

WALTON COUNTY TOURISM

SUMMER VISITOR TRACKING REPORT

JUNE – AUGUST 2026

WALTON COUNTY TOURISM

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 METHODOLOGY

4 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

11 5-YEAR OVERVIEW

14 VISITOR PROFILE SUMMARY

24 VISITOR PROFILE DETAILED FINDINGS

25 PRE-VISIT

35 TRAVEL PARTY PROFILE

47 TRIP EXPERIENCE

54 POST-TRIP EVALUATION

METHODOLOGY



Surveys were completed by **521** visitors via online and intercept interviews between **June 1 and August 31, 2026**. Intercept surveys were conducted across the 16 beach neighborhoods.

Visitors are defined as people who live outside of Walton County and are taking a day trip/staying overnight in South Walton.

NOTE: Visitor tracking questionnaire was updated in June 2026. Data reflects responses from the updated survey. Year over year comparisons should be interpreted with caution as results may not be directly comparable to previous years.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



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KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026



2,007,700

TOTAL VISITORS



1,264,400

ROOM NIGHTS[1]



$1,623,604,100

DIRECT SPENDING



$31,625,933

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT TAX[2]

[1]Source: Smith Travel Research, Key Data, and Walton County Clerk of Court.
[2]Source: Walton County Clerk of Court.

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LODGING METRICS

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

COMBINED[1]



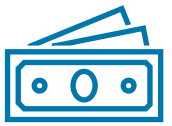
67.8%

OCCUPANCY



$497.91

AVERAGE DAILY RATE



$337.58

REVENUE PER AVAILABLE ROOM

HOTELS[2]



71.7%

OCCUPANCY



$256.23

AVERAGE DAILY RATE



$187.42

REVENUE PER AVAILABLE ROOM

VACATION RENTALS[3]



66.6%

OCCUPANCY



$570.77

AVERAGE DAILY RATE



$394.47

REVENUE PER AVAILABLE ROOM

WALTON COUNTY TOURISM

[1]Combined metrics include hotels and vacation rentals. Sources include Smith Travel Research, Key Data, Department of Business and Professional Regulation, and Walton County Clerk of Court.
[2]Source: Smith Travel Research.
[3]Source: Key Data and Department of Business and Professional Regulation.

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DAILY TRAVEL PARTY SPENDING

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

	ALL VISITORS[1] 2025	ALL VISITORS[1] 2026
Accommodations	$304	$299
Restaurants	$134	$153
Groceries	$69	$68
Shopping	$96	$107
Entertainment	$43	$60
Transportation	$45	$50
Other	$15	$12
Daily Spending	**$706**	**$749**

[1]Including visitors staying in paid accommodations, with friends/relatives or second homes, and day trippers.

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TOTAL TRAVEL PARTY SPENDING

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

	ALL VISITORS[1] 2025	ALL VISITORS[1] 2026
Accommodations	$1,909	$1,695
Restaurants	$842	$868
Groceries	$433	$386
Shopping	$603	$607
Entertainment	$270	$340
Transportation	$283	$284
Other	$94	$68
Total Spending	**$4,434**	**$4,248**

[1]Including visitors staying in paid accommodations, with friends/relatives or second homes, and day trippers.

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KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS YOY

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

	Summer 2025	Summer 2026	% Δ
Visitors	1,928,600	2,007,700	+4.1%
Direct Spending	$1,558,484,300	$1,623,604,100	+4.2%
Room Nights[1]	1,241,100	1,264,400	+1.9%
TDT[2]	$29,588,853	$31,625,933	+6.9%

[1]Source: Smith Travel Research, Key Data, and Walton County Clerk of Court.
[2]Source: Walton County Clerk of Court.

WALTON COUNTY TOURISM

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KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS YOY

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

COMBINED LODGING METRICS[1]	SUMMER 2025	SUMMER 2026	% Δ
Occupancy	68.5%	67.8%	-1.0%
ADR	$478.43	$497.91	+4.1%
RevPAR	$327.64	$337.58	+3.0%

HOTEL METRICS[2]	SUMMER 2025	SUMMER 2026	% Δ
Occupancy	74.8%	71.7%	-4.1%
ADR	$266.38	$256.23	-3.8%
RevPAR	$199.33	$183.82	-7.8%

VACATION RENTAL METRICS[3]	SUMMER 2025	SUMMER 2026	% Δ
Occupancy	66.5%	66.6%	+0.2%
ADR	$540.94	$570.77	+5.5%
RevPAR	$359.76	$380.20	+5.7%

WALTON COUNTY TOURISM

[1]Combined metrics include hotels and vacation rentals. Sources include Smith Travel Research, Key Data, Department of Business and Professional Regulation, and Walton County Clerk of Court.
[2]Source: Smith Travel Research.
[3]Source: Key Data and Department of Business and Professional Regulation.

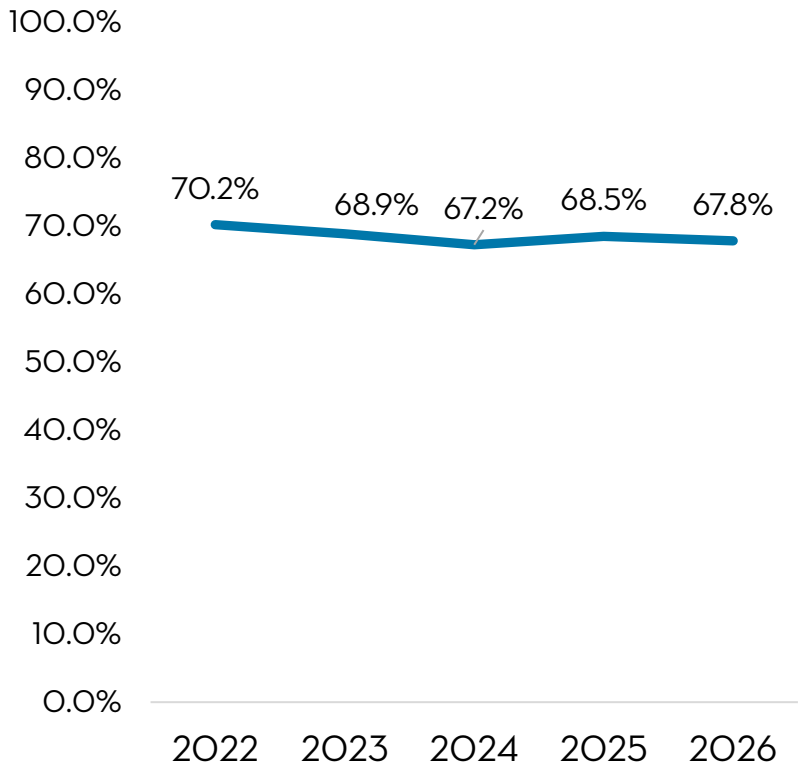
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5-YEAR OVERVIEW

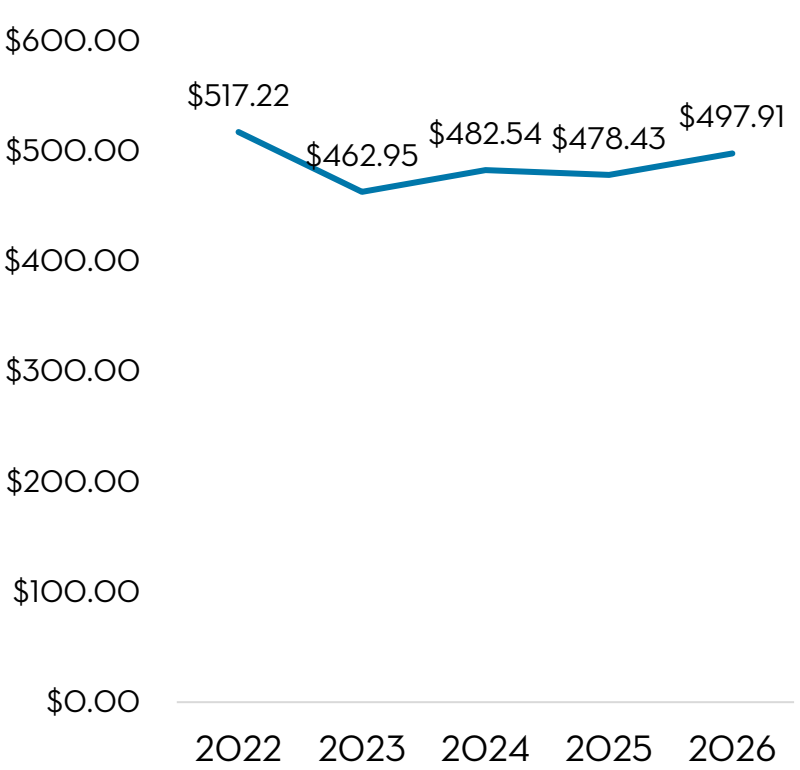


SUMMER LODGING METRICS[1]

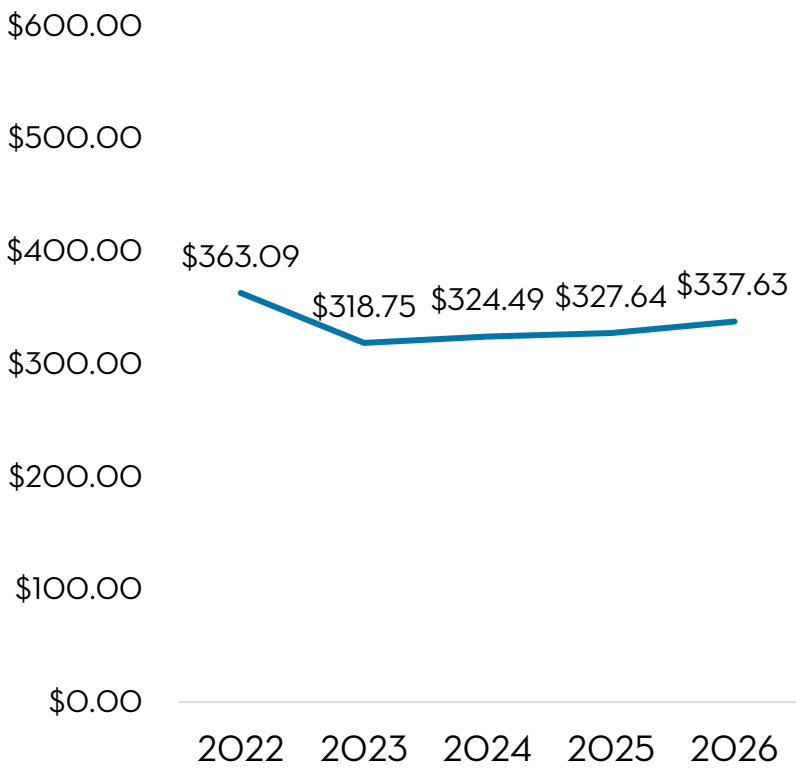
OCCUPANCY



AVERAGE DAILY RATE



REVENUE PER AVAILABLE ROOM



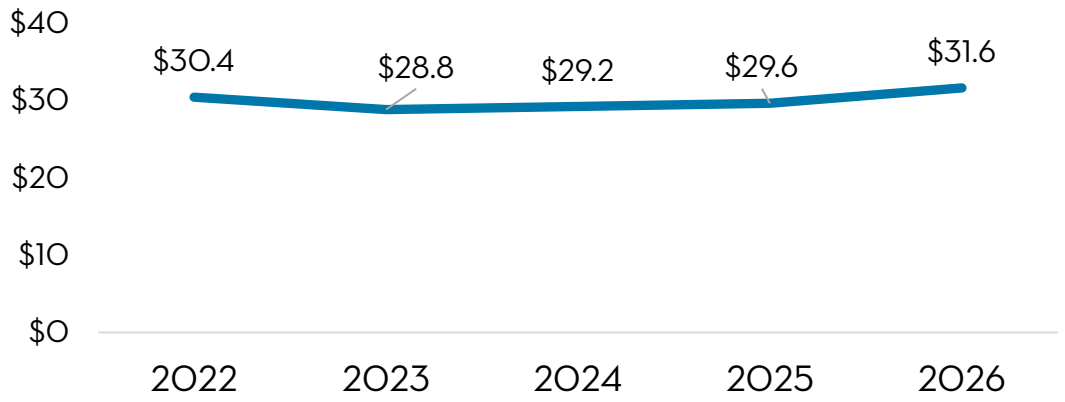
[1]Lodging metrics include hotels and vacation rentals. Sources include Smith Travel Research, Key Data, Department of Business and Professional Regulation, and Walton County Clerk of Court.

WALTON COUNTY TOURISM

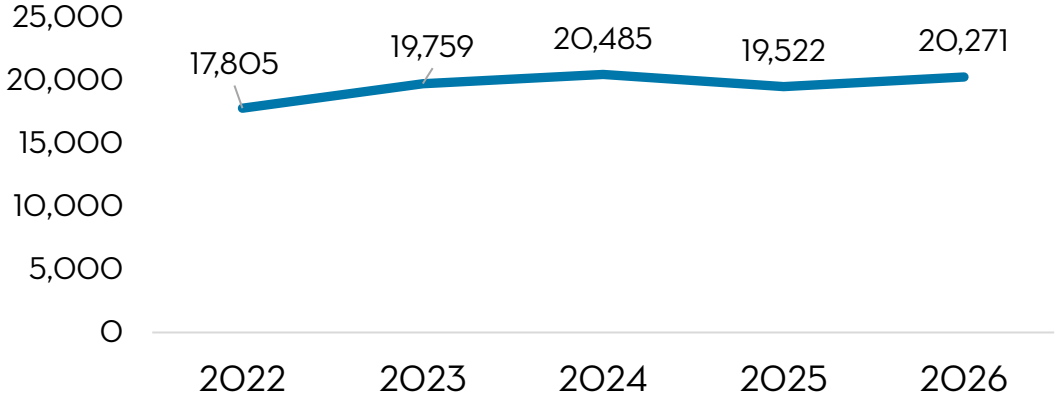
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SUMMER TOURISM METRICS

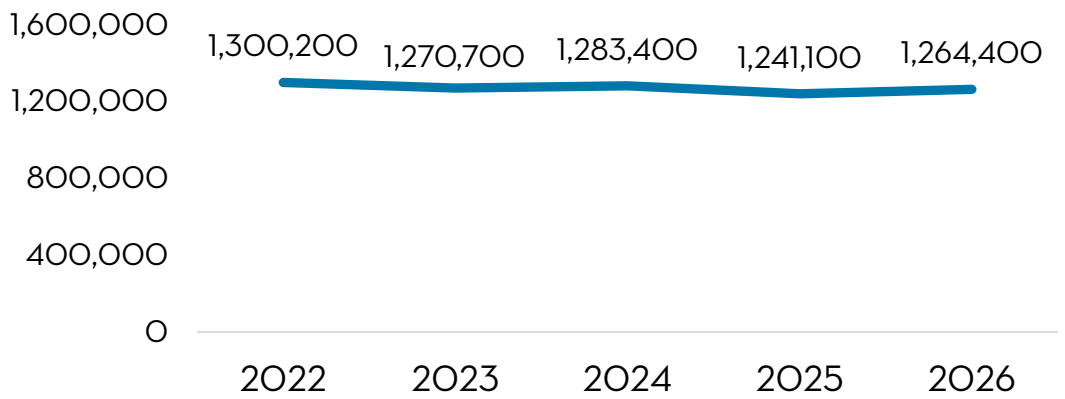
TDT (IN MILLIONS)[1]



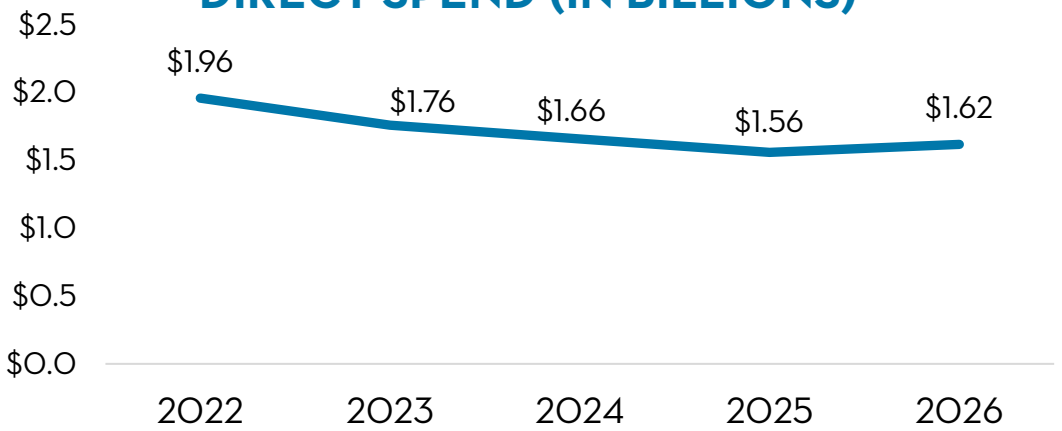
UNITS



ROOM NIGHTS[2]



DIRECT SPEND (IN BILLIONS)



WALTON COUNTY TOURISM

[1]Source: Walton County Clerk of Court.
[2]Source: Smith Travel Research, Key Data, and Walton County Clerk of Court.

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VISITOR PROFILE SUMMARY



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VISITOR PROFILE

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026



13%
Use the term "South Walton"

70%
Drove

19%
First-time Visitor

52%
Traveled with children[1]

5.1
Travel Party Size[2]

5.7
Length of Stay[2]

[1]Children are defined as people under 20 years old.
[2]Includes visitors staying in paid accommodations, nonpaid accommodations, and day trippers.

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VISITOR TYPE

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026



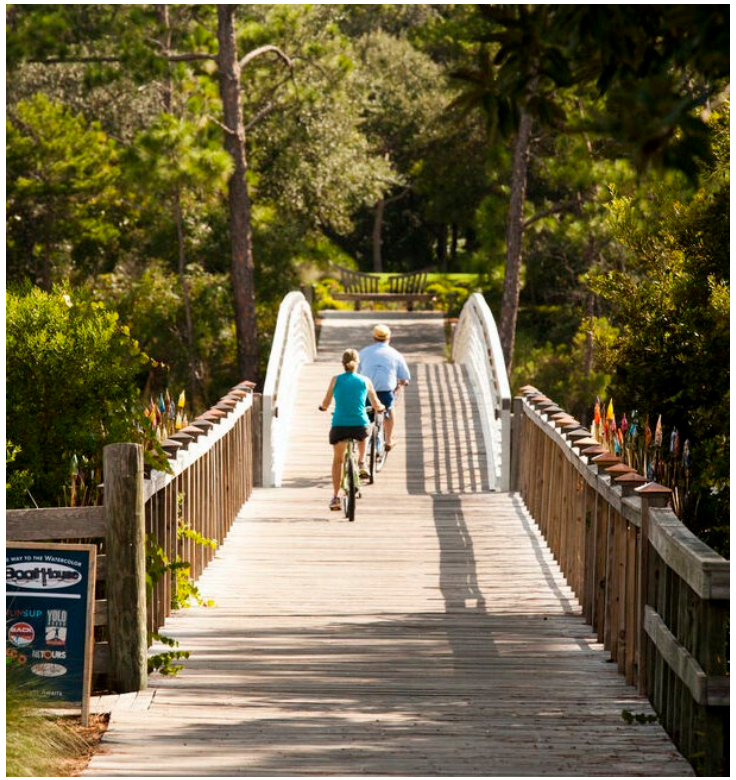
Paid Accommodations

60%



Nonpaid Accommodations

28%



Day tripper

12%

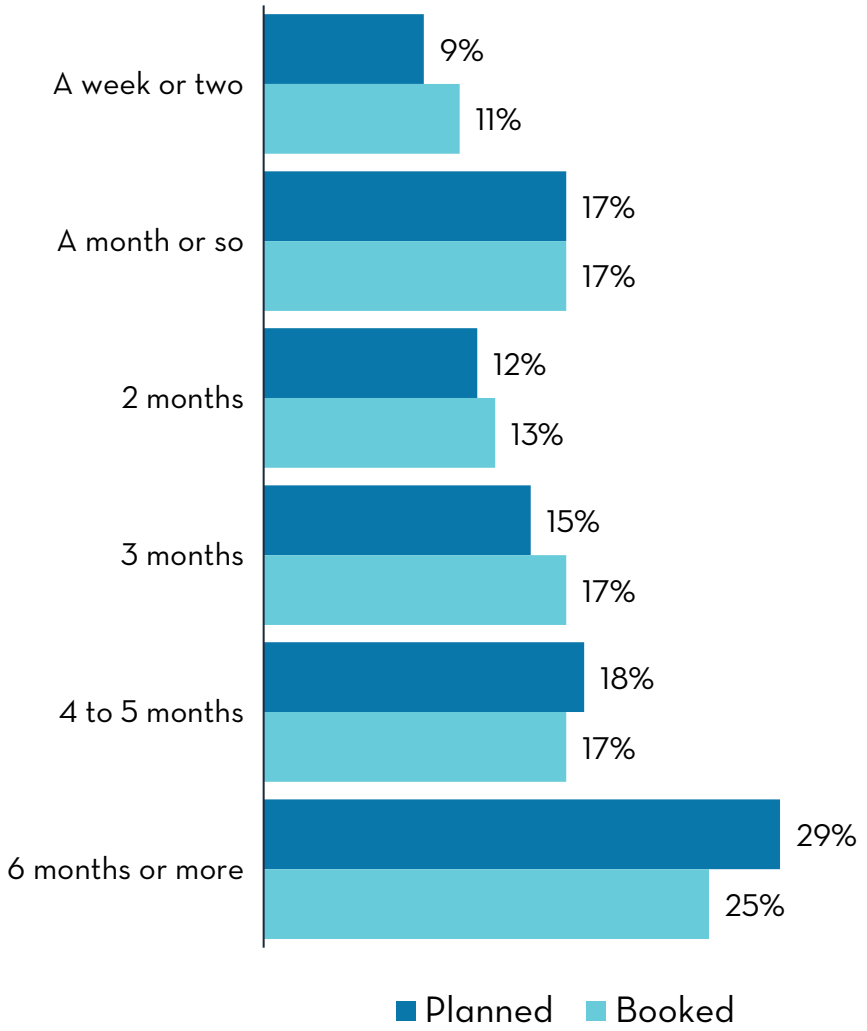
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TRIP PLANNING & BOOKING CYCLE

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- The typical visitor[1] **planned** their trip **84 days** (nearly 3 months) in advance.
- The typical visitor[1] **booked** their trip **76 days** in advance - about 8 days after planning their trip.



