



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA | EXTENSION

TOURISM CENTER

A Summary of Asian-American Travel Interests and Behaviors

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SUMMARY

This report provides a brief outline of the existing and potential domestic travel market among Asian Americans in the United States. Demographic, income, English proficiency information, and basic trip characteristics are presented.

In summary, according to the 2010 Census, the Asian-American population was 17,320,856 in the United States (5.6% of the U.S. population), and 247,132 in Minnesota (4.7% of the state population). Asian Americans are the highest-income, best-educated, and fastest-growing racial group in the United States. This group has a median age of 35.4 years in the country and 27.3 years in Minnesota. Also, Asian Americans have a higher income than the overall U.S. population and the highest median household income when compared to African Americans and Hispanics, both in the country and in Minnesota.

Travel is most frequently for leisure purposes, for 3.3 days in the Western United States, using paid lodging. Group sizes are, on average, 2.8 persons. The average trip expenditure is higher than that of the typical U.S. traveler. Asian Americans accounted for 82 million domestic person-trips in the United States in 2010. The population group is expected to grow to 21.6 million by 2020, and the number of domestic person-trips could grow by 45.5%.

CURRENT DEMAND

U.S. Basic Demographics

Asian Americans are the highest-income, best-educated, and fastest-growing racial group in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2013). Forty-six percent of Asian Americans live in the West, 22% in the South, 20% in the Northeast, and 12% live in the Midwest (Hoeffel, Rastogi, Kim & Shahid, 2012).

Population: In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau counted 17,320,856 Asian Americans in the United States, which is 5.6% of the total population. (Figure 1). Included in this population are 2.6 million U.S. mixed-race residents who are Asian and at least one additional race (Hoeffel et al., 2012). The Asian-American population roughly quadrupled from 1980 to 2010 (Pew Research Center, 2013). The percentage increase during the period 2000-2010 was 45%, whereas the increase for the U.S. population was only 9.7% (Hoeffel et al., 2012).

Origin: Asian Americans are either immigrants from Asia (59%) or descendants of immigrants (41%) (Pew Research Center, 2013). By country of origin, six groups comprise more than 80% of the total Asian population in the United States: Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, and Japanese (Figure 2). Each one of these groups has more than one million people (Pew Research Center, 2013).

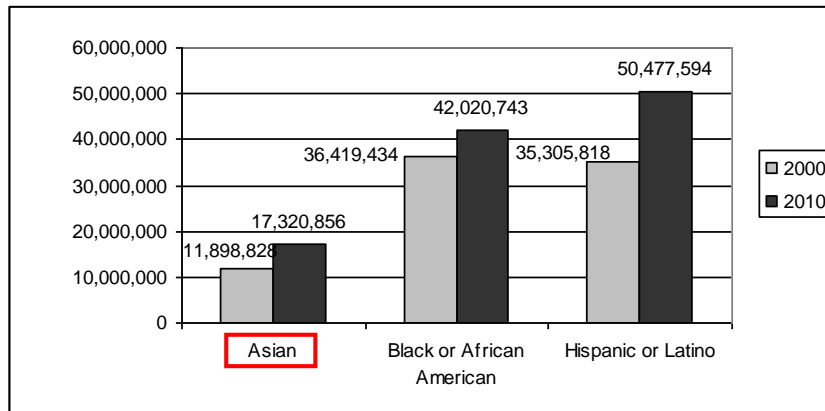


Figure 1. Population of Asian Americans, African Americans and Hispanics in the United States, 2000 and 2010. Race alone or in combination with one or more other races; Hispanic or Latino of any race (Data from U.S. Census Bureau.)

