

OUTSIDER AWARENESS & PERCEPTION STUDY

CHANDLERTHINKS

DESTINATION BRANDING SPECIALISTS

AAP Study - Main Observations

1. Scenic Beauty Is Blowing Rock's Dominant Brand Signal

Outsiders overwhelmingly associate Blowing Rock first and foremost with **mountains, scenic views, and natural beauty**. The Blue Ridge Parkway, overlooks, and the namesake Blowing Rock are instinctive mental images, positioning the town as a premier High Country scenic destination.

SOURCE: AAP



AAP Study - Main Observations

2. Blowing Rock Is Widely Perceived as a Charming, Quaint Mountain Town

Beyond scenery, Blowing Rock is consistently described as **charming, walkable, cozy, and storybook-like**. Outsiders picture a peaceful village with shops, parks, and a slower pace—reinforcing a strong emotional appeal rooted in small-town authenticity.

SOURCE: AAP



AAP Study - Main Observations

3. Downtown Is the Primary Reason for Visiting

While nature draws attention, **Downtown Blowing Rock is the top stated reason for visitation**. Exploring Main Street, shopping, dining, and enjoying the downtown environment are the most common motivations and activities—confirming downtown as the experiential core of the destination.

SOURCE: AAP



AAP Study - Main Observations

4. Blowing Rock Functions as Both a Destination and a Regional Hub

Just over half of visitors consider Blowing Rock their **primary destination**, while a significant share includes it as part of a **multi-destination High Country trip** (Boone, Grandfather Mountain, Banner Elk, Asheville). This reinforces Blowing Rock's role as both a stand-alone destination and a gateway.

SOURCE: AAP



AAP Study - Main Observations

5. Visitor Satisfaction, Loyalty, and Advocacy Are Extremely Strong

Outsiders rate Blowing Rock **very highly across nearly all measures**, led by scenic beauty, outdoor access, dining, shopping, and overall experience. Repeat visitation is common, stays are typically two nights or more, and likelihood to recommend is exceptionally high—indicating strong brand equity and word-of-mouth power.

SOURCE: AAP



Q: What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of Blowing Rock?

SOURCE: AAP



First impressions of Blowing Rock are scenic beauty, quaint mountain town and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Mountains, Scenic Views & Natural Beauty

Mountains overwhelmingly dominate first impressions—often paired with words like *beautiful*, *breathtaking*, *peaceful*, *foggy*, *windy*, and *refreshing*. Scenic overlooks, cliffs, forests, and fall colors are the most instinctive mental image.

The Blowing Rock Itself & Its Legend

The iconic rock formation, its folklore (wind blowing objects back up), cliffs, wind, and mystery are a strong immediate association—especially for people who know the name but may not know the town well.

Blue Ridge Parkway & Mountain Drives

The Parkway, scenic drives, overlooks, and proximity to outdoor recreation (hiking, skiing, fishing) frequently come up as a first thought, reinforcing Blowing Rock as a gateway to the High Country.

SOURCE: AAP Q: What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of Blowing Rock?



Top of mind cont..

Quaint, Small Mountain Town Atmosphere

Words like *quaint*, *charming*, *small town*, *cozy*, *walkable*, and *storybook* consistently appear. Many people immediately picture a peaceful village with shops, parks, and a slower pace.

Tourism & Seasonal Associations

Visitors often think of Blowing Rock as a **tourist destination**, tied to:

- Fall foliage
- Cool summer weather
- Snow and winter activities
- Tweetsie Railroad and nearby attractions
- Festivals and holiday décor

SOURCE: AAP Q: What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of Blowing Rock?

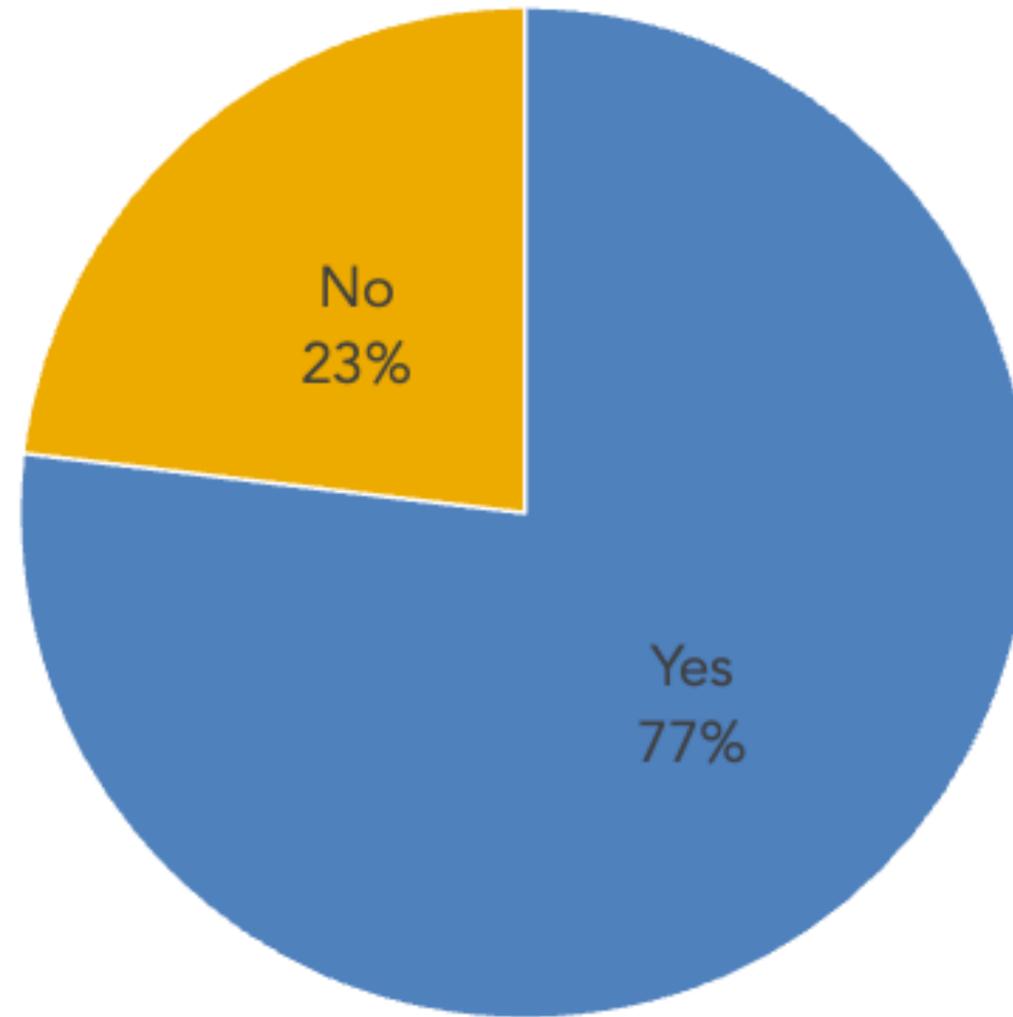


Q: Have you visited or traveled through Blowing Rock in the past 24 months?