[1]Includes visitors staying in paid accommodations, nonpaid accommodations, and day trippers.

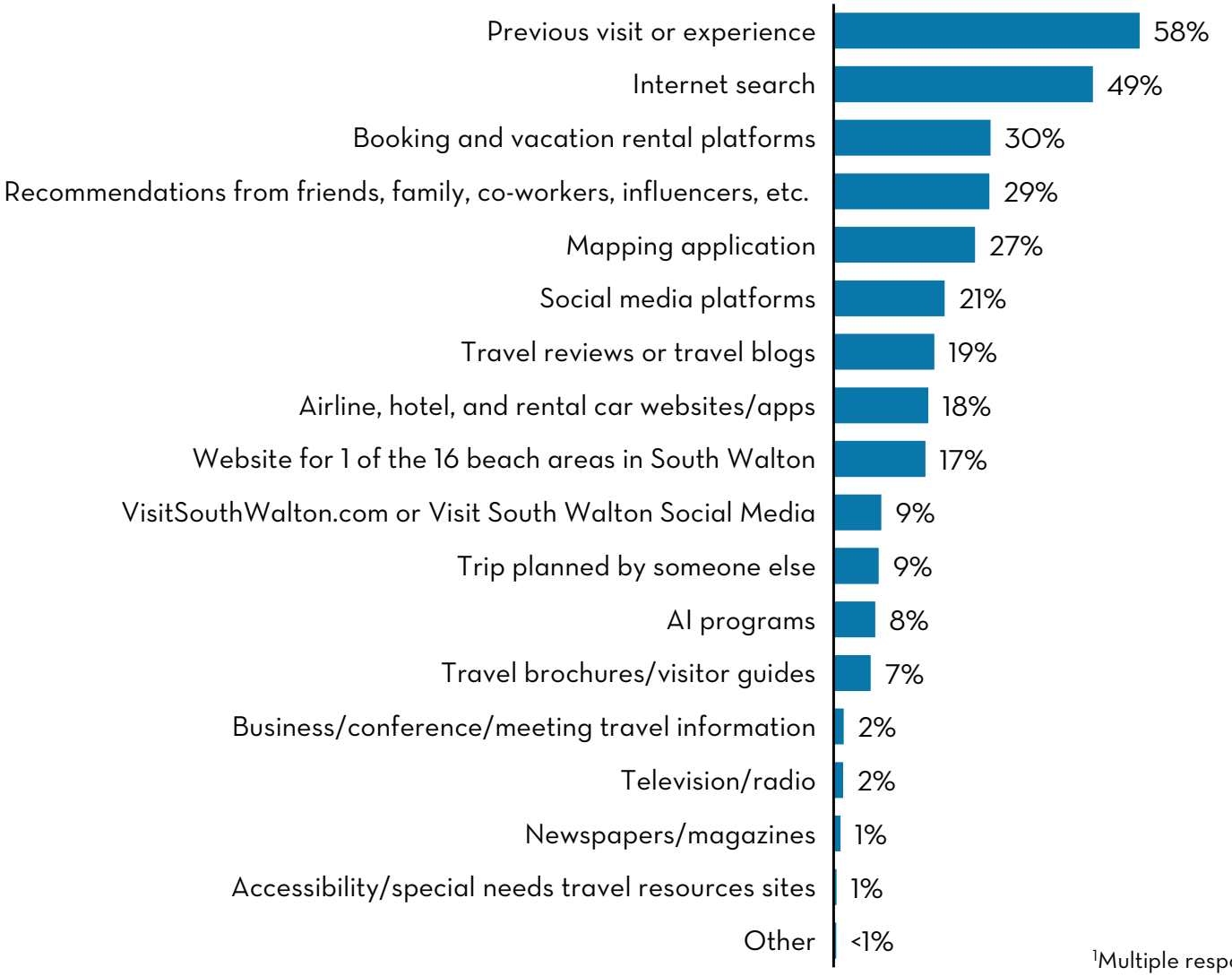
WALTON COUNTY TOURISM

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TRIP PLANNING SOURCES[1]

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- **Nearly 3 in 5** visitors planned their trip based on their **previous visit to South Walton**.
- **Nearly half** of visitors searched the **internet** to plan their trip.



[1]Multiple responses permitted.

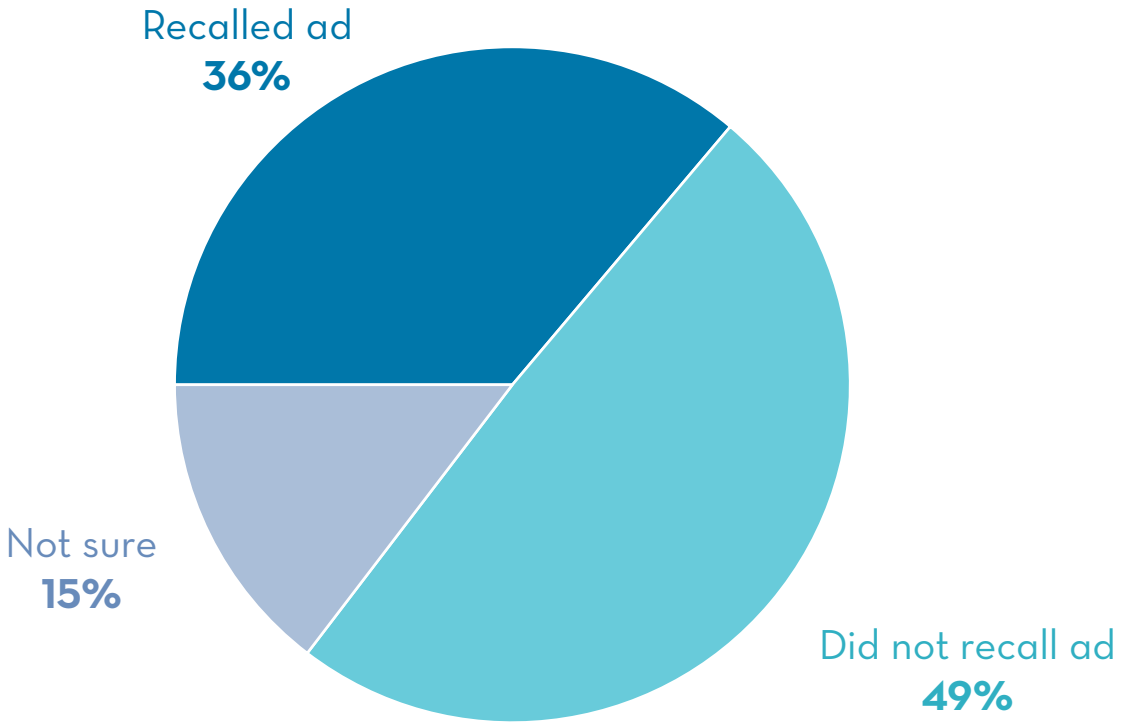
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AD RECALL[1]

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- **Over 1 in 3** visitors recalled advertising about South Walton.
- On average, visitors who recalled advertising about South Walton found it to be **slightly influential** in their decision to visit South Walton.



[1] Note: These figures are topline and solely rely on the memory of each visitor even though various other factors go into the influence of advertising.

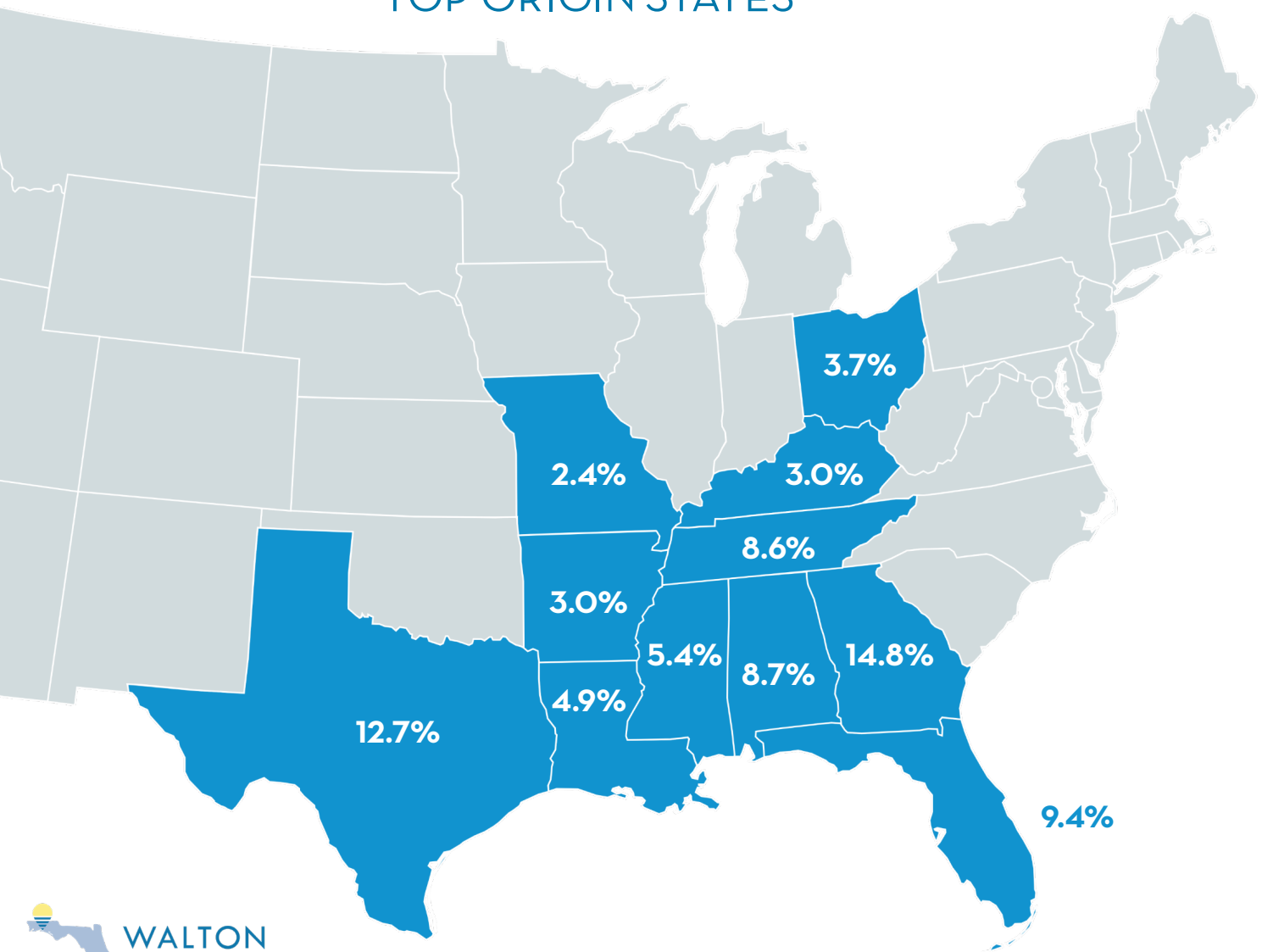
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VISITOR ORIGIN

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

TOP ORIGIN STATES



TOP DMAs	SUMMER 2026
Atlanta	10.9%
Dallas-Fort Worth	6.2%
Nashville	4.4%
Birmingham	4.1%
Houston	3.6%
Memphis	2.6%
Kansas City	2.5%
Little Rock-Pine Bluff	2.3%
Cincinnati	2.1%
Panama City	2.0%
Denver	2.0%
Mobile	1.9%
New Orleans	1.9%

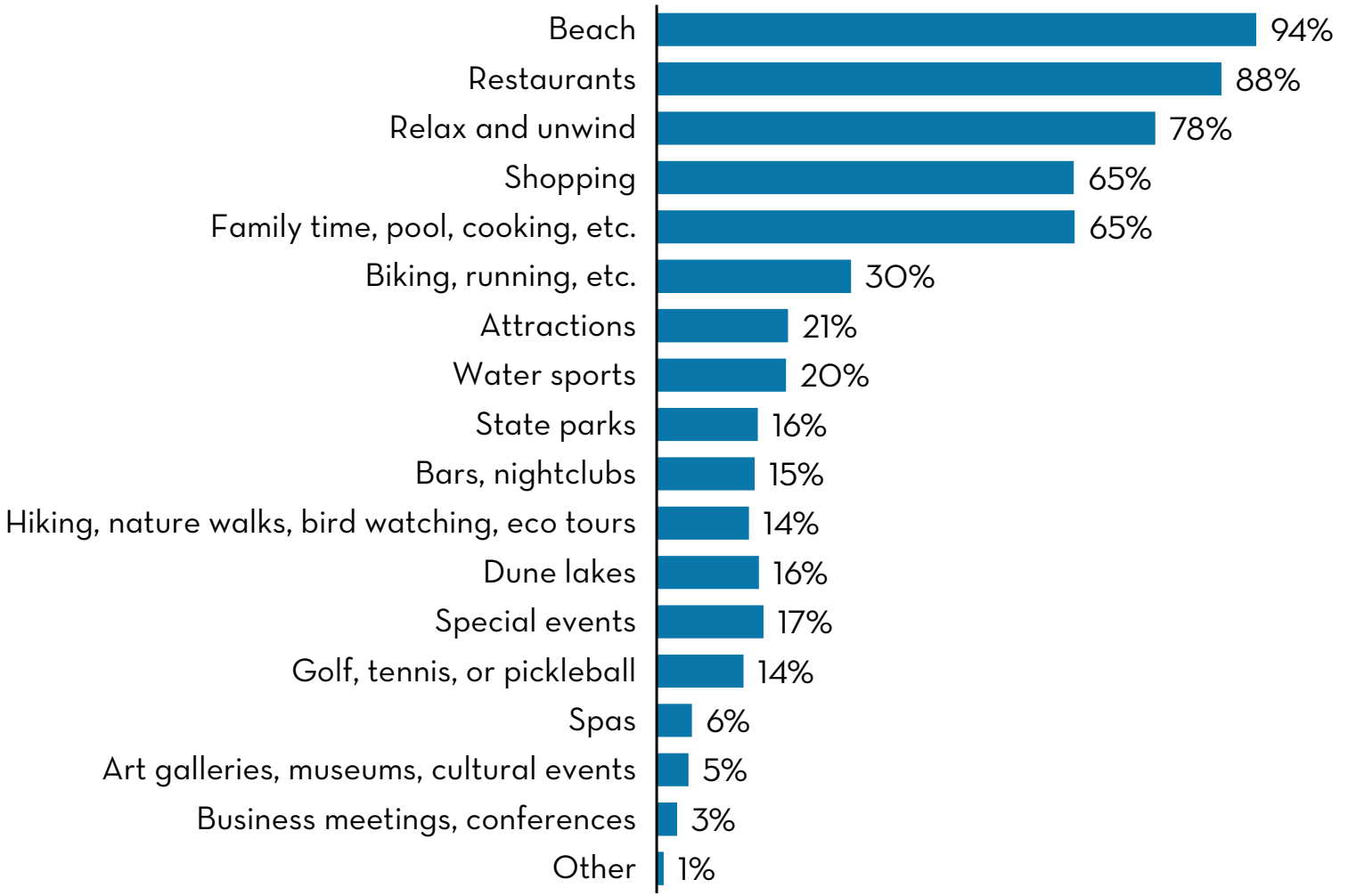
WALTON COUNTY TOURISM

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VISITOR ACTIVITIES[1]

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

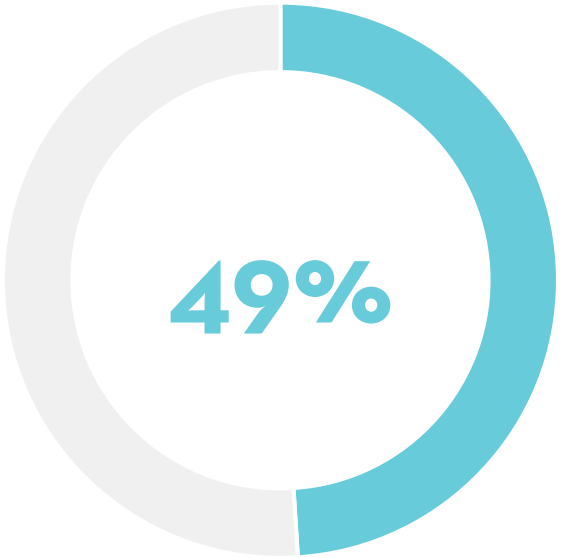
- Top visitor activities include:
  - **Visiting the beach**
  - **Eating at restaurants**
  - **Relaxing**
  - **Shopping**
  - **Family time**



[1]Multiple responses permitted.

VISITOR RATINGS

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026



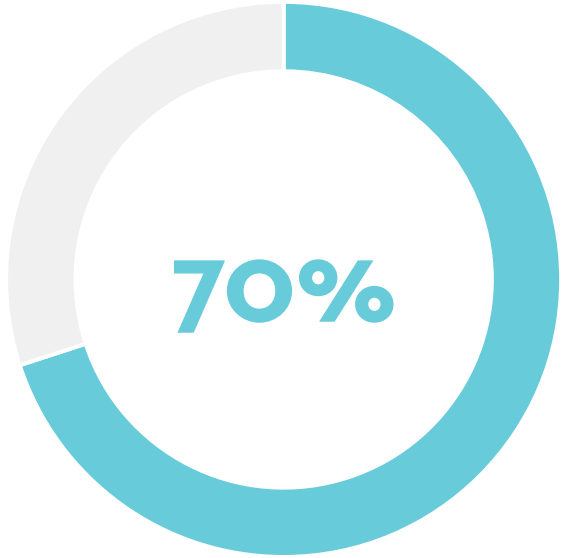
VERY SATISFIED

On average, visitors were very satisfied with their trip to South Walton and were particularly satisfied with the beautiful beaches and food, shopping, and attraction offerings.



STRONG LIKELIHOOD TO RECOMMEND

On average, visitors rated their likelihood to recommend the South Walton area an 8.7 out of 10, suggesting a strong likelihood to recommend.



DEFINITELY WILL RETURN

Visitors have a strong intent to return to South Walton as 7 in 10 visitors said they will definitely return.

