

The History of Tourism on Prince Edward Island

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The purpose of the program

This program about tourism in Prince Edward Island is written to describe the development of the industry over more than a century. Islanders turned to tourism as a way to improve the local economy in the late 1800s. They drew upon the natural beauty and culture of their homeland to promote it as a tourist attraction. While times have changed, the reason for Island tourism has not, nor has the marketing of our landscape and culture.

The content of the program

The materials that constitute this program are contained within a suitcase for easy storage and portability. This document provides the core information. There are various supplementary resources. A complete listing of the contents is provided at the end of the text.

Definition of Tourist and Tourism

The word **tourist** defines someone who travels to places outside where he or she normally lives for the purpose of pleasure. However, many people who make the choice to relax and explore their own home area also call themselves tourists.

The term **tourism** means the industry that services people who travel for pleasure. It usually has three components: transportation, accommodation, and services. Many other businesses that service these industries also benefit from tourism. Examples would be fuel companies, construction companies, and food suppliers.

How old an industry is tourism? Historians say wealthy people have always travelled to view architecture and art, sample foods and culture, and for their health. They have traced holidaying back to the ancient Roman civilization. In medieval Europe a holiday was often taken in the form of a pilgrimage. A pilgrimage is a long journey to a religious place that holds special meaning for the person. An example would be a trip to the city of Jerusalem.

In the early days of the settlement of North America holidaying was seen as a status symbol for the upper classes. It was not a pursuit of the working classes who were expected to be dedicated to their work. As paid vacation time became more common in the workplace and salaries increased to a point where people had disposable income, meaning all of their money wasn't taken to buy food, shelter and clothing, more people began to travel and to become tourists.

Improved transportation systems, in particular air travel following World War II, made it easier for people to become tourists.

There are many types of tourism. Some of them are: winter, beach, farm, pilgrimage, educational, and cultural.

Money, time, and health are the three main things needed to be a tourist.

Europe is the main tourist destination in the world.

Benefits of Tourism

Listed below are some of the ways in which the tourism industry can bring many benefits to a geographical area.

- Employment to local residents
- Diversity to the local economy and opportunity for growth
- Improved infrastructure, such as roads, water and sewer, power, communications
- Awareness and appreciation for culture and diversity
- Preservation and conservation of architecture, arts, and heritage
- Acknowledgement of the unique qualities of an area

Disadvantages of Tourism

Consideration can also be given to the downside of tourism.

- Low wages for the majority of those involved in the industry
- Strain on infrastructure such as roads, sewage systems, etc
- Damage to the environment, such as sensitive waterways and landscapes
- Increase in the cost of real estate for the local population
- Unpredictability of the number of visitors

Overview of tourism on Prince Edward Island

Prince Edward Island is just over 224 km long and between 6 and 64 km wide. By car one can travel from one end to the other in under five hours.

There is something magical about islands. Early settlers on Prince Edward Island loved the amazing natural beauty of the land that the Aboriginal people, the Mi'kmaq, called *Abegweit* meaning "cradled in the waves." It almost came as a natural inclination for Islanders to want to share with visitors the wondrous peaceful vistas of gently sloping lands meeting the lazy rivers and ocean shoreline. People have always loved to travel to islands, believing they are an escape from the busy pace of mainstream life.

While many Island families have been here for several generations, there were always groups or individuals who chose to seek jobs and opportunities elsewhere. Thus, it is not surprising to learn that early tourism on the Island focused on getting former Islanders to come back home to visit. In 1890 the city of Charlottetown held its first Old Home Week in order to attract former Islanders, an annual event that has been held every year since. In 1904, Summerside held "The Islanders Reunion Celebration" with fireworks, yacht races, aquatic sports, rifle matches, harness races, and strawberry festivals.

Over the history of Island tourism the sales pitch to attract tourists has changed from time to time. Relaxation and recreation have been big sellers as have beaches, sunsets, seascapes, landscapes, lighthouses, fishing villages, family farms, golf courses, and of course Anne of Green Gables. In the 21st century cultural and heritage tourism is becoming the big attraction.

An overview of the evolution of the industry is presented in the sections that follow.

Tourism Prior to 1900

The thought of encouraging tourism on Prince Edward Island began in the early 1870s when it was still a British colony. The Island was in a recession for several reasons. The shipbuilding industry was coming to an end, the United States had shut its doors to free trade, which the Island had heavily depended upon, and the building of the railway had bankrupted the Island government. Something was needed to stimulate the economy. Some Islanders hoped that encouraging Americans to holiday here might be a solution.

