and after stay in Ireland

Pre-arrival Avg. Spend

€412 (Inc. nothing)

€584 (Ex. nothing)

Post-arrival Avg. Spend

€450 (Inc. nothing)

€479 (Ex. nothing)

Avg. Number of
People this covers

2

Q.6 Please estimate the total amount of money you spent on your trip to Ireland in advance of arriving in the country?

Q.7 Please estimate the total amount of money you/your travelling party spent on your trip while in Ireland on each of the following?

(Base: All Passengers; n=945)

Up to €500+ is spent on accommodation on average



Among those not staying with friends / family, accommodation is the largest expense, with travellers paying upwards of €500 on average.

Spend During Stay in Ireland (excl. Nothing – All Passengers who Spent something)



Q.7 Please estimate the total amount of money you/your travelling party spent on your trip while in Ireland on each of the following?

(Base: All Passengers; n=945)



**Non-Irish Residing
Passengers
travelling through
Ireland West
Airport contribute
a significant
amount to the
economy during
Summer months**

Total economic contribution
from non-Irish residents

€28,703,000

Assumes the following;

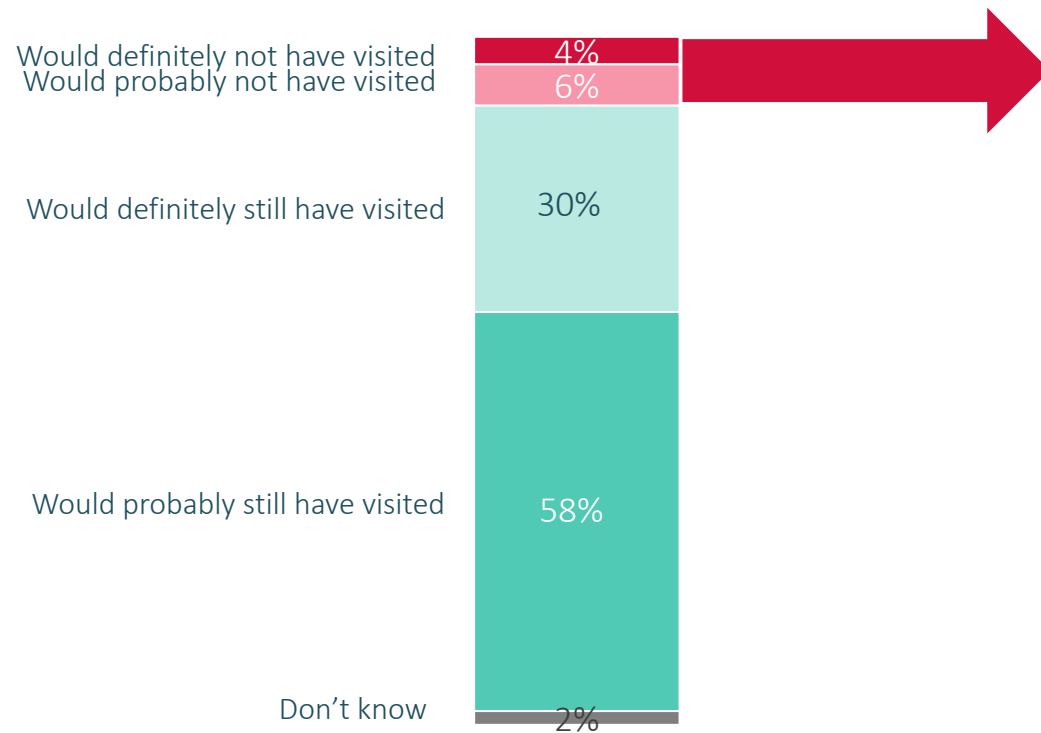
- *63,783 non-Irish passengers on these flights during June-August 2023 – source: IWA estimates*
- *Average claimed spend of €450 after arrival in Ireland*

An IW flight option was essential for 1 in 10 passengers



While the majority of passengers would have flown in regardless, 1 in 10 passengers would not have made the trip to the West of Ireland without a suitable IW flight option.

