

ONTARIO CYCLE TOURISM & CYCLING ACTIVITY REPORT

2021/2022



Transportation
Options

ONTARIO CYCLE TOURISM & CYCLING ACTIVITY REPORT: 2021/2022

Purpose:

- To build on data collected and published in past sector reports: Cycle Tourism in Ontario: A Report on the State of Ontario's Cycle Tourism Sector (2019); From Niche to Now - A Report on the State of Ontario's Cycle Tourism Sector (2015).
- To add further insight to survey reports and data collected during the pandemic: Cycle Tourism & Cycling Activity Survey Report - COVID-19 (November 2020 & May 2020).
- To assist tourism partners, tourism businesses and related organizations to understand impact of Covid on cycle tourism and cycling activities.
- To assist tourism partners, tourism businesses and related organizations in planning for future cycle tourism and cycling activities post-Covid.

To view past reports on the cycle tourism sector and cycling activity in Ontario visit: <http://www.transportationoptions.org/ontarioresearch>

While this report focuses on Ontario and is intended to assist tourism partners in Ontario, it is our belief that the findings will be useful to and are indicative of larger trends in other jurisdictions across Canada and internationally.

About the 2021 Survey Respondents:

In November/December 2021 a survey was issued by email to over 16,000 Ontario By Bike e-newsletter subscribers. From that outreach, a total of 1,263 survey responses were completed and received.

- 94% of respondents were from Ontario, representing a good cross section of residents (32% from central Ontario; 22% from SW Ontario; 19% from eastern Ontario; 15% from Toronto; 6% from the north.)
- The majority of respondents had been cyclists for 10 or more years (74%), only 5% were new cyclists within the past 2 years.
- 61% identified themselves as experienced cyclists; 39% as leisure/recreational cyclists (similar to 2020 results, 66% and 30% respectively).

Prepared By:

This report was prepared by: [Ontario By Bike \(Transportation Options\)](http://www.ontariobybike.ca), a not for profit organization whose cross provincial programming develops and promotes cycle tourism in Ontario. www.ontariobybike.ca

ABOUT ONTARIO CYCLISTS

- 47% of cyclists are aged 45 to 64, (compared to 60% in 2018), 44% of cyclists are over 65.
- 54% of cyclists are retired, (compared to 23% in 2018; 8% in 2012).
 - Number of retired riders is growing
- 60% of cyclists are male, (compared to 61% in 2018).
- 65% have university education, (compared to 57% in 2018).
- 47% have a household income over \$100,000, (compared to 46% in 2018).



ONTARIO CYCLISTS | RIDE HABITS & PREFERENCES

- Road cycling, followed closely by riding off-road trails (paved and unpaved) are preferred types of cycling, followed by gravel cycling, then mountain biking and fat biking.
- 46% prefer a daily ride distance of 46km to 99km, followed by 39% who prefer distances between 21km to 45km.
- Ontario cyclists ride frequently during their active cycling months.
- 61% ride year round and in shoulder seasons, 16% are winter and year round cyclists.
- 61% ride 2 to 3 times a week, 17% ride daily.



ONTARIO CYCLISTS | BIKES & ACCESSORIES

- 49% ride a bike valued between \$500 to \$2,000, 43% ride bikes that cost more than \$2,000 (similar to 2018 with 56% and 35%, and in 2015, 52% and 35% respectively).
- 43% spend between \$250 to \$1,000 annually on bike equipment, maintenance, clothes and accessories; 33% spend between \$100 and \$250, (16% less than \$100, 8% more than \$1,000 per year.)
- 17% own one or more ebikes in their household, 19% are considering purchasing an ebike in the future.



ONTARIO CYCLISTS | CYCLING ACTIVITY IN 2021

- 82% increased or did the same amount of cycling in 2021, including 47% who increased the amount of cycling in 2021. (In 2020, 50% did more cycling than in 2019, showing positive growth through Covid).
- Recreational cycling was the most popular type of cycling activity in 2021 and throughout Covid, with 94% of respondents cycling for recreation, followed by cycle touring (38%) and training (26%) rides.
- Cycling activity has increased during Covid.



Photo Credit: Martin Lortz/Destination Ontario

*When responses exceed 100%, respondents were permitted to select multiple answers to the question.

