

Cape May County Tourism Conference

MAINTAINING 'NORMAL' IN A
CHANGING TOURISM INDUSTRY

Escape

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AUTHENTICALLY CHARMING. *Sincerely Yours.*

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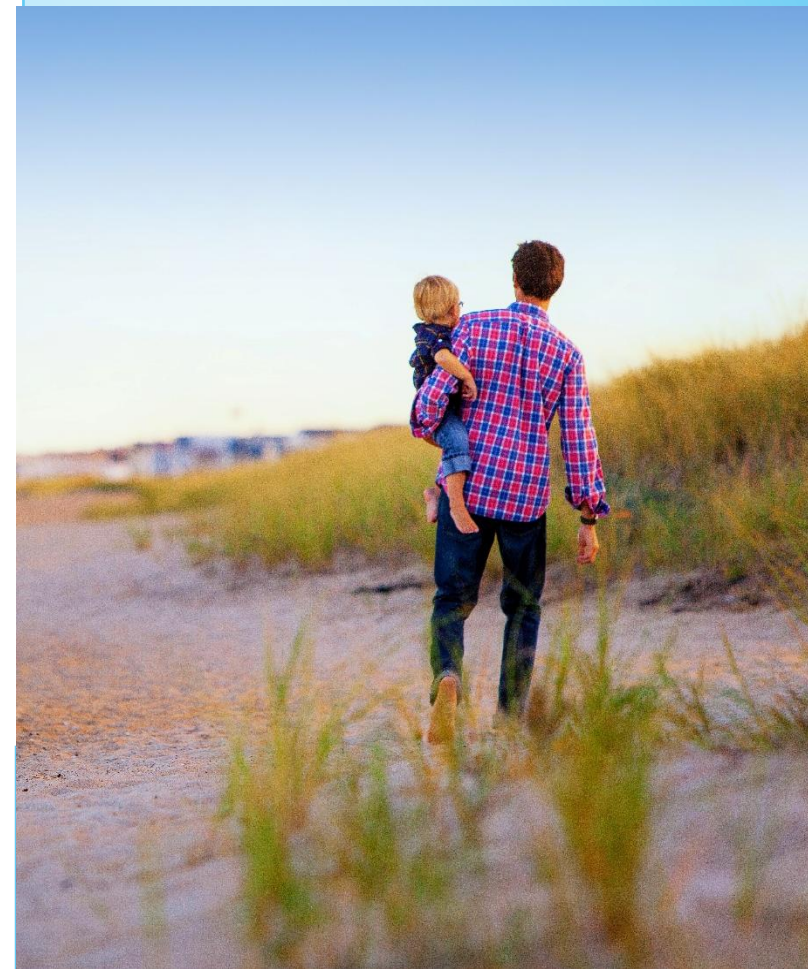
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Cape May County Department of Tourism

5/15/2025

The Economy's Impact on Tourism



The economy greatly impacts tourism and is considered one of the most fragile industries worldwide. Over the last 15 years, tourism has faced a high number of natural disasters like hurricanes and tsunamis, wars, civil unrest, health and physical safety concerns, political changes, sustainability issues, and an

uncertain economy. These challenges create fear about the future of the hospitality industry.

Cape May County has also faced its share of disasters that have affected countywide businesses, infrastructure, and reputation as a premier destination. However, we have also witnessed the resilience and determination of our tourism leaders, businesses, and government officials, which have helped us remain strong, recover, and grow. The flexibility and adaptability of our tourism industry are evident in the survival mentality of the business community, showcasing their grit as they repair, replace, and upgrade their properties in the aftermath to welcome return visitors and attract new customers.

During the shoulder season, construction sounds fill the resort towns. By summer, they are ready to welcome over 12 million visitors to Jersey Cape.

Despite various challenges, the Cape May County tourism industry consistently strives to renew and reinvent itself to meet market demands, thus creating opportunities for growth and job expansion. Since 1994, following the release of economic impact data, Cape May County has experienced annual growth, except in 2020. In 1994, the economic impact was \$2 billion, growing to \$6 billion over the past 20 years.

Family-owned businesses contribute significantly to Cape May County's largest industry, ensuring tourism remains stable during challenging periods. In 2019, Cape May County saw \$6.9 billion in direct tourism spending. In 2020, visitor spending decreased to \$5.4 billion. By 2021, spending recovered by 94% from 2019 levels. In 2022, tourism spending reached \$7.4 billion and full recovery and \$7.7 billion in 2023. As of 2024, visitor spending has grown by \$2.7 billion, exceeding national recovery predictions. Cape May County remains a leader in the state for visitor spending.

Economic conditions affect tourism both in the United States and globally. Factors like inflation, stagnant incomes, employment rates, exchange rates, and social and political issues can impact people's ability and willingness to travel. Although tourism can boost local economies by increasing service demand, creating jobs, and generating revenue, economic downturns reduce travel numbers and harm tourism destinations.

Cape May County is expected to continue similar growth in 2025, despite a decline in Canadian visitors. Industry professionals indicate a strong 2025 summer season, with a 3.9% overall growth rate forecast for the United States, as 72% of Americans plan to take a road trip. Travel experts are predicting similar trends as in 2024, with all forecasting that this will be the year of the Road Trip. This is a good trend as a growing number of travelers are opting to extend their vacations to accommodate stops en route to their destination. This trend, along with compatible trends, fit Cape May County perfectly.

With the dropping fuel prices, rising costs of air travel, compliance with REAL ID requirements for domestic flights, and issues related to flight delays and cancellations, many travelers are seeking vacations that minimize hassles and are taking to the road to discover new experiences at their own pace. The road trip decision is influenced by several factors, with economic considerations being primary. Road trips allow travelers to enjoy the journey and visit multiple locations while they experience authentic, meaningful adventures along the way. This is referred to as *detour destinations* and accounts for 63% of road trip planning. To reach these vacation planners, it is not a bad idea to mention sites along the way that can enhance the drive and make it more relaxing and make the journey more immersive and memorable.

Economic factors are crucial and impact tourism in many ways, as price-sensitive travelers are increasingly searching for affordable options with a potential decline in disposable income. With 42% of our visitors indicating that the economy affected their vacation plans. Additionally, last-minute bookings are becoming more common, with many people reserving accommodations a month or less in advance. This trend, which began in 2022, continues to rise as travelers seek spontaneity in their travels. While this approach isn't suitable for everyone, a considerable number of travelers, most notably Millennials, Gen Y, prefer more flexible booking schedules that let them adjust plans based on current conditions or unexpected issues or opportunities. Many travel planners are also reassessing their budgets due to economic uncertainty and planning and booking closer to their vacation dates.

The New Normal

The "new normal" concept has been discussed in recent years, and it's time to recognize that this new reality has become the norm and is here to stay. The Tourism Department monitors year-over-year visitor spending, and we can confidently say that steady growth has returned, and the outlook remains positive. Industry standards consider steady growth in the 3-5% range normal growth. Cape May County 2024 visitor spending grew 5% to \$8.1 billion, an increase of \$387.9 million over 2023.

Based on benchmarks like Occupancy Tax collection and traffic counts, we expected growth in the 4-5% range and achieved 5%, second only to Hudson County, with 6%, and a \$164.6 million increase. Data from *Tourism Economics* and the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism show Jersey Cape saw a solid 5% growth compared to 2023. Our benchmarks were solid metrics that helped guide us.

The last two years started a new norm with an average growth rate of 4% for Cape May County. While this growth doesn't match the peaks of 2021 and 2022, where we saw an 11% rise in visitor spending due to "revenge tourism", it marks a significant recovery from pandemic losses. We likely won't see similar growth soon.

Cape May County is well-aligned with emerging travel trends and has demonstrated its ability to adapt to new developments that may influence business operations and marketing strategies for the destination. One notable trend in travel is the increasing tendency to book accommodations closer to vacation dates, reflecting the flexible schedules of families and friends and accommodating last-minute plans.

According to a survey by YouGov.com, 26% of travelers book their trips within 30 days of departure in hopes of securing better deals. Travelers are increasingly comparing options and adjusting dates and lodging to fit their budgets, often seeking mid-week specials and shoulder season rates. Technological advancements and online booking platforms have streamlined the reservation process, benefiting both leisure and business travelers and enabling them to book closer to planned dates or select vacation dates based on availability. Remote workers have the flexibility to plan and extend their vacation dates in real-time according to their work schedules. Local hoteliers have noted a slowdown in reservations compared to previous years, which may be attributed to this trend.

Travel planners have become more price-sensitive, actively searching for affordable options. According to our visitor survey, of the 42% that said the economy impacted their vacation spending, 28% reduced the duration of their stays to remain within budget constraints. 42% are cutting down on expenditures related to food and beverages, 44% cut retail purchases, 28% cut attractions, and 21% cut recreational activities. With 24% opting for grab-and-go breakfasts and lunches as a cost-saving measure to afford prioritized activities. It was further noted that there has been an increase in attendance at free concerts, movies, and festivals, as visitors seek to maximize the value of their vacations.

Current travel trends emphasize destinations that offer dream experiences, eco-friendly trips, and road travel. Individuals now prioritize immersive experiences over material possessions, choosing to spend more on bucket list adventures rather than physical items. A new sub-trend called "nostalgification" has emerged, focusing on reliving childhood vacation memories, visiting roadside attractions, retro hotels,

and dining experiences. This trend aligns well with the offerings of Cape May County, each resort town providing unique and authentic experiences that have become beloved over generations. Options such as Victorian, Mid-Century (Doo Wop), Modern, and Camping lodging choices, paired with boardwalks, boating, biking, and parades, will attract the interest of travel planners and should be integral to our marketing strategy.

The Tourism Department promotes Jersey Cape as "authentically charming," inviting visitors to select vacation options that evoke cherished memories. "Memory Lane Journeys" resonate particularly well with road trip enthusiasts seeking genuine and enriching travel experiences, perfectly aligning with our 'authentically charming, sincerely yours' message. This concept emphasizes the collection of 'souvenirs of the soul' through sights, sounds, aromas, and family memories that remain long after the trip concludes. The "Sincerely Yours" theme underscores the personalized nature of planning these vacations, allowing visitors to tailor their experience according to their own preferences.

The extension of the summer season into fall and winter has resulted in a 4.9% increase in Occupancy Tax collections, benefiting all sectors of tourism. Events during the shoulder seasons draw visitors for both day trips and overnight stays. Shoulder season Occupancy Tax accounted for approximately half of the tax collected during the spring and summer months. Marketing efforts from the Department of Tourism, along with initiatives from Southern Shore DMO and local chambers, have supported the expansion of the shoulder season through advertising, public relations, and special events. Fall events have contributed to extending the traditional summer season. Special events are currently scheduled

every weekend in resort towns and mainland communities. The success of fall events has led to the addition of winter events, mainly around the holiday season. Interest in experiencing local culture has increased the number of winter overnight and day visitors, with second homeowners returning to participate in these special events.

The traditional 100-day tourist season is over, and Cape May County has moved to a 6–9-month season. Second homeowners, who comprise 47% of county dwellings, visit year-round for holidays and family events. Fall and winter vacations are now popular, increasing Cape May County's off-season visitors. Nearly half (49%) take multiple vacations to the Jersey Cape, taking two or more vacations each year. Online booking platforms like Airbnb and VRBO are aiding in the growth of off-peak stays. Trivago, Bookings.com, and Expedia are also working to increase visitors year-round. Despite labor issues causing some early closures, many businesses remain open.

In 2024, Cape May County's tourism hit \$8.1 billion, a 5% rise, trailing only Atlantic County's \$8.2 billion. Cape May led in food and beverage, retail, and recreation spending. Lodging revenue, which includes rentals and casino spending, put Atlantic County first by \$1 billion. Visitor spending grew by 5%, with increases across all sectors, reaching \$8.1 billion and making up 16% of statewide tourism spending, the second highest growth in New Jersey. Visitor numbers increased by 4.6% to 12.1 million, representing 9.8% of state tourists. Overnight visitors rose by 3.2% to 7.42 million, and day trippers increased by 6.8% to 3.7 million. On average, each visitor spends \$669.07 per trip.