The American economy was booming and many citizens had the disposable income to allow for travel. To escape the industrialized cities of New England, people sought the comfortable climate of places like Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia that could be easily reached by ship or by rail. Visitors included many former Islanders who had migrated to the “Boston States” (the northeast region of the United States that includes the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island) to find work and who now wanted to spend their holidays with family and friends.

The Island was first promoted or sold as a place to get away from the high-pressured society of North America. Since it was an island it was like travelling to another world. As well, in those early days many Americans saw Canada as a foreign land that resembled the old country of England but without the bustle.

On the Island people could relax and enjoy the unique beauty and quiet of the place, and the temperate summer air. Tourism advertising carried the information that Prince Edward Island’s water temperature on the north side was over 70 degrees Fahrenheit and the average daytime air temperature was over 80 degrees Fahrenheit. For invalids (sickly) the Island was promoted as the perfect place to recover one’s health as one breathed in the fresh sea air and ate the fine sea food and fresh farm produce.

The Island was also sold as the perfect place for the outdoorsman in the early days of tourism. It was advertised that the rivers and streams were full of fish waiting to be caught and the skies were filled with birds for the huntsman.

Most early tourists to the Island stayed in small boarding houses and inns. They preferred this type of accommodation to the hotels, which were often described as “of a lesser quality.”

One of the first Island resorts was built in Summerside in 1872 by entrepreneur James Ludlow Holman who constructed the 125-room building on an island in the harbour. The Island Park Hotel was described as large and lavish with bathhouses, billiard tables, bowling alleys and fine dining. Guests travelled to Holman's Island by a small steamer named the *Frank*. Many well-known Americans stayed at the resort, which unfortunately closed after the death of Mr. Holman in 1877.

In 1875, there were twenty-one hotel owners on the Island with most owners conducting another line of business in order to make a living. The line of thinking on the Island by 1885 was that tourism could indeed help bring prosperity to the province and more people were looking for a way to get involved. Newspaper columnists on the Island were writing articles in the early 1890s suggesting more people would come to PEI if there were more places to stay. The hotels of note were the Davies in Charlottetown, the Seaside Hotel in Rustico, Shaw's Hotel in Brackley Beach, North Shore House in Malpeque, the Lansdowne in Cape Traverse, as well as several establishments in Summerside. Tignish, Alberton, Bayview, Souris, and Georgetown were also listed as having excellent hotels. Reporters stated that, as well as the hotels, "there are hundreds of farm houses all along the Island shores that offer visitors good, comfortable, and enjoyable quarters for the summer months." By 1905, there were almost fifty hotels in Prince Edward Island.

The train and the steamship were the main ways to reach the Island in the early days of tourism. Visitors came into Charlottetown or Summerside by steamship and travelled out to other parts of the province by horse and carriage and later by train. It took three hours to come over from Pointe du Chene, New Brunswick to Summerside by steamship. The Borden-Cape Tormentine crossing was started in 1917. The modern day tourist can still take the train as far as Moncton, New Brunswick and then travel to the Island by bus.

In 1899, the Island had seven thousand visitors from the United States. By this time tourist operators had figured out that visitors with no connection to the Island left more money in the Island economy than did former Islanders coming for a holiday. The logical reason was that they couldn't be fed and boarded by family who lived here.

Individuals in the travel writing industry promoted the Island as a tourist destination in the late 1800s. Writers travelled to different locations throughout the world to holiday and wrote about their findings in magazines and newspapers. The steamship lines and railways also did some promotion as did the local newspapers.

The tourism industry on Prince Edward Island was begun and pursued by private individuals. It would take many years for the Island government to become involved with tourism.

Attracting Visitors in the Early Decades of the 1900s

In 1901, a private tourist information bureau was opened in Charlottetown. Two years later Summerside set up an Improvement and Tourist Association to try to promote the

town as a tourist attraction. Both communities saw the economic value in encouraging visitors to stay for a period of time to enjoy the Island way of life.

In 1905, the Prince Edward Island Development and Tourist Association was formed and the following year received a \$500 grant from the provincial government.

By the 1920s the luxury of travelling had extended from the wealthy upper classes to the citizens of the middle class who were beginning to purchase automobiles. Families, travelling by car, wanted good roads to traverse. In 1923, the newly formed P.E.I. Tourist and Publicity Association started to push government for highway improvement.