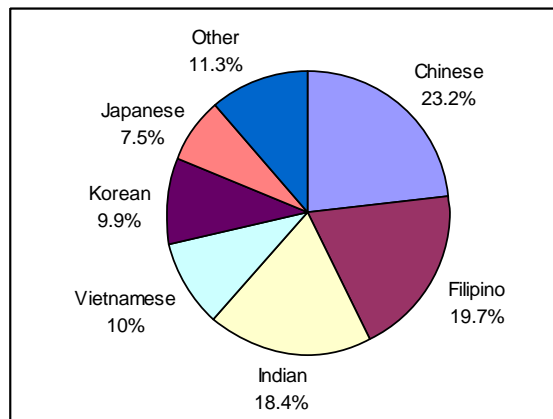


Figure 2. Percentage of Asian Americans in the United States by origin, 2010 (Data from Pew Research Center, 2013.)

The basic demographics of these groups, however, are different. Indian Americans lead all other groups by a significant margin in level of income and education. Americans with Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, and other U.S. Asian origins, on the other hand, have higher shares in poverty than the U.S. general public. Those with Indian, Japanese, and Filipino origins have lower shares of poverty (Pew Research Center, 2013).

Immigration since 2009: The number of newly arrived Asian-American immigrants has surpassed the number of newly arrived Hispanic immigrants since 2009. About 430,000 new immigrants in 2010 were Asian compared to 370,000 who were Hispanic. These totals include individuals with both legal and unauthorized status, as well as those arriving with work, student, or other temporary visas (Pew Research Center, 2013).

Age Distribution: Median age of the single-race Asian-American population was 35.4. The corresponding figure was 37.2 years for the population as a whole (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census; Figure 3).

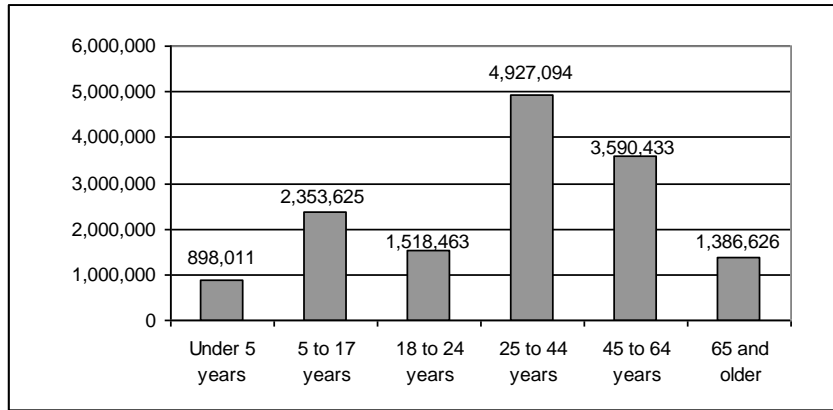


Figure 3. Age distribution of Asian-American population in the United States, 2010. Single race (Data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.)

Household Income: Median household income among Asian Americans in 2012 was \$71,709, a higher value compared to \$53,046 for the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 ACS; Figure 4). Median annual personal earnings (full-time, year-round workers) were \$48,000 (Pew Research Center, 2013). In 2012, Asian-American households had an average of \$61,400 in expenditures, 19% more than overall households (The Nielsen Company, 2013).

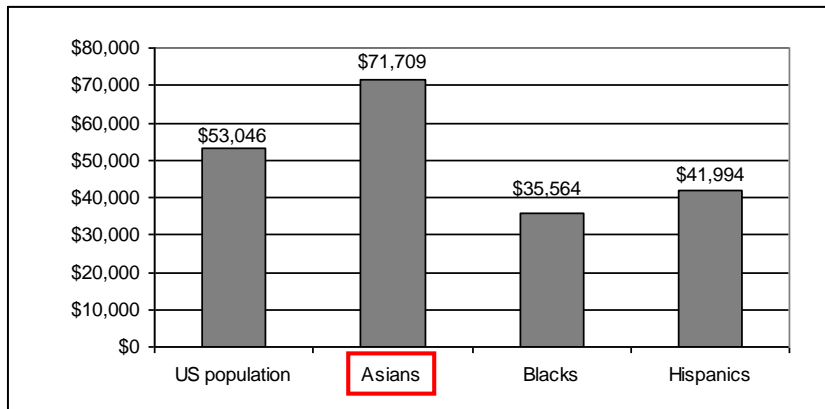


Figure 4. Median household income United States, 2012. Single race householder (Data from 2008-2012 ACS.)