SOURCE: AAP



Three-quarters have visited.



SOURCE: AAP Q: Have you visited or traveled through Blowing Rock in the past 24 months?



Q: What is most appealing about Blowing Rock as a place to visit?

SOURCE: AAP



The appeal of Blowing Rock is the mountain scenery and the variety of things to do.

- **Mountain scenery, views, and natural beauty**
 - Breathtaking Blue Ridge mountain vistas, valleys, forests, rivers, waterfalls, fall color, and “fresh air” are the most repeated reasons.
- **A peaceful, serene getaway atmosphere**
 - Visitors describe it as tranquil, relaxing, quiet, and a perfect escape from everyday life (especially with the cooler mountain climate).
- **Charming small-town feel and “pretty” downtown**
 - Quaint, well-kept, walkable village character; attractive architecture, beautiful homes, and a consistent “mountain town” theme.
- **Shopping and local businesses**
 - Main Street shops, locally owned stores, browsing “little shops,” and the lack of big chains come up repeatedly as part of the fun.
- **Variety of things to do (outdoors + attractions + dining)**
 - Hiking trails, scenic drives, Blue Ridge Parkway access, Tweetsie Railroad, parks/lakes (Bass Lake/Price Park), gem mining, plus restaurants and food experiences.

SOURCE: AAP Q: What is most appealing about Blowing Rock as a place to visit?



Q: Was Blowing Rock your destination or were you passing through on the way to another destination?

SOURCE: AAP



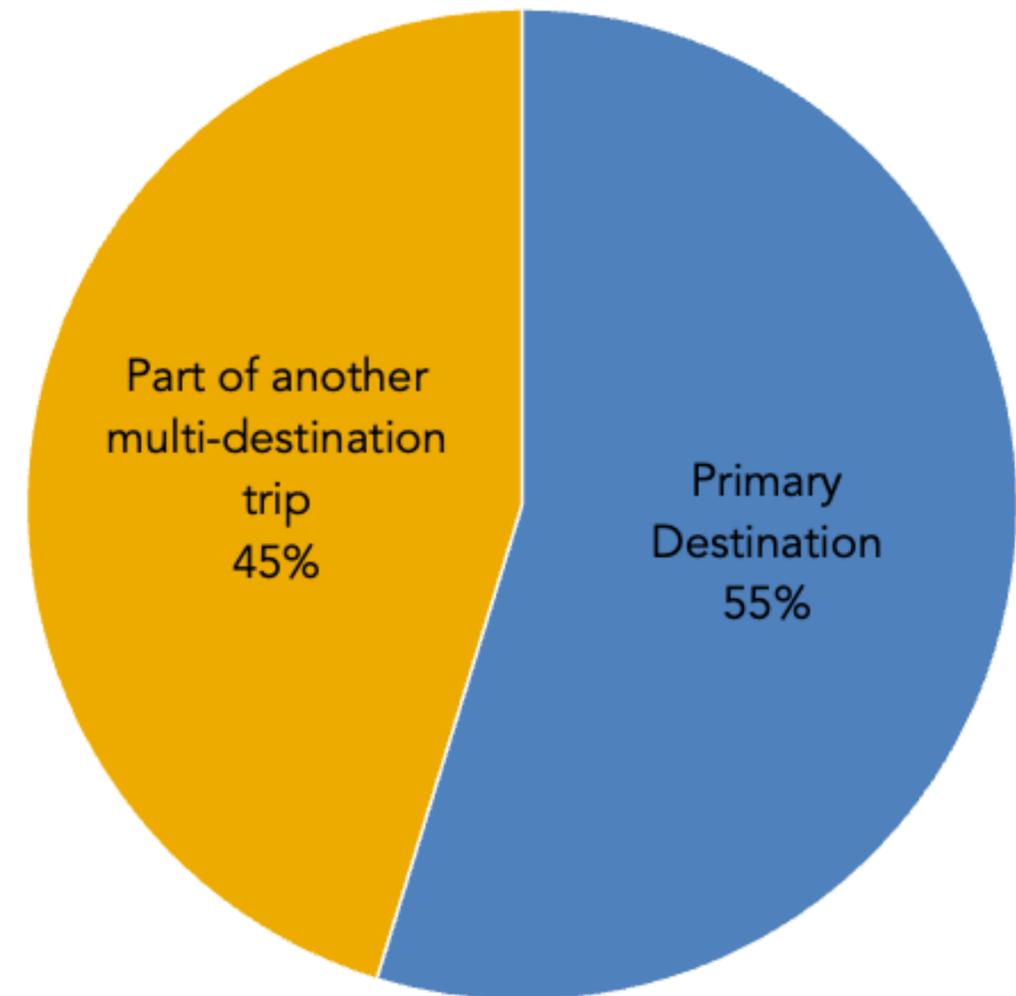
Blowing Rock was the primary destination for just over half of the visitors.

Primary :

- Boone
- Grandfather Mountain
- Hickory
- Banner Elk
- Asheville

Secondary but notable:

- Lenoir
- Charlotte
- Linville Gorge
- Mount Mitchell State Park
- Tennessee destinations (Johnson City, Mountain City, Nashville)
- Coastal destinations (Myrtle Beach, Wilmington)



SOURCE: AAP Q: Was Blowing Rock your destination or were you passing through on the way to another destination?

