

# **Cochise County Tourism Analysis Project**

## **COCHISE COUNTY VISITOR STUDY**

**2000 – 2001**

**Bisbee Profile**



**Prepared for Cochise County**

**by the**

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## Cochise County Visitor Survey 2000-2001

### Town of Bisbee

The 2000-2001 Cochise County Visitor Survey produced extremely useful information that allows us to paint a portrait of the visitor to Bisbee. This individual community profile is similar to the overall Cochise County report, with one important distinction. No economic and employment impact analysis is possible at the community level, since the data collected only allows for calculation at the county level. Visitors' direct expenditures in Bisbee are, however, represented and reported in the county economic impact report.

Individual community profiles, such as this report for Bisbee, are created by selecting only those respondents who identified Bisbee as the location where they received and completed the survey. The total distribution of surveys for the county is shown in Table 1, which identifies Bisbee respondents at 381, or 52 percent of total responses. Bisbee had the largest number of respondents of any community, and as such tended to drive overall findings.

Table 1. Distribution of returned surveys

		<b>Where were you given this survey?</b>		
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
	Benson	110	13.9%	14.9%
	Bisbee	381	48.3%	51.8%
	Douglas	9	1.1%	1.2%
	Tombstone	28	3.5%	3.8%
	Sierra Vista	72	9.1%	9.8%
	Willcox	120	15.2%	16.3%
	Other	16	2.0%	2.2%
	Total	736	93.3%	100.0%
Missing	System	53	6.7%	
Total		789	100.0%	

## Transportation

Visitors to Bisbee had somewhat distinct characteristics with respect to their origins and modes of transport. A higher percentage of Bisbee visitors (64.1%) arrived by private automobiles than for the county overall (55%), and a surprising 27.3 percent traveled by motorcycles. Visitors' primary transportation modes are included as Table 2.

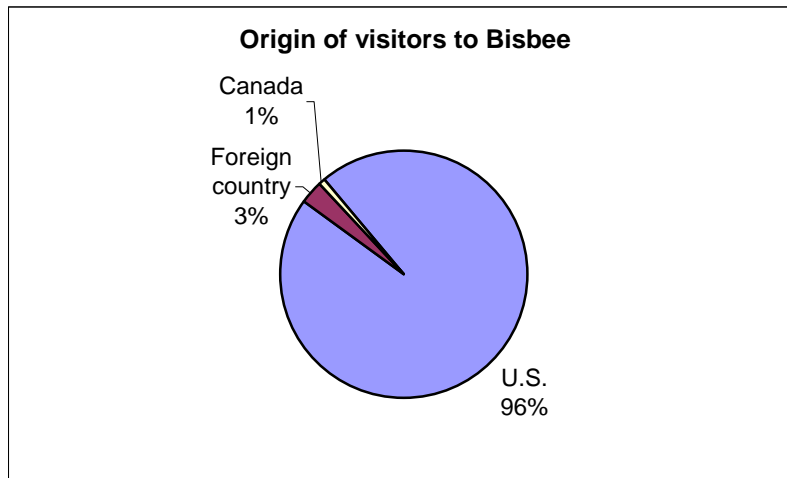
Table 2. Primary Mode of Transportation.

What is your primary mode of transportation - Bisbee		
	Count	Col %
Private auto	239	64.1%
Rental car	3	.8%
RV/Camper	8	2.1%
Motorcycle	102	27.3%
Tour bus	12	3.2%
Other	9	2.4%

