



Mornington Peninsula Visitor Profile and Satisfaction Report: Summary of results

The Mornington Peninsula Visitor Profile and Satisfaction (VPS) project was completed as part of the Destination Visitor Survey Program (DVS) run by Tourism Research Australia (part of the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism). The objective of the project was to gain an understanding of Mornington Peninsula visitors to assist in destination management planning, marketing and product development.

The survey was conducted from February to April 2010 and 946 surveys were completed.

Since 2006 about 67 VPS projects have been completed in Australian regional tourist destinations. Data from these projects have been collated to establish the VPS Benchmark Database. Benchmarks are the average of all (unweighted) VPS destination projects with at least 50 respondents. Some destinations are surveyed during different times of year in order to encompass the broadest range of visitors. In this event, only the most recent research for the destination is included. Comparisons against VPS benchmarks are made throughout this summary.

Visitor and trip characteristics

- Most visitors in the survey sample were in Mornington Peninsula for holiday/leisure purposes (84%) and to visit friends and/or relatives (13%).
- Most visitors in the survey sample stayed in Mornington Peninsula overnight (71%), with 8% of these staying in their own holiday home.
- Visitors were from all age groups including 25% younger than 35 years.
- Travel parties included couples (42%), groups of friends and/or family (30%) and parents with kids (21%).
- Nearly nine in ten visitors (88%) were domestic visitors.
- Over three quarters of domestic visitors (77%) were from Victoria, with 80% of these from Melbourne.
- Seven in ten visitors (72%) were repeat visitors.
- Day visitors were more likely to be in the young/midlife life stage with no kids, live in Victoria, have shorter planning periods and use no information sources (besides previous visits) or make any bookings compared with overnight visitors.
- Visitors used a range of accommodation types in Mornington Peninsula.



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Why did they visit Mornington Peninsula?

The common theme that runs through the reasons for visiting Mornington Peninsula and the experiences which people expected of their visit was 'variety', evident in the following ways:

1. The variety of things to see and do in Mornington Peninsula was a key reason for people choosing to visit.
2. When asked to state the single most important reason they chose to visit, respondents gave a long list of reasons. This broad scope of motivations was complemented by a long list of experiences that visitors expected of Mornington Peninsula.

This reflects the fact that Mornington Peninsula does have a broad range of experiences on offer. Many of these experiences motivate people to visit in their own right but the significant driving force is the combination of all those experiences in the one region. A typical comment was:

"There is always something different to do and see. It is always a delight.....always we are surprised at the unexpected. No matter how many times we visit, we find new things." (Intrastate, 55–64 years)

The top 10 list of reasons Mornington Peninsula was chosen were (multiple responses allowed):

- The variety of things to see and do (39%)
- For a wine tour/to visit a winery (26%)
- To visit a specific attraction (26%)
- It's a great place to spend time with my partner (25%)
- To experience nature (17%)
- It's a great place for a family holiday (17%)
- To visit friends (16%)
- It was recommended (14%)
- To visit family (12%)
- To go to a market (11%).

For day visitors, although the variety of things to see and do was also important, 38% reported that visiting specific attractions was the main reason for choosing to visit Mornington Peninsula.

The list of experiences that visitors typically expected was equally long. The top 10 experiences expected were:

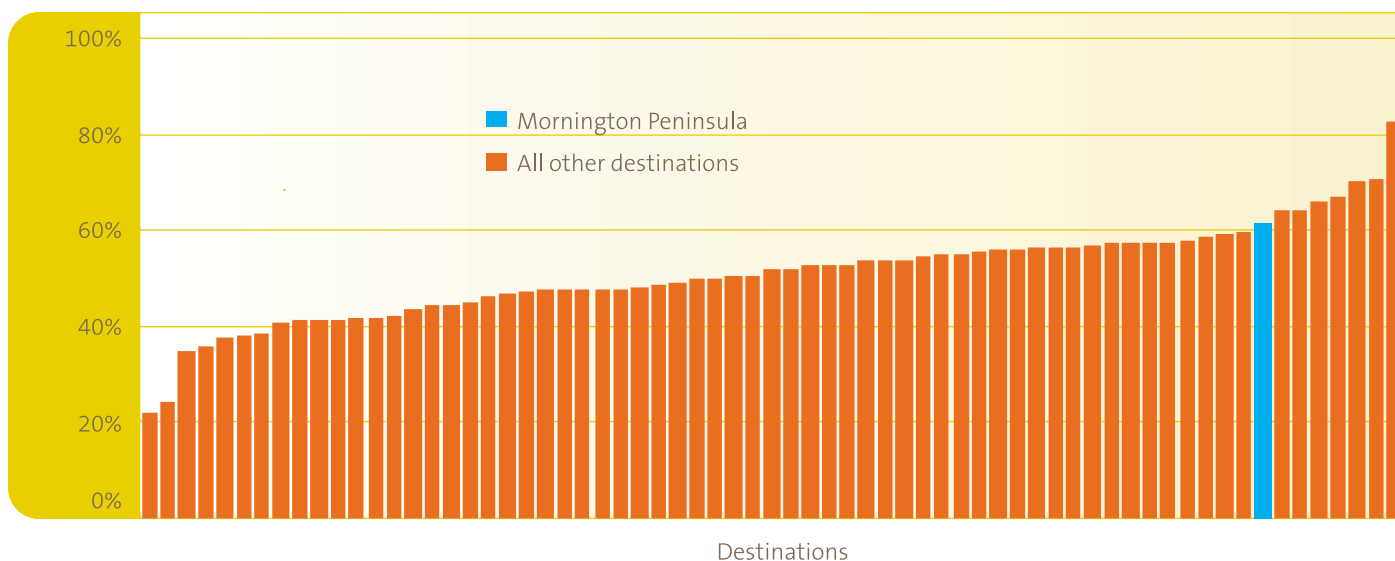
- To relax and rejuvenate (88%)
- A place to spend quality time with partner/family/friends (86%)
- An opportunity to tour around and explore (82%)
- Great coastal experiences and scenery (81%)
- Food and wine experiences (73%)
- Nature based experiences (70%)
- A chance to discover and learn something new (55%)
- Great villages (51%)
- Luxury and indulgence (49%)
- An adventure (43%).

The majority of visitors to Mornington Peninsula were self-drive (95%). The proximity to Melbourne and the ease of the drive – particularly since the Eastlink opened – were stated as significant advantages of the region.

Were visitors happy with their trip to Mornington Peninsula?

Mornington Peninsula recorded one of the highest proportions of visitors who were very satisfied with their visit (62%); the eighth highest of all the VPS benchmark destinations:

Overall satisfaction: Proportion of visitors very satisfied



Generally, all visitor types to the Mornington Peninsula had high levels of satisfaction, with the only groups well below the overall score being young singles/couples without kids and day visitors. However, their scores of 54% and 55% respectively for 'very satisfied' were still above the VPS benchmark of 51%.

One of the factors driving overall satisfaction was the variety of things to see and do. Sixty per cent of visitors were very satisfied with the variety in Mornington Peninsula, 10 percentage points above the VPS benchmark. Other attributes that rated highly were:

- the wineries, one of Mornington Peninsula's key attractions - 58% of visitors rated the food and wine experiences as better than expected, 11 percentage points above the benchmark
- attractions - 55% of visitors reported that they were very satisfied, which is six percentage points above the VPS benchmark
- good shopping (46%, +5 points) and a place to spend quality time with friends (61%, +4 points) were the other experiences that scored above the VPS benchmarks for being better than expected.

With only a few experiences and attributes that rated above the VPS benchmarks, the importance that the large variety of experiences on offer plays in visitors' overall satisfaction with the region is highlighted.

Open ended comments from visitors provide some further insight. There was some dissatisfaction concerning the cost of the Cape Schanck experience (for the tour and for the entry and parking). With regard to signage, several respondents noted that their GPS device did not seem to align with actual conditions. Signage to wineries and attractions was also noted as inadequate by a number of respondents.

There were also some experiences rated slightly below VPS benchmark levels. They were:

- Nature based experiences
- An opportunity to experience arts or culture
- Something the kids would enjoy.

