



2024 Socioeconomic Research of Arches National Park

Report on 2024 Data Collection



Visitors capture the beauty of Delicate Arch during sunset.
NPS / NICOLE SEGNINI

2024 Socioeconomic Research of Arches National Park: Report on 2024 Data Collection

Science Report NPS/SR—2026/395

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Abstract

A strong mandate and need for socioeconomic monitoring have been expressed in the National Park Service (NPS) strategic goals for science, in statements by NPS leadership, and in various official reports. Since such monitoring began in 2022, the NPS has conducted visitor surveys at 24 parks per year across the United States and associated territories. Arches National Park (Arches) was selected as one of these units for 2024 implementation. This socioeconomic monitoring at Arches uses a two-step survey methodology to capture a representative sample of park visitors during the peak season of each respective park unit. This process includes (1) an on-site intercept survey conducted via tablet, and (2) a post-trip survey (completed either by mail-back or online) for more in-depth trip details. The types of data collected include visitor demographics, trip characteristics/planning, and experience evaluations. Results are organized by these two survey instruments and are aimed at assisting park managers in understanding current utilization and perception of park resources, assessing operations and potential issues, and facilitating communication and decision-making processes within the park and between the park and its local partners and stakeholders. Results of this and studies at the 23 other park units sampled for 2024 contribute to a technical report on national-level findings.

Introduction

Social science research has become increasingly recognized as a crucial component of park planning, amplifying its significance for the National Park Service (NPS). With the ever-changing landscape of visitation and a desire to provide transformative visitor experiences, understanding the needs and expectations of the visiting public has become more important than ever. The agency seeks to provide the highest quality visitor experience while also protecting the important natural and cultural resources that make these sites special.

A pilot visitor study was conducted in 2015/2016 across selected park units throughout the United States. Building upon the insights gleaned from the pilot study, the Socioeconomic Monitoring Program (SEM) Visitor Survey has been carried out each year starting in 2022 at 24 NPS units across the country per year. Arches National Park (Arches) was selected as one of these 24 units in 2024. The study aims to deepen understanding of visitor demographics and characteristics at Arches.

This report contains the data and findings collected from the SEM Visitor Survey in 2024. The study gathers data at a comprehensive agency level, addressing the informational needs of park managers throughout the National Park System. The data collected during the 2024 SEM Visitor Survey sampling period are intended to provide park managers with data-supported insights into their visitors while enabling data analysis at the agency level and beyond for future applications.

This study collects information about visitor use, aids in finding effective management solutions, and offers insights into the visitors who experience NPS sites. The findings empower NPS managers to better comprehend visitor behaviors, inform park operations, and identify areas for enhancing the visitor experience. Moreover, these results are intended to facilitate communication and foster informed decision-making processes, both within the NPS unit and in collaboration with local partners and stakeholders.

This report does not include spending data, despite it being collected as part of the study. For detailed information regarding visitor spending at Arches, please refer to the 2024 Visitor Spending Effects report.

The research was carried out by a team including Otak, Inc., RRC Associates, Inc., the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research at the University of Montana, and GAIA Environmental Consulting.

Methods

The SEM Visitor Survey methodology is designed to capture a representative sample of visitor information, characteristics, and behavior at each sampled park unit through:

1. An onsite intercept survey conducted via tablet, and
2. A post-trip follow-up survey (mail-back or online) for full trip details.

This comprehensive approach provides the necessary information to make on-the-ground decisions in park units using the intercept survey to capture visitor responses on higher priority information, while also capturing key in-depth information on visitor spending and trip characteristics for long-term planning from the post-trip survey. Additionally, the intercept survey is designed to be brief so as not to fundamentally affect visitors' experiences. The methods also permit a larger sample to be collected on key questions of interest by asking these high priority questions during the intercept survey.

Study Area

The Arches local area map is shown in Figure 1. The local area around Arches consists of Grand and San Juan counties in Utah, along with the community of Green River. Within Arches, the study area was comprised of three locations. Table 1 lists those sites, and the number of onsite intercept surveys completed at each. The distribution of surveyor effort across sites was determined based on historical visitor volumes and spatial distribution across the park's key areas. Where available, Visitor Use Statistics estimates for monthly visitation at each site were used to assign surveyors proportionally to reflect visitor use patterns. Park staff were consulted prior to the study launch to confirm that these metrics accurately captured visitor flows, ensuring that sampling efforts were focused on the most popular and representative locations.

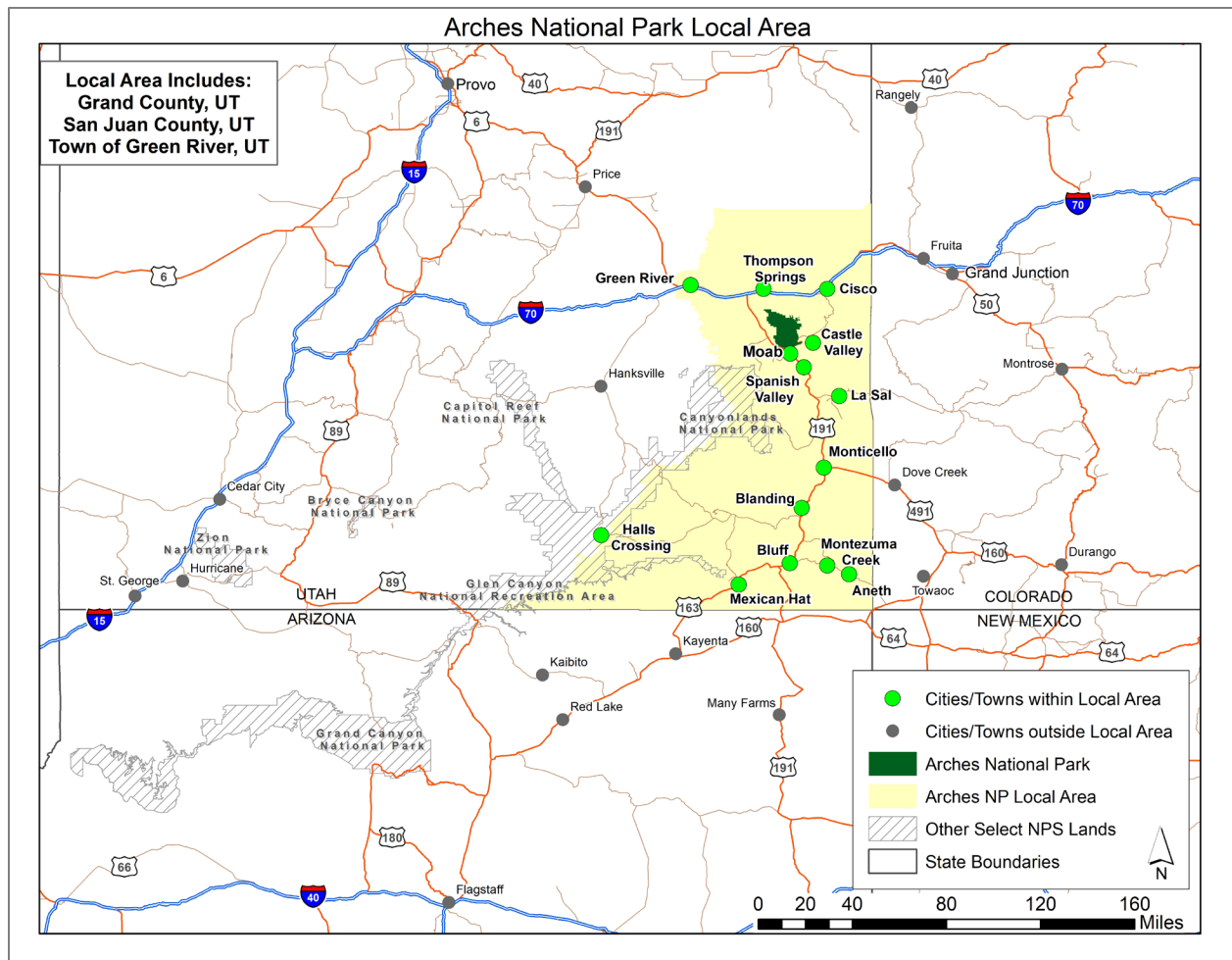


Figure 1. Arches local area map.
 NPS

Table 1. Intercept surveys conducted within Arches.

Intercept Site	Completed Intercept Surveys	
	Number of Surveys	Percent of Surveys
Park Avenue Entry Pull-off	638	66.6%
Visitor Center	317	33.1%
Willow Flats/Balanced Rock	3	0.3%

Sampling Period and Procedure

Intercept Survey

The on-site intercept survey is designed to rapidly collect visitor information as tablet-based responses, reaching the largest possible sample for the highest priority visitor information. The intercept sampling was conducted during the period of August 23rd through September 3rd, 2024. A sample of visitors were intercepted while visiting Arches across the designated locations listed in Table 1, above. At the Park Avenue entrance inbound pull-off, respondents were intercepted in their vehicle after being pulled over as they entered the park. Respondents at the other locations were intercepted on foot.

Surveyors approached potential respondent groups at the site to introduce the purpose of the study and ask them to participate in a short 5–7-minute survey about their experience in Arches (NPS 2024). Within the group, the adult with the next upcoming birthday was asked to participate. If the visitor was eligible (at least 18 years of age, not an Arches employee, and had not previously taken the survey) and agreed to participate in the study, the surveyor verbally administered the survey questions and recorded the responses on a handheld tablet device. If the visitor did not agree, surveyors asked if they would be willing to answer three non-response bias questions (see the Non-response Bias Analysis section, below). Upon complete or partial refusal, the surveyor would thank the visitor for their time, log the non-response, and approach the next visitor group.

At the end of the intercept survey, respondents were invited to participate in a post-trip survey by mail-back or online response. Those who agreed to participate were given an envelope containing a printed copy of the post-trip survey with a postage paid envelope for mailing it back, as well as a hyperlink and instructions for accessing it online. As part of the intercept protocol, surveyors logged a unique identifier (four-digit code) from the envelope into the tablet for future connection to the post-trip survey.

Therefore, four potential outcomes were possible when intercepting visitors (see Table 2):

1. Complete refusal, refused to answer any questions, including non-response bias questions;
2. Partial refusal, answered non-response bias questions but nothing further;
3. Completed intercept, but refused to take post-trip survey; or
4. Completed intercept and took post-trip survey.

During the sampling period, four surveyors were stationed simultaneously at different sampling sites. Roadway intercepts were conducted by teams of two or three field technicians, while the Visitor Center was sampled by one technician during every shift. Start times varied day-to-day and by location to capture a diverse sample of visitors across Arches. Each surveyor worked 10 seven-hour days (approximately six hours of data collection and a one-hour lunch break) and had two days off during the 12-day sampling window.

Table 2. Response outcomes—Arches intercept survey.

Outcome	Total
Eligible visitors contacted	1,206
Complete refusals	132
Partial refusals (non-response bias questions completed)	116
Intercept surveys completed	958
Post-trip surveys distributed	786
Intercept response rate	79.4%
Post-trip acceptance rate	82.0%

Post-Trip Survey

The post-trip survey was distributed to participating respondents who completed the intercept survey and then agreed to take a follow-up survey after completing their trip to the NPS unit. This method extended data collection and asked participants to complete the survey after their visit, either through a provided postage-paid envelope, or online via a provided survey link. The post-trip survey covers visitor trip spending details, travel patterns, and perceptions of their recent visit (NPS 2024). Both the intercept survey and the post-trip survey were tagged with a unique identifier (four-digit code) for each respondent so their onsite intercept responses could be paired with their post-trip responses. Numbers were assigned at random to the individual. The use of this code allows the data to be joined, while keeping all surveys confidential and removing respondents' identifying information. Joining the two datasets provides a more complete picture of in-park experiences and post-visit perceptions.

At the end of the intercept survey, respondents were asked for their physical mailing address or email address. This allowed for a reminder postcard or email to be sent to all respondents who provided contact information about a week following the end of each onsite data collection period. This postcard or email thanked respondents for their original participation and encouraged them to complete the post-trip survey if they had not already done so.

Three weeks after postcard mailing, a second contact (with the same unique IDs) was delivered to all outstanding addresses/emails, noting that the individual's completed questionnaire had yet to be received. The mailed survey packets included replacement surveys and postage-paid, self-addressed return envelopes. A final contact was mailed/emailed to all remaining non-respondents four weeks after sending the second contact (i.e., first full replacement survey). Table 3 shows response rates for the post-trip survey.

Table 3. Response outcomes—Arches post-trip survey.

Outcome	Total
Post-trip surveys distributed	786
Valid post-trip surveys completed	255
Response rate	32.4%

Non-Response Bias Analysis

To account for potential biases between respondents and non-respondents, three questions were asked of eligible visitors contacted who did not wish to participate in the survey. The responses to these three questions can then be compared to both the larger group of respondents who completed the intercept survey, and the smaller group who completed both the intercept and post-trip surveys.

The Office of Management and Budget recommends testing for non-response bias when a response rate is less than 80%. Since the response rate for the intercept survey (79.4%) did not meet this threshold, bias testing was conducted to evaluate differences between the full set of visitors who participated in the onsite intercept survey (intercept respondents) and those eligible visitors who declined to participate (intercept non-respondents).

A chi-square test for homogeneity was performed for each of the three questions to evaluate differences between the groups. A p-value of 0.05 is used as the indicated threshold of significance; p-values of 0.05 or lower indicate significant difference between groups. The distribution of responses among intercept survey respondents and non-respondents differed significantly for one question: local area residency. Therefore, permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around Arches are not as well represented in the intercept survey sample (1.6%) as desired, when compared to their proportion among intercept survey non-respondents (4.3%). Results of the bias testing for the intercept survey are shown in Tables 4 through 6.

Table 4. Intercept survey non-response bias question: “Are you a permanent or seasonal/second home resident of the local area around Arches?” Note: p-value = 0.04.

Response	Intercept Survey Respondents		Intercept Survey Non-Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	15	1.6%	5	4.3%
No	943	98.4%	111	95.7%

Table 5. Intercept survey non-response bias question: “Do you currently live in the United States?” Note: p-value = 0.32.

Response	Intercept Survey Respondents		Intercept Survey Non-Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	788	82.3%	91	78.4%
No	170	17.7%	25	21.6%

Table 6. Intercept survey non-response bias question: “On this trip away from home, have you stayed, or will you stay overnight away from your permanent residence either in Arches and/or within the local area?” Note: p-value = 0.65.

Response	Intercept Survey Respondents		Intercept Survey Non-Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	759	79.2%	94	81.0%
No	199	20.8%	22	19.0%

Additionally, because the post-trip survey response rate (32.4%) also did not meet the minimum threshold, bias testing was conducted to evaluate differences between those respondents who completed the full survey (both intercept and post-trip), and those who only completed the intercept portion.

Again, chi-square tests for homogeneity were performed to evaluate differences between the groups. The distribution of responses among full survey respondents and intercept-only respondents differed significantly for both questions for which the test was run (testing was not possible for the third question due to low cell counts): 1) country of residence, and 2) overnight visitation. Therefore, international visitors and day trip visitors are not as well represented in the full survey sample (8.7% and 13.1%, respectively) as desired, based on their proportion among respondents that only completed the intercept survey (21.0% and 23.5%). Results of the bias testing for the post-trip survey are shown in Tables 7 through 9.

Table 7. Post-trip survey non-response bias question: “Are you a permanent or seasonal/second home resident of the local area around Arches?” Note: chi-square test cannot be performed due to low cell counts.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	2	0.8%	13	1.8%
No	250	99.2%	693	98.2%

Table 8. Post-trip survey non-response bias question: “Do you currently live in the United States?” Note: p-value < 0.01.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	230	91.3%	558	79.0%
No	22	8.7%	148	21.0%

Table 9. Post-trip survey non-response bias question: “On this trip away from home, have you stayed, or will you stay overnight away from your permanent residence either in Arches and/or within the local area?” Note: p-value < 0.01.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	219	86.9%	540	76.5%
No	33	13.1%	166	23.5%

Results

Results are presented separately for both the intercept and post-trip surveys throughout the following section. To preserve the data for additional analyses, outliers for open-ended numeric questions (e.g., nights spent, days in local area, etc.) have not been removed. Given these outliers, medians are shown instead of means throughout the report, in order to better represent the central tendency. Some questions were omitted because they were not applicable to this report.

Intercept Survey Results

The following section provides results of the 958 visitor intercept surveys conducted in Arches from August 23rd through September 3rd, 2024. All results are presented in this report, regardless of sample size, which varies by question. Caution is recommended in the interpretation of figures with sample size lower than $n = 30$. Categories on some questions may not sum to 100% due to rounding differences and/or the opportunity to select more than one response option.

Questions 1–2: Visitor Residency

First, respondents were asked to indicate if they were permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around Arches. Permanent and seasonal residents were then asked for their ZIP code within the local area. Respondents who do not reside permanently or seasonally in the local area were asked if they currently live in the U.S., and if so, for their ZIP code. Figure 2 depicts responses to this group of questions.

