

CULTURAL TOURISM IN BELIZE: ANALYZING THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEGMENT



CENTRAL BANK
of BELIZE

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The opinions expressed are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Central Bank of Belize.

THE BELIZE TOURISM PACKAGE

The National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (NSTMP) has identified that Belize has strong potential to become a destination offering six main types of tourism experiences:

- Nature Based Tourism: Western Belize, Orange Walk
- Cultural tourism: Corozal, Orange Walk
- Sun & Beach Tourism- Placencia Peninsula, Stann Creek District, Ambergris Caye
- Cruise Tourism- Belize City
- Nautical Tourism- Riversdale Area, Ambergris Caye
- Leisure and Entertainment- Ambergris Caye, Corozal



THE BELIZE TOURISM PACKAGE

According to the NSTMP, Belize has four “unique tourism assets” with international recognition

attracting tourists by themselves

- Barrier Reef Reserve System,
- Blue Hole Marine Reserve,
- Caracol Mayan site
- Chiquibul Caves System.



MAIN QUESTIONS

- **How large is the demand for archaeological tourism and what elements of it attract tourists?**
- **Who are the tourists that visit archaeological sites and why?**
- **What specific travel behaviours make them distinct from other travellers?**
- **How can archaeological tourism be successfully developed and promoted?**

TOURISM STATISTICS

Average Spending per Tourist in 2017



\$304.73



\$133.28

Tourism activities accounted for **28%** of total employment.



Total Tourism Spending in 2017

\$839.6mn



In 2017 the direct contribution of tourism to foreign exchange earnings from exports of goods and services was **42.0%**