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PERCEPTIONS OF SOUTH WALTON[1]

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

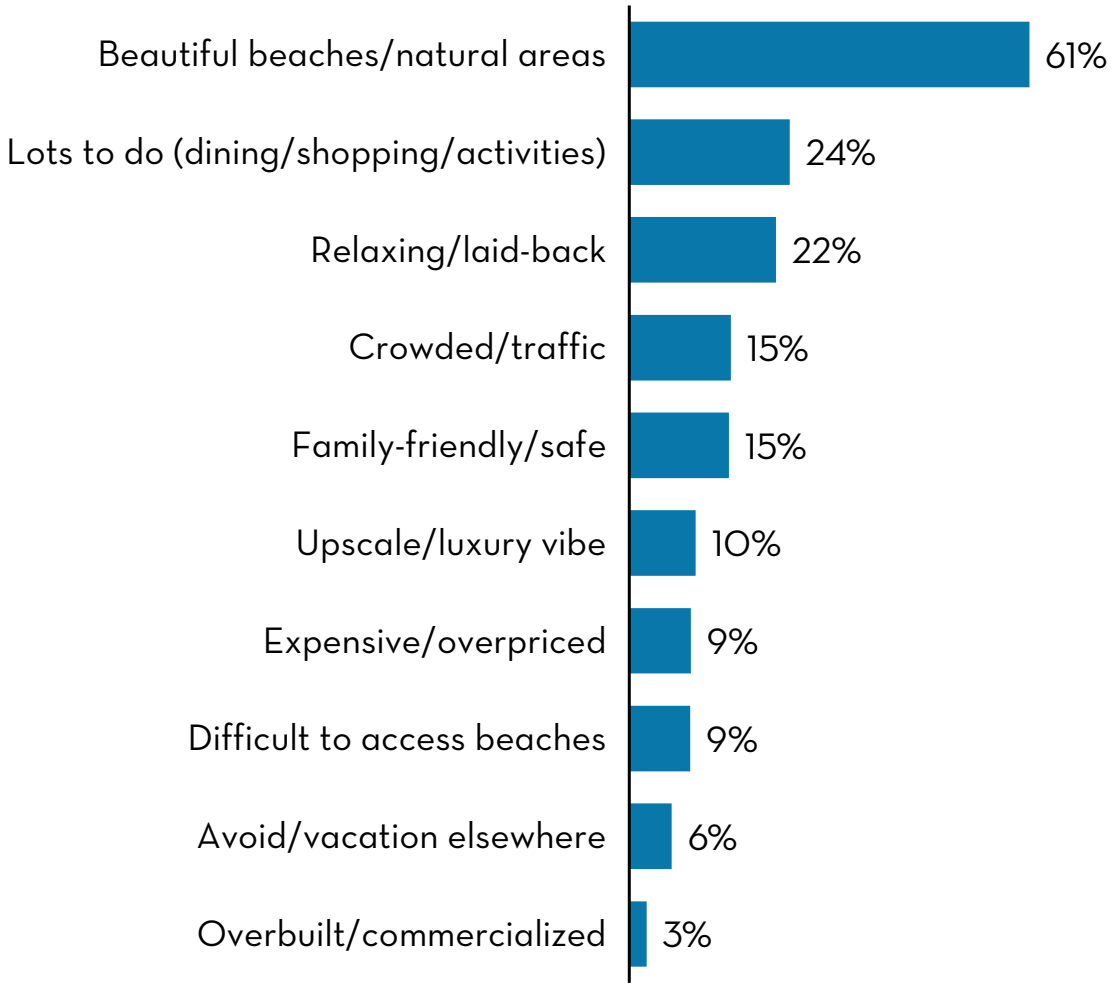
Visitor Descriptions:

"It is a slice of heaven from the stunning beaches to accommodations to the food. Everything you could possibly want in a vacation is in South Walton!"

"A mix of family-friendly low-key beaches to upscale high-end beaches. Something for everyone."

"Stunning family-friendly area with beautiful sandy beaches. Great place to unwind and to build family memories and start traditions."

"Can be crowded and hard to park/find beach access but if you find a quiet sport it's gorgeous"



[1]Visitors were asked the following open-ended question: "If you were talking to a friend, how would you describe South Walton as a place to visit?". Their responses were coded and grouped into themes/categories.

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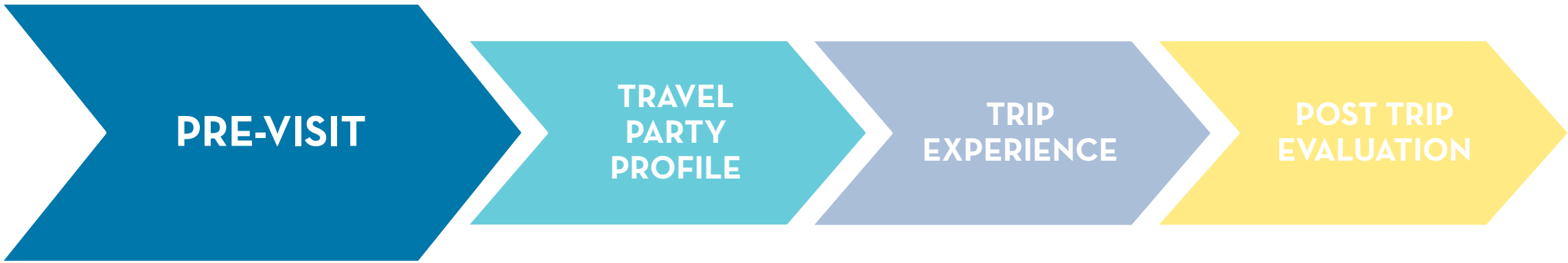
VISITOR PROFILE DETAILED FINDINGS



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STUDY OBJECTIVES: PRE-VISIT



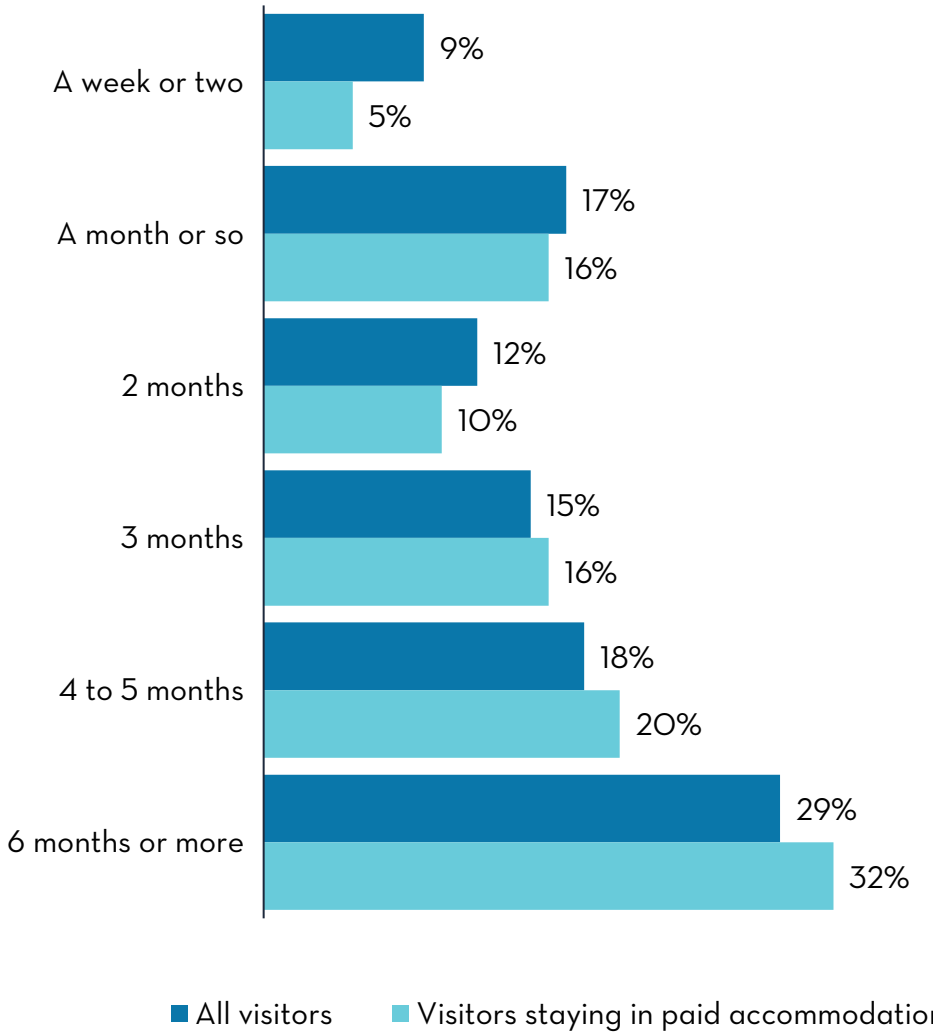
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TRIP PLANNING CYCLE

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- On average, visitors[1] planned their trip **101 days** (over 3 months) in advance.
- Visitors staying in paid accommodations have a longer planning period of **108 days** (over 3 months).



[1]Includes visitors staying in paid accommodations, nonpaid accommodations, and day trippers.

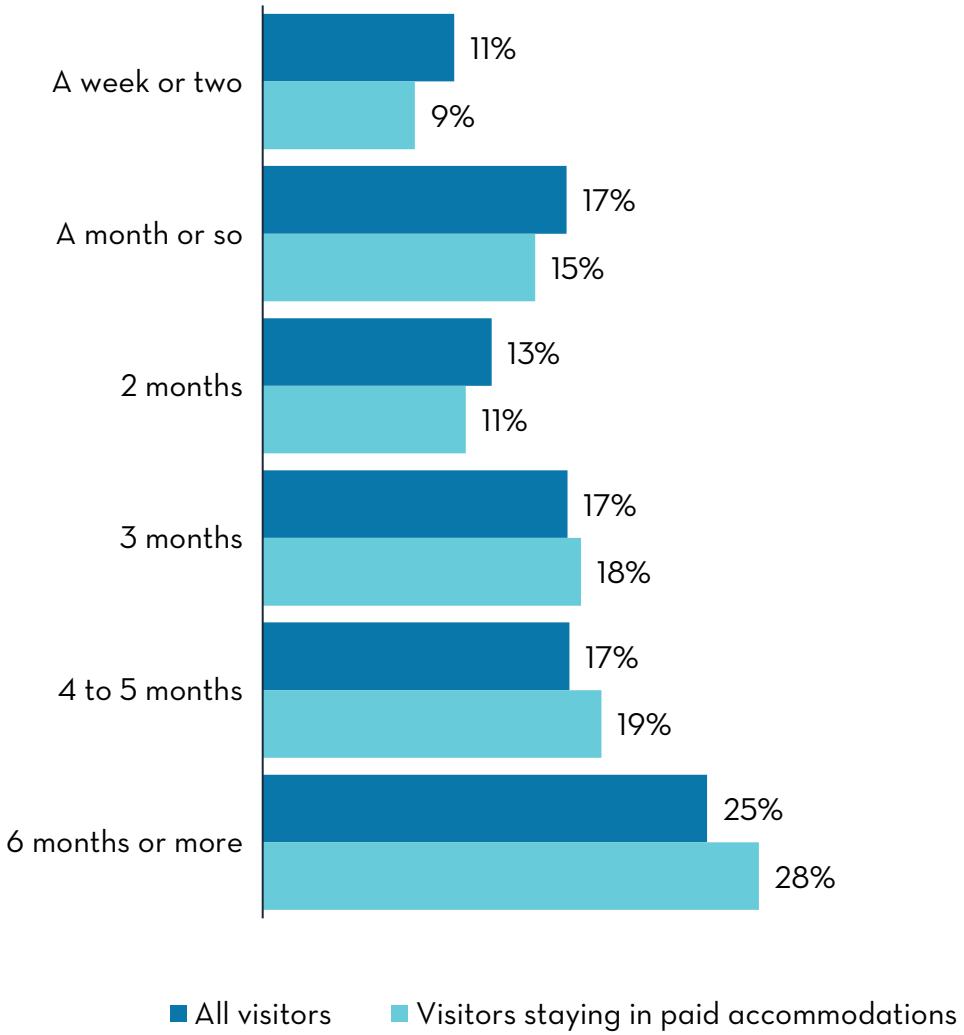
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BOOKING CYCLE

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- On average, visitors[1] booked their trip **95 days** in advance - about 6 days after planning their trip.
- Visitors staying in paid accommodations booked their trip **102 days** in advance - about 6 days after planning their trip.



[1]Includes visitors staying in paid accommodations, nonpaid accommodations, and day trippers.

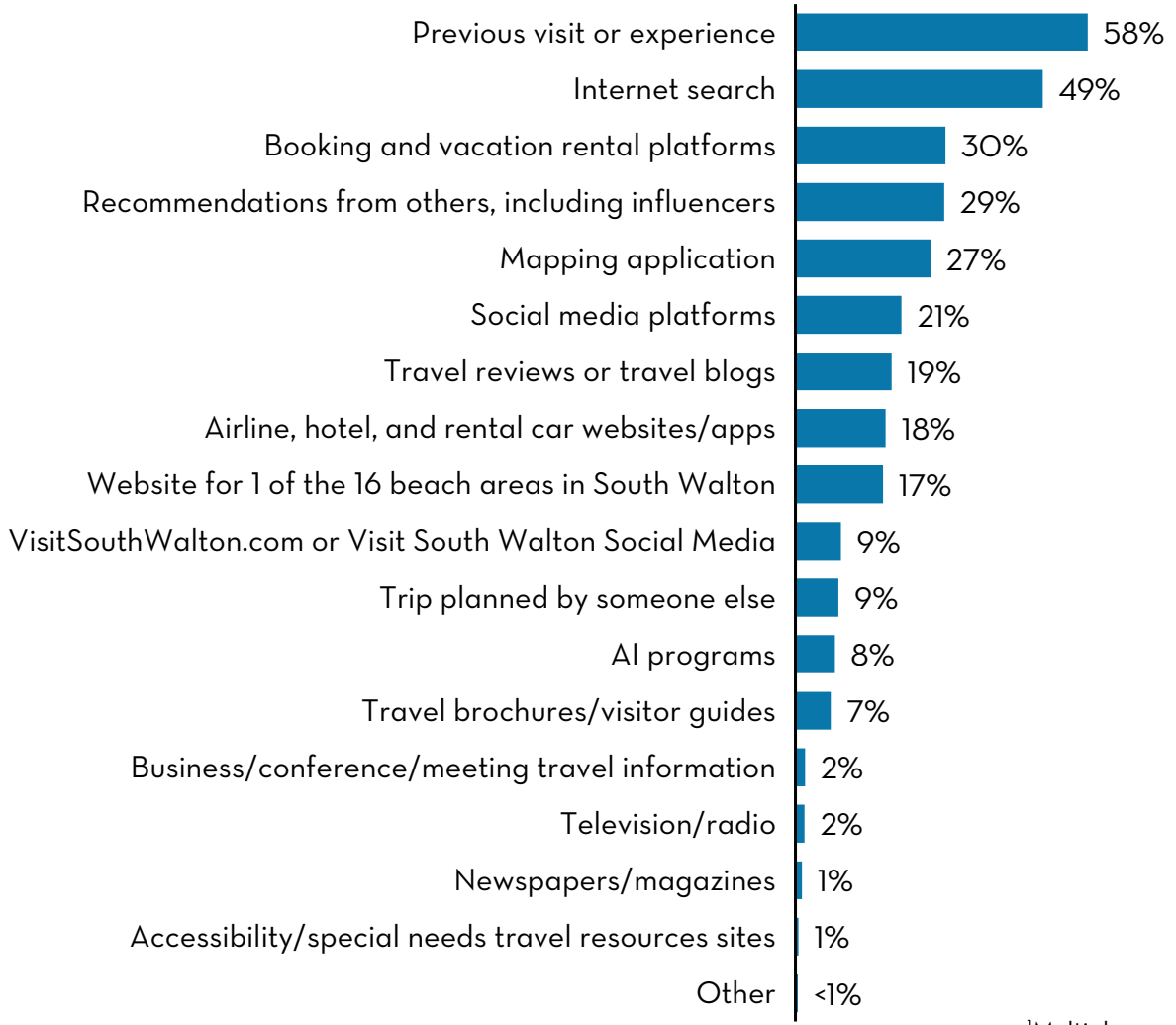
WALTON COUNTY TOURISM

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TRIP PLANNING SOURCES[1]

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- **Nearly 3 in 5** visitors planned their trip based on their **previous visit to South Walton**.
- **Nearly half** of visitors searched the **internet** to plan their trip.



[1]Multiple responses permitted.

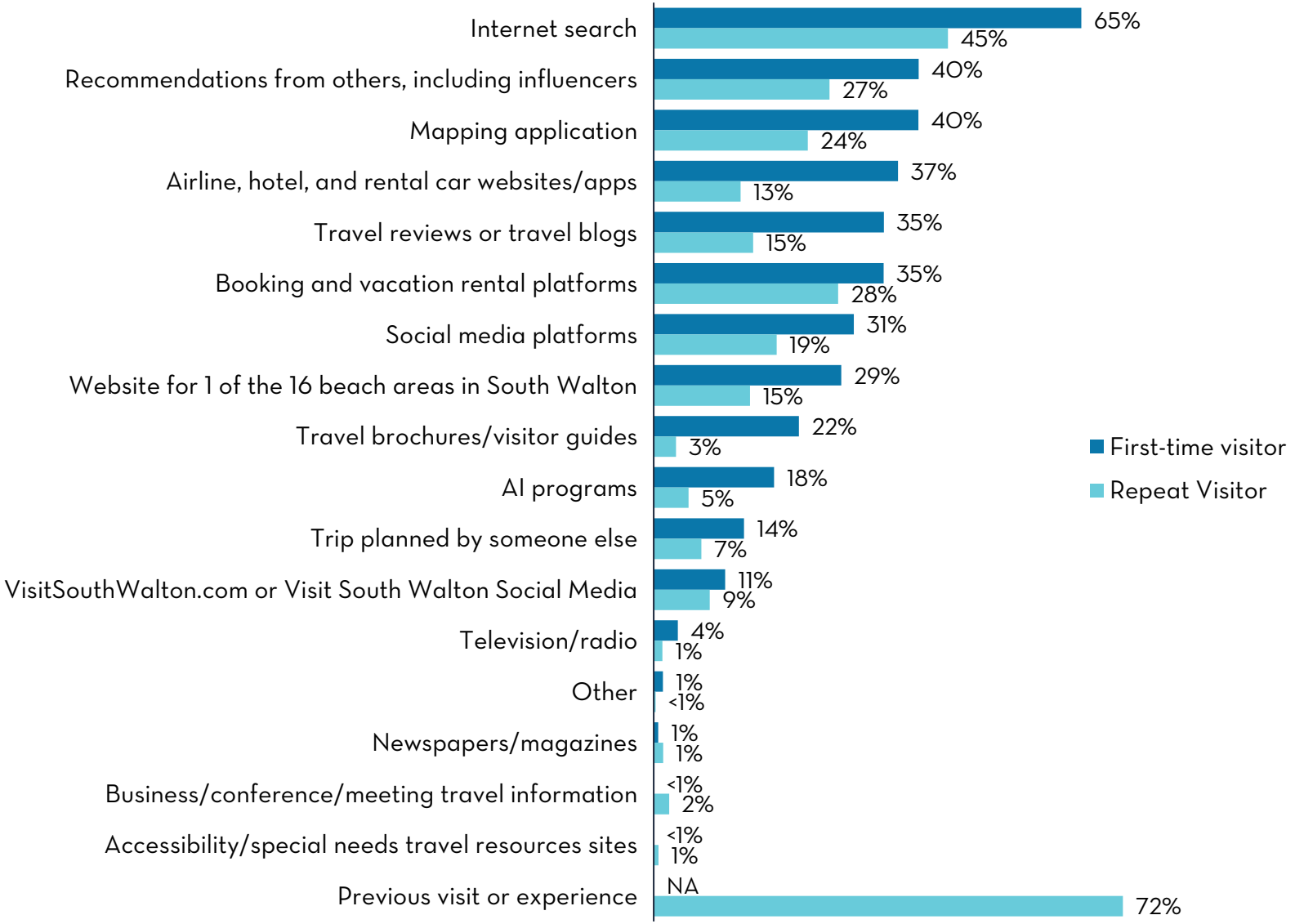
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TRIP PLANNING SOURCES[1]: FIRST VS. REPEAT VISITORS

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- Repeat visitors relied heavily on a **previous visit or experience**, while first-time visitors were more likely to plan based on **internet searches**, **recommendations**, **mapping apps**, **airline/hotel/rental car sites**, **travel reviews/blogs**, **social media**, **South Walton beach neighborhood websites**, **travel brochures/guides**, and **AI programs**.
- This suggests repeat visitors plan based on familiarity and first-time visitors depend more on a variety of sources.



[1]Multiple responses permitted.