## Visitor Origin

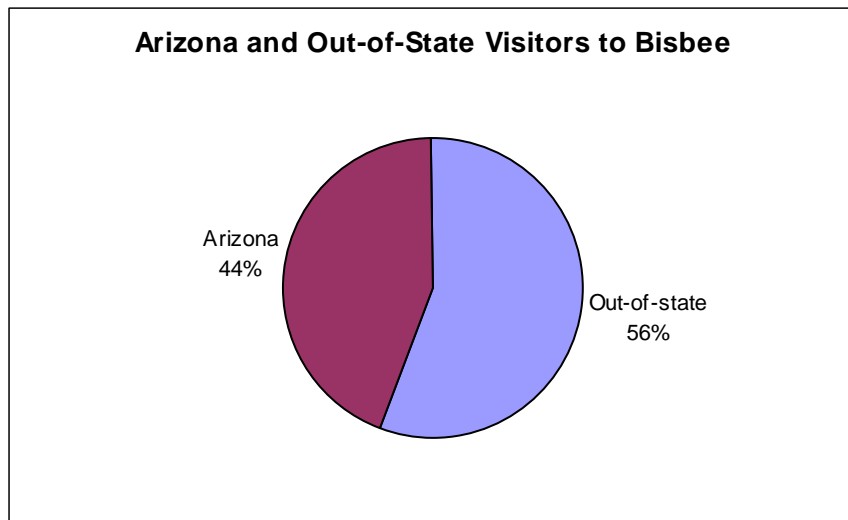
A vast majority – 96 percent- of visitors to Bisbee were of domestic origin; four percent were foreigners, and one percent of these were Canadian visitors. See Figure 1.

Figure 1. Origin of visitors to Bisbee



Statewide data show that at least 30 percent of Arizona tourism is the result of intra-state tourism, i.e. Arizona residents visiting within their state. At 44 percent, Bisbee attracts an even higher Arizona resident visitor population, significantly higher than for the state overall or for Cochise County generally (36%). See Figure 2.

Figure 2. Arizona and Out-of-State Visitors to Bisbee



Among out-of-state visitors, California (7.4%) contributed the largest percentage, followed by Illinois (4.0%), Washington (4.0%), New York (3.4%), and Texas (3.1%) – origins that are very similar for Arizona visitation statewide. Other out-of-state visitors hailed from many additional states, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. State of Origin Visitors to Bisbee

**Zip code of origin of Bisbee visitors**

	Count	Col %
Arizona	169	52.3%
California	24	7.4%
Illinois	13	4.0%
Washington	13	4.0%
New York	11	3.4%
Texas	10	3.1%
Michigan	9	2.8%
Oregon	8	2.5%
Massachusetts	6	1.9%
Connecticut	5	1.5%
Florida	5	1.5%
Vermont	5	1.5%
New Mexico	4	1.2%
Idaho	3	.9%
Minnesota	3	.9%
Missouri	3	.9%
New Jersey	3	.9%
Pennsylvania	3	.9%
Wisconsin	3	.9%
Indiana	2	.6%
Kansas	2	.6%
Nebraska	2	.6%
Nevada	2	.6%
Rhode Island	2	.6%
Utah	2	.6%
Virginia	2	.6%
APO	2	.6%
Alaska	1	.3%
Georgia	1	.3%
Louisiana	1	.3%
New Hampshire	1	.3%
North Carolina	1	.3%
Ohio	1	.3%
Tennessee	1	.3%
Total	323	100.0%

## **Primary Purpose of Trip**

Trip purposes for Bisbee visitors were similar to those for the county overall, with a few variations: Bisbee had more visitors vacationing, more on weekend excursions, fewer business visitors, and fewer visiting friends and relatives than the county overall. Even so, vacationing, (47.2%) weekend excursions (30.2%) and business (6.0%) were the three most common reasons for visiting Bisbee (Table 4). Visiting friends and relatives (5.0%), day trips (4.7%) and combined business and pleasure (3.3%) accounted for the majority of the remaining travel purposes to Bisbee. Just passing through (2.7%), military training (0.7%), and military-related business (0.3%) rounded out the category. Trip purpose is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. What is the primary purpose of your trip to Bisbee?

**Primary purpose of your trip to Bisbee and Southeastern Arizona/Cochise County**

	Count	Col %
Vacationing	142	47.2%
Weekend excursions	91	30.2%
Business	18	6.0%
Visiting friends and relatives	15	5.0%
Day trip	14	4.7%
Combination of business & pleasure	10	3.3%
Just passing through	8	2.7%
Military training	2	.7%
Military related business	1	.3%
Total	301	100.0%

The length of time visitors spent in the county was highly correlated to trip purpose. Respondents, whose primary trip purposes was a combination of business and

pleasure had the longest stays in the community (4.1 days), whereas, respondents in the county for military training had the longest period away from home (24 days). While military visitors are important to the economy of Sierra Vista they are not representative of the average visitor to Bisbee. Leisure, weekend or business travelers represent the typical visitor, with average stays of two to four days in the area. Bisbee clearly has a greater attraction to those on vacations and weekend excursions, as opposed to the long-stay visitors or “snowbirds” who are attracted to some other Cochise County communities (Sierra Vista or Benson). See Table 5.

