

UK Visitors' and Non-visitors' Experiences and Perceptions of Oxfordshire July 2026



Summary of survey key findings

Purpose of the survey

The results of the survey provide an objective view of the wider public's experiences and perceptions of Oxfordshire as a visitor destination, including opinions about their most recent trips, key destinations visited within the county and comparisons with other destinations within the UK. It provides insights into the profile of Oxfordshire's visitors and reveals reasons potential visitors choose not to visit. It measures the latest impacts of the current cost of living and assesses perceptions about sustainability.

Who responded to the survey?

Experience Oxfordshire commissioned Destination Research to conduct the consumer survey among visitors and non-visitors to Oxfordshire. The results are based on a national online panel survey of consumers using a structured questionnaire and provides an objective view of the wider public, identifying what the average person thinks of Oxfordshire. The report is based on a sample of 416 visitors and 172 non-visitors.

How appealing do visitors find Oxfordshire as a destination?

The survey reveals that perceptions of Oxfordshire differ sharply between those who have visited and those who have not. The data highlights that those who have visited tend to view Oxfordshire positively, while non-visitors lack awareness and have weaker impressions of Oxfordshire's visitor offer.

68% of visitors responding state they have visited multiple times over the last three years with 21% visiting several times per year. 71% of visitors responding find Oxfordshire appealing and 83% of visitors say they are likely to visit again.

30% of non-visitors said they had no particular reason for not choosing to visit Oxfordshire, 38% of non-visitors said they did not know enough about Oxfordshire to have an opinion of the county and 15% had a negative view of Oxfordshire despite never having visited.

Why do visitors choose Oxfordshire as a destination?

The top five of the multiple reasons why visitors chose to visit Oxfordshire was for its history and heritage (34%); range of attractions (30%); experiences (26%); arts & culture (25%) and to visit family & friends (21%).

When presented with a list of attributes they might associate with Oxfordshire, 42% of visitors responding equated Oxfordshire with history and 40% with heritage, 28% recognise it as a centre for museums and galleries, 28% for arts and culture and 13% as offering events and festivals. 30% equate Oxfordshire with attractive countryside, 13% with gardens to visit and 21% as an area for walking and cycling. 50% of respondents find it easy to travel to Oxfordshire from their home.

When asked to rate the county against a range of attributes relating to their overall experience, visitors scored Oxfordshire highly for a general feeling of safety; the range & quality of hospitality; the range & quality of visitor attractions; the quality of cultural scene and the cleanliness of public spaces.

Where do people stay and how and when do they make their booking?

The majority, 49%, of respondents had stayed in serviced accommodation during their most recent overnight stay with 18% using self-catering accommodation and 13% staying with friends or family. 25% of visitors stayed in an AirBnB/VRBO home stay (room or full home) listed establishment.

41% booked directly with the establishment, (online, via email or phone) and 51% made their booking within one month of arrival (22% during the week before) and a further 9% booked on arrival. 27% of respondents had booked accommodation through Booking.com.

How do visitors spend their time in Oxfordshire?

The City of Oxford was the most visited destination amongst respondents with the towns of Oxford, Bicester, Henley, Banbury, Chipping Norton, Burford, Woodstock, Abingdon, Witney, Thame all receiving a notable number of visits.

The five most popular activities, according to 39% of respondents, was visiting a café, pub or restaurant with 26% sightseeing and exploring different areas, 25% visiting an attraction, 21% visiting friends and relatives and 19% shopping for something of a special nature.