



Atlantic City *Restaurant Week*

EXECUTIVE REPORT - MAY 2020



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Commissioned by: Casino Reinvestment Development Authority
and Atlantic City Restaurant Week Committee

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Overview

Atlantic City Restaurant Week 2020 occurred from March 8-13, just as New Jersey was beginning to respond to the threat of COVID-19. New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy declared a statewide Public Health Emergency on March 9 ([Executive Order 103](#)) and ordered further restrictions on public gatherings on March 16 ([Executive Order 104](#)). Restaurants were allowed to continue operating after March 16 but could only offer food via take out or delivery.

There is little doubt that this had a significant impact on the event, reducing attendance, and in turn responses to the patron survey. While Restaurant Week would have extended through March 20 under normal circumstances, COVID-19 precautions effectively ended the event as of March 16. The last patron survey received was dated March 15.

To allow comparison with prior Restaurant Weeks we have restricted our analysis to the official Restaurant Week dates March 8 – 13, 2020 and where 2019 and 2018 data is shown, March 3 – 8 and March 4 – 9 respectively.

As in previous years, patrons of Atlantic City Restaurant Week were surveyed regarding their personal characteristics and experience of the event. Survey responses were collected over the course of one week, March 8 – 13, and 212 responses were collected via an online survey. Survey respondents represented a diverse group with respect to age and household income. Most Restaurant Week patrons had previously attended Restaurant Week and intended to return next year. Overall, patrons were pleased with their experience.





KEY FINDINGS

Seven of 10 Restaurant Week attendees were returning patrons

38% of first-time patrons heard about Restaurant Week from the Restaurant Week Website, **29%** from Friends/Relatives.

Eight out of 10 Restaurant Week attendees said the event factored into their decision to visit Atlantic City.

68% all Restaurant Week patrons were 41 or older, one-third were between the ages of 21 and 40.

24% of Restaurant Week patrons traveled more than 50 miles to attend

83% of patrons were from New Jersey, **7%** from Pennsylvania and **4%** from New York

Among Restaurant Week patrons who were not residents of Atlantic City, **3 out of 10** said they were staying in the Atlantic City area overnight.

57% of respondents rated Restaurant Week 5 out of 5 for value.

87% of 2020 patrons said they would return in 2021.

Methodology

Restaurant Week patrons were asked to answer a series of questions regarding their experience of the event. A 12-question online survey was administered via Qualtrics and an identical 12-question survey card was distributed at the individual restaurants.

While the original intention was to combine both samples, circumstances necessitated the use of only the online responses for this analysis. While 212 respondents participated in the 2020 online survey between March 8-13, only 157 finished the survey and not all answered every question.

12 ONLINE
QUESTION SURVEY

212 RESPONDENTS
PARTICIPATED



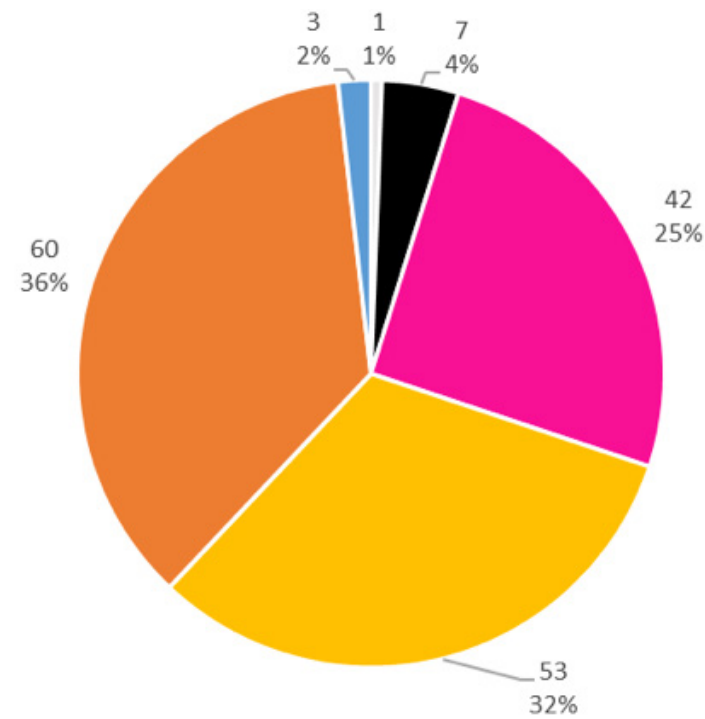


DEMOGRAPHICS CHARACTERISTICS: WHO IS THE ATLANTIC CITY RESTAURANT WEEK VISITOR?

Age

As in previous years, Restaurant Week patrons represented a broad range of ages. More than a third (36%) of respondents indicated that they were between the ages of 56-75 (Baby Boomers) and a little less than a third (32%) indicated that they were between the ages of 41-55 (Generation X). A quarter of respondents (25%) indicated that they were between the ages of 26-40 (millennials), 4% were 21-25 (Generation Z), 2% were over the age of 75 (Silent Generation) and less than 1% of respondents indicated that they were under the age of 21. First-time patrons trended younger than return patrons with 38% saying they were under forty compared to 27% of return patrons.

Please select your age group?
(166 responses)



Party Size

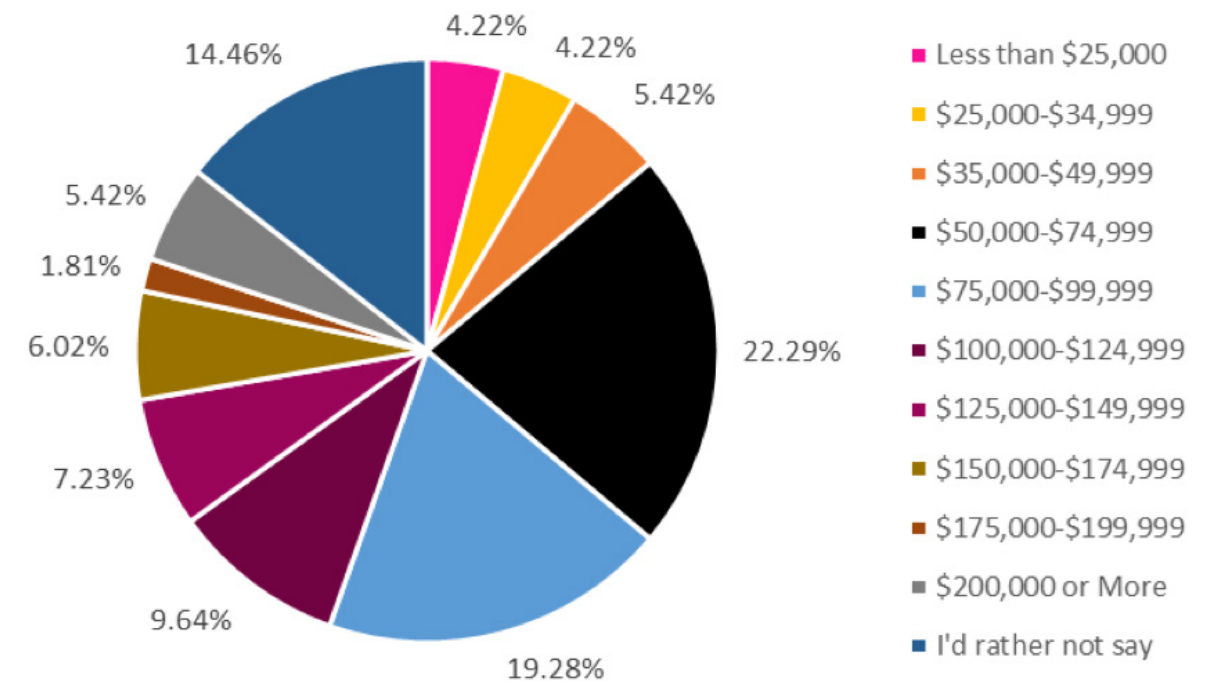
Restaurant Week continues to be an event particularly attractive to couples – 52% percent of respondents indicated they were traveling in a party of two and 28% indicated they were traveling in a party of four.

Baby Boomers (respondents ages 56-74) tended to travel in pairs representing 40% of all parties of two, while members of Generation X (respondents ages 41-55) were more likely to travel in groups of four (40% of all parties of four). Millennials (respondents ages 26-40) tended to travel in larger groups representing 45% of parties of 5-7.

Income

As in previous years, patrons indicated a wide range of household incomes with most patrons falling within the \$50,000 to \$124,999 range. This is consistent with median incomes for the state of New Jersey (\$76,475) and Atlantic County (\$57,514) and higher than the median income for Atlantic City (\$26,006) (Bureau, United States Census, 2019).

Which of the following best represents your household income last year before taxes?
(166 responses)



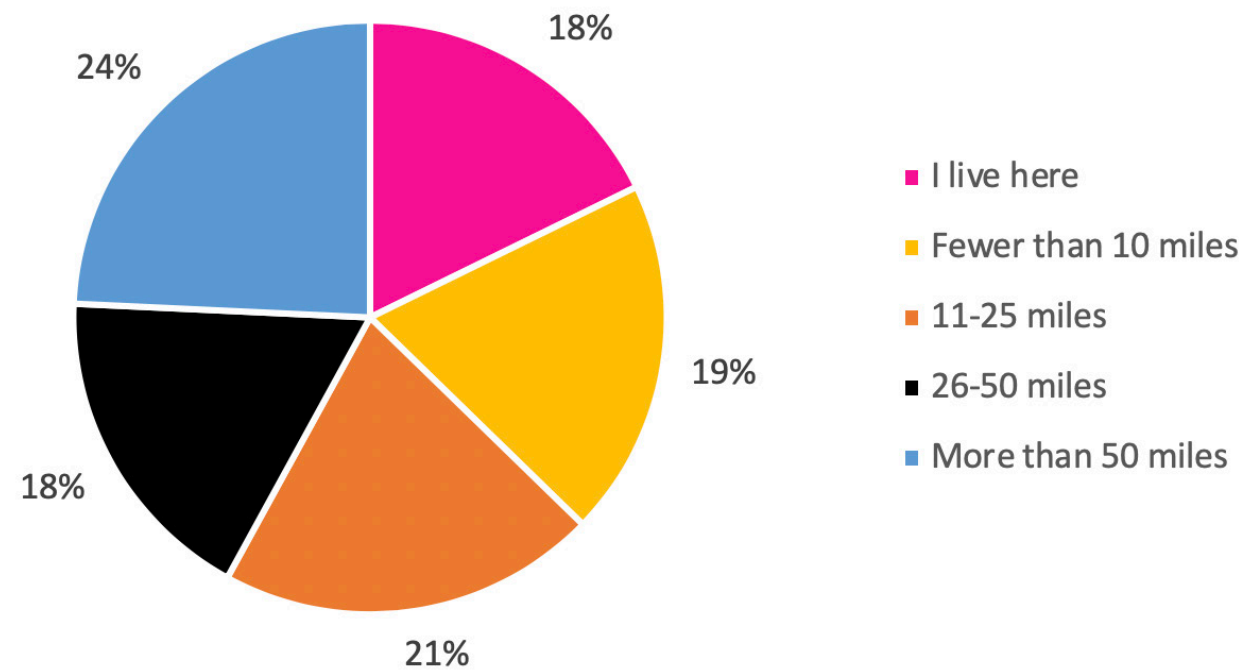


GEOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS: WHERE DID RESTAURANT WEEK PATRONS COME FROM?

Distance

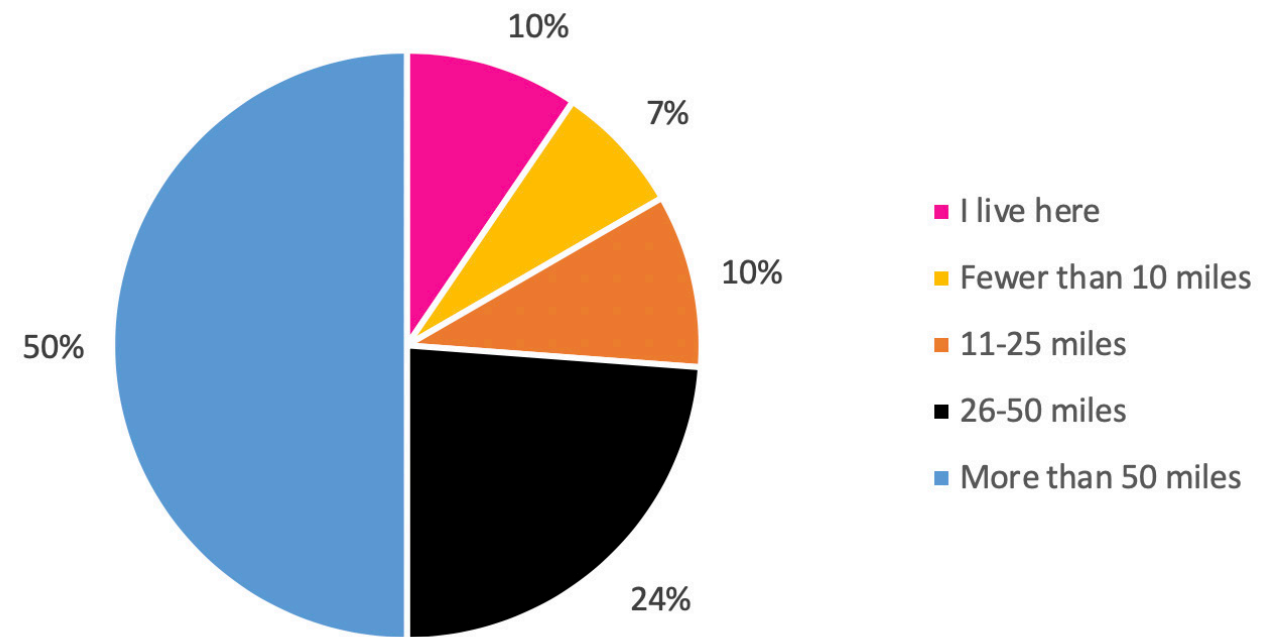
Restaurant Week succeeded in attracting a mix of local and more distant visitors, with nearly even distribution among visitors traveling fewer than ten miles, 11-25 miles, 26-50 miles, and more than 50 miles to participate.

How far did you travel to participate in Restaurant Week?
(169 responses)



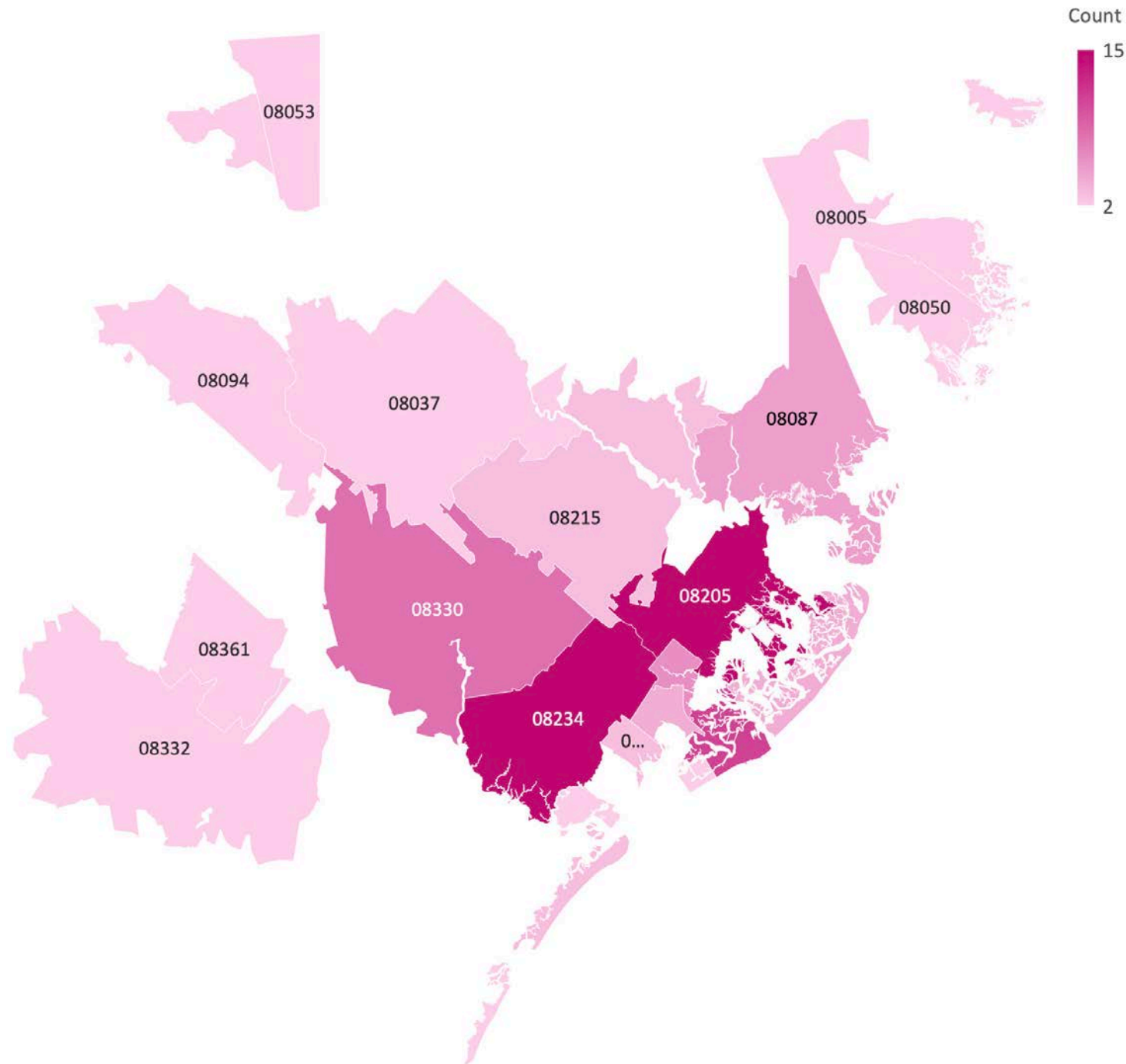
First-time Restaurant Week patrons traveled further than return patrons with 50% traveling more than 50 miles compared to 16% of return patrons.

How far did you travel to participate in Restaurant Week? (First-time patrons)(42 responses)



Zip Code

The most commonly reported zip codes for Restaurant Week Patrons were Galloway, NJ (08205) and Egg Harbor Township (08234), each representing 9.6% of all respondents. Atlantic City (08401 - 7.0%), Mays Landing (08330 - 5.1%), Absecon (08201 - 3.8%) and Little Egg Harbor (08087 - 3.2%) were also well represented. The map below shows the geographic origins of Restaurant Week Patrons organized by zip code. Only zip codes with 2 or more patrons are shown (157 total respondents)



While most patrons (137 - 83.4%) gave a New Jersey zip code, 7 other states (including Florida, Ohio and Massachusetts) were also represented.

Where are you from?
(157 responses)

Respondent States	Count	% Total
NJ	131	83.44%
DE	1	0.64%
Lewes	1	0.64%
FL	3	1.91%
Boynton Beach	1	0.64%
Coral Springs	1	0.64%
Key Colony Beach	1	0.64%
MA	1	0.64%
Norton	1	0.64%
MD	1	0.64%
Arbutus	1	0.64%
NY	7	4.46%
Bronx	1	0.64%
Brooklyn	2	1.27%
Chestnut Ridge	1	0.64%
New York	1	0.64%
Oakdale	1	0.64%
Westbury	1	0.64%
OH	2	1.27%
PA	11	7.01%
Bethlehem	1	0.64%
Brookhaven	1	0.64%
East Stroudsburg	1	0.64%
Fairless Hills	1	0.64%
Media	1	0.64%
Newfoundland	1	0.64%
Royersford	1	0.64%
Philadelphia	4	2.55%
Grand Total	157	100.00%



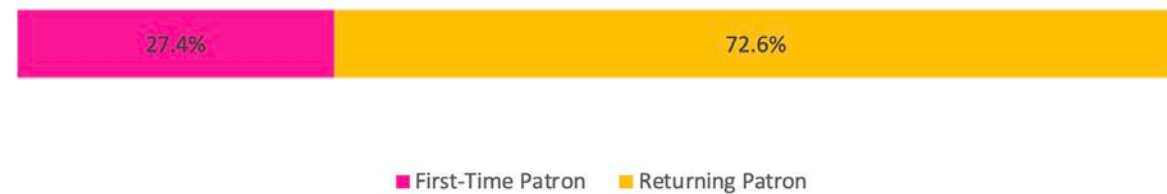


ADVERTISING & NOTORIETY: HOW DID PATRONS HEAR ABOUT RESTAURANT WEEK?

Advertising & Notoriety

A history of delivering quality experiences for patrons continues to be the best endorsement for Restaurant Week and a significant factor in the event's popularity. Nearly three quarters of respondents (72.6%) in 2020 were return guests compared to 68.4% in 2019, and 58.66% in 2018.

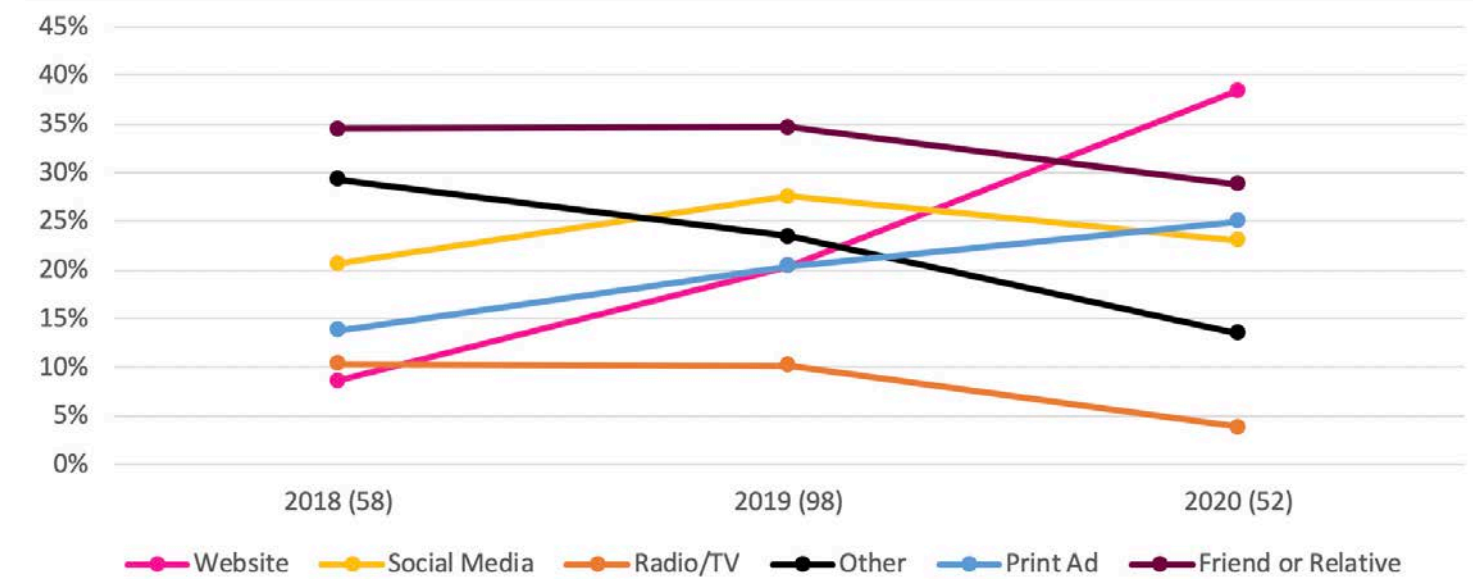
Is (was) this the first time you attended Restaurant Week?
(195 responses)



Among all patrons, Friends/Relatives (34.4%), Social Media (30.3%), Print Advertising (29.7%) and the Website (29.2%) were the most common ways patrons heard about Restaurant Week. First-time patrons, were most likely to have learned about the event from the Restaurant Week Website (38.5%), Friends/Relatives (28.8%), and Print Advertising (25.0%).

How did you hear about Restaurant Week?

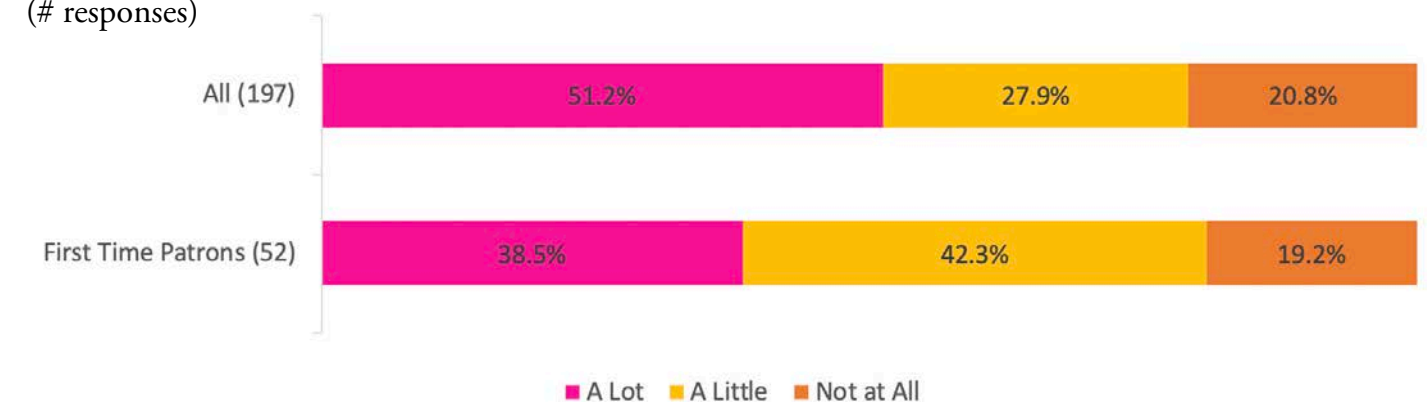
(# first-time respondents per year, respondents were instructed to choose all that apply)



Patrons were also asked whether Restaurant Week was a factor in their decision to visit Atlantic City. More than half of all respondents (51.2%) said that Restaurant Week factored 'A Lot' in their decision to visit the city, nearly a third (27.9%) said that Restaurant Week had 'A Little' effect on their decision, and two in 10 (20.8%) said that Restaurant Week did not factor into their decision. Among first time patrons, most (80.8%) said Restaurant Week at least factored 'A Little' if not 'A Lot' in their decision to come to Atlantic City.

Did Restaurant Week factor in your decision to visit Atlantic City this week?

(# responses)

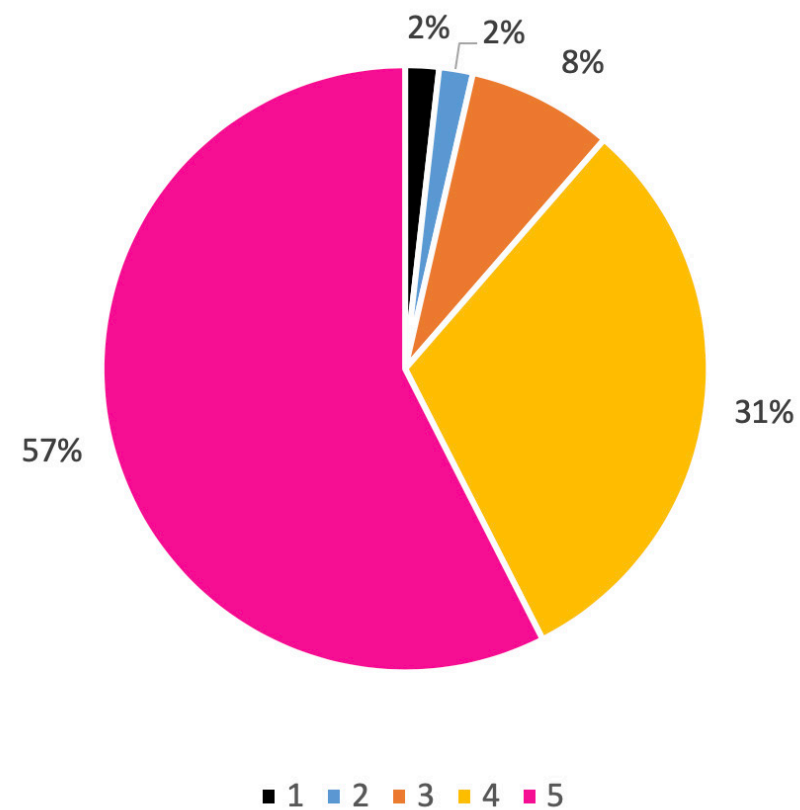




CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE: DOES RESTAURANT WEEK PROVIDE VALUE FOR PATRONS?

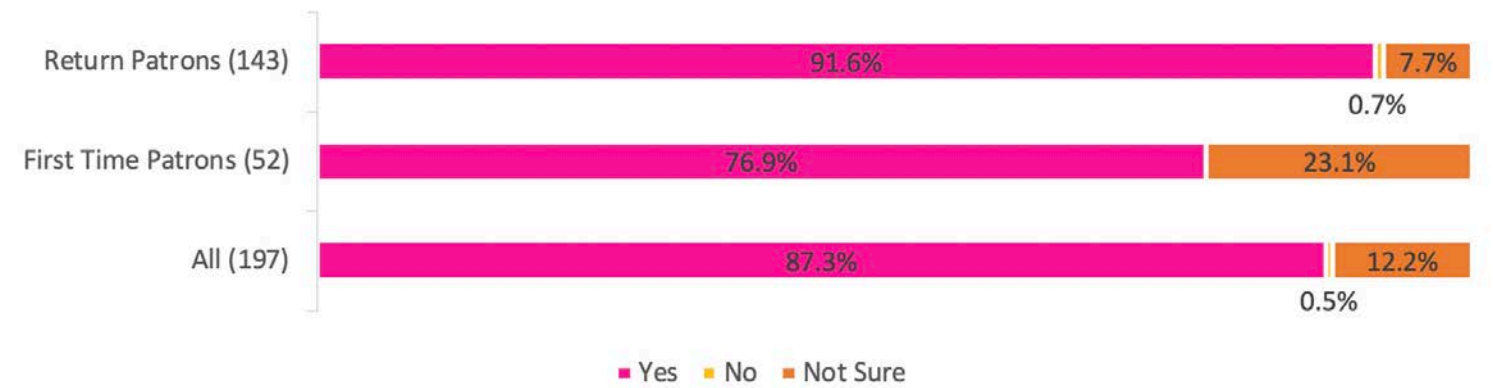
Atlantic City Restaurant Week continues to provide value for patrons with more than half of respondents (57.5%) rating the event 5 out of 5 for value.

On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest) please tell us if Atlantic City Restaurant Week provided a value for your group. (167 responses)



It is this value that keeps bringing patrons back each year. Both first-time and return patrons said they plan to return next year. After just one experience with Restaurant Week, 77% of first-time patrons said that they plan to return next year.

Do you plan to return for Restaurant Week next year? (# responses)

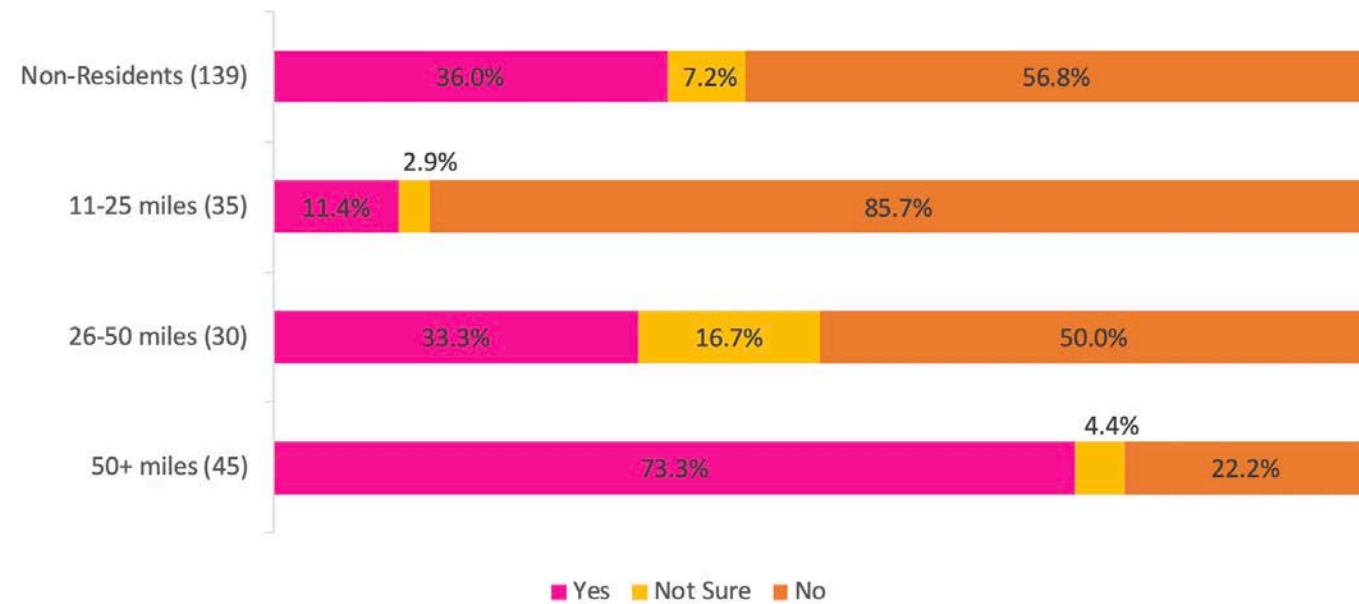




ECONOMIC IMPACT: WHAT OTHER ACTIVITIES DID RESTAURANT WEEK PATRONS PARTICIPATE IN?

Restaurant Week patrons included both Atlantic City residents and visitors from outside the local area. Among non-residents, 36% said that they would be staying in the Atlantic City area overnight. Patrons who traveled 50 miles or more were most likely to stay overnight; 73.3% said they would be staying in the Atlantic City area.

Will you be staying in the Atlantic City area overnight?
(# responses)



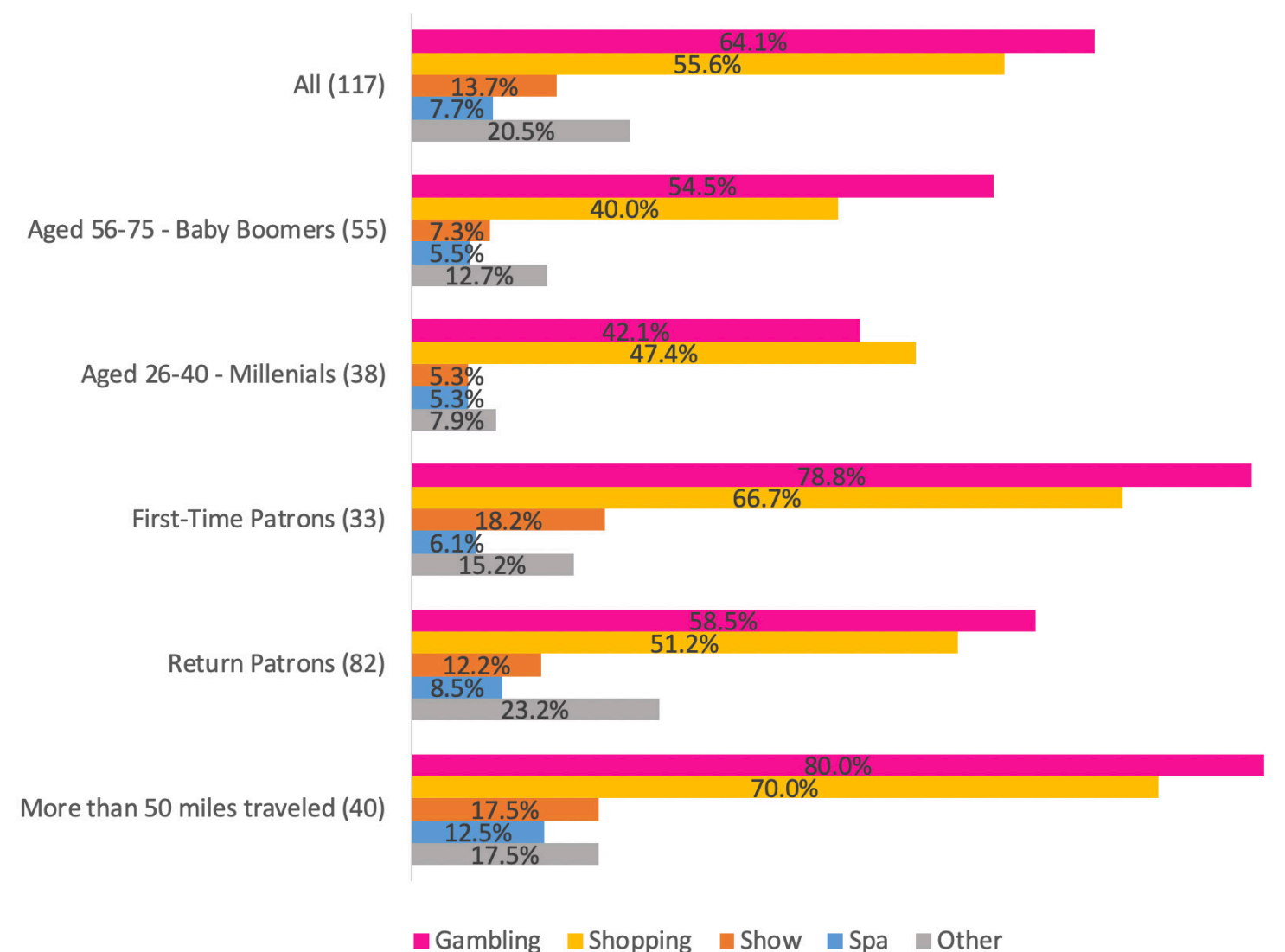
Restaurant Week patrons not only dined at area restaurants and stayed at local hotels, but also participated in other activities throughout the city. Gambling was the most popular activity for Restaurant Week patrons followed by shopping and other activities which included (text entries) clubbing/nightlife, walking the Boardwalk, seeing the organ at Boardwalk Hall and, in at least one case, axe throwing.

Millennials (age 26-24), like their Baby Boomer counterparts, shopped and gambled while visiting the city for Restaurant Week but they were more likely to shop than gamble.

First-time Restaurant Week patrons took advantage of Atlantic City's other amenities including gambling and shopping; 18.2% attended a show.

Patrons that traveled more than 50 miles likely stayed in Atlantic City longer than other patrons and had the opportunity to take advantage of more of the resort's amenities. In addition to gambling and shopping, 17.5% attended a show, and 12.5% received a spa service during their trip.

What other activities will you be participating in while here for Restaurant Week?
(# of respondents, respondents were instructed to choose all that apply)



DISCUSSION & Recommendations

In 2020, the Restaurant Week committee and The Lloyd D. Levenson Institute of Gaming Hospitality and Tourism (LIGHT) collected data from Restaurant Week patrons utilizing both an online and paper survey. Due to precautions related to the coronavirus outbreak only the online survey responses were used in this analysis. To allow for direct comparison, filters were applied to the 2019 and 2018 data sets to provide a pool of respondents similar to the scope of the 2020 sample. Analysis was restricted to responses received via online survey during the official span of Restaurant Week.

Restaurant Week patrons who responded to the 2020 survey visited 2.63 restaurants on average from March 8 through 13, 2020. This was more than 2019 when patrons averaged 2.35 restaurants and 2018 when patrons averaged 2.47 restaurants during their respective weeks. Party sizes were slightly larger in 2020, with respondents traveling with an average 2.87 members in their party compared to patrons visiting during Restaurant Week in 2019 (2.71) and 2018 (2.68).

Using the average party size and the fixed meal price for each respective year, an average spend per visit per respondent can be calculated. In 2020, survey respondents spent an average \$101.02 per restaurant visit, not including additional purchases such as wine and/or cocktails to accompany the meal. This compares to the average per-visit spend by respondents in 2019 (\$95.36), and 2018 (\$94.28). By multiplying this per visit spend with the average number of visits per respondent; a picture of Restaurant Week's economic impact on local restaurants begins to emerge. With an average group party size of 2.87 and an estimated 2.63 restaurants visited, each respondent in 2020 spent approximately \$265.68 total at participating restaurants during Restaurant Week. This compares favorably to 2019 when respondents each spent \$224.10 on average and 2018 when respondents spent \$232.87. This estimate does not account for any additional purchases (i.e. wine and cocktails) which patrons may have made at the restaurants during their visit.

Given the limitations of the 2020 survey, and the relatively small comparative sample sizes, any

conclusions drawn must be taken with caution. That data from each of the three years shows strong similarities suggests Restaurant Week 2020, before the ordered closures, was on track to be as successful as prior years.

One notable area in which 2020 data diverges from 2019 and 2018 is in the ratio of return visitors. The 2020 patrons were proportionately more likely to be return visitors than in previous years. This could be a function of increased familiarity with the online survey platform by return visitors or an indicator that early concern over the outbreak suppressed visitation from patrons without previous experience of the event.

Without knowing the total number of Restaurant Week attendees, it is impossible to gauge the total economic impact even the abbreviated event had on Atlantic City restaurants. With an estimated average \$265.68 spent at local restaurants, the 157 patrons who completed the 2020 survey contributed \$41,711.76 to the local economy in a single week of activity. If these patrons represented 25% of all Restaurant Week attendees the resulting spending would be greater than \$150,000. This unfortunately is a fraction of the activity generated

by Restaurant Week 2019. Using the full sample from 2019, including both online and paper surveys from a two week period, 815 Restaurant Week patrons spent an estimated \$205.89 on average contributing \$167,800 to the local economy. If the 2019 sample represented 25% of total attendees the resulting spending may have equaled more than half a million dollars.

Restaurant spending is just one facet of the economic activity generated by Restaurant Week every year. Visitors may come to Atlantic City for Restaurant Week, but they also

gamble, shop and take advantage of all the resort's other amenities. The Restaurant Week Committee's efforts to promote the event also have the added benefit of promoting Atlantic City as a year-round destination for fine dining. Restaurant Week patrons, who enjoyed their experience at local restaurants, are likely to become return customers for these businesses. Even those who are unable to visit Atlantic City during Restaurant Week itself may be encouraged to visit at another time based on the positive exposure and visitor testimonials generated by the event.

Works Cited
Bureau, United States Census. (2019, May 29). Quick Facts. Retrieved from www.census.gov: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/NJ.atlanticcitynewjersey,atlanticcountynewjersey/PST040218>



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