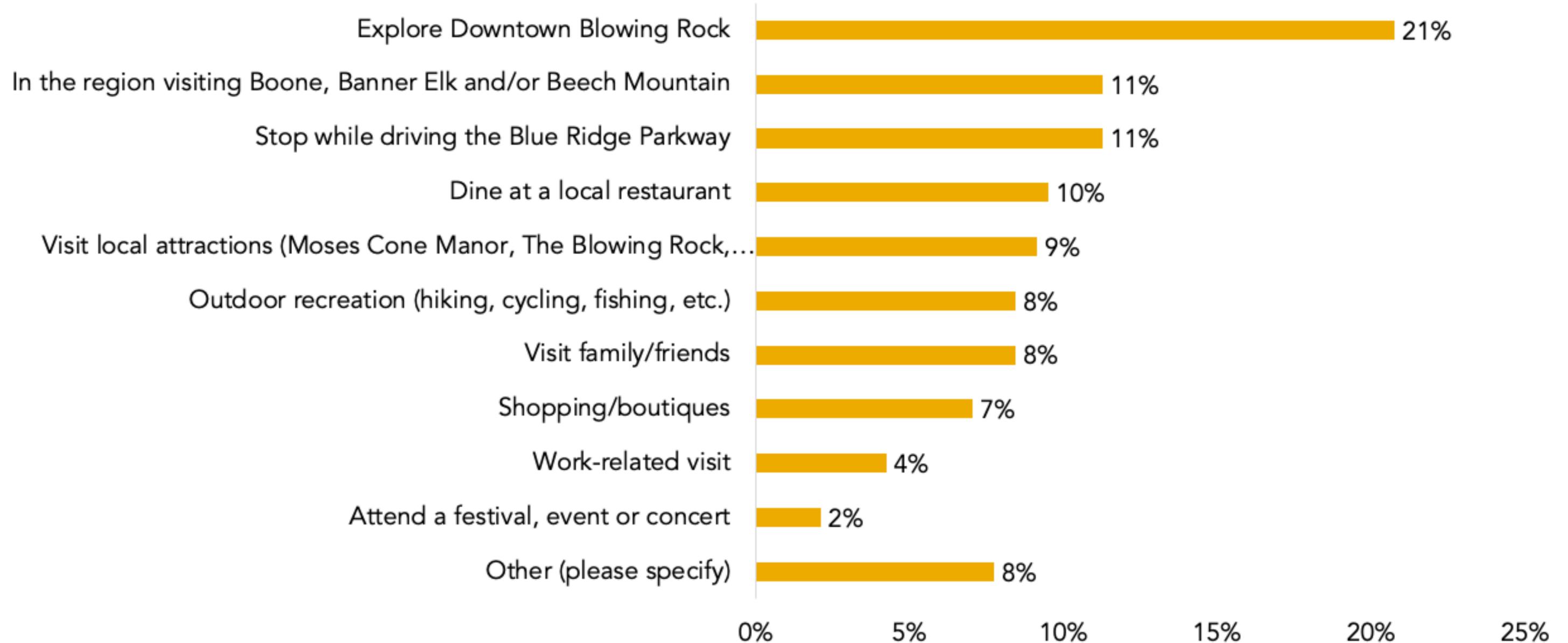


Q: What was the main reason for your most recent visit to Blowing Rock? [Select only one]

SOURCE: AAP



Exploring Downtown Blowing Rock is the primary reason for visitation.



SOURCE: AAP Q: What was the main reason for your most recent visit to Blowing Rock? [Select only one]