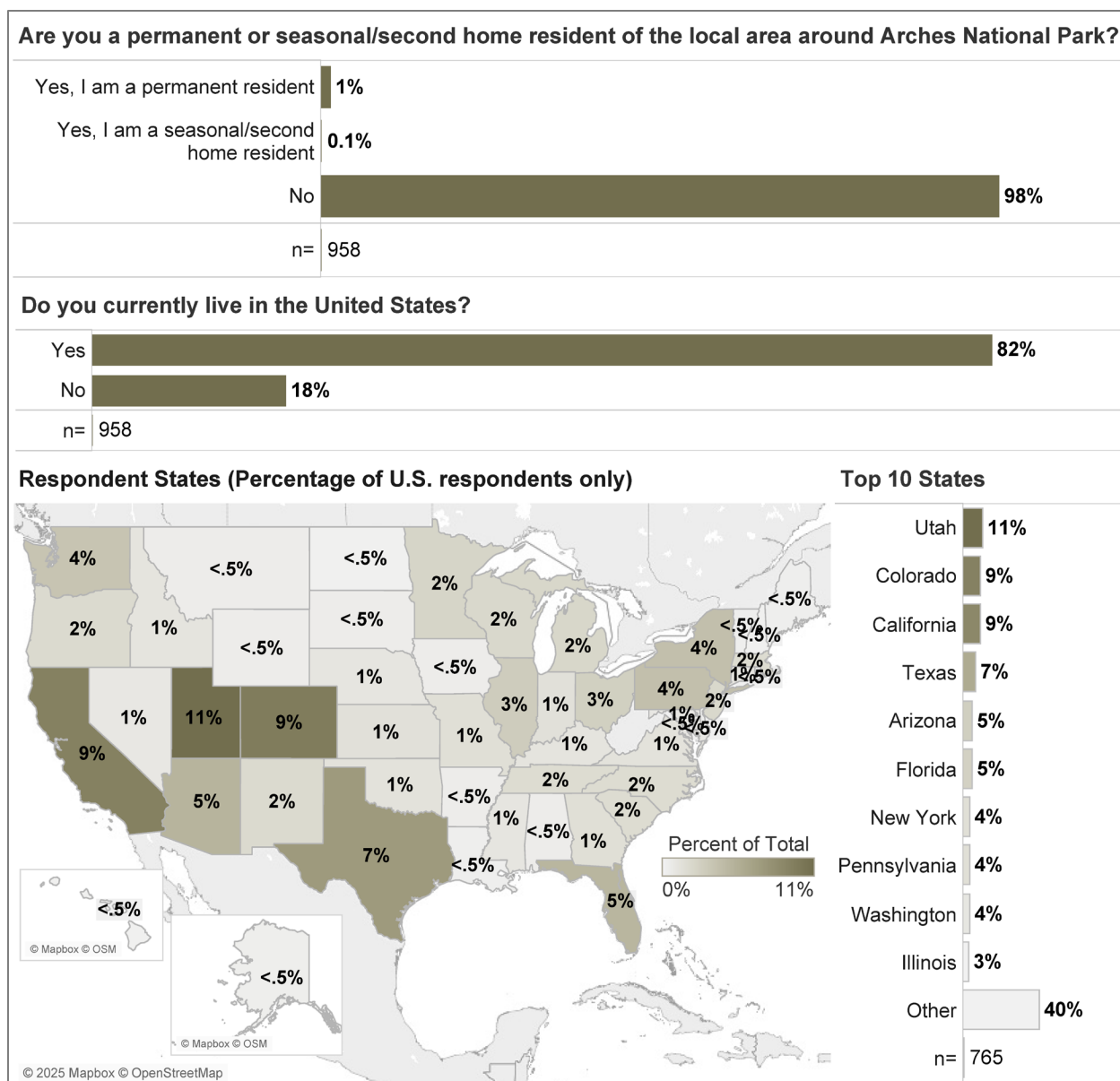


Figure 2. Respondent residency status and geographic origin of domestic visitors surveyed at Arches.
NPS

- Very few respondents (a combined 1.1%) stated that they were either permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around Arches.
- Among the 82% of respondents currently residing in the U.S., 11% reside in Utah, followed by Colorado (9%), California (9%), and Texas (7%).

Question 3: Trip Purpose

Respondents who are not permanent or seasonal residents of the local area were asked about the purpose for their overall trip away from home, while permanent or seasonal residents of the local area were asked about the purpose of their trip away from home “today,” the day they were intercepted in the park. Figure 3 depicts responses to this group of questions.

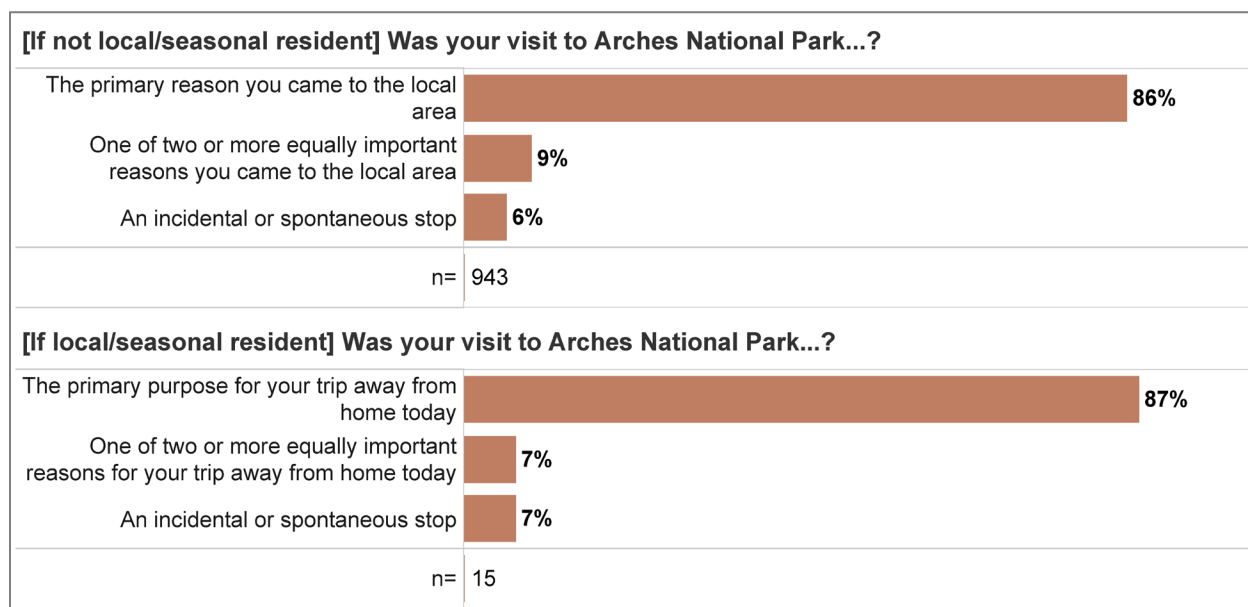


Figure 3. Role of Arches in overall trip purpose.

NPS

- Most (86%) of respondents who resided outside the local area (i.e., the Arches National Park local area, as depicted in Figure 1) stated that their visit to Arches was the primary reason they came to the local area.
- For a small percentage (9%) of non-local respondents, visiting Arches was one of two or more equally important reasons they came to the local area.
- The remaining small proportion (6%) of respondents indicated their visit to Arches was an incidental or spontaneous stop while they were already in the area.
- Among permanent or seasonal local resident respondents, most (87%) stated that visiting Arches was the primary purpose of their trip away from home on the day they were contacted, while 7% indicated it was one of two or more equally important reasons for their trip away from home on that day, and 7% also indicated it was an incidental or spontaneous stop.

Question 4: Length of Stay

Respondents who are not permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around Arches were also asked how many days they planned to spend within that local area, including days spent in the park. All respondents, regardless of residency, were asked whether they would be staying overnight away from their permanent residence within the local area. Responses to both of these questions are depicted in Figure 4.

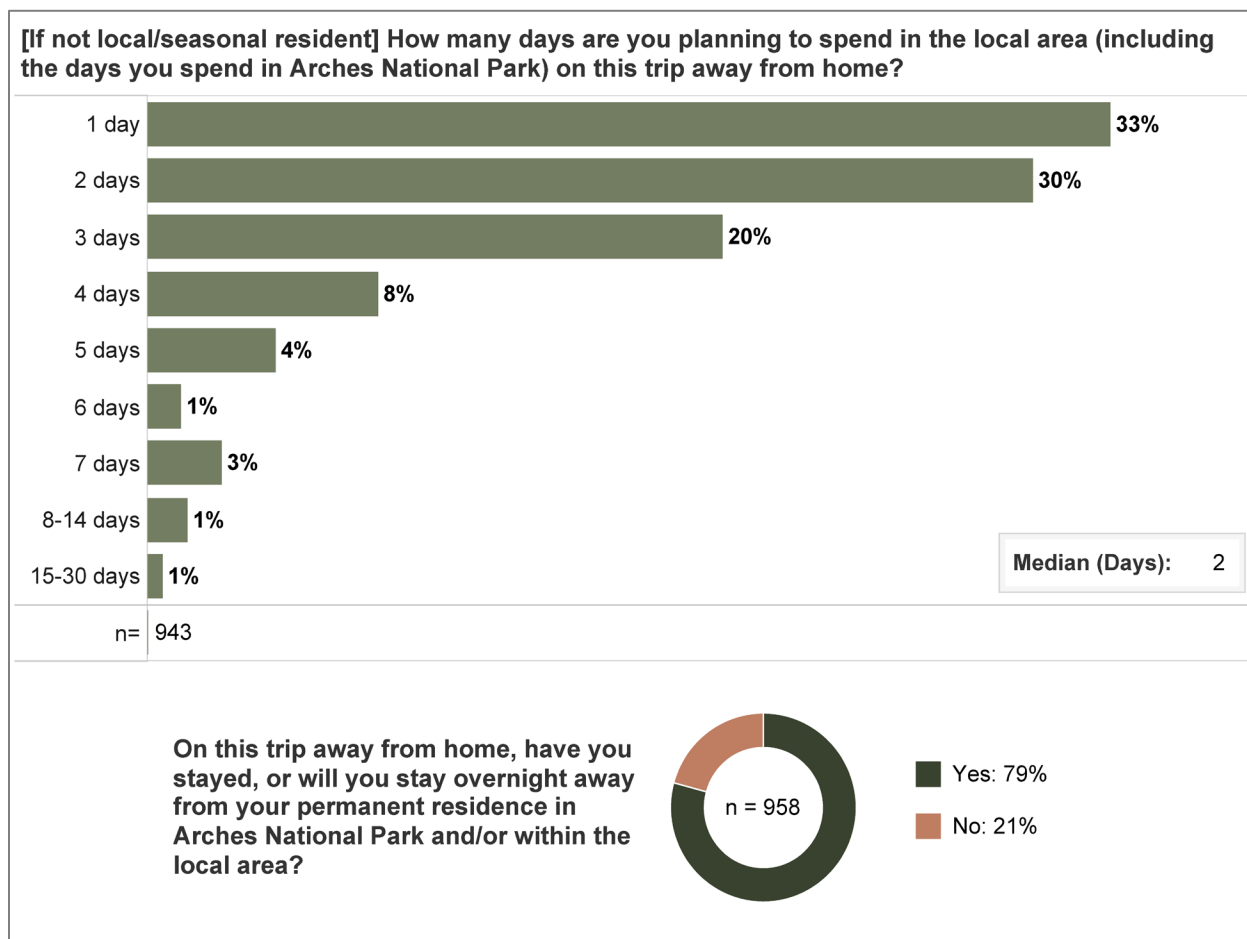


Figure 4. Time spent in the local area around Arches.

NPS

- One-third of non-local respondents (33%) spent one day in the local area, while 30% spent two days, and 20% spent three days. The median length of stay was two days.
- Additionally, more than three quarters of all respondents (79%; including permanent/seasonal residents) had stayed or planned to stay overnight away from their permanent residence in the park and/or in the local area.

Questions 5–6: Overnight Visitors

If respondents indicated that they stayed overnight in the local area, they were asked about the type(s) of accommodation they used or planned to use while there (Figure 5).

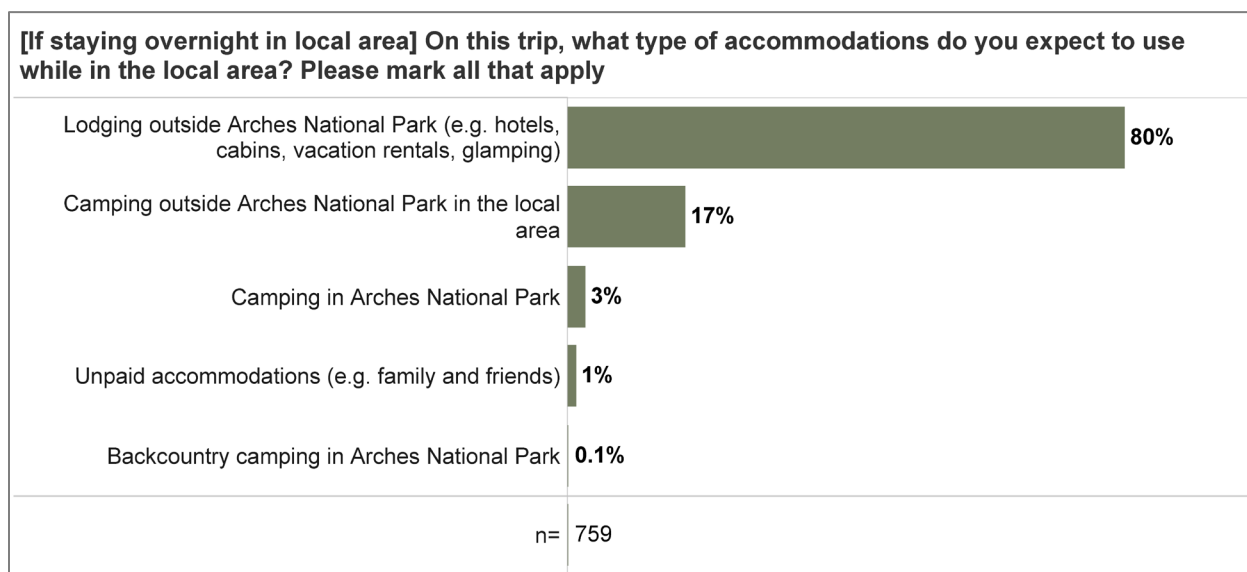


Figure 5. Accommodation types used by overnight visitors within Arches and in the local area surrounding it.

NPS

- More than three quarters of overnight respondents (80%) stayed in lodging outside Arches National Park while in the local area.
- This was followed in prevalence by camping outside Arches National Park (17%), and camping in Arches National Park (3%).

Respondents were then asked to indicate the number of nights they spent or would spend in each accommodation type (Figure 6).

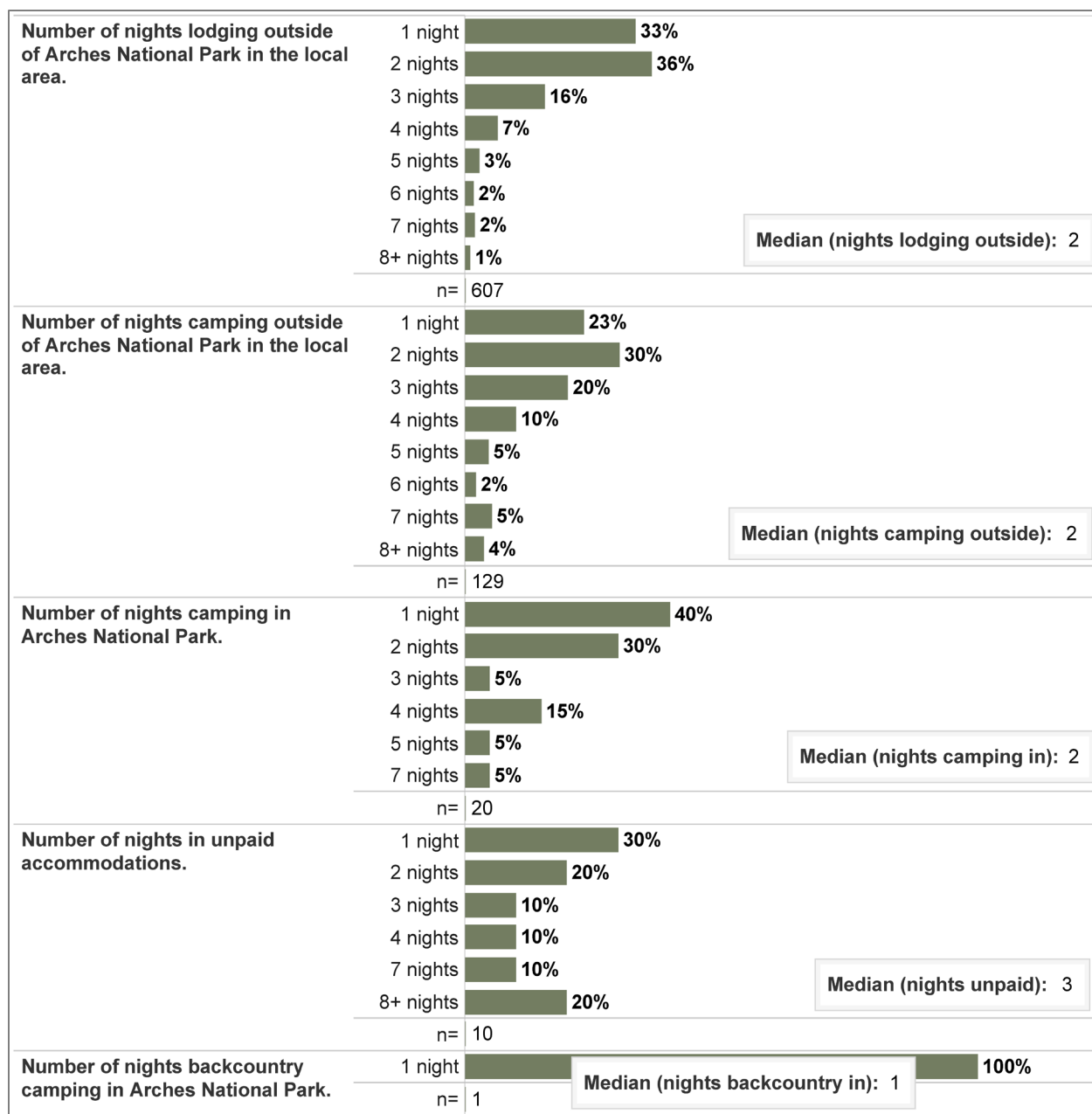


Figure 6. Number of nights spent within Arches and in the local area surrounding it, by accommodation type. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 11](#).

NPS

- Among the 80% of overnight respondents who lodged outside of Arches in the local area (per Figure 5), median length of stay was two nights. About two-thirds (69%) lodged two nights or fewer in the local area this trip; 85% spent three nights or fewer.
- Among the 17% of overnight respondents who camped outside of Arches (per Figure 5), median length of stay was two nights. A majority (53%) camped two nights or fewer; 73% camped three nights or fewer.
- Among the 3% of overnight respondents who camped in Arches (per Figure 5), median length of stay was two nights. A majority (70%) of campers spent two nights or fewer camping in the park this trip; 75% spent three nights or fewer.
- Among the 1% of overnight respondents who stayed in unpaid accommodations in the local area (per Figure 5), median length of stay was three nights. Half (50%) of overnight respondents who stayed in unpaid accommodations spent two nights or fewer ; 60% spent three nights or fewer.
- One overnight respondent (0.1%) camped in the backcountry in Arches National Park. That respondent camped in the backcountry for one night.

Questions 9–11: Party Characteristics

Respondents were asked to indicate how many adults (18 or older) and children (under 18) were in their personal group during their visit to Arches (Figure 7). A personal group was defined as the visitor and companions with whom they visited the park, such as a spouse, family, and/or friends, but respondents were informed not to account for the larger group with whom they may have traveled, such as a school, church, scout, or tour group.