English Proficiency: When foreign-born Asian-American respondents of the Pew Research Center survey (2013) assessed their own English proficiency, nearly half (49%) indicate they can carry on a conversation in English “very well.” Some (26%) say they can carry on a conversation “pretty well,” and 25% say they can do this “just a little” or “not at all”.

MINNESOTA BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS

Population: In 2010, the Asian-American population in Minnesota was 247,132, which is 4.7% of the total state population of 5,303,925. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census; Figure 5). The percent growth of the group during 2000-2010 was 52.2% (Hoeffel et al., 2012). Asian-American population in the Twin Cities Metro Area was 207,410 (Asian American Center for Advancing Justice, 2012), 3.9% of the total state population.

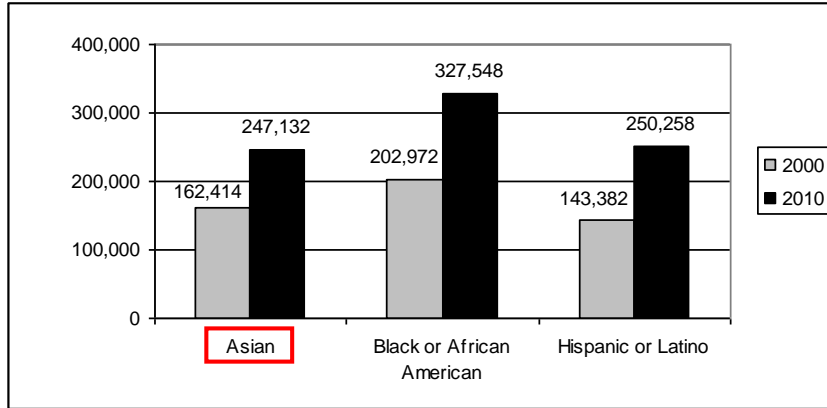


Figure 5. Population of Asian Americans, African Americans and Hispanics in Minnesota, 2000 and 2010. Race alone or in combination with one or more other races; Hispanic or Latino of any race (Data from U.S. Census Bureau.)

Origin: Sixty-two percent of Asian Americans in Minnesota (single race) are foreign-born (Kao, 2012). Figure 6 shows the distribution of the main groups of Asian Americans in the state according to the country of origin. Minnesota has the second largest population of Hmong in the country (Kao, 2012).

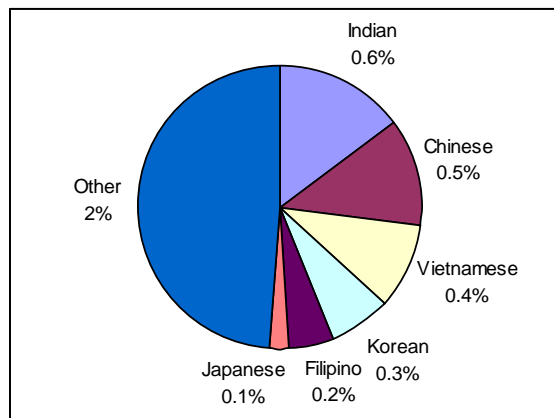


Figure 6. Percentage of Asian Americans in Minnesota by origin, 2010. Single race; percentages from the 4% of Asian population in the state (Data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.)

Age Distribution: The median age of the single-race Asian-American population in Minnesota was 27.3 years. The corresponding figure for the state population as a whole was 37.4 years (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census; Figure 7).

