



## Northern Ireland Domestic Tourism 2018

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**2.2m  
trips**



**4.5m  
nights**



**£299m  
spent**

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Frequency: Annual  
Coverage: Northern Ireland  
Theme: People and Places

The key points are:

- in 2018, an estimated 2.2 million domestic overnight trips were taken within Northern Ireland by Northern Ireland residents;
- estimated expenditure associated with these domestic overnight trips in Northern Ireland during 2018 was £299 million;
- Northern Ireland residents spent an estimated 1.1 million nights in local hotels during 2018; and
- an estimated 3.8 million overnight trips were taken by Northern Ireland residents outside of Northern Ireland during 2018.

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[Click here for definitions of tourism statistics common terms used in this report](#)

## National Statistics Status

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

These statistics were designated as National Statistics in May 2017 following a full assessment against the Code of Practice. Since the assessment by the UK Statistics Authority, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have also made improvements such as the following:



- Improved quality of the data by boosting the sample size of the tourism module in the Continuous Household Survey (CHS) from April 2017. This improved the precision around headline estimates.
- The CHS was made more accessible by improving the wording of questions and updating survey software to improve the presentation. This reduces the burden on respondents to improve response rates.
- Increased accessibility by publishing data in open source format for all statistics.
- Increasing awareness of statistics by allowing users to sign up to a [mailing list](#) that means they can be informed of any new statistical releases.

## Introduction

This report provides an analysis of the tourism activity of Northern Ireland (NI) residents. A full picture of all tourism activity is provided in the [Northern Ireland Annual Tourism Statistics 2018 publication](#). The statistics in this report and accompanying tables aim to give an indication of the levels of domestic tourism along with some information on where NI residents take trips outside of Northern Ireland.

The information provided is the result of sample surveys (collected in the Continuous Household Survey (CHS)) and is used to estimate the headline statistics of overnight trips, with the associated nights and expenditure, taken by Northern Ireland residents. The results from sample surveys are always estimates and not precise figures. This means that they are subject to margins of error which can have an impact on how the estimates should be interpreted, especially regarding comparisons over the short term.

### What you can say....

**The sources show a fluctuating trend in estimated overnight trips in Northern Ireland by Northern Ireland residents from 2013 and a general upward trend in estimated expenditure over the same period. There has been no statistically significant change in the estimated number of overnight trips and expenditure between 2017 and 2018.**

### What you cannot say....

**There was a definite increase in expenditure on overnight trips by Northern Ireland residents within Northern Ireland, increasing by 11% from £270 million to £299 million between 2017 and 2018.**