Likelihood of visiting West of Ireland if IW Airport wasn't available



10%
would not have
travelled to West of
Ireland if Ireland
West Airport was
not available

The absence of Ireland West Airport would have a significant economic impact

Impact of Ireland West Airport on economy



Would not have made trip without availability of IWA

10%

Overall impact on Irish economy without IWA

- €2,870,300

Assumes the following;

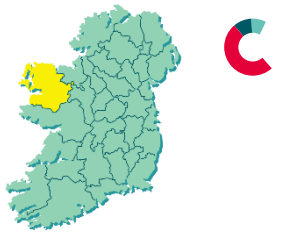
- 63,783 non-Irish passengers on these flights during June-August 2023 – source: IWA estimates*
- Average claimed spend of €450 after arrival in Ireland*
- Assumes the 10% who would not have made the trip through IWA, would be unlikely to have travelled anywhere in Ireland*



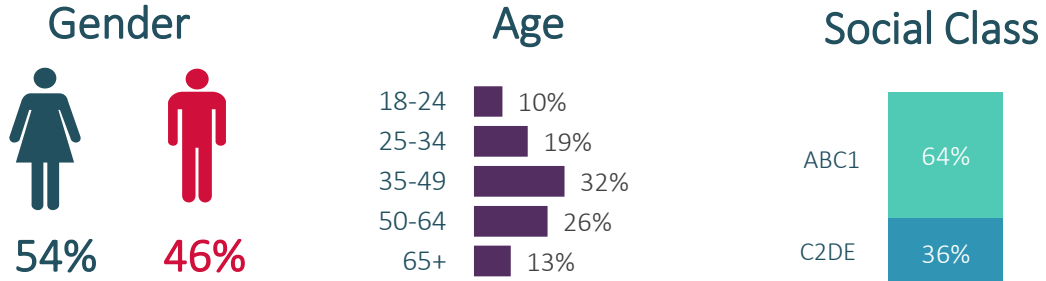
County Summaries

County Summary - Mayo

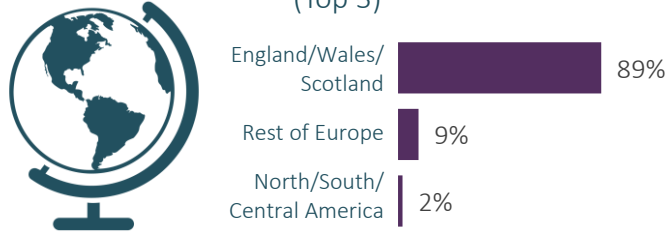
(All passengers who visited Mayo, n=746)



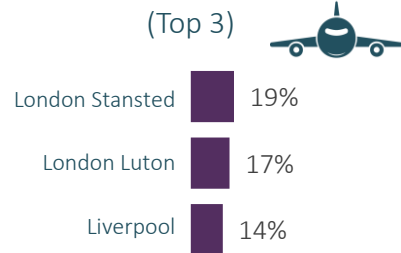
Passenger Profile



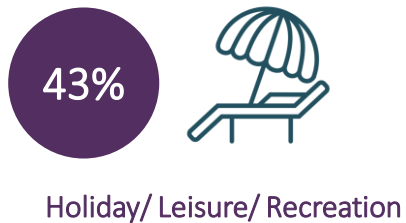
Country of Residence (Top 3)



Destination of Flight (Top 3)

