CONTEXT IS EVERYTHING

MUNICIPALITY OF KINCARDINE TOURISM RECOMMENDATIONS

Municipality of Kincardine
Recommendations from the 2026 Tourism Profile
October 2026

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VISITORS

WHO TO TARGET AND HOW TO REACH THEM

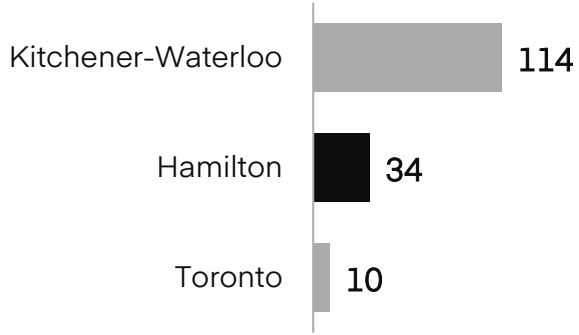
Invest in digital marketing to meet Ontarians where they plan trips, and grow the 40–200 km market where it under-performs.

Advertise in Hamilton first, then test Toronto

Kitchener-Waterloo sends more than three times as many visitors per resident as Hamilton, which is barely further away and similar in make-up.

Toronto is a highly competitive market but warrants consideration due to its size.

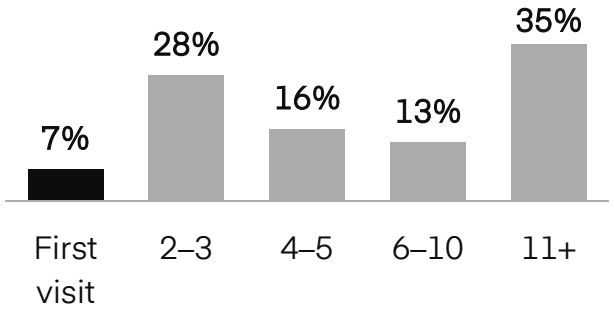
Kincardine visitors per 1,000 residents of origin



Win more of the visitors who already come back

93% of visitors are returning, suggesting a high customer lifetime value and justifying above-average acquisition costs to reach the right demographics through marketing: mid-market, high-income families west of the 400.

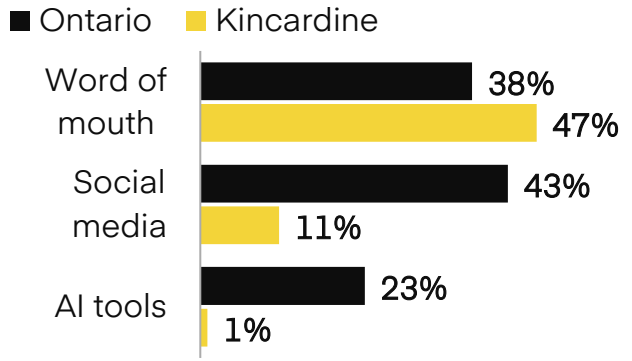
Visits in the past three years, all visitors, 2026



Stop being a best-kept secret

Most visitors hear about Kincardine by word of mouth. Ontarians plan on social media and AI tools, where it barely shows up. Build social with local businesses, set up the Town's sites for AI search, and run shoulder ads inside two months of the dates, when two in three visitors plan.

How visitors found Kincardine vs. where Ontarians look



Sources: 2026 Visitor Survey (CRG), unweighted · Environics geofence via RTO7, 2025 · Destination Ontario OTTM · Statistics Canada, Census 2021

VISITORS

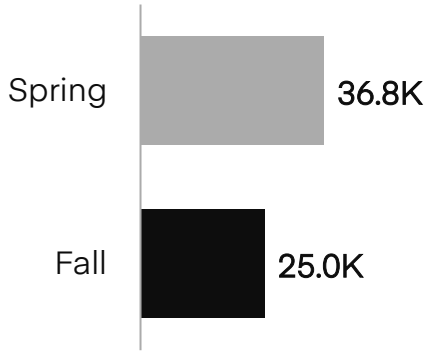
WHAT TO OFFER

Give people a reason to come in fall, and a reason to stay the night.

Make fall the season to grow

Fall averages a third fewer visits a month than spring. Kincardine's mild fall weather, creates an opportunity to extend the summer season much later than cottage country north of the 400.

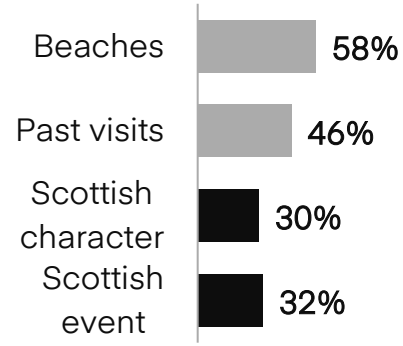
Visits a month, 40–200 km band, 2025



Option 1: a second Scottish event

The town's Scottish character is a top visitor draw. A fall music event, or a related idea like Oktoberfest, could build on it without taking away from the summer festival.

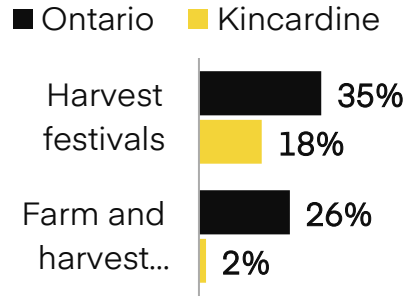
Why they came, and Scottish event attendance



Option 2: a harvest festival

Ontario's fall travellers plan harvest festivals and farm visits. Few visitors do either here, in strong farm country. Build one with local agri-business.