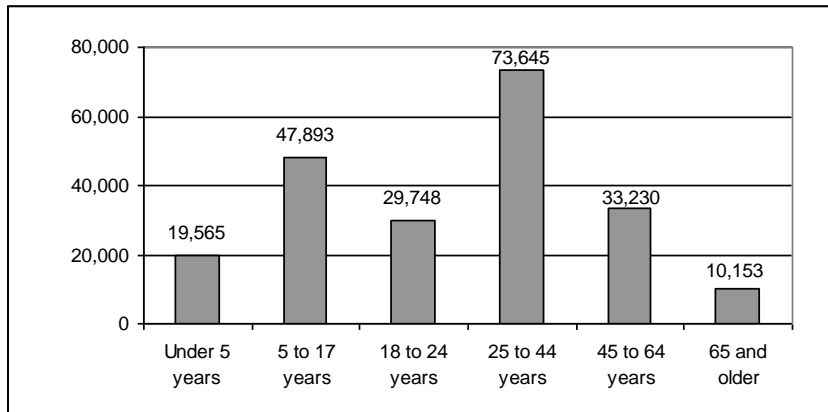


Figure 7. Age distribution of the Asian-American population Minnesota, 2010. Single race (Data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.)

Household Income: Annual median household income in Minnesota in 2012 (inflation-adjusted dollars, Asian alone householder) was \$64,093. Median household income for overall population in the state was \$59,126 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 ACS). The purchasing power of Minnesota’s Asian population in 2010 was \$5.9 billion (Kao, 2012).

TRAVELING AMONG ASIAN AMERICANS

Public information on travel among Asian Americans is limited. The most recent statewide survey of Minnesota travelers reveals 1% identified as Asian-American in the state overall, and 2% in the Metro area (Davidson-Peterson, 2008). The sample sizes are too small for further analysis. Subsequently, data from national datasets is used to reveal a variety of trip details and consumer behavior. TNS’ Travelsmerica survey of U.S. residents taking domestic trips during 2012 (U.S. Travel Association, 2014) presents some basic characteristics of leisure and business trips among Asian Americans:

About 51% of Asian Americans have taken a domestic plane trip in the past 12 months, and they are at least 1.2 times more likely than the general population to go on domestic cruises and visit theme parks (The Nielsen Company, 2013).

Trip Purpose: The primary trip purpose was leisure (80%) vs. business (14%). Visiting friends/relatives was the most common trip purpose (Figure 8) and the main activities reported were entertainment/amusement, family/reunion, and nature/outdoor (Figure 9).

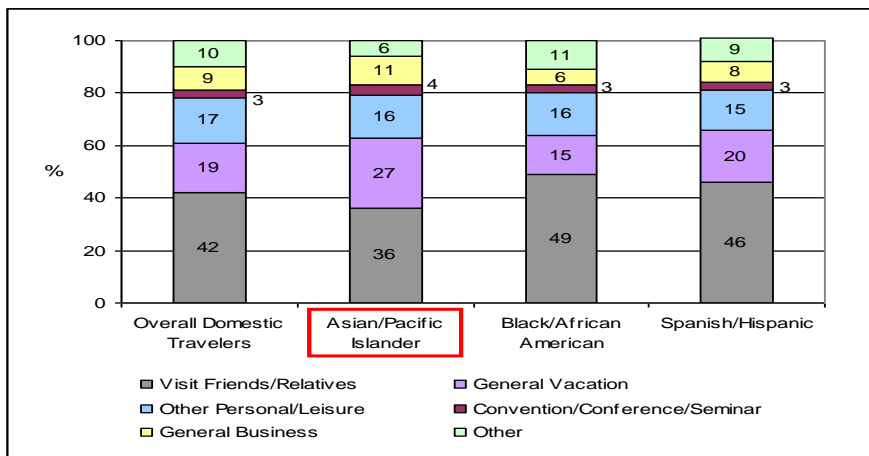


Figure 8. Primary trip purpose, 2012 (Data from U.S. Travel Association, 2014.)