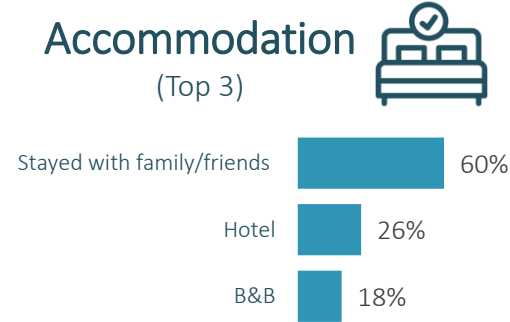


Purpose of Visit

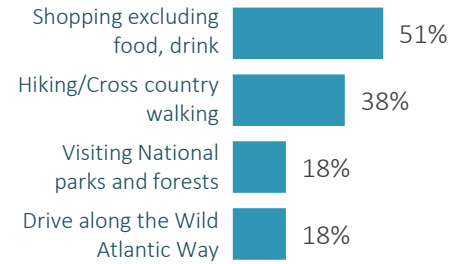


Activity in Mayo

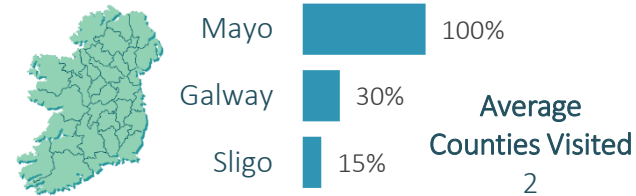
Accommodation (Top 3)



Activities Conducted (Top 3)



Counties Visited (Top 3)



Average Nights Spent

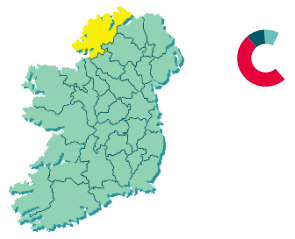


Attractions Visited (Top 3)

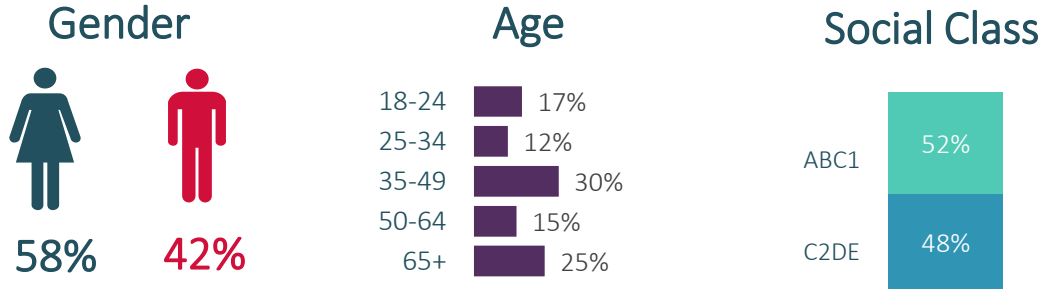


County Summary - Donegal

(All passengers who visited Donegal, n=53)

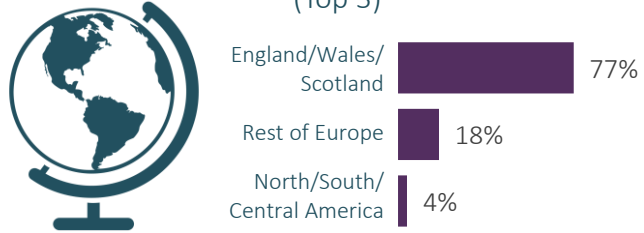


Passenger Profile



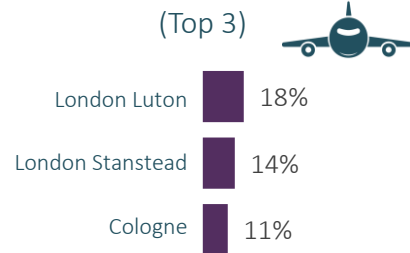
Country of Residence

(Top 3)



Destination of Flight

(Top 3)