In 1924, after a century of driving on the left side of the road, Islanders were obliged to shift to right hand driving in order to accommodate tourists and former Islanders coming to visit. Right hand driving was the standard North American practice. The Motor League published an official motoring guide of Prince Edward Island in 1928.

Getting to the Island by car wasn't an easy task in the 1920s. The ferry had been built to carry passengers and railway cars. In the early part of the decade, automobiles had to be loaded onto flatbed railway cars, which then were moved by rail onto the ferry. As car traffic increased, a makeshift auto deck was made on the ferry SS Prince Edward Island.

In the 1920s many fans of Lucy Maud Montgomery were travelling to PEI in order to visit Cavendish, the home of the famous author. The publication in 1908 of her famous book *Anne of Green Gables*, had been followed by other stories with the north shore of Prince Edward Island as the setting.

In 1925, approximately 25,000 tourists visited Prince Edward Island. However, the promotion of the tourism industry through the 1920s was very unorganized and could be considered a hit and miss affair.

Tourism during the Depression Years of the 1930s

The Great Depression began in 1929. While tourism numbers dropped sharply across the rest of Canada they actually increased on Prince Edward Island from 1929 to 1931, dropped in 1932, and then started to climb again until the end of the decade. One thing that helped keep tourists coming to the Island was a lowered fare for the ferry crossing after Island tourism operators successfully lobbied the federal government.

The Island government became more interested in tourism during the depression since it was economically healthy. The government made the decision to improve Island roads during this time with the hope of bringing even more of the motoring tourists to the Island. Road building was also a good way to make jobs for unemployed Islanders. A note of interest is that Prince Edward Island has the highest concentration of roads in all of Canada.

The face of Island tourism began to change in the 1930s. One of the changes was the need by visitors for small cottages that could be rented for short periods of time. A

reasonably priced vacation was in demand by the visitor. As a result, the large seaside resorts lost business during this time period.

Another big change for Island tourism came on July 19, 1939 when the Prince Edward Island National Park was opened at Cavendish. Cavendish had been selected for the park from twenty-two contending sites. The park stretched twenty-five miles along the north shore. In its first year the park had over 35,000 visitors. This shifted the face of tourism to the Cavendish area. Rustico had previously been the most popular tourist area.

Island Tourism during the 1940s

In September 1939, Canada entered World War II and the routine of daily life quickly changed. Tourism on the Island was able to hold its own in wartime economy. This was no doubt due in part to the fact that people could no longer travel safely outside the continent. In the early years of the war Americans kept coming to the Island, but as it wore on, a shift was seen in the makeup of visitors coming from central Canada.

How could people think about vacationing during wartime? People had no idea what the future would bring, especially the young, and people gave way to living in the present moment. How could they afford to vacation in a war economy? The war brought prosperity to many industries and everybody that could work had a job. This meant that people had money in their pockets, but very little to buy as meeting the war needs came first. Spending some hard-earned dollars on a vacation was a good diversion.

Island tourist operators at the eastern end of the Island lobbied for many years for a ferry service that would bring more tourists their way. They finally got their wish in June of 1941, when the Wood Islands-Caribou Ferry Service was started. The service is subsidized by the federal government and is still in operation today. Many modern day tourists make the decision to use both the bridge and the ferry when visiting the Island.

Airmail and passenger service to Prince Edward Island began in 1931 through an airport at Charlottetown. Air travel was the new fad in transportation available to those with financial resources. Summerside also built an airport during the 1930s. But the mainland airlines didn't have much interest in developing routes into Prince Edward Island. This changed in 1941 with the start of Maritime Central Airways (M.C.A) to serve the Atlantic region. There was a Moncton-Summerside-Charlottetown route for both airmail and passengers. The service was started by Carl F. Burke, a young Islander who opened up air travel in the Atlantic region.

It has not been easy over the decades to keep airlines interested in travelling to Prince Edward Island on a schedule that is helpful for tourism. The main problem is that tourism is so seasonal it is difficult for airlines to make money on Island routes the rest of the year. Charlottetown is now the only commercial airport in the province. Although still owned by Transport Canada, it was turned over to the Charlottetown Airport Authority in 1999 to operate. The authority has made great strides in making the airport a major entryway into the province. It has not only secured direct flights from major Canadian centres but also several American centres. In 2007, the airport broke its

passenger record with 253,224 passengers. Many tourists who fly into Charlottetown rent cars for touring the province.