## Domestic overnight trips and expenditure trend

**Figure 1: NI domestic overnight trips and associated expenditure (Rolling 12 months)**

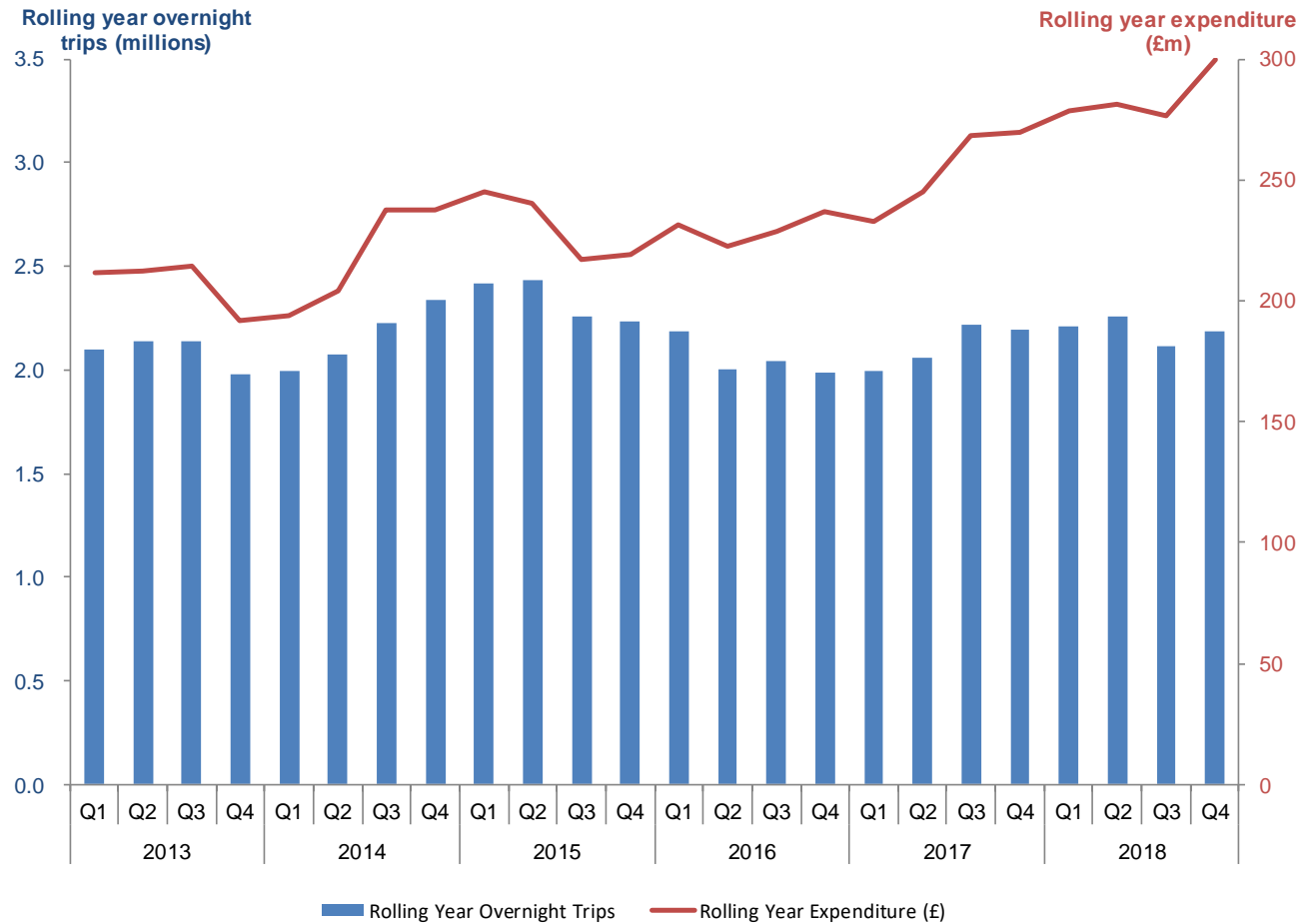


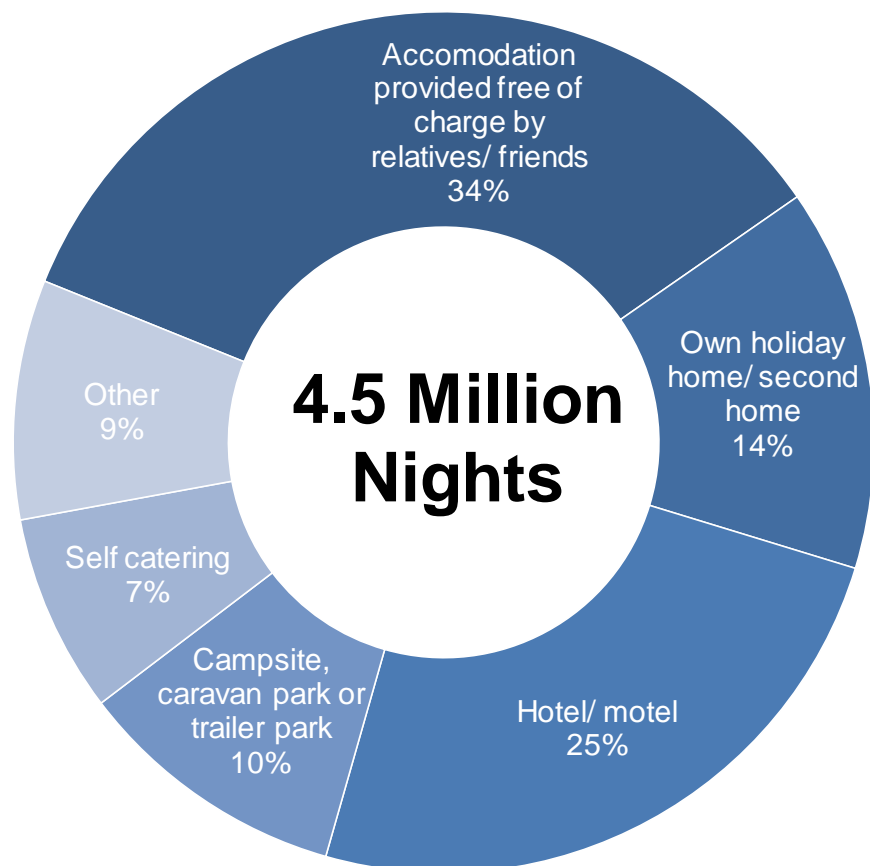
Figure 1 shows the rolling year (twelve month) estimated domestic overnight trips and associated spend by quarter for 2013 to 2018.

