Stay-Over Tourism

Cruise and Stay-Over Arrivals 2023

SHOPPING / DINING / ACTIVITIES / NIGHTLIFE / FAMILY

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Introduction

The Department of Statistics (STAT) conducts the Tourism Exit Survey (TES) multiple times yearly, in which visitors are surveyed before their departure. The visitors are approached at our two main ports of entry, namely, at Princess Juliana International Airport to collect information from stay-over visitors and at Port St. Maarten to collect data from cruise visitors.

This survey assesses visitor trip characteristics, spending, and travel patterns. TES consists of two types of surveys - the expenditure and the satisfaction surveys. The expenditure survey mainly captures the average amount spent on various categories, such as accommodation, food, and transportation. The satisfaction survey captures the level of satisfaction for multiple products and services.

This report presents the results of the TES surveys conducted in 2023. The report is divided into two sections. Part one provides the findings for the stay-over visitors, and part two focus on cruise visitors. According to the World Trade Organization, "A visitor is defined as the activities of person(s) traveling to and staying in places outside of their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.[1]" Consequently, individuals residing in St. Maarten for one year or longer are excluded from the survey. Due to the geographical location and size of the island, all tourists are viewed as international visitors in this report.

TES is usually conducted four times yearly, with at least one survey conducted in each high and low season. The survey period lasts 14 days, starting on the third Sunday of the month until the last Saturday of that month. However, in 2022, data collection was only conducted during March, September, and December. Although the data observation periods were limited, they still represented the island's high and low tourist seasons.

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[1] https://www.unwto.org/glossary-tourism-terms

Methodology

1. Coverage

The Tourism Exit survey covered a sample of all tourists leaving St. Maarten on either cruise vessels or commercial planes. As this survey objective was to obtain the purpose and measure the economic activity of tourists within the island, it was crucial to define visitor consumption, determine the period of purchase that is measured, and distinguish between the goods and services purchased.

Visitor consumption refers to the overall spending made by a visitor during their trip and stay at a destination. This includes purchases made directly by the visitor or on their behalf, as well as expenditures on goods and services by various institutional units for the visitor. It also encompasses transfers in kind and other non-cash transactions that benefit the visitors. This broad definition incorporates the consumption of individual non-market services. In essence, visitor consumption encompasses all categories of goods and services consumed by visitors, as outlined by the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001. The survey in question collected data on both market and non-market service consumption, utilizing information from expenditure behaviors and satisfaction statistics.

2. Sampling Method

2.1 Design

A goal of this survey is cumulate data on cruise and stay-over visitors within St. Maarten's tourism market. The use of a simple random sampling was chosen as an appropriate procedure in gathering this data. Here, the selection of sample elements is made by using a list of random numbers. This means that each person in the population has an equal chance of being selected, and each possible combination has an equal chance of being selected (Moutinho, 2000). The data collected from this survey will offer some insight into the tourism market of St. Maarten. For this reason, some generalizations are made while keeping in mind that the results are assumption-based.

2.2 Measurement Scales and Surveys

This study employed a casual research design using several questions, which have been utilized by prior TES (Babu & Kumar, 2010). STAT together with partners from St. Maarten Tourism Bureau, and the Economic Department evaluated the questions which resulted in the enclosed questionnaire (see annex 1). The questionnaire was prepared in English but can eventually be expanded into more languages. It consists of four sections pertaining to their travel activities, satisfaction rating, travel expenditures, and general information. Prior to the first fieldwork, the questionnaire was tested during a pilot survey and revisions made where appropriate. For training purposes of the interviewers, a manual was prepared in which explanations were given on how to conduct the survey.
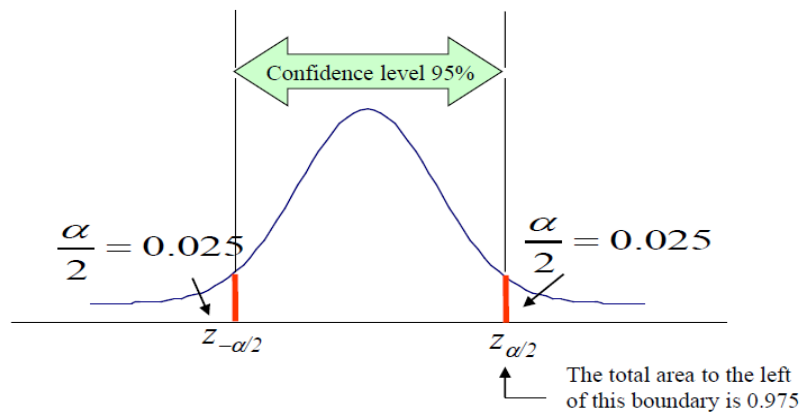
2.3 Sample Size

The equation below was used to determine the sample size for each surveying period equating to 1,066 per survey type, expenditure, and satisfaction, per period. A sample is a subset of the population elements that results from a sampling strategy. Sample size determination is an important and often difficult step in planning an empirical study. To determine the viability, the sample size of 95 percent confidence level is used. A confidence interval is of the form: estimate +/- margin of error. The margin of error shows how accurate we believe our guess is based on the variability of the estimate.

So, the margin of error gets smaller when:
- z gets smaller
- σ gets smaller
- n gets larger

Confidence Level	Tail area α	$z_{\alpha/2}$
90%	.05	1.645
95%	.025	1.960
99%	.005	2.576

Sample size formula: $n = \left(\dfrac{z_{\alpha/2} * \sigma}{E}\right)^2$; for the maximum error E of estimate where σ is known.

When σ is unknown we replace it with $p * q$ and population is known N

Then Sample Size formula**Invalid source specified.**:

$$n = \frac{X^2 * N * (pq)}{d^2 * (N - 1) + X^2 * (pq)}$$

$p = 0.5$
$q = 1 - p$
$d = degree\ of\ accuracy = 0.035$
$N = target\ population$

$X^2 = 3.84\ (.05\ level = 95\%\ confidence\ level)$ `Chi-square @ d.f.= 1`

$n = total\ sample$

2.4   Sampling Summary

In total, 9129 surveys were conducted in person. Due to the need for high response rates, face-to-face interviews were chosen as the preferred technique of interaction between the interviewers and respondents. A total of 9042 surveys were completed by stay-over visitors, of which 3976 provided an overview of spending habits whilst on the island and 5066 responded to their level of satisfaction. On the other hand, cruise visitors accounted for a total of 871 completed surveys, which consisted of 495 expenditure surveys and 376 satisfaction surveys.

Table 1-1: Samples Collected		
	Surveys collected	Percentage of expected responses
	n	%
Stay-over survey	9042	91%
Cruise survey	871	9%

The Stay-over survey consists of the high and low season visitors with the low season (May to November) having a total collection of 3,608 visitors and the high season (December to April) having 5,434 visitors.

The Cruise survey also consists of the high and low season visitors with the low season having a total collection of 482 visitors and high season having 389 visitors. Therefore, the cruise results are slightly skewed towards high season responses.

2.5   Sample Size and Margin of Error

The margin of error associated with the total sample and the specific sub-groups used (i.e., tourism season) in this report is summarized in the following. In terms of statistical accuracy, the actual margin of error for each market will vary slightly due to minor variations in the sample size.
Overall, a sample of this size has a sampling error of ±0.11 percent and ± 0.09 percent at a 95 percent confidence level for the Stay-Over and Cruise, respectively. However, the margins of error for the sampling periods are higher (**low season = ±1.34% and ±6.16%**; and **high season = ±1.62% and ±3.94%**).

Table 1-2: Sample Size and Margin of Error				
	Stay-Over		Cruise	
	Total		Total	
	Sample Size	Margin of Error [a]	Sample Size	Margin of Error [a]
Low Season (May-Nov)	5,375	±1.34	253	±6.16
High Season (Dec-Apr)	3,667	±1.62	618	±3.94
Full-Year (12 months)	9,042	±1.03	871	±3.32
Note: a) Margin of error indicates % of total number of responses used in each sub-group at the 95% confidence level.				

3. Data Collection

The surveys were designed to target specific groups of tourists visiting St. Maarten. Survey periods consisted of 1 week per survey type and started every third Sunday of the month during the first 3 quarters of the year; however, during the 4th quarter, the period was initiated a week earlier due to the Christmas holiday season. The interviews were held in the departure hall of PJIAE for departing air passengers and at the Port St. Maarten's cruise facilities (A.C. Wathey and Captain Hodge Wharf). Questionnaires were filled out, collected, and scanned by the interviewers for errors or non-responses. As previously mentioned, the interviewers received intensive training by staff members of the Department of Statistics ahead of the survey period, which encompassed locating, identifying, soliciting respondents, examining the respondents' responses for errors, and terminating the discussions. The interviewers were strongly advised to adhere to the training instructions and procedures prior to interviews.

3.1   Data Processing and Error Detection
During data processing and error detection:

- All questionnaires were reviewed manually to determine if they were complete and coherent.
- Data was captured, coded, and verified.
- Outliers were identified during analysis and removed or corrected.

3.2   SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The TES questionnaire gathers information on the travel habits of visitors which includes the following:

- Usual place of residence (country, province/state, city, postal code/zip code);
- Date of entry and exit (day, month, year);
- Entry and exit point;
- Mode of transportation during visit;
- Party size, characteristics, and composition;
- Primary reason for trip;
- Primary features that attracted visitors to the island;
- Primary destination of the trip and trip duration;
- Type of accommodations used;
- Locations visited during the trip;
- Activities participated in while on trip;
- Number of prior visits to the island;
- Travel expenditures;
- Satisfaction ratings of goods, services, and facilities/infrastructure.
- Incidence of likes/dislikes, and future behavioral intentions; and
- Demographic information.