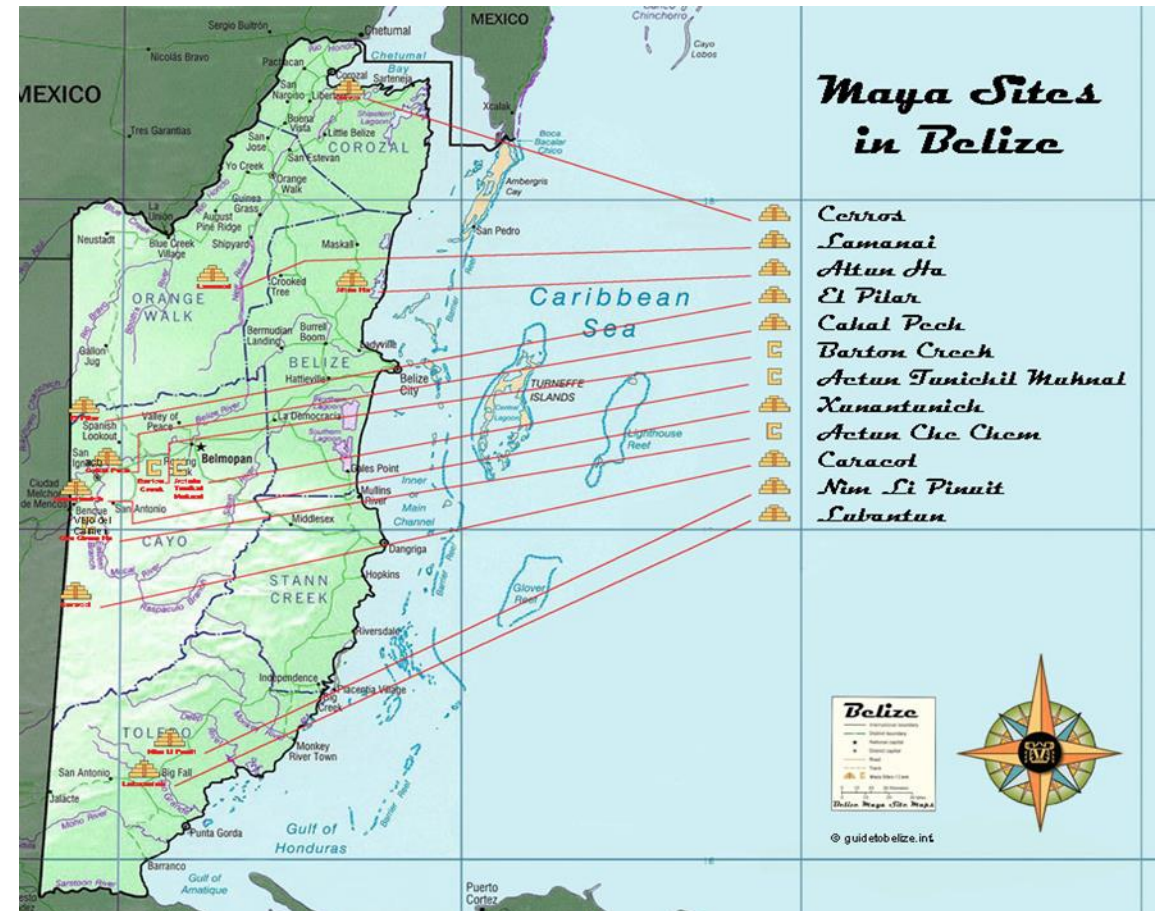


CULTURAL TOURISM IN BELIZE

Cultural heritage tourism (CHT)- travel concerned with experiencing cultural environments, including landscapes, the visual and performing arts, special lifestyles, values, traditions and events.

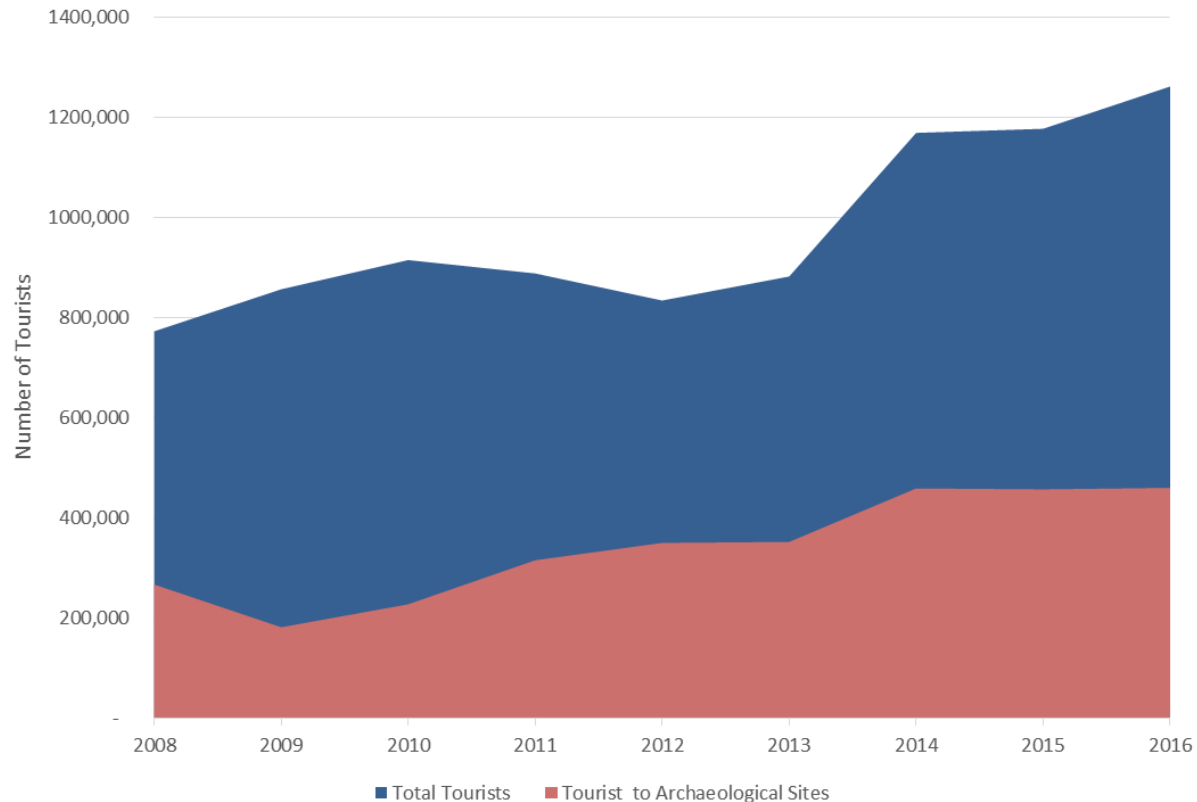
The NSTMP proposes that the national cultural tourism product include:

- Development of Mayan Archaeological Sites in a homogeneous manner
- Creation of a chain of enchanting villages with a Belizean appeal
- Development of rural tourism sites
- Development of traditional markets, festivals and themed programs



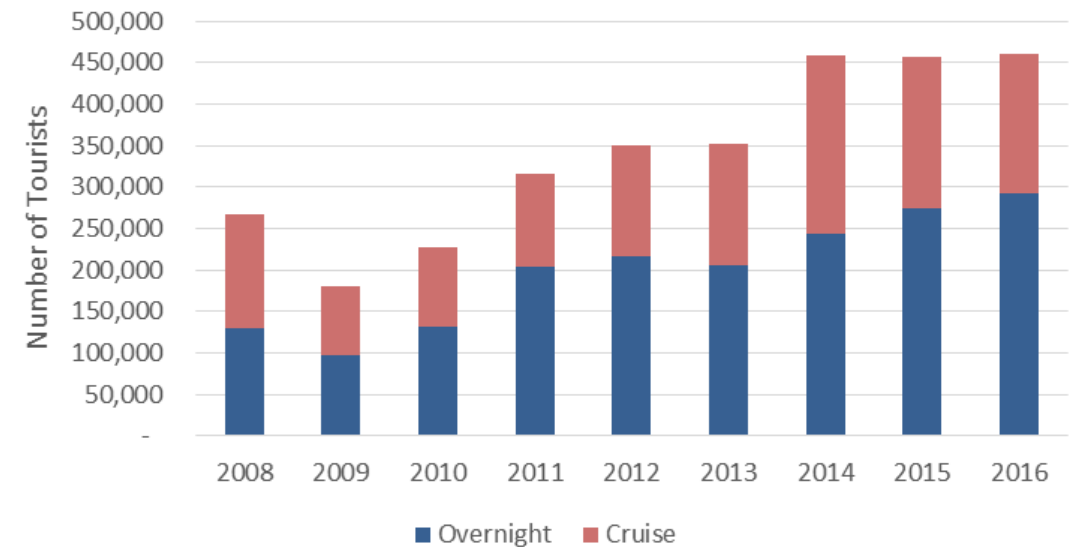
TOURIST ARRIVALS

Tourist Arrivals-Stayover and Cruise



From 2008 to 2016, on average approximately 35% of total tourists visited archaeological sites.