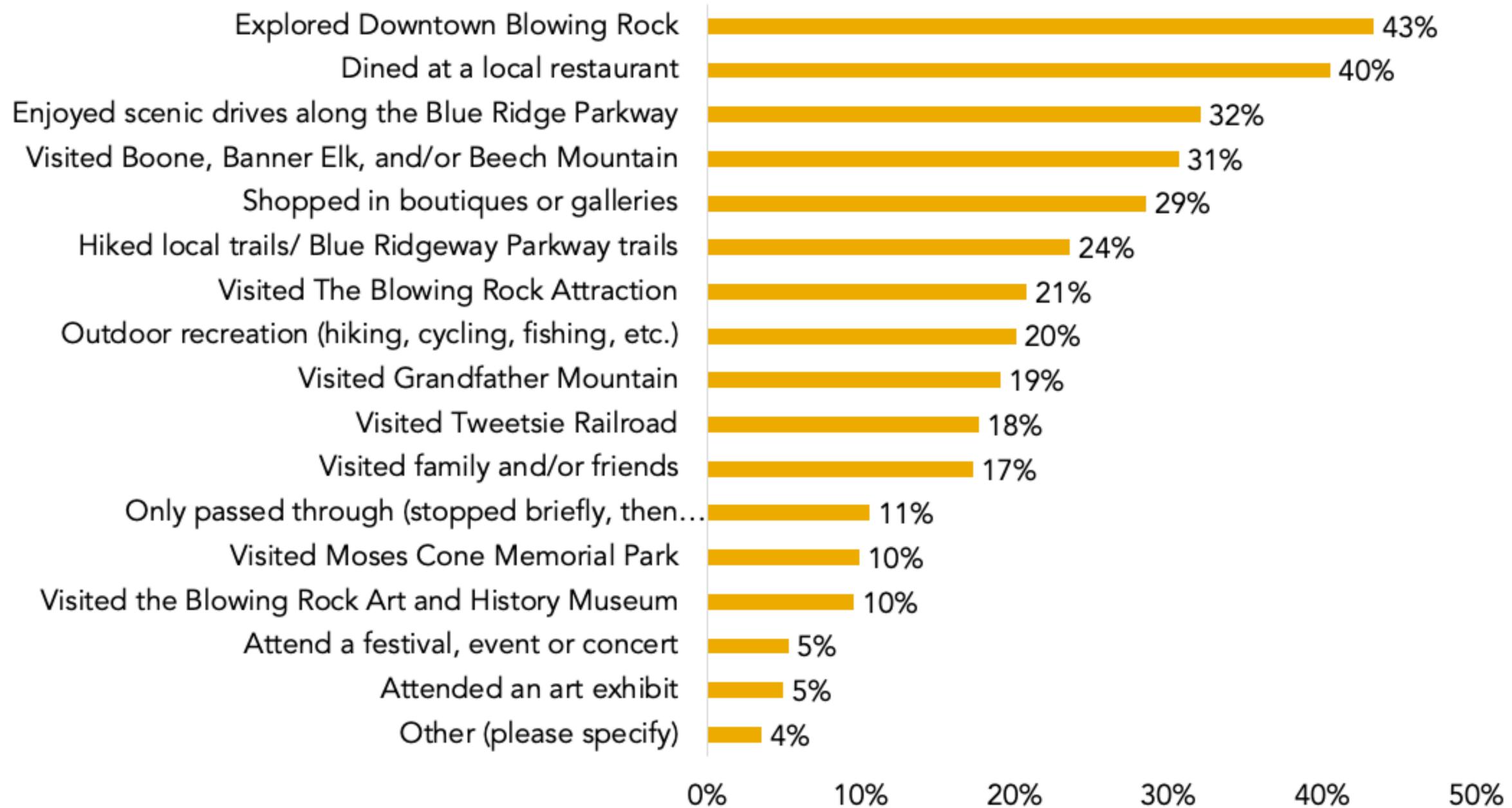


*Q: While visiting Blowing Rock, what did you do?
[Multiple responses accepted]*

SOURCE: AAP



Downtown Blowing Rock and the Blue Ridge Parkway are the top activities.



SOURCE: AAP Q: While visiting Blowing Rock, what did you do? [Multiple responses accepted]

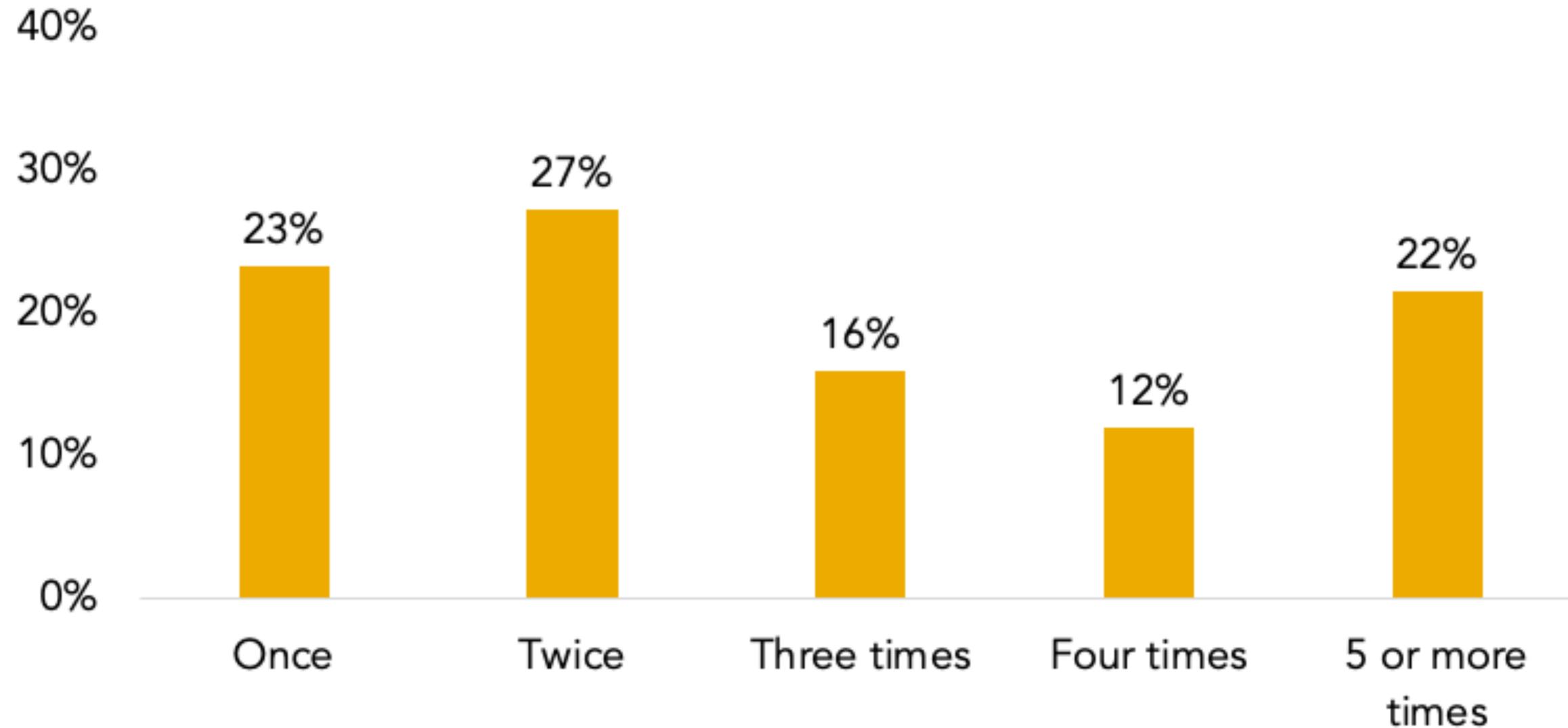


Q: How many times have you visited Blowing Rock in the past 24 months?

SOURCE: AAP



Blowing Rock is not just a one and done destination.



SOURCE: AAP Q: How many times have you visited Blowing Rock in the past 24 months?