Stay-Over Tourism
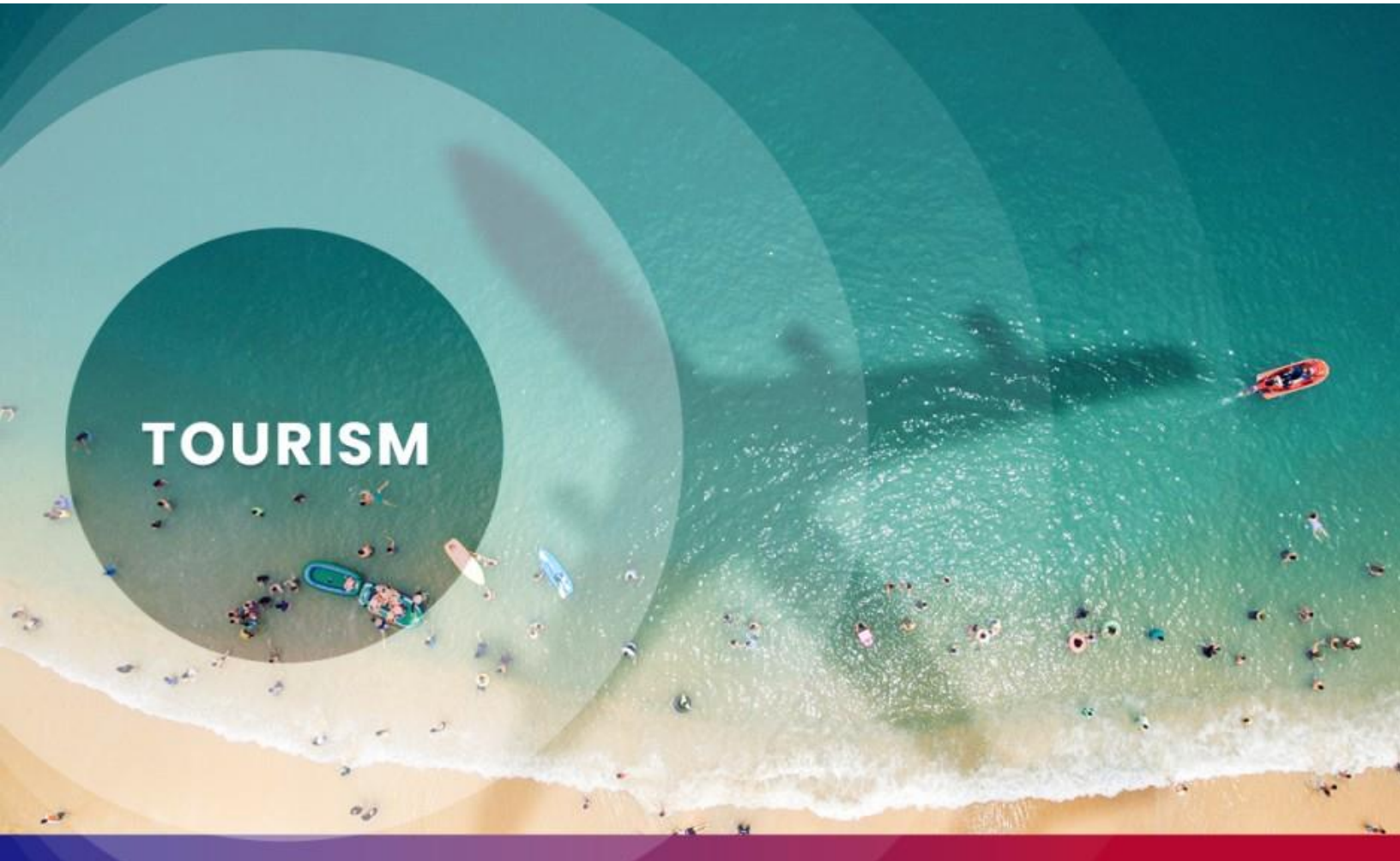
Part 1. Stay-over visitors

This section focuses on the stay-over visitors, covering St. Maarten's overall stay-over arrivals. In addition, this section presents the results of the Expenditure and Satisfaction surveys conducted at Princess Juliana International Airport in 2023.

Stay-over arrivals 2023

The graph below shows the expected seasonal influx of visitors to the island (see Figure 1). In 2023, stay-over arrivals increased from 372,808 in the previous year to 395,053 in 2023, an increase of 6%. This is 24% above the 2019 pre-covid levels. (maybe you should also mention why Residents are shown in the graph when the survey is aimed at tourists)
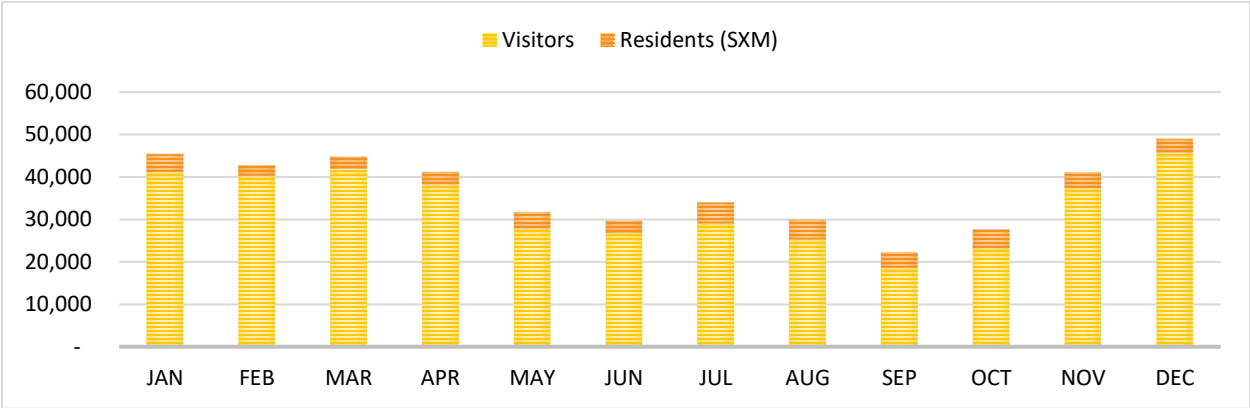
Stay Over Arrivals Figure 1

The comparison between the 2022 and 2023 arrivals by region reveals significant changes in all areas (see Table 1). Regarding arrivals by region, visitors from North America and Europe remained the most prominent groups, accounting for 67% and 24% respectively. Moreover, visitors from the Caribbean, South America, and the rest of the world accounted for 9% of the remaining stay-over arrivals.

Table 1. stay-over arrivals by region					
	2022	**2023**	**% Of 2022 overall arrivals**	**% Of 2023 overall arrivals**	**% Change 2023/2022**
North America	247,604	263,226	66%	67%	6%
Caribbean	9,593	13,084	3%	3%	36%
Europe	97,510	95,716	26%	24%	-2%
South America	4,298	5,959	1%	2%	39%
Rest of the World	13,803	17,068	4%	4%	24%
Total	**372,808**	**395,053**	**100%**	**100%**	**6%**

Results of 2023 Stay-over Tourism Exit Survey

1. Visitor Profile

Number of visits

Slightly less one-half of the respondents in 2023 were returning visitors. First-time visitors accounted for 58% of the sample, compared to 42% of returning visitors. Of those returning, 19% indicated that their first visit to the island was via a cruise (Table 2). Likewise, 46% of returnees indicated they had visited the island one to three times, whereas 54% indicated that they had been there four or more times before (see Figure 2).

Table 2. First visit to the island - 2023		
	First-time visit to the island	**The first visit was via cruise**
Yes	58%	8%
No	42%	92%

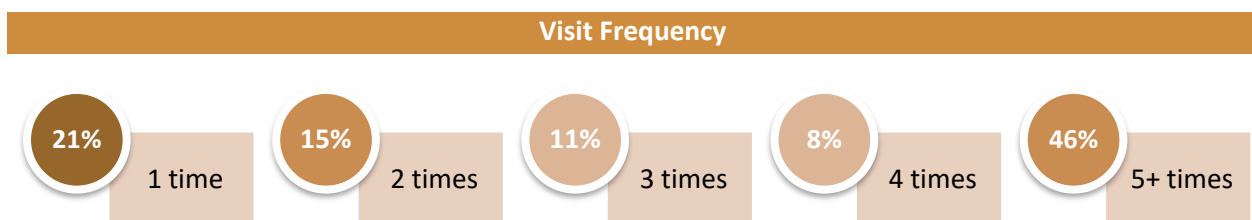| Visit Frequency				
21%	15%	11%	8%	46%
1 time	2 times	3 times	4 times	5+ times

Figure 2. Number of visits to the island.

Age and gender

Approximately 43% of the respondents were male, and 57% were female. The most significant percentage of respondents were aged 55 – 64, 45 – 54 followed by ages. Ages 25 – 34 and 65+ years were the third and fourth highest groups. Ages 18 - 24 years, and under 18 years completed the listing (see Table 3).

Table 3. Age and gender			
	Male	**Female**	**Total**
Under 18 years	5%	4%	4%
18 - 24 years	4%	8%	7%
25 - 34 years	15%	17%	16%
35 - 44 years	17%	18%	18%
45 - 54 years	19%	19%	19%
55 - 64 years	23%	20%	21%
65 + years	17%	14%	15%
% of gender response	43%	57%	100%
Average Age	47	44	45

Travel party size and Travel party composition

The average travel party size was two persons. This visitor size was consistent throughout visitors from various regions. The travel party composition indicates that 42% spouse/partner, 17% with friends, 13% with their family, and 14% with both family and friends, 9% of respondents traveled alone, and the remaining 1% of respondents traveled with business associates (see Table 5).

Table 4. Average travel party size by region/country		
	persons	%
Average travel party size	**2**	**100%**
United States	2	77%
Canada	2	5%
Caribbean	2	3%
Europe	2	6%
Central America	2	0%
South America	2	1%
Other	2	1%
Not reported	1	9%

Table 5. Travel party composition	
Alone, no travel companion	9%
You & your spouse/partner	42%
Family only	13%
Friends only	17%
Family & Friends	14%
Business associates	1%
Other	-
Not reported	4%
Total	**100%**

Moreover, observing the relationship between travel party arrangements and region reveals that visitors from North America, Europe, and Latin America traveled with their spouse or partner. Whereas Caribbean visitors often traveled alone (see Table 6).