Rapid Growth during the 1950s

The post war period of the 1950s saw rapid growth in tourism across the continent of North America. There were several reasons for this growth. World War II, which ended in 1945, had changed the attitudes of the general population. People wanted to experience what life had to offer and there was a feeling in the air that it wasn't just the rich who should be able to have a holiday. The economy in both Canada and the United States was booming and with rising incomes people had more money to spend.

By the mid-1950s, tourism was the third ranked industry on Prince Edward Island, the first and second being agriculture and fishing. During this decade the Island government started to really pay attention to tourism. It issued the first official guidebook for tourists. The highlights were Island beaches and the National Park and Anne of Green Gables House in Cavendish. It began to seriously invest in the industry and the promotion of it. The provincial Department of Tourism was established in 1960.

The tourists of the 1950s were young couples travelling with children. To take advantage of this, the government introduced a promotion to call the province "Holiday Island." Vacationing visitors were looking for affordable accommodations suitable for families. Many of them sought campgrounds in order to travel economically.

The PEI government started the provincial park system in order to create a variety of recreational and camping facilities across the Island. Several parks were established in the late 1950s and the system was completed in the 1960s. The first three provincial parks to open were the Strathgartney, Brudenell and Selkirk Parks, all located on parcels of land donated to the people of PEI from Robert Cotton, sometimes referred to as the "Father of the Provincial Parks."

Following the Second World War, Anne of Green Gables was translated into the Japanese language. The book gave hope to Japanese readers who were devastated by years of war. As the economy of Japan rebuilt in the following decades, Japanese tourists made their way to the "Land of Anne." In the year 1996, over 25,000 Japanese visitors came to Prince Edward Island.

The 1960s promotion of PEI as the Cradle of Confederation

Prince Edward Island is known as the birthplace of Canada because Charlottetown hosted the 1864 conference between Quebec, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia that laid the foundation for Canadian Confederation in 1867. Prince Edward Island refused to join until 1873.

It took a hundred years for the Island to starting promoting itself as the birthplace of Canadian Confederation. This came about with the Centennial celebrations of 1964 when Province House, where the delegates had gathered, became a centre of attention.

Province House National Historic Site now welcomes over 100,000 visitors a year. The Fathers of Confederation travel the streets of the capital city during the summer months.

Charlottetown, especially, capitalized on the promotion after the Fathers of Confederation Memorial Building, more commonly known as the Confederation Centre, opened in the city in 1964. As a cultural complex it attracted many tourists to the Island in the coming years to view musical stage productions such as *Anne of Green Gables*.

The yearly number of tourists coming to Prince Edward Island tripled during the 1960s. In 1966, tourists spent a total of six million dollars. Privately owned vehicles remained as the most favoured choice of transportation of visitors and the car ferry service struggled to keep up with increased traffic. There were often long waits on both sides of the Northumberland Strait for the ferry crossings.

The increase in the number of visitors led to more construction of motels which made it possible for tourists to park right in front of their bedroom doors. The term “motel” is short for motor hotel and these businesses catered to the automobile tourist who was on the move from destination to destination.

Government Involvement during the 1970s

The Comprehensive Development Plan created by the government in 1969 was the first official step to move tourism away from being a casual affair towards being an industry that would manage resources. The driving force behind the plan was Dr. M. Lorne Bonnell, the PEI Minister of Tourism of the time. He wanted an infrastructure put in place that would encourage people to increase the length of their visits and thus spend more money. The anticipated growth rate was ten percent yearly. This led to worries among some Islanders that the Island would become nothing but a tourist resort. However, the market gradually slowed, peaking in 1975, before it began to level off. Island tourism was competing with a much increased world tourism market.

Tourism advertising was also greatly increased during the early years of the development plan and the focus was the marketing of the Island’s natural beauty. The tourism department designated a scenic drive for each of the three counties. The Prince County 300-km coastal route was named Lady Slipper Drive after the provincial flower. The name was changed in 2005 to the North Cape Coastal Drive in hopes of attracting more visitors to stay longer. The Queen’s County scenic drive of 198-km was designated the Blue Heron Drive in honour of the large wading bird. The route shows off the beaches, sand dunes, red cliffs, and winding roads of central Prince Edward Island and covers the heart of Island tourist attractions. The Kings County scenic drive was named the Kings Byway. The 380-km route wound through a landscape of coastal villages, harbours, bays, lighthouses, and sandy beaches. In 2005 it was renamed the Points East Coastal Drive.