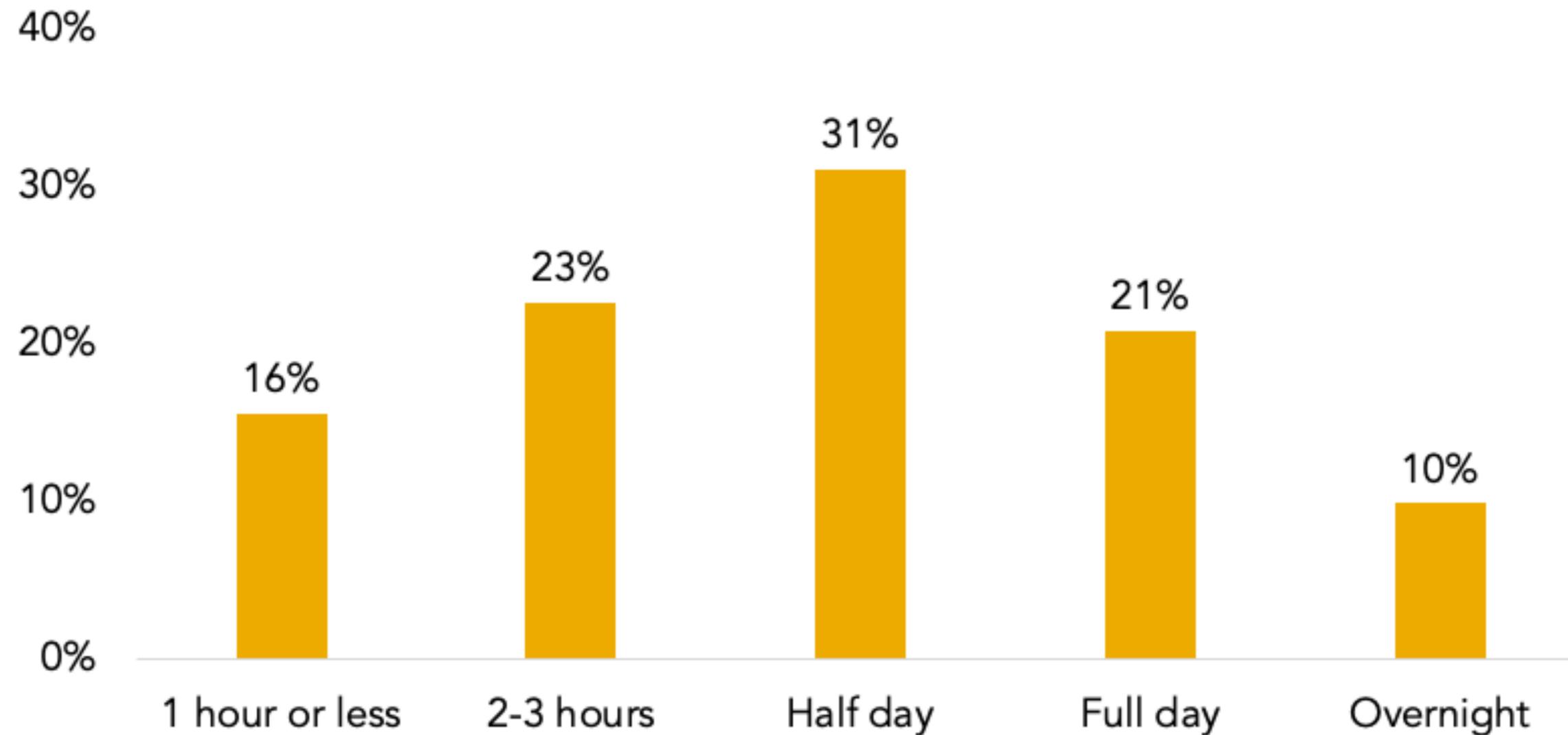


Q: On a typical visit to Blowing Rock, approximately how much time would you estimate you spend in the area?

SOURCE: AAP



Visitors tend to spend a half day or more in Blowing Rock.



SOURCE: AAP Q: On a typical visit to Blowing Rock, approximately how much time would you estimate you spend in the area?

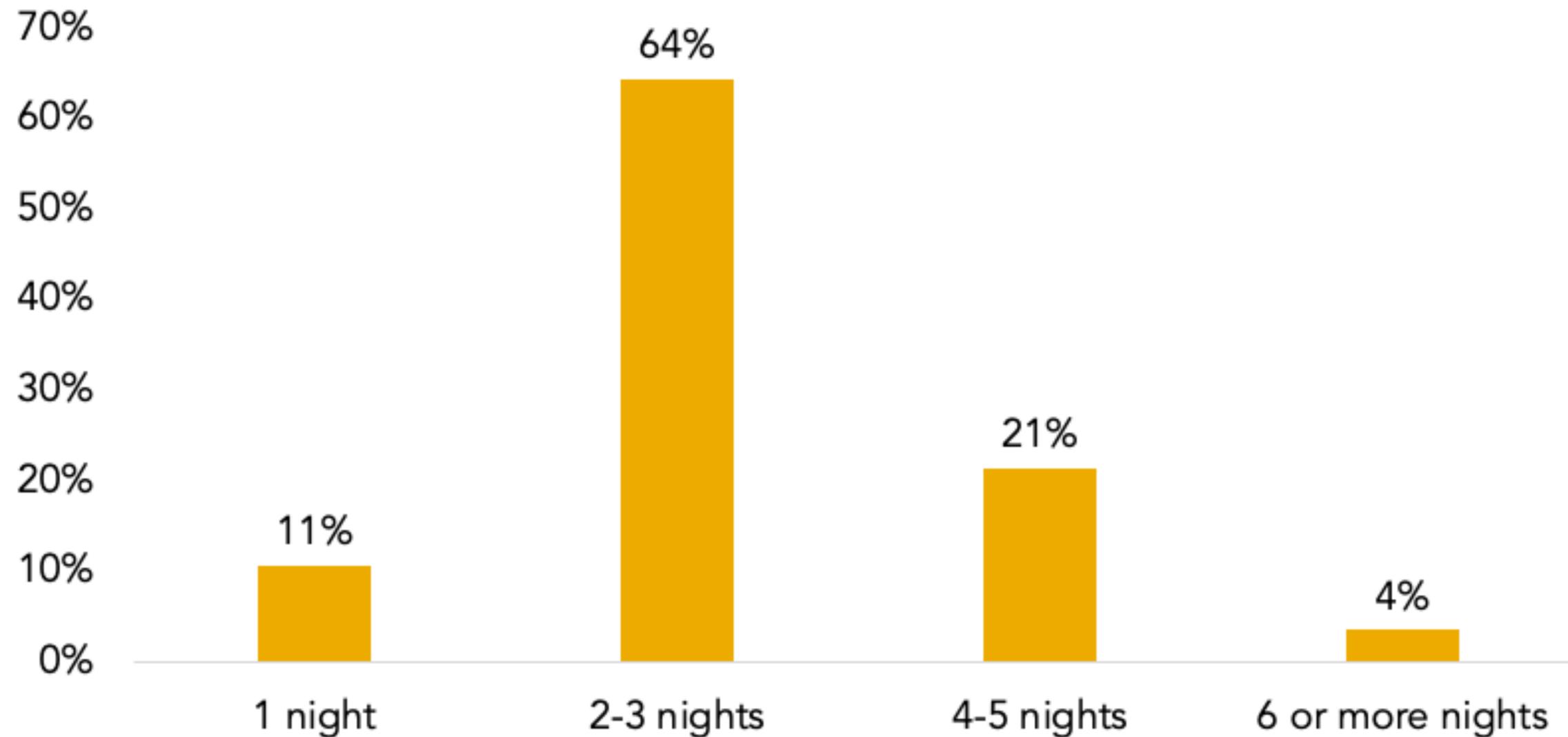


Q: How many nights did you stay in Blowing Rock?