Table 6. Travel party composition by region				
	North America	Caribbean	Europe	Latin America
Alone, no travel companion	7%	43%	28%	22%
You & your spouse/partner	42%	22%	31%	31%
Family only	15%	8%	8%	11%
Friends only	18%	7%	12%	17%
Family & Friends	15%	7%	10%	13%
Business associates	1%	6%	5%	4%
Other	-	2%	1%	-
Not reported	3%	5%	4%	3%
	100%	100%	100%	100%

Purpose of visit

Figure 3. Purpose of visit
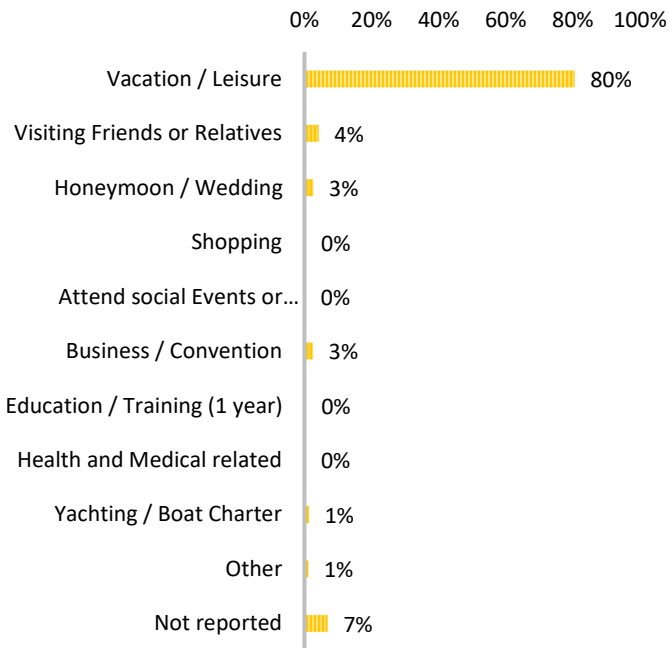
The main reason for traveling to the island was vacation/leisure at 80%. The second largest reason chosen were Visiting friends (4%), Honeymoon / Weddings (3%), and attending business / conventions (3%). Additionally, 1% of the respondents were on the island for yachting/boating or other endeavors (see Figure 3).

Length of stay

Respondents stayed, on average, 7 nights on the island. European visitors had the most prolonged stay, amounting to 13 nights. They were followed by Canadians, averaging 9 nights. The United States and the Caribbean were next in line with 7 nights (see Table 7).

Table 7. Average length of stay in nights (per region)	
	Average stay in nights
United States	7
Canada	9
Caribbean	7
Europe	13
Not reported	8
Total Average	7

Country/region

Figure 4 displays the country/region of permanent residence of the visitors surveyed. The majority of the respondents resided in the United States (78%). The second largest group of respondents resided in Europe at 6%, which was closely followed by Canadian visitors. the Caribbean and Latin America accounted for 3% and 1%, respectively.

Most respondents from the United States (78%) were from the top five States ranked in the following order New York, Florida, New Jersey, Georgia, and Texas. The top five respondents from the Caribbean (3%) were from Curacao, Anguilla, Saint-Barthélemy, Saba, Trinidad and Tobago. The top five European (6%) respondents were from France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Italy.
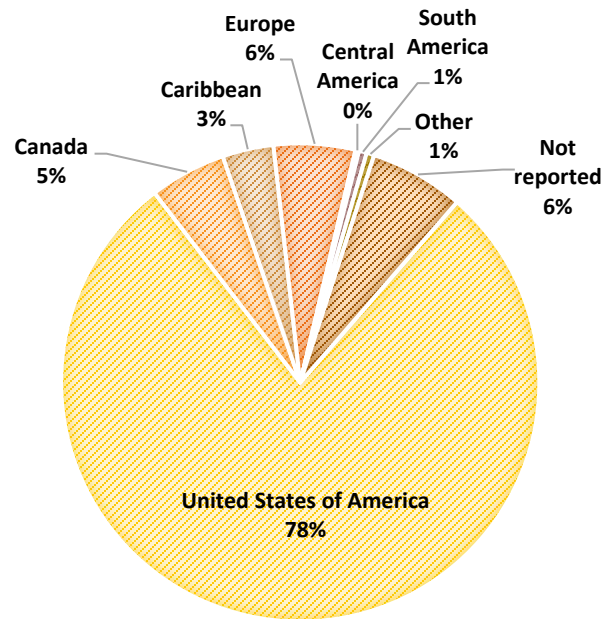
Figure 4. Country/region of permanent residence.

Income

Majority of the respondents surveyed in 2023 had a gross annual household income of over $125,000 (37%). Of the remaining groups, 12% fell into the category of $100,001 - $125,000, 14% grossed between $75,001 - $100,000, 9% grossed $50,001 - $75,000, 6% grossed $25,000 - $50,000, and respondents who had an income of less than $25,000 were 22% of the total (see Table 8).

Table 8. Household income	
Less than $25,000	22%
$25,000 - $50,000	6%
$50,001 - $75,000	9%
$75,001 - $100,000	14%
$100,001 - $125,000	12%
$125,001 and over	37%
Total	**100%**

2. Activities

Figure 5 shows the responses to a multiple selection question inquiring of respondents' activities during their stay on the island. More than one-half of the respondents dined (89%), visited the beaches (87%), shopped (62%), and visited Philipsburg (50%). Of the four districts noticeably advertised to visitors, Philipsburg was the most visited, followed by Marigot, Orient Bay, and Grand Case. Casino / Night life activities, Water sports, island hopping, visiting historical sites, and hiking were also highly attended activities during their stay.
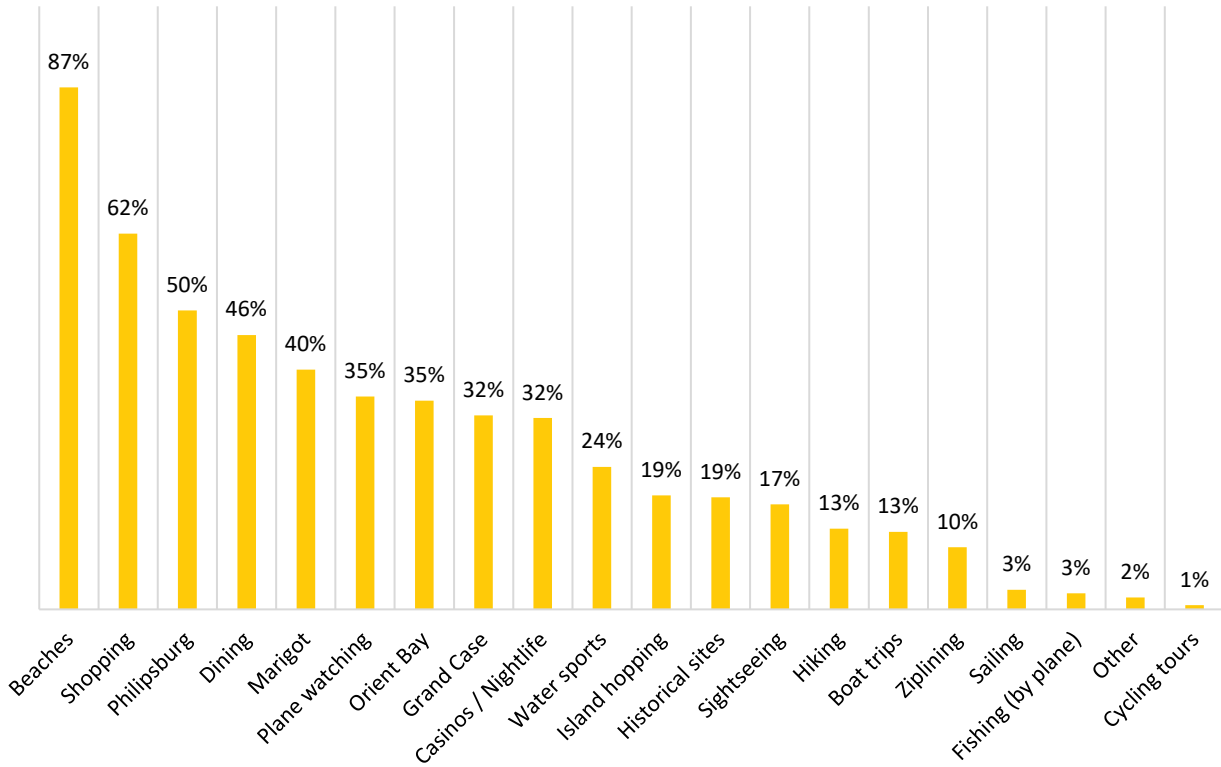
Figure 5. Activity participation.

Figure 6 shows where respondents stayed during their stay on the island. Most respondents stayed at hotels, while the second largest group stayed in timeshares. Additionally, 11% in the alternative lodgings industry (Airbnb, VRBO, HomeAway, etc.), 9% in a condo/villa, 5% with friends/relatives, and 6% divided among the remaining accommodation types.
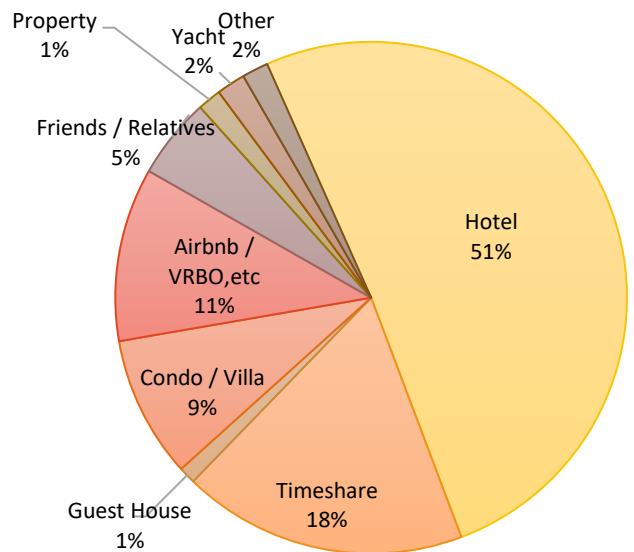

Figure 6. Accommodation Type.

3. Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to rate specific aspects of the island, with '1' being 'Very poor' and '5' being 'Excellent.' For the ratings of the entire island, the top scores were considered above 2.5. The aspects rated above 2.5, from highest to lowest were Immigration services, the island's cleanliness, airport facilities, airlines, communication services, and sightseeing. The remaining aspects fell below an average score. (see Figures 7 and 8).
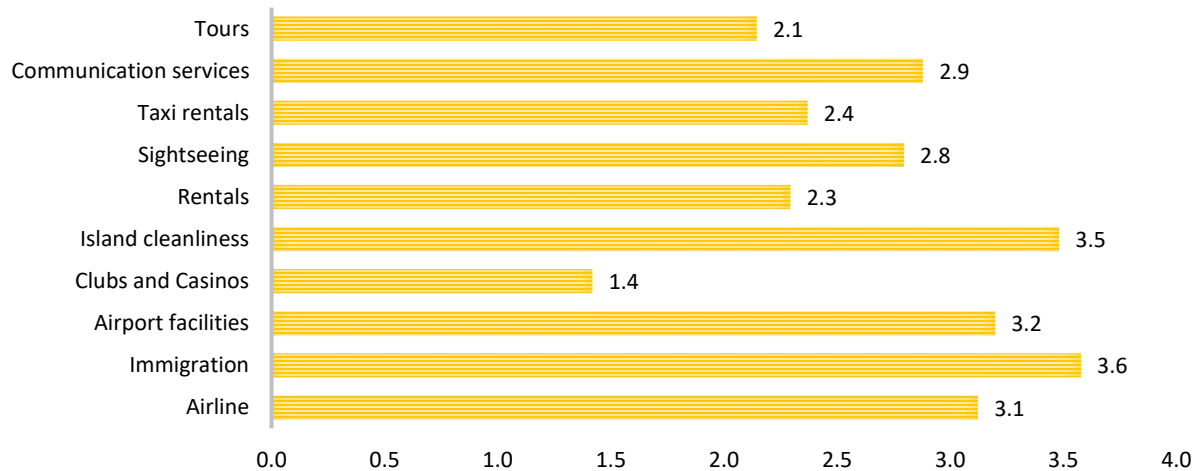

Figure 7. Island-wide satisfaction ratings

In all the categories shown in figure 8, the Dutch side (Dutch) scored higher than the French side (French) on average. The Dutch obtained the highest scores in the categories of beaches and friendliness. Whereas, with the French, the highest average scores were beaches and dining. The aspect with the most significant average score difference between both sides of the island was accommodations, with a difference of 1.9, favoring the Dutch side.
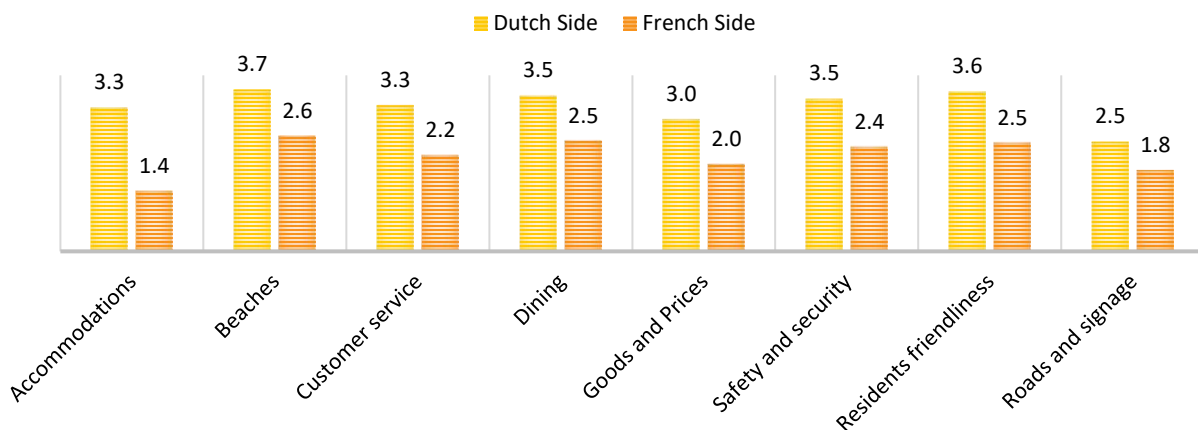

Figure 8. Comparison of satisfaction ratings

The survey also captured to what extent visitors' expectations were met during their visit to the island. Over 92% of respondents' expectations were positively satisfied – 59% indicated their expectations were met, and 33% indicated that their experience exceeded their expectations. 4% of respondents' experience on the island was below their expectations, while 4% were non-responses (see Figure 9).

33%	Above expectations	59%	Met expectations	4%	Below expectations	4%	Not reported
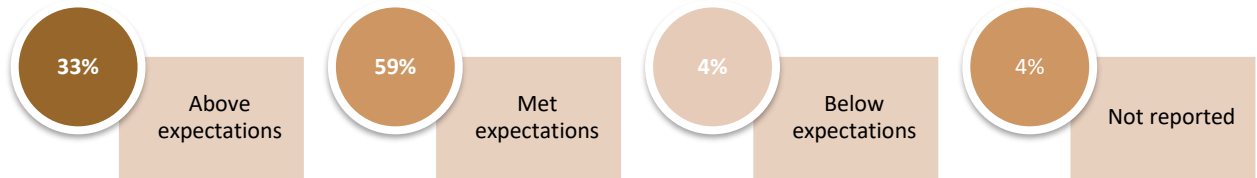
Figure 9. Visitor expectations

Many respondents were quite optimistic when asked if they would "return or recommend" the island to others. approximately 60% of respondents indicated that they would "definitely return to the island and also definitely recommend" the island to others. Slightly above 80% indicated positive attitudes towards the island. In contrast, 3% has negative intentions or attitudes towards retuning to or recommending St. Maarten (Figures 10 & 11).

60%	Definitely	22%	Probably	9%	Unsure	2%	Probably not	1%	Definitely not	5%	Not reported

Figure 10. Intentions of return.

61%	Definitely	23%	Probably	6%	Unsure	2%	Probably not	1%	Definitely not	7%	Not reported

Figure 11. Recommend to others.

4. Expenditure

The Average Daily Expenditure (ADE) amongst visitors surveyed in 2023 was $149.00 per person per day (see Figure 12).

Figure 13 shows the average daily expenditure by region. Visitors from North America had the largest ADE at $161.65 per person (USA and Canada, $161.67 and $129.31, respectively), followed by visitors from the Caribbean ($137.15), Other ($123.61), and Europe ($94.04). The lowest ADE was Latin America visitors, with $52.77 per person daily.
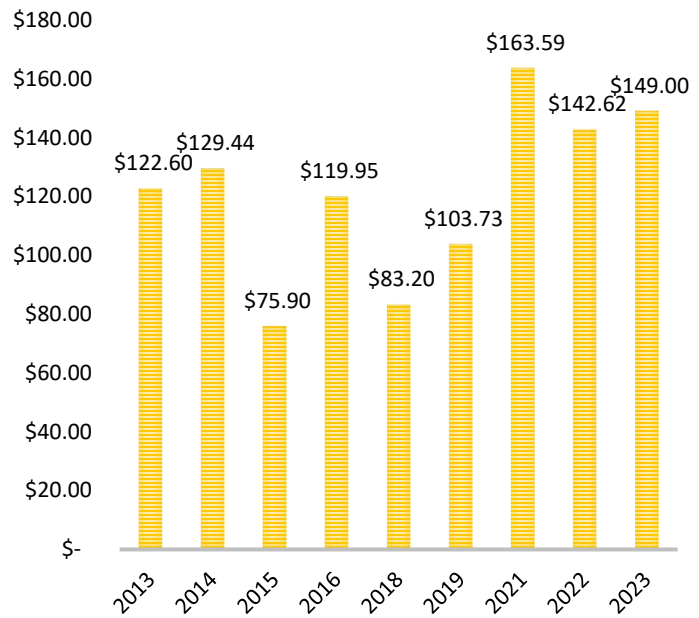