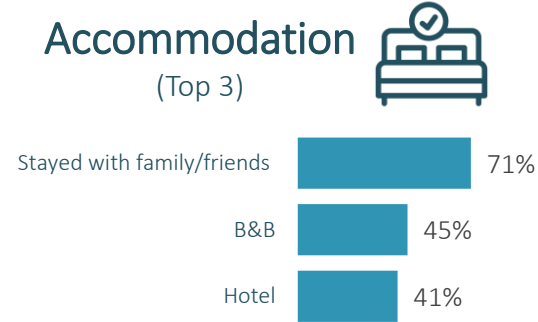
Purpose of Visit



Activity in Donegal

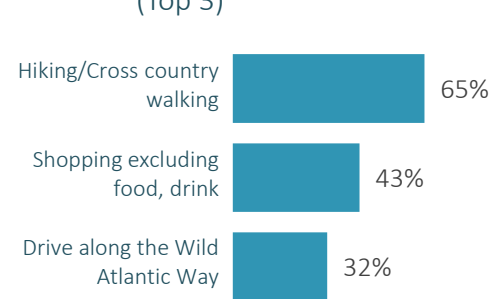
Accommodation

(Top 3)



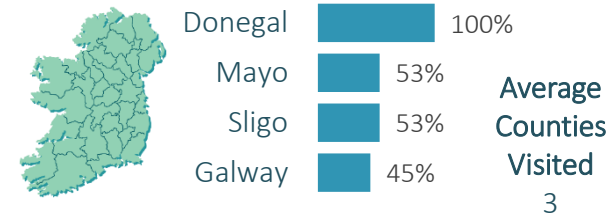
Activities Conducted

(Top 3)



Counties Visited

(Top 3)

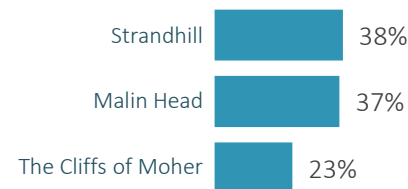


Average Nights Spent



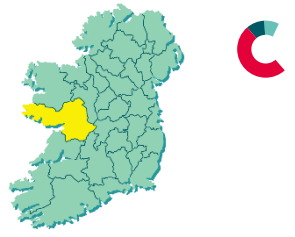
Attractions Visited

(Top 3)

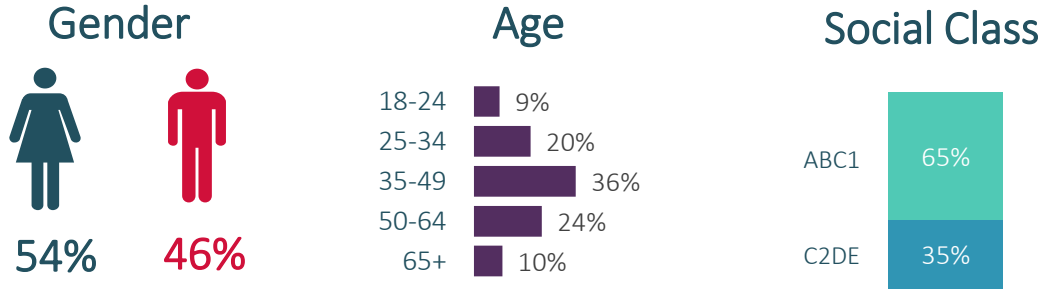


County Summary - Galway

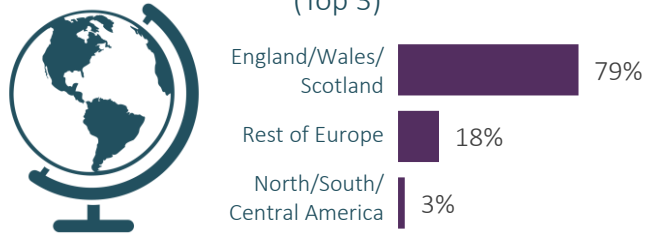
(All passengers who visited Galway, n=358)



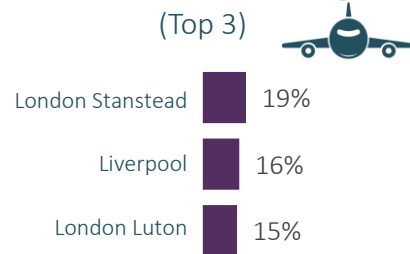
Passenger Profile



Country of Residence (Top 3)



Destination of Flight (Top 3)