SOURCE: AAP



Most stay in Blowing Rock two nights or more.



SOURCE: AAP Q: How many nights did you stay in Blowing Rock?

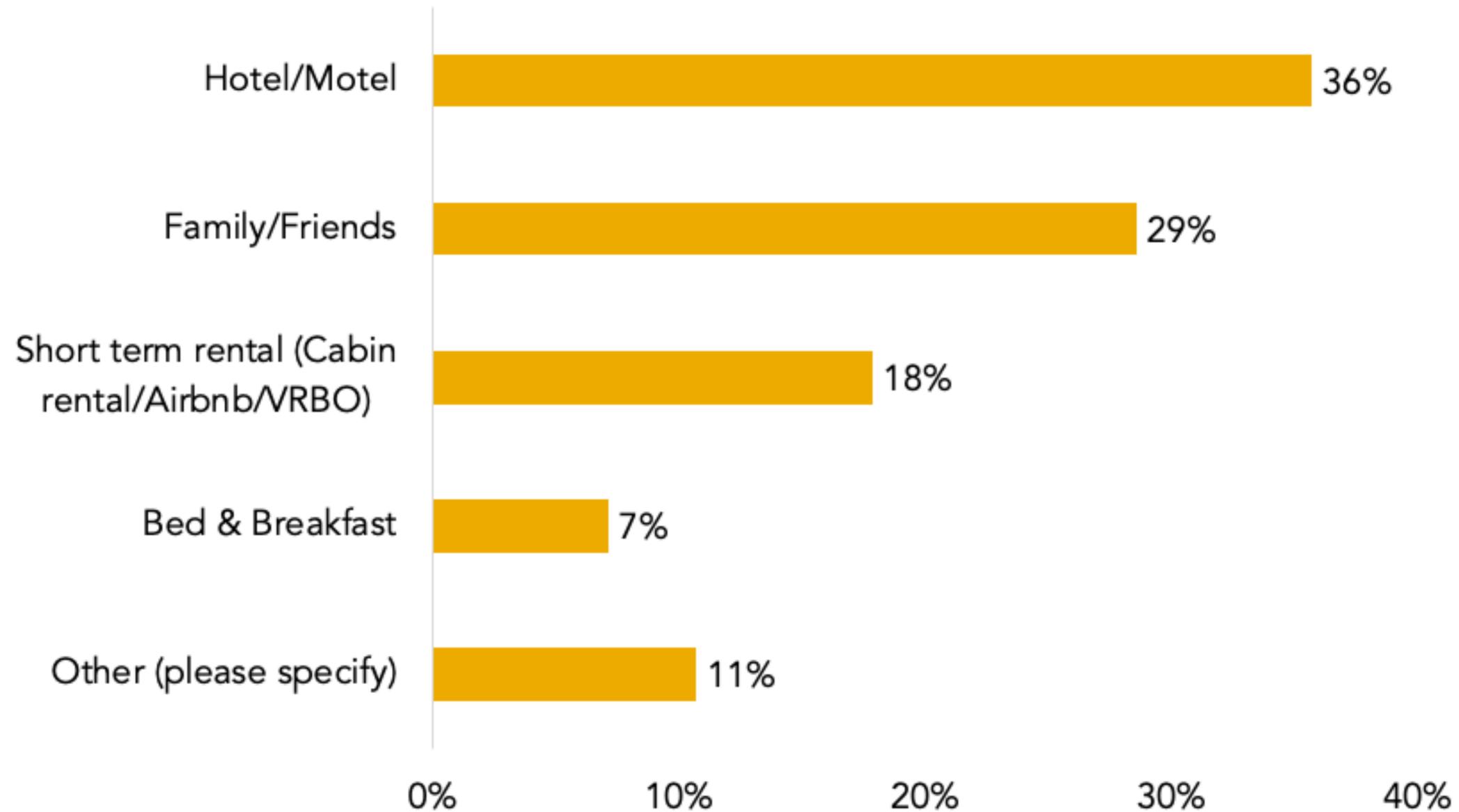


Q: Where did you stay?

SOURCE: AAP



Hotel/Motel is the top lodging followed by family/friends.



SOURCE: AAP Q: Where did you stay?