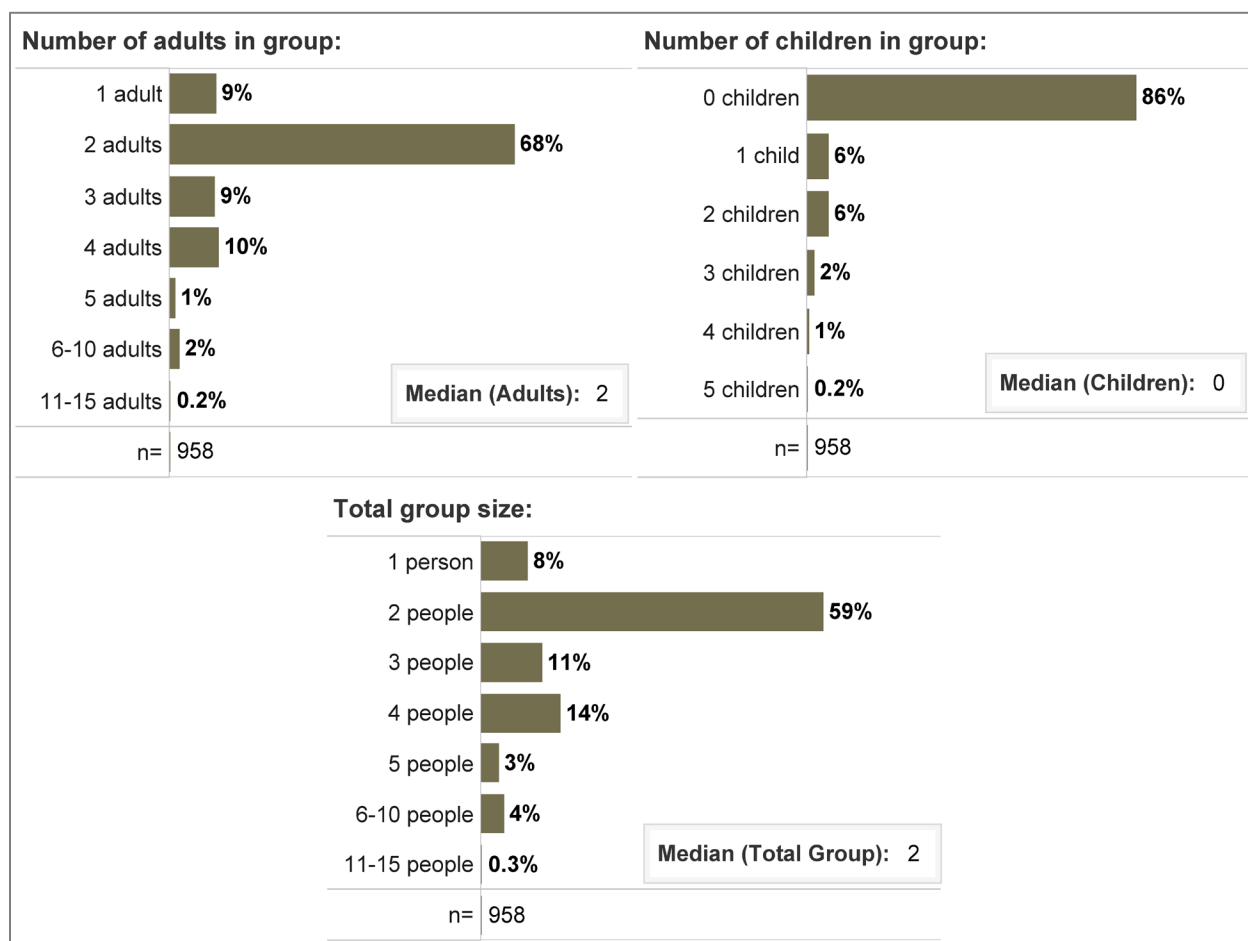


Figure 7. Number of adults and children in respondent's personal group, and total group size, while visiting Arches. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 12](#).

NPS

- The median number of adults per group was two. Most groups (68%) included two adults.
- Most groups (86%) did not include any children.
- The median total number of people (adults and children) per group was two.

Respondents were then asked to provide the age of each member of their group (Figure 8). These data show the true age distribution of respondent groups sampled at Arches.

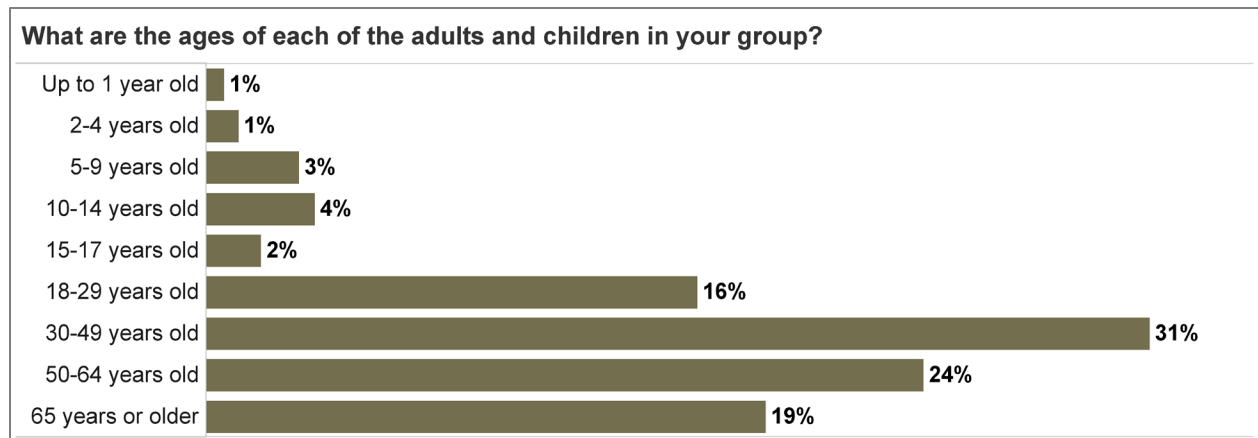


Figure 8. Age distribution of all members of respondent's personal group while visiting Arches.
NPS

- The most common ages of the adults and children in a personal group was 30 to 49 years old (31%), followed by 50 to 64 years old (24%), and 65 years or older (19%).
- Children (i.e., visitors under 18 years old) accounted for a combined total of just 11% of group members.

Questions 13–14: Local Communities

To build a more detailed understanding of the impact of Arches on the surrounding local area, respondents were given a list of nearby communities and asked which one(s), if any, they had already visited or planned to visit during their trip. Visiting a community was defined as stopping to do or buy anything, such as purchasing gas, groceries, or dining. Those respondents who had previously indicated that they were staying overnight in the local area outside Arches (i.e., paid lodging outside the park, camping outside the park, or staying in unpaid accommodation outside the park) were then asked which local community (or communities) from that list was (or were) closest to their accommodations. Responses to both questions are shown in Figure 9, below.

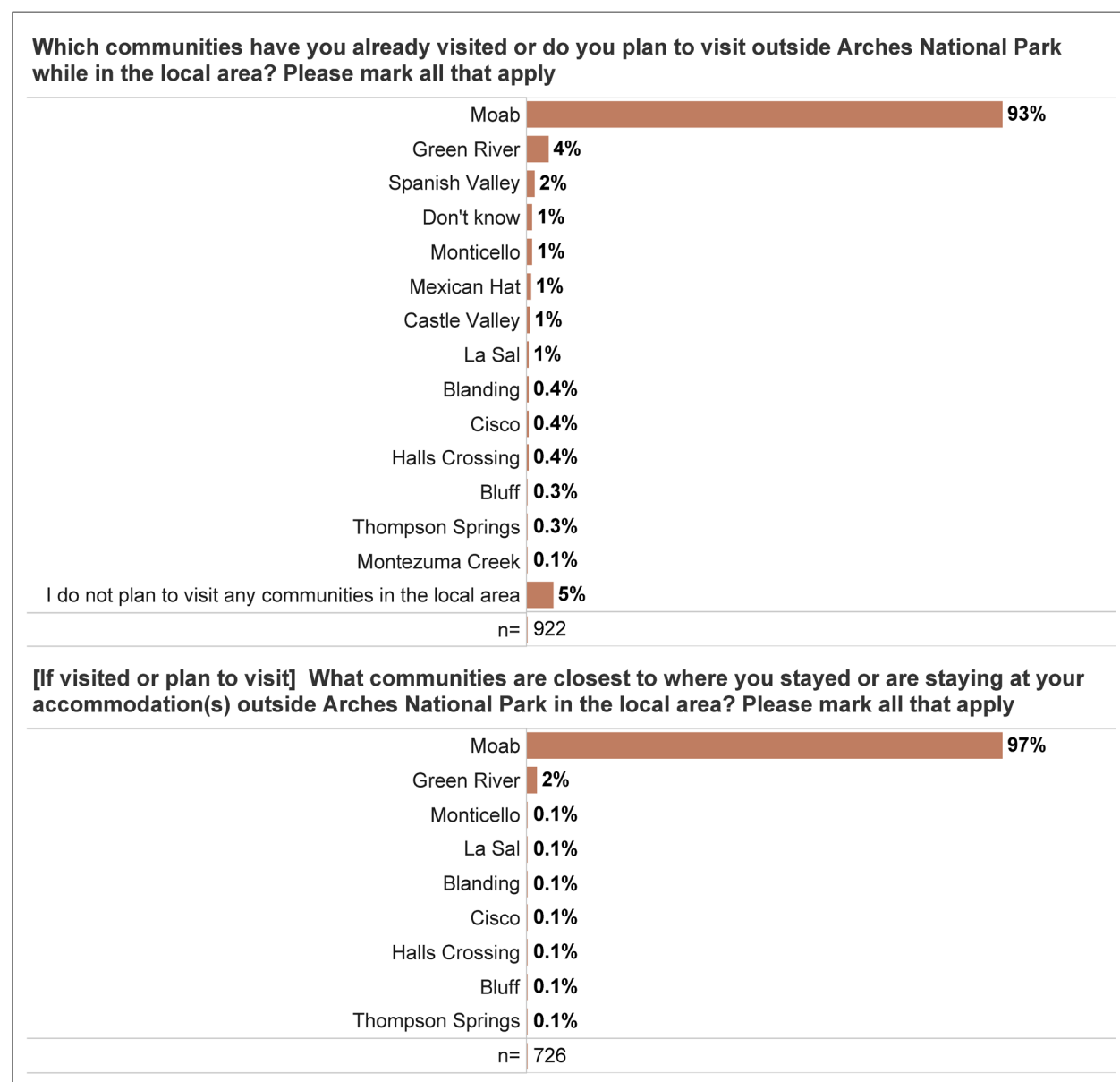


Figure 9. Communities visited outside Arches while in the local area.

NPS

- Most respondents (93%) reported they had visited or planned to visit Moab while visiting the Arches local area on their trip away from home.
- The next most visited community was Green River, visited by 4% of respondents.
- The rank order of the top two communities was the same when considering which community was closest to where respondents stayed during their visit: most respondents reported staying in Moab (97%), followed by Green River (2%).

Questions 15–21: Park Entry

Respondents were asked to indicate which type of entrance fee applied to them personally on their most recent trip to Arches (Figure 10).

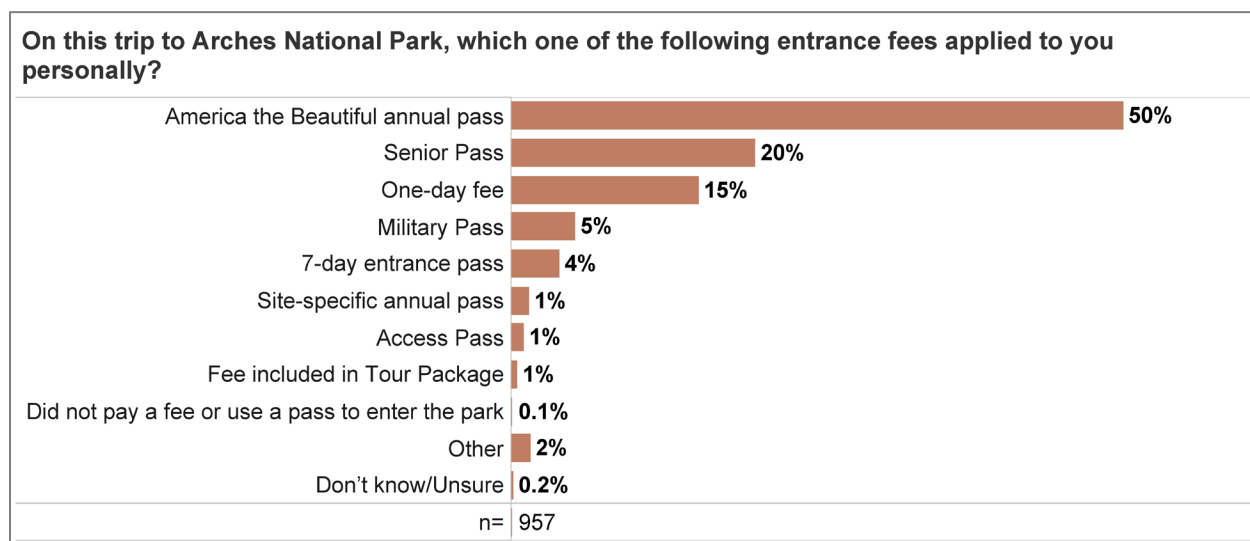


Figure 10. Entrance fee paid to enter Arches on the most recent trip.

NPS

- Half of respondents (50%) reported using an America the Beautiful annual pass, and another 26% entered using a Senior Pass, Access Pass, or Military Pass.
- In contrast, 20% of respondents entered using an Arches-specific pass or fee (i.e., annual pass, 7-day, or single-day entrance fee).

Next, respondents were asked how far in advance of their trip they made the decision to visit Arches (Figure 11).

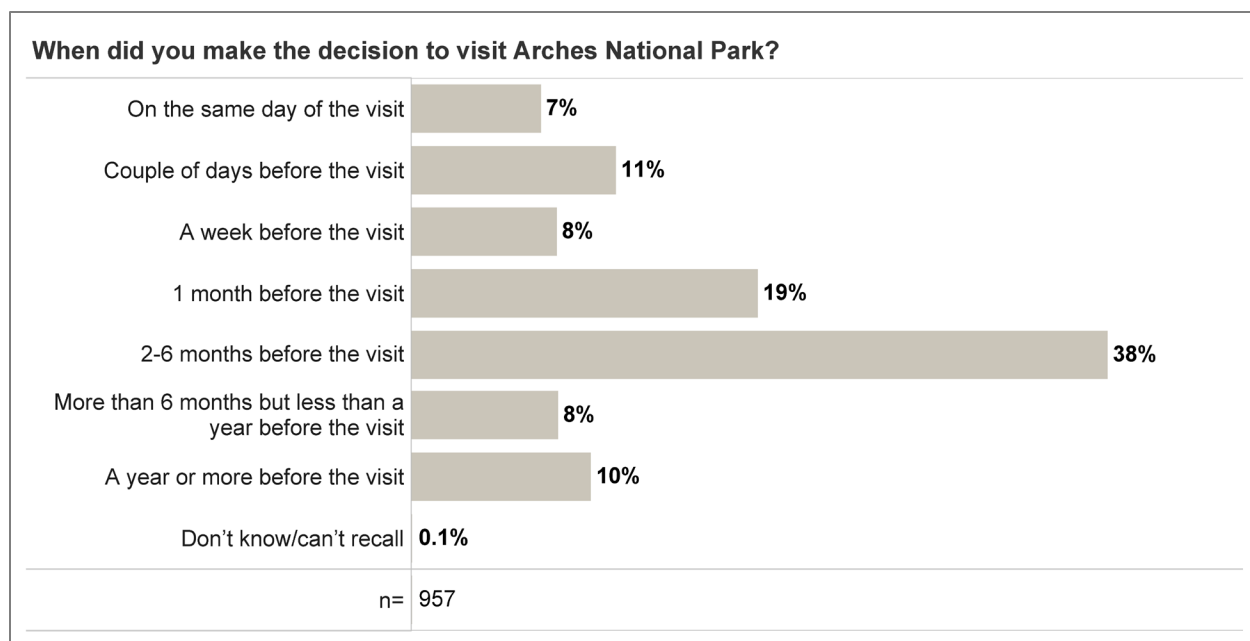


Figure 11. When decision to visit Arches was made.

NPS

- A plurality (38%) of respondents indicated that they decided to visit Arches two to six months before their visit, while an additional 19% of respondents indicated that they decided to visit one month prior to their visit.
- About a quarter (26%) of respondents made their decision to visit a week or less before their visit to Arches, while 18% made their decision to visit more than six months before their visit.

Then, respondents were asked a series of questions related to their awareness and use of the timed-entry reservation system at Arches (Figures 12 through 15).