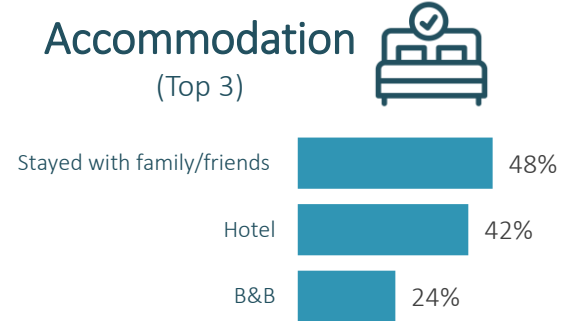


Purpose of Visit



Activity in Galway

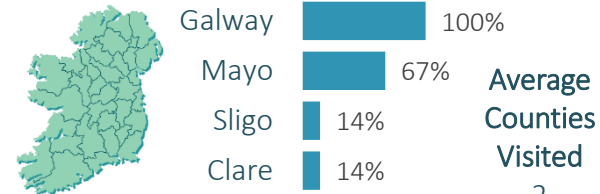
Accommodation (Top 3)



Activities Conducted (Top 3)



Counties Visited (Top 3)



Average Nights Spent

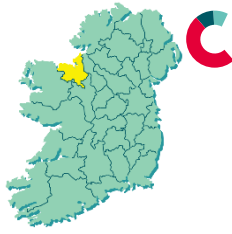


Attractions Visited (Top 3)

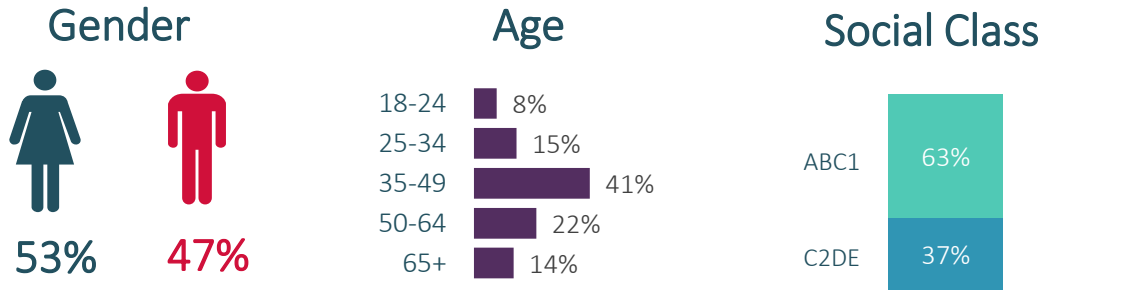


County Summary - Sligo

(All passengers who visited Sligo, n=156)