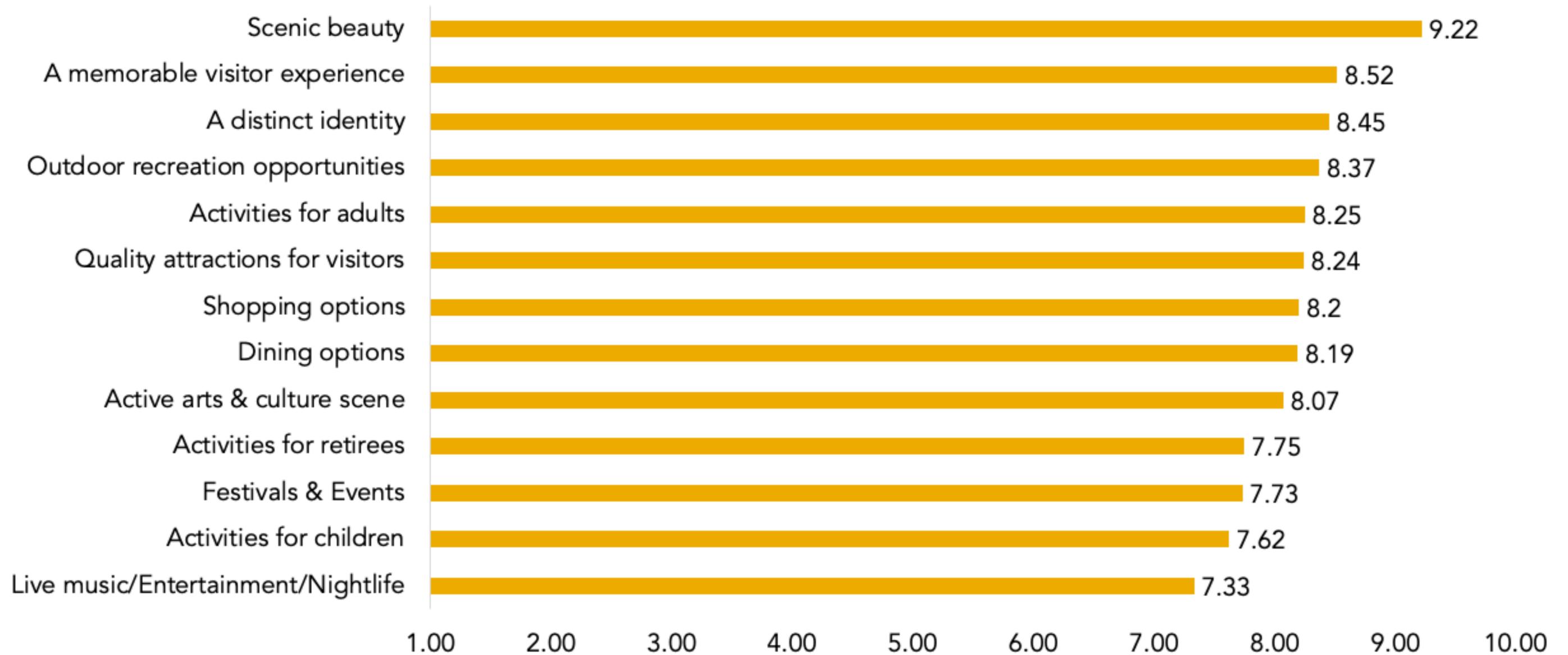


Q: Using a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being “poor” and 10 being “excellent,” how well does Blowing Rock deliver the following for attracting out of town visitors?

SOURCE: AAP



Scenic beauty is what attracts out of town visitors.



SOURCE: AAP

Q: Using a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being "poor" and 10 being "excellent," how well does Blowing Rock deliver the following for attracting out of town visitors?

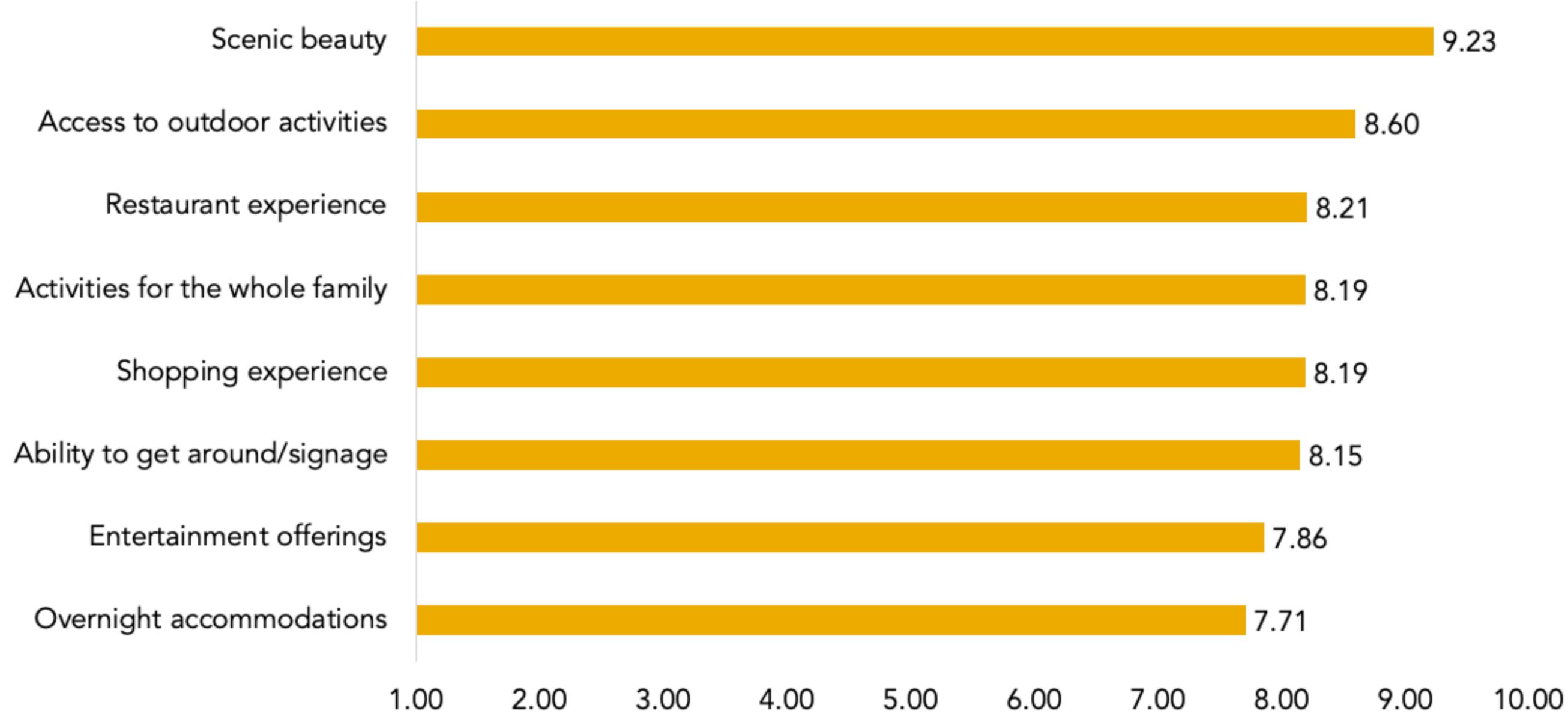


Q: How would you rate the following regarding your most recent trip to Blowing Rock?