WALTON COUNTY TOURISM

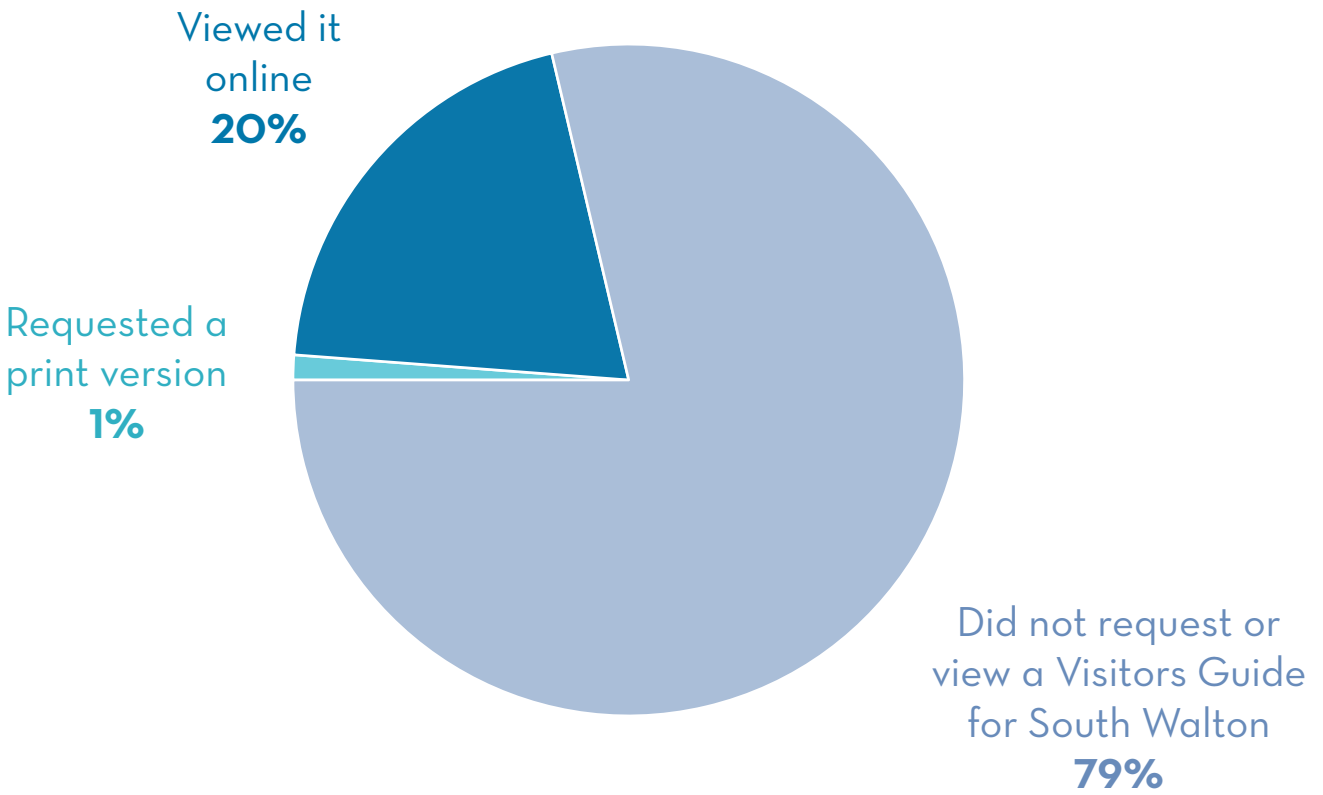
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VISITOR GUIDE

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- **Over 1 in 5 visitors** requested or viewed the South Walton Visitor Guide with online viewership being significantly greater than print consumption.

- Those who used the visitor guide gave it a usefulness rating of **7.9 out of 10**[1]. This indicates visitors found it helpful when planning their trip.



[1] On a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 is Extremely useful and 1 is Not at all useful.

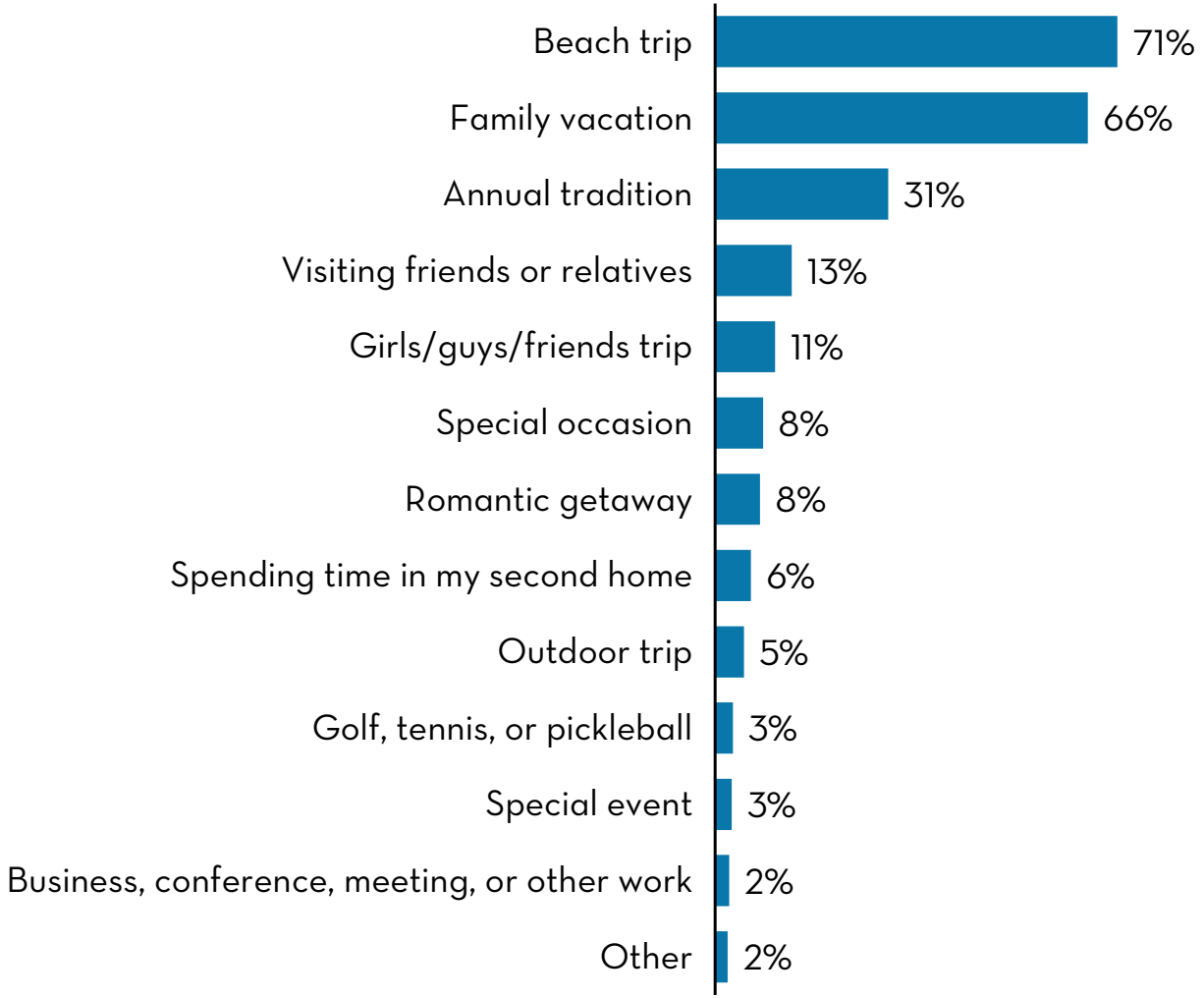
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REASONS FOR VISITING[1]

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- Visitors mostly travel to South Walton for a **beach trip** and **family vacation**. This points to leisure and family-focused travel being the main drivers for visitors coming to the area.

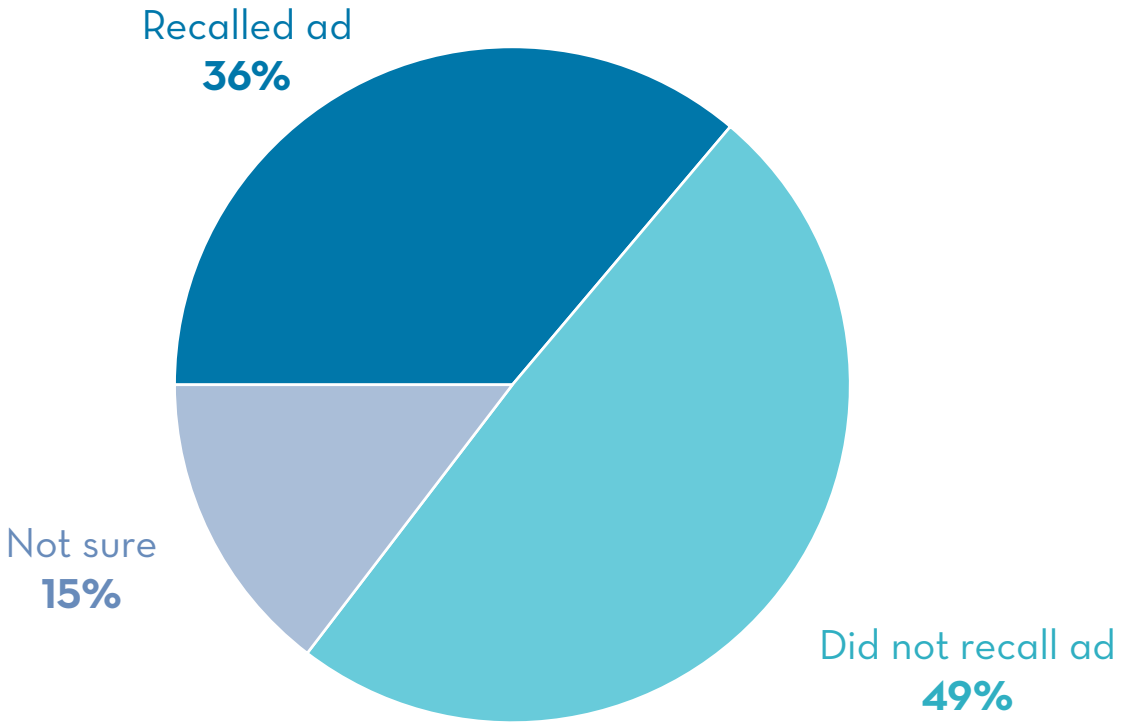


[1]Multiple responses permitted.

AD RECALL[1]

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- **Over 1 in 3** visitors recalled advertising about South Walton.



[1] Note: These figures are topline and solely rely on the memory of each visitor even though various other factors go into the influence of advertising.

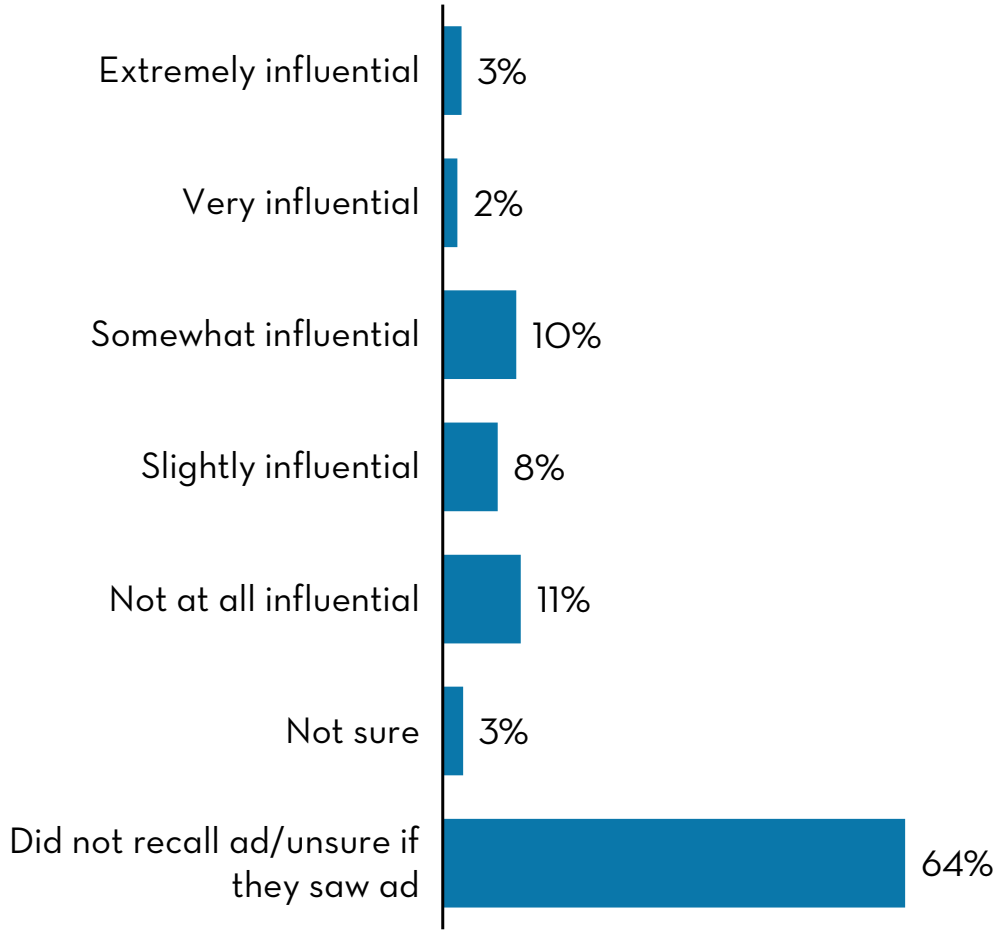
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AD INFLUENCE[1]

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- **15%** of visitors found the advertising to be **somewhat, very, or extremely influential** in their decision to visit South Walton.

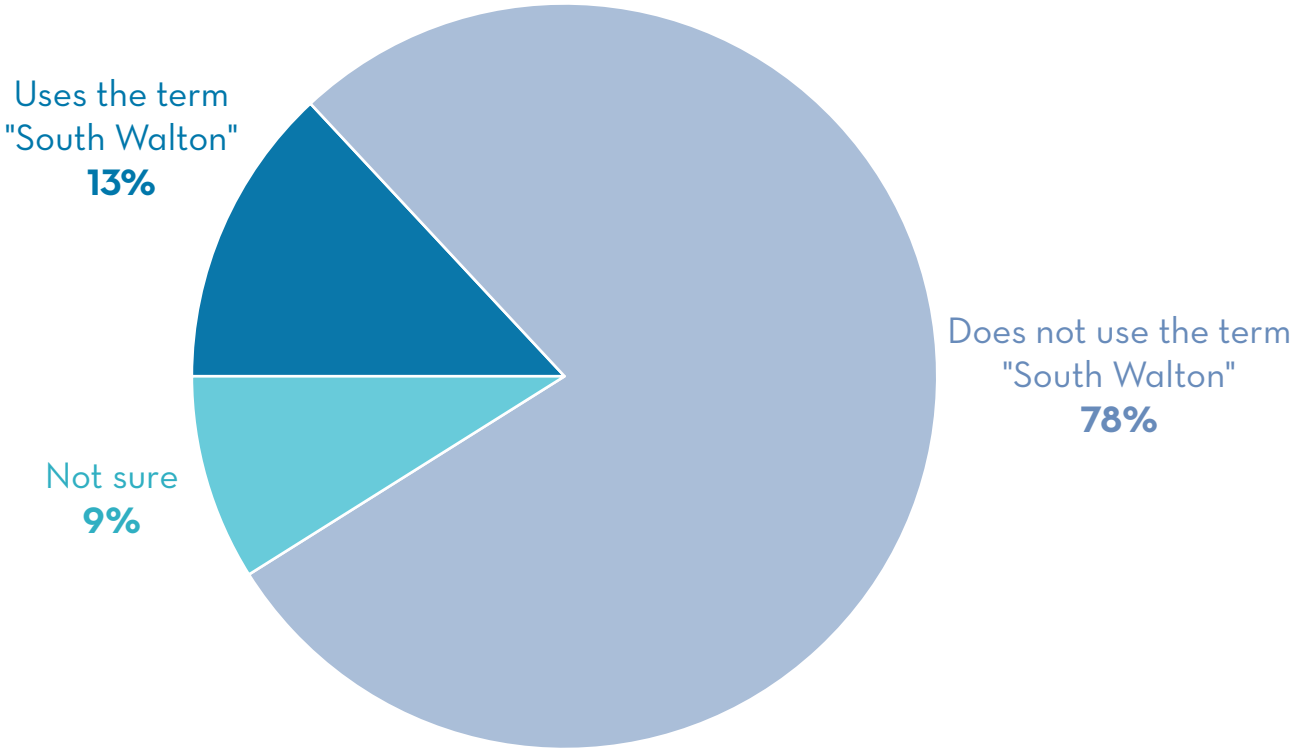


[1] Note: These figures are topline and solely rely on the memory of each visitor even though various other factors go into the influence of advertising.

USE "SOUTH WALTON"

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- **Over 1 in 10** visitors use the term "South Walton" when referring to the 16 beach neighborhoods.



WALTON COUNTY TOURISM

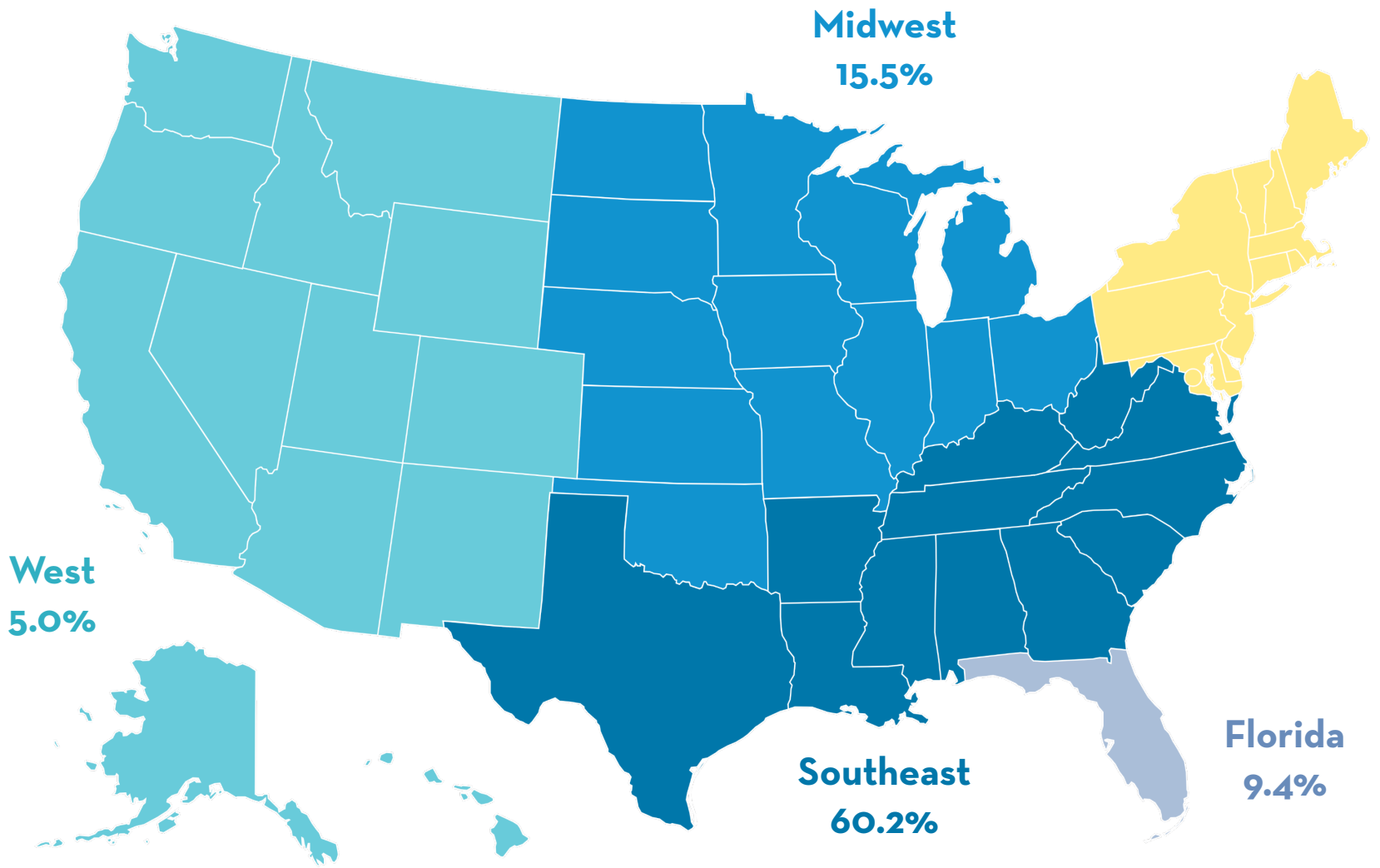
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STUDY OBJECTIVES: TRAVEL PARTY PROFILE



