

Recreational Uses

This topic looks at the great importance of water for tourism and recreation in Canada. "Water-based activities" include swimming and beach activity, canoeing, kayaking and sailing, power boating and recreational fishing. Note that "water" in this sub-topic will always mean "freshwater".

Scope of Water-based Recreation

Table 1 shows that water-based recreation is very popular in Canada. In a recent year (1996), more than a third of adult Canadians engaged in these activities, with nearly 90 million trips and outings being taken for them.

Table 1. Participation in Water-based Activities, 1996

Participation	Water-based Activities 8 532 000
Total days	134 520 000
Total trips	89 423 000
Same-day	59 239 000
Overnight	30 184 000

Source: Canada. Environment Canada. Recreation: Importance of water for Tourism and Recreation in Canada. Ottawa, 2001.

The presence of water also greatly enhances activities such as camping, sightseeing and nature photography. A significant portion of the \$12 billion that nature-based tourism and recreation contribute to the Canadian economy results from activities that depend on clean and abundant water. For example, nearly \$2 billion results from expenditures on recreational fishing, alone.

Canada's vast number of lakes and rivers encourages boating of all kinds. Despite the seasonal limitations imposed by climate, Canadians own more than twice as many boats per capita as do residents of the United States. At present, outboard motorboats account for roughly half of all watercraft in Canada, with canoes being another 20% of the total, and sailboats about 10%. An older form of boat, the kayak, is regaining popularity in Canada.