Figure 12. Average daily expenditure.
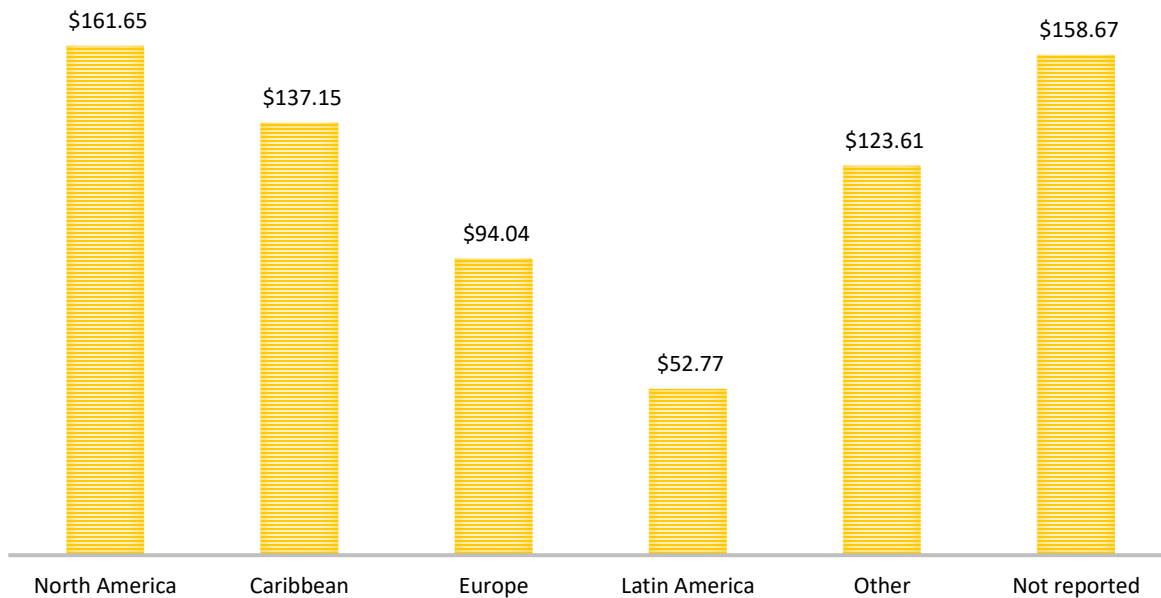
Figure 13. Average daily expenditure by region

Further analysis of the average daily expenditure, when matched by household, showed that respondents with a yearly household income of over $125,001 spent over $169.88 per day. Moreover, the average daily expenditures of respondents with the following annual household incomes were: 100,001 - $125,000 spent $146.18, $75,001 - $100,000 spent $143.76, $50,001 - $75,000 spent $146.66, $25,000 - $50,000 spent $92.49, and respondents who had an income of less than $25,000 spent $138.34.

Figure 14. Average daily expenditure by Gross household income

The most significant percentage of visitors' budget was spent on accommodations, accounting for 61% of total expenditures. Food and beverages consumed outside the visitor's accommodation (restaurants) accounted for the second highest expenditure, 11% (see Table 9).

Table 9. Percentage of daily expenditure per category								
	United States of America	Canada	Caribbean	Europe	Latin America	Other	Not reported	Total
*Accommodations	63%	57%	40%	52%	45%	41%	47%	61%
Room	29%	28%	31%	24%	40%	31%	31%	29%
Food/Beverages	8%	7%	6%	8%	6%	8%	5%	8%
Groceries	4%	6%	10%	7%	12%	9%	6%	5%
Restaurants	10%	12%	11%	15%	17%	15%	9%	11%
Night club	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%
Casinos	1%	1%	3%	2%	2%	1%	6%	2%
Land Attractions	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Water Attractions	2%	1%	0%	1%	3%	0%	1%	2%
Sports	1%	2%	0%	1%	0%	14%	1%	1%
Special events	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Adult entertainment	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Taxi	2%	2%	1%	2%	5%	1%	3%	2%
Car rental	5%	5%	8%	9%	3%	12%	4%	5%
Public bus	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Scooters / Atvs / etc.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Boat Charters	1%	2%	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Clothing	2%	2%	11%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Jewelry	3%	2%	2%	0%	4%	0%	7%	2%
Electronics	0%	0%	2%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Alcohol	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%
Tobacco	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Other goods	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%	5%	1%
Other services	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	5%	1%

***Accommodations is a composite of Room and Food/Beverages**

Cruise Tourism

Part 2: Cruise visitors

Cruise arrivals 2023

Displayed in figure 15 are the total number of cruise passengers and cruise vessels in absolute numbers. In 2014, St. Maarten reached its peak cruise visitor arrivals as 2,001,996 persons arrived at its port via 692 cruise vessels. However, that number steadily declined, which was accelerated in 2017 due to hurricane Irma. This was followed by a relief rally in 2018 and 2019 with cruise arrivals increasing but was cut short in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic where no cruise vessels were visiting the island. Figures 15 and 16 show decreases in both cruise passenger numbers and vessel arrivals during 2020, a flat year in 2021, and a steep, and a sharp recovery in 2022 onwards. In 2022, passenger arrivals increased by 263% and a 119% increase in cruise vessel visits from 2021 lows (see Figures 16 & 17).
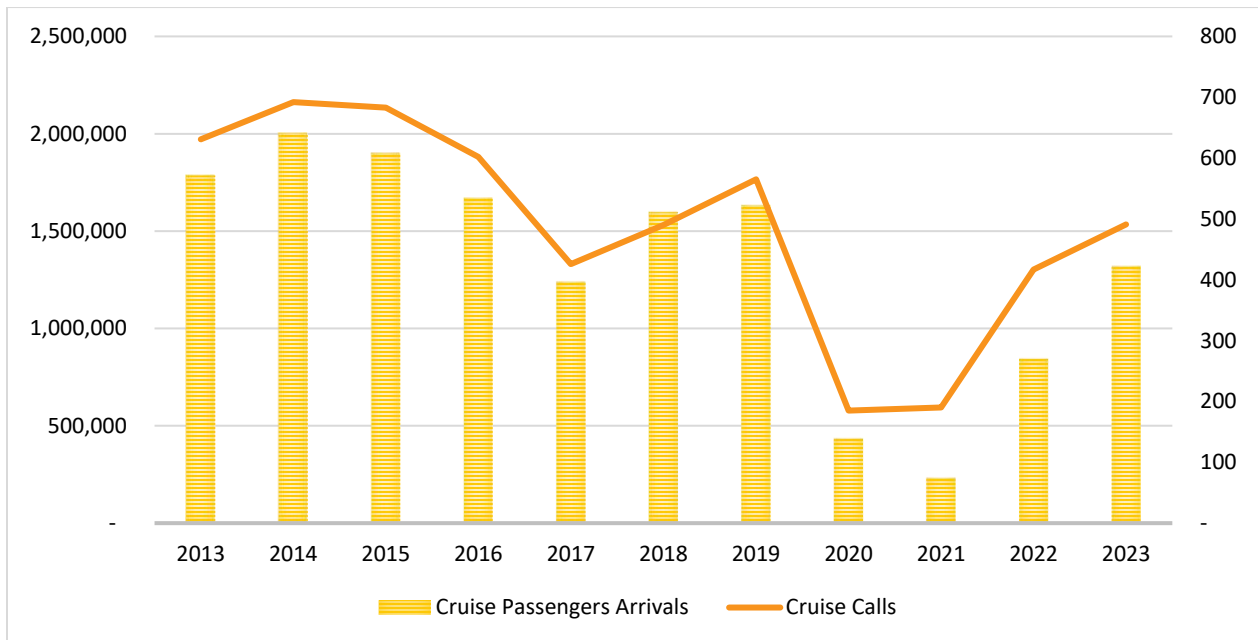
Figure 15. Total number of cruise passengers (yearly).
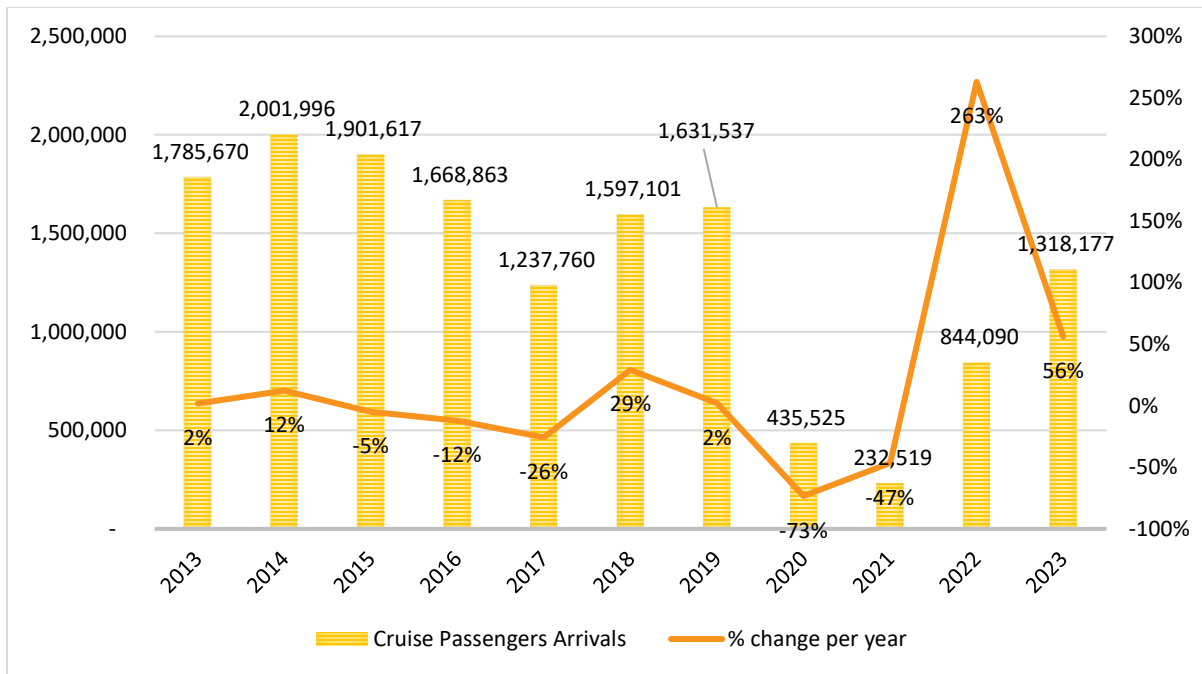
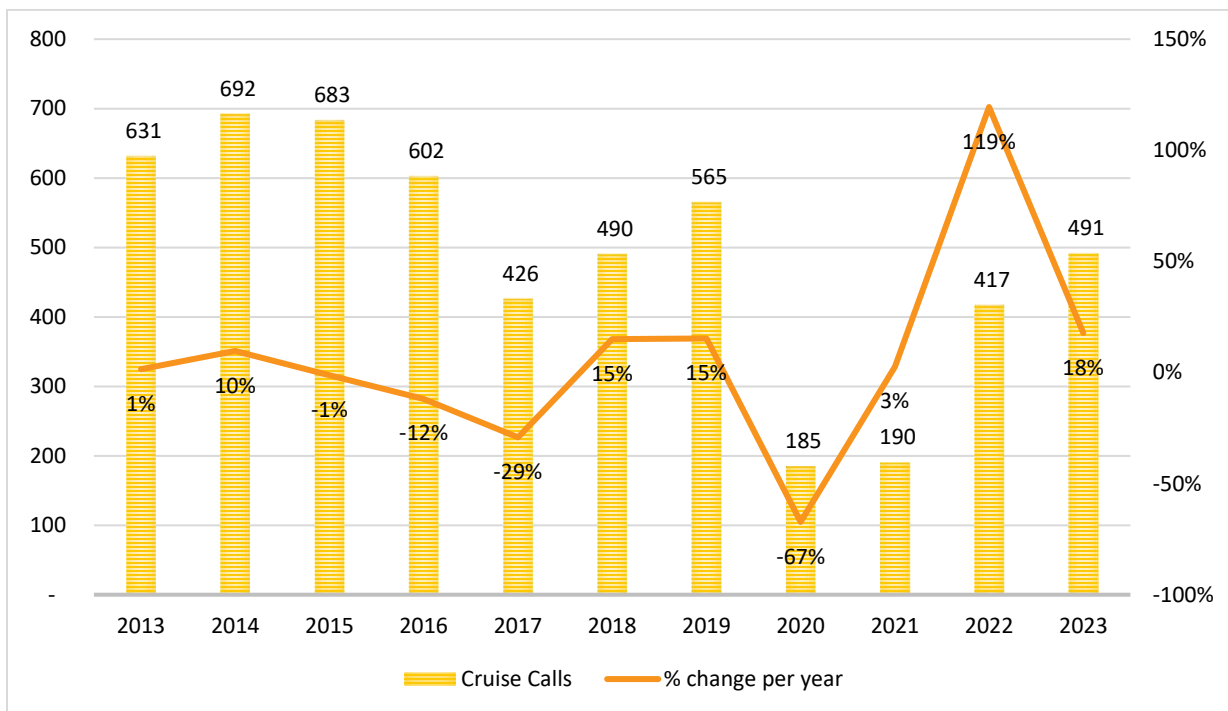**Figure 16. Total number of cruise passengers and percentage of change.**