Table 5. Average length of stay in Bisbee by type of trip.

**Primary purpose of your trip to Southeastern Arizona/Cochise County - Bisbee Visitors**

	How many nights do you plan to spend in Cochise County/Southeastern Arizona	How many nights will you be away from home on this trip?
	Mean	Mean
Vacationing	2.8	7.5
Just passing through	2.4	9.5
Business	2.5	4.1
Visiting friends and relatives	3.6	9.1
Weekend excursions	1.7	3.4
Combination of business & pleasure	4.1	5.9
Military training	2.0	23.5
Military related business	1.0	1.0
Day trip	1.0	9.2

**Visitor Spending**

Visitor expenditures are very important to community economic development, resulting in much-needed sales and tax revenues. Visitors to Bisbee had high levels of

expenditures in most categories. The highest levels of expenditure i.e., expenditure categories in which the most parties participated, were lodging with average expenditures of \$167, followed by food and beverage with an average of \$112. Other expenditures were transportation services at \$46, shopping/souvenirs and gifts at \$91, and entertainment/recreation (including entrance fees) at \$34. See Table 6.

Table 6. Average Visitor Expenditures – Bisbee

Expenditure Categories	Percent with expenditures	Mean
Lodging	86%	\$167
Food & Beverage	87%	\$112
Shopping/Souvenirs/Gifts	65%	\$91
Transportation	69%	\$46
Entertainment/Recreation (including entrance fees)	60%	\$34
Total		\$451

### **Choice of Overnight Community**

Travelers choose to stay in different communities for various reasons. These reasons include: convenience, distance to or from a specific attraction that they want to visit, price of accommodations, or simply because the lodging facility is open with available rooms. In Bisbee, the proximity of lodging to an attraction was sighted most often (54.8%) for overnight choice, followed by a good selection of hotels-motels (24.0%), and a convenient distance from where the respondent stayed the night before (20.0%). Reasonable price of lodging (12.2%) or closeness to friends and relatives (9.9%) were less important to the selection of Bisbee. “Other” reasons (39.1%) scored highly for choice of Bisbee, and included remarks about bus tours, grandchildren and motorcycle rallies. See Table 7.

Table 7. Why did you choose this particular town as a place to spend the night.

**Reasons you chose this town - Bisbee?**

	Cases	Col Response %
Good selection of hotels-motels	83	24.1%
Reasonable price of lodging	42	12.2%
Convenient distance from where we were the night before	69	20.0%
Near attraction I am visiting	189	54.8%
Other	135	39.1%
Close to friends/relatives	34	9.9%

### Activities

Bisbee is rich in both cultural and natural resources. The history and culture of Bisbee are powerful attractions for visitors, scoring more highly in these categories than other communities in Cochise County. Bisbee respondents were most interested in visiting sights of Old West history (70.2%), and more than two-thirds of all visitors indicated that they were either very or extremely interested in visiting Old West cultural heritage/historic sites (71.1%). More than half of respondents (58.5%) also indicated that they were either very or extremely interested in visiting the abundant public lands in the county – Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, and National Park lands. More than half (54.7%) also indicated that they were interested in visiting one of the many Ghost Towns in the county, while a further 53.1 percent were interested in visiting sites of mining history. Additionally, almost two-fifths (39.1%) of respondents were interested in visiting sites of Mexican history.

Thus, visitors to Bisbee are true tourists; they are not primarily motivated by business reasons, but are interested in experiencing the history of the Old West and the southwest. Well-developed itineraries for the area should include as many of these historic attractions as possible to persuade visitors to stay longer and do more in the area. Increased awareness of the unique historic and cultural products in Bisbee should be a primary focus of tourism promotion.