Cape May County Tourism Economic Impacts

Total Direct Tourism Expenditures in 2024 - \$8.102 Billion

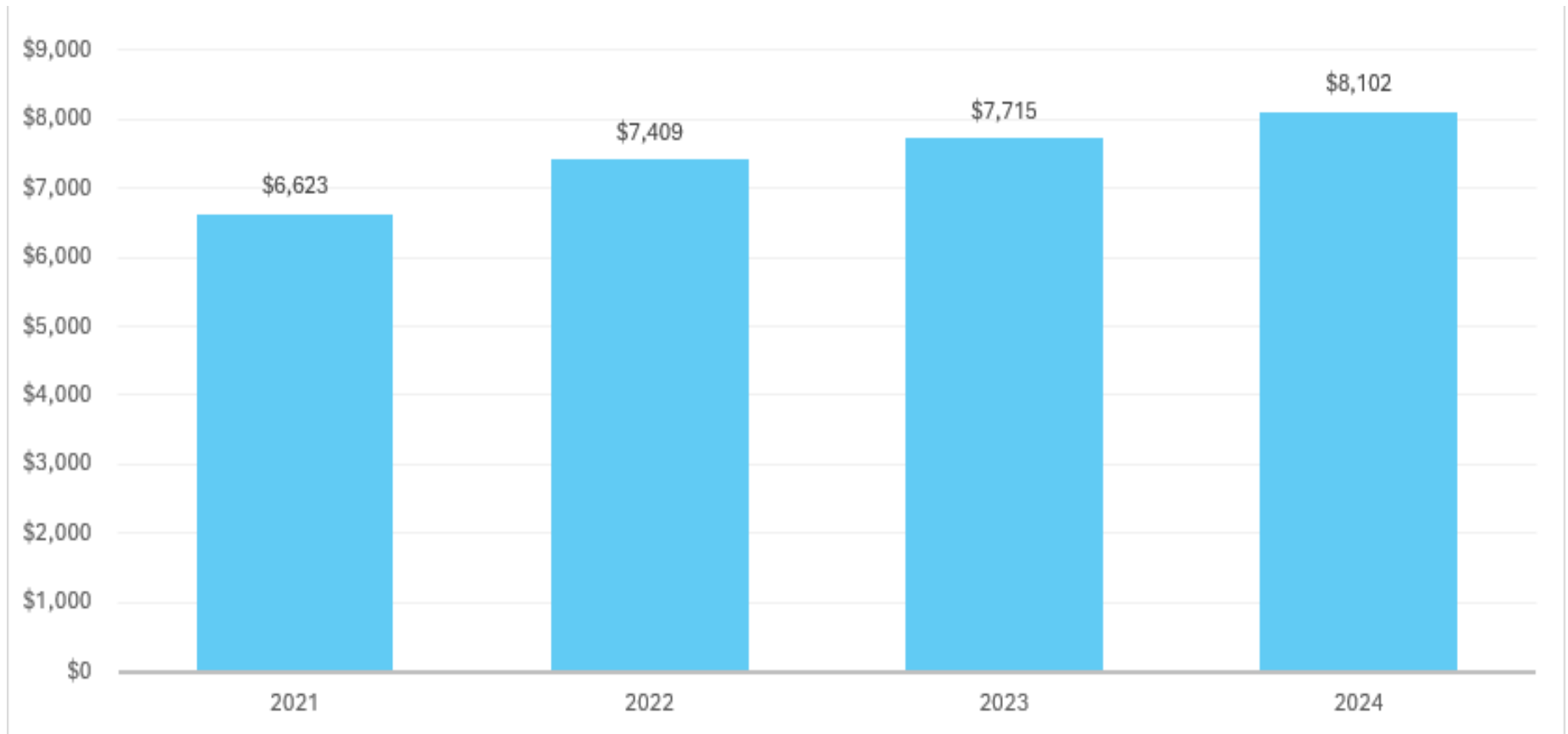
Representing a 5% or \$388 million increase in visitor spending over 2023.

Lodging	Food & Beverage	Retail	Recreation	Transportation
\$3.344 billion	\$1.87 billion	\$1.52 billion	\$828.1 million	\$546.3 million

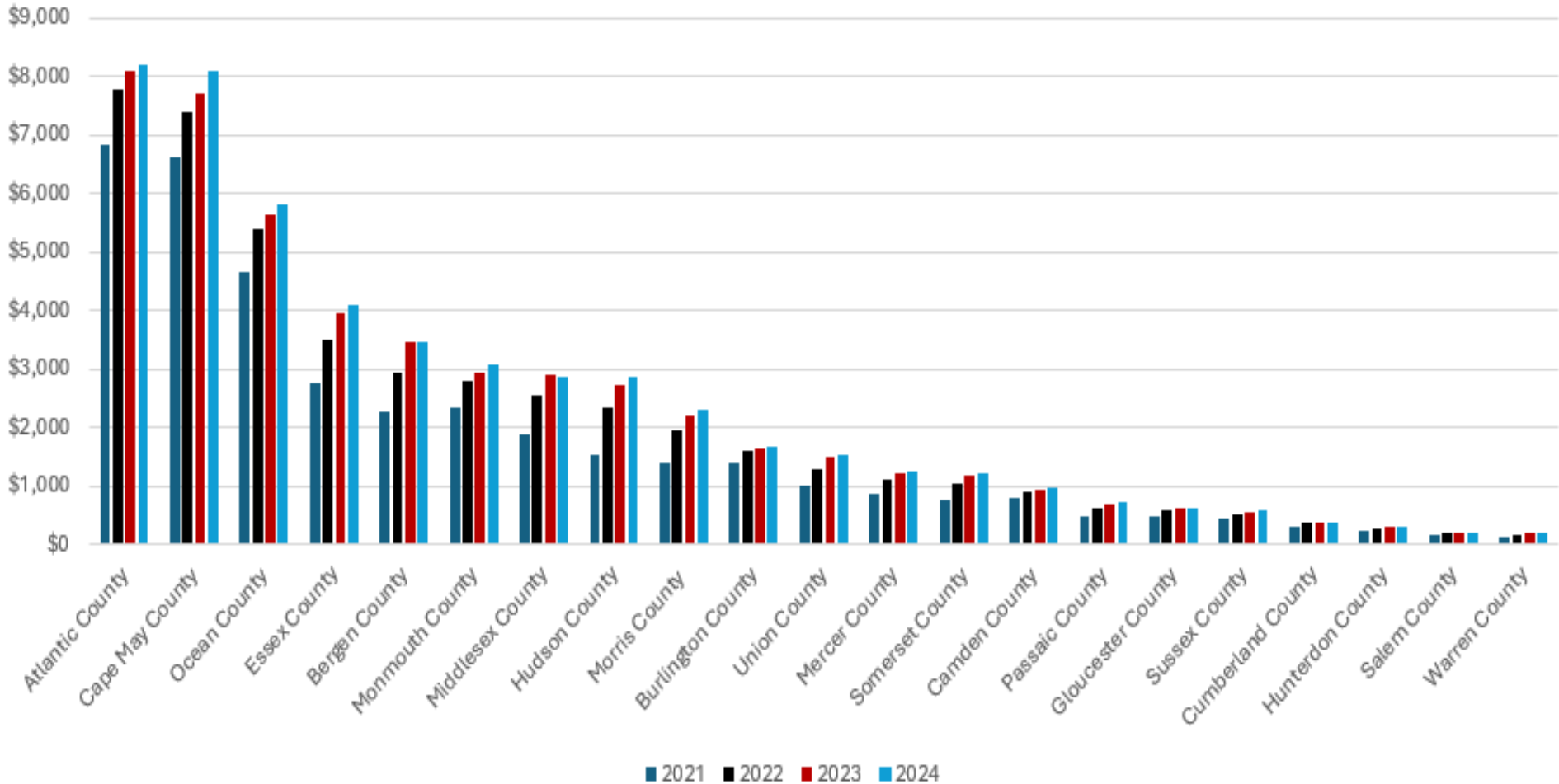
- Cape May County ranks second to Atlantic County in total direct spending. Lodging included second home rentals and casino spending. Transportation includes both ground and air transportation. In-person spending in Atlantic City was \$2.81 billion.
- Cape May County outpaced all other counties in Food & Beverage, Retail, and Recreation.
- All sectors measured experienced growth in 2024, with a 5% total increase in visitor spending.
- Cape May County generated \$668.5 million in State and Local Taxes, an increase of 4.9%. (\$1.83 million per day) 13.4% of the total share collected in New Jersey.
- Visitor-supported direct jobs 32,051, an increase of 2.3%; 44.7% share of local employment, and 9.6% share of total tourism jobs in New Jersey.
- Total visitor-supported direct and indirect tourism jobs 41,703 or 58.1% of total county jobs.
- Total visitor volume 12.11 million, an increase of 4.6%, and 9.8% of total visitors to New Jersey. 7.41 million Overnight trips, up 3.2%; and 13.8% total share of overnight trips in New Jersey. 4.70 million day trips, up 6.8%, and 6.7% of the total share of day trips to New Jersey.

- 2024 Occupancy Tax generated - \$23,066,528.58 an increase of 4.91%

Cape May County Tourism Expenditures Represented by Billions of Dollars



Tourism Expenditures by County Represented by Billions of Dollars

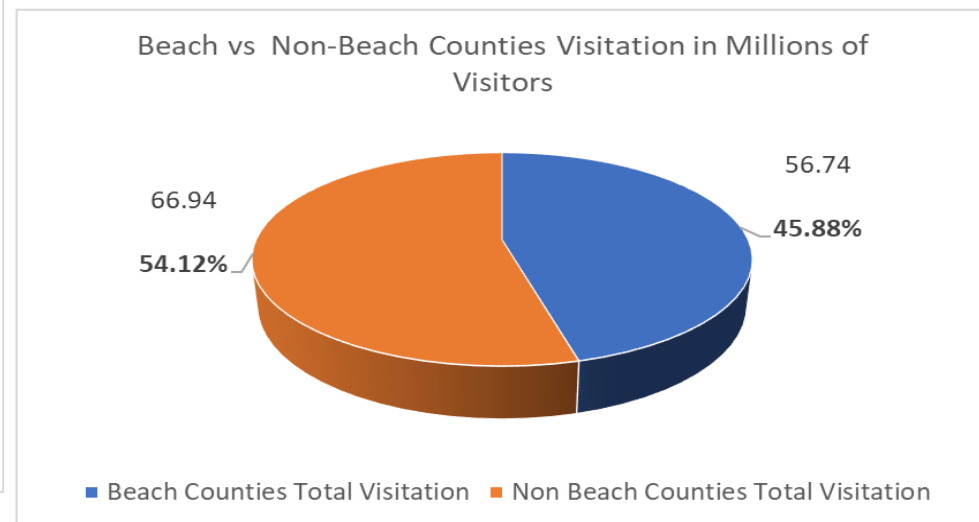
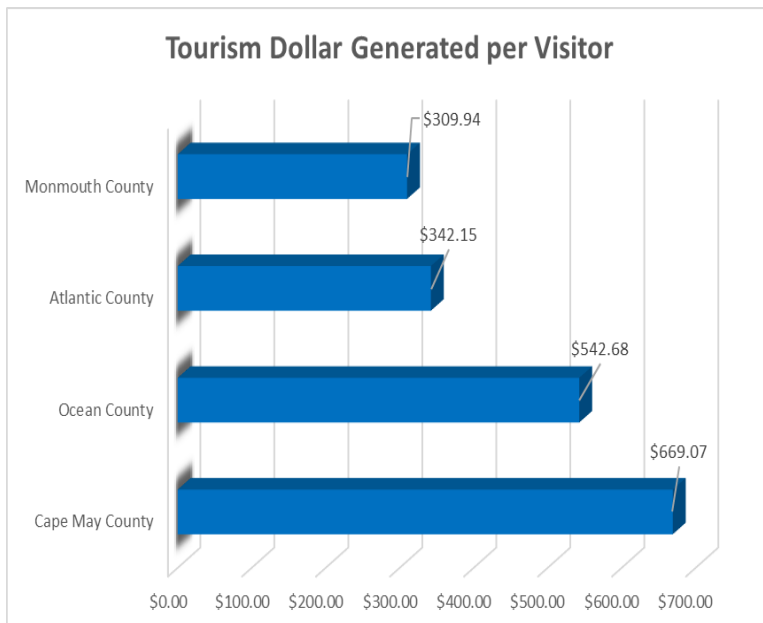
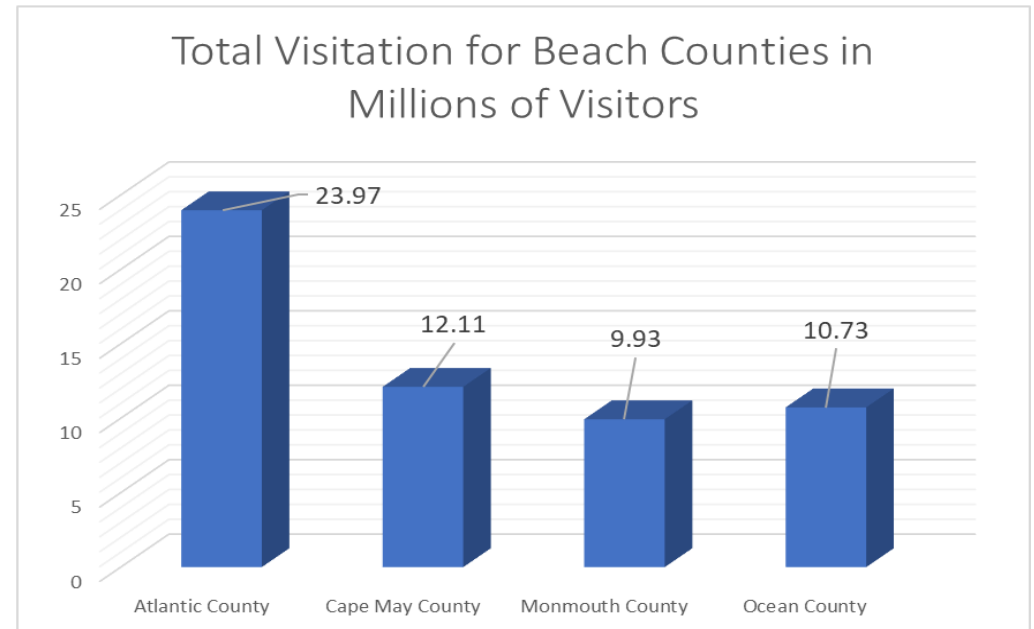