Visitors to Archaeological Sites



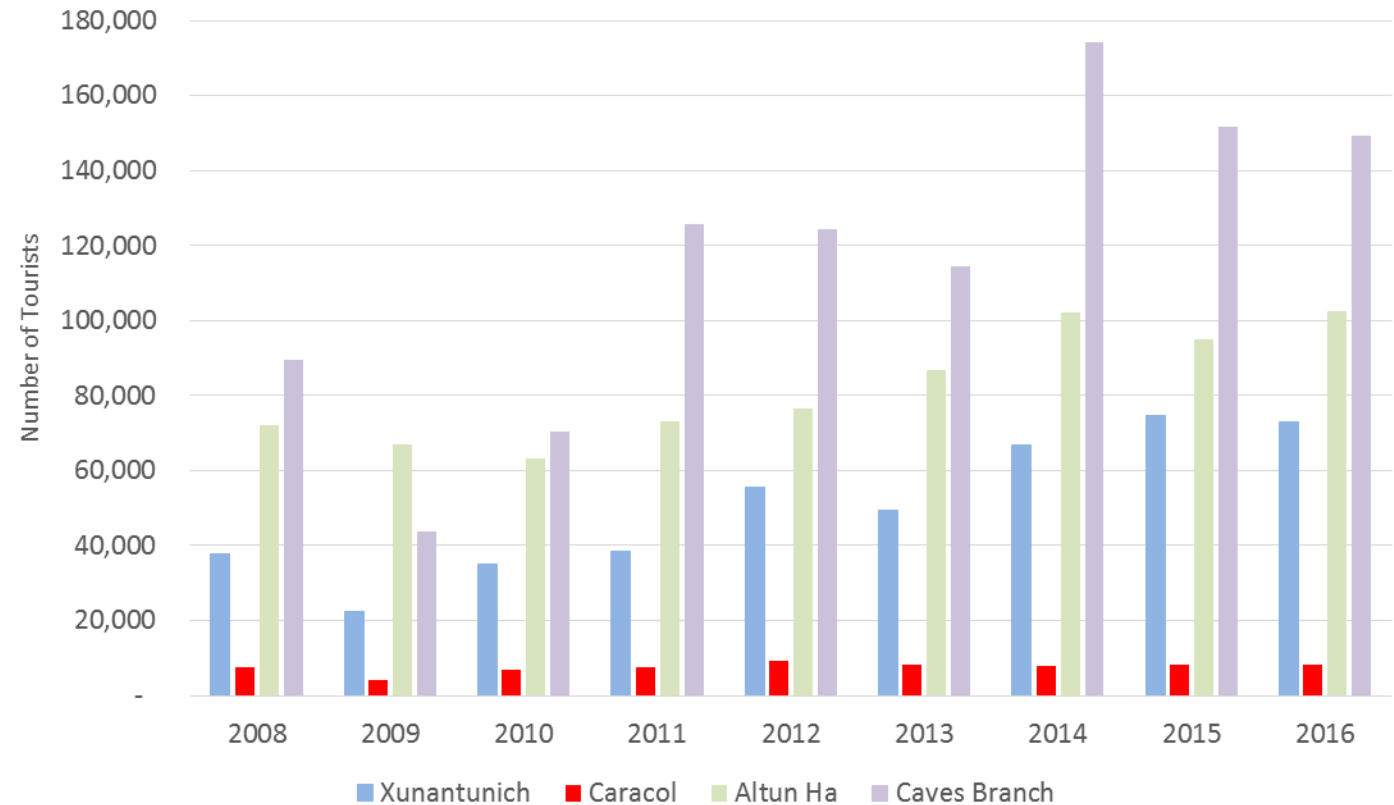
From 2008 to 2016 total visitor arrivals grew by approximately 72.4%.

MOST VISITED ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Top Seven Most Visited Sites:



Top Three Visited Sites and Caracol

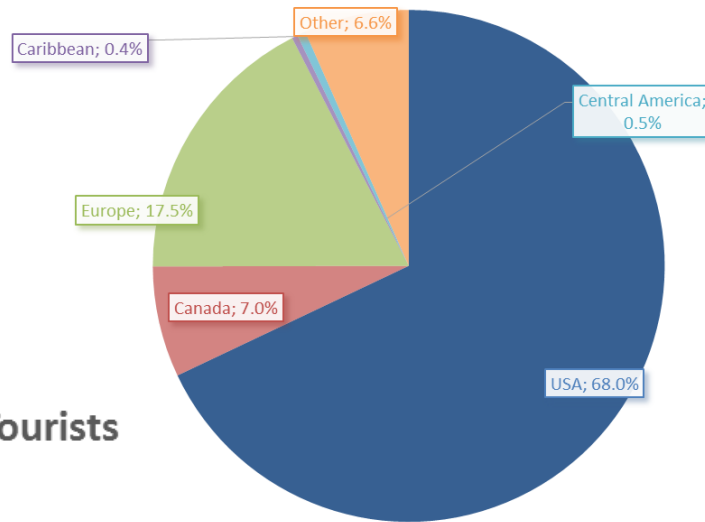


Visitors to Caracol accounted for only approximately 2.0% of archaeological tourists.

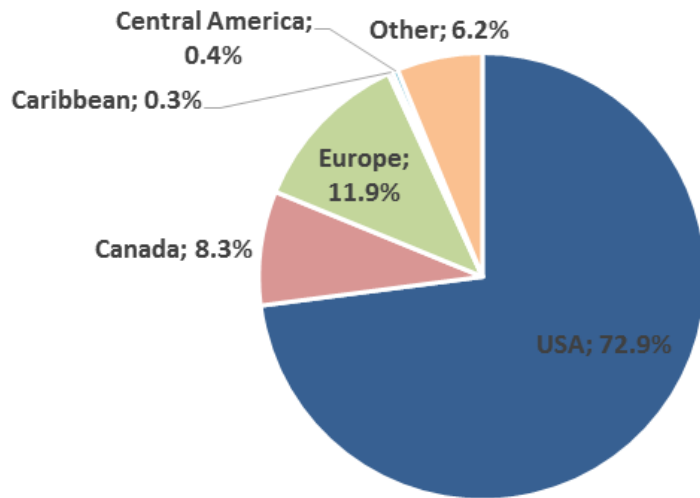
PROFILE OF TOURISTS VISITING ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