VPS surveys show that regional tourism destinations are often defined by one or two key experiences. If those experiences are delivered very well, visitors are likely to be very satisfied. In the case of Mornington Peninsula, no single experience or attribute defines the region. Further, no experience or attribute performs significantly better than similar offerings in other destinations (with the possible exception of food and wine experiences).

However, when all these experiences and attributes are brought together in the same region and delivered well, visitors have an exceptionally satisfying experience overall.

Regional tourism destinations like Mornington Peninsula that offer a variety of experiences attract a broad range of visitors. Further analysis of Mornington Peninsula's key experiences – nature, food and wine, golf and spa, help demonstrate this.

Nature based visitors

Nature based experiences were expected by 70% of all visitors to Mornington Peninsula. Clearly, nature based experiences work at various levels for Mornington Peninsula visitors, from not actually doing any nature based activity other than 'leaving the city to get back to nature' to bushwalking in a National Park or swimming with dolphins. For this analysis, nature based visitors were defined as expecting to have a nature based experience and undertaking at least one of the nature activities.

- Nature based visitors were less likely to rely on friends and relatives for information on visiting Mornington Peninsula.
- They were more likely to use the Visitor Information Centre.
- They were more likely to stay longer in the region.
- The variety of things to see and do was even more pronounced as a key reason for visiting than it was for the full sample.
- There were several experiences that nature based visitors expected more than the broader sample: history, arts and culture, adventure, learn something new and exploring beautiful gardens.
- Nature based visitors had similar overall satisfaction levels to the broader sample, although they tended to be more satisfied across a broader range of attributes and experiences.

Food and wine visitors

Food and wine experiences were expected from 73% of the survey sample. For this analysis, food and wine visitors were defined as expecting to have a food and wine experience and also visited a winery/cellar door (35% of visitors).

- Almost half the food and wine visitors researched the Mornington Peninsula exclusively on the internet.
- They did not stay any longer or shorter than the broader sample.
- They were twice as likely to stay in B&B accommodation as the broader sample.
- As with the broader sample, the variety of things to see and do was the most important reason for visiting.
- Luxury and indulgence and arts and culture were two experiences that food and wine visitors expected more than the broader sample.
- They had a higher level of overall satisfaction than the broader sample (67% very satisfied versus 62%).
- Even with their high expectations of food and wine experiences, 72% reported that the experience was better than expected.

Golf visitors

Nine per cent of all visitors expected the region to offer the chance to play great golf courses and actually did play – these are the visitors defined here as golf visitors.

- Golf visitors were skewed towards older visitors compared with the broader sample.
- Golfers were unlikely to be on a day trip.
- They were more likely to stay longer in the region with a median of four nights compared with two nights for the broader sample.
- Golfers were much more likely to be staying in luxury accommodation.
- Golfers were one group where the most common reason for choosing Mornington Peninsula was not the variety of things to see and do, it was to play golf.

- Luxury and indulgence and food and wine were two experiences that golfers expected more than the broader sample.
- Golfers tended to expect fewer experiences, although they still participated in as many, if not more, activities than the broader sample.
- Even with their high expectations of great golf course experiences, 70% reported that the experience was better than expected.
- Golfers were more likely to return to Mornington Peninsula than the broader sample.

Spa visitors

Nine per cent of the visitors went to a spa/spa retreat – these are the visitors defined here as spa visitors.

- Spa visitors covered the broad spectrum of life stages although they were less likely to be older non-working visitors.
- Four in five spa visitors travelled with a partner or friends/relatives.
- Half the spa visitors researched Mornington Peninsula via the internet only.
- Spa visitors were much more likely to be staying in luxury accommodation than the broader sample.
- Like most visitors to Mornington Peninsula, spa visitors appreciated a variety of things to do.
- The expectation of luxury and indulgence differentiated spa visitors from the broader sample.
- Shopping, going to markets and visiting wineries were activities that spa visitors were more likely to undertake.
- Like most visitors, spa visitors were generally very satisfied across a range of attributes.

This summary is extracted from research conducted by Tourism Research Australia in partnership with Mornington Peninsula Tourism and Tourism Victoria. For the full Visitor Profile and Satisfaction Report, please email tourism.research@ret.gov.au.

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National Golf Course, Cape Schanck, Mornington Peninsula
 Image courtesy of Tourism Victoria

Publication date: June 2010