REGION OF ORIGIN

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026



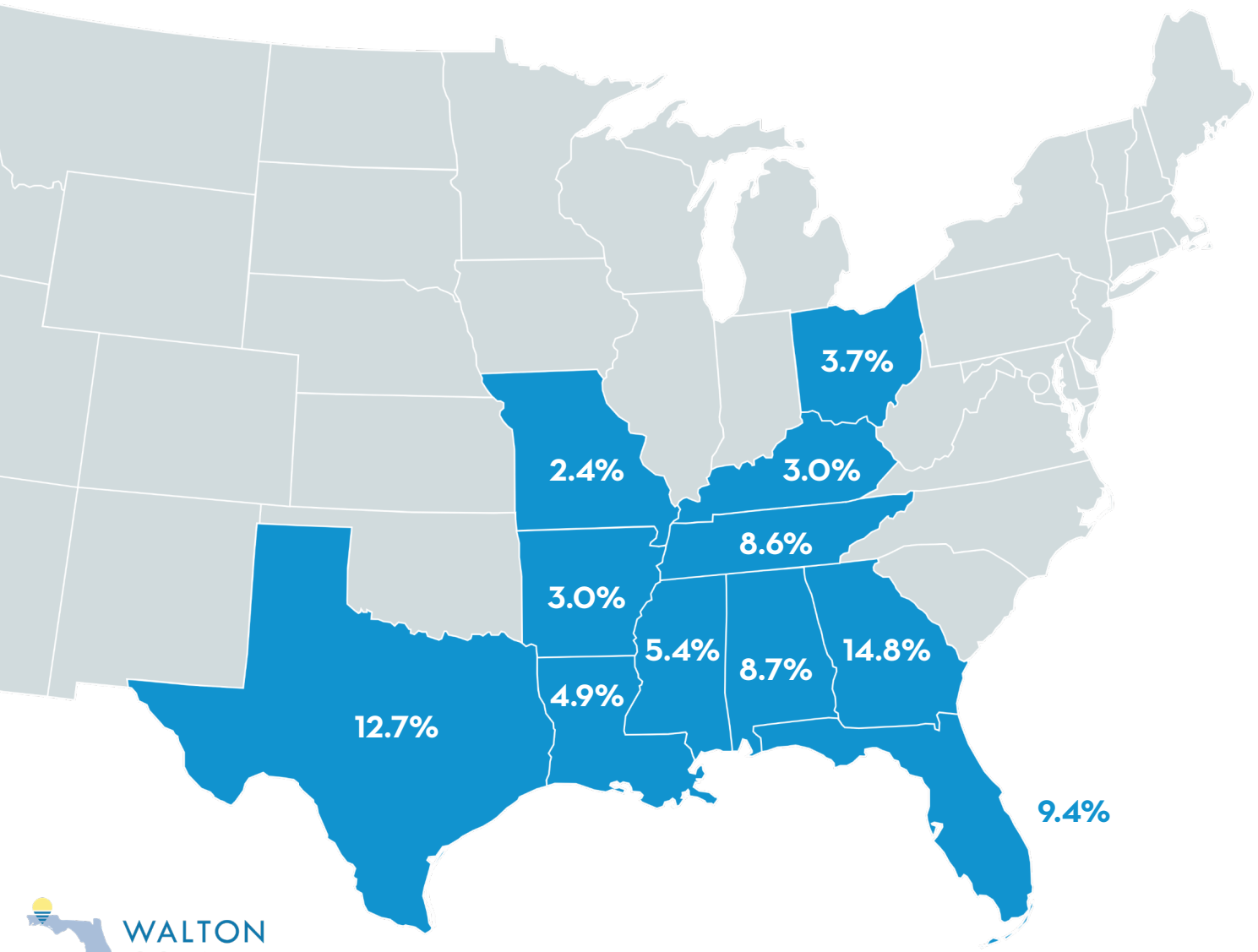
- **Nearly 7 in 10** visitors traveled to South Walton from the **Southeast, including Florida**.
- **3.1%** of visitors traveled **internationally** to South Walton, mostly from Canada (0.8%) and the United Kingdom (0.3%).

WALTON COUNTY TOURISM

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TOP STATES OF ORIGIN

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026



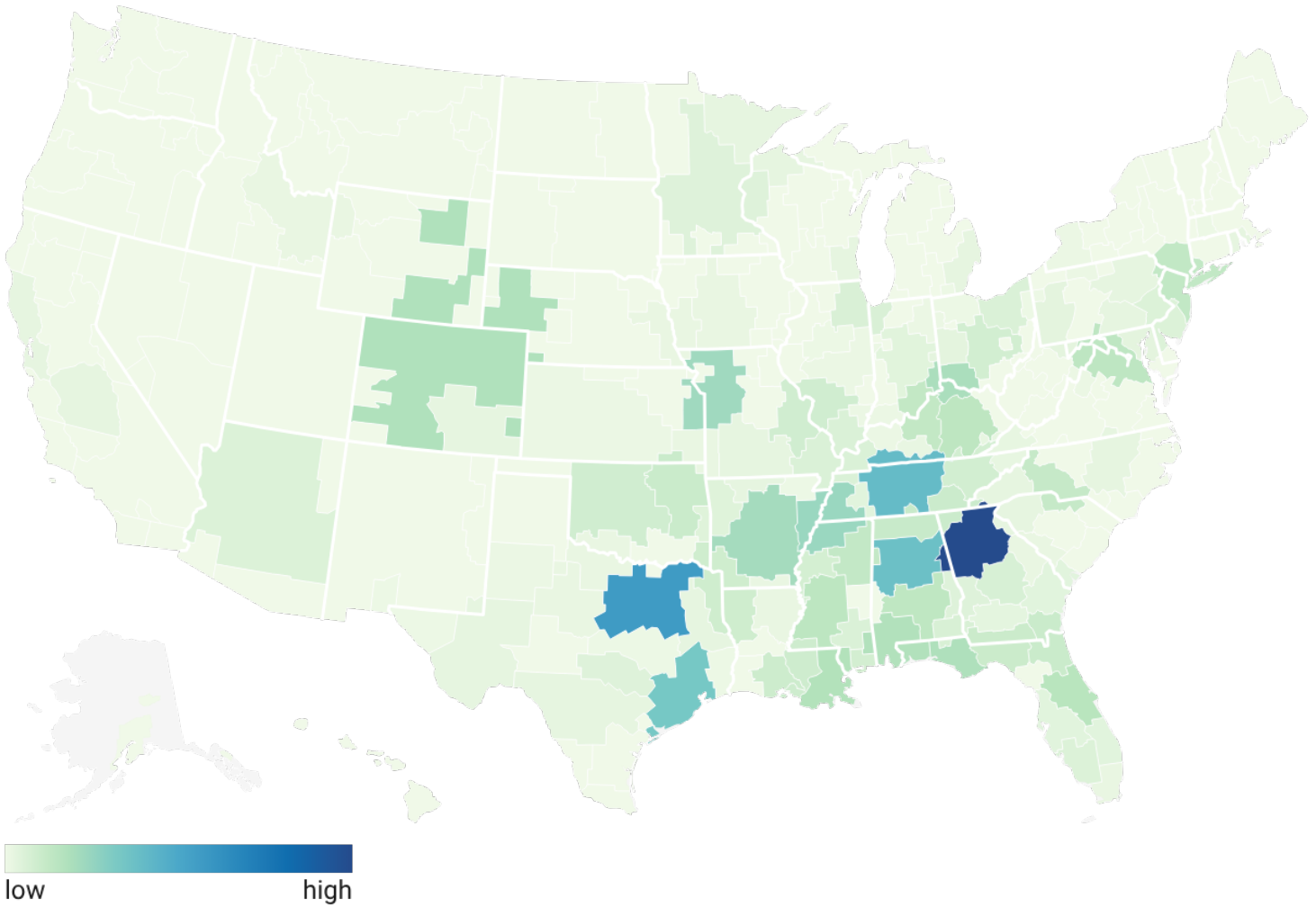
TOP STATES	SUMMER 2026
Georgia	14.8%
Texas	12.7%
Florida	9.4%
Alabama	8.7%
Tennessee	8.6%
Mississippi	5.4%
Louisiana	4.9%
Ohio	3.7%
Kentucky	3.0%
Arkansas	3.0%
Missouri	2.4%

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TOP ORIGIN MARKETS

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026



TOP DMAs	SUMMER 2026
Atlanta	10.9%
Dallas-Fort Worth	6.2%
Nashville	4.4%
Birmingham	4.1%
Houston	3.6%
Memphis	2.6%
Kansas City	2.5%
Little Rock-Pine Bluff	2.3%
Cincinnati	2.1%
Panama City	2.0%
Denver	2.0%
Mobile	1.9%
New Orleans	1.9%

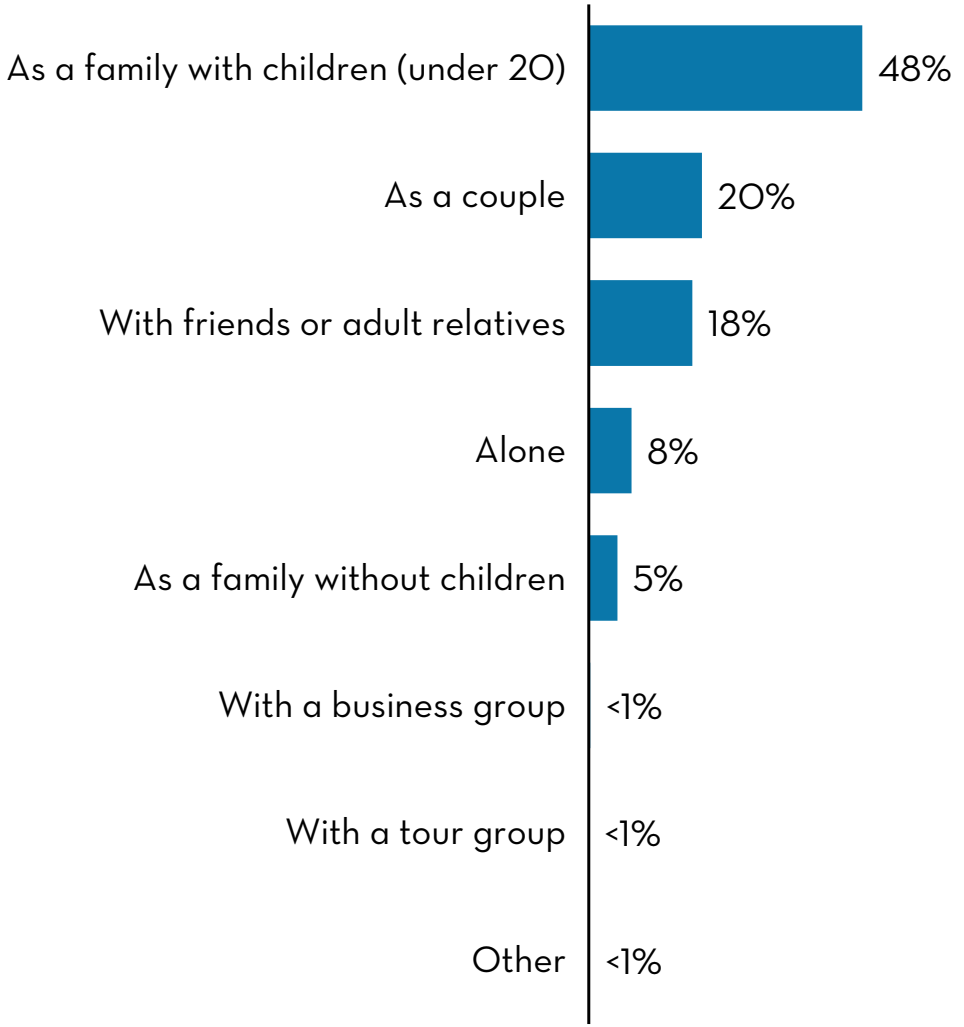
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TRAVEL PARTY COMPOSITION

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- **Nearly half** of visitors traveled as a **family with children**.
- **About 1 in 5** visitors traveled as a **couple** or with **friends/adult relatives**.



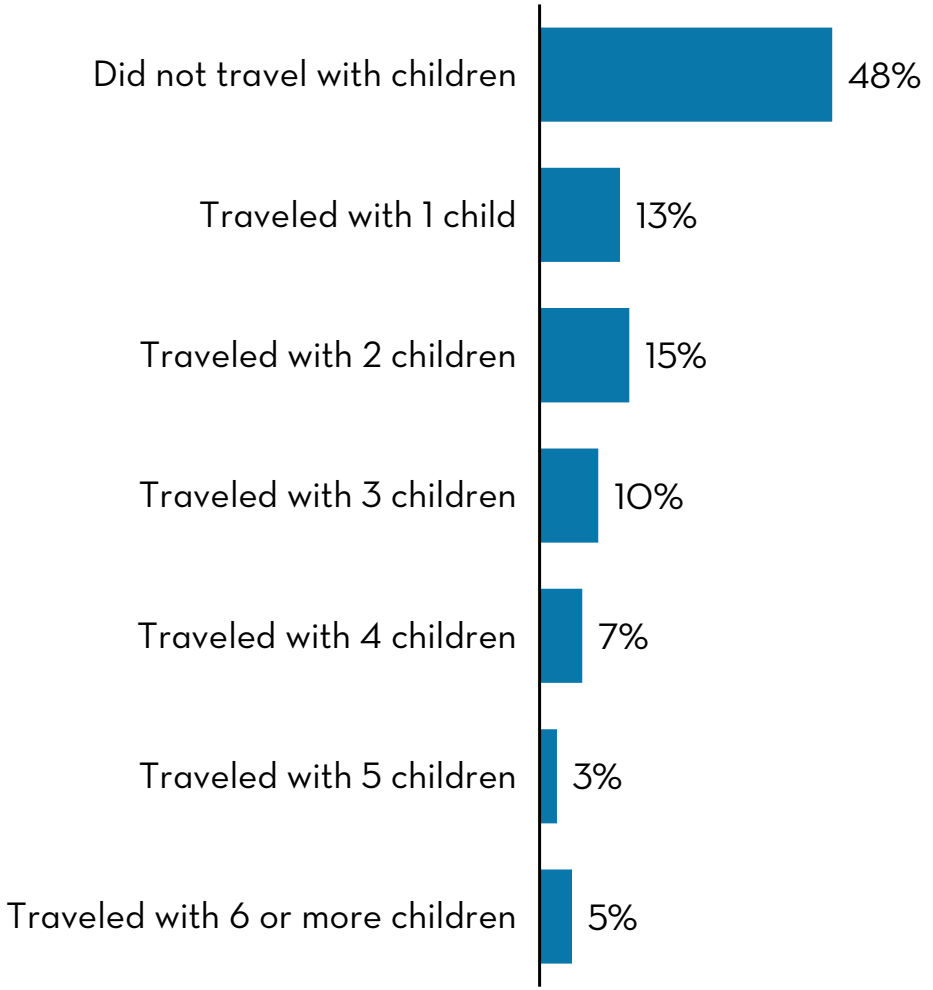
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CHILDREN IN TRAVEL PARTY

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

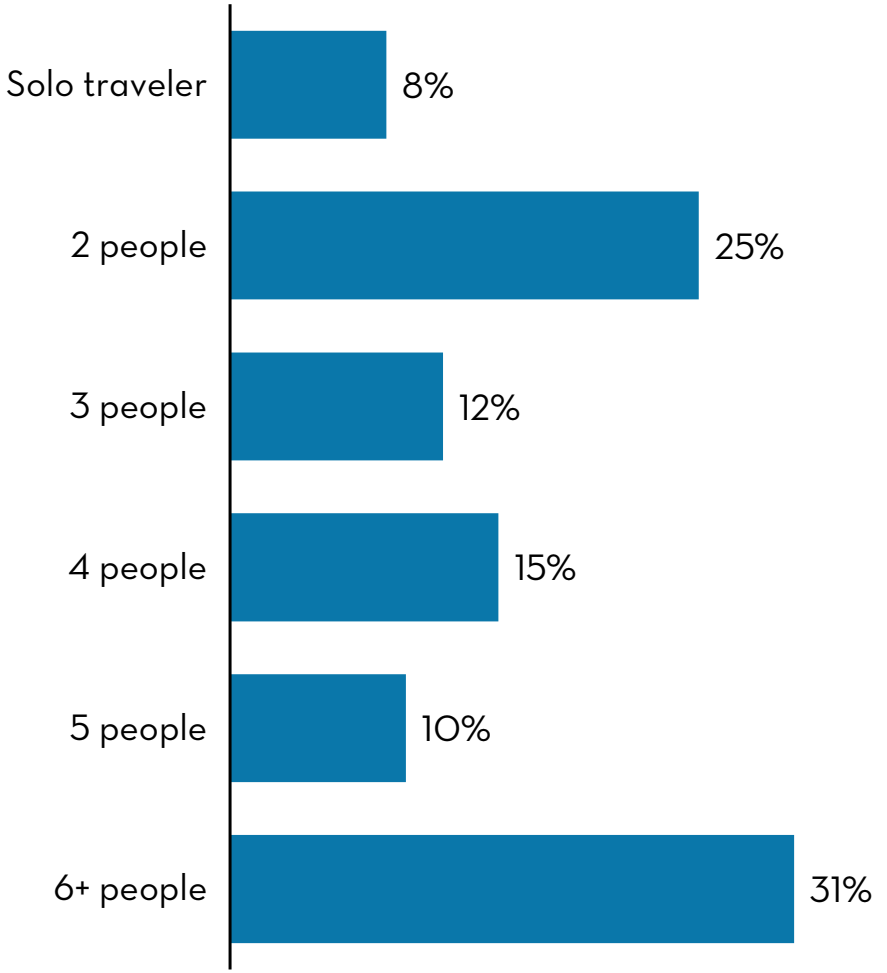
- **Over half** of visitors traveled with children under 20 years old.



TRAVEL PARTY SIZE

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- For **all visitors**[1], the typical travel party size was **5.1 people**.
- The typical travel party size for visitors staying in **paid accommodations**[2] was **5.8 people**.



[1]Includes visitors staying in paid accommodations, nonpaid accommodations, and day trippers.
[2]Visitors staying in a hotel/motel/resort, rental condo/vacation rental home, or campground/RV park.

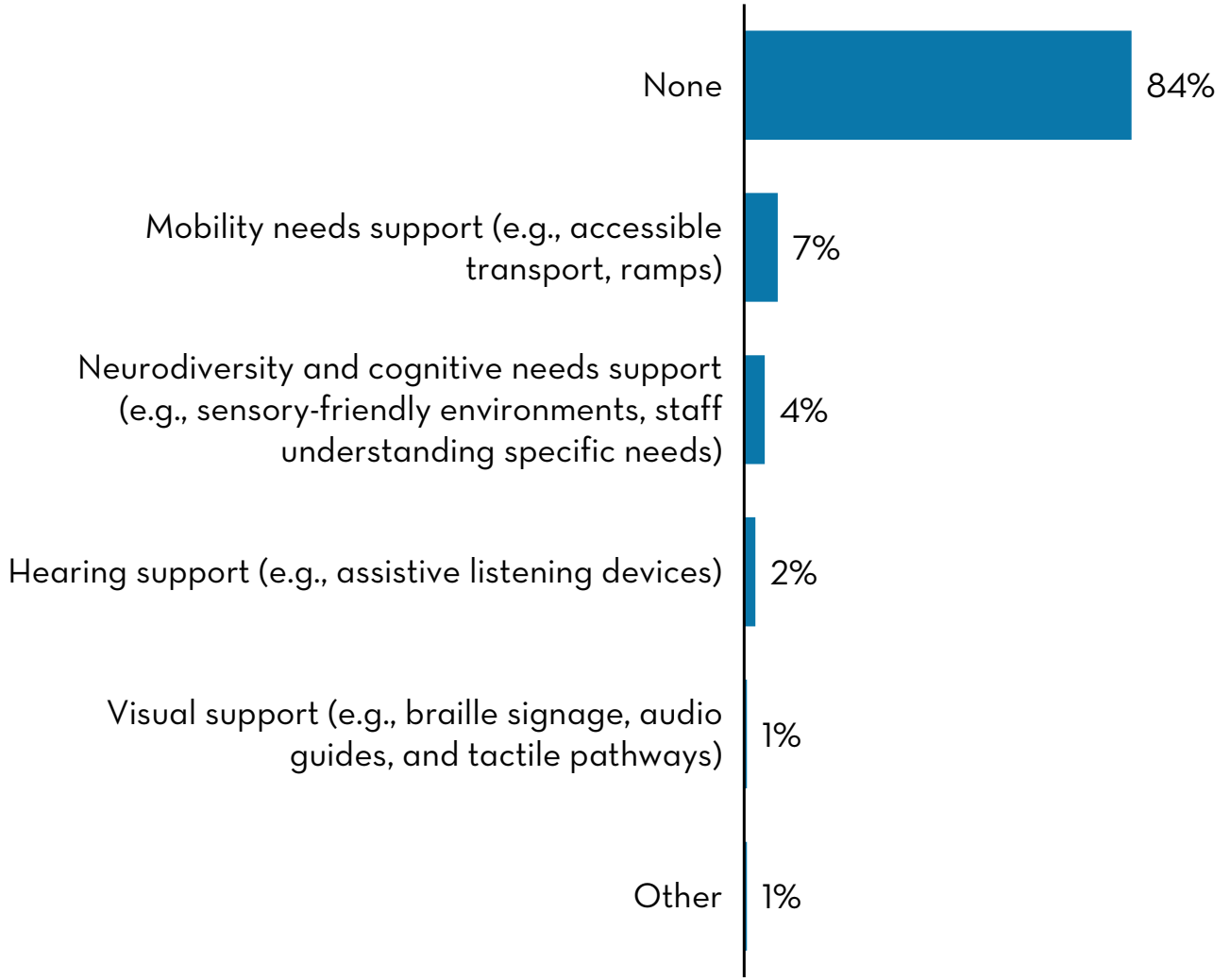
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TRAVEL PARTY NEEDS[1]

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- **1 in 6** visitors noted having someone in their travel party with at least one the following needs:
  - **Mobility support**
  - **Neurodiversity and cognitive support**
  - **Hearing and visual support**



[1]Multiple responses permitted.