It shows that the trend for the estimated number of overnight trips taken by NI residents within NI has fluctuated since 2013. The estimated expenditure shows an upward trend since 2013.

### Accommodation used by Northern Ireland residents during overnight trip nights in Northern Ireland

In 2018, an estimated 4.5 million nights were spent on domestic overnight trips in NI. It is estimated that just over one third (34%) of these nights were spent in accommodation provided free of charge by relatives/friends and a quarter (25%) of nights were spent in a hotel or motel. It is estimated that 14% of nights were spent in own holiday homes/second homes. (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Proportion of nights spent in NI by accommodation type used by NI residents, 2018**

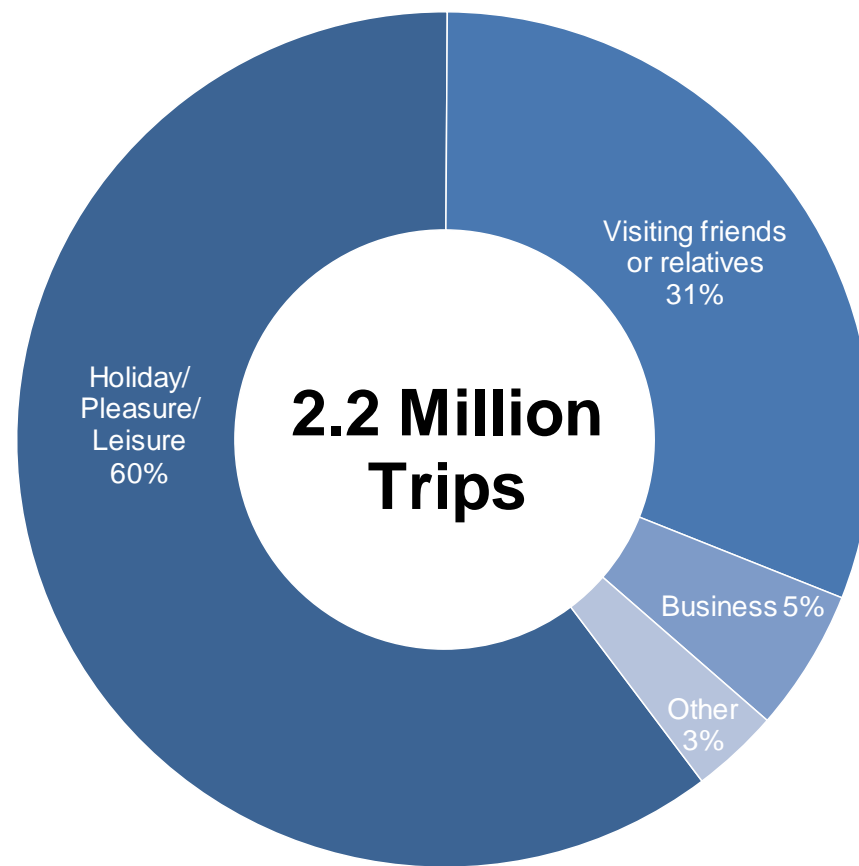


\*Total percentage may not sum to 100% due to rounding

### Reason for overnight trips taken in Northern Ireland by Northern Ireland residents

Figure 3 shows that, over three fifths (61%) of the estimated domestic overnight trips taken were for a holiday and almost one third (31%) were to visit friends or relatives.