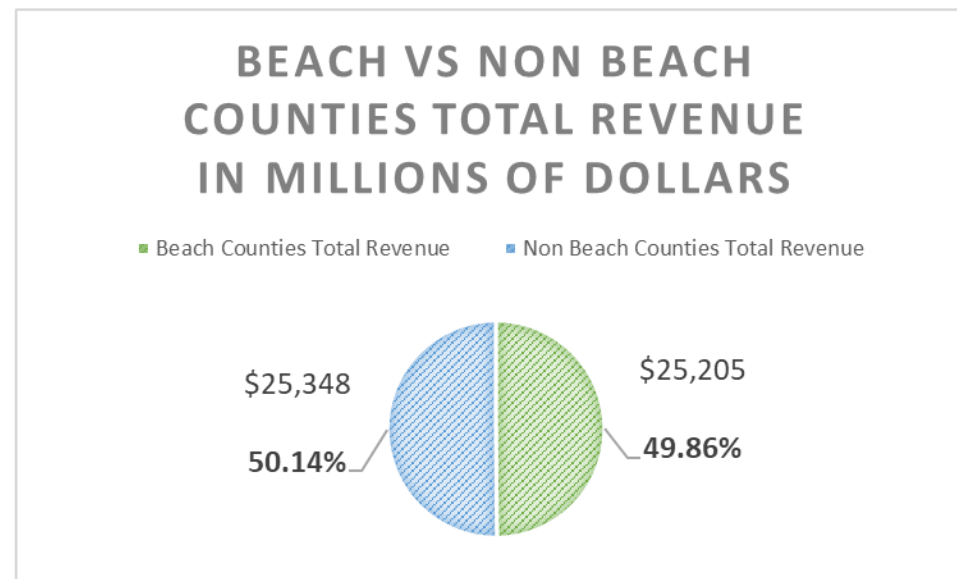
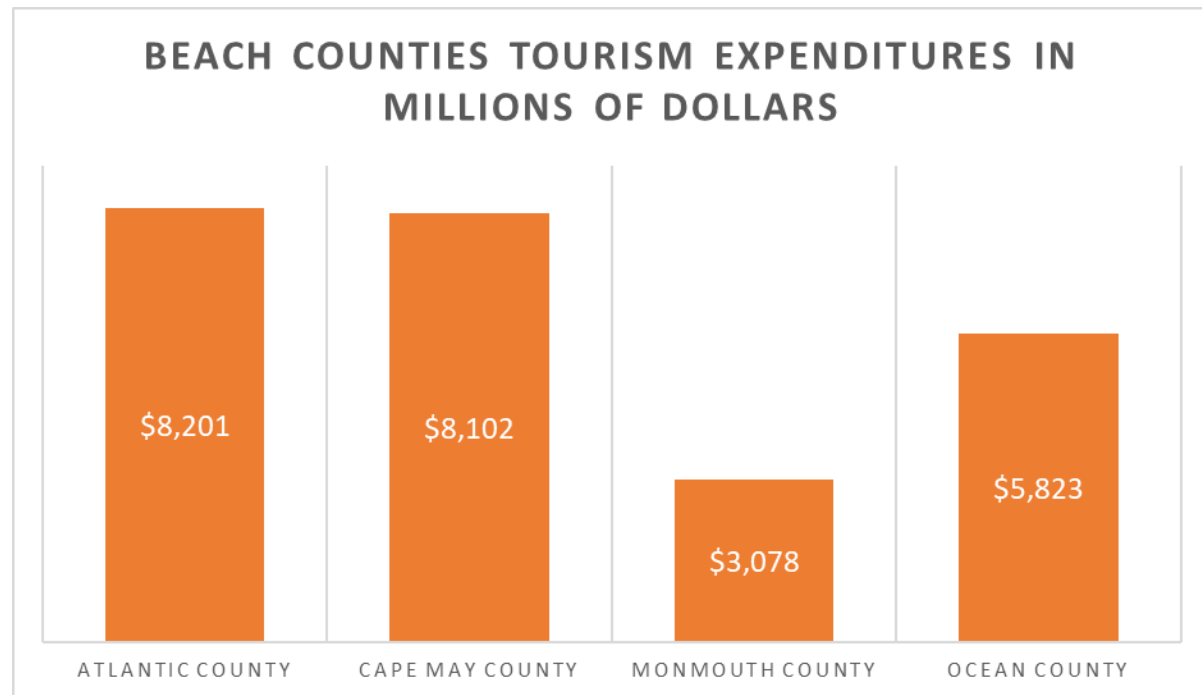
Atlantic County generated \$8.2 billion with 23.97 million visitors in 2024. (\$4342.24 per visitor)

Cape May County generated \$8.1 billion in visitor spending with 12.11 million visitors in 2024. (\$669.07 per visitor)

Ocean County generated \$5.8 billion with 10.73 visitors in 2024. (\$542.68 per visitor)

Monmouth County generated \$3.07 billion with 9.93 million visitors in 2024. (\$342.15 per visitor)





2024 Occupancy Tax

Occupancy Tax and been around since 2005, and we have been discussing it since 2006, when we realized that there was something wrong with the funding distribution from the room tax that was supported by the tourism industry and created to fund Tourism, the Arts, and History. In 2024 Occupancy Tax collected statewide was \$193,903,308.99. Based on data listed on Tourism, Arts, and History websites, the total amount of funding through grants was \$49,500,060. Based on the data available, 25.5% of the funding collected was allocated to the three entities that the fees were supposed to support.

The law when written in 2005 stipulated that 40% of the occupancy collected would go to support Tourism, Arts, and History. The law reads as follows:

*(2)of the fees collected for **occupancies** during State Fiscal Year **2005** and thereafter: 22.68 percent shall be annually allocated for appropriation to the **New Jersey** State Council on the **Arts** for cultural projects, provided that the amount allocated shall not be less than \$22,680,000; 3.84 percent shall be allocated for appropriation to the **New Jersey Historical** Commission for the purposes of subsection a. of section 3 of P.L.1999, c.131 (C.18A:73-22.3), provided that the amount allocated shall not be less than \$3,840,000; 12.76 percent shall be allocated for appropriation to the **New Jersey** Commerce and Economic Growth Commission for **tourism** advertising and promotion, provided that the amount allocated shall not be less than \$12,760,000; and .72 percent shall be allocated for appropriation to the **New Jersey** Cultural Trust, provided that the amount allocated shall not be less than \$720,000.*

Over the 20 years since the Occupancy Tax was established, the amount collected has grown substantially, yet the return via grants has not for many, especially those who generate the most. From 2016 to 2024, Cape May County's Occupancy Tax collection more than doubled, increasing by more than 50%, from \$11.418 million to \$23.067 million, an increase of \$11.649 over 8 years.

Cape May County, the second highest generator of Occupancy Tax statewide, collected \$23,067 million in Occupancy Tax in 2024 and received a return of 6% or \$1.4 million. In comparison, 2 counties receive more than 100% return and one county received 88.5% return.

The top 5 generators of this tax include -

Bergen County - \$24,224,494 collected and 5.72% return or \$1.38 million

Cape May County - \$23,066,528 collected and 6% return or \$1.4 million

Middlesex County - \$22,436,931 collected and 12.48% return or \$2.3 million

Hudson County – 17,254,876 collected and 8% return or \$1.38 million

Morris County - \$15,810,967 collected and 14.5% return or \$2.29 million

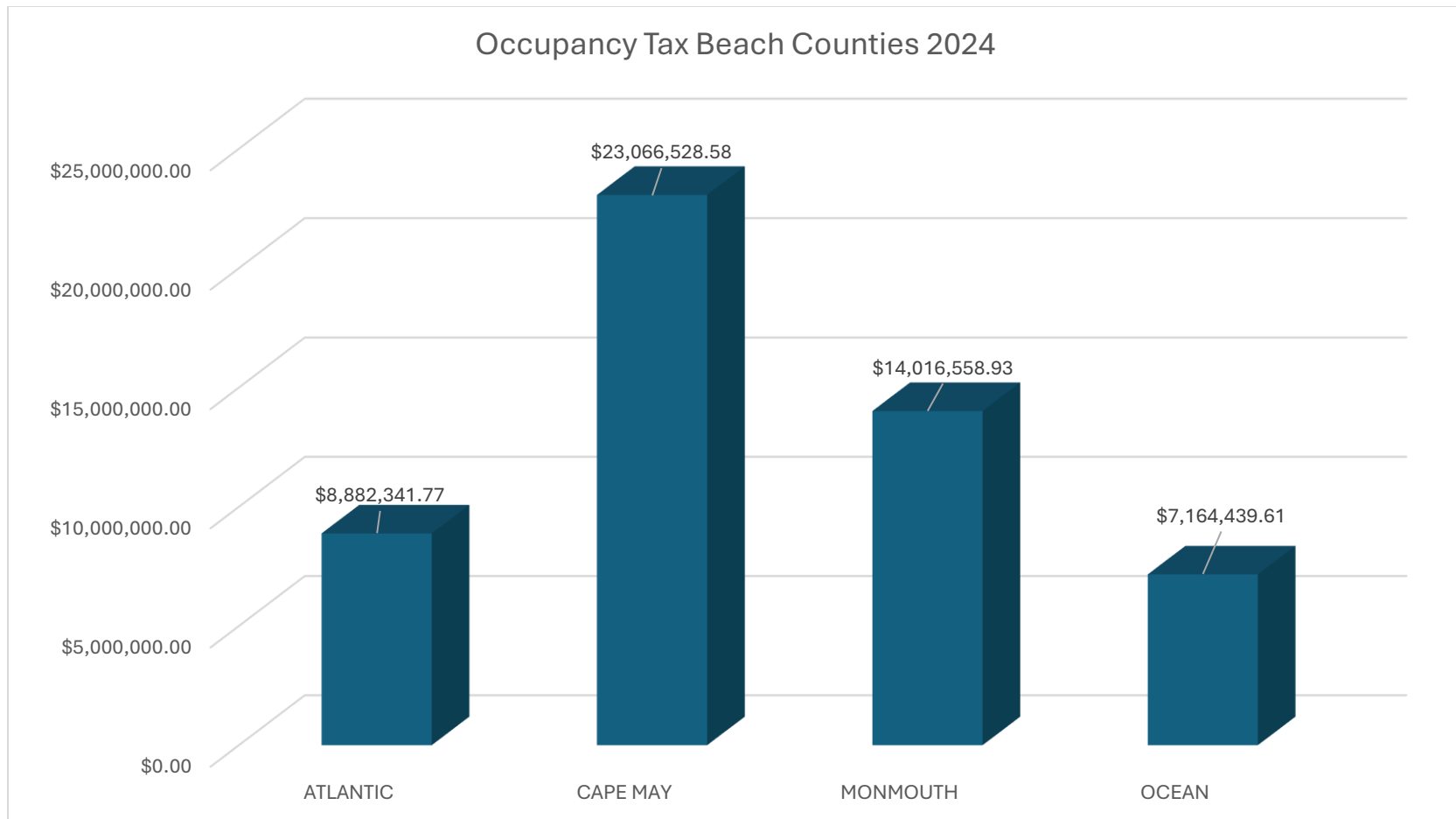
Five of 21 counties generated \$80.36 million of the \$194 million collected statewide and saw a return of \$8.75 million in 2024. The breakdown equates to those 5 counties generated 41% of the total dollars collected in Occupancy Tax and received 21.5% of the dollars allocated through Tourism, Arts and History grants. The formula is flawed with no incentive to work harder.