**Figure 17. Total number of cruise vessels and percentage of change.**

Results 2023 Tourism Exit Surveys

1. Visitor's profile

Number of visits

Table 10 displays the percentage of cruise passengers who visited St. Maarten for the first time. Most cruise respondents have been to the island previously via cruise or stay-over and have returned anywhere between 2 to 5 times (see Figure 18).

Table 10. First visit to the island - 2023	
First-time visit to the island	
Yes	54%
No	46%
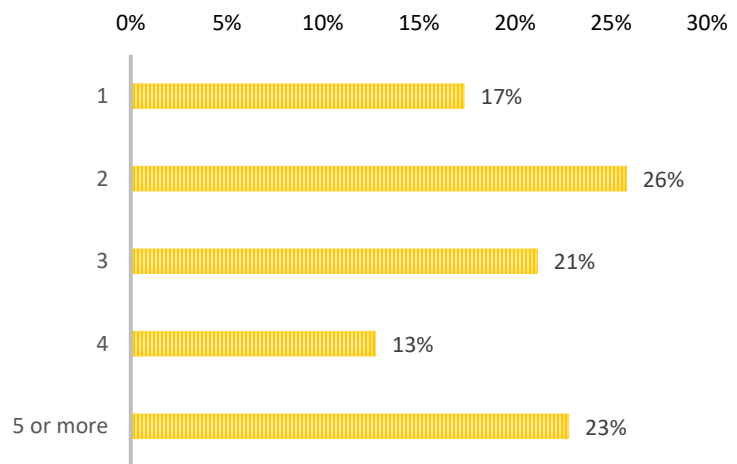
Figure 18. Number of returns.

Age and gender

Table 11 indicates the age and gender of the sampled cruise visitors. Seemingly many cruise visitors, approximately 55%, are 55+. Seniors ages 65+ have the largest percentage representation amongst cruise visitors for both genders. The remaining age groups are similar in representation, except for persons under 18.

| Table 11. Age and Gender	Male	Female	Total
Under 18	7%	8%	7%
18 - 24	2%	4%	3%
25 - 34	8%	6%	7%
35 - 44	8%	11%	9%
45 - 54	16%	17%	17%
55 - 64	25%	26%	25%
65 +	35%	29%	31%
% of gender response	**42%**	**58%**	**100%**
Average Age	**52**	**50**	**51**

Travel Party Size

The average travel party size was two persons. Most regions had the same average visitor travel party size, with the visitors from the Caribbean and Latin America having a smaller travel party size (see Table 12).

Table 12. Travel party size

United States	2
Canada	2
Caribbean	1
Europe	2
Latin America	1
Other	1
Not reported	2
Grand Total	**2**

Travel party composition

Most cruisers traveled as intimate groups of spouses/partners (44%), followed by family & friends and friends only (21%) . Therefore, the island may be seen as a couple's getaway or mini honeymoon. Figure 19 displays the travel party categories and the percentage of cruise visitors in each group.
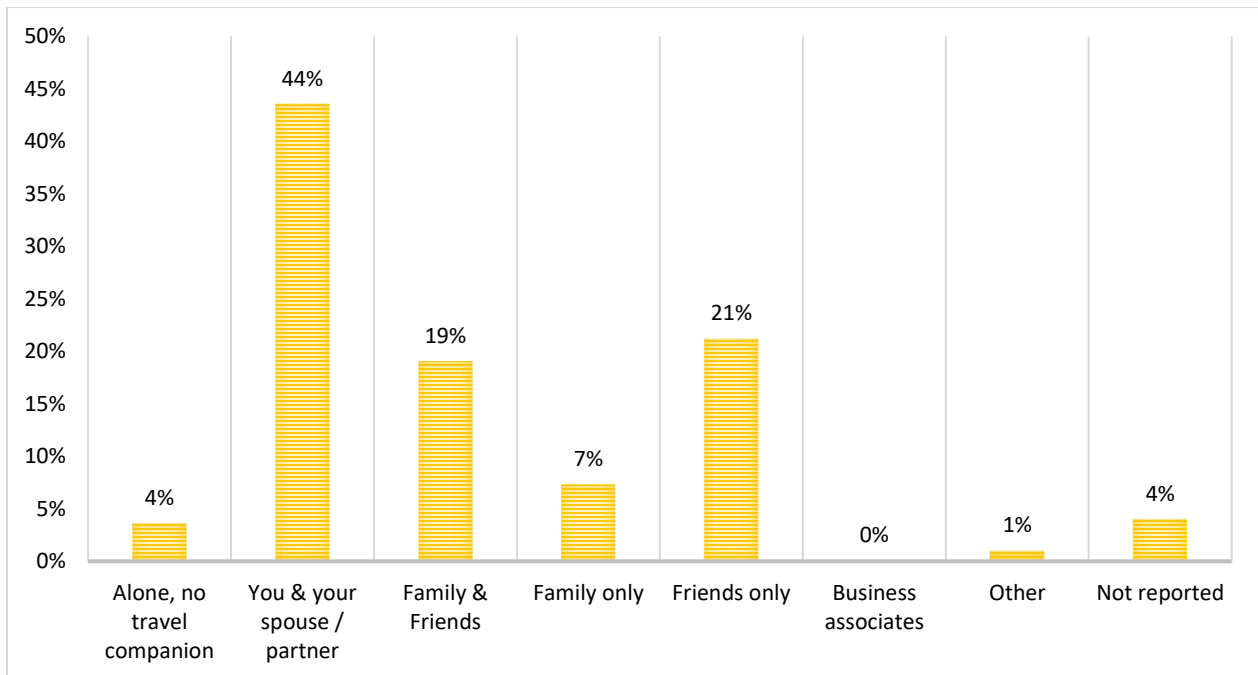
Figure 19. Travel group composition.

Country/Region

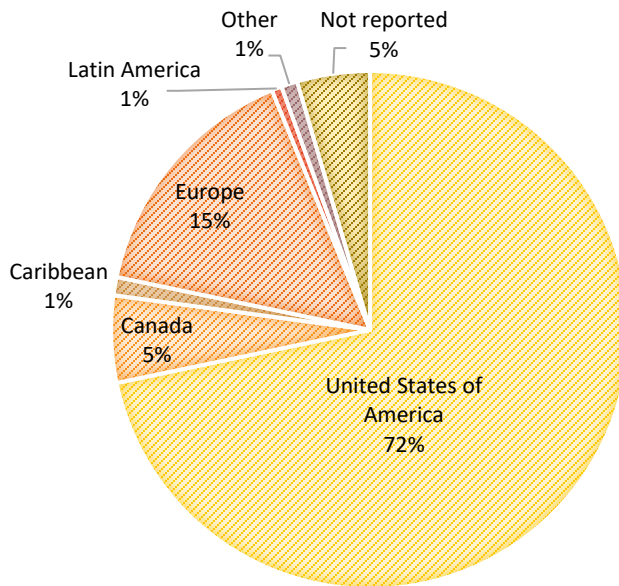**Figure 20. Country/region of permanent residence.**

Figure 20 shows the country/region of permanent residence of the visitors surveyed. The majority of the respondents, 72%, were from the United States. The second largest group of respondents was from Europe (14%). The remaining regions cumulatively represented 14% of the responses.

The United States respondents were from Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and New York. The top respondents from the Caribbean were from Barbados, Saint Lucia, Guadeloupe, and Jamaica. In that order, the top five European respondents were from the United Kingdom, Germany, Ireland, and Belgium.