The Visitor Expenditure and Motivational Survey (VEMS) is a survey carried out annually by the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) on behalf of the Central Bank of Belize and The Belize Tourism Board.

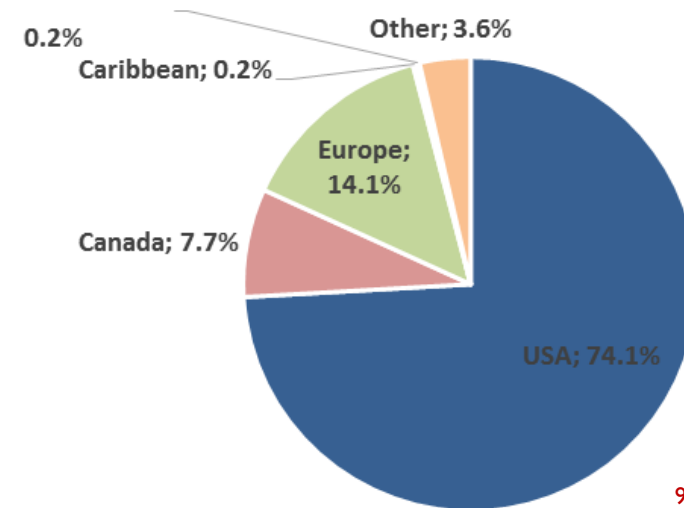
Origin of Archaeological Tourists



Origin of Sun and Sea Tourists

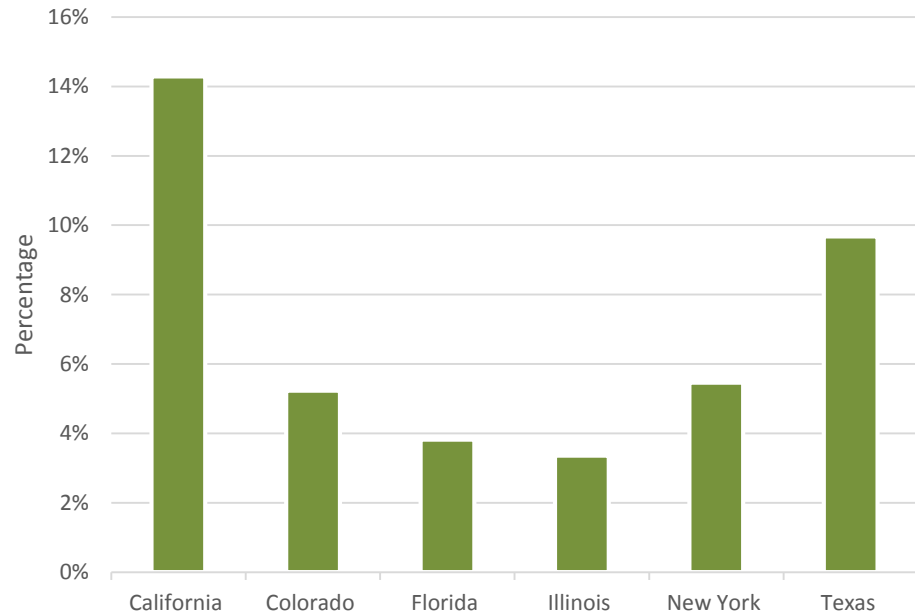


Origin of Jungle Tourists