**Figure 3: Purpose of overnight trips taken by NI residents within NI, 2018**



\*Total percentage may not sum to 100% due to rounding

## Activities reported on overnight trips in Northern Ireland

In 2018, it is estimated that the most popular activities partaken by NI residents on domestic overnight trips were going to a restaurant, café, pub or nightclub (54%), hiking or walking (36%), going to beaches or the coast (30%) and shopping (22%).



Going to a restaurant, café, pub or nightclub (54%)



Hiking / walking (36%)



Going to beaches or the coast (30%)

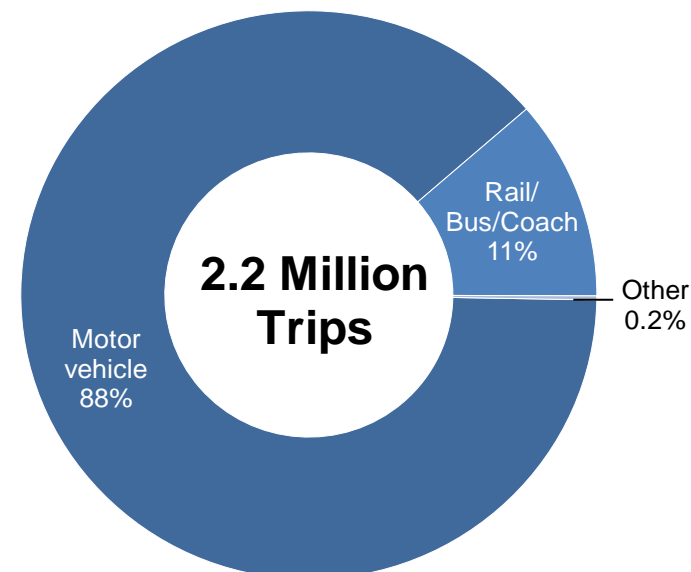


Shopping (22%)

## Type of transport used on overnight trips in Northern Ireland

During 2018, it is estimated that 88% of domestic overnight trips in Northern Ireland by NI residents used a motor vehicle for the journey. Rail, bus, or coach was the method of transport used for 11% of estimated overnight trips.

Figure 4: Type of transport used on overnight trips by NI residents within NI, 2018.



\*Total percentage may not sum to 100% due to rounding

## Main reason for not taking an overnight trip in Northern Ireland

Those surveyed who did not take a domestic overnight trip in Northern Ireland in 2018 (within the 4 weeks prior to interview) were asked to provide their main reason. The most common response was “Prefer to stay at home, no motivation to travel” (21%). This was followed by “Lack of free time due to work or study commitments” (19%) and “Lack of free time due to family commitments” (19%)

**Table 1: Main reason for not taking an overnight trip in NI, 2016-2018**

	Percentage		
	2016	2017	2018
Prefer to stay at home, no motivation to travel	24%	21%	21%
Lack of free time due to work or study commitments	17%	17%	19%
Lack of free time due to family commitments	24%	20%	19%
Recently returned from an overnight trip <sup>1</sup>		11%	13%
Health reasons or reduced mobility	12%	12%	13%
Financial reasons	16%	15%	12%
Other	6%	4%	2%
<b>Total<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Notes:

(1) The “Recently returned from an overnight trip” category was introduced in 2017