Income

In 2023, the percentage of visitors increased as annual household income increased. Figure 21 shows that persons with household incomes of $ 125,001 and greater were the most represented, with 19% percent. The remainder fell in ranges of $100,001 - $125,000 (8%), $75,001 - $100,000 (16%), $50,001 - $75,000 (14%), $25,001 - $50,000 (10%), and below $25,000 (5%).
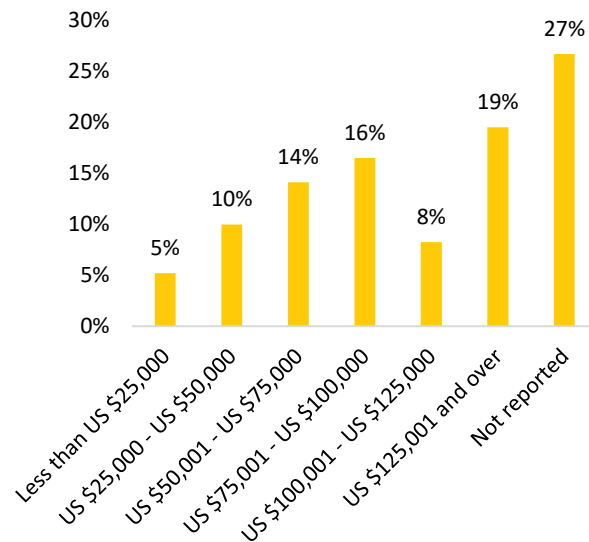
2. Activities

Figure 22 shows the respondents' activities during their stay on the island. More than one-half of the respondents were Shopping (74%). Of the four districts noticeably advertised to visitors, Philipsburg was the most visited, followed by Marigot, Orient Bay, and Grand Case. Sightseeing, Plane spotting/watching, and Boat trips were also highly joined during their stay.
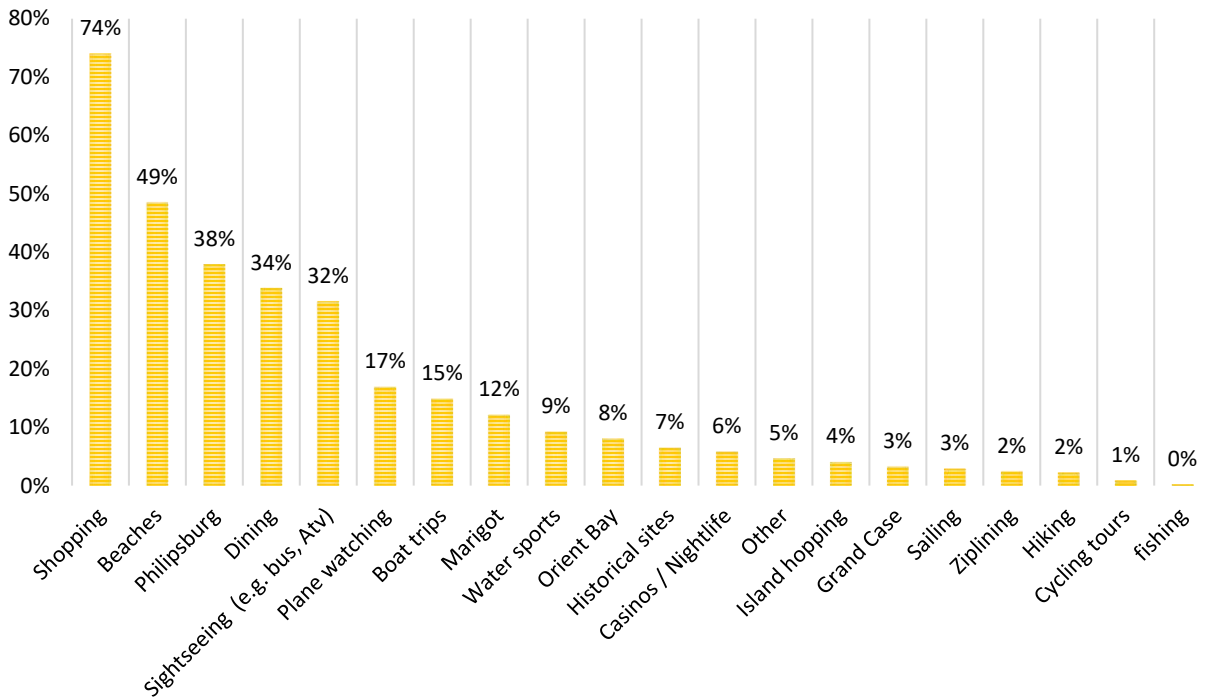

Figure 22. Activity participation.

3. Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to rate specific aspects of the island, with '1' being 'Very poor' and '5' being 'Excellent'. For the ratings of the Dutch-side of the island, the top scores were considered above 2.5. The aspects rated above a 2.5, from highest to lowest, were the sightseeing, tours, island's cleanliness, port facility, taxis, rental vehicles, clubs/casinos, and communication.
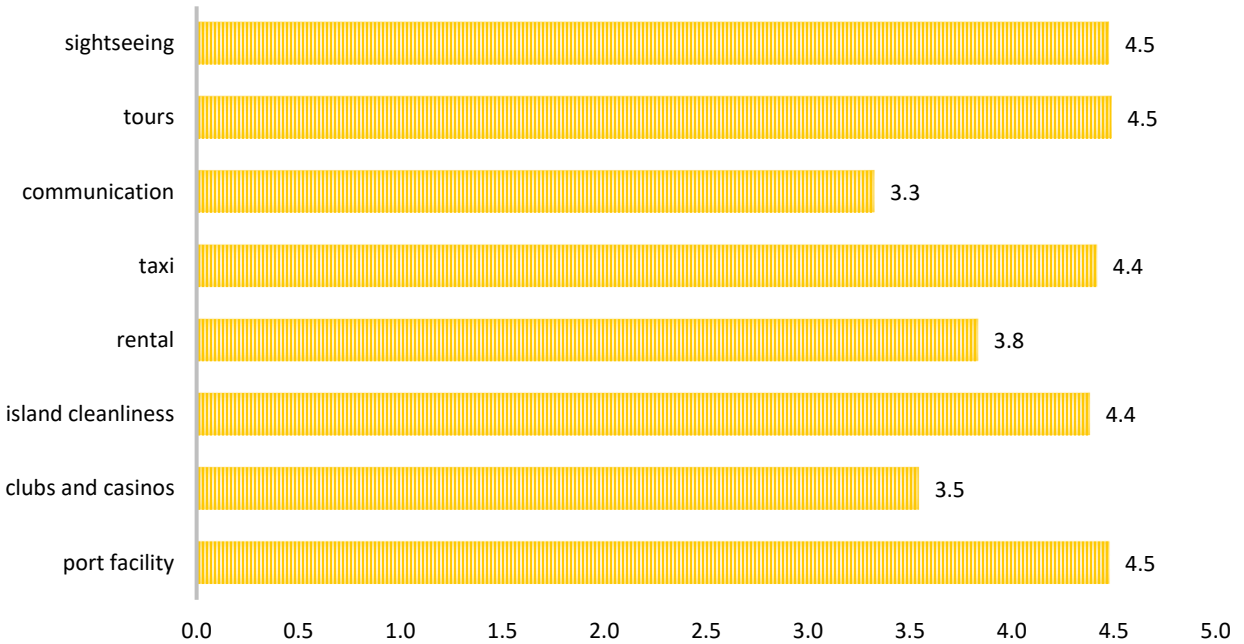
Figure 23. Island-wide satisfaction ratings.

In all the categories shown in figure 24, the Dutch side (Dutch) scored slightly higher on average than the French side (French). The Dutch obtained the highest scores in the categories of friendliness and beaches. The Dutch side consistently outperformed the French side in every aspect except for customer service and road/signage, in which they achieved identical scores.
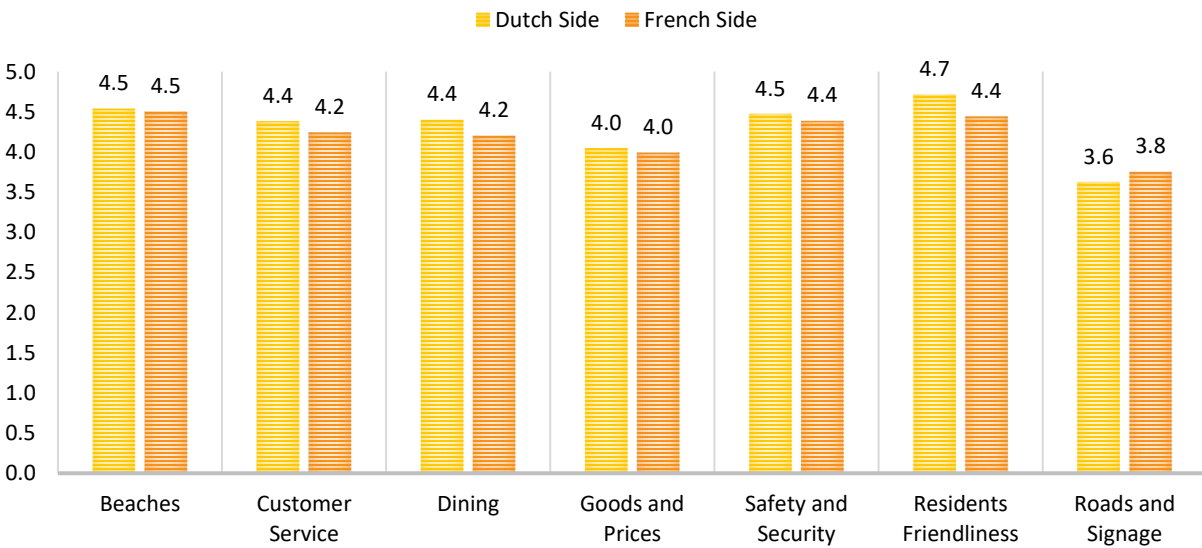

Figure 24. Comparison of satisfaction ratings

The survey also captured to what extent visitors' expectations were met during their visit to the island. Over 89% of respondents' expectations were positively satisfied – 61% indicated their expectations were met, and 28% indicated that their experience exceeded their expectations. 4% percent of respondents reported that their experience on the island fell below expectations, while an additional 7% did not provide a response (refer to figure 25).
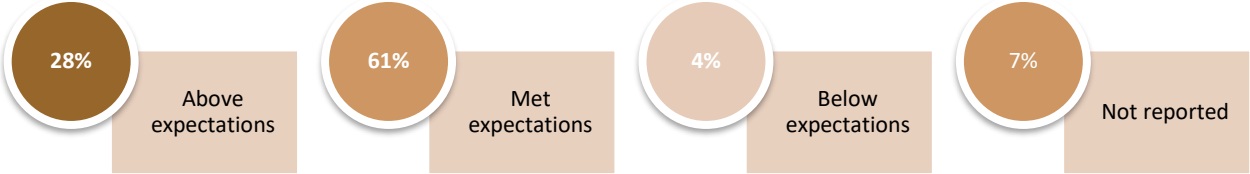
| 28% Above expectations | 61% Met expectations | 4% Below expectations | 7% Not reported |

Figure 25. Visitor expectations.