More than one-third (36.7%) of respondents indicated that they were either very or extremely interested in visiting wildlife preserves or participating in bird-watching during their visit – another possible way to extend trips in the area. Other active outdoor pursuits, such as hiking/biking/rock climbing (29.9%) and tent/RV camping (18.5) were also of interest to visitors. Greater advertising of the abundant federal lands and unique birding opportunities within the boundaries of Bisbee may grow this segment significantly. Of less interest to visitors were agricultural/u-pick operations (7.8%) and golf (15.3%). The complete list of activities ranked in order of mean (average) scores can be found in Table 8.

Table 8. How interested are you in spending part of your vacation time on the following activities?

Activities you are interested in	Not at all interested	A little interested	Somewhat interested	Very interested	Extremely interested	Mean
Interested in visiting sites of Old West history	2.8	9.7	17.3	46.4	23.9	3.8
Interested in visiting cultural heritage/historical sites	2.1	6.3	20.6	49.5	21.6	3.8
Interested in visiting Mexican history sites	12.0	21.9	27.0	31.0	8.0	3.0
Interested in visiting sites of mining history	5.8	16.6	24.5	35.7	17.3	3.4
Interested in visiting Ghost Towns	8.8	12.0	24.5	32.8	21.9	3.5
Interested in visiting public lands i.e., BLM, Forest Service and National Parks	5.5	10.9	25.1	35.6	22.9	3.6
Interested in visiting wildlife preserves or bird watching	18.9	20.0	24.4	23.7	13.0	2.9
Interested in touring agriculture/U-Pick operations	53.1	26.4	12.8	5.0	2.7	1.8
Interested in Hiking/Mountain Biking/Rock climbing	36.2	18.1	15.9	17.0	12.9	2.5
Interested in Camping/Tenting/RV	52.8	15.1	13.7	12.5	5.9	2.0
Interested in playing golf	68.2	10.2	6.2	9.1	6.2	1.7

### **Communities/Attractions Visited**

Bisbee visitors were asked to indicate whether they had visited specific communities or attractions in the county. Respondents were provided with an extensive list of communities and attractions and asked to indicate those they had visited or intended to visit on this trip. Bisbee (88.3%), not surprisingly, was the most popular single site visited during the study period, followed by Tombstone (74.4%). Other popular attractions were the Copper Queen Mine Tour (54.7%), Bisbee Mining and

Historic Museum (45.6%), Tombstone Courthouse State Park (32.4%) and Kartchner Caverns State Park (29.8%). All responses are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. On this trip did you visit any of these attractions/sites?

Attractions visited	Cases	Col Response %
Bisbee	273	88.3
Tombstone	230	74.4
Bisbee Queen Mine Tour (a Smithsonian affiliate)	169	54.7
Bisbee Mining and Historic Museum	141	45.6
Tombstone Courthouse State Park	100	32.4
Kartchner Caverns State Park	92	29.8
Bisbee	84	27.2
Sierra Vista	81	26.2
Chiricahua National Monument	75	24.3
Douglas	72	23.3
Willcox	60	19.4
Fort Huachuca	53	17.2
Fort Bowie National Historic Site	53	17.2
Gadsden Hotel Lobby	49	15.9
Ramsey Canyon Nature Preserve	36	11.7
Rex Allen Museum	36	11.7
Farm Markets - U Picks	35	11.3
Coronado National Monument	35	11.3
San Pedro Nat	34	11.0
Huachuca City	29	9.4
The Slaughter Ranch Museum	24	7.8
Other	54	17.5

## Visiting Mexico

Approximately one-tenth (11.2%) of Bisbee respondents indicated that they planned to visit Mexico on this trip – roughly the same as for the county overall. See table 10.

Table 10. Do you plan to visit Mexico?