Cape May County 2024 Occupancy Tax by Month

	2022	% Change	2023	% Change	2024	% Change
				2022		2023
Jan	\$185,209.26	103.27%	\$318,002.47	71.70%	\$449,363.46	41.31%
Feb	\$229,955.47	107.70%	\$424,966.12	84.80%	\$502,668.10	18.28%
Mar	\$322,408.96	39.90%	\$549,409.91	70.41%	\$656,919.97	19.57%
Apr	\$641,567.13	49.02%	\$807,684.39	25.89%	\$772,867.88	-4.31%
May	\$1,340,917.61	17.10%	\$1,555,113.96	15.97%	\$1,675,755.94	7.76%
June	\$2,973,752.60	17.72%	\$3,297,817.05	10.90%	\$3,537,897.67	7.28%
July	\$4,719,041.68	12.74%	\$5,288,929.09	12.08%	\$5,373,561.19	1.60%
Aug	\$4,811,223.97	16.94%	\$5,211,879.08	8.33%	\$5,374,967.74	3.13%
Sept	\$2,394,749.20	19.47%	\$2,439,872.30	1.88%	\$2,298,262.58	-5.80%
Oct	\$854,630.52	8.01%	\$941,229.04	10.13%	\$1,088,286.02	15.62%
Nov	\$409,804.53	32.93%	\$485,834.08	18.55%	\$565,884.08	16.48%
Dec	\$519,014.17	44.29%	\$666,683.88	28.45%	\$770,093.95	15.51%
Total	\$19,402,275.10	19.05%	\$21,987,421.37	13.32%	\$23,066,528.58	4.91%
1st Quarter	\$737,573.69	70.62%	\$1,292,378.50	75.22%	\$1,608,951.53	24.50%
2nd Quarter	\$4,956,237.34	20.83%	\$5,660,615.40	14.21%	\$5,986,521.49	5.76%
3rd Quarter	\$11,925,014.85	15.73%	\$12,940,680.47	8.52%	\$13,046,791.51	0.82%
4th Quarter	\$1,783,449.22	22.22%	\$2,093,747.00	17.40%	\$2,424,264.05	15.79%
Jun-Aug	\$12,504,018.25	15.50%	\$13,798,625.22	10.35%	\$14,286,426.60	3.54%
April-Oct	\$17,735,882.71	16.70%	\$19,542,524.91	10.19%	\$20,121,599.02	2.96%

2024 - Occupancy Tax by County

	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Total
ATLANTIC	447,857.85	510,398.15	546,206.40	658,515.68	818,566.44	1,114,619.37	1,344,253.78	1,182,578.98	705,225.11	597,102.44	523,242.82	433,774.12	8,882,341.77
BERGEN	1,325,687.31	1,363,827.98	1,760,651.31	1,898,695.48	2,284,266.53	2,266,229.54	2,194,686.09	2,136,590.83	2,370,257.79	2,497,070.25	1,926,378.07	2,200,153.63	24,224,494.76
BURLINGTON	577,053.55	624,400.48	696,087.23	883,609.46	934,090.55	949,772.98	875,998.12	912,255.40	770,281.36	799,883.30	742,747.87	592,193.11	9,358,373.63
CAMDEN	252,757.59	267,894.68	342,061.89	434,128.53	447,989.27	455,833.71	406,908.16	387,312.94	372,748.64	407,603.33	314,022.19	308,041.24	4,397,302.03
CAPE MAY	449,363.46	502,668.10	656,919.97	772,867.88	1,675,755.94	3,537,897.67	5,373,561.19	5,374,967.74	2,298,262.04	1,088,286.02	565,884.08	770,093.95	23,066,529.25
CUMBERLAND	89,508.28	100,404.59	125,457.94	150,428.89	164,347.33	197,462.58	201,494.69	176,100.94	165,059.09	161,354.06	139,630.01	107,488.95	1,778,738.16
ESSEX	447,902.33	479,392.23	606,295.55	638,618.97	711,835.48	775,287.33	683,476.76	699,469.54	757,262.58	759,540.74	681,642.73	665,051.75	7,905,776.20
GLOUCESTER	205,241.72	205,706.24	257,003.72	321,236.93	317,369.83	333,815.72	295,845.66	287,536.05	279,841.44	296,214.23	268,479.89	210,303.63	3,278,595.11
HUDSON	767,083.43	782,707.73	1,232,355.91	1,319,408.17	1,559,472.30	1,582,935.51	1,568,369.34	1,536,223.82	1,818,217.11	1,881,809.37	1,432,808.54	1,773,485.27	17,254,877.67
HUNTERDON	104,145.40	95,079.81	107,053.34	136,183.30	163,848.47	188,100.49	169,262.82	174,012.43	166,659.58	203,288.62	153,380.97	127,905.00	1,788,920.20
MERCER	431,655.86	432,793.32	521,175.95	620,637.95	872,780.07	812,280.12	760,694.00	794,691.79	711,859.52	803,747.43	658,745.60	521,832.86	7,942,894.97
MIDDLESEX	1,344,943.15	1,339,167.77	1,602,651.34	1,797,151.01	2,271,234.17	2,330,394.52	2,179,552.41	2,051,156.04	2,002,762.38	2,157,617.67	1,697,735.62	1,662,565.77	22,436,931.66
MONMOUTH	577,986.23	600,974.86	693,477.33	887,789.06	1,262,979.98	1,815,038.40	2,097,553.18	2,130,386.26	1,464,277.88	1,015,346.59	806,457.21	664,291.70	14,016,558.93
MORRIS	905,489.53	928,612.18	1,114,561.31	1,282,403.23	1,395,326.13	1,523,013.39	1,442,911.75	1,447,818.34	1,513,720.78	1,625,387.96	1,359,382.72	1,272,340.60	15,810,968.25
OCEAN	180,703.73	210,732.75	255,398.59	299,381.10	600,020.67	1,048,229.28	1,623,213.73	1,573,063.05	573,688.52	331,916.73	248,556.01	219,535.56	7,164,439.61
PASSAIC	216,968.87	205,204.74	264,535.62	295,866.68	325,168.60	369,966.09	351,778.11	352,998.66	351,226.11	376,422.62	316,412.19	321,892.49	3,748,441.05
SALEM	38,537.79	36,711.82	57,864.70	82,932.74	73,084.86	71,113.66	57,482.63	59,922.50	57,344.63	47,958.02	48,643.31	33,894.05	665,490.52
SOMERSET	630,258.44	614,673.37	660,106.99	835,185.89	923,622.41	1,073,833.48	952,197.16	918,333.56	944,180.25	1,137,319.57	816,428.03	719,262.35	10,225,402.41
SUSSEX	206,290.81	100,652.73	307,433.73	206,379.52	302,150.14	348,454.51	393,897.12	471,448.12	348,602.24	344,292.97	304,933.37	305,399.23	3,639,934.33
UNION	358,949.06	354,900.55	434,029.32	484,213.76	560,939.90	609,618.13	536,286.45	549,562.19	577,295.24	621,063.33	523,430.73	517,730.36	6,128,019.26
WARREN	10,652.84	12,014.85	12,298.90	14,431.63	18,264.90	19,997.80	19,283.37	19,714.52	17,233.88	18,522.07	15,335.85	10,528.55	188,279.23
Total	9,569,037.23	9,768,918.93	12,253,627.04	14,020,065.86	17,683,113.97	21,423,894.28	23,528,706.52	23,236,143.70	18,266,006.17	17,171,747.32	13,544,277.81	13,437,764.17	193,903,308.99



The four beach counties generated \$53.13 million, or 27.3% of the statewide Occupancy Tax collected in 2024, and received in total grant awards \$6.8 million or 12.8% return.

Canadian Visitation

Canadian reservations for the Jersey Cape have dropped for 2025. Visitors from Quebec, who usually come in July and August, made up 7-9% of our pre-pandemic guests, while Ontario visitors were less than 1%. We are monitoring cancellations and reduced bookings from hotels, motels, campgrounds, and rentals. To address this decline, we are enhancing our marketing on Canadian social media in both French and English and launching public relations initiatives.

Cape May County has been marketing to Canada since 1968. The County observed an increase in Canadian visitors and established a part-time office, and in 1970, opened a full-time office. Canadians, looking for warmer ocean waters, found the Wildwoods and the growing campgrounds. Currently, Canadian visitors, some spanning three generations, utilize the various amenities offered by the county, patronize local businesses, and are transitioning from motels to condos and Airbnbs.

Our downtown Montreal office operated from 1970 to 1995 but closed due to rising costs, including GST and Provincial Tax that was levied on rent and utilities, and supplies. Now, a PR consultant handles Canadian market efforts, with activities like ad placement, news releases, brochure translations, and media FAM tours. We focus mainly on Quebec and the Toronto region of Ottawa. Canadians often drive the 9-hour trip from Montreal to Jersey Cape.

The reduction in the number of Canadian visitors is influenced by several factors beyond tariffs, annexation discussions, and general political dissatisfaction. The economic situation in Canada has affected travel to the U.S. over the past three years and has not yet returned to pre-2019 levels. Tariffs and political rhetoric are contributing to this decline, but their economy has been a growing factor. Local businesses have cultivated long-term relationships with Canadian visitors who have been coming for generations, and it is anticipated that they will return when circumstances improve.

Moreover, the Canadian dollar has, on average, been trading at below 69 to 70 cents against the U.S. dollar. During the 1970s, the dollar traded at par. When you cross the border, the combination of the hit on disposable income during the year and a loss of up to 30 cents on the value of your dollar is another factor in the decline of visitors. Soaring debt, inflation, a housing crisis, a lack of private investment, and stagnant growth have affected core Canadian household expenses, leading to reduced discretionary spending. For instance, fuel costs are creating pain at the pump; the cost of a gallon of gas in Montreal is \$5.79 (or \$1.53 per liter) and filling a 20-gallon tank costs approximately \$115.82.

As we assess the overall impact of the decline in Canadian visitors, we reflect on the 19 months (March 2020 to November 2021) when the U.S.-Canadian border was closed, representing two summer seasons with no travel between the two countries. Domestic travel will exceed pre-COVID levels and will help fill the vacancies during the 2025 season. Reports from our stakeholders in the lodging sector, many canceled reservations have been replaced with domestic visitors.

Our marketing efforts are expanding to target a broader audience seeking what we offer as a vacation destination, and social media platforms have been instrumental in this effort. Our French-language Facebook and Instagram accounts are experiencing growth in followers, likes, and engagements, indicating an interest in the Jersey Cape. The content includes value-added attractions and nostalgia.

On the positive side, most comments from those who have canceled reservations cite the economy and the unaffordability of travel in 2025 as the primary reasons. While some express frustration over the political climate and the president's actions, the majority point to economic factors as the main concern and reason for cancellations.

While the Tourism Department has been cautious about advertising in Canada, so as not to incite angry reactions, some of our ads have been declined by media outlets. Canada Automobile Association (CAA) declined our ads, stating they were not taking any ads from the US. FAMs scheduled for the Jersey

Cape were cancelled because those news outlets decided they were not covering US destinations and were not sending journalists, nor are they publishing news releases from or about the US.

CAPE MAY COUNTY NEW JERSEY: OCEAN CITY, SEA ISLE, AVALON, STONE HARBOR, THE WILDWOODS, CAPE MAY

TELEMENT CHARMANT
Sincèrement vôtre.

BIENVENUE dans un endroit réel...
et vraiment charmant. Une des dix premières destinations mondiales pour l'observation des oiseaux, entourée de petites villes pittoresques, tout pleins d'aliments provenant directement de la mer et du sol, ainsi que de brasseries artisanales et de distilleries qui reflètent notre environnement local...