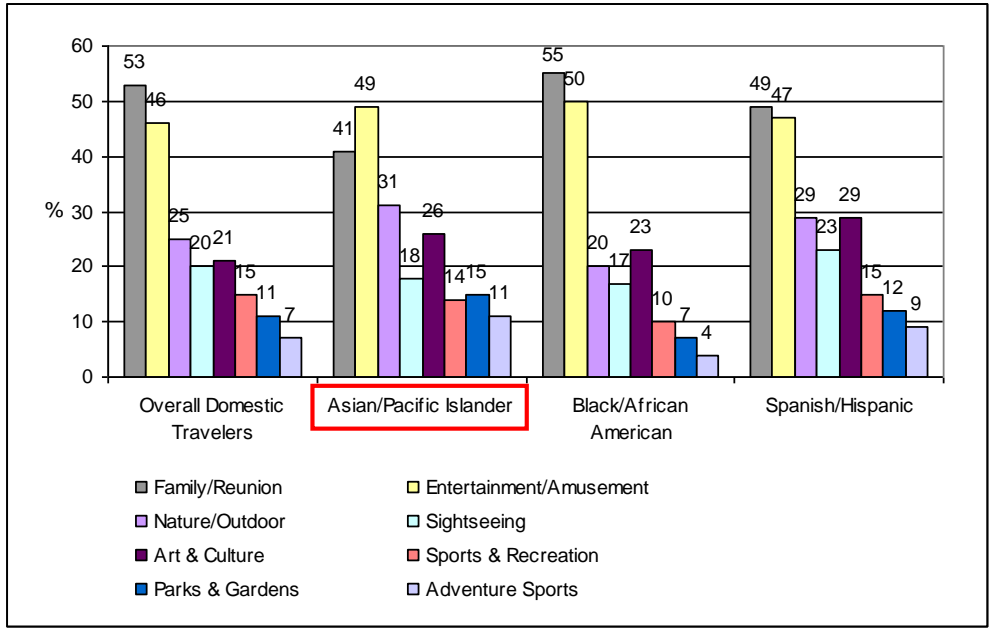


Figure 9. Activities reported, 2012. Multiple response (Data from U.S. Travel Association, 2014).

Duration of Trips: Forty percent of trips were 1-2 nights (Figure 10). The mean duration of the trips is 3.3 days (when day trips are included), or 4.2 days (when day trips are not included). Corresponding means for overall domestic travelers were 2.6 and 3.7 days with and without day trips included.

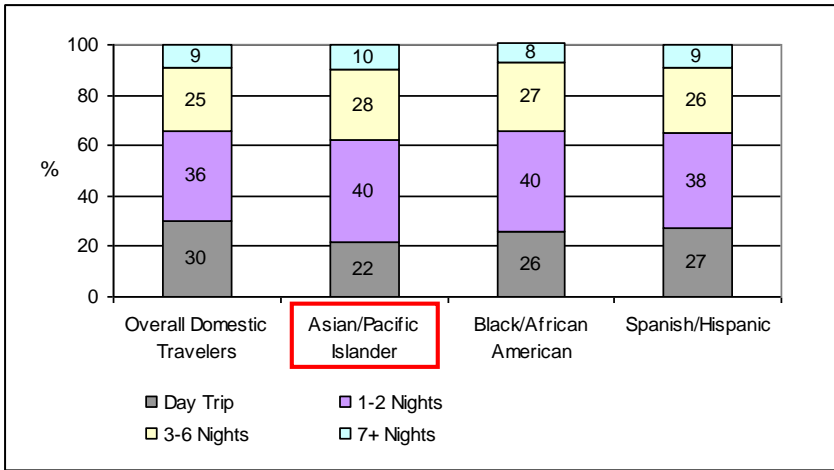


Figure 10. Duration of trips, 2012 (Data from U.S. Travel Association, 2014).

Person-trips: The number of domestic person-trips in 2010 was 82 million, which is 4% of all domestic person-trips. (Cook, 2011).

Season: Trips most frequently happened in the summer (30%) and spring (25%).

Travel Party Size: The mean size of the household travel party (excluding day trips) was 2.2 people and 2.8 for parties including non-household members. Thirty-two percent of travel parties (including non-household members) were composed of adults and children. The corresponding figures for overall domestic travelers were 1.9 and 2.6 people for parties with household and non-household parties for mean party sizes, and 22% for percent of parties composed of adults and children.