In the 1970s the provincial government became a big investor in the sector and has remained so ever since. It built attractions from which it was hoped private businesses would develop and thrive. Examples of this were the Brudenell Resort near Georgetown

in Kings County and the Mill River Resort in Prince County. Both resorts included golf courses, which were seen as an important tourist attraction. The first golf club on the Island was the Charlottetown Golf Club formed in 1893 and incorporated in 1907 under the name Belvedere Golf Club. Over the next three decades the government built additional courses and encouraged private ones. By 1989, there were twelve courses and by 2000 there were more than twenty-six. The government course at Crowbush Cove ranks as one of North America's top ten. By 2008, the government was trying to sell its courses and put golf in the hands of the private sector.

Another concern to the government's heavy emphasis on tourism in the 1970s was the fear of an influx of "Disney spin-offs" that would have no relation to the heritage or culture of the Island. The government itself opened a buffalo park after receiving fifteen buffalo as a gift from the federal government. Buffalo is not native to the Island.

An additional issue of the industry in the 1970s was the over-zealous use of commercial road signage. The government brought in strict information signage rules to protect the natural landscape.

The Cultural Direction of the 1980s

Visitors who came to the Island as children in the 1950s and 60s were part of the Baby Boom Generation, that is, people born between 1946 and 1964. As they grew older they returned with their own children to visit many of the same attractions they had visited in their youth. At the same time the focus of tourism on Prince Edward Island began to shift away from family oriented activities to those of a cultural nature.

Cultural tourism is the sector of tourism that deals with visual and performing arts, heritage, and the culture of a people. Prince Edward Island has always done cultural tourism but in the 1980s the emphasis became more pronounced. The Island cultivated musicians, dancers, storytellers, and actors and began to present its culture through numerous venues. Tourists began to come for the uniqueness of the province.

Historical sites were given more attention and direction with the passing of the Museums Act of 1983. The PEI Museum and Heritage Foundation, funded by government, replaced the earlier volunteer organization and began to promote heritage through its official sites. In the same year the formation of the Community Museums Association of Prince Edward Island led to the ability of many communities to showcase artefacts in their own local facilities.

In the 1980s tourism operators took steps to formalize their voice to governments by forming the Tourism Industry Association of Prince Edward Island. TIAPEI acts as a liaison between tourist operators and the federal and provincial governments. It also works to improve standards in the industry by offering programs to tourist operators and workers.

In the early 1980s the Prince Edward Island government established a convention bureau to promote the Island as a convention centre. Conventions are meetings of companies,

groups or organizations and can be local, regional, national, or international in scope. Since many convention participants combine business with pleasure and bring their families to conventions it is important to have activities for spouses and children. The Island has been successful in building its convention market. In the year 2008, over 200 conventions with 20,000 delegates will be held in the province bringing 19 million dollars into the economy. The government turned the convention business over to a private not-for-profit company in 1988. More can be learned about conventions on Prince Edward Island by going to www.seasidesocial.com.

The last half of the 1980s saw steady increases in the number of visitors to Prince Edward Island. Questions begin to arise concerning whether the natural resources, which visitors come to see, could be retained as the numbers climbed. Some steps were taken to preserve natural resources. An example was the protection of the sand dunes from foot-traffic that destroyed the marran grass, which in turn caused the breakdown of the dunes.

In 1987, the provincial government designated a number of Heritage Roads. This move was made to protect and preserve some of the scenic and cultural roads that were still clay, narrow in width, lined with trees, and showed the pure beauty of the past. The roads give Islanders and tourists alike the opportunity to travel through yesteryear. By 2005, eleven roads had been designated. There are six other old roads that suit the criteria but are not officially designated. To learn more about the Heritage Roads visit the government website.

In 1984, the Canadian Heritage Rivers system was established by the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to conserve and protect the best examples of Canada's river heritage and encourage the public to enjoy and appreciate them. The Montague, Brudenell, and Cardigan Rivers under the heading Three Rivers are designated, as is the Hillsborough River. Check out the Three Rivers Heritage Association website and Hillsborough Heritage Association for information on Heritage Rivers.

In 1989, trains were taken out of service, after having been part of the Island landscape since 1875. After much debate it was determined that the rail bed would become part of the planned national coast-to-coast trail system. In 1994, the provincial government purchased the railway lines from Canadian National Railways and the work began of transferring it into a walking, cycling, and snowmobile trail for Islanders and visitors alike. It was named the Confederation Trail and was completed tip to tip across the province by 2000. The Island was the first province in Canada to complete its section of the national trail. The Confederation Trail tip to tip is 279 kilometres long with several side extensions making it 357 kilometres. The trail is a unique way to see the Island in that it presents the landscape in a manner not seen from the highways. The trail brings the user close to nature as it passes through farmland, woodland, waterways, and wetlands. Many tourists who bike or hike the trail divide it into segments stopping at night at local bed and breakfast establishments.