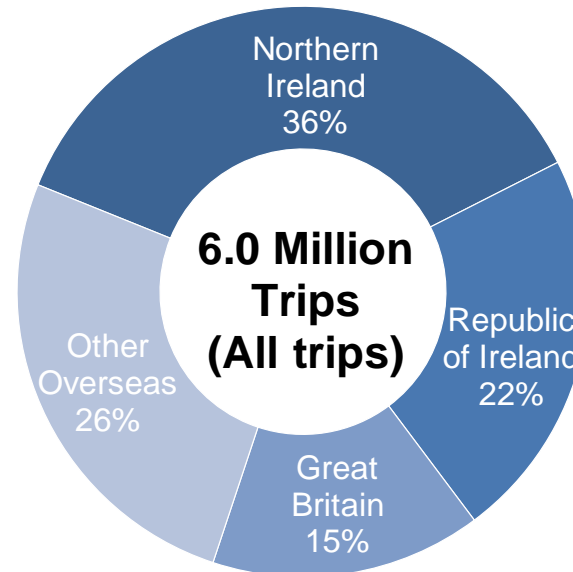
(2) Totals may not sum due to rounding

## All destinations of overnight trips by NI residents

The CHS also collects information on trips Northern Ireland residents take outside NI; this has shown the total number of estimated overnight trips taken by NI residents to all destinations during 2018 was 6.0 million.

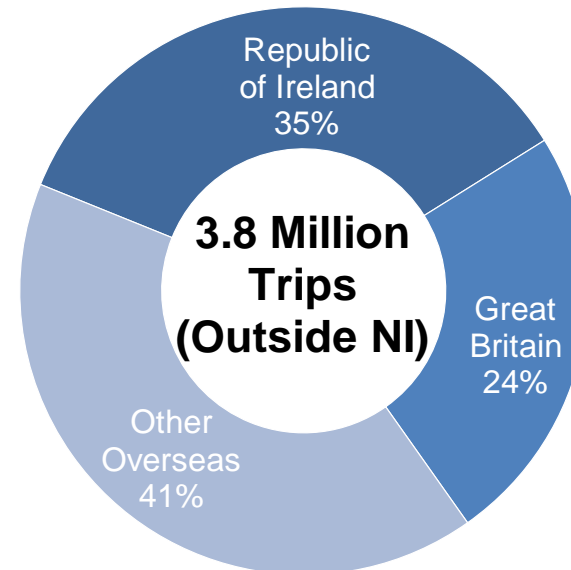
Nearly two thirds of these overnight trips (64% or 3.8 million) were taken outside of Northern Ireland. Of these external trips, just almost a quarter (24%) were to Great Britain, over a third (35%) were to the Republic of Ireland just over two fifths (41%) were outside the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Figure 5: All destinations of overnight trips by NI residents, 2018



\*Total percentage may not sum to 100% due to rounding

Figure 6: Overnight trips outside NI by NI residents, 2018





## Background Notes

### Definitions/Data sources of Domestic Tourism Statistics in Northern Ireland (NI)

An **overnight trip** includes any trip away from home for at least one night by a Northern Ireland resident.

A **domestic overnight trip** includes any trip away from home for at least one night in Northern Ireland by a Northern Ireland resident.

### Trip expenditure

Trip expenditure is the total spent on package travel, business travel, accommodation, travel costs, food & drink, and other items spend.

### Confidence Intervals

The estimates in this bulletin are derived from sample surveys and are therefore subject to sampling errors. Sampling errors are determined both by the sample design and by the sample size. Generally speaking, the larger the sample supporting a particular estimate, the smaller the associated sampling error. For 2018, the confidence interval around the estimates of all overnight trips by Northern Ireland residents in NI stands at +/-7% while the confidence interval around the estimates for expenditure on all overnight trips by Northern Ireland residents in NI stands at +/-10%. Information on confidence intervals in Northern Ireland tourism statistics can be accessed at this [link](#).

### Methodology

A link to details on the methodology, sample size, rounding and grossing, precision of estimates, etc can be found at this [link](#) . A quality report on the domestic tourism series can be found at this [link](#).

### Further Information

Tables containing data used in this publication can be found at this [link](#).

For more information relating to this publication or if an alternative format is required, please contact us at [tourismstatistics@nisra.gov.uk](mailto:tourismstatistics@nisra.gov.uk)

### Source

The information presented in this publication was collected through the Continuous Household Survey. Further information on the survey methodology is available from <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/continuous-household-survey>

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