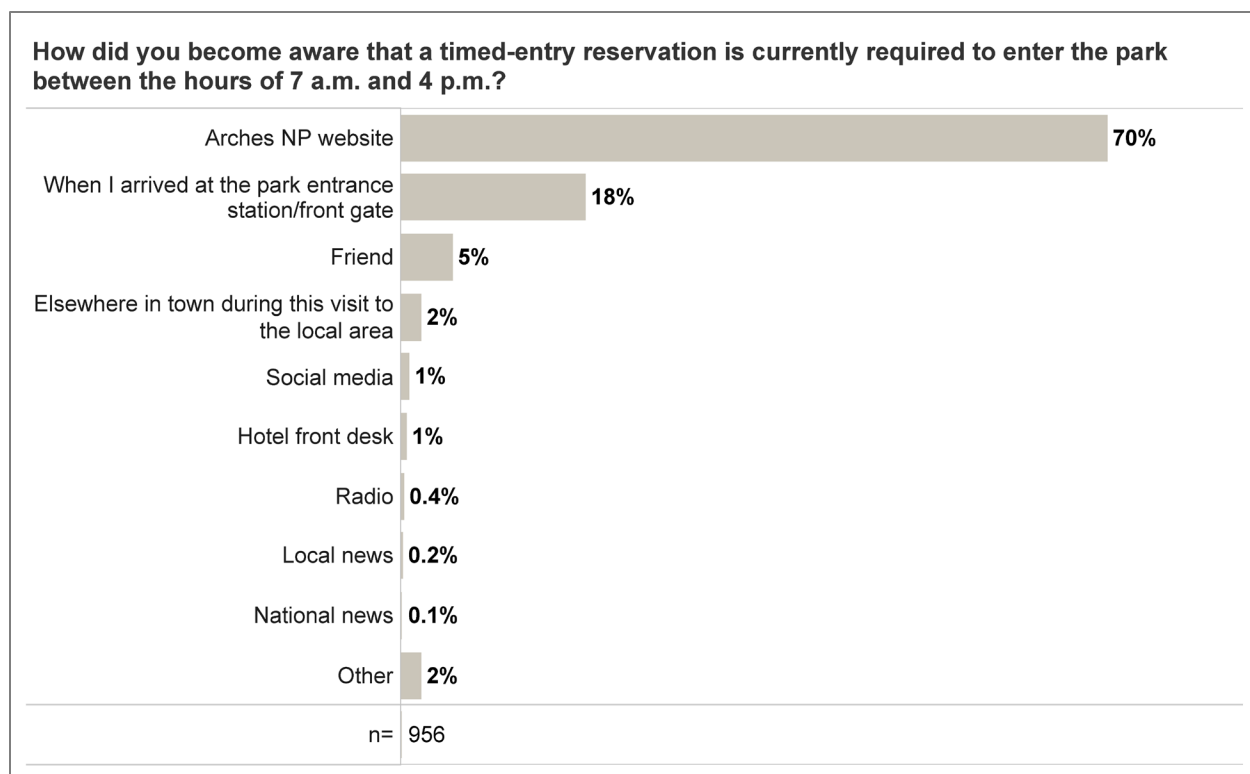


Figure 12. Awareness of the timed-entry reservation system currently in place at Arches.

NPS

- A majority (70%) of respondents indicated that they learned about the Arches timed-entry reservation system from the Arches National Park website, while 18% learned about it when they arrived at the park entrance station.
- An additional 5% of respondents learned about the timed-entry reservation system from a friend, while 2% learned about it somewhere in town during their visit to the local area.

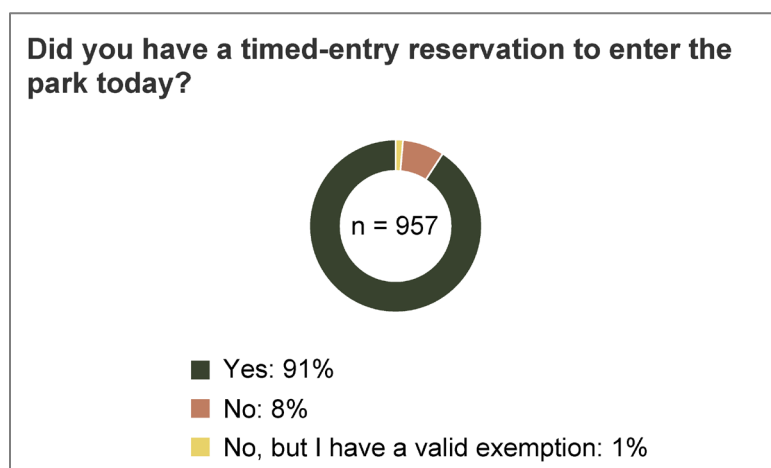


Figure 13. Use of the timed-entry reservation system on the day of the survey.

NPS

- Most (91%) respondents had a timed-entry reservation to enter Arches on the day they were contacted for the survey, while 8% did not, and 1% did not have a timed-entry reservation, but had a valid exemption.

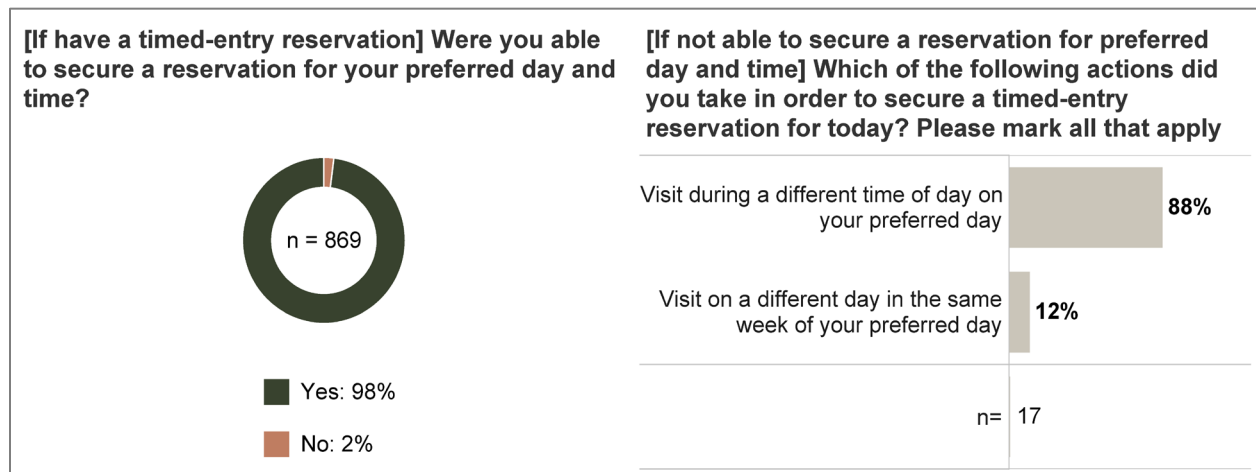


Figure 14. Timed-entry reservation availability for respondent's preferred day and time.

NPS

- The vast majority (98%) of respondents who had a timed-entry reservation on the day they were contacted were able to secure a reservation for their preferred day and time.
- Of the 2% of respondents who secured a timed-entry reservation but not for their preferred day and time, 88% visited Arches during a different time on their preferred day, and 12% visited on a different day in the same week as their preferred day.

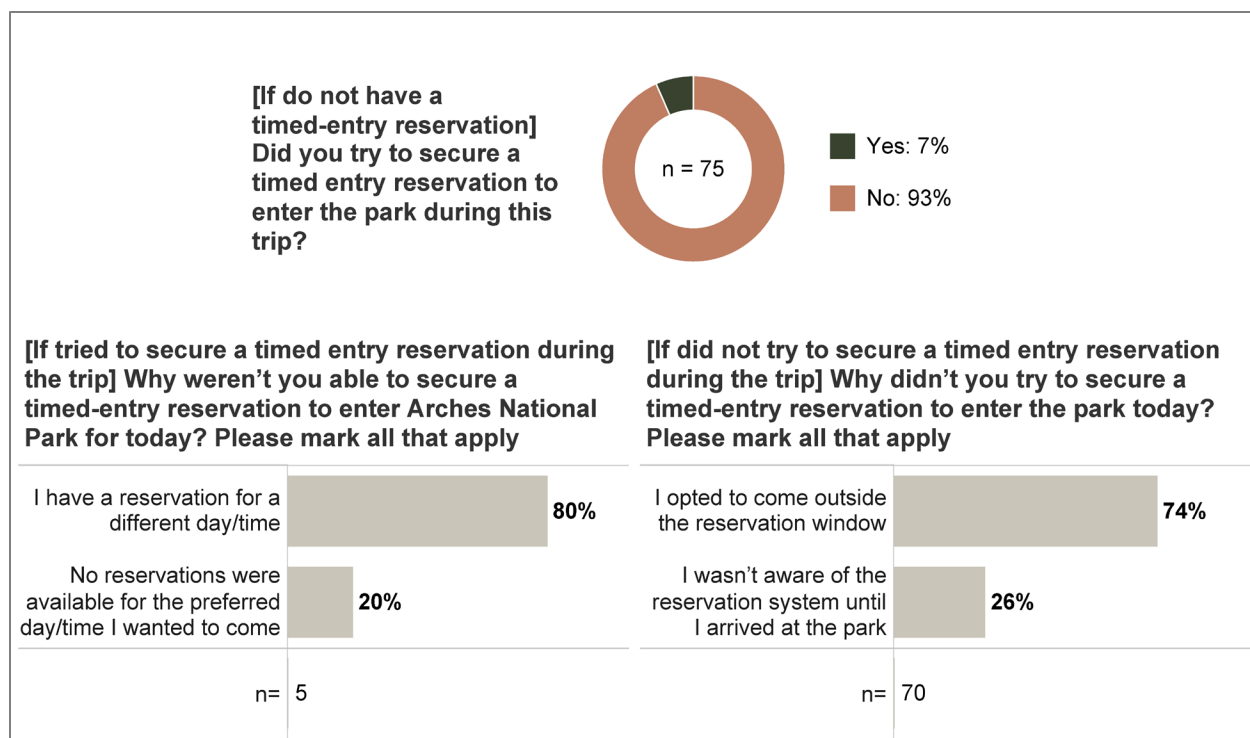


Figure 15. Reasons for not securing a timed-entry reservation on the day of the survey.

NPS

- Of the 8% of respondents who arrived at the park on the day they were contacted without a timed-entry reservation (see Figure 13), 93% did not try to obtain a reservation during their trip.
- Of the 7% of respondents who tried to obtain a reservation but were unable to do so, 80% were able to secure a reservation for a different day and time, while 20% indicated that there were no reservations available for the day or time they preferred to visit Arches.
- Of those respondents who did not try to obtain a timed-entry reservation, 74% opted to arrive at the park outside the reservation window, while 26% were not aware of the reservation system until they arrived at the park.

Questions 22–26: Park Use Characteristics

Respondents were asked to indicate if they planned to visit Arches for more than one day, and then a series of follow-up questions about the length of time they might spend in the park (Figure 16 and Table 10).

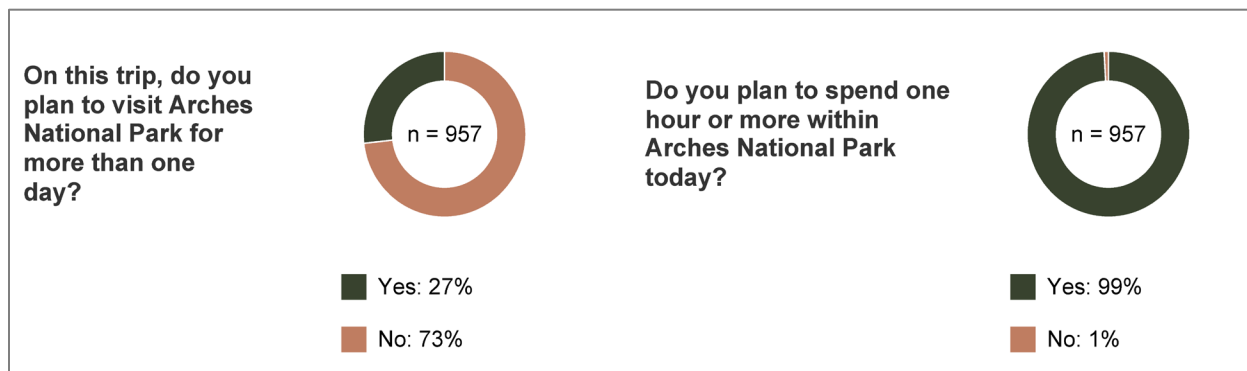


Figure 16. Length of time spent within Arches on this trip.

NPS

Table 10. Length of time spent within Arches on this trip.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
[If not planning to spend one hour or more] How many minutes do you plan to spend within Arches today?	8	43
[If planning to spend one hour or more] How many hours do you plan to spend within Arches today?	944	4
[If planning to visit more than one day] How many days do you plan to spend within Arches on this trip?	256	2
[If planning to visit more than one day] On how many different days do you expect to enter the park?	256	2

- Nearly all respondents (99%) planned to spend one hour or more within Arches on the day they were surveyed. Among these visitors, median length of time spent in the park “today” was four hours.
- Among the 1% of respondents who planned to spend less than an hour within the park on the day they were surveyed, the median length of anticipated visit was 43 minutes.
- Additionally, about three-quarters of respondents (73%) were planning to spend just a single day in Arches on their trip. Among the 27% of respondents who planned to visit for more than one day, the median length of visit was two days.
- Those respondents who spent more than one day in the park were also asked on how many different days they expected to enter the park; the median answer was two days.

Next, respondents were asked to indicate the most recent entrance they used to enter Arches (Figure 17).

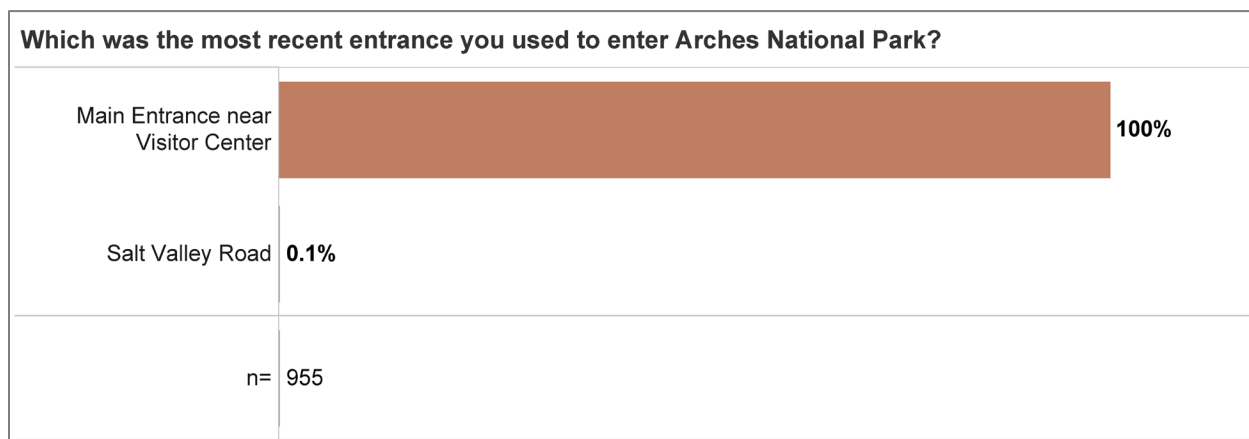


Figure 17. Most recent entrance used to enter Arches.

NPS

- The main entrance near the Visitor Center was the most commonly used entrance to Arches (100%), with an extremely small number of respondents (0.1%) entering the park via Salt Valley Road.
- Due to park geography and proximity of intercept sites to entrances, the results for most recent entrance used were impacted by the volume of visitors intercepted at various sites.

Respondents were also presented with a list of locations within Arches and asked to indicate if they had been to, or planned to visit them, that day (Figure 18).

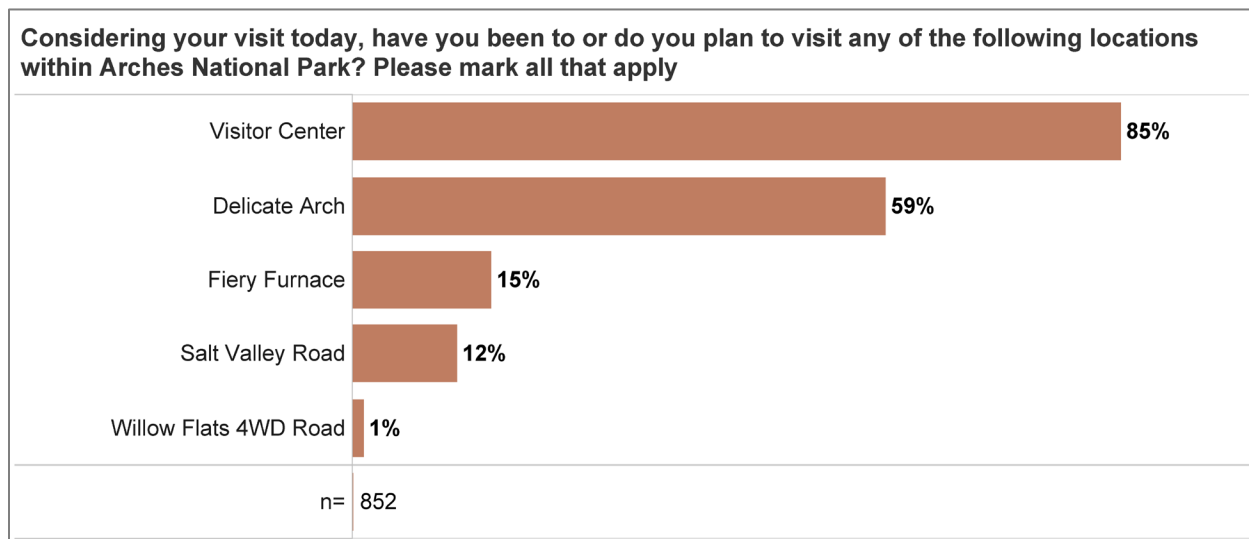


Figure 18. Park locations visited during the most recent trip to Arches.

NPS

- The most commonly visited location in Arches was the Visitor Center (85% of respondents had either been there or planned to visit it on their trip), followed by Delicate Arch (59%), Fiery Furnace (15%), and Salt Valley Road (12%).
- Willow Flats four-wheel drive road was the least-visited location from the list provided, with only 1% of respondents reporting having visited or planning to visit.

Question 27: Transportation

Respondents were asked about the form of transportation they used to enter Arches on the day they were surveyed (Figure 19).

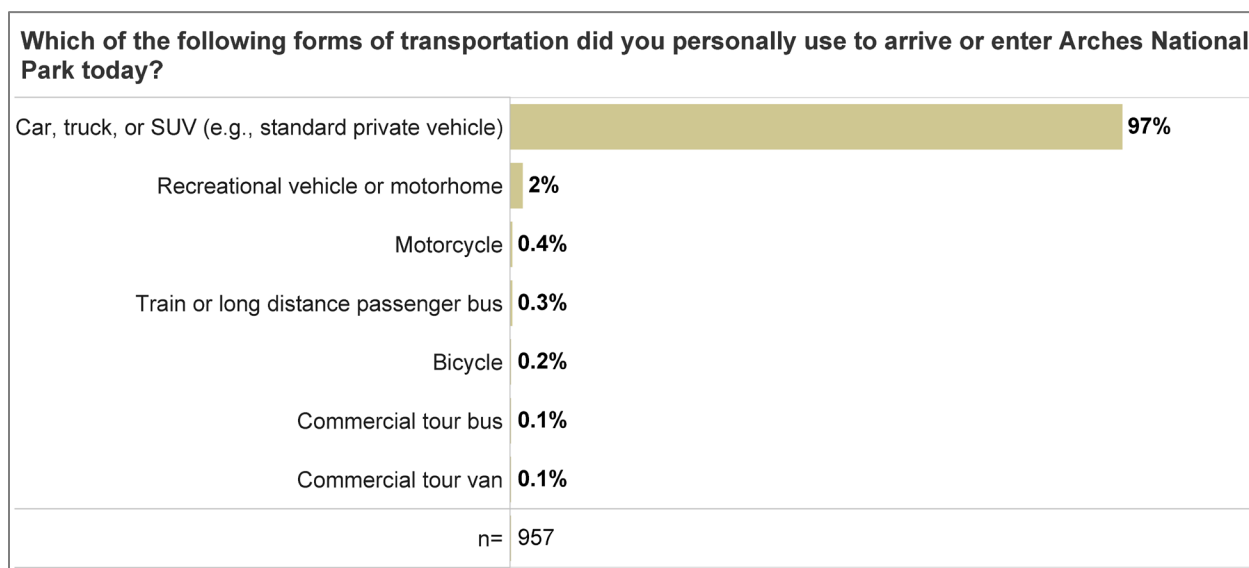


Figure 19. Form of transportation used to enter Arches on the day of the survey.