Destination: Among Asian Americans, in-state only trips were 47% of destinations, and out-of-state only trips were 50%. The main travel destination was the West Census Region (51%) (Figure 11), and within it, the Pacific Division of California, Oregon, and Washington (39%) (U.S. Travel Association, 2014).

Midwest states are not primary destinations among Asian-American travelers (Cook, 2011). According to Cook’s data, California is the top state destination among Asian-American hotel travelers (44%). Other frequently visited destinations are Texas (more than 7% travelers), and Florida, Illinois, New York, Virginia, and Washington (each one in the range of 3-6.9% of travelers). The percentage of Asian-American travelers that report Minnesota as destination is in the range of 1-2.9%.

Modes of Transportation: The primary modes of transportation were own car/truck and airplane (Figure 12).

Lodging: Lodging used for overnight stay was mostly hotel/motel (63%). The proportion for private home lodging (unpaid accommodations) was 31%, and bed & breakfasts were 2%. The corresponding percentages for overall domestic travelers were 49%, 42%, and 1%, respectively.

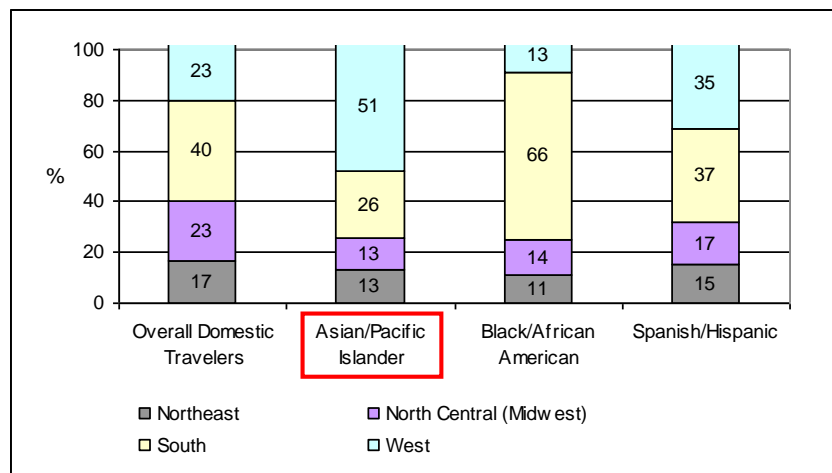


Figure 11. Destination by census regions, 2012 (Data from U.S. Travel Association, 2014.)

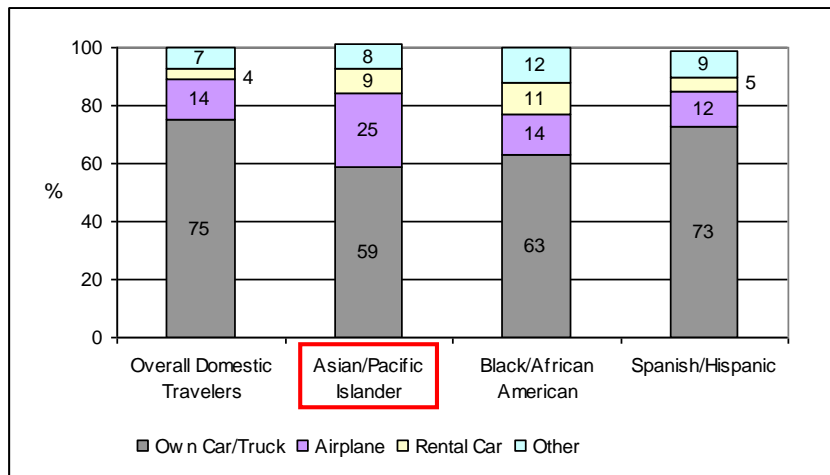


Figure 12. Primary mode of transportation, 2012 (Data from U.S. Travel Association, 2014).

