



Denver Adds 1M Visitors in 2015; Sets New Tourism Records

- Visitor Spending Tops \$5 Billion for the First Time -

DENVER (June 15, 2016) – Denver welcomed 16.4 million overnight visitors in 2015, surpassing 2014 by one million visitors, a 6 percent increase year over year. Overnight visitors also spent 9 percent more than in 2014, establishing a new spending record for Denver of \$5 billion.

The numbers are according to the Longwoods International annual visitor profile study. Longwoods has been studying Denver visitors since 1994, and this research provides a standard visitor tracking tool for many of the country's top tourism destinations.

“This is the 10th consecutive year that we have generated record tourism numbers, which continues to validate Denver voter approval to increase tourism marketing dollars in 2005,” said Richard Scharf, president & CEO of VISIT DENVER, The Convention & Visitors Bureau. “Since that increase in marketing dollars, Denver has seen dramatic tourism growth that translates into greater economic impact for the city.”

Leisure visitors totaled 13.8 million, while business travelers reached 2.6 million. Within the leisure travel category, 7.7 million people were visiting family and friends, while 6.1 million were “marketable” visitors, travelers who could go anywhere and chose to visit Denver. In addition to the 16.4 million overnight visitors, Denver also generated a record 12 million day visitors.

According to Scharf, five of the top seven urban feeder markets have been target markets for the annual consumer marketing campaigns by VISIT DENVER – Chicago, Houston, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Albuquerque and Phoenix. Longwoods reported that Denver generated more out-of-state leisure visitors than in the past several years, reaching 82 percent in 2015, vs. 74 percent in 2014.

“Out-of-state visitors typically stay longer and spend more money and therefore are the target of most of our marketing dollars,” said Scharf. “One of the reasons we have seen such positive tourism growth is that we have a city that is willing to invest in its tourism product, and we saw that again in 2015 with voters approving important expansions of the Colorado Convention Center and National Western Center as well as the launch of the new rail connection between Denver International Airport and downtown that will pay dividends for decades to come.”

VISIT DENVER is currently conducting a comprehensive tourism roadmap study that will help establish tourism goals for Denver for the next decade. The study will be completed in late 2016.

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Key visitor numbers for 2015 include:

- Denver welcomed a record 16.4 million overnight visitors in 2015, up 6 percent over the 15.4 million in 2014. Nationally, total overnight trips only increased 2 percent.
- Overnight leisure visitors totaled 13.8 million, also a 6 percent increase compared to 2 percent nationally.
- The number of people coming to Denver for conventions and business travel in 2015 was 2.6 million, up 9 percent over 2014; business travel was flat nationally in 2015.
- Overnight visitors spent a record \$5 billion in 2015, 9 percent more than 2014.
- All five of the major business sectors connected to travel and tourism saw an increase in spending in 2015. Denver visitors spent more than \$1.5 billion in Denver hotels and other lodging establishments, and \$1 billion on food and beverages.
- Expenditures by visitors on gas, car rentals and other local transportation purchases topped \$1.46 billion. Purchases at retail stores were \$627 million, while vacationers and business travelers spent \$437 million on the city's paid attractions and other recreational and sightseeing activities.
- Another way of looking at expenditures is to factor in how much each type of visitor spends per day. On average in 2015, the biggest spenders were business travelers, who spent \$149 per day; followed by marketable leisure visitors who spent \$136 per day, then followed by people visiting friends and relatives, who spent \$71 per day. Each of those figures increased over 2014.
- An additional 12 million day visitors spent \$671 million.
- Vacationers spent an average of 3.3 nights in the city in 2015, slightly up from 2014.
- Denver's image (what visitors thought of the city) improved year over year also. Nearly eight in 10 visitors agreed strongly that Denver is a place they would "really enjoy visiting again."
- Denver's image as a travel destination improved in all categories, reaching new highs in the categories of:
 - *Denver's popularity as a destination*
 - *Sightseeing (including beautiful scenery)*
 - *Great dining and accommodations*
 - *Relaxed and safe atmosphere*

The top five states sending vacationers to Denver in 2015, apart from Colorado itself, were:

- California
- Texas
- Florida
- Illinois
- Arizona

- more -

The top seven cities from outside of Colorado sending leisure visitors to Denver in 2015 were:

- Los Angeles
- New York City
- Chicago
- Phoenix
- Houston
- Albuquerque
- Dallas/Ft. Worth

TOP ATTRACTIONS IN 2015

Shopping and entertainment were popular tourist activities in Denver in 2015. The top shopping and entertainment centers visited by non-Colorado residents were (in order):

- 16th Street Mall
- LoDo “Lower Downtown” Historic District
- Cherry Creek
- Denver Pavilions
- Park Meadows Retail Resort
- Larimer Square
- Outlets at Castle Rock
- Belmar
- FlatIron Crossing Mall

Paid Admission

The top paid attractions visited by non-Colorado residents were (in order):

- Denver Zoo
- Denver Art Museum
- Red Rocks Park & Amphitheatre
- Denver Botanic Gardens
- Buffalo Bill Museum & Grave
- Denver Museum of Nature & Science/IMAX
- Downtown Aquarium
- Colorado Railroad Museum
- Colorado Rockies
- Butterfly Pavilion
- Children’s Museum of Denver
- Denver Broncos

Top 3 Free Admission

- Red Rocks Park & Amphitheatre
- Coors Brewery
- Colorado State Capitol

About VISIT DENVER, The Convention & Visitors Bureau

Celebrating 107 years of promoting The Mile High City, VISIT DENVER is a nonprofit trade association that contracts with the City of Denver to market Denver as a convention and leisure destination, increasing economic development in the city, creating jobs and generating taxes. A record 16.4 million visitors stayed overnight in Denver in 2015, generating \$5 billion in spending, while supporting nearly 54,000 jobs and making tourism among the top industries in Denver. Learn more about Denver on the [VISITDENVER](#) website and at [TOURISMPAYSDENVER](#) or by phone at 800 2 Denver. Follow Denver's social media channels for up-to-the-minute updates at: [Facebook.com/visitdenver](#); [Twitter.com/visitdenver](#); [Instagram.com/visitdenver](#); and [YouTube.com/visitdenver](#).

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