TRAVEL THAT INCLUDED CYCLING IN 2021

- 88% of cyclists cycled close to home (locally, regionally and cross-regionally) and within the province in 2021, compared to 93% in 2020.
 - 56% of cyclists travelled locally (compared to 72% in 2020)*
 - 58% regionally (compared to 60% in 2020)*
 - 27% cross regionally (compared to 31% in 2020)*
 - 13% inter-provincially (compared to 10.5% in 2020)*
 - 2.4% internationally (compared to 2.4% in 2020)*
 - 5% did not travel (compared to 4% in 2020)*
- 61% did three or more day trips that included cycling in 2021.
- 48% did one or more overnight trips that included cycling in 2021 (compared to 40% in 2020).



*When responses exceed 100%, respondents were permitted to select multiple answers to the question.

ONTARIO CYCLE TOURISM IMPACT ON BUSINESSES

Accommodations

When on an overnight cycling trip, cyclists had the following preferences:

- 48% stay at hotels/motels/luxury accommodations often/very often
- 36% stay at private rentals, cottages, with friends and relatives, hostels
- 16% prefer camping

The largest percentage of cyclists spent between \$101 and \$150 per day.

- 77% of cyclists spent over \$50 per night on accommodations while on a bike trip, compared to 66% in 2018 and 69% in 2014.
- 58% of cyclists spent over \$100 per night on accommodations while on a bike trip, compared to 42% in 2018 and 38% in 2014.



ONTARIO CYCLE TOURISM IMPACT ON BUSINESSES

Food & Beverage

- 51% of cyclists spent over \$26 on food and beverage on a cycling trip or outing, compared to 79% in 2018 and 81% in 2014
- 22% of cyclists spent over \$50 on food and beverage, compared to 40% in 2018 and 36% in 2014

The largest percentage of cyclists spent between \$1 and \$25 per day

Reported spending on food and beverage has decreased, possibly due to limited options and restrictions from Covid over past couple of years.

Attractions, Entertainment and Other Activities

- 23% of cyclists spent over \$26 per day on attractions and other activities, compared to 36% in 2018. 77% spend between \$0 and \$25, compared to 64% in 2018 while on a bike trip.

Retail Shopping

- 21% of cyclists spent over \$26 per day on retail shopping, compared to 30% in 2018. 79% spent between \$0 and \$25, compared to 70% in 2018 while on a bike trip.

2022 PLANNING FOR FUTURE CYCLING ACTIVITIES

- 75% of respondents were considering making non-local regional travel plans that include cycling in 2022 with travel restrictions eased (survey in Nov/Dec 2021)
- 46% of trips that include cycling in 2022 were anticipated to be overnight trips, 30% were considering day trips, with travel restrictions eased (surveyed in Nov/Dec 2021)
- 31% were considering participating in some type of organized cycling activity, including events and tours in 2022, as restrictions allow (survey Nov/Dec 2021)



CYCLING TRIP PLANNING RESOURCES

Cyclists use a variety of resources when planning cycling outings and while riding. Ontario By Bike website remains the most used resource for ideas, planning cycling outings and routes.

To get ideas and plan cycling outings and routes, the most used resources in order were:

- Ontario By Bike website (68%)
- Recommendations from friends/family (60%)
- Other websites (47%)
- Digital cycling maps (46%)
- Print cycling maps (45%)

During a cycling trip or outing, the most used resources for navigation and general information in order were:

- Google Maps
- Smartphone apps
- GPS
- Wayfinding signage
- Print cycling maps



*When responses exceed 100%, respondents were permitted to select multiple answers to the question.

SAMPLE OF SURVEY COMMENTS FROM CYCLISTS

- *I am passionate about cycling, although I use my \$20 garage sale bike and my regular street clothes. For me the highlight of 2021 was cycling alone from my house on a six day trip from the city to wilderness and back. Can hardly wait until next year.*
- *I did not go on organized cycle tours but do plan to go touring in 2022.*
- *Haven't done as many cycling related trips as I would like to due to Covid. I would be interested in attending more races and exploring more trails and travelling as restrictions allow.*
- *2021 was not a "normal" year in terms of our traveling to bicycle. We did a lot less than usual.*
- *We need more signed bicycle routes, more separated bike lanes and more connected bike paths.*
- *Lots of interesting routes suggested on the website and in the guide this year and I hope to ride them next year.*
- *My compliments to all in producing such a high quality biking guide and an inspiration to many people on the great and exciting places there are to visit by bike in Ontario.*
- *We use ebikes to enjoy a new bike riding experience*
- *Had hoped to bicycle in Canada during 2021, but border crossing from USA was hindered by COVID restrictions. Looking forward to it in the future.*

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This report and other research on cycle tourism can be found online at: www.transportationoptions.org/research