Connection to the mainland in the 1990s

One of the most important events in the history of Prince Edward Island took place in 1997, with the opening of the Confederation Bridge that crossed the waters between Cape Jourimain, NB and Borden-Carleton, PEI. This 13-kilometre engineering marvel brought to a close the era of the ferry service between Borden and Cape Tormentine. Visitors could now quickly make their way to the Island and they did so in record numbers for several years - in part, to see the great wonder of the bridge. During the first year of the bridge, over a million tourists came to P.E.I. and tourism spending jumped by 63 percent. Accommodations were greatly increased in those years as many operators thought the numbers would just keep growing. They were wrong. Tourism was good for several years and then the numbers began to fall to pre-bridge numbers.

One result of the bridge, that tourist operators hadn't expected, was that visitors actually reduced their length of stay. It was much easier to come, but it was also much easier to leave.

The late 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century saw a new type of tourism, known as "experiential tourism," being encouraged. This developing interest on the part of consumers, allowed the visitor to be an active participant in a hands-on experience. Nature tourism, adventure tourism, ecotourism, heritage tourism are a few examples of the type of tourism that falls under Experiential Tourism.

Modern day tourists are looking for more than scenery – they are seeking experiences. This means they don't want to just watch what is happening – they want to be a part of something happening. They want to fish for tuna, build sand castles, or take part in a festival, etc. This is one reason the government in 1995 established Festivals and Events P.E.I. to promote to tourists some of the things Islanders are doing and welcome them to get involved.

Agritourism has become a part of experiential tourism. As of 2008 the majority of the world's population lives in urban centres. They have lost contact with how their food is grown and produced. More and more people are seeking out a farm vacation to reconnect with their roots.

Current Considerations about the Industry

Tourism has surpassed fishing in economic contribution to the Island economy.

Visitors to the Island have always been encouraged to relax and enjoy the unique beauty of the Island. In 2006, the government launched a campaign to promote PEI as the "Gentle Island."

An issue that Island tourism faces is that the Prince Edward Island, for a variety of reasons, is losing some of its uniqueness. Many of the small family farms that dotted the landscape, and were enjoyed by tourists, are rapidly disappearing, as are the small fishing wharfs along the coasts. In 2007 the government began to close or privatize some

provincial parks as the age of tourists changed to an older clientele who prefer other accommodations.

In May of 2007, the Island government permitted Sunday shopping, the same as everywhere else. In May 2008, the uniqueness of getting “pop” in a glass bottle also disappeared from store shelves. Small things perhaps in the eyes of many, but in the competitive tourism trade perhaps not small at all.

The Summerside Journal Pioneer newspaper reported in 2007 that tourism on Prince Edward Island employed twelve thousand people on a fulltime, part-time, and seasonal basis for a total of 7,000 full-time equivalent jobs.

One of the downsides to tourism is the heavy demand it puts on Island highways, infrastructure, recreational facilities and services. During the tourist season there are ten visitors for every Islander. Tourism has changed the landscape and has contributed to strip development in such communities as Cavendish. It has also put pressure on shore frontage as more people wish to come and build cottages.

The majority of workers in the tourism industry are women and students. Wages are at the lower end of the scale and many workers have to depend on Employment Insurance or a second job to get them through the year. This makes it difficult to attract highly trained professional people to the industry.

Island tourist operators have a very short season in which to make their money. This can make it difficult to make a decent return on their capital investment. July and August are the height of the tourist season. The government has tried for many years to lengthen the season into the spring and fall, a period of time known as the “shoulder season,” but this has proven difficult as many tourist operators depend on students for staff. However, as the North American population ages, this is becoming an important issue as many people whose families have grown prefer to travel in the off-season.

Tourists are demanding consumers with a world of choices at their fingertips. The future of tourism is an uncertain one, but if the Island remains true to its authenticity of landscapes and culture, there is no doubt people will desire to visit for generations to come.

Questions for Critical Thought and Ideas for Further Exploration

Definition of Tourist and Tourism

- Many people who explore their own home areas call themselves tourists as well. If you were a tourist like this, what could you do in your own area?
- How do fuel companies, construction companies, and food suppliers benefit from tourism?
- Do you enjoy traveling? What do you find appealing about being a tourist?