NPS

- The vast majority of respondents (97%) reported that they used their car, truck, or SUV to enter Arches on the day of the survey.
- This was followed distantly by use of a recreational vehicle or motorhome (2%).

If respondents entered the park using a multi-passenger private vehicle (i.e., car, truck or SUV, recreational vehicle or motorhome, or motorcycle), they were asked to indicate how many people were traveling in or on that vehicle (Figure 20).

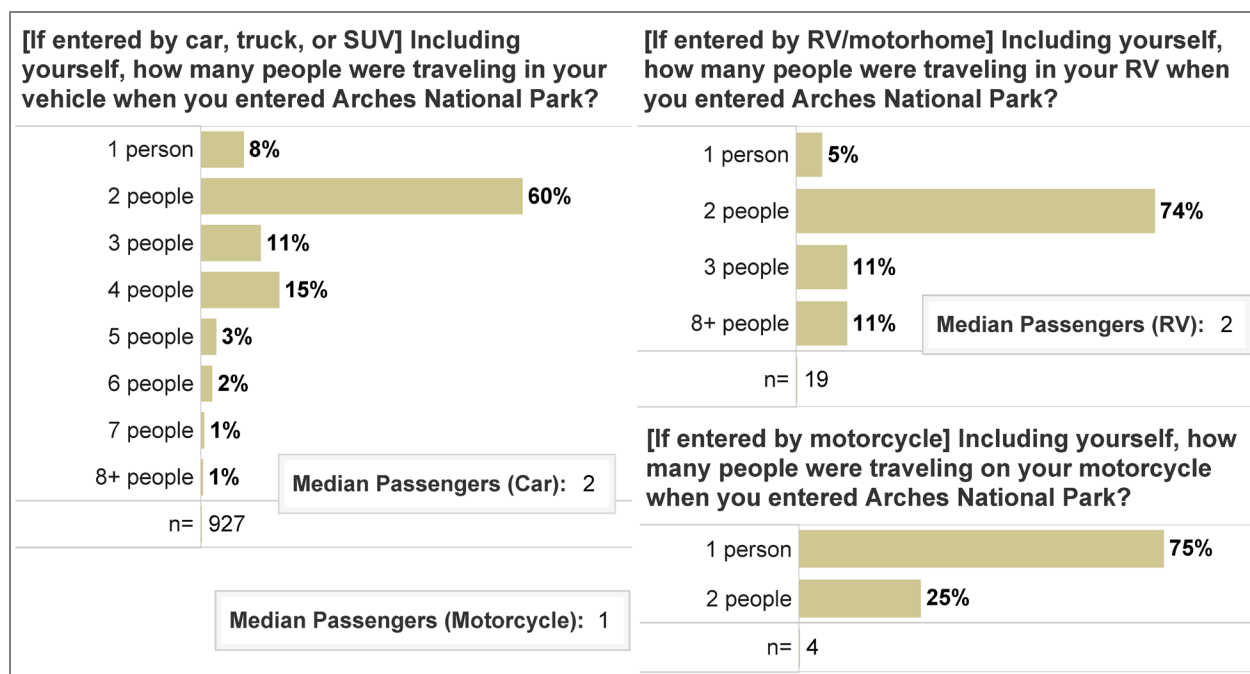


Figure 20. Number of people in or on respondent's vehicle when entering Arches. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 13](#).

NPS

- Sixty percent of respondents traveling by car reported two people. The next most common group size was four people (15%), followed by three people (11%).
- About three-quarters of respondents entering Arches by RV/motorhome reported traveling in a group of two people (74%), followed by three people (11%) or eight or more people (11%).
- Most motorcyclists (75%) were traveling on their own.

Question 29: Previous Visits to Arches

Respondents were asked if they were first time visitors to Arches. Repeat visitors were then asked how many visits they have made to Arches in the last 12 months and the last five years (Figure 21).

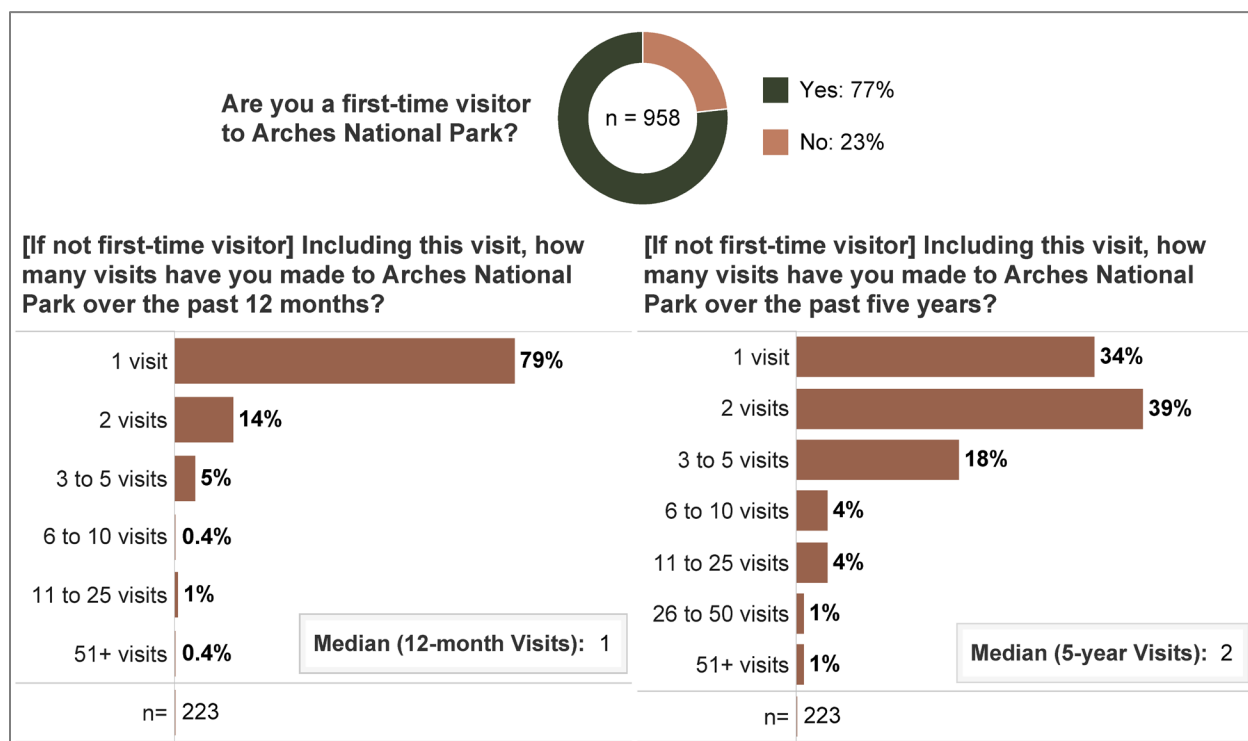


Figure 21. Previous visits to Arches. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 14](#).

NPS

- Three-quarters of respondents (77%) were on their first ever trip to Arches.
- Among the 23% of respondents who were repeat visitors, three-quarters (79%) were on their first visit in the past 12 months (i.e., had last visited more than a year ago).
- However, two-thirds of repeat visitors (66%) had visited at least one prior time in the past five years.
- The median number of visits made in the past five years was two, including the current trip; 6% of repeat visitors had made more than 10 visits in the past five years.

Question 30: Previous Visits to Other NPS Units

Finally, respondents were asked how many visits they have made to other NPS sites over the past 12 months (Figure 22).

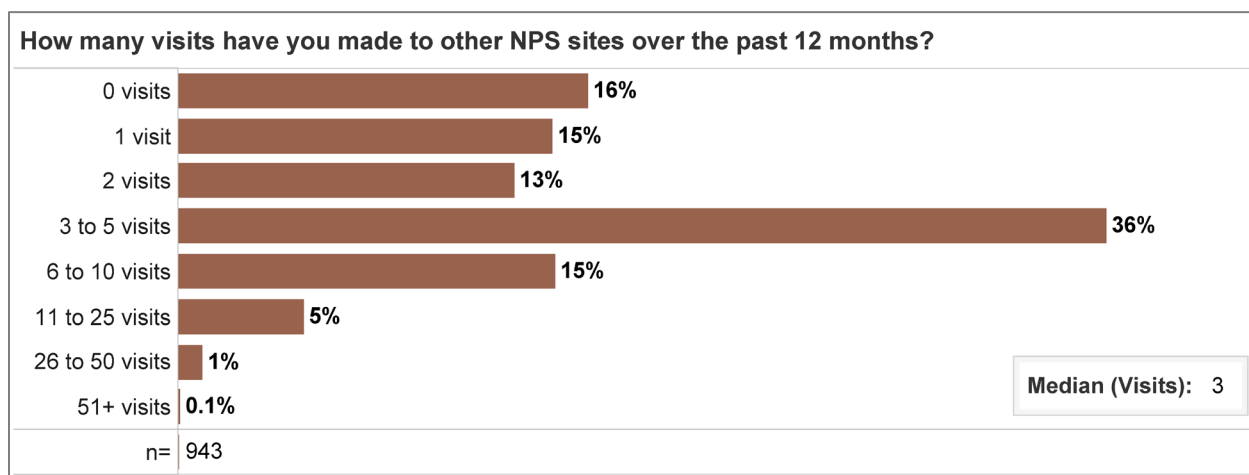


Figure 22. Visits made to other NPS sites within the past year. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 15](#).

NPS

- Most respondents (84%) had made at least one visit to other NPS site(s) in the past year.
- The median number of visits made to other NPS site(s) in the past 12 months was three, though a combined 57.1% had made three or more visits in the past year.

Post-Trip Survey Results

The following section provides results of the 255 post-trip visitor surveys received by mail-back or online following fieldwork conducted in Arches during the 2024 season. Again, caution is recommended in the interpretation of figures with sample size lower than $n = 30$, and categories on some questions may not sum to 100% due to rounding differences and/or the opportunity to select more than one response option.

Questions 1–2: Information About Arches

First, respondents were asked what sources they used to obtain information about Arches prior to their trip, and whether they had the information they needed on their trip (Figure 23).

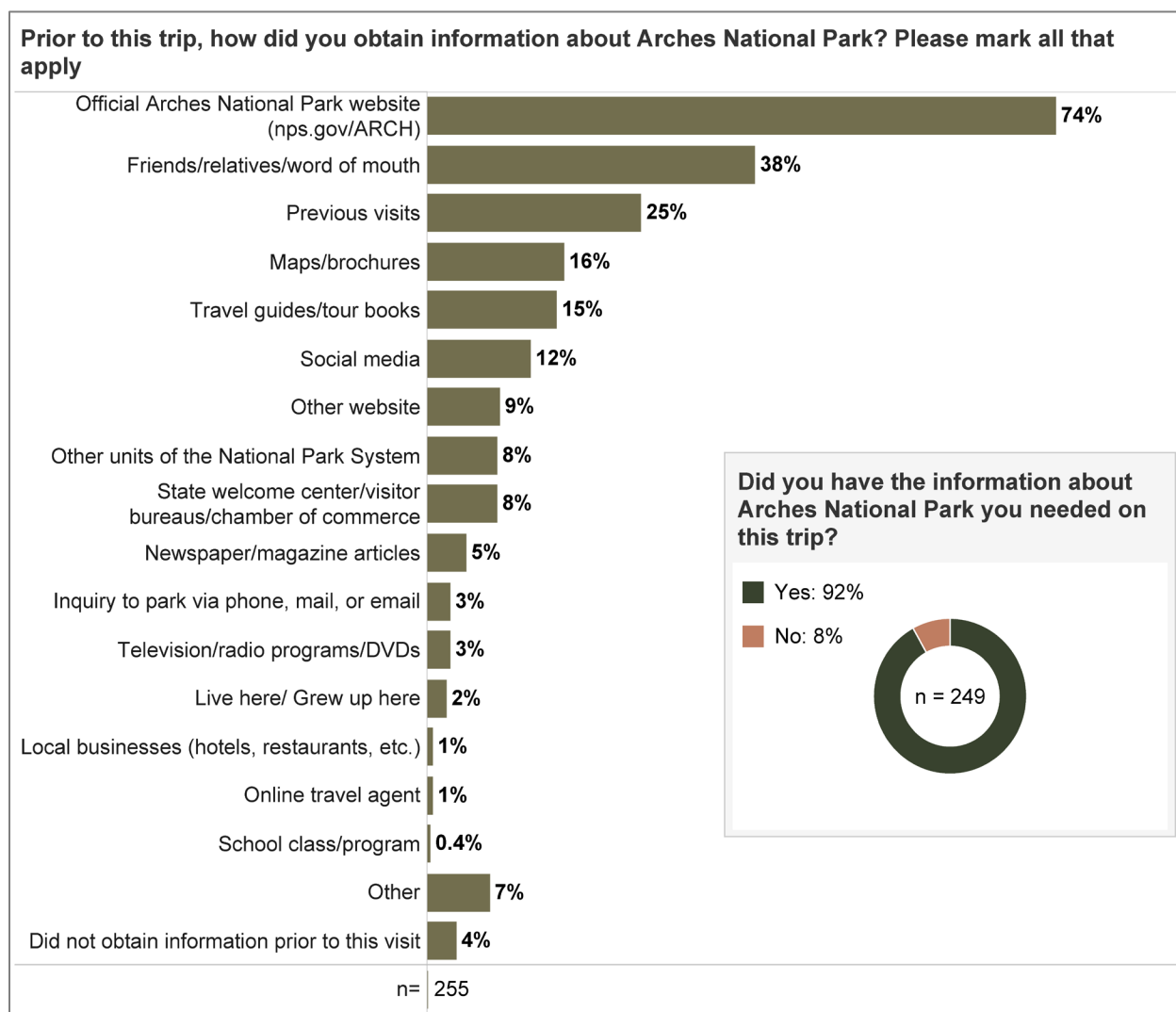


Figure 23. Sources used to obtain information about Arches prior to the trip.

NPS

- The most used resource was the official Arches National Park website, with 74% of respondents reportedly using it. The second most common source was friends/relatives/word of mouth (38%), followed by a previous visit (25%), maps/brochures (16%), travel guides/tour books (15%), and social media (12%).
- In a follow-up question, 92% of respondents said that they had the information about Arches that they needed on their trip, while 8% indicated that there was information that they needed but did not have.
- In an open-ended follow-up question, those who did not have the information they needed on this trip were asked to elaborate.

Question 3: Transportation

In the intercept survey, respondents indicated a mode of transportation they used to enter the park on the day of the intercept. In the post-trip survey, respondents were asked to select all forms of transportation they personally used to travel from their home to Arches on their trip (Figure 24).

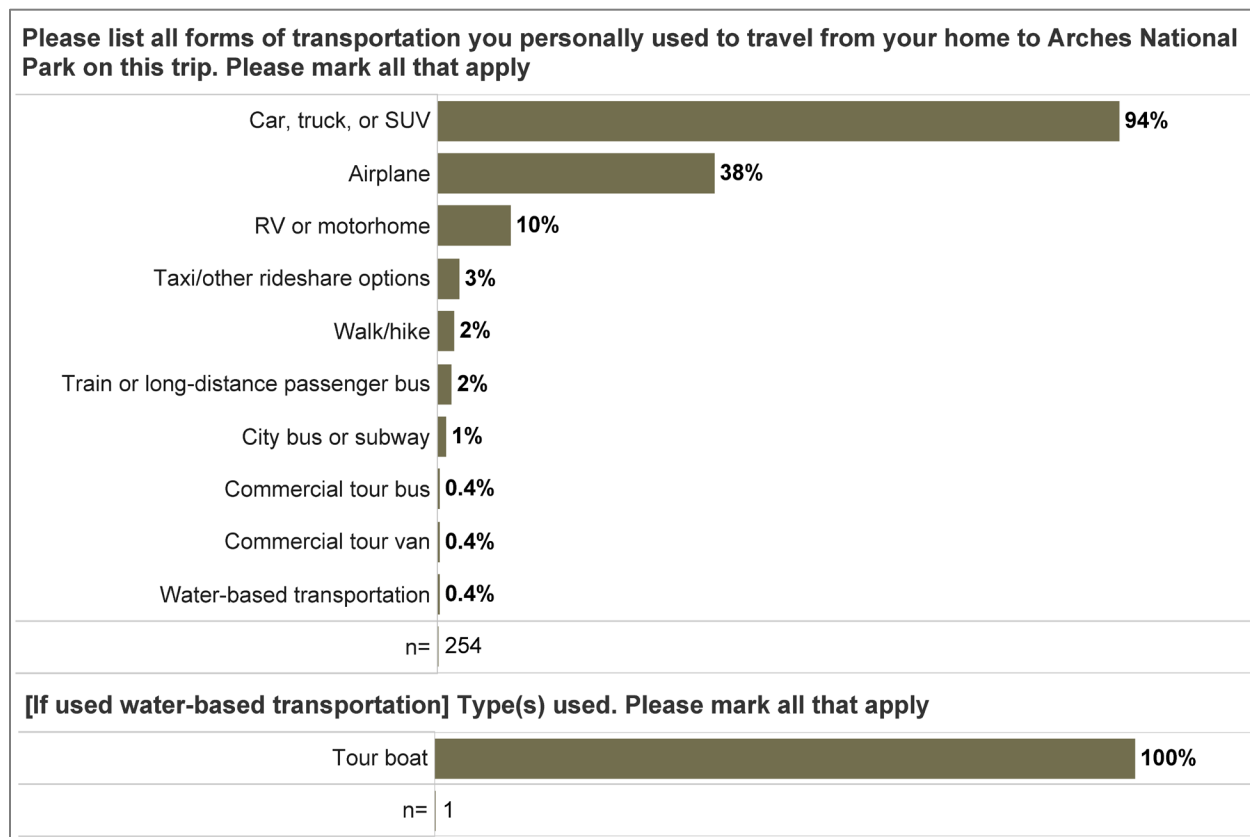


Figure 24. Forms of transportation used to travel from home to Arches on the recent trip.