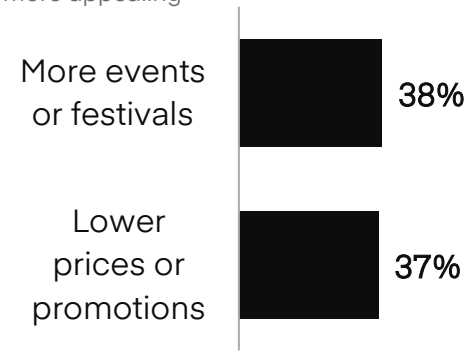
Ontario fall plans vs. visitors here



Package the visit

Shoulder visitors ask for events and lower prices. A two-night package with dinners, from local hotels and restaurants, answers both. More leisure guests fill rooms, and fuller rooms let rates firm up.

What would make a fall or winter visit more appealing



Sources: Environics geofence via RTO7, 2025 · 2026 Visitor Survey (CRG), unweighted · Destination Ontario OTTM

VISITORS

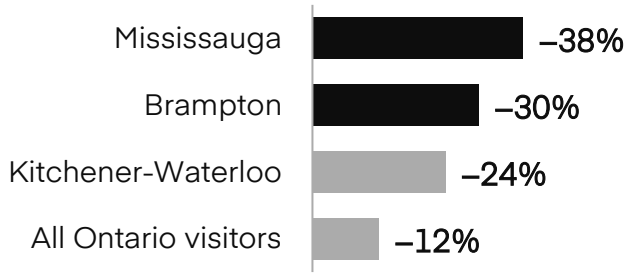
WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Fewer visitors are staying the night, and summer is already full for residents.

Overnight stays are slipping

Overnight nights fell from 686,000 in 2022 to 604,000 in 2025, 57% of it from visitors 40 to 200 km away, steepest from Mississauga and Brampton. Day trips held steady, so people still come but more go home the same day.

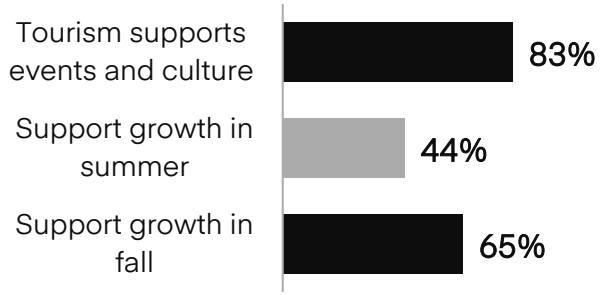
Drop in overnight nights, 2022 to 2025



What residents need to hear

Four in ten residents say life is worse in July and August, yet most credit tourism for local events. In communications, highlight that growth is aimed at spring and fall, and the benefits: more events, dining deals, and revenue supplementing property taxes.

Residents who agree, 2026



Ease summer parking

Parking is a top resident concern and the fix businesses ask for most. Consider paid summer parking at the beach lots for non-residents (subject to by-law), with a free resident pass, and overflow lots for downtown and large events. Visitors rate parking well, so a fee is unlikely to deter them.

84% of residents say tourism puts pressure on parking

59% of businesses say parking affects their customers' access

Research to commission

Hotel operator interviews and a focus group on the overnight drop · a survey of 40–200 km day visitors on why they don't stay over · a study of seasonal owners · visitor surveys at events over 5,000

Sources: Environics VisitorView and geofence via RTO7, 2022–2025 · 2026 Resident Survey (CRG), weighted · 2026 Business Survey (CRG), n=32

BUSINESS

WORKING WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES

Businesses want a longer season. Bring them, and the neighbouring towns, into building it.

Promote the supports that already exist

56%

know the tourism supports available (18 of 32)

Just over half of businesses know what the Municipality offers. Promote the programmes through the BIAs and the chamber of commerce, so the ones who need them most find them.

Build the off-season with them

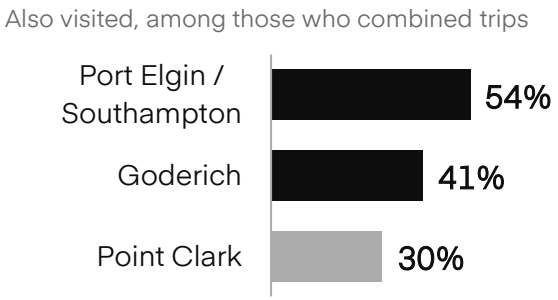
41%

find the off-season challenging (13 of 32)

And 85% want more shoulder and off-season programming. Work through the BIAs to bring them into the planning: fall packages, co-op advertising and tie-ins with events.

Share the bill with Port Elgin and Goderich

38% of visitors combine Kincardine with another town. Take this to the neighbouring BIAs and split shoulder-season marketing, since each town gains from the others' visitors.



Fund events on evidence

1. Ask every event over 5,000 people to run a visitor survey, and track the Town's cost for each.
2. Ask grant applicants for ticket prices, marketing spend and target market, then support shoulder-season events with the best return.
3. Support events with Town-funded digital advertising aimed at Hamilton and west of the 400, with the BIA and chamber bringing in hotels and restaurants.

Sources: 2026 Business Survey (CRG), 32 open-link responses, directional · 2026 Visitor Survey (CRG), unweighted