- There are many types of tourism: beach, farm, winter, pilgrimage, educational, and cultural. Which do you think is most popular on the Island? In the world?

Benefits of Tourism

- Tourism benefits the preservation and conservation of architecture, arts, and heritage. Why do you think this is important?
- Tourism benefits towns and cities in one way by creating employment for local residents. What sort of jobs do you think the residents would do?

Disadvantages of Tourism

- One of the disadvantages of tourism is the unpredictability of the number of visitors. What are some factors that may make it more predictable?
- Why do you think the majority of those involved in the industry would get low wages?
- Overview of Tourism on Prince Edward Island
- Why do you think cultural and heritage tourism is becoming a bigger attraction than other sorts in the 21st century?

Tourism prior to 1900

- Why do you think hotels were thought to be a lesser quality than small boarding houses and inns?
- What do you think would have most helped promote the Island as a tourist destination: travel writers, steamship lines and railway promotion, or newspaper advertisements? Explain.

Attracting Visitors in the Early Decades of the 1900s

- Why was tourism considered to be a “hit and miss affair”?
- The availability of automobiles made traveling easier but it was a more costly method of transportation. How do you think this impacted the industry?
- Tourism organizers wanted to encourage visitors to experience the “Island way of life”. How would you describe the Island way of life? Why would this be attractive to tourists?
- Why do you think the tourism industry was so unorganized through the 1920s?

Tourism during the Depression Years of the 1930s

- Island tourism increased during the years of the great economic depression. Why do you think this was the case? Who could afford to travel during these tough times?
- How would this industry have helped Islanders get through the Depression years?
- Why do you think the Cavendish area was chosen for the Island's first National Park? Do you think that was a good choice?

Island Tourism during the 1940s

- How did the war affect tourists to the Island? Would they have encountered the same experiences as pre-war days? What might have been different?
- Air transportation was introduced to the Island in the 1940s and there continues to be advancement in travel methods. What do you think is the most popular way to come to the Island: bridge, ferry or airplane?

Rapid Growth during the 1950s

- The promotion of Prince Edward Island as "Holiday Island" attempted to attract families with young children. Do you think this was a good way to advertise the Island? Is it an appealing slogan? What is the Island being promoted as today? Do you feel it is an effective promotion?
- Why would visitors be so interested in parks and beaches during the 1950s? How was this post-war period different from prior decades?

The 1960s promotion of PEI as the Cradle of Confederation

- Why do you think it took so long for the Island to promote itself as the birthplace of Canada? Why would this historical fact attract visitors?
- What do you think were some of the factors which lead to a tripling of visitors to the Island in the 1960s?

Government Involvement during the 1970s

- The Island competes in a large world tourism market. What are some other well-known tourist destinations?
- "Disney spin-offs," though attempted with the aim of attracting visitors, often fail. Why might this be? Do you think they are a good idea?
- In the 1970s, many Islanders feared the province would become a big tourist resort. Were their fears without reason? If it became a reality, how would the Island be different?

The Cultural Direction of the 1980s

- Tourists come to experience the uniqueness of the province. What are some unique features of Prince Edward Island?
- Why did the tourism industry make a shift to greater promotion for cultural tourism?
- Why would the Island be a good location for conferences?

Connection to the Mainland in the 1990s

- Why is the building of the Confederation Bridge one of the most significant events in Island history?

Current Considerations about the Industry

- The tourism season has recently begun extending into the fall months to accommodate off-season travelers. What are some advantages / disadvantages to traveling in the off-season?
- Women and students tend to be employed in the majority of tourism positions. Why might this be the case?
- Name some of the factors that have always attracted visitors to the Island and continue to do so to this day?
- The Island has lost some of its unique factors such as driving on the left hand side, no Sunday shopping, and pop in bottles. How have these changes affected Islanders? How have the changes influenced visitors? Overall, are they positive or negative changes?
- In what sort of activities might visitors participate as a part of experiential tourism? What activities might be good to develop to attract visitors?

Suggestions for Activities

1. What would you recommend to a visitor to see and do on their holiday? Consider making a present day brochure outlining your choice of top Island attractions. In your brochure promote what you think is appealing and attractive about the Island, not necessarily what is being commercially promoted.
2. Compose an ad for a newspaper or magazine promoting vacationing on Prince Edward Island. Review the ads of days gone by that you can find in the resource binder. What are the important aspects of the Island to promote? Note how language has changed over time.

