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Hawai'i Tourism Authority Issues State's First-Ever Studies on LGBT Travel

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) today issued four research studies offering comprehensive findings about the profiles, preferences and sentiments of LGBT travelers from the [United States](#), [Canada](#), [China](#), and [Australia](#) as it relates to the Hawaiian Islands.

Two additional studies by HTA evaluating LGBT travel to Hawai'i from Japan and Taiwan are in progress and will be issued within the next couple of months.

Commissioned by HTA's Tourism Research Division and conducted by Community Marketing & Insights, a San Francisco-based firm specializing in LGBT consumer research, the studies are the first done on behalf of the State of Hawai'i to analyze LGBT travel to the Hawaiian Islands.

Daniel Nāho'opi'i, HTA Director of Tourism Research, noted the studies present insightful information that will help Hawai'i tourism industry businesses to better understand how they can more effectively attract a larger segment of the LGBT travel market.

"We initiated these studies to provide travel industry businesses statewide with both a broader and more precise base of knowledge as to how they can capture a greater market share of LGBT travelers from our key source markets," said Nāho'opi'i. "These studies also confirm that Hawai'i travel providers can benefit from more targeted marketing, new product offerings, and a greater understanding as to what LGBT travelers are seeking when visiting Hawai'i."

Nāho'opi'i added that the studies show LGBT Generation X and Millennial travelers offer the greatest potential for growth, especially from Asia. However, he noted that, "Hawai'i is not on their wish list of preferred travel destinations and the attributes of the Islands are not as well known to them as they are to LGBT Baby Boomers. Increasing awareness about Hawai'i's range of offerings is key to elevating interest from this younger generation of travelers."

Marketing products that appeal