NPS

- Nearly all respondents (94%) used a personal vehicle, such as a car, truck, or SUV, at some point during their trip from home to Arches.
- The second most common mode of travel was an airplane (38%), followed by RV or motorhome (10%).
- One respondent used a water-based form of transportation during their trip, which was a tour boat.

Question 4: Travel Party Composition

Respondents were asked what type of group they were with during their visit to Arches on the day of the survey (Figure 25).

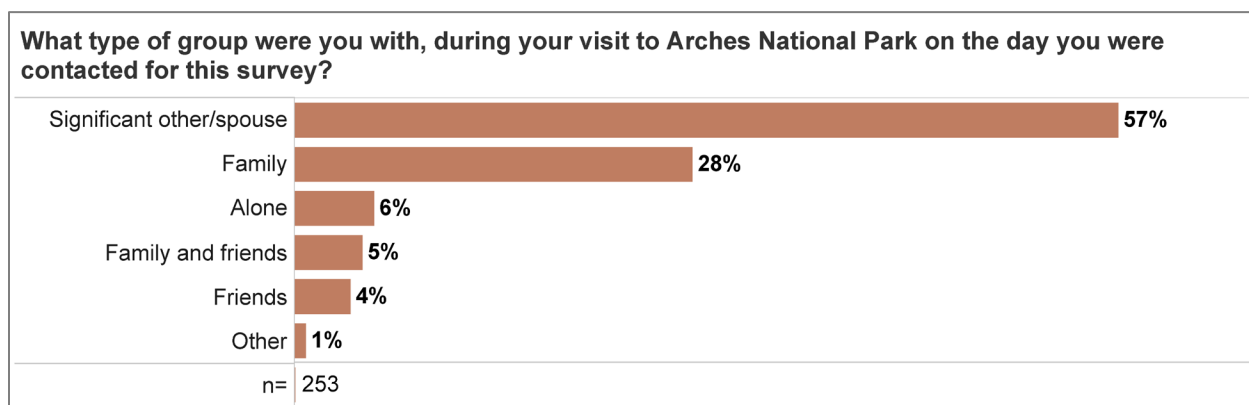


Figure 25. Travel party composition during Arches visit.

NPS

- A majority of respondents (57%) visited Arches with their significant other or spouse on the day of the survey.
- About a quarter of respondents (28%) explored Arches with their family, and another 9% visited the park with their friends.

Questions 11–13: Trip Characteristics

Respondents were asked if they visited other National Park Service sites on their trip away from home (Figure 26).

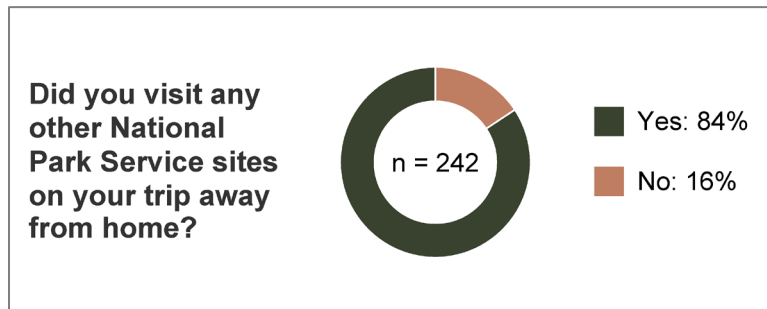


Figure 26. NPS sites visited on trip away from home.

NPS

- Most (84%) respondents had visited other NPS sites on their trip, while 16% identified Arches as the only NPS site they visited while away from home.
- In an open-ended follow-up question, those who had visited other NPS sites on their trip were asked to list which one(s).

Survey respondents were then asked to identify all activities that they participated in while visiting Arches, and which of those was their primary activity (Figure 27).

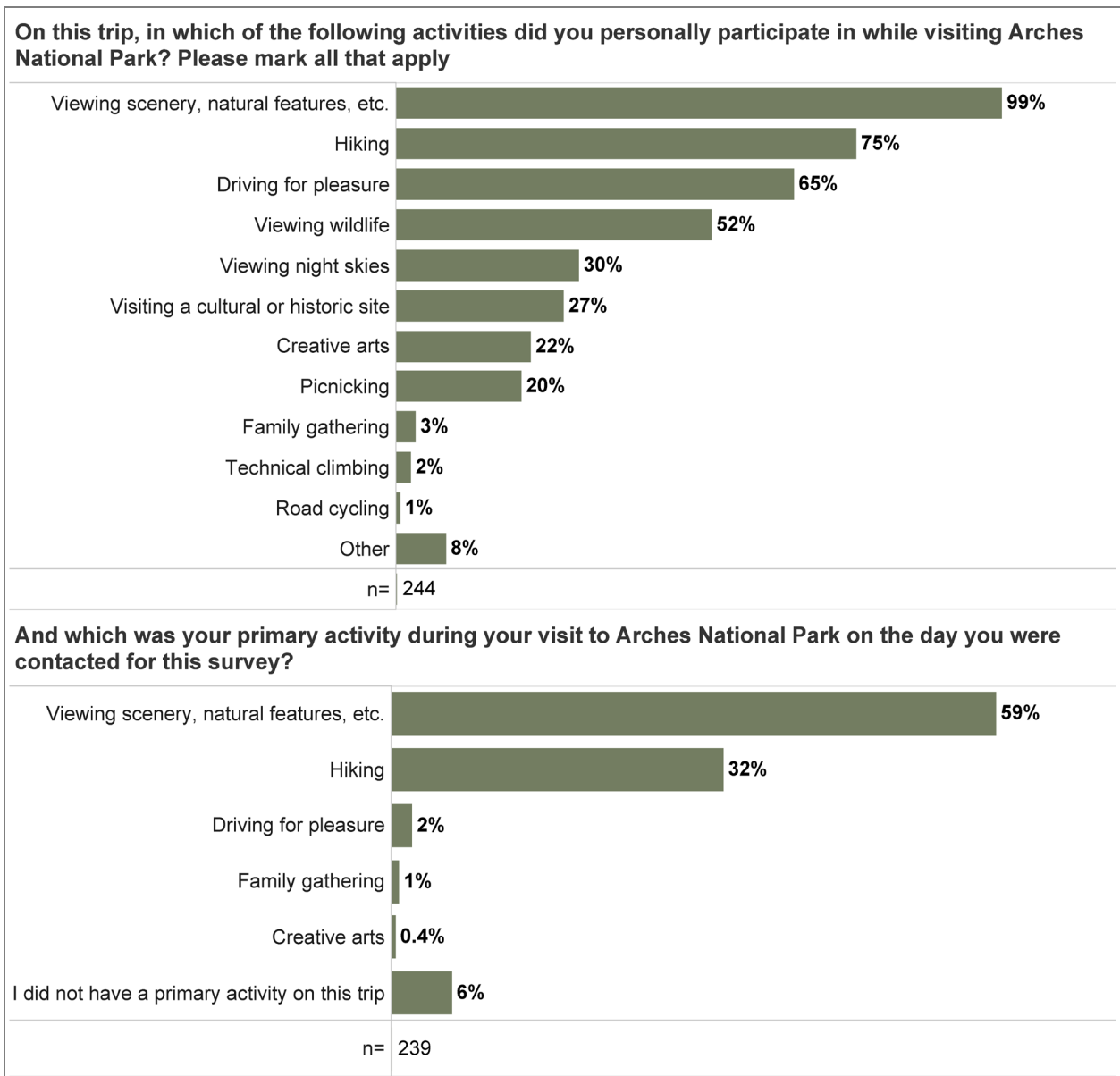


Figure 27. Participation in activities at Arches.

NPS

- Almost all respondents reported viewing scenery, natural features, etc. (99%), while a majority of respondents reported hiking (75%), driving for pleasure (65%), and viewing wildlife (52%).
- Family gatherings, technical climbing, and road cycling were all uncommon activities (reported by 3% or fewer respondents).
- The majority of respondents (59%) reported viewing scenery, natural features, etc. as their primary activity, followed by hiking (32%).

Questions 14–15: Reasons to Visit

Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of various reasons to visit Arches on their trip and were then asked which of those was the most important reason for them to visit Arches (Figure 28).

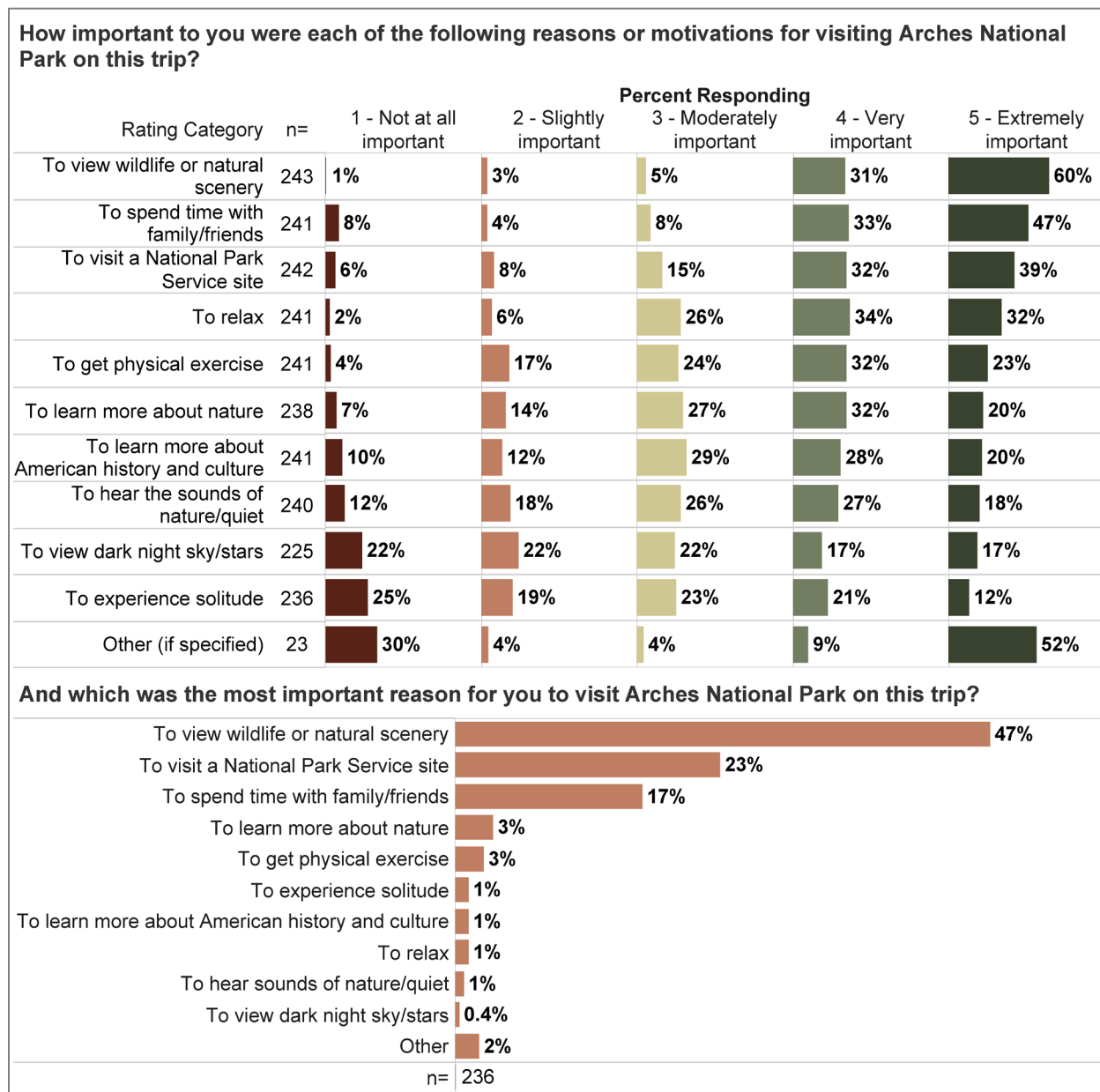


Figure 28. Reasons or motivations to visit Arches. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 16](#).

NPS

- Most respondents rated viewing wildlife or natural scenery (60%) as an extremely important reason for their trip to Arches.
- Other important reasons were to spend time with family/friends and to visit a National Park Service site (47% and 39% of respondents, respectively, rated them as extremely important).
- The least important reasons were to view dark night skies/stars and to experience solitude (only 17% and 12% of respondents, respectively, reported them as extremely important, and 22% and 25% of respondents, respectively, rated them as not at all important).
- The most common response for the most important reason was to view wildlife or natural scenery (47%), followed by visiting a National Park Service site (23%), and spending time with family/friends (17%).

Questions 16–18: Programs, Services, and Learning

Respondents were asked to identify all programs and services in which they personally participated in Arches during their trip (Figure 29).

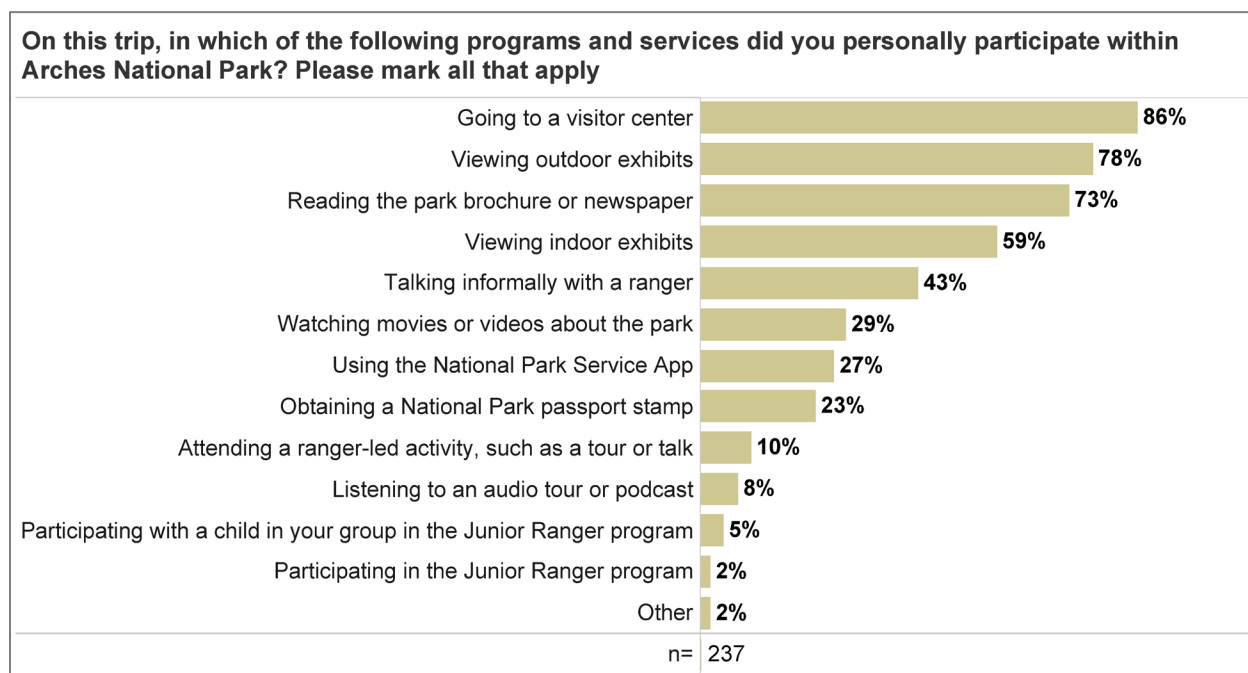


Figure 29. Participation in programs at Arches.

NPS

- The two most-used programs were going to the visitor center and viewing outdoor exhibits, with more than three-quarters of respondents (86% and 78%, respectively) reporting participating in each of them.
- Two other programs were engaged in by over half of respondents: reading the park brochure or newspaper (73%) and viewing indoor exhibits (59%).

Two follow-up questions asked if respondents learned anything from park staff, programs, and/or exhibits about American history, nature, and/or culture, and what specific subjects they would like to learn about in the future (Figure 30).

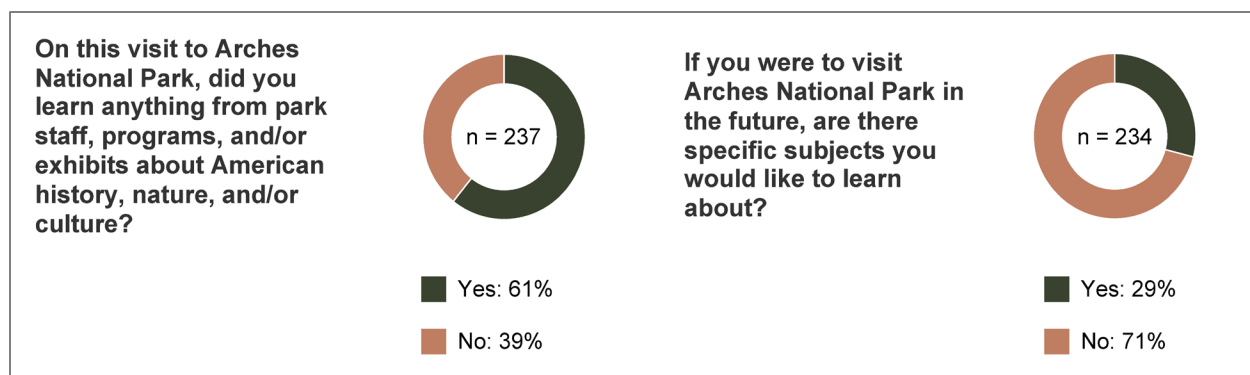


Figure 30. Learning outcomes while visiting Arches.

NPS

- A majority of respondents (61%) reported that they learned something from park staff, programs, and/or exhibits about American history, nature, and/or culture.
- Just over a quarter of respondents (29%) reported that if they were to visit Arches in the future, there are specific subjects they would like to learn about.
- Respondents who said yes to either of these two questions were asked to elaborate.