3. Consider becoming a tourist in your own province. Encourage your family to explore your home community.
4. Have a class debate about the merits of tourism. Is it an industry that is good for Prince Edward Island and its people?
5. If you were going to develop a new tourist attraction for Prince Edward Island what would it be? Would your attraction be specific to the Island, or would it be something that could be found anywhere in North America? An older group of students could look at putting in place an attraction totally out of character with the Island and be called upon to defend their idea while listing all the problems it might create. An example would be bringing dolphins to the province so that tourists could swim with them.
6. The best ambassador for any tourist destination is a local citizen who knows his or her surroundings. Play the Prince Edward Island board game and learn about your home province.
7. Debate government regulations. A good example of how much more involved the government has become in the tourism industry is the Tourism P.E.I. Act of 1988. You can find the legislation on the Internet and hold a classroom discussion on whether or not you feel the government is helping or harming the industry with its regulations.
8. Consider the spin-offs of the industry. A spin-off is defined a “something derived from another.” Make a list of the industries or types of businesses that are affected by tourism. An example would be increased sales for craftspeople.
9. Listen to the song on Allan Rankin’s CD about tourists coming to visit. Can you relate to the song? Try to find someone who can sing the jingle “Dial the Island” recorded by Stompin’ Tom in the 1970s. The toll-free # was 800-565-7421.

Items in the suitcase

Besides the written material contained in the binder a number of other materials have been gathered for the suitcase that will increase the student’s understanding of the tourism industry and how it has evolved over time.

Prince Edward Island On Board: Produced by Help on Board in support of Junior Achievement P.E.I., this board game gives students a chance to discover the Island and what it has to offer including some well known tourist attractions such as Founder’s Hall, The College of Piping, The Charlottetown Festival, and The Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival.

Tourism Guide Books: To visually see how tourism has changed over time, the suitcase includes five tourism guidebooks from different decades including 1910s, 1930s, 1950, 1970s, and 2000s. These books allow students to analyse how advertising techniques have changed, which attractions have come and gone, how values have altered, transportation methods have advanced, prices have increased, etc.

Brochures: An assortment of recent PEI brochures, pamphlets, and tourist information advertising a variety of attractions, concerts, parks, etc. is included. Brochures from years past can be found in the Supplementary Material Binder. Some of the early brochures in the binder include “Special Attractions,” “Prince Edward Island, Canada’s Garden Province”, and “Big 5 Tour.” This will give students the opportunity to make comparisons of how the industry has changed over time.

Articles and Ads: The Supplementary Material Binder includes a number of articles and advertisements relating to the tourism industry. Some excerpts include: a hotel ad from 1866, the Islanders’ Reunion Celebration Programme from 1904, a 1913 Guardian write up on the Island’s tourist attractions, and even a modern Guardian article on the 100th anniversary of Anne of Green Gables. These ads provide students with an opportunity to discover how the tourism industry has changed over time.

Photographs: The Supplementary Material binder contains photographs from the 1800s, 1900s, and 2000s. Topics covered include hotels and motels; transportation methods – automobiles, ferries, bridge, shuttle, train tracks; and a family vacation photo album from 1907. Also included are photos of postcards from the early 1900s. These images allow students to see what PEI was like many years ago, and visually make comparisons of how the tourism industry and peoples lifestyles in general have changed over the years.

Photo CD: All of the photographs are also provided on a CD for easy classroom viewing.

Allan Rankin CD: This CD has a song about tourists coming to visit. This gives students the opportunity to listen to travelers’ experiences.

Maps: Island maps are included in the suitcases to enable students to find key locations in the province. They can learn the geography of the province as they discover where prime tourist destinations once were, and where they are today.

Resources used to compile this information

“Discovering An Island: Travel Writers and Tourism on Prince Edward Island,” by Alan Andrew MacEachern. The Island Magazine, Number 29, Spring/Summer 1991

If You’re Stronghearted; Prince Edward Island in the Twentieth Century, by Edward MacDonald. Prince Edward Island Museum and Heritage Foundation, 2000

Land of The Red Sea; A Popular History of Prince Edward Island, by Douglas Baldwin, Ragweed Press, 1998

Prince Edward Island; An Unauthorized History, by Boyde Beck. Acorn Press, 1996

Vertical File. MacNaught History Centre and Archives, Summerside

Prince Edward Island Visitors Guides, various years