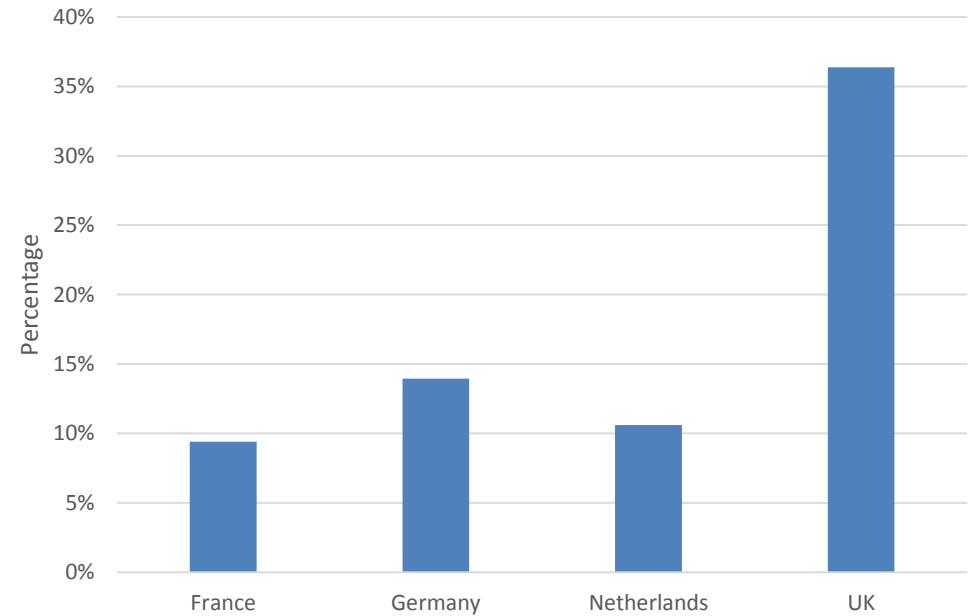


ORIGIN FROM WITHIN THE USA AND EUROPE

Origin of Archaeological Tourists



Origin of Archaeological Tourists



LENGTH OF STAY AND EXPENDITURE OF TOURISTS

Total Expenditure: **\$111.4mn**



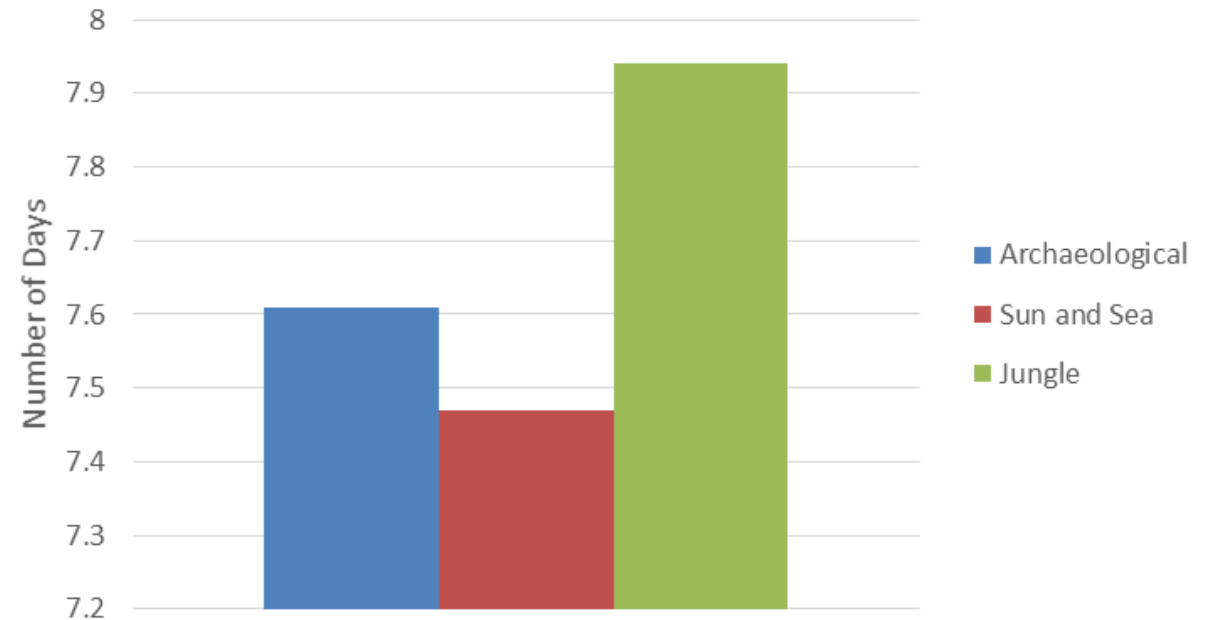
Stayover
\$89.2mn



Cruise
\$22.3mn

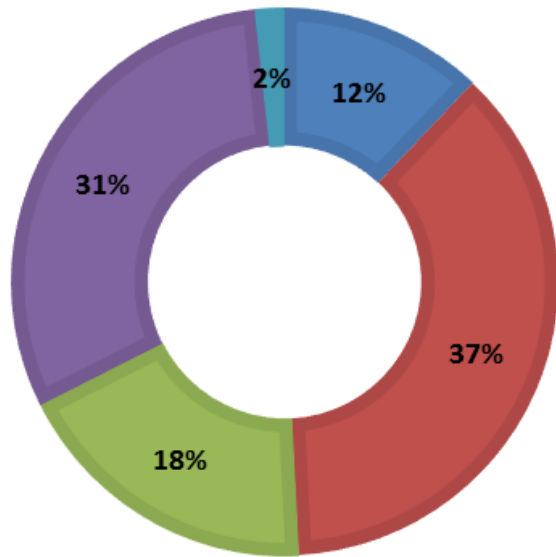
Of which: **\$5.2mn** was entrance fees.