Many respondents were quite optimistic when asked if they would "return or recommend" the island to others. The percentage of respondents who would "definitely return and recommend" to others were above 60% overall. The positive rate for both "definitely or probably return" and recommend intentions surpassed 80%. At the same time, 5% and 2% were negative returns and recommendations, respectively (see Figures 26 & 27).

| 62% Definitely | 20% Probably | 9% Unsure | 2% Probably not | 3% Definitely not | 4% Not reported |

Figure 26. Intentions of return.

| 64% Definitely | 19% Probably | 7% Unsure | 1% Probably not | 1% Definitely not | 9% Not reported |

Figure 27. Recommend to others.

4. Expenditures

This section will cover tourism-related expenditure indicators, significant markers in this industry upon which our economy is heavily reliant. The indicators include the average daily expenditures of $142.56 in 2023 per cruise visitor (see Figure 28). In figure 29, the ADE by region of residence is presented by primarily the five significant regions whose residents usually embark on cruises destined for the Caribbean that disembarked in St. Maarten along their journey. This chart also includes data gathered from residents of countries outside the "Western world" and grouped in a category labeled as "Other."
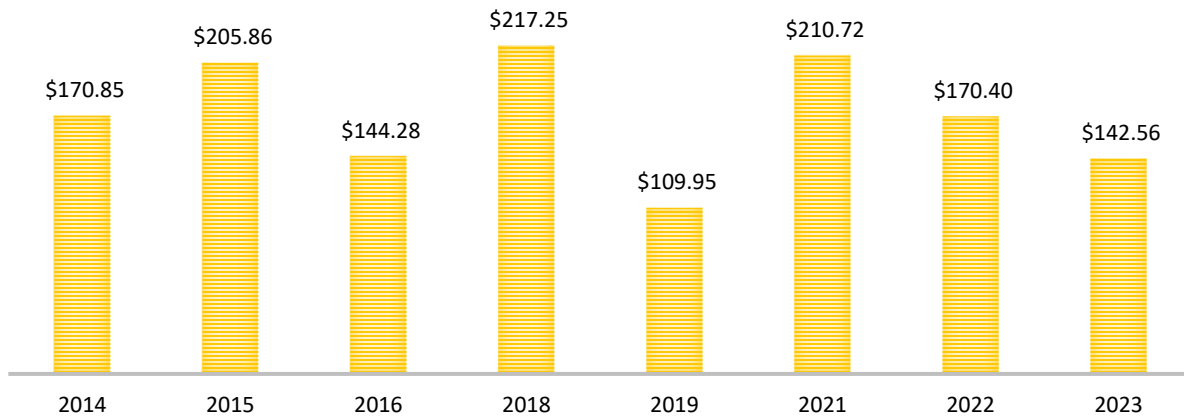
Figure 28. Average daily expenditure by year

American visitors, on average, contributed to the largest amount of daily expenditure per person for goods and services provided while visiting the island. Europeans were the second largest cruise spenders, followed by the Caribbean. Lastly, Canadian visitors spent the least onshore (see Table 13).
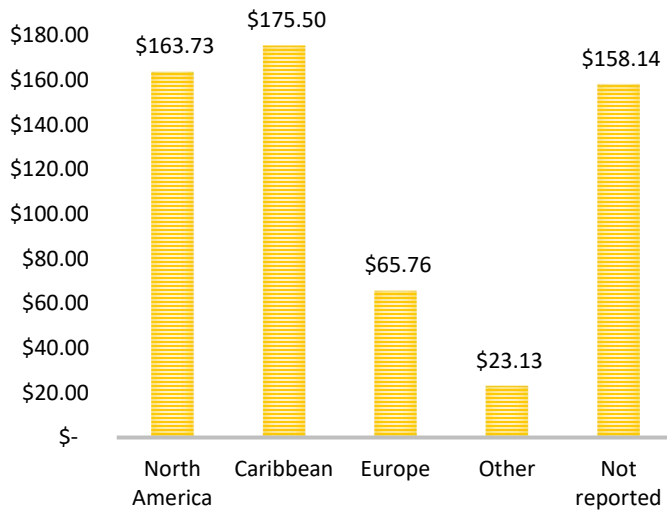

ABLE 13: CRUISE VISITORS PER REGION	
United States	72%
Canada	5%
Caribbean	3%
Europe	16%
Latin America	1%
Other	1%
Not reported	5%
Grand Total	**100%**

Figure 29. Average daily expenditure by region of residence

Figure 30 presents the cruise passengers' ADE based on their number of visits. Visits ranged from one time before the present trip and up to five or more previous visits. The bar chart indicates that return visitors were more likely to have higher expenditures per person than on previous trips. Although not always linear, in most years, tourists' expenditures continued to increase upon the fourth visit. This chart aligns with existing literature that suggest patronizing customers are more profitable over the life of a business or product (Babu & Kumar, 2010; Reinart & Kumar, 2000). With further research the island may be able to determine the optimum investment needed to encourage visitor returns given a particular financial profitability.
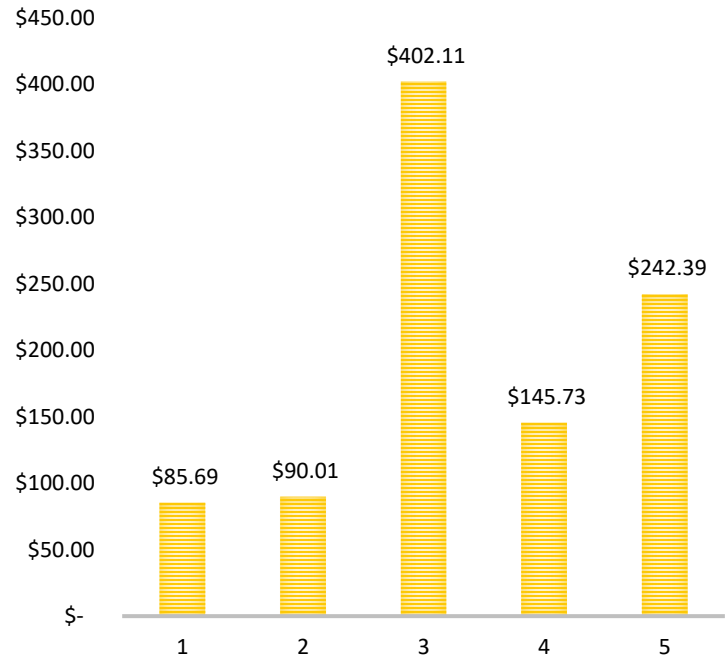

Figure 30. Average daily expenditure by the number of visits.

Based on their average household income ranges, during their disembarkment on St. Maarten, higher household income earners displayed more expenditures on the island than their counterparts. On average, they spent slightly above $250 per person per day, 39% less than the previous year's estimates. However, there is no concise annual trend concerning the value of their total expenditures with household earnings.
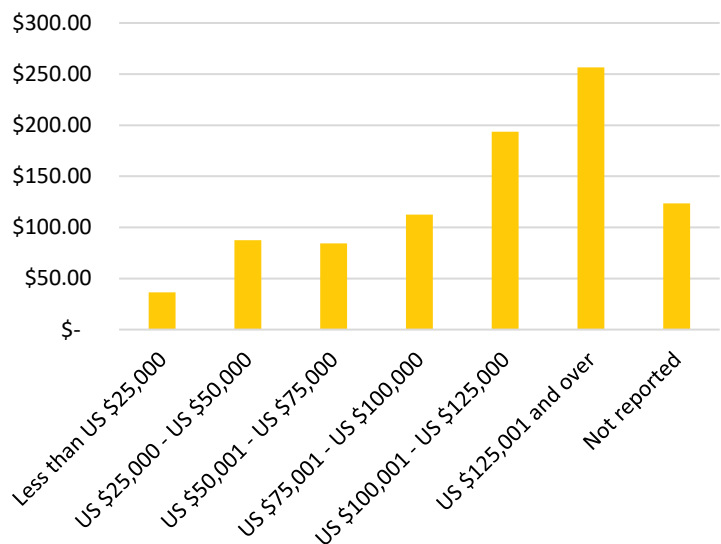

Figure 31. Average daily expenditure by income.

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1. Moutinho, L. (2000). Strategic management in tourism. Wallingford: CABI.

2. Babu, K. & Kumar, B. (2010). 'Customer Service Management - Turning Customer Loyalty into Profitability,' Synergy, 8(2): 93- 98

3. Reinartz, W. & Kumar, V. (2000). On the Profitability of Long-Life Customers in a Noncontractual Setting: An Empirical Investigation and Implications for Marketing. Journal of Marketing. 64. 17–35. 10.1509/jmkg.64.4.17.18077.