Trip Spending: Average total trip spending was \$835.50 (Figure 13). Asian Americans reported a high average spending in casino and gaming. For total trip spending, 39% of the trips were in the range of \$250-999, and 35% were in the range of \$1-249.

It has been estimated that Asian Americans spent \$62.2 billion on domestic travel in 2010. Although accounting for only 4% of total domestic person-trips, Asian Americans accounted for 10% of total domestic travel spending (Cook, 2011).

Planning and Booking: For planning trips, offline sources were reported as the most frequently used (49%; mostly friends/relatives and own experience), compared to online sources (30%). For booking, online sources (40%) were used more than offline sources (19%).

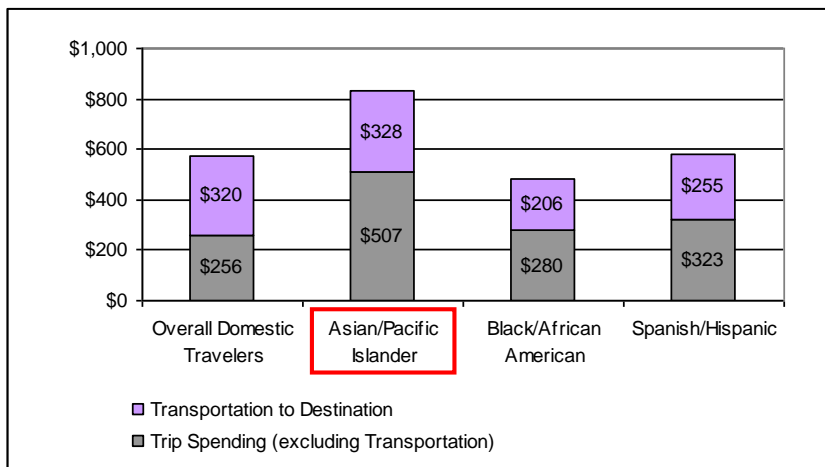


Figure 13. Average trip spending, 2012 (Data from U.S. Travel Association, 2014).

Traveling Abroad: Asian-Americans are 43% more likely than the general population to travel abroad in their leisure time. About 57% of Asian Americans have taken a trip outside the continental United States during the past three years and are 46% more likely to have traveled in first class on foreign trips (The Nielsen Company, 2013).

Outdoor Recreation

Minnesota: The *2004 Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey of Minnesotans*, prepared by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, does not present specific information about Asian Americans; the report only presents data broken down into two categories: non-white and/or Hispanic, and white, non-Hispanic.

The Minnesota data of the *2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*, prepared by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, does not present information about minorities because the sample size of these groups was too small (less than 10) to reliably report data.

A qualitative focus group study conducted by the Metropolitan Council to identify constraints to regional park visitation among minorities in the Twin Cities area (Salk, 2014) found the top preferred outdoor activities for the Asian-Americans were walking, fishing, and rest or relaxation; the most prominent constraints to regional park system visitation are lack of awareness, language barriers, and weather.

Oregon: In preparation for the 2008-2012 Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department contracted Oregon State University to conduct a survey of Hispanic and Asian Americans in Oregon. The goal of the survey was to better understand current outdoor recreation patterns among Hispanics and Asians in the state (Lindberg, 2007).

The main activities reported by Asians were walking, hiking, and fishing. Information about activities and facilities, cost, and location was identified as desired. The preferred information outlets were internet, newspaper, and television. Desired facilities mentioned by respondents were picnic areas, trails, and campgrounds.

In 2006, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and the USDA National Forest Region 6 conducted focus groups interviews to ascertain the perceptions of racial/ethnic minorities in Oregon about what recreation activities, services, facilities, and experiences are appropriate at public lands (Burns, Graefe & Covelli, 2006).

Participants expressed interest in recreation areas with water features and in improved amenities like overnight facilities and places to eat. They enjoy visiting areas with the entire family, including elders and children. Respondents also expressed dislike for camping in tents. Concerns were mentioned about online reservation systems and not being able to locate overnight facilities at both the state and federal level recreation areas. Issues surrounding safety and protection were identified as important.

When asked to identify the types of benefits they hope to gain from an outdoor activity, participants mentioned the following: to be in nature and see wildlife, to get away from it all, and to receive educational experiences.

The perceived factors that prevent or decrease their participation in outdoor recreation were lack of information and safety concerns. According to participants, having information in multiple Asian languages would help encourage use of outdoor recreation areas. They agreed that utilizing existing Asian-American organizations as a media to inform the community about recreation opportunities

would be helpful, as well as using key informants to build trust and publicize the benefits of recreation to the community.

PROJECTED PARTICIPATION

According to projections by the Pew Research Center (2013), the nation's Asian-American population will continue to grow more rapidly than the U.S. population overall, and it will be less dominated by immigrants than it is now. Specifically, the Asian-American population is expected to grow by 31% during the ten years following 2010, and it could reach 21.6 million by 2020 (Cook, 2011) and 41 million by 2050. In 2005, the majority of Asians in the United States (58%) were foreign born; by 2050, fewer than half (47%) will be foreign born (Pew Research Center, 2013).

The percentage change of domestic person-trips from 2010 to 2020 for the Asian-American group is expected to be 45.5%, which means that in 2020, there could be 119.3 million person-trips (Cook, 2011; Figure 14). Asian-American buying power is projected to reach \$1 trillion by 2017 (The Nielsen Company, 2013).

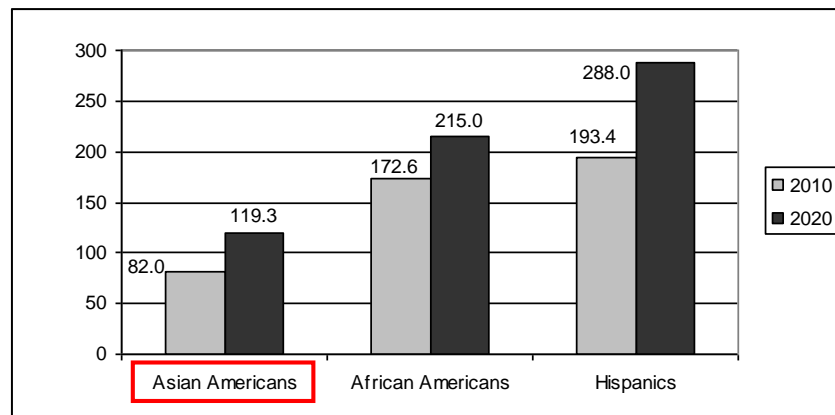


Figure 14. Domestic person-trips (in millions) in the United States for Asian Americans, African Americans, and Hispanics in 2010, as well as projections for 2020 (Data from Cook, 2011).

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APPENDIX

Notes on Data Collection Methods for References with Primary Data

- Burns, R., Graefe, A., & Covelli, L. (2006). *Racial/Ethnic Minority Focus Group Interviews: Oregon SCORP*.
Focus groups with Asian-American, Hispanic, and African-American participants.
- Davidson-Peterson Associates. (2008). *The Profile of Travelers in Minnesota Summer Season (2005/2007)*.
Onsite intercept interviews among travelers throughout Minnesota, summer seasons (June, July and August) of 2005 and 2007; 1,664 participants.
- Lindberg, K. (2007). *Outdoor Recreation Amongst Oregon's Hispanic and Asian Populations*.
Mail survey responded by 343 Hispanics and 179 Asian Americans.
- Pew Research Center. (2013). *The Rise of Asian Americans*.
Telephone survey of a nationally representative sample of 3,511 Asian Americans conducted from January to March, 2012. Analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau and other official sources.
- Salk, R. (2014). *Regional Park Use among Select Communities of Color. A Qualitative Investigation*.
Sixteen focus groups from the Twin Cities metropolitan region that included African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanics. Sessions held between October, 2013, and January, 2014; 257 participants total.

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