

Executive Summary

This visitor study report profiles a systematic random sample of Mount Rushmore National Memorial visitors during June 21–27, 2013. A total of 1,298 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 782 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 60.2% response rate.

Group size and type	Forty percent of visitor groups were in groups of two while 34% were in groups of three or four people. Twenty-five percent were in groups of five or more people. Most visitor groups (80%) consisted of family groups.
State or country of residence	United States visitors were from 49 states and comprised 96% of total visitation during the survey period, with 7% from each of the following states: Colorado, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. For 3% of visitor groups, all members were residents of the area (within 100-mile drive of the memorial). International visitors were from 11 countries and comprised 4% of total visitation during the survey period, with 55% from Canada.
Number of visits	Most visitors (92%) were visiting the memorial for the first time in the past 12 months. For 61%, this was the first visit in their lifetime, while 30% had visited two or three times.
Age, ethnicity, race, educational level, and income level	Forty-seven percent of visitors were ages 36-65 years, 24% were 15 years or younger, and 15% were 66 years or older. Five percent were Hispanic or Latino. Most visitors (93%) were White and 3% were Asian. Twenty-nine percent of respondents had completed a graduate degree and 29% had a bachelor's degree. Twenty percent of respondents reported an income level of \$100,000-\$149,999 and another 20% listed a \$50,000-\$74,999 income level.
Website as source to plan trip to memorial	Twenty-nine percent of visitor groups used the memorial website to plan their visit to Mount Rushmore National Memorial. Most visitor groups (59%) found the website "extremely helpful" or "very helpful."
The memorial as a destination	During the on-site interview, 73% of visitor groups said Mount Rushmore National Memorial was one of several destinations and for 25%, the memorial was their primary destination.
Primary reason for visiting the Black Hills area	For 66% of visitor groups, visiting Mount Rushmore National Memorial was the primary reason they came to the Black Hills area. Fifteen percent of visitor groups came to visit other area attractions.
Other places visited in the Black Hills area	On this trip, 14% of visitor groups only visited Mount Rushmore National Memorial. Visitor groups also visited or planned to visit the following places: Crazy Horse Memorial (67%), Custer State Park (57%), and Badlands National Park (54%).
Transportation	Fifty-two percent of visitor groups used a private car and 26% used a SUV/truck/van to travel most of the distance between home and the memorial.
Number of entries into the memorial	Seventy-eight percent of visitor groups entered the memorial once, while 17% entered twice on this visit.

Executive Summary (continued)

Overnight stays	Most visitor groups (91%) stayed overnight in the Black Hills area within a 100-mile drive of the memorial, of which 52% stayed one or two nights. Thirty-one percent stayed four or more nights. Seventy-eight percent of visitor groups stayed in lodges, motels, cabins, vacation rentals, bed and breakfasts, etc., while 16% RV camped in a developed campground.
Length of visit	Fifty-six percent of visitor groups spent two or three hours visiting the memorial. The average length of visit was 2.6 hours. Fifteen percent of visitor groups visited the memorial on more than one day, of which 90% visited on two days. Of those, the average number of days visited was 2.1.
Activities on this visit	The most common activities were viewing/learning about the memorial (85%), shopping in park gift shop (68%), walking the Presidential Trail (50%), and learning about the four Presidents (50%). The most common activities that were the primary reason for visiting Mount Rushmore National Memorial were viewing/learning about the memorial (80%) and walking the Presidential Trail (8%).
Contacts with National Park Service employee	Thirty-five percent of visitor groups obtained information from a National Park Service employee during their visit. Visitor groups rated the quality of their interactions with employees as “very good” or “good” for courteousness (97%), quality of information provided (96%), and helpfulness (94%).
Information services and facilities	The information services and facilities most often used by visitor groups were the park brochure/map (59%), Presidential Trail – self-guided walk (51%), and film shown in visitor center (48%).
Visitor services and facilities	The visitor services and facilities most often used by visitor groups were restrooms (91%), sales items in bookstores (51%), and Information Center – overall (48%).
Satisfaction with parking experience	Most visitor groups (98%) used the parking facility during their visit. The highest satisfaction levels (“very satisfied” or “satisfied”) were for appearance of facility (94%), length of wait (90%), and ease of use (90%). For length of wait, 55% of visitor groups did not wait and another 36% waited up to five minutes.
Satisfaction with gift shop experience	Many visitor groups (89%) used the gift shop during their visit. The highest satisfaction levels (“very satisfied” or “satisfied”) were for appearance of facility (93%), interactions with staff (84%), and choice of items (84%). For length of wait, 35% of visitor groups did not wait, 42% waited up to five minutes, and 18% waited six or more minutes.
Satisfaction with indoor food service	Forty-five percent of visitor groups used Carvers Café or the ice cream/fudge shop. Of these, 70% used the indoor food service. The highest satisfaction levels (“very satisfied” or “satisfied”) with aspects of the indoor food service were for appearance of facility (94%), interactions with staff (84%), preparation of menu items (82%), and choice of menu items (82%). For length of wait, 20% did not wait, 45% waited up to five minutes, and 34% waited six minutes or more.

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Satisfaction with outdoor food service	Of those who used any food service, 42% used the outdoor food service. The highest satisfaction levels (“very satisfied” or “satisfied”) with aspects of the outdoor food service were for appearance of facility (88%), interactions with staff (83%), and length of wait (82%). For length of wait, too few visitor groups responded to have reliable data.
Use of facilities	The most used facilities were the main restrooms (87%), Avenue of Flags (87%), and Information Center (53%).
Satisfaction with facilities	Facilities cleanliness: Visitor groups gave the highest ratings (“very satisfied” or “satisfied”) to the amphitheater (98%), Lincoln Borglum Museum (97%), and Avenue of Flags (97%). Facilities state of repair and maintenance: The highest ratings (“very satisfied” or “satisfied”) were for Lincoln Borglum Museum (98%), Sculptor’s Historic Studio (97%), Information Center (97%), and Amphitheater (97%).
Expenditures	The average visitor group expenditure (inside and outside the memorial within a 100-mile drive of the memorial) was \$772. The median group expenditure (50% of groups spent more and 50% of groups spent less) was \$450. The average total expenditure per person (per capita) was \$239.
Income forgone to make this trip	Eighteen percent of respondents had forgone income to make this trip. Of those, 59% had forgone \$1001 or more.
Overall quality	Most visitor groups (97%) rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities at Mount Rushmore National Memorial as “very good” or “good.” Less than two percent of groups rated the overall quality as “very poor” or “poor.”

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho at (208) 885-2585 or the following website <http://www.psu.uidaho.edu>.