Questions 19–20: Use of Devices

Two survey questions were focused on the use of electronic devices, their importance, and the quality of service provided. First, respondents were asked which personal electronic devices they used while in Arches (Figure 31).

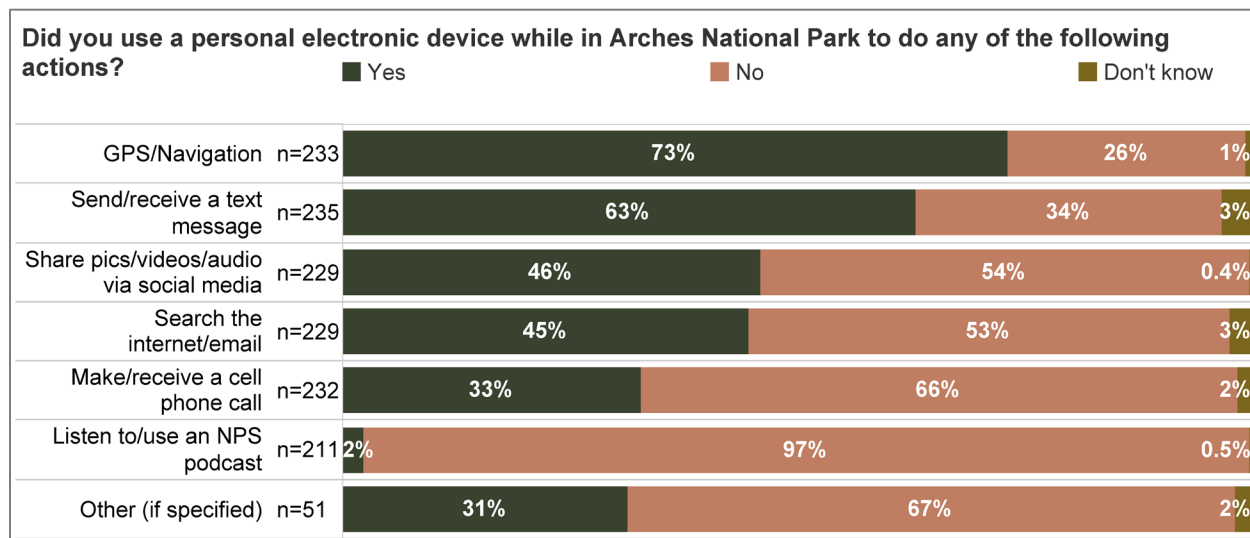


Figure 31. Use of personal electronic devices while visiting Arches. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 17](#).

NPS

- About three-quarters of respondents (73%) reported using GPS/navigation, and almost two-thirds of respondents (63%) reported sending or receiving a text message.
- Conversely, only 2% of respondents listened to or used an NPS podcast.

Then, respondents were asked to rate both the importance of each of these electronic device uses (Figure 32), and the quality of their service (Figure 33).

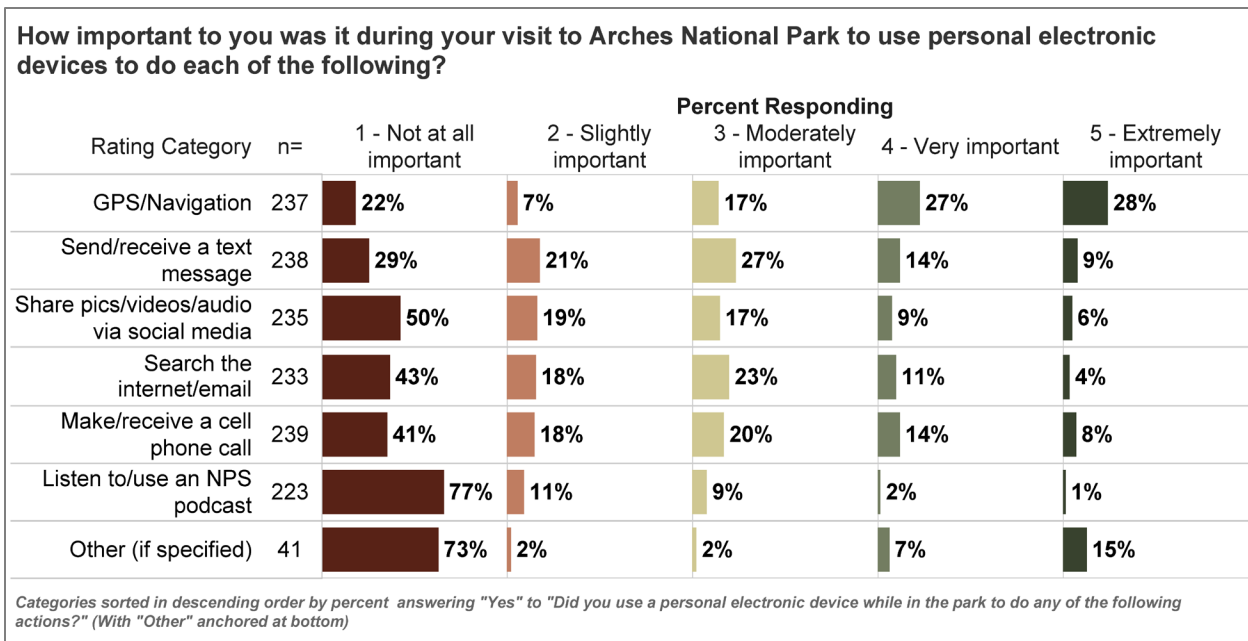


Figure 32. The importance of the use of personal electronic devices while visiting Arches. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 18](#).

NPS

- The most important device use was GPS/navigation (28% of respondents rated it as extremely important).
- Listening to and using an NPS podcast was rated as extremely important by only 1% of respondents, and not at all important by 77% of respondents.

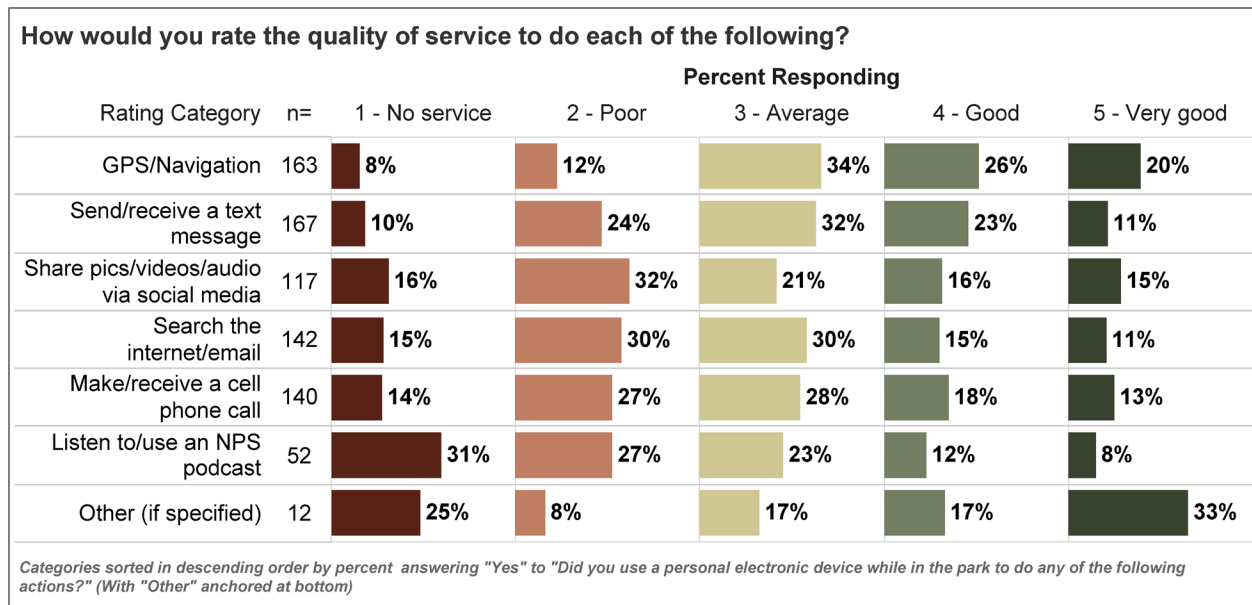


Figure 33. Quality of service for personal electronic devices while visiting Arches. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 19](#).

NPS

- GPS/navigation was rated as very good or good by 20% and 26% of respondents, respectively. However, 8% of respondents reported that they had no service for this.
- Some respondents (ranged from 10% to 31%, depending on the service) reported that they also had no service to send or receive a text message, share picture/videos/audio via social media, search the internet/email, make or receive a cell phone call, or listen to/use an NPS podcast.
- However, a small percentage of respondents (ranging from 8% to 15%, depending on the service) rated these services as very good.

Question 21: Physical Difficulties

Respondents were asked if anyone in their personal group had a physical condition that made it difficult to access or participate in park activities or services during their visit to Arches. If such a condition was identified, respondents were asked to specify the type of difficulty (Figure 34).

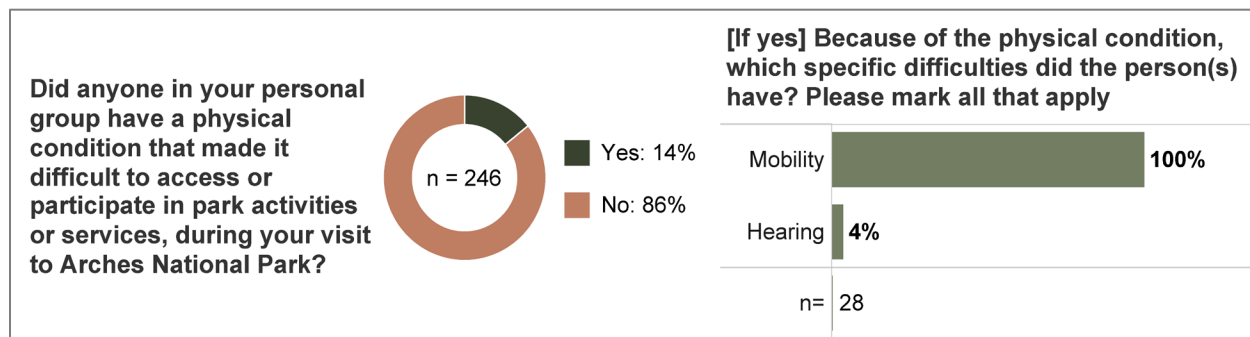


Figure 34. Physical difficulties while visiting Arches.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (86%) reported that nobody in their personal group had a physical condition that made it difficult to access or participate in park activities or services during their visit to Arches.
- Among the 14% of respondents who identified at least one difficulty, 100% reported mobility issues in their group, with a small percentage (4%) also reporting hearing difficulties.

Questions 24–27: Visitor Experience

Respondents were asked if their visit to Arches met their expectations (Figure 35).

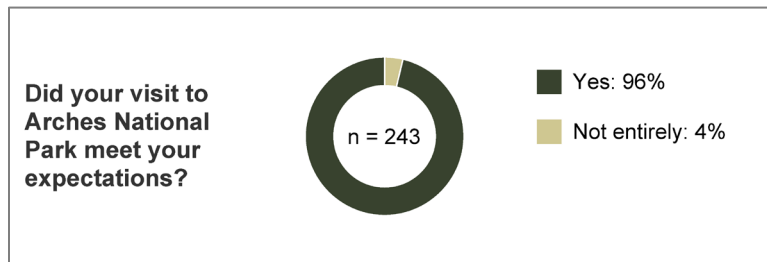


Figure 35. Meeting Arches expectations.

NPS

- Most respondents (96%) reported that their visit to Arches met their expectations, while 4% of respondents said it did not meet their expectations entirely, and no respondents indicated that it did not meet their expectations at all.
- In an open-ended follow-up question, respondents were asked to elaborate on their responses.

Respondents were then given several statements about Arches and asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each given statement (Figure 36).

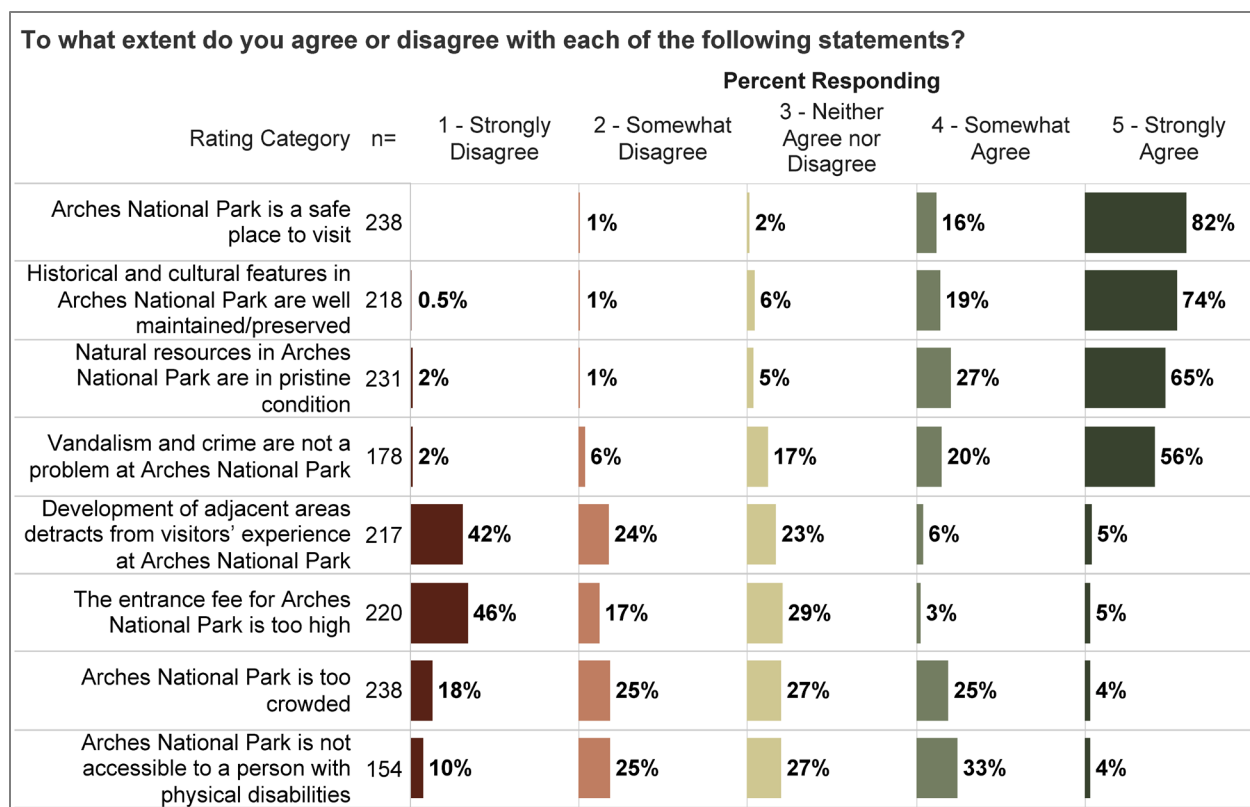


Figure 36. Rating Arches experience. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 20](#).

NPS

- From all the statements listed, “Arches National Park is a safe place to visit” received the most consensus with a combined 98% of respondents saying they either strongly or somewhat agree with it. That was followed by “historical/cultural features in Arches National Park are well maintained/preserved” and “natural resources in Arches National Park are in pristine condition” (93% and 92% of respondents, respectively, strongly or somewhat agreed with these statements).
- Conversely, “development of adjacent areas detracts from visitors’ experience at Arches National Park” and “the entrance fee for Arches National Park is too high” received the least support, with only small percentages of respondents (11% and 8% of respondents, respectively) either somewhat or strongly agreeing with these statements, and nearly half (42% and 46% of respondents, respectively) strongly disagreeing with each of them.

Next, respondents were asked to rate the quality of park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in Arches (Figure 37).

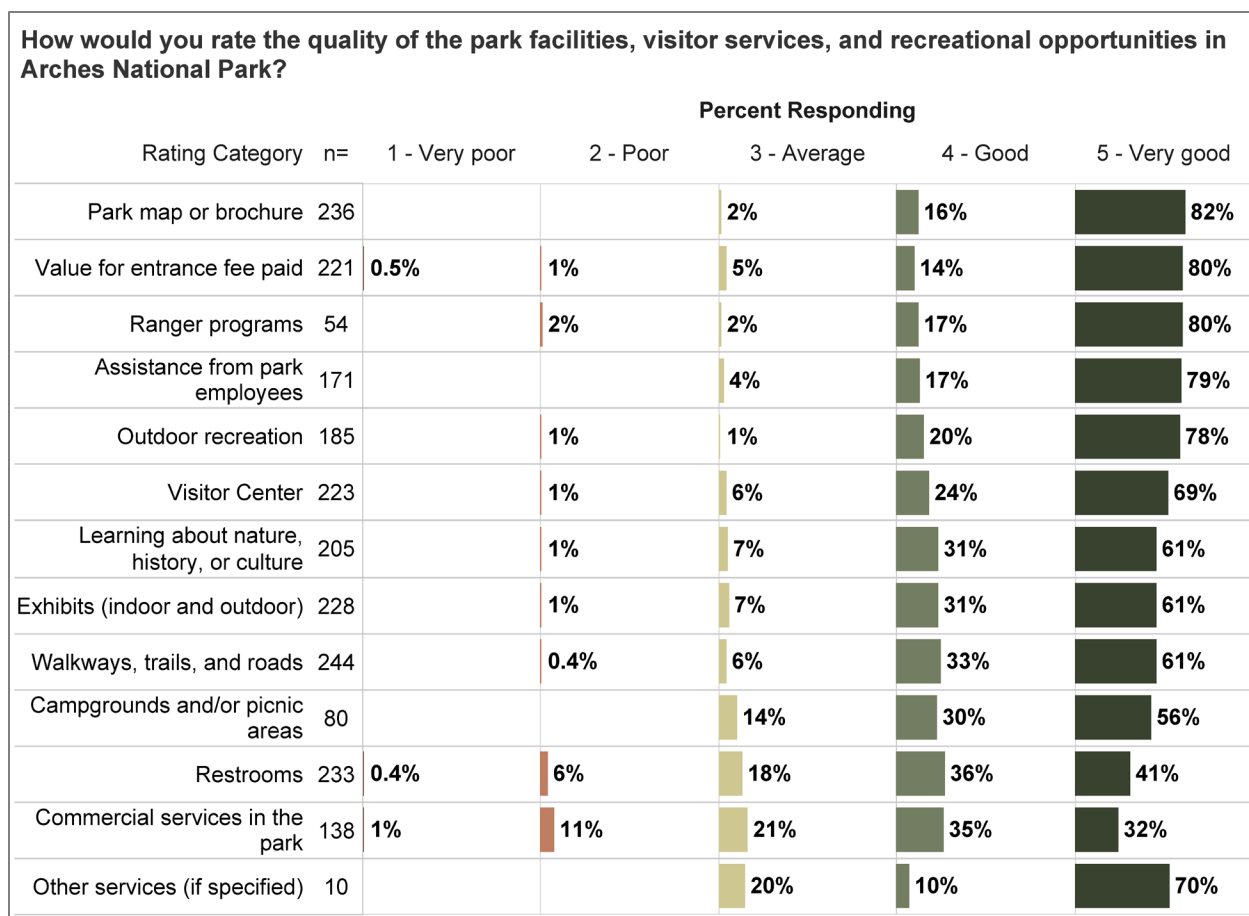


Figure 37. Rating the quality of specific Arches facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 21](#).