Détachez-vous de la routine et optez pour la passion
www.escapetothejerseycape.com ou 1.800.227.2207



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Évadez-vous
VERS LE CAP JERSEY

NEW JERSEY SOUTHERN SHORE
CAPE MAY & CUMBERLAND COUNTIES

SUPPORTED IN PART BY A GRANT FROM THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF STATE, DIVISION OF TRAVEL & TOURISM. WWW.VISITNJ.ORG

French Canadian Ads – Print & Digital

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Évadez-vous!

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New Jersey
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Évadez-vous!
VERS LE CAP JERSEY

Échappez à la routine et
poursuivez vos passions.

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New Jersey
visitnj.org

Sample French Social Media Video – Screen Shot Free Things to Do on the Jersey Cape

LES ACTIVITÉS
GRATUITES
DANS LE
COMTÉ DE
CAPE MAY

Le Cap de Jersey

1.
LE ZOO DU
CAPE MAY
COMTÉ

OUVERT À L'ANNÉE, ACCÈS
FACILE POUR TOUS,
STATIONNEMENT GRATUIT, LE
PRIX D'ENTRÉE EST LAISSÉ À
VOTRE DISCRETION

Ouvert tous les jours entre 10h et 18h.
Surveillez les horaires saisonniers.

2.
LES PLAGES DES
WILDWOODS

L'ACCÈS À TOUTES LES PLAGES
DES WILDWOODS SONT
GRATUITES.

Les plages des Wildwoods s'étendent sur 16 km. Elles
sont propices à de nombreuses activités de loisir.
Accompagnez la saison de Beach Balls, Clap les enfants.

3.
LES PISTES
CYCLABLES

LE COMTÉ DE CAPE MAY OFFRE
DES DOUZAINES DE PISTES.
PLUSIEURS ONT DES
STATIONNEMENTS GRATUITS
ATTENDANTS

Les plus populaires sont le littoral de la
Promenade de Cape May, Côté Spring Brook Park, et le
Wildwood Crest Bike Path. Il y a des stations de
pompes à vélo à Cape May et à Wildwoods.

4.
FILMS SUR
LA PLAGE

APPORTEZ VOS CHAIRES DE
PLAGE, RELAXEZ-VOUS DANS LE SABLE
BLANC. PROFITEZ DE LA
PROJECTION HEBDOMADAIRE QUI
DÉBUTE AU COUCHER DE SOLEIL.

Allez sur les plages de Cape May, Sea Isle City et
Wildwood Crest.

5.
FEUX
D'ARTIFICE

À VOIR TOUTS LES VENDREDIS
SOIRS DE JUIN À AOÛT SUR LE
BOARDWALK

Si la température est inclemente, c'est prévu au
dimanche soir.
C'est le quartier anglais partant dans le Jersey Cape.

6.
CONCERTS
EXTÉRIEURS

ILS SONT OFFERTS TOUT L'ÉTÉ À
WILDWOOD CREST, SEA ISLE
CITY ET STONE HARBOR

Wildwood Crest: tous les jeudis et samedis à
19h au Central Park.
Sea Isle City: tous les samedis à 19h30 au
Excursion Park.
Stone Harbor: les mercredis à la Towne.

Top Travel Trends for 2025

The April 2025 MMGY study found that 29% of Americans surveyed will change from international to domestic destinations, and 24% indicated they will opt for a less expensive mode of transportation.

(Globetrender/MMGY April 2025)

Nostalgia travel became popular in 2024 and continues to rank among the top trends in 2025. This trend brings us to the return of the Road Trip with the new word 'nostalgification'. From millennials to Baby Boomers, travel planners are looking to take vacations where they can relive the past and rekindle new memories. In a world of high tech, Zoom calls, and overscheduled kids, people are longing for simpler times and childhood vacations, exchanging digital convenience for the charm of the past.

Travel Trends are the bible for tourism marketers; understanding them, finding your fit, and implementing them into your message is key in developing an effective marketing plan. Following emerging travel trends is important for businesses to align their marketing strategies with travelers' preferences. Not all assets fit, and that's okay. There are many trends on the lists that will make sense and fit in with what you offer and appeal to your audience. Trends change, but some stick around and will fit like a glove for several years.

A MMGY, a leading travel, tourism, and hospitality company, survey indicates that 80% of U.S. adults are planning vacations in 2025, marking a 7% increase from their previous survey. With international travel

to the U.S. expected to decline, promoting domestic tourism assets that match these trends is critical. Other MMGY findings include.

MMGY travel trends for 2025 indicate a shift towards more intentional and sustainable travel choices among Americans 2025.

- **Increased Travel:** Americans plan to travel more, with an average vacation budget rising to **\$5,051** and trips increasing to **4.1 per person**.
- **Meaningful Experiences:** There is a strong desire for meaningful experiences, with travelers prioritizing value and sustainability on their trips.
- **AI and Sustainability:** The role of AI in trip planning is becoming more significant, alongside sustainability practices being emphasized.
- **Essential Travel:** Travel is now viewed as an essential part of Americans' lives, contributing to well-being and personal fulfillment

Domestic travel emphasizes local experiences with a 'live like a local' approach. Nostalgia, culture, nature, and sustainability are factors influencing travel planning in 2025. Americans, particularly younger generations, are exploring their own country more. Teens are interested in outdoor activities such as surfing, camping, zip lining, hiking, and wildlife viewing for genuine nature experiences.

In the nostalgia category, the Road Trip has been resurrected with a few new twists. Friends and families are making the journey part of the experience and taking to the road to better explore the attractions on

the way to their destination. The ad from the 1950s, *See the USA in your Chevrolet* is back, along with interest in retro motels, roadside attractions, and restaurants. Gen Ys, also known as millennials, are taking the lead in road trip vacations and embracing retro travel memories of their youth, moving away from digital convenience to embrace the fun and experiences of their past.

Expedia highlights the travel trends for 2025:

- Detour Destinations: Exploring lesser-known spots during road trips
- Eco-friendly Travel: Prioritizing environmentally friendly options
- Local Immersion: Experiencing local culture is increasingly popular
- Sports Tourism: More travelers are interested in sports events
- Stargazing Opportunities: Growing interest due to metropolitan light pollution
- Slow Travel: Emphasis on relaxing and enjoying the moment
- Nature-focused Travel: Increased desire for outdoor activities post-pandemic
- Food-focused Travel: Rising culinary tourism trend with farm/sea to table dining
- Cultural Tourism: Travelers are looking to become immersed in the community to better understand different cultures, cuisine, and values

Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism involves traveling to appreciate arts, architecture, heritage, cuisine, literature, music, and creative industries. Cape May County is becoming a destination known for its distinct cultural experiences and historic architecture spanning three centuries. This trend is influenced by nostalgia, as travel planners seek simpler times by revisiting childhood memories of beaches and boardwalks. Road trips are also part of the local cultural experience and fall within cultural tourism. Retro-vacation options throughout the Jersey Cape provide genuine experiences that align with travel trends predicted for 2025.

Multi-generational travelers, including baby boomers and millennials, make up over 70% of visitors. Marketing efforts targeting the creation of new memories and the rekindling of old ones are effective with this demographic. Comments on Facebook often highlight sensory experiences such as the scent of the ocean when crossing bridges to barrier islands, the aromas and sounds from boardwalk establishments, and the tranquility found in campgrounds.

Local Culture Travel Trends include.

- Connecting with local communities
- Immersing in local cultures
- Seeking authentic experiences
- Prioritizing neighborhoods and local culture
- Exploring history and political tours
- Focusing on economic opportunities in sharing heritage, stories, and traditions with visitors

Small Business Drives the County Tourism Industry

Kudos to our small business owners! Cape May County achieved record tourism growth, leading New Jersey counties in all sectors, excluding casino spending. The county hosted 12.11 million visitors, supported 4,703 jobs, and generated \$668.5 million in state and local taxes.

Small family-owned small businesses support all sectors of our tourism industry.

Comparisons with other beach destinations – by county:

- Lee County, FL: \$4.95 billion economic impact, 3.2 million visitors (affected by Hurricane Ian). Includes Fort Myers, Fort Myers Beach, Cape Coral, Captiva, Sanibel, and Bonita Springs.
- Collier County, FL: \$2.25 billion impact, 2.07 million visitors. Includes Naples, North Naples, Marco Island, and Everglade City.
- Outer Banks, NC: Over \$2.1 billion in direct spending, 3 million visitors in 2024. The Outer Banks is primarily located in Dare County but also encompasses Currituck and Carteret Counties.

Sample of another tourism county destination

- Lancaster County, Pa: \$2.7 billion in direct spending, 10.2 million visitors in 2024

Shrpa

The Cape May County Department of Tourism has found the perfect way to bring storytelling, tourism, local culture, and visitor engagement together—all through Shrpa, a travel platform that lets us handpick influencers and craft the story we want to share.

Shrpa makes it easy for us to team up with content creators who highlight Cape May County's hidden gems, must-see destinations, and unique experiences. By working with passionate travel creators, we can showcase everything from scenic outdoor adventures to charming restaurants and cultural hotspots, helping visitors discover the county beyond traditional review sites.

But Shrpa isn't just about influencers—it also encourages members of our community to share their favorite places. Whether it's a lifelong resident or someone new to the area, Shrpa provides a space where local voices can shine, offering fresh perspectives on what makes Cape May County truly special.

Most importantly, Shrpa's curated collaborations make exploring effortless. Whether visitors are looking to uncover a secluded beach, wander through small-town boutiques, or indulge in the county's renowned seafood scene, Shrpa turns every visit into a memorable adventure while supporting local businesses.

With Shrpa, we're not just promoting Cape May County, we're inviting travelers to experience it in a whole new way.

Lights. Camera. Action.

The New Jersey Motion Picture & Television Commission is taking the lead in keeping the state front and center in the film industry. Cape May County is quickly becoming a sought-after film location, drawing productions that take advantage of its picturesque coastal views, rural landscapes, and rich architectural heritage. One of the most exciting recent developments is Steven Spielberg's upcoming film "Non-View", which features a UFO theme and boasts a stellar cast, including Emily Blunt and Colin Firth. Filming was underway recently in Woodbine, Tuckahoe, and Upper Township, adding to the county's growing reputation in the industry.

Cape May also served as a backdrop for "A Complete Unknown", a Bob Dylan biopic starring Timothée Chalamet. This film, which wrapped production in 2024, received nominations for Best Picture and Best Actor at the 2025 Oscars. The county's blend of scenic beauty and historic charm continues to attract filmmakers looking for diverse settings.

Cape May County is a filmmaker's dream, offering a unique combination of elements that make it a prime filming destination:

- **Spectacular Coastal Views:** Stunning beaches, iconic lighthouses, and oceanfront scenery provide breathtaking cinematic backdrops.
- **Historic Architecture:** From Cape May's Victorian homes to the retro Doo Wop style in the Wildwoods, to the beachy vibe of Ocean City, the region offers timeless aesthetics perfect for period pieces.

- **Versatile Locations:** Filmmakers can find everything from small-town streets and rural landscapes to bustling boardwalks and the charm of the mainland communities, allowing for various cinematic settings.
- **Industry Incentives:** New Jersey's tax benefits make filming financially appealing, attracting high-profile productions.
- **Local Enthusiasm:** Businesses and residents warmly support film crews, offering accommodations and logistical assistance.

Economic and Cultural Impact. The presence of film crews significantly benefits Cape May County's economy. Productions generate revenue for local businesses, including hotels and restaurants.

Spielberg's "Non-View" is already boosting commerce in Woodbine and Tuckahoe, where crew members have been staying and dining. Social media has been buzzing with sightings of Edward Norton enjoying his daily coffee at Coffee Tyme in Cape May while filming *Complete Unknown*, and Emily Blunt posing with the owner of Primal Restaurant after a day of shooting *Non-View* in Woodbine.

New Jersey's broader film industry has flourished thanks to the Film and Digital Media Tax Credit Program, contributing \$2.3 billion in economic activity. Cape May County benefits from this initiative, positioning itself as a prime film destination.

Preparing for More Productions. To further support the growing film industry, Cape May County is working toward certification in the "Film Ready New Jersey" program. This effort started in late 2023, with Diane Wieland and Deborah Bass of the County's Department of Tourism, and Barbara Jones of the Cape May County Chamber of Commerce working to fulfill the requirement to maximize economic

benefits and increase visibility for filmmakers. Currently, more than 200 images of county-wide locations have been uploaded to the Film Commission's website. The Commission is under the NJEDA, and they are working with County Commissioner Bobby Barr and Assistant Administrator Ron Simone to advance the County's presence as a potential film location and reap the benefits for all county municipalities.