SOURCE: AAP



Blowing Rock receives high visitation rating led by scenic beauty.



SOURCE: AAP Q: Using the same 1 – 10 scale, how would you rate the following regarding your most recent trip to Blowing Rock?

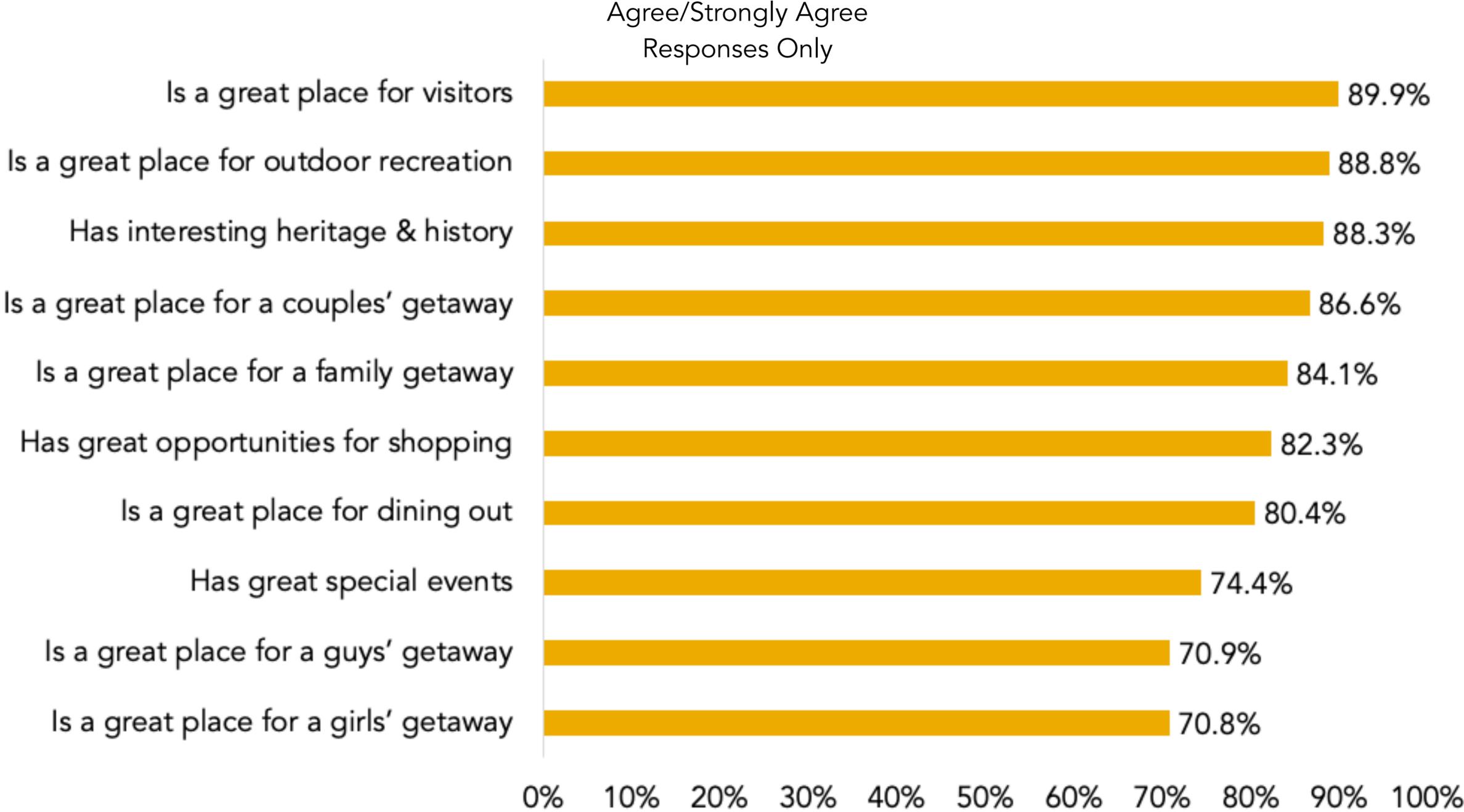


Q: Please rate Blowing Rock in the following areas:

SOURCE: AAP



Blowing Rock is rated high across the board.



SOURCE: AAP Q: Please rate Blowing Rock in the following areas:



Q: What is the one word or phrase you would use to best describe the Blowing Rock visitor experience?

SOURCE: AAP



Beautiful, breathtaking and scenic is by far the dominant descriptor.

- **Beautiful / Breathtaking / Scenic**

By far the dominant descriptor. Visitors overwhelmingly describe Blowing Rock as *beautiful, breathtaking, gorgeous, picturesque*, and *scenic*, with mountain views and natural surroundings defining the experience.

- **Peaceful / Relaxing / Serene**

Words like *peaceful, relaxing, tranquil, calm, rejuvenating*, and *a breath of fresh air* appear repeatedly, positioning Blowing Rock as a restorative mountain escape.

- **Charming / Quaint / Welcoming**

Frequently described as *charming, quaint, cozy*, and *welcoming*, reflecting a small-town atmosphere that feels warm, intimate, and authentic.

- **Memorable / Amazing / Special**

Visitors consistently use high-emotion language such as *amazing, wonderful, unforgettable, extraordinary*, and *experience of a lifetime*, indicating strong emotional resonance.

- **Adventurous / Nature-Driven**

Often associated with *mountains, nature, hiking, adventure*, and *outdoor beauty*, reinforcing Blowing Rock as both a scenic and experiential destination.

SOURCE: AAP Q: What is the one word or phrase you would use to best describe the Blowing Rock visitor experience?



Q: What feature/activity/characteristic makes Blowing Rock more distinct than anywhere in North Carolina?

SOURCE: AAP



Blowing Rock has several features that make it more distinct than other places in North Carolina.

1. The Blowing Rock
2. Blue Ridge Parkway
3. Grandfather Mountain
4. Tweetsie Railroad
5. Walkable Downtown & Village Attractions

SOURCE: AAP Q: What feature/activity/characteristic makes Blowing Rock more distinct than anywhere in North Carolina?