NPS

- Over half of respondents (ranging from 56% to 82%) rated the park map or brochure, value for entrance fee paid, ranger programs, assistance from park employees, outdoor recreation, the park's Visitor Center, learning about nature, history, or culture, indoor and outdoor exhibits, walkways, trails, and roads, and campgrounds and/or picnic areas as very good.
- Conversely, fewer than half of respondents rated restrooms and commercial services in the park as very good.

Finally, respondents were asked to rate overall quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreation opportunities (Figure 38).

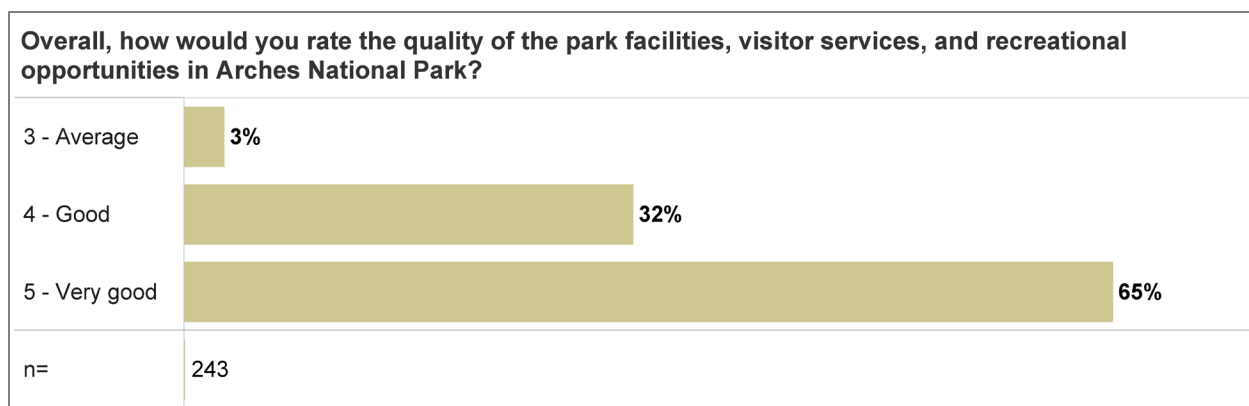


Figure 38. Rating overall quality of Arches facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.
NPS

- In general, about two-thirds of respondents (65%) rated the quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in Arches as very good, and another 32% rated them as good.
- A small percentage (3%) of respondents rated the overall quality as average.

Questions 30–38: Background/Demographics

In the final section of the post-trip survey, respondents were asked various questions about their personal and household demographics. Figure 39 depicts descriptive statistics for respondent age and education.

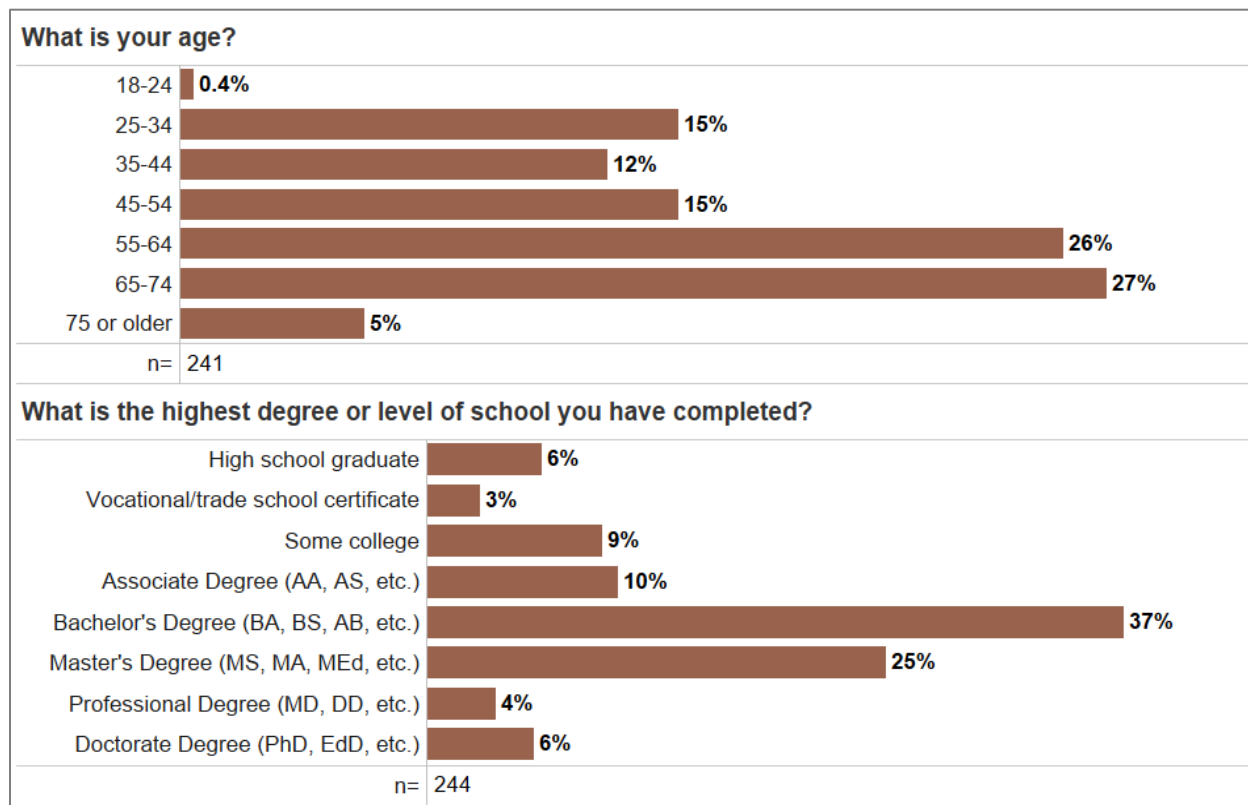


Figure 39. Respondent demographics: age and level of education.

NPS

- The most common age categories were 65 to 74 years old (27%), 55 to 64 years old (26%), 45 to 54 years old (15%), and 25 to 34 years old (15%). The least represented age group was 18 to 24 years old (only 0.4% of the participants surveyed).
- Most survey respondents reported obtaining higher education, with a combined 82% having some college degree, and a plurality (37%) holding a bachelor's degree.

Respondents were also asked to identify their race(s) and if they were of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin (Figure 40).

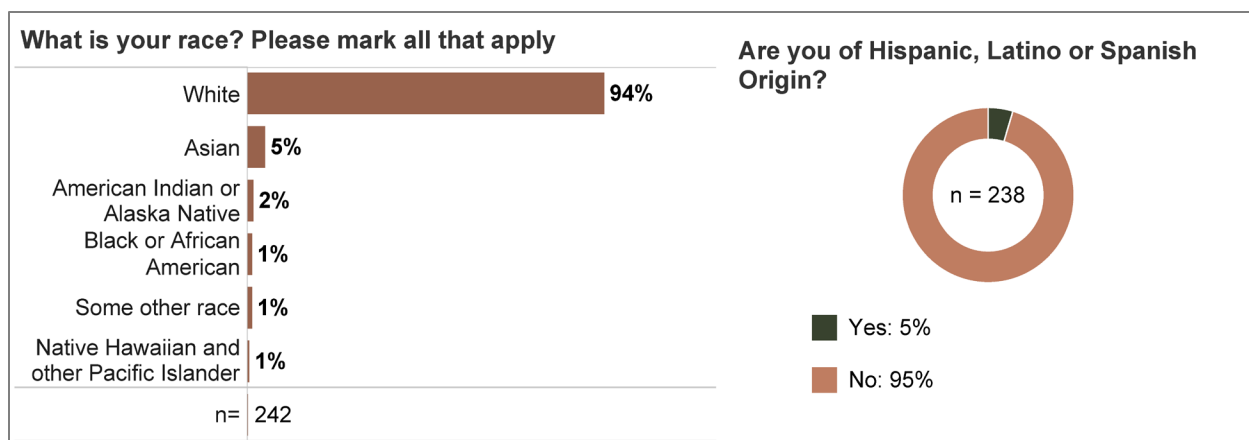


Figure 40. Respondent demographics: race and ethnicity.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (94%) were White, while 5% were Asian.
- Most respondents (95%) were not of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin.

At a household level, respondents were asked to report annual income and number of contributors, as well as how many people (adults and children) live in their household (Figure 41).

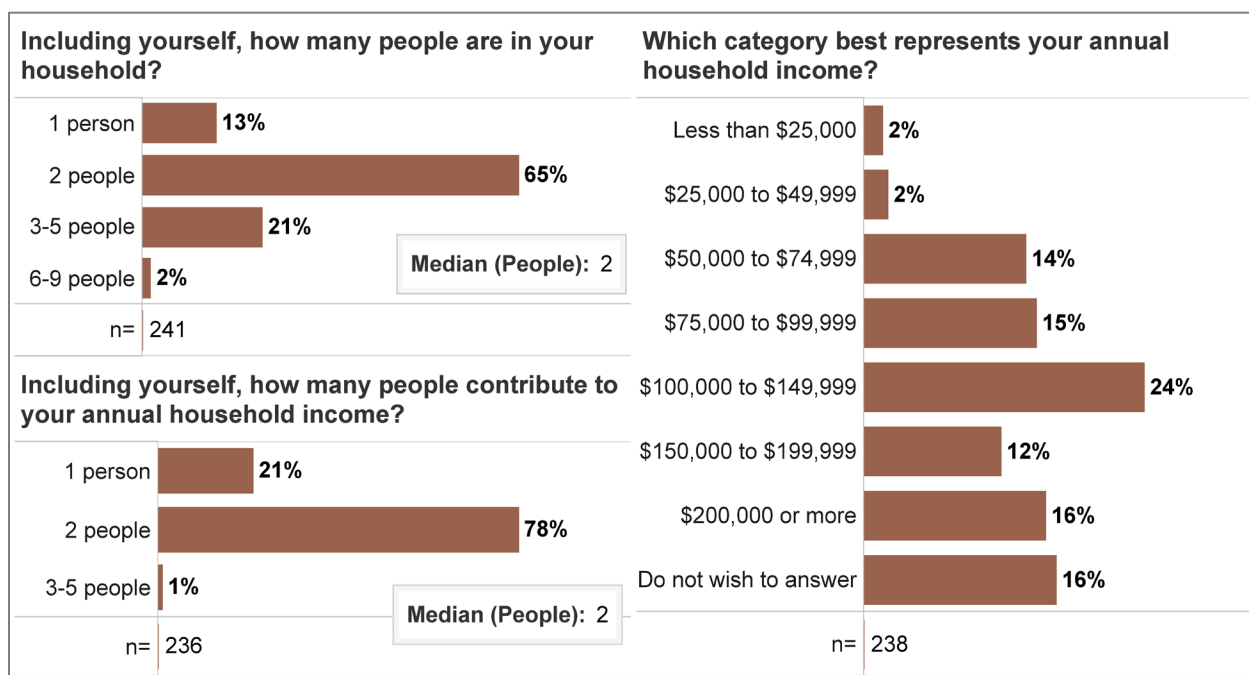


Figure 41. Household demographics: annual household income and household size. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 22](#).

NPS

- Nearly two-thirds of respondents (65%) had two people in their household, followed by three to five people (another 21%).
- In addition to obtaining higher education, visitors surveyed at Arches also reported relatively high income levels. Over one-third of respondents (36%) reported that their annual household income was between \$100,000 and \$199,999, and another 16% earned \$200,000 or more.
- Most respondents (78%) came from a dual-income household.

Finally, respondents were asked about their language preference (Figure 42).

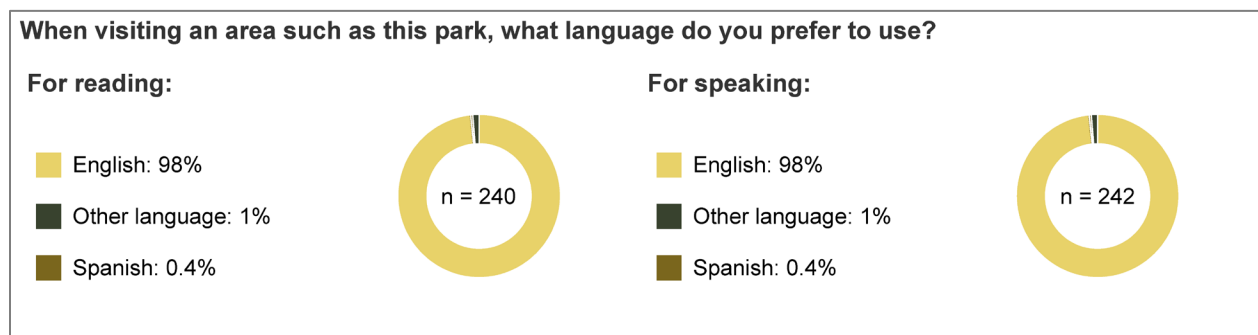


Figure 42. Respondent's language preference.

NPS

- While 5% of respondents were of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin, the overwhelming majority of respondents (98%) preferred to use English both for reading and speaking when visiting an area such as Arches.
- Only 0.4% of respondents preferred Spanish for either reading and/or speaking, while an additional 1% of respondents preferred another language.

Literature Cited

National Park Service (NPS). 2024. 2024 Socioeconomic Monitoring of Arches National Park:

Visitor intercept and post-trip surveys. <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2317378>

Appendix A: Accessible Tables

Tables 11 through 22 contain tabular data from figures found in the body of the report.

Table 11. Data from [Figure 6](#). Number of nights spent in the local area around Arches, by accommodation type.

Accommodation Type	Sample Size (n)	Median
Backcountry Camping in Arches	1	1
Camping in Arches	20	2
Camping outside Arches	129	2
Lodging outside Arches	607	2
Unpaid accommodations	10	3

Table 12. Data from [Figure 7](#). Number of adults and children in respondent's personal group, and total group size, while visiting Arches.

Group Composition	Sample Size (n)	Median
Adults	958	2
Children	958	0
Total group size	958	2

Table 13. Data from [Figure 20](#). Number of people in or on respondent's vehicle when entering Arches.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
[If entered by car, truck, or SUV] Including yourself, how many people were traveling in your vehicle when you entered Arches?	927	2
[If entered by RV/motorhome] Including yourself, how many people were traveling in your RV when you entered Arches?	19	2
[If entered by motorcycle] Including yourself, how many people were traveling on your motorcycle when you entered Arches?	4	1

Table 14. Data from [Figure 21](#). Previous visits to Arches.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
[If not first-time visitor] Including this visit, how many visits have you made to Arches over the past 12 months?	223	1
[If not first-time visitor] Including this visit, how many visits have you made to Arches over the past five years?	223	2

Table 15. Data from [Figure 22](#). Visits made to other NPS sites within the past year.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
How many visits have you made to other NPS sites over the past 12 months?	943	3

Table 16. Data from [Figure 28](#). Reasons or motivations to visit Arches.

Rating Category	Sample Size (n)
To visit a National Park Service site	242
To experience solitude	236
To hear the sounds of nature/quiet	240
To learn more about nature	238
To learn more about American history and culture	241
To spend time with family/friends	241
To get physical exercise	241
To view wildlife or natural scenery	243
To relax	241
To view dark night sky/stars	225
Other (if specified)	23

Table 17. Data from [Figure 31](#). Use of personal electronic devices while visiting Arches.

Device Use	Sample Size (n)
Make/receive a cell phone call	232
Send/receive a text message	235
Search the internet/email	229
GPS/Navigation	233
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	229
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	211
Other (if specified)	51

Table 18. Data from [Figure 32](#). The importance of the use of personal electronic devices while visiting Arches.

Device Use	Sample Size (n)
Make/receive a cell phone call	238
Send/receive a text message	233
Search the internet/email	237
GPS/Navigation	235
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	223
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	41
Other (if specified)	238

Table 19. Data from [Figure 33](#). Quality of service for personal electronic devices while visiting Arches.

Device Use	Sample Size (n)
Make/receive a cell phone call	140
Send/receive a text message	167
Search the internet/email	142
GPS/Navigation	163
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	117
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	52
Other (if specified)	12

Table 20. Data from [Figure 36](#). Rating Arches experience.

Rating Category	Sample Size (n)
Arches is a safe place to visit	238
Arches is too crowded	238
Natural resources in Arches are in pristine condition	231
The entrance fee for Arches is too high	220
Vandalism and crime are not a problem at Arches	178
Arches is not accessible to a person with physical disabilities	154
Historical and cultural features in Arches are well maintained/preserved	218
Development of adjacent areas detracts from visitors' experience at Arches	217

Table 21. Data from [Figure 37](#). Rating the quality of Arches facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.

Rating Category	Sample Size (n)
Visitor Center	223
Exhibits (indoor and outdoor)	228
Restrooms	233
Walkways, trails, and roads	244
Campgrounds and/or picnic areas	80
Assistance from park employees	171
Park map or brochure	236
Ranger programs	54
Value for entrance fee paid	221
Commercial services in the park (food, lodging, gifts, rental, etc.)	138
Other services (if specified)	10
Learning about nature, history, or culture	205
Outdoor recreation (sightseeing, camping, bicycling, boating, hiking, etc.)	185

Table 22. Data from [Figure 41](#). Household demographics: annual household income and household size.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
Including yourself, how many people are in your household?	241	2
Including yourself, how many people contribute to your annual household income?	236	2

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