<b>Visited - Mexico -Bisbee</b>			
		<b>Count</b>	<b>Col %</b>
On this trip do you plan to visit Agua Prieta or Sonora Mexico	Yes	31	11.2%
	No	245	88.8%

Of Bisbee respondents visiting Mexico, shopping was more important than for county visitors overall (63.6% for Bisbee vs. 59% county), while sightseeing (50.6%) was somewhat less important than for county visitors generally (52.6%). Business (15.2%) was less important a factor than for county visitors overall (22.4%), and fewer Bisbee visitors (18.2%) indicated that they intended to travel beyond the border zone and deeper into Mexico than county visitors generally (21.1%). Much smaller percentages of visitors indicated that they were going to eat in Mexico (15.6%), or that they were going to Mexico for medical care (9.1%). One-fifth of visitors (20.8%) indicated that they were going to Mexico for “other” reasons – that may have to do with visits to family and friends, or with education. See Table 11.

Table 11. What do you plan to do in Mexico?

**Reasons for visiting Mexico - Bisbee**

	Cases	Col Response %
Visit Mexico for shopping	49	63.6%
Visit Mexico for sightseeing	39	50.6%
Visit Mexico for business	20	26.0%
Visit Mexico for medical care	7	9.1%
Visit Mexico for traveling beyond the border	14	18.2%
Eating in Mexcio	12	15.6%
Visit Mexico for other	16	20.8%

**Party Composition**

People travel to Bisbee most frequently in groups of two people, with an average party size of 2.26 persons – a party size slightly larger than for the county overall (2.09). While 76 percent of Bisbee visitors were not traveling with children, the remainder of parties (24%) included children – a rate twice that for the county generally. A large percentage (18.4%) was traveling with children under age 13, while 24.6 percent of parties traveled with children between the ages of 13 and 18. Bisbee is clearly much more a family destination than some other county communities. Further information on travel party can be gleaned from Table 12.

Table 12. Travel party

Number in Party	Household Members	Women	Men	Children 0-12	Children 13-18
0	2.8%	4.0%	7.8%	81.6%	77.5%
1	11.0%	62.6%	65.4%	9.6%	12.4%
2	65.4%	20.5%	16.7%	5.6%	5.4%
3	10.2%	2.9%	4.3%	0.8%	1.6%
More than 4	10.6%	9.9%	5.8%	2.4%	3.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Average party size 2.26 persons

### **Demographics**

The average age of travelers to Bisbee is 52 years of age, the same as for the county generally. The largest portion of visitors (37.9%) was between the ages of 51 and 65 years; another 29.6 percent of respondents were between the ages of 36 and 50 years; and, 16.6 percent were over age 65. When combined, 54 percent of all visitors were over 50 years of age. This group tends to have more time to vacation and participate in leisure activities, and often the disposable income to support leisure travel. Only a small segment of respondents was younger than 25 years (5.1%). Overall, visitors to Bisbee were very similar in age categories to visitors in the county generally. The age categories into which the respondents fall are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Age of visitors to Bisbee.

**Age recoded**

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 25 years	13	5.1	5.1
26 - 35 years	27	10.7	15.8
36 - 50 years	75	29.6	45.5
51 - 65 years	96	37.9	83.4
65+ years	42	16.6	100.0
Total	253	100.0	

The Bisbee sample appears to be well balanced with respect to gender and age. Overall, the sample reflects a middle-aged visiting population that is still active and eager to participate in the many outdoor and adventure activities that the county has to offer. Male visitors (53 years) are slightly older than female visitors (49 years), and the mean age indicates little difference between gender groups. Overall, more women were aged between 36 and 50 (36.5%) than were men (20.6%). However, more men (63.5%) were over 50 years of age than were women (47.5%). See Table 14.

Table 14. Gender by Age (recoded).

**Age recoded - Bisbee**

	What is your gender	
	Female	Male
	Col %	Col %
Less than 25 years	5.1%	4.7%
26 - 35 years	10.9%	11.2%
36 - 50 years	36.5%	20.6%
51 - 65 years	38.7%	38.3%
65+ years	8.8%	25.2%

## Household Income

Finally, respondents were asked about their annual household income, according to a range of six categories. Slightly more than one-third of respondents (33.9%) did not answer the question about annual household income. For the remainder (55.5%), approximately three-fourths (74.6%) of the sample had annual household incomes in excess of \$50,000, while one-fourth (25.4%) had incomes of less than \$50,000 a year. Only 6.3 percent of respondents had incomes under \$25,000 a year. See Figure 3.

Figure 3. Which category best describes your annual household income?