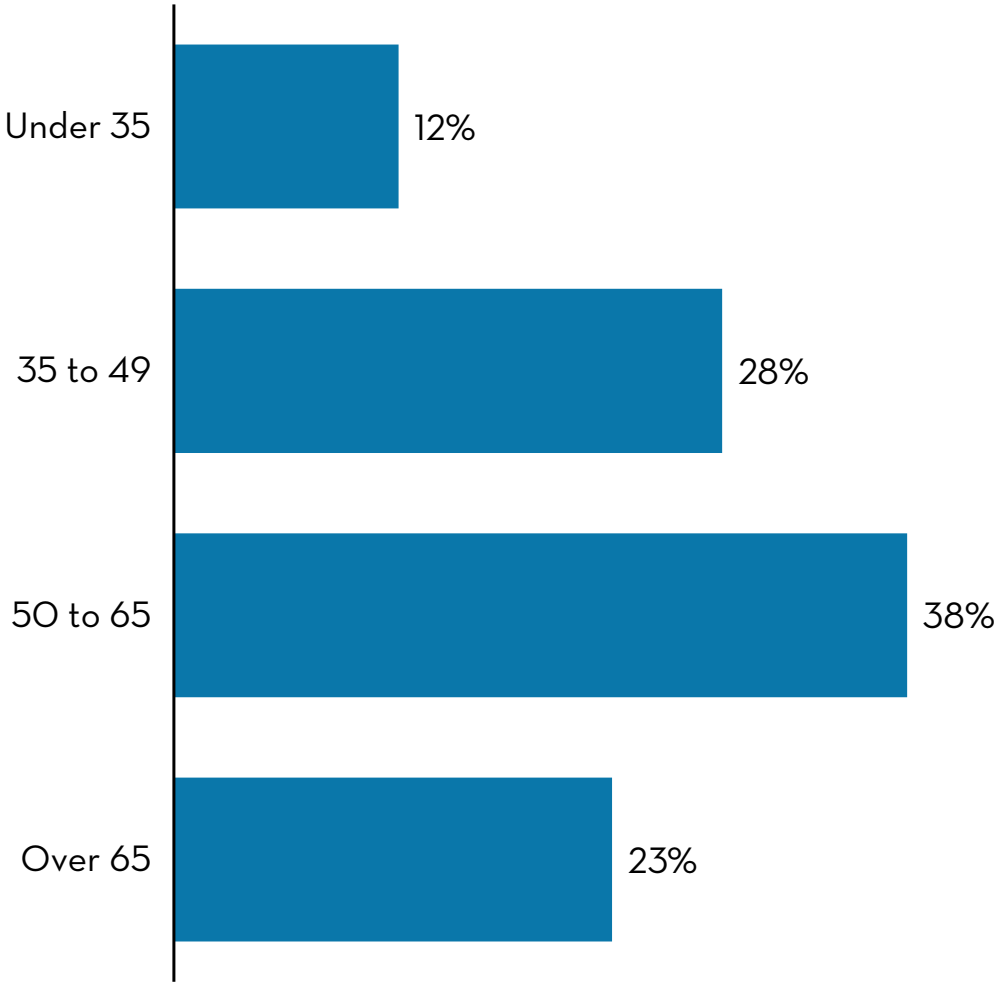
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AGE

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- The **median age**[1] of visitors surveyed was **53**.



[1]Age of the member of travel party surveyed.
The demographic data reflects the surveyed individual, who may not fully represent the entire travel party or all visitors to the area.

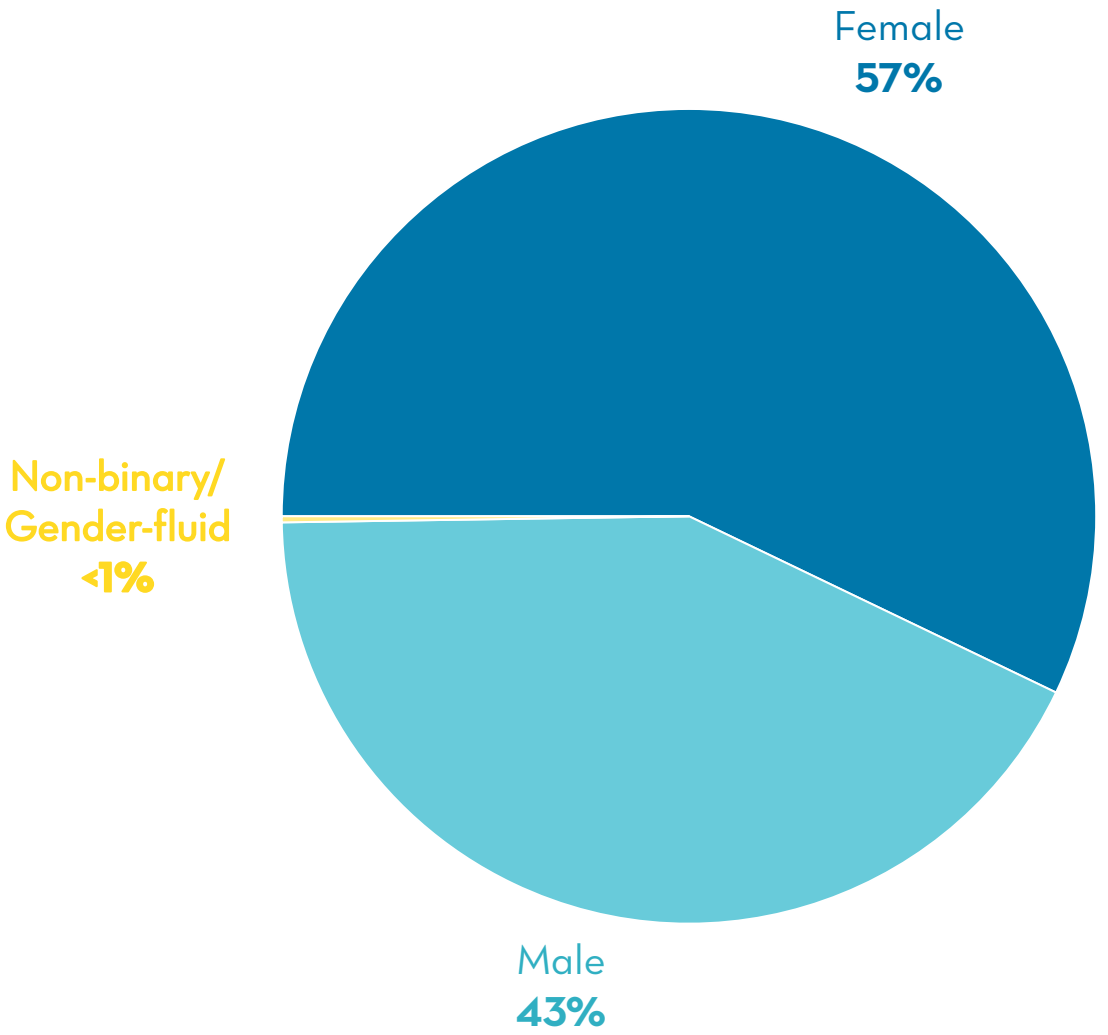
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GENDER

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- Nearly **3 in 5** of visitors surveyed were **female**[1].



[1]Gender of the member of travel party surveyed.
The demographic data reflects the surveyed individual, who may not fully represent the entire travel party or all visitors to the area.

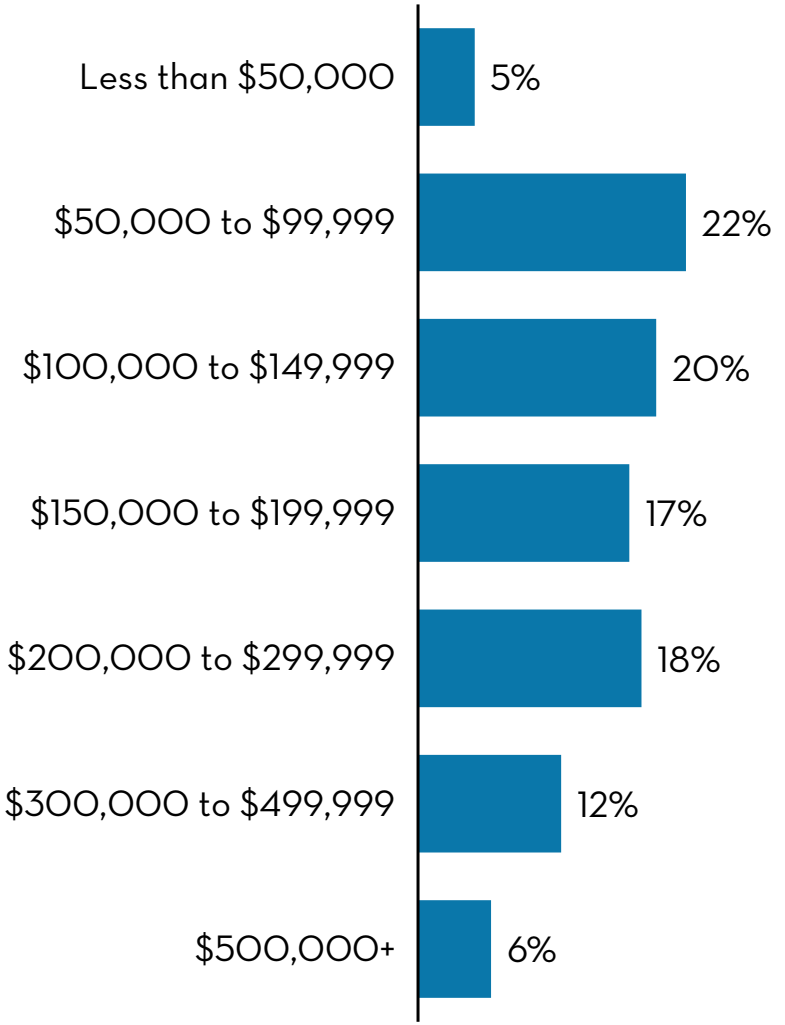
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TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- The **median household income** of visitors was **$160,400**.



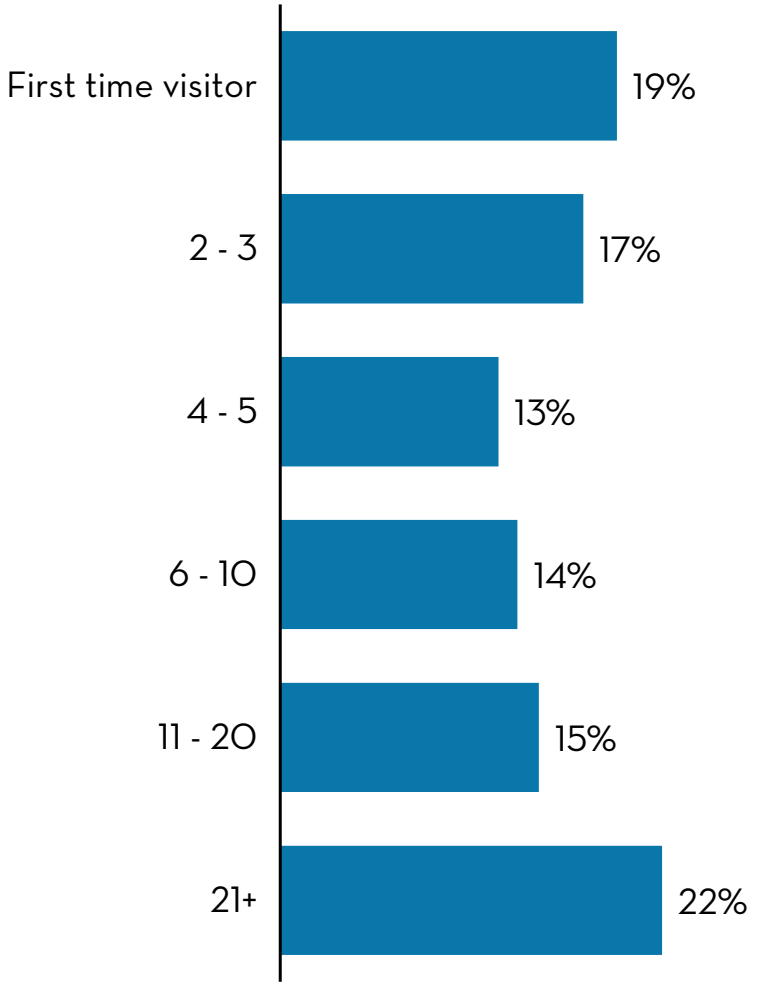
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NUMBER OF VISITS TO WALTON COUNTY

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- **Nearly 1 in 5** visitors were traveling to South Walton for the first time.
- **Nearly 2 in 5** visitors were loyalists, having visited South Walton over 10 times.



WALTON COUNTY TOURISM

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STUDY OBJECTIVES: TRIP EXPERIENCE



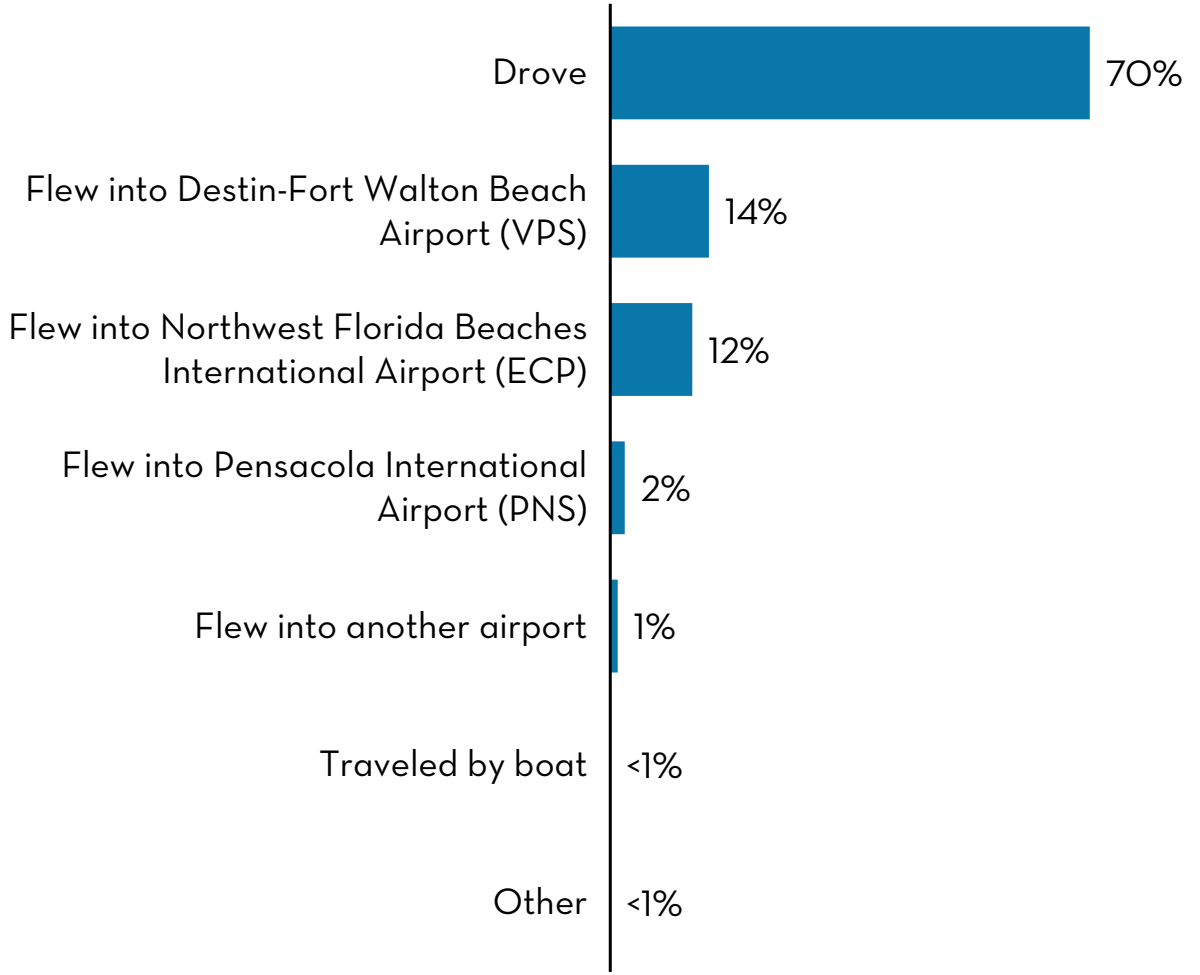
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TRANSPORTATION

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- **7 in 10** visitors drove to South Walton.
- **30%** of visitors flew to South Walton.



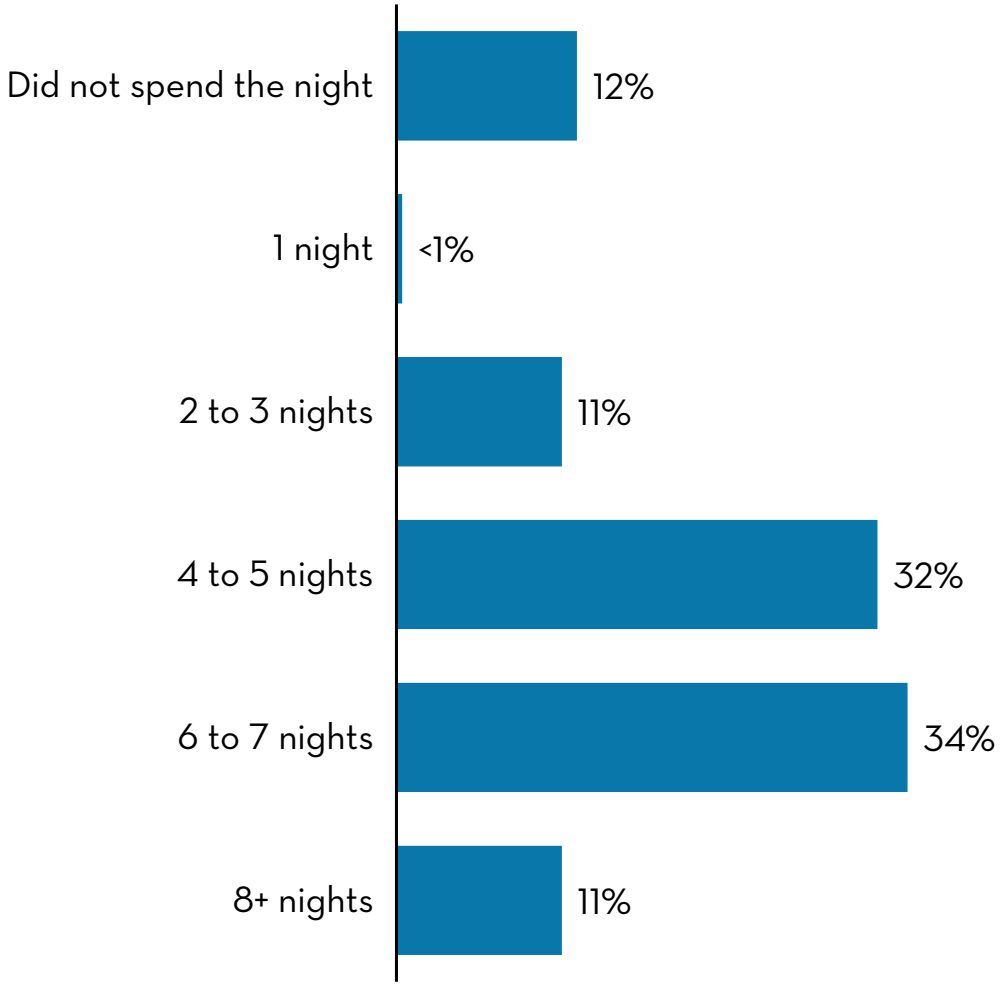
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LENGTH OF STAY

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- The typical visitor[1] stayed **5.7 nights** in the South Walton.
- Visitors staying in **paid accommodations**[2] stayed an average of **6.1 nights**.