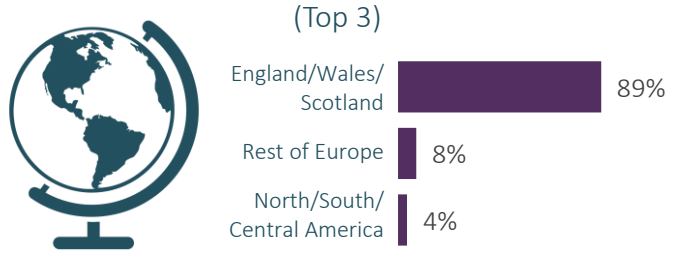
Passenger Profile



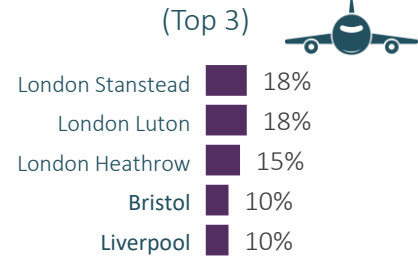
Activity in Sligo



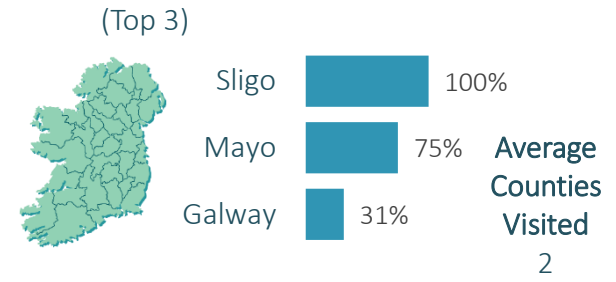
Country of Residence



Destination of Flight



Counties Visited



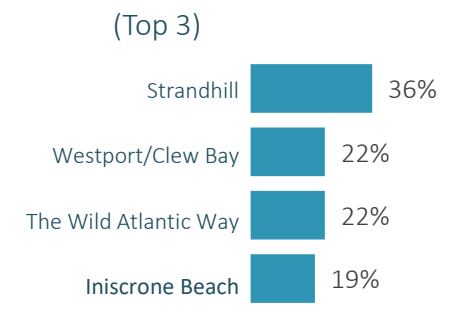
Average Nights Spent



Purpose of Visit

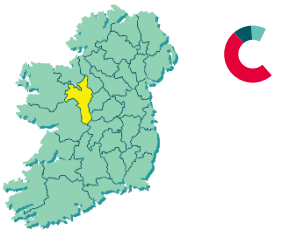


Attractions Visited

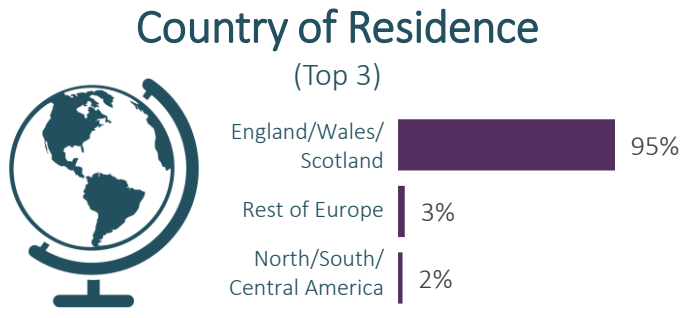
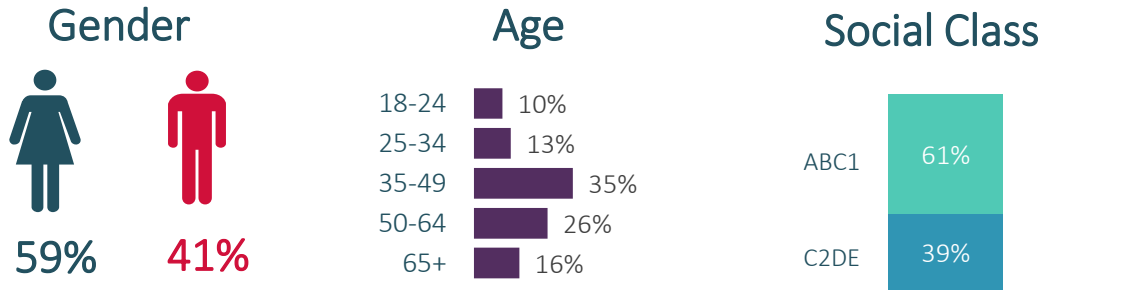


County Summary - Roscommon

(All passengers who visited Roscommon, n=103)



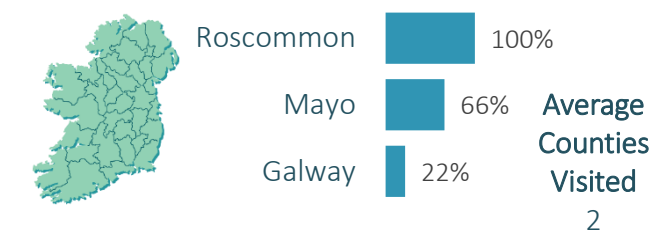
Passenger Profile



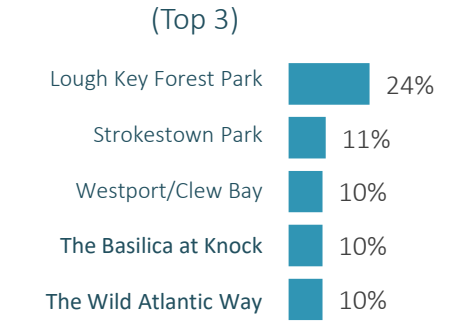
Purpose of Visit



Activity in Roscommon

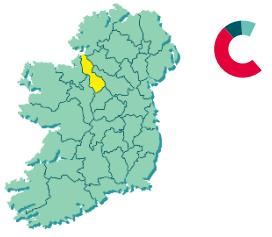


Attractions Visited

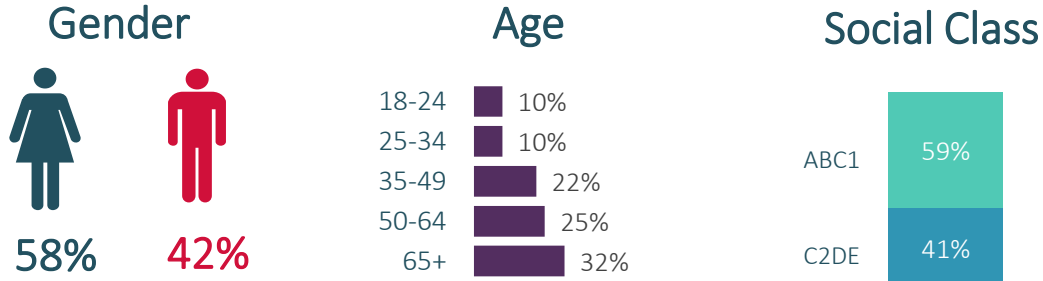


County Summary - Leitrim

(All passengers who visited Leitrim, n=47)

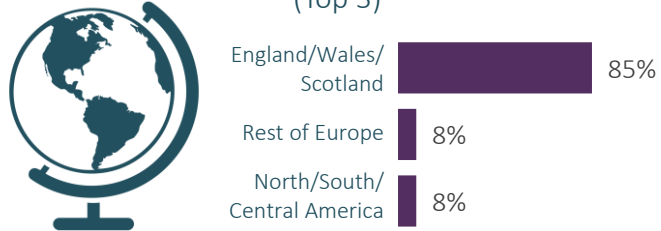


Passenger Profile



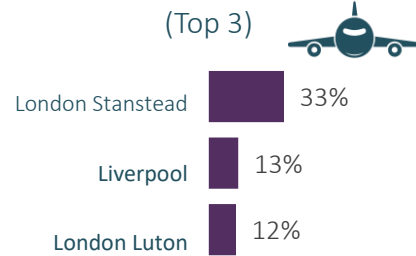
Country of Residence

(Top 3)



Destination of Flight

(Top 3)



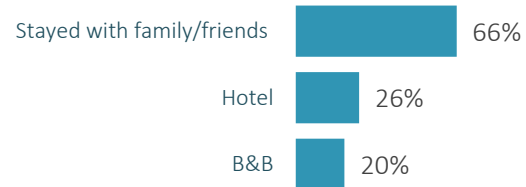
Purpose of Visit



Activity in Leitrim

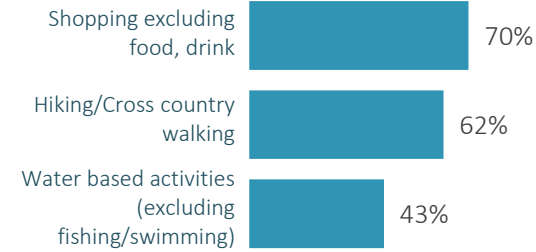
Accommodation

(Top 3)



Activities Conducted

(Top 3)



Counties Visited

(Top 3)



Average Counties Visited
3

Average Nights Spent



6

Attractions Visited

(Top 3)



SPEND before stay
€659

SPEND during stay
€414

RESEARCH
EVALUATION
DIRECTION
CLARITY

See More, Clearly

REDC