Length of Stay

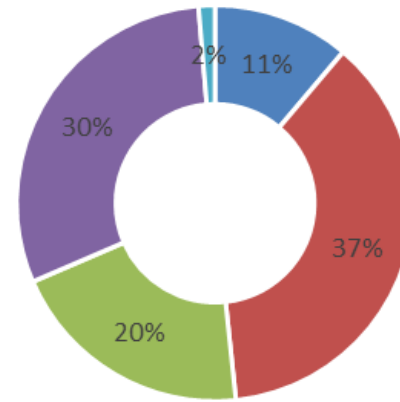


CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TRAVEL GROUP

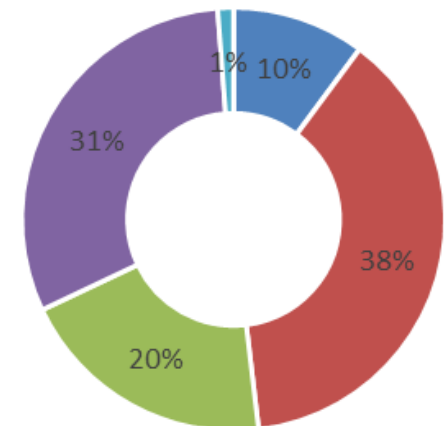
Travel Party - Archaeological Tourists



Travel Party-Sun and Sea



Travel Party-Jungle



■ Nobody ■ Spouse ■ Family ■ Group/Friends ■ Other

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE DECISION TO VISIT

Archaeological Tourists



Sun and Sea Tourists



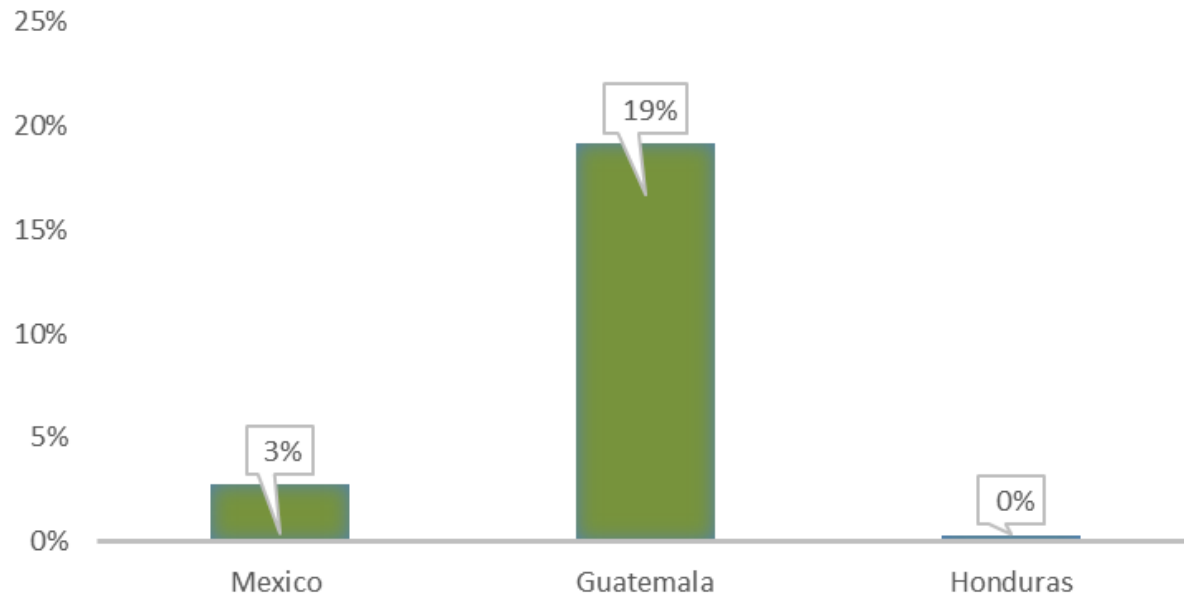
Jungle Tourists



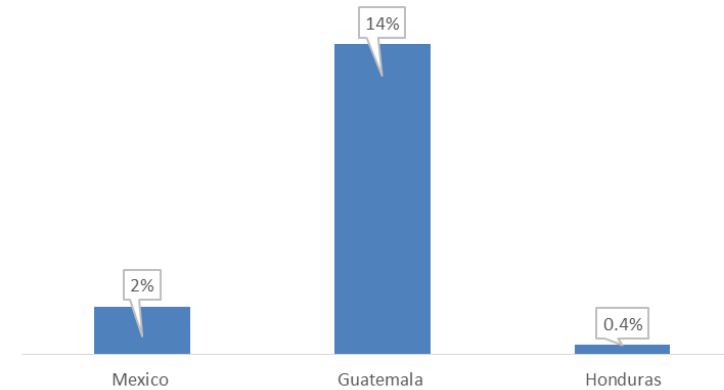
- Travel Agent
- Magazine
- Travel Guidebook
- Television
- Friends
- Internet
- Other

SPILLOVER TOURISM TO NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

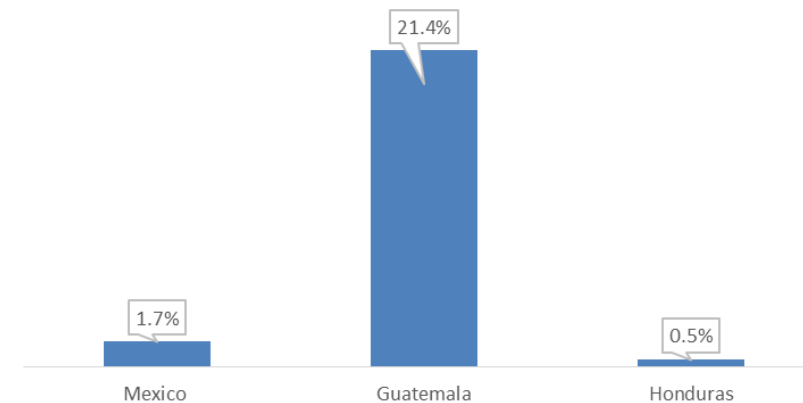
Archaeological Tourists



Sun and Sea Tourists



Jungle Tourists



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Expand marketing efforts beyond the US market, to attract more visitors from other regions in particular the EU and Canada.
- Improve air connectivity to facilitate the movement of tourists around the country.
- In the medium term boost improvements of the tourism infrastructure (visitors centre, picnic areas, parking area, restrooms, improve ticketing and control points, signage, improve security and enforcement, trail improvements, strategic excavation and conservation of additional areas on the archaeological monuments).
- Archaeological sites are located all over the country. However, most of the activity occurs in the Cayo and Belize Districts. Therefore, the sites in other districts need to be developed so that the economic spill over becomes wider.
- Development of road to Caracol has to be a priority in order to realize the full potential of this site as proposed in the NTSMP.



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THANK YOU