[1]Visitors staying in paid accommodations, nonpaid accommodations, and day trippers.
[2]Visitors staying in a hotel/motel/resort, vacation rental home, bed and breakfast, or campground/RV park.

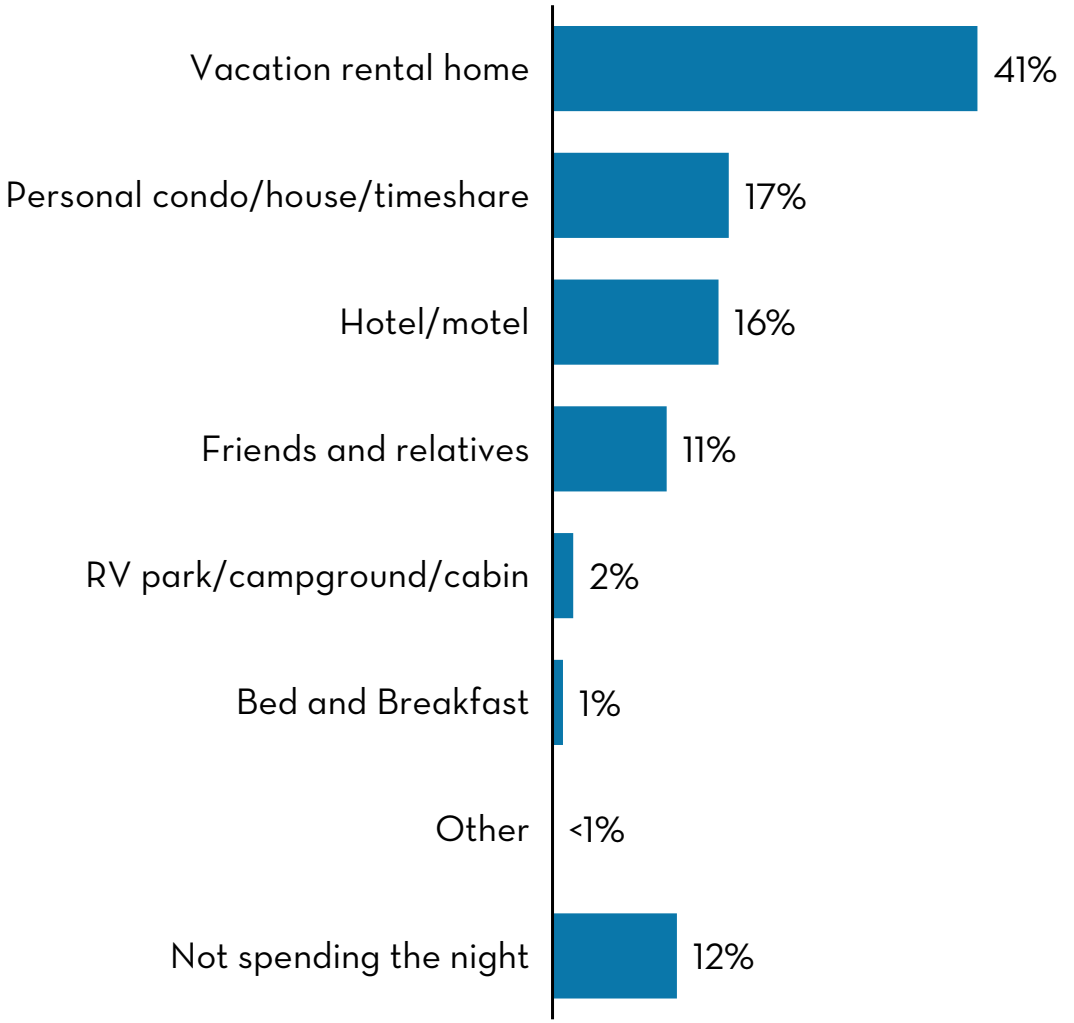
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ACCOMODATION TYPE

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- **88%** of visitors **stayed overnight** in South Walton with **60%** staying in **paid accommodations**[1].
- **Over 2 in 5** visitors stayed in a **vacation rental home**.



WALTON COUNTY TOURISM

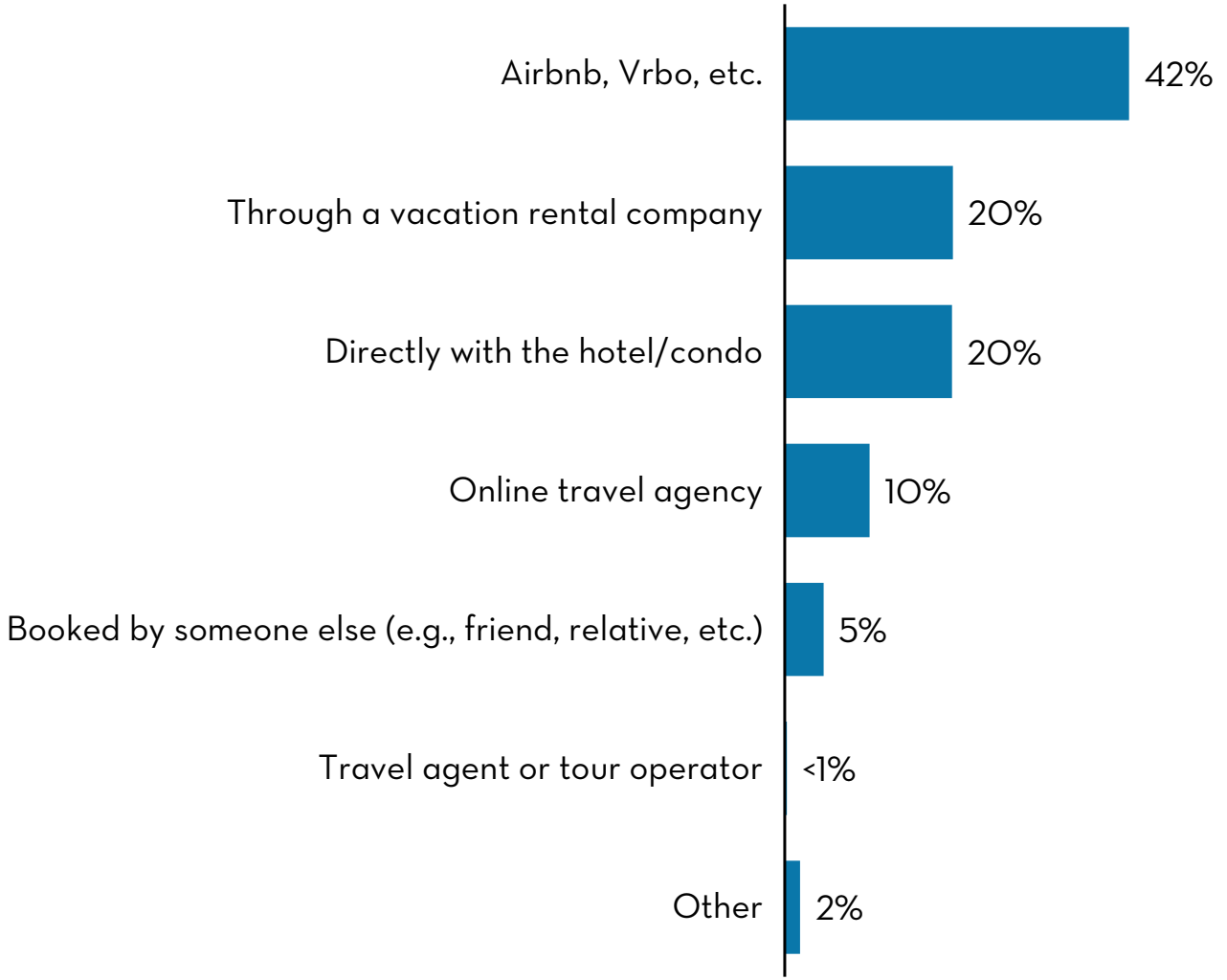
[1]Visitors staying in a vacation rental home, hotel/motel/, bed and breakfast, or RV park/campground/cabin.

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ACCOMODATION BOOKING

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- **Over 2 in 5** visitors booked their accommodations through a vacation rental company such as **Airbnb, Vrbo, etc**.
- **1 in 5** visitors booked their accommodations through a **vacation rental company** such as Wyndham, Sunburst, Newman-Dailey, 360Blue, Southern, Cottage Rental Agency, etc.
- **1 in 5** visitors booked their accommodations directly with a **hotel/condo**.



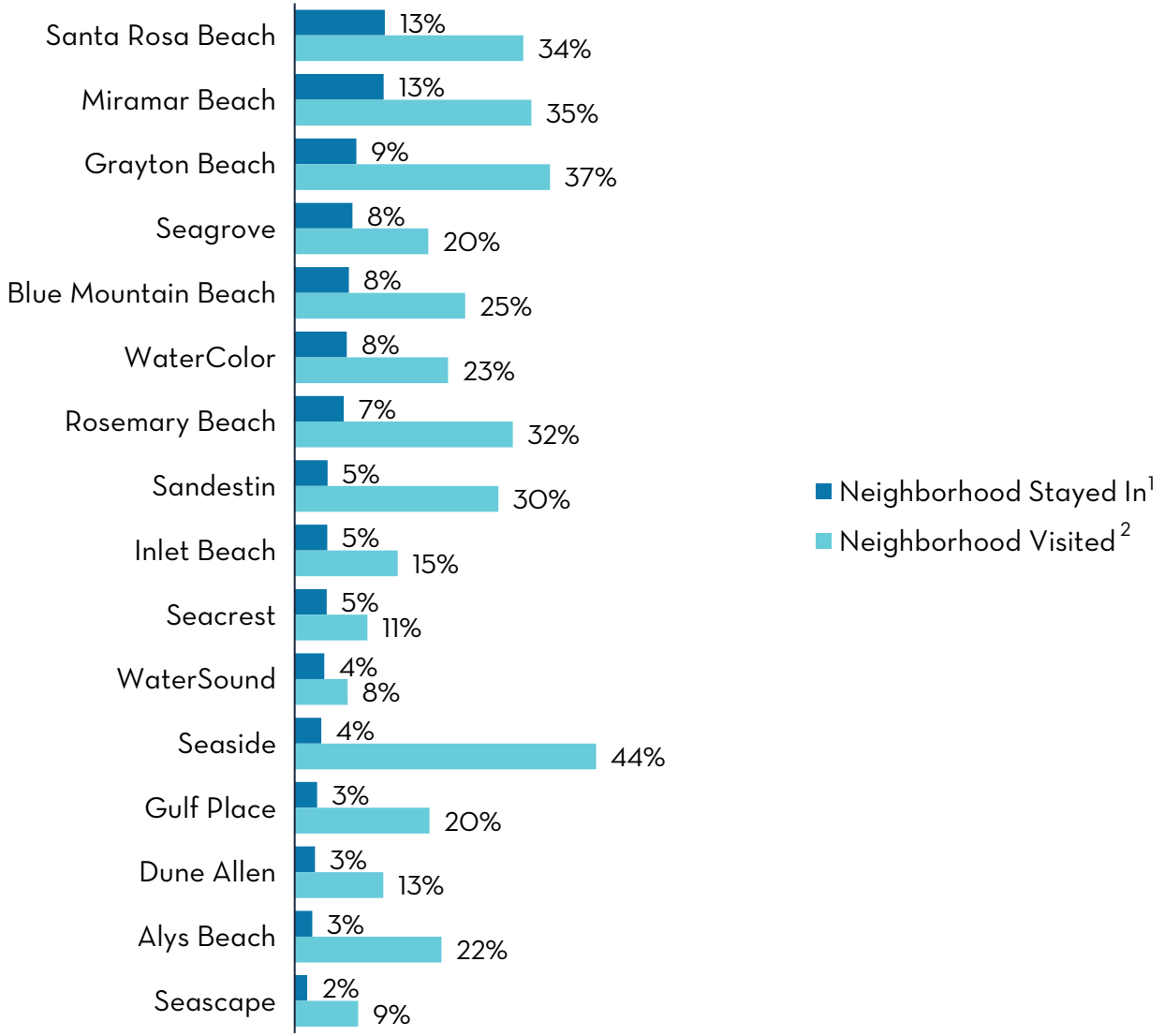
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BEACH NEIGHBORHOODS: STAYED VS VISITED

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- **Santa Rosa Beach** and **Miramar Beach** were the top neighborhoods where visitors stayed overnight[1].
- The neighborhoods visitors[2] went to the most include **Seaside, Grayton Beach, Miramar Beach, Santa Rosa Beach, Rosemary Beach,** and **Sandestin.**



[1]Includes visitors staying in paid accommodations and nonpaid accommodations.
[2]Multiple responses permitted. Includes visitors staying in paid accommodations, nonpaid accommodations, and day trippers.

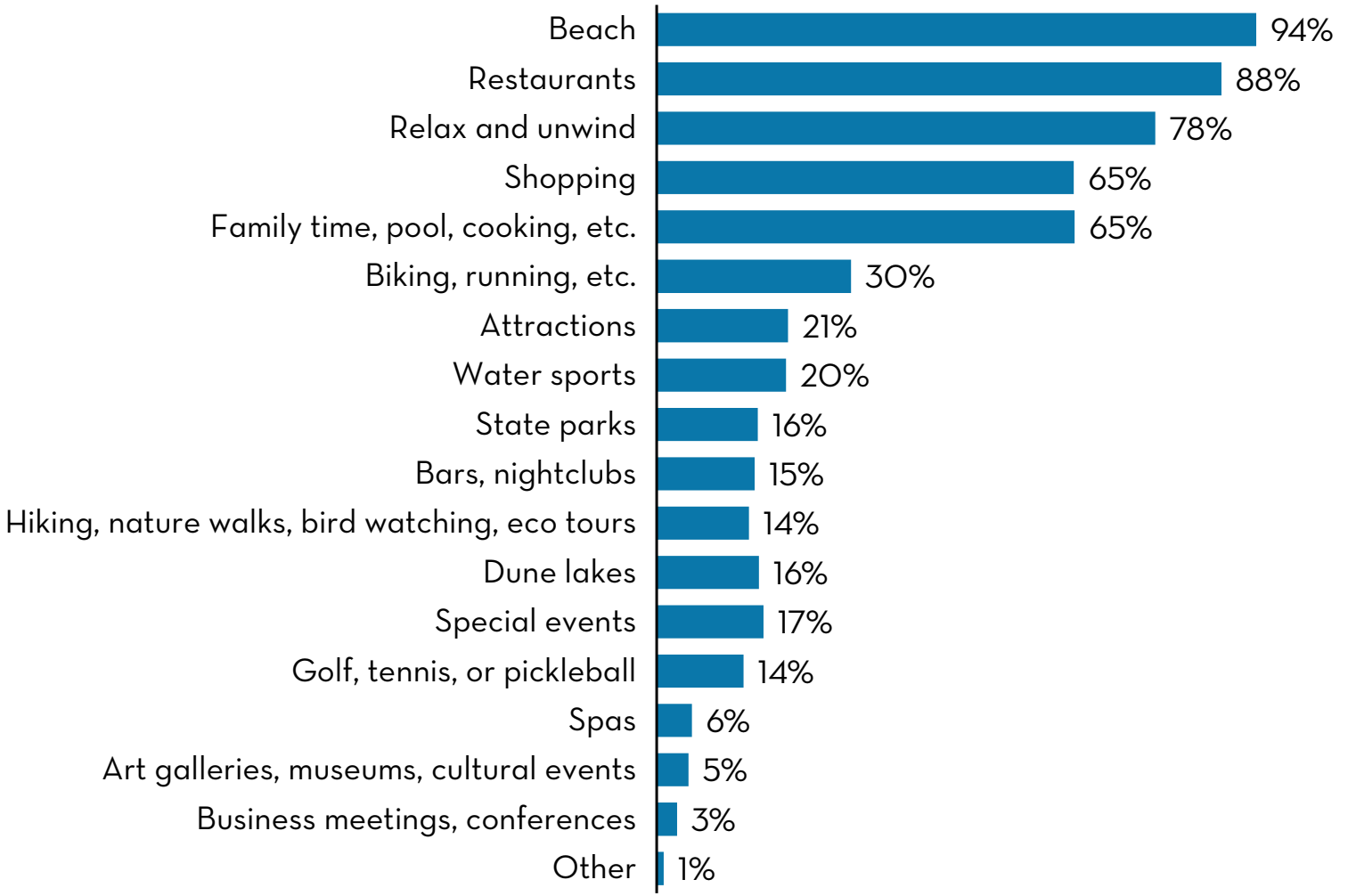
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VISITOR ACTIVITIES[1]

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- Top visitor activities include:
  - **Visiting the beach**
  - **Eating at restaurants**
  - **Relaxing**
  - **Shopping**
  - **Family time**



[1]Multiple responses permitted.

STUDY OBJECTIVES: POST TRIP EVALUATION



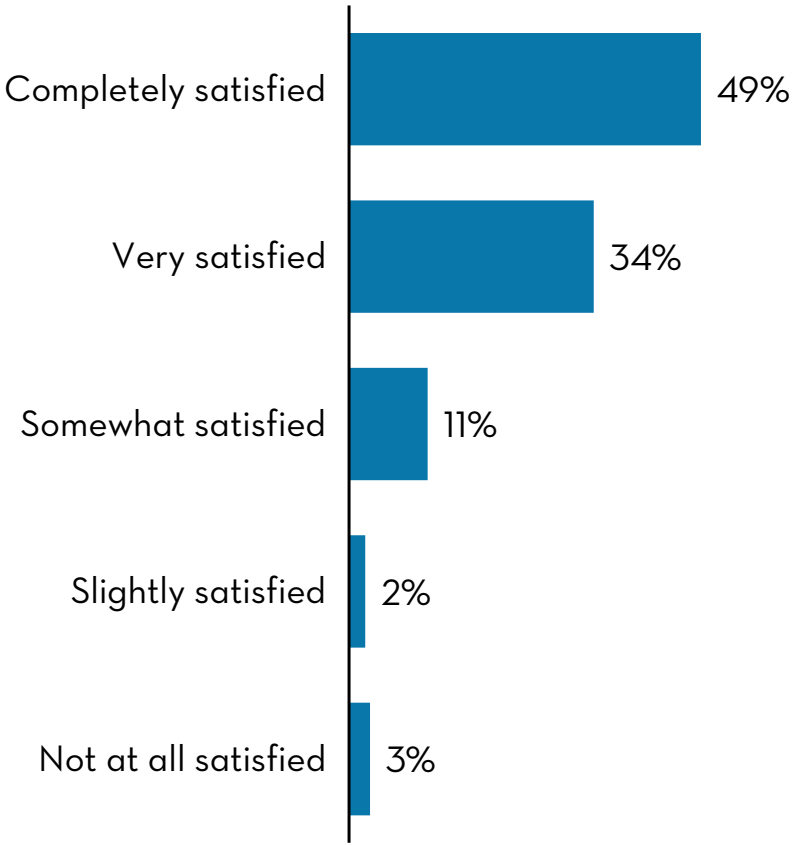
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TRIP SATISFACTION

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- On average, visitors were **very satisfied** with their trip to South Walton.

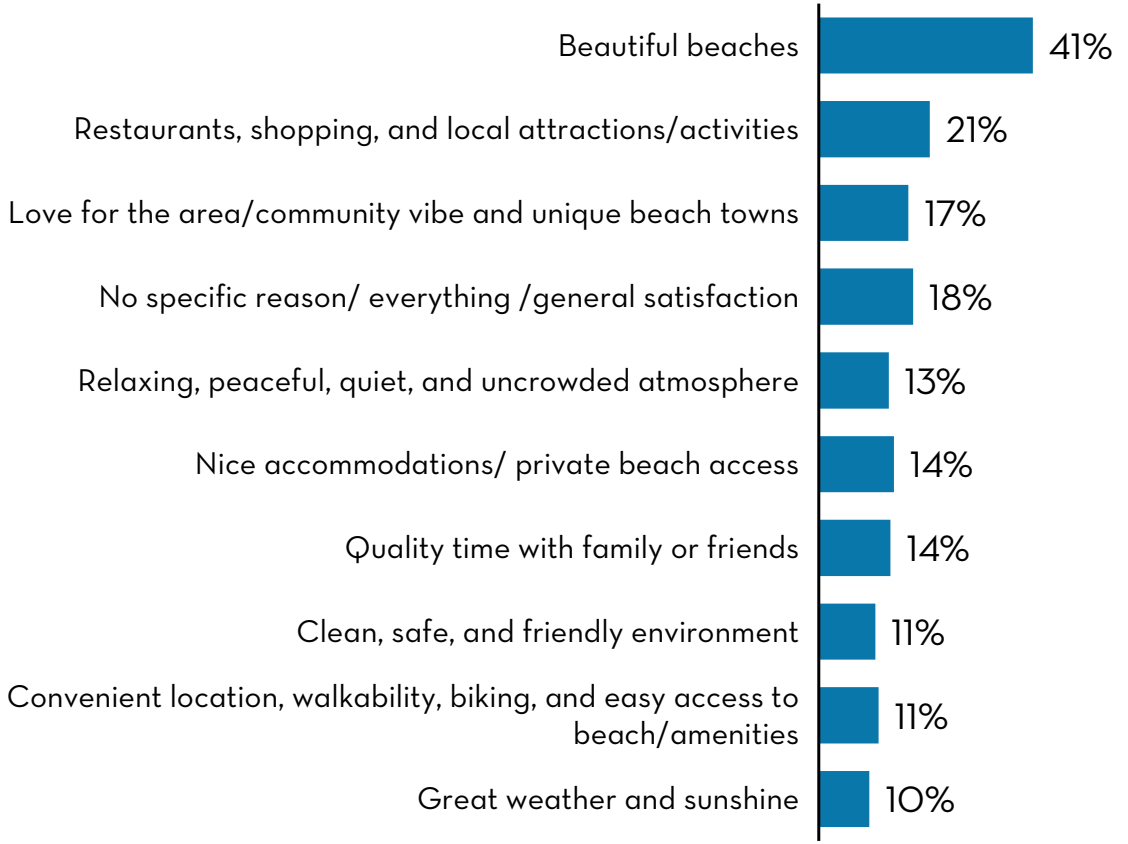


REASONS FOR TRIP SATISFACTION

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- Visitors were particularly satisfied with the **beautiful beaches** and **food/shopping/attraction offerings**[1].

Base: 84% of visitors who were "very satisfied" or "completely satisfied" with their trip.



[1]Visitors who stated they were "very satisfied" or "completely satisfied" with their trip were asked the following open-ended question: "Was there anything in particular that made you satisfied with your trip to South Walton?". Their responses were coded and grouped into themes/categories.

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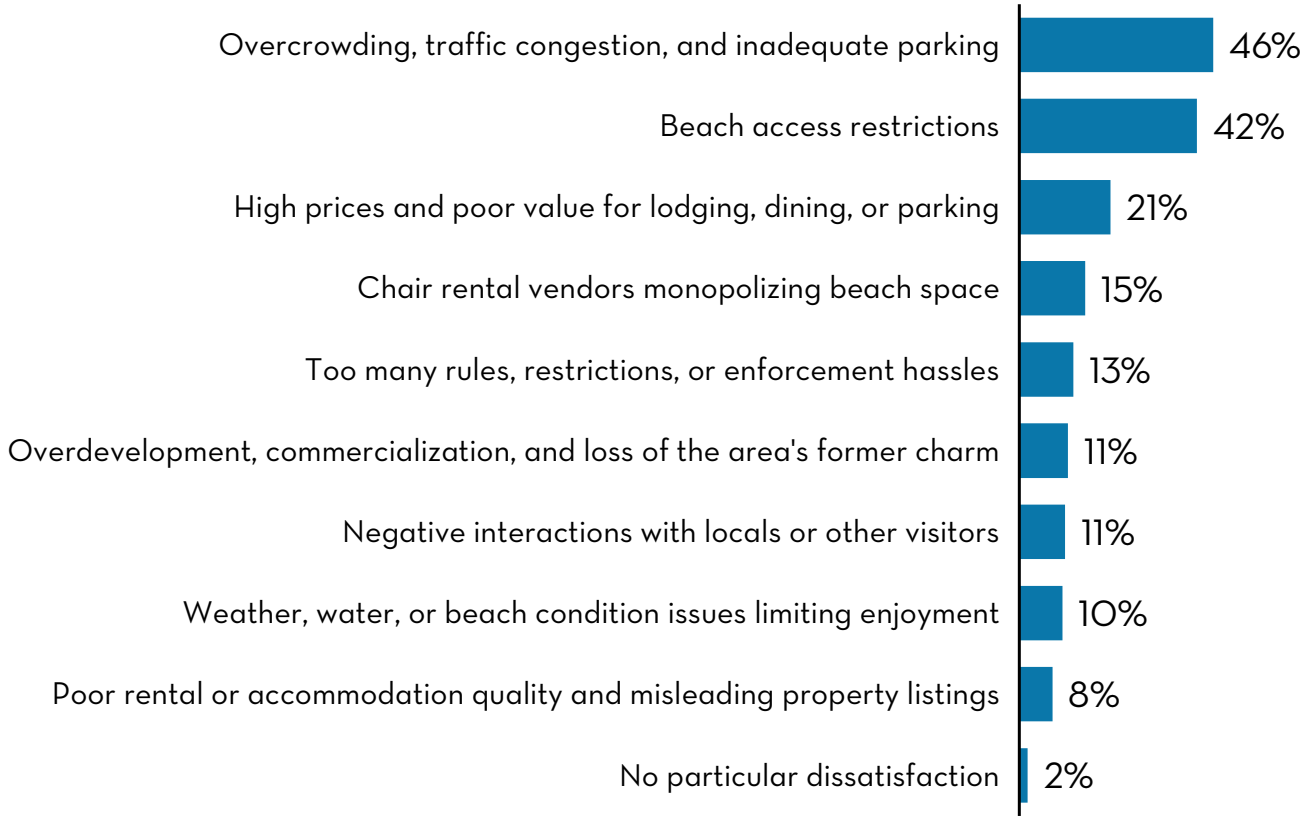
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REASONS FOR TRIP DISSATISFACTION

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- **Overcrowding and beach accessibility**[1] were the top reasons visitors experienced dissatisfaction with their trip.

Base: 16% of visitors who were "somewhat satisfied", "slightly satisfied", or "not at all satisfied" with their trip.



[1]Visitors who stated they were "somewhat satisfied", "slightly satisfied", or "not at all satisfied" with their trip were asked the following open-ended question: "Was there anything in particular that made you dissatisfied with your trip to South Walton?". Their responses were coded and grouped into themes/categories.

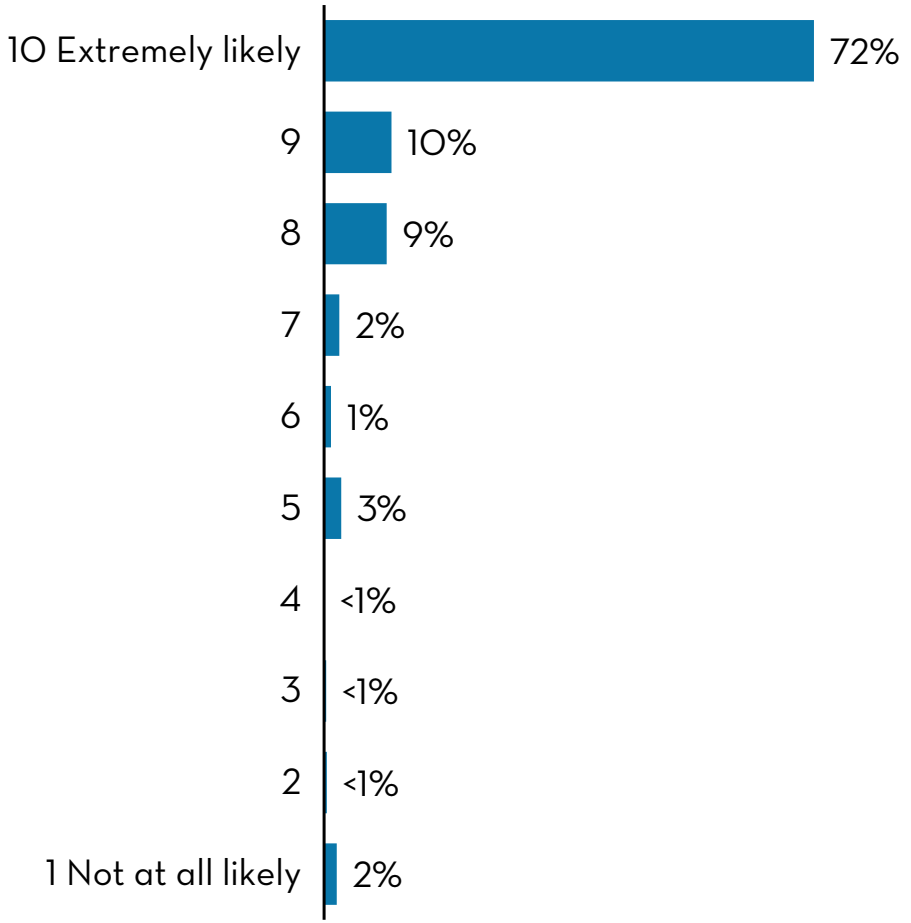
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LIKELIHOOD TO RECOMMEND

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- On average, visitors rated their likelihood to recommend the South Walton area a **9.3 out of 10**, suggesting a **strong likelihood to recommend**.
- South Walton has a strong Net Promoter Score (NPS)[1] of **64.**



[1]Net Promoter Score is determined by subtracting the Detractors (sum of those that rated a 1-6) from the Promoters (sum of those that rated a 9 or 10). The overall scale is -100 to 100. Above 0: More customers are loyal than dissatisfied; the minimum baseline for a healthy score. 50 to 70: Considered strong performance in most industries.

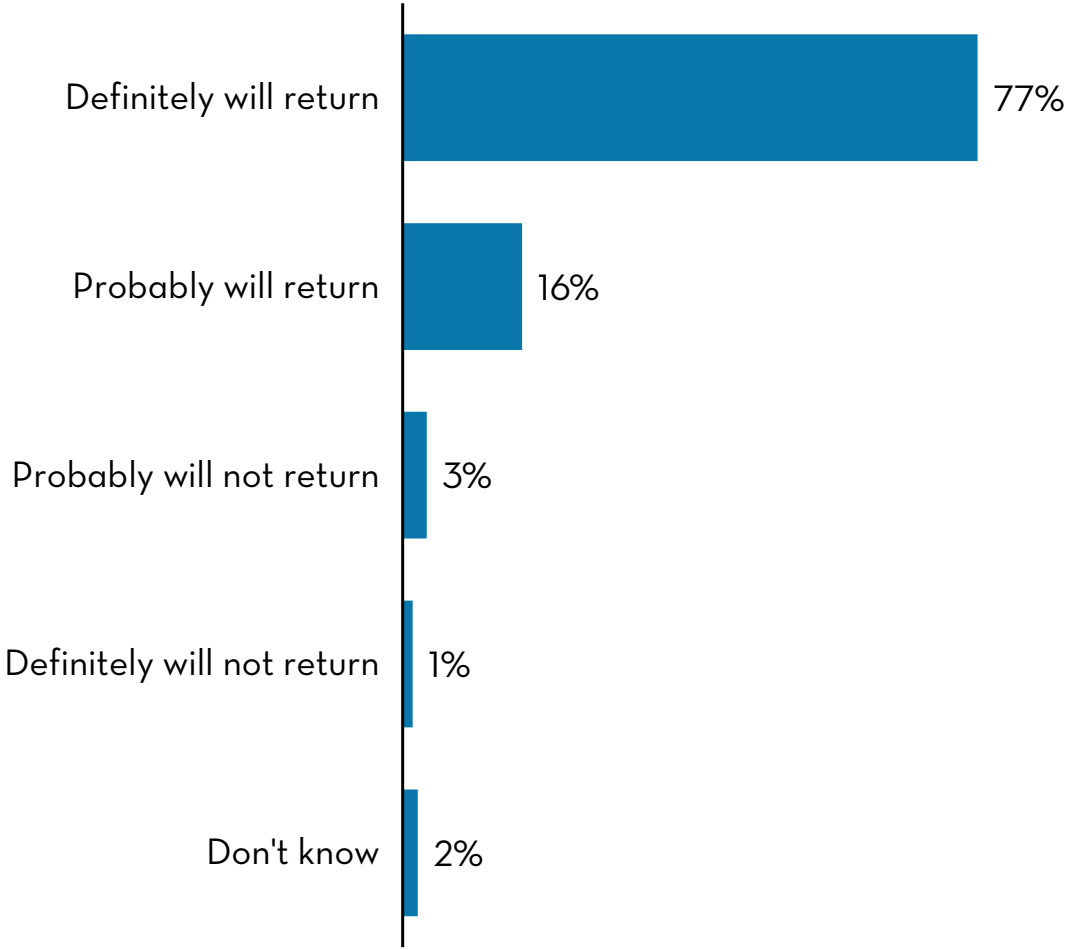
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LIKELIHOOD TO RETURN

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- Visitors have a **strong intent to return** to South Walton with 93% stating they will probably or definitely return.
- Of the **6%** of visitors who were uncertain about returning to South Walton, **beach access issues** and the **cost** were the top reasons[1].



[1]Visitors who stated they would "probably will not return", "definitely will not return", or "don't know" if they will return to South Walton were asked the following open-ended question: "Why are you uncertain about returning to South Walton?". Their responses were coded and grouped into themes/categories.

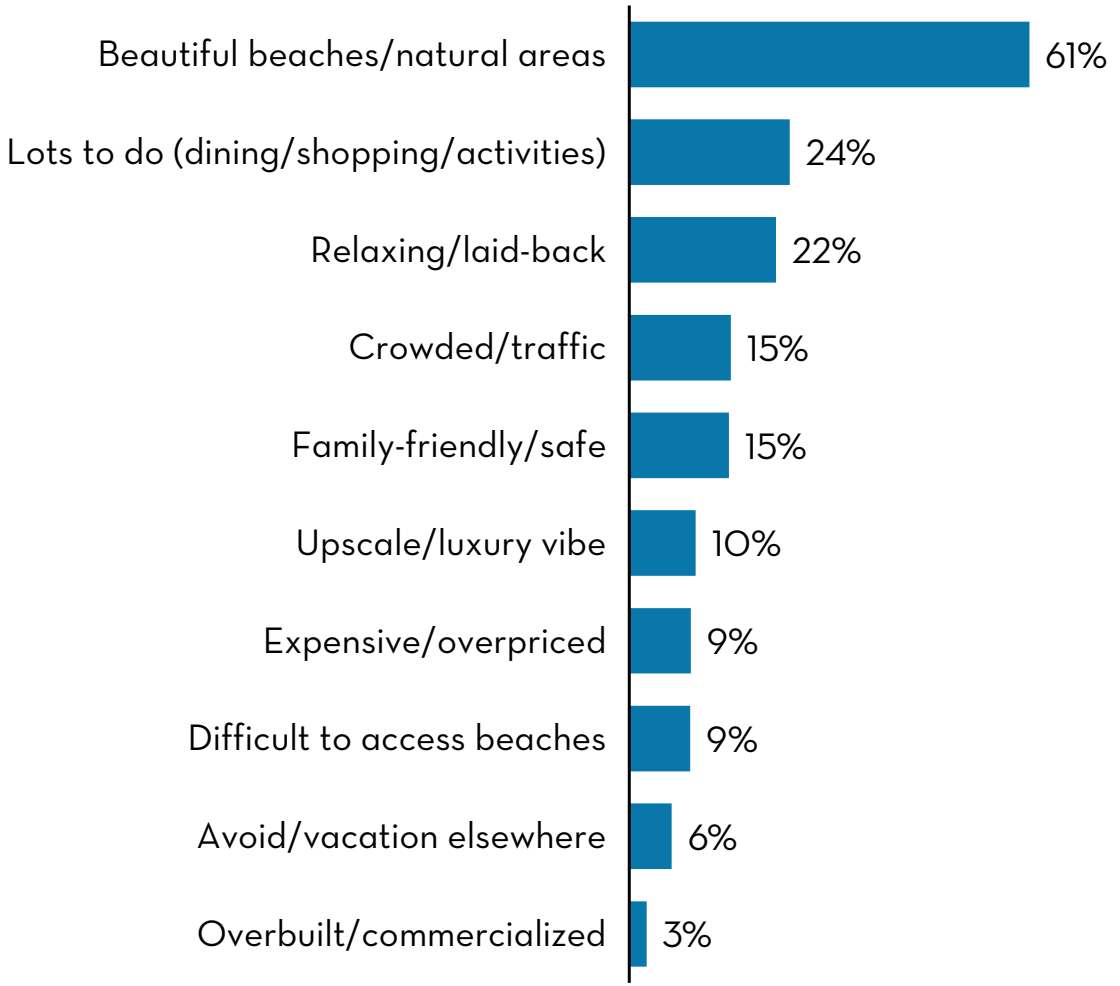
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PERCEPTIONS OF SOUTH WALTON[1]

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- Visitors described South Walton as having **beautiful beaches, lots to do, and relaxing**.



[1]Visitors were asked the following open-ended question: "If you were talking to a friend, how would you describe South Walton as a place to visit?". Their responses were coded and grouped into themes/categories.

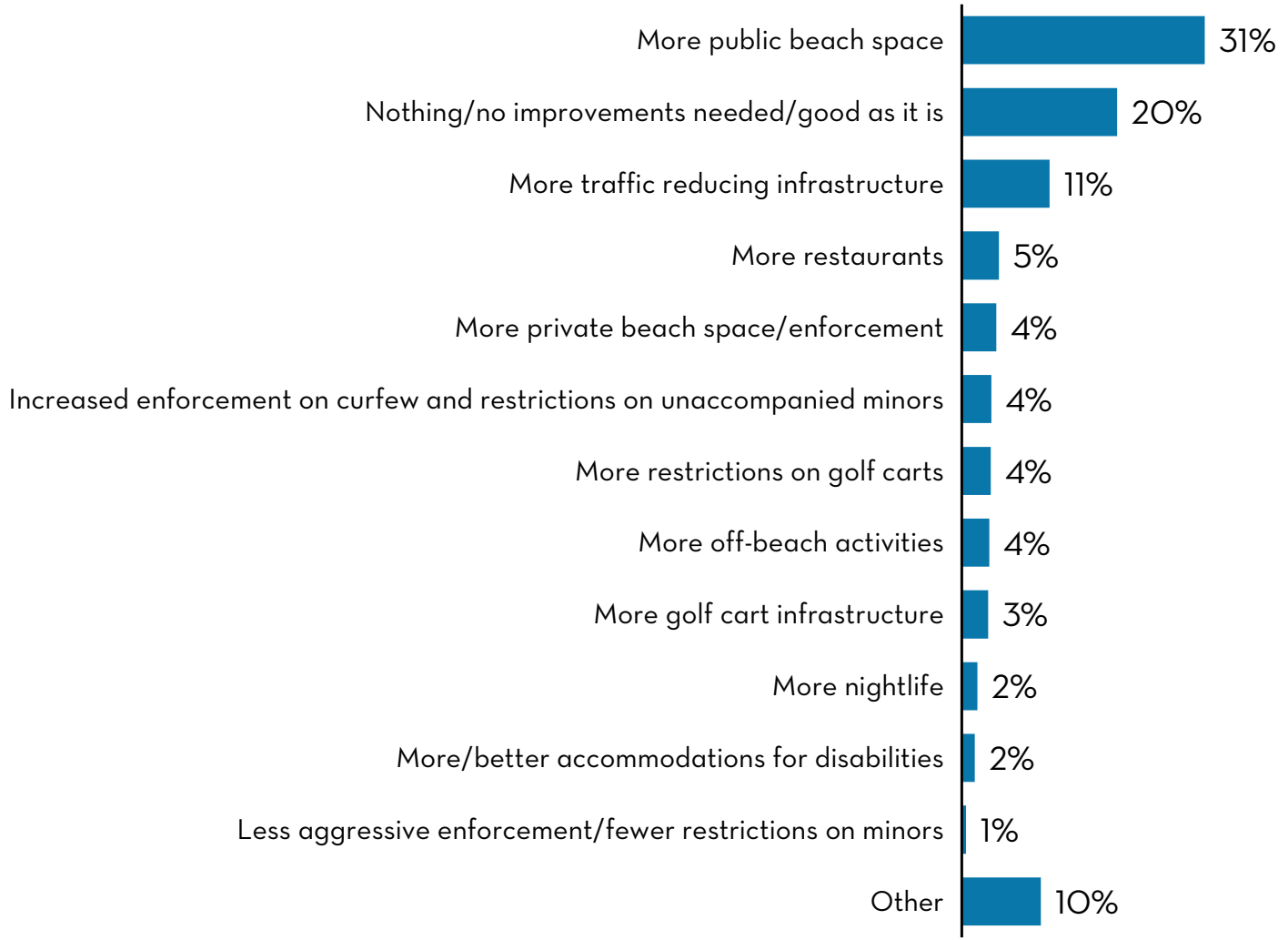
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AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

- The top areas of improvement noted by visitors are the want for **more public beach space** and **more traffic reducing infrastructure**.



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SUMMER VISITOR TRACKING REPORT
JUNE – AUGUST 2026

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