The state is actively investing in the film industry, helping municipalities become "film-ready" through tax incentives and infrastructure support. The "Film Ready New Jersey" program ensures destinations can accommodate productions while leveraging the economic advantages they bring.

A New Frontier: Set-Jetting Tourism. With Cape May County gaining prominence in film production, it may soon become a hotspot for set-jetting, where travelers visit locations featured in movies and TV shows. Tour operators and marketers could capitalize on Cape May's role in **A Complete Unknown**, which transformed the city into a stand-in for Newport, Rhode Island. The Victorian Motel became the "Viking Motel," while parts of the Washington Street Mall were redesigned to reflect the 1960s.

Local businesses also got a cinematic makeover—Galvanic temporarily became The Mayflower Restaurant, and Congress Hall served as a base for extras dressed in period attire. As set-jetting grows in popularity, Cape May County stands to gain a new tourism demographic eager to experience the magic of film in real life. With a thriving film industry, economic incentives, and enthusiastic local support, Cape May County is rapidly establishing itself as a premier location for filmmakers—and a must-visit destination for movie lovers.

Cape May County Arts and History Regrant Program

The Cape May County Division of Culture and Heritage, under the direction of Elizabeth Bakely, is a Division within the Cape May County Department of Tourism, which applies for grant funding from the NJ State Council on the Arts and the NJ State Historical Commission, both Divisions of the State of New Jersey. The State awards are competitively awarded on a three-year cycle.

The Division maintains an annual, competitive, regrant program with the awarded funding, offering Cape May County Organizations opportunities to apply for general operation support, special project support, or general programming support.

- Over the past 5 years, the Division of Culture and Heritage has granted \$865,946.00 to Cape May County arts projects, programs, and operations.
 - Helping an average of 24 Cape May County Arts organizations annually.
- Over the past 5 years, the Division of Culture and Heritage has granted \$249,878.00 to Cape May County history projects, programs, and operations.
 - Helping an average of 12 Cape May County History organizations annually.

Grant Information: www.cmcculture.net for grant guidelines and application. The 2026 funding process will begin in August of 2025. culture@co.cape-may.nj.us with questions.

2021 Project	Art \$65,946.00	History \$27,014.00
Operations	3	3
Special Project (1 event)	5	3
Programming (series)	13	5
Project Totals	21	11
Total Individual Activities	209	123

2022 Project	Art \$200,000.00	History \$40,521.00
Operations	3	5
Special Project (1 event)	9	4
Programming (series)	11	3
Project Totals	23	12
Total Individual Activities	301	115

2023 Project	Art \$200,000.00	History \$60,781.00
Operations	4	5
Special Project (1 event)	5	5
Programming (series)	13	5
Project Totals	22	15
Total Individual Activities	380	278

2024 Project	Art \$200,000.00	History \$60,781.00
Operations	5	8
Special Project (1 event)	12	2
Programming (series)	19	5
Project Totals	36	15
Total Individual Activities	402	583

2025 Project	Art \$200,000.00	History \$60,781.00
Operations	4	7
Special Project (1 event)	15	6
Programming (series)	16	3
Project Totals	35	16
Total Individual Activities	TBD	TBD

Art Total Projects- 5 years	History Total Projects- 5 years
137	69
Total Individual Activities: 1,292	Total Individual Activities: 1,099

Teen Arts Festival

The Division of Culture and Heritage supports the Cape May and Cumberland County Teen Arts Festival. A one-day event for teens to showcase their artistic capabilities through a variety of artistic mediums. The festival is an opportunity for students to collaborate with their peers and learn from professionals in the field through student critique and workshops.

Students gain knowledge, creativity, collaboration skills, and the opportunity to advance to the NJ State Teen Arts Festival. Only selected students may advance to the State Festival.

An average of 1,750 teen artists, art teachers, and professional artists from Cape May County have been supported over the last five years through this one-day festival.

Culture and Heritage Marketing

The Division of Culture and Heritage supports the events, projects, and programs of its regrantees all year long. Whether through a marketing campaign, Facebook, or direct email, the Division aids in the marketing efforts of its grant-funded organizations at no cost to them.

Camping

There are 47 campgrounds in Cape May County with more than 12,000 sites that offer a variety of options for campers. Located in the lush, wooded mainland area of the county, campgrounds offer the best of both worlds; they provide the quiet, peaceful, and natural setting travelers are looking for, yet close enough to the beaches, boardwalks, and excitement of the resort towns.

Camping is among the top vacation trends in the U.S. for 2025, appealing to baby boomers, Gen X, and Gen Y travelers. RV travel remains affordable for families and ticks the trend boxes for nostalgia, eco-friendly, connecting with nature, and sustainable outdoor experiences. Camping is diverse and caters to everyone's needs and interests, from glamping to rustic tent camping; it's all about outdoor living.

Campground Marketplace predicts a strong year for camping in 2025, driven by increased demand and interest in unique outdoor experiences. Now is an ideal time to look into campground options that offer tailored experiences. For campground owners, sellers, and buyers, 2025 is the perfect season to capitalize on this growing industry.

Camping Trends for 2025

- Culinary Camping: Gourmet outdoor experiences with glamping and resorts offering on-site dining.
- Eco-Friendly Camping: Emphasis on sustainability and eco-conscious practices.
- Nostalgia-Driven Camping: Simpler camping experiences to escape modern complexities.
- Digital Integration: Using technology like apps for planning and navigation.

- Innovative Gear: Popular new equipment, including inflatable tents and smart tools.

New Campers and RV Rental Statistics:

- Increased Interest: Among those intending to travel in 2025, 60% are planning a road trip or vacation in an RV, indicating sustained interest in RV travel. [Rvshare](#)
- RV Rentals: The RV rental market is expanding, with 64% of travelers considering renting an RV for a future trip, a 10% increase from last year. This growth is driven by the flexibility and convenience that RV travel offers. [Rvshare](#)

Popular Types of Parks:

- National and Scenic Parks: National parks and scenic areas remain top destinations, with 67% of travelers expressing interest in visiting these sites during their RV trips. [Rvshare](#)
- Family-Friendly Resorts: Campgrounds offering a range of amenities, such as swimming pools, sports facilities, and organized activities, are attracting families seeking comprehensive vacation experiences. [The Sun](#)
- Rustic and Remote Locations: There's a growing appeal for rustic retreats, with 83% of campers finding the idea appealing for the chance to disconnect and unwind. [Campspot](#)
-

Cape May County at a Glance

- 94,610 year-round residents with an estimated summer population of 763,940
- 4.2 percent of the people are under the age of 5.
- 29.5 percent are over 65 years old.
- Median household income is approximately \$83,870.

- Of the 99,422 housing units, nearly half (47%) remain vacant for seasonal/recreational use only.
- 93.9% of persons 25+ are high school graduates or higher.

GEOGRAPHY

- Encompassing 252 square miles of land area located at the southern tip of the State bordered by Atlantic County to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the east and south, the Delaware Bay to the west.
- Made up of 16 municipalities.
- 30 miles of white sandy beaches on the barrier islands with thousands of acres on the mainland preserved for open space, farmland, and natural conservation.
- Middle Township, with over 70 square miles, is geographically the largest of all the municipalities.
- Lower Township, with approximately 23,000 people, is the most populated.
-

ECONOMY

- Total civilian labor force of 53,235 people
- Tourism represents the number one industry, generating over \$8.1 billion a year in revenues.
- There are 12,364 total firms, including self-employed people, and 3,764 of those firms are employer establishments.
- The County's largest employment component is leisure and hospitality, which includes lodging, food services, recreation, and amusements.
- The next largest employment sector is health care and social assistance.
- The average annual unemployment rate is 7.4 percent.

Cape May County Commercial Fishing Industry

Cape May County's Commercial Fishing Industry ranks second in economic impact, next to tourism. The Port of Cape May/ Wildwood is the largest port in New Jersey and 2nd second-largest on the Eastern Seaboard. The port of Cape May/Wildwood ranks in the top 5 in Landings and top 20 in dollar value in the nation. (128 Ports in the U.S.)

Port of Cape May/Wildwood Ex-vessel activity includes \$90 million in sales with 94.5 million pounds landed. Local income/economic impact is \$700 million.

The Cape May/Wildwood port is the center of fish processing and freezing in New Jersey, and the Cape May/Wildwood fleet is the homeport to some of the largest fishing vessels on the Atlantic coast. The commercial fishing industry has led the way in developing new fisheries and new domestic and international markets for New Jersey seafood.

Major Cape May fisheries focus on squid, mackerel, flounder (fluke), sea bass, bluefish, striped bass, tautog, porgies, lobsters, and menhaden. In addition to this, Wildwood boats are also in the surf clam/ocean quahog fisheries.

The scallop industry in Cape May County is an additional \$440 million-a-year industry, despite its challenges.

Cape May County Facts and Figures

Motels/Hotels	290
Units /Rooms	11,350
Condos (Short Term Rentals)	21,960
B & Bs	42
Rooms	359
Active Airbnb listings	2,868
Active VRBO listings	4,437
Campgrounds (47)	35 Public
Campsites	12,098

Visitation in 2024	12.11 million
Day Trips	4.70 million
Overnight	7.41 million

Alcohol Establishments	
Bars/alcohol establishments	131
Liquor Stores	38
Wineries/Breweries/Distillers	18

Cape May County Tourism generated 32,051 direct jobs, and 41,703 total direct and indirect jobs, representing 58.1% of countywide employment. Tourism jobs represent 9.6% or 1 in 10 tourism jobs in New Jersey.

Without Tourism, each New Jersey household would pay an additional \$1,545 in taxes.

Winter Population	
Town	Population
Avalon	1,243
Cape May	2,768
Cape May Point	305
Dennis Township	6,285
Lower Township	22,057
Middle Township	20,380
North Wildwood	3,621
Ocean City	11,229
Sea Isle City	2,104
Stone Harbor	796
Upper Township	12,539
West Cape May	1,010
West Wildwood	540
Wildwood	5,157
Wildwood Crest	3,101
Woodbine	2,128
TOTAL	95,263

Summer Population	
Town	Population
Avalon	35,028
Cape May	45,874
Cape May Point	4,100
Dennis Township	37,339
Lower Township	99,786
Middle Township	71,321
North Wildwood	70,118
Ocean City	139,654
Sea Isle City	44,820
Stone Harbor	22,528
Upper Township	45,940
West Cape May	8,590
West Wildwood	7,468
Wildwood	67,258
Wildwood Crest	54,633
Woodbine	9,483
TOTAL	763,940

The resident population increases by an average 8x during summer, with second homeowners using their vacation homes. Individual resort town summer populations increase by as much as 20x.

An estimated 47% of the 99,606 dwellings in Cape May County are considered second homes or vacation homes. Of these, 53% rent them at some time during the season, the balance is used for personal vacation homes only.

12.11 million Visitors in 2024, generating \$8.102 in visitor spending.

2024 Cape May County Zoo – Visitor Count

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
JANUARY	7,683	5,655	5,179	5,176	622	15,160	3,664	13,637	10,876
FEBRUARY	10,858	1,280	9,354	7,737	540	6,572	15,037	15,594	17,682
MARCH	36,232	10,757	15,042	20,799	0	40,427	20,314	18,092	37,089
APRIL	36,051	63,637	39,999	57,468	0	64,540	67,314	75,604	58,107
MAY	55,041	50,482	55,107	60,669	0	64,579	57,575	83,877	73,974
JUNE	88,810	86,056	84,677	87,000	48,809	87,335	95,979	97,021	102,176
JULY	110,466	115,822	111,452	60,841	67,372	111,228	105,072	109,921	130,063
AUGUST	127,387	79,262	110,946	124,747	82,619	101,841	120,963	140,757	145,615
SEPTEMBER	55,337	27,210	48,866	58,203	74,260	62,464	61,286	53,659	67,397
OCTOBER	30,536	27,425	24,662	9,567	42,749	35,665	32,937	40,229	47,057
NOVEMBER	19,246	14,354	13,678	4,457	28,107	20,798	24,625	40,108	29,153
DECEMBER	5,825	4,446	7,911	7,950	5,794	12,481	10,215	11,093	10,624
TOTALS	583,472	486,386	526,873	504,614	350,872	623,090	614,981	699,592	729,813

Zoo Counter Out / Gate Closed

COVID Shutdown / Restrictions

2024 Cape May County Clerk's Office Monthly Transaction Totals

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Transaction Totals	53,541	49,274	51,162	58,196	67,346	48,222	36,570	34,496

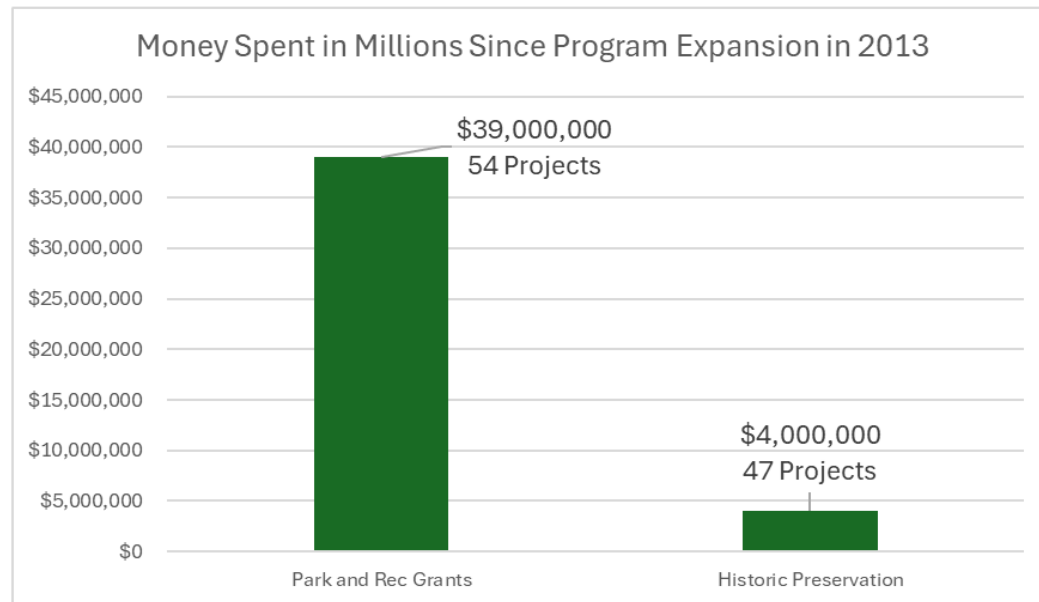
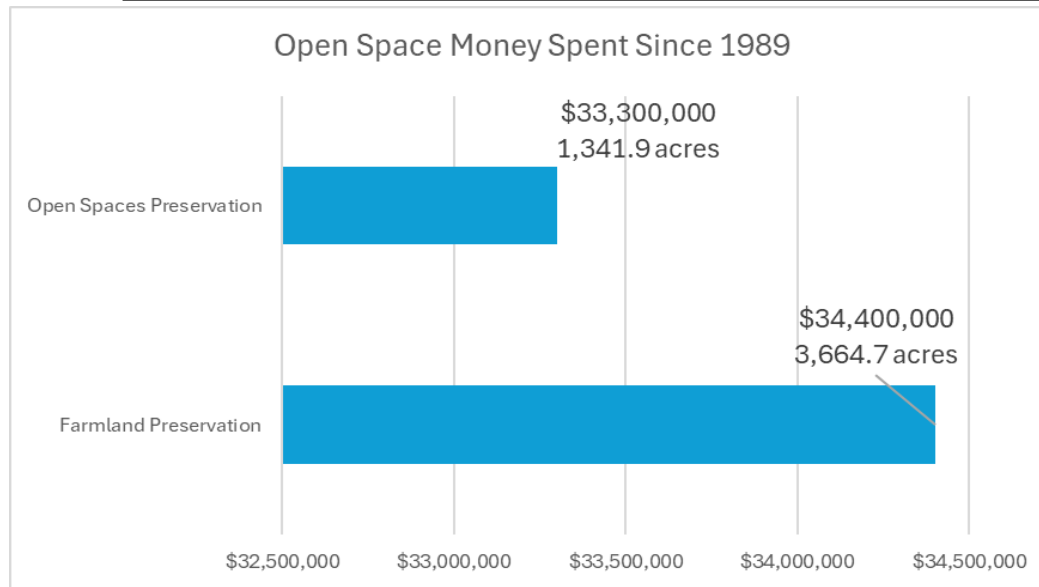
2024 Cape May County Clerk's Office Monthly Revenue

County Clerk Recording Fees	\$852,525	\$812,947	\$854,787	\$1,003,564	\$1,214,407	\$809,556	\$624,169	\$601,468
Fee Increase by S553	\$828,550	\$797,498	\$839,514	\$1,043,076	\$1,260,121	\$791,823	\$611,034	\$600,892
28.6% Realty Transfer Fee	\$2,713,502	\$2,913,935	\$2,984,847	\$3,844,651	\$4,887,985	\$4,164,934	\$3,485,271	\$3,534,562
Other Realty Transfer Fees	\$1,255,512	\$1,346,885	\$1,374,019	\$1,783,123	\$2,247,725	\$1,907,823	\$1,591,080	\$1,605,389
Homelessness Trust Fund	\$73,125	\$76,530	\$100,377	\$162,486	\$201,395	\$126,350	\$91,770	\$90,475
Interest on Recording Account	\$10,382	\$27,148	\$50,238	\$16,036	\$8,231	\$27,333	\$116,762	\$155,989
Records Management Fees	\$3,764	\$3,588	\$3,602	\$1,990	\$3,132	\$2,579	\$2,271	\$2,062
Revenue Total	\$5,664,235	\$5,902,000	\$6,107,007	\$7,692,440	\$9,621,600	\$7,704,047	\$6,430,587	\$6,590,836
Total Receipts	\$34,874,016	\$38,080,948	\$39,704,569	\$54,543,795	\$71,493,319	\$65,271,660	\$54,829,422	\$56,044,069

2024 Cape May Lewes Ferry – Passenger Count

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
TotalPassengers	1,048,637	499,610	917,251	987,022	1,023,451	1,024,595
Total Revenue	\$13,742,439	\$6,872,757	\$12,145,318	\$13,341,779	\$13,882,937	\$13,984,599

Cape May County Open Space Program



Cape May Open Space and Farmland Preservation

On November 9, 1989, the voters of Cape May County approved by a 2-1 margin a ballot question endorsing the establishment of a trust fund to preserve open space and agricultural land. The trust is funded by a county property tax of 1cent per 100 dollars of assessed valuation and currently generates approximately \$8 million a year.

Since its inception, the program has preserved approximately 5,000 acres of open space and farmland, almost 8 square miles.

Cape May County Visitor Profile

Visitor Return Rate	85%
How many in travel group?	
1-2	34.79%
3-4	35.4%
5-6	21.7%
7 or more	8.21%
Who did they travel with?	
SPOUSE-NO CHILDREN	19.81%
CHILDREN ONLY	1%
FAMILY (SPOUSE & CHILDREN)	36.97%
COUPLE AND/OR FRIENDS	7.66%
EXTENDED FAMILY (PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, SIBLINGS, ETC.)	24.05%
GROUP	1.27%
TRAVEL ALONE OR SOLO	7.23%
Other	2.02%
Length of Stay	
DAY TRIP	12.26%
1 NIGHT	7.31%
2-5 NIGHTS	30.39%
6-7 NIGHTS (1 week)	29.89%
8-10 NIGHTS	2.41%
2 WEEKS	6.21%
MORE THAN 2 WEEKS	4.2%
Other	7.34%
Did the Economy impact your Vacation Spending?	
Yes	41.55%
No	58.45%
Vacations planned for 2025	
1	52.01%
2	26.1%
3	6.02%
4 or MORE	8.43%
Other	7.43%

Age	
18-35	14.28%
36-45	19.07%
46-53	24.5%
54-71	28.09%
72 AND OVER	14.23%
Travel Season	
SUMMER	81.67%
FALL	46.14%
WINTER	18.43%
SPRING	37.43%
Top Markets	
New Jersey	33%
Pennsylvania	31%
New York	19%
Maryland/DC	8%
Other	9%
Vacation met expectations.	
YES	89.47%
NO	10.53%
Years vacationing in CMC?	
FIRST TIME	15.16%
1-2 YEARS	7.24%
3-4 YEARS	7.29%
5-6 YEARS	3.61%
7-8 YEARS	0%
9-10 YEARS	2.41%
11-15 YEARS	9.64%
16-20 YEARS	11.04%
20 PLUS YEARS	44.38%

Vacation Spending	
\$100 - \$300	6.59%
\$300 - \$500	7.69%
\$500 - \$700	12.66%
\$700 - \$1,000	13.94%
\$1,000 - \$1,500	15.19%
\$1,500 - \$2,000	18.4%
\$2,500 - \$3,000	10.16%
MORE THAN \$3,000	15.19%
Top Reasons for Vacationing in CMC	
SAFETY & SECURITY	81.49%
VALUE	75.9%
QUIET	46.83%
ROMANTIC	16.87%
FAMILY ORIENTED	46.75%
RELAXATION	68.67%
CLOSE TO HOME	22.69%
OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES	27.3%
CHARMING	56.81%
Other	9.23%
Top Attractions	
BEACH	<u>84.49%</u>
SHOPPING	<u>76.27%</u>
RESTAURANT/DINING	<u>79.49%</u>
CULTURAL/HISTORIC ATTRACTIONS	<u>27.71%</u>
BOARDWALK	<u>67.45%</u>
ECO/NATURE-BASED	
(eg. Whale Watching Excursion)	<u>14.46%</u>
BIRDING	<u>8.43%</u>
FISHING/BOATING	<u>13.25%</u>
GOLFING	<u>3.2%</u>
WATERSPORTS	<u>9.61%</u>
CAMPING	<u>3.61%</u>
ZOO	<u>33.92%</u>
SPECIAL EVENTS	<u>20.07%</u>
AGRI-FARM MARKET- FARM T2TABLE	<u>13.61%</u>
WINERIES, BREWERIES, DISTILLERIES	<u>29.89%</u>

Sample Ads – Digital, Print, Social Media and Billboards



ESCAPE THE EVERYDAY! Visit a place that's real... and really charming. Spectacular beaches and thrilling boardwalks. Bustling towns and events for every interest. Escape the everyday, pursue your passions at escapetothejerseycap.com or 1.800.227.2297



Escape
TO THE JERSEY CAPE



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TO THE JERSEY CAPE



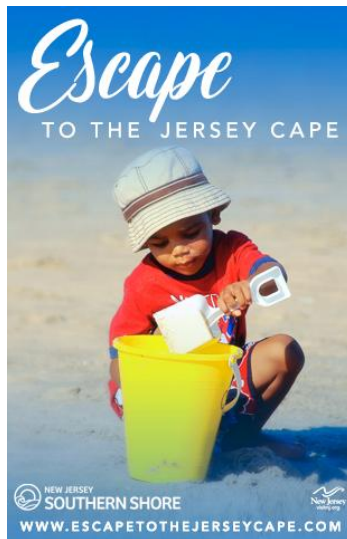
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CAPE MAY COUNTY NEW JERSEY:

YOU KNOW THE JERSEY SHORE, but do you know the Jersey Cape? It's a place that's real... and really charming. Authentically charming attractions, quaint small towns, seasonal events, beautiful beaches and bustling boardwalks.

Escape the everyday, pursue your passions at escapetothejerseycap.com or 1.800.227.2297



Escape
TO THE JERSEY CAPE

OCEAN CITY, SEA ISLE, AVALON, STONE HARBOR, THE WILDWOODS, CAPE MAY

AUTHENTICALLY CHARMING ATTRACTIONS
Sincerely Yours.



YOU KNOW THE JERSEY SHORE, but do you know the Jersey Cape? It's a place that's real... and really charming. Filled with authentically charming attractions, quaint small towns, seasonal events, beautiful beaches and bustling boardwalks. Escape the everyday, pursue your passions at escapetothejerseycap.com or 1.800.227.2297

Escape TO THE JERSEY CAPE



2025 Cape May County Visitor's Survey – Measuring 2024

Open number 1103 Completed 26%

1. Did you take a vacation to Cape May County in 2024?

YES	76%
NO	24%

2. What is your age group?

18-35	14.28%
36-45	<u>19.07%</u>
46-53	<u>24.5%</u>
54-71	<u>28.09%</u>
72 AND OVER	<u>14.23%</u>

3. Total number of people that traveled with you, including yourself?

1-2	<u>34.79%</u>
3-4	<u>35.4%</u>
5-6	21.7%
7-8	<u>3.49%</u>
9-10	<u>2.45%</u>
Other	<u>2.27%</u>

4. Who is most likely to travel with you when vacationing in Cape May County?

SPOUSE-NO CHILDREN	19.87%
CHILDREN ONLY	<u>1%</u>
FAMILY (SPOUSE & CHILDREN)	<u>36.97%</u>
COUPLE AND/OR FRIENDS	<u>7.66%</u>

EXTENDED FAMILY (PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, SIBLINGS, ETC.)	24.05%
GROUP	<u>1.2%</u>
TRAVEL ALONE OR SOLO	<u>7.23%</u>
Other	<u>2.02%</u>

5. Was this your first vacation/trip to Cape May County?

YES	<u>16.05%</u>
NO	<u>83.95%</u>

6. How many nights did you stay?

DAY TRIP	<u>12.26%</u>
1 NIGHT	<u>7.31%</u>
2-5 NIGHTS	<u>30.39%</u>
6-7 NIGHTS (1 week)	29.89%
8-10 NIGHTS	<u>2.41%</u>
2 WEEKS	<u>6.21%</u>
MORE THAN 2 WEEKS	<u>4.2%</u>
Other	<u>7.34%</u>

7. How many years have you been coming to Cape May County for a vacation?

FIRST TIME	<u>15.16%</u>
1-2 YEARS	<u>7.24%</u>
3-4 YEARS	<u>7.29%</u>
5-6 YEARS	<u>3.61%</u>
7-8 YEARS	0%
9-10 YEARS	<u>2.41%</u>
11-15 YEARS	<u>9.64%</u>

16-20 YEARS	11.04%
20 YEARS Plus	<u>44.38%</u>

8. Which Cape May County Resort is your vacation destination? Select all that apply.

CAPE MAY	<u>54.12%</u>
WILDWOODS	<u>50.6%</u>
STONE HARBOR	<u>12.64%</u>
AVALON	<u>10.23%</u>
SEA ISLE CITY	<u>17.23%</u>
OCEAN CITY	<u>37.71%</u>
MAINLAND	8.62%
<i>(Not an Island resort)</i>	

9. What time of year did you vacation at the Jersey Cape in 2024? Check all that apply.

SUMMER	<u>81.67%</u>
FALL	<u>46.14%</u>
WINTER	<u>18.43%</u>
SPRING	<u>33.73%</u>

10. What reasons affected the time(s) of year that you vacationed in 2024?

Money or "Bidenomics"
Grandchildren
Cheaper & less crowded

11. What attractions brought you to Cape May County in 2024? Check all that apply.

BEACH	<u>79.68%</u>
SHOPPING	<u>47.97%</u>
RESTAURANTS/DINING	<u>68.56%</u>

CULTURAL/HISTORIC ATTRACTIONS	<u>34.18%</u>
BOARDWALK	<u>62.03%</u>
ECO/NATURE BASED ACTIVITIES (eg. Whale Watching Excursion)	<u>20.25%</u>
BIRDING	<u>10.13%</u>
FISHING/BOATING	<u>17.72%</u>
GOLFING	<u>4.27%</u>
WATER SPORTS	<u>9.53%</u>
CAMPING	<u>4.53%</u>
ZOO	<u>35.38%</u>
ART EXHIBITS/ THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES	<u>5.8%</u>
SPECIAL EVENTS	<u>24.05%</u>
ATLANTIC CITY	<u>17.99%</u>
ATHLETIC EVENT:RUN OR RACE	<u>1.27%</u>
MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT/THEATER	<u>16.33%</u>
AGRI-FARM MARKET - FARM TO TABLE	<u>8.33%</u>
WINERIES, BREWERIES, DISTILLERIES	<u>9.52%</u>
Other	<u>7.59%</u>

12. How many attractions did you visit while in Cape May County in 2024? Check all that apply.

BEACH	<u>84.49%</u>
SHOPPING	<u>76.27%</u>
RESTAURANT/DINING	<u>79.49%</u>
CULTURAL/HISTORIC ATTRACTIONS	<u>27.71%</u>
BOARDWALK	<u>67.45%</u>
ECO/NATURE-BASED (eg. Whale Watching Excursion)	<u>14.46%</u>
BIRDING	<u>8.43%</u>

FISHING/BOATING	<u>13.25%</u>
GOLFING	<u>3.2%</u>
WATERSPORTS	<u>9.61%</u>
CAMPING	<u>3.61%</u>
ZOO	<u>33.92%</u>
ART EXHIBITS/THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES	<u>7.41%</u>
SPECIAL EVENTS	<u>20.07%</u>
ATLANTIC CITY	<u>16.66%</u>
ATHLETIC EVENT: RUN OR RACE	<u>1.2%</u>
MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT/THEATER	<u>9.82%</u>
AGRI-FARM MARKET- FARM TO TABLE	<u>13.61%</u>
WINERIES, BREWERIES, DISTILLERIES	<u>29.89%</u>
Other	<u>10.84%</u>

13. What style of dining was the most popular choice in Summer 2024? Check all that apply.

FINE DINING	<u>30%</u>
CASUAL DINING	<u>86.25%</u>
TAKE OUT & GRAB AND GO	<u>23.75%</u>
FARM TO TABLE	<u>12.5%</u>

14. Did you visit one of our agri-tourism attractions? Check all that apply.

WINERY	<u>38.6%</u>
BREWERY	<u>28.07%</u>
DISTILLERY	<u>12.28%</u>
FARM/FARM MARKET	<u>43.6%</u>
RESTAURANT FARM/SEA TO TABLE	<u>38.84%</u>
Other	<u>15.79%</u>

15. Where else did you travel in 2024? Check all that apply.

PENNSYLVANIA	<u>62.16%</u>
NEW YORK	<u>29.73%</u>
DELAWARE	<u>25.68%</u>
MARYLAND	<u>33.78%</u>
NEW ENGLAND	<u>12.16%</u>
VIRGINIA	<u>14.86%</u>
NORTH CAROLINA	<u>16.22%</u>
SOUTH CAROLINA	<u>14.86%</u>
FLORIDA	<u>31.08%</u>
THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS	<u>10.81%</u>
EUROPE	<u>8.11%</u>
Other	<u>16.22%</u>

16. What type of accommodations do you most often choose while vacationing in Cape May County?

MOTEL	<u>31.89%</u>
HOTEL	<u>26.33%</u>
BED & BREAKFAST	<u>6.82%</u>
CONDO RENTAL	<u>15.25%</u>
APARTMENT/HOUSE RENTAL	<u>6.02%</u>
CAMPGROUND	<u>2.41%</u>
OWN HOUSE	<u>3.61%</u>
RELATIVE/FRIEND	<u>2.41%</u>
AIRBNB, VRBO, HOMEAWAY	<u>13.61%</u>
DAY TRIP	<u>8.43%</u>
Other	<u>1.2%</u>

What influenced your choice of accommodations in 2024? Please explain in the box provided.

Trivago.

Location and size of rental property

Safety Cleanliness

17. How did you hear about Cape May County? Check all that apply.

FAMILY/FRIEND	<u>42.17%</u>
RETURN VISITOR	<u>57.83%</u>
PRINT AD	<u>12.05%</u>
TELEVISION	<u>9.02%</u>
INTERNET/WEBSITE	<u>20.07%</u>
TRAVEL GUIDE	<u>25.3%</u>
TRAVEL/TRADE SHOW	<u>2.41%</u>
TOUR OPERATOR/BUS TRIP	0 0%
SOCIAL MEDIA	<u>10.23%</u>
Other	<u>6.02%</u>

18. Where did you get the information to choose Cape May County as your vacation destination?

Check all that apply.

PRINT AD	<u>13.84%</u>
RADIO/TV	<u>14.41%</u>
INTERNET	<u>37.35%</u>
SOCIAL MEDIA AD	<u>12.05%</u>
BROCHURE/TRAVEL GUIDE	<u>45.78%</u>
FRIEND/FAMILY	<u>36.51%</u>
RETURN VISIT	<u>54.22%</u>
Other	<u>1.2%</u>

19. How do you prefer to get your vacation information? Check all that apply.

INTERNET/WEBSITE	<u>63.86%</u>
DIRECT MAIL	<u>57.83%</u>
EMAIL	<u>46.99%</u>
PRINT AD	<u>15.66%</u>
TELEVISION/RADIO	<u>18.2%</u>
FAMILY/FRIEND REFERRAL	<u>10.84%</u>
SOCIAL MEDIA	<u>20.66%</u>
Other	<u>2.41%</u>

20. Approximately how much do you spend while on vacation?

\$100 - \$300	<u>7.59%</u>
\$300 - \$500	<u>7.69%</u>
\$500 - \$700	<u>12.66%</u>
\$700 - \$1,000	<u>13.92%</u>
\$1,000 - \$1,500	<u>15.19%</u>
\$1,500 - \$2,000	<u>18.4%</u>
\$2,500 - \$3,000	<u>8.86%</u>
MORE THAN \$3,000	<u>15.19%</u>

21. What do you spend on average per day, per person while on vacation?

\$100 - \$150	<u>4.1%</u>
\$150 - \$200	<u>23.75%</u>
\$200 - \$250	<u>6.25%</u>
\$250 - \$300	<u>10%</u>
\$300 - \$350	<u>2.5%</u>
\$350 - \$400	<u>7.5%</u>
\$400 - \$450	<u>3.75%</u>

\$450 - \$500	<u>2.5%</u>
\$500 - \$550	0%
\$550 - \$600	0%
OVER \$600	<u>3.75%</u>

22. Important factors when choosing your vacation destination in 2025? Check all that apply.

SAFETY & SECURITY	<u>81.49%</u>
VALUE	<u>75.9%</u>
QUIET	<u>46.83%</u>
ROMANTIC	<u>16.87%</u>
FAMILY ORIENTED	<u>46.75%</u>
RELAXATION	<u>68.67%</u>
CLOSE TO HOME	<u>22.69%</u>
OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES	<u>27.3%</u>
CHARMING	<u>56.81%</u>
Other	<u>9.23%</u>

23. How many vacations do you plan to take to Cape May County in 2025?

1	<u>52.01%</u>
2	<u>26.1%</u>
3	<u>6.02%</u>
4 or MORE	<u>8.43%</u>
Other	<u>7.43%</u>

24. Will you plan your vacation to Cape May County around a special event in 2025?

YES	<u>20.99%</u>
NO	<u>79.01%</u>

25. Did your vacation in Cape May County meet your expectations in 2024?

YES	<u>89.47%</u>
NO	<u>10.53%</u>

26. If you answered No, please explain in the box provided.

Didn't visit in 2024.

I enjoyed everything and the town is very pretty. However I am used to Maryland beaches and the beach tags thing is a turn off. I did not enjoy having to show every time I entered beach. Other than that I enjoyed my time there.

27. How can we make your stay in Cape May County more enjoyable? Please explain in the box provided.

Free nights.

Offer more variety of room packages

I'm not sure there's enough to do there to stay more than a couple of nights.

28. Did the economy impact your vacation plans in 2024? If no, skip to question #33.

YES	<u>41.55%</u>
NO	<u>58.45%</u>

29. Did you reduce your vacation spending?

Showing the most recent responses to the question. [See all responses](#) here.

YES	<u>57.89%</u>
NO	<u>42.11%</u>

30. Did you change your vacation plans due to the economy? Check all that apply.

CANCEL YOUR VACATION	<u>18.6%</u>
TAKE FEWER VACATIONS	<u>51.16%</u>
TAKE A STAYCATION	<u>13.95%</u>
TAKE A WEEKEND OR SHORT GETAWAY	<u>30.23%</u>
TAKE DAY TRIPS	<u>37.21%</u>
REDUCE THE LENGTH OF YOUR STAY	<u>27.91%</u>

31. If yes, how did you reduce spending on your vacation to the Jersey Cape? Check all that apply.

CUT SPENDING FOR MEALS	<u>42.11%</u>
CUT SPENDING FOR ATTRACTIONS	<u>28.95%</u>
CUT SPENDING FOR SHOPPING	<u>44.37%</u>
CUT SPENDING FOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES	<u>21.05%</u>
CHANGE LODGING OPTIONS TO FIT YOUR BUDGET	<u>39.47%</u>
OTHER	<u>13.16%</u>

32. Will the economy impact your vacation plans in 2025? If yes, please explain.

No

Hopefully not

We will wait and see if the economy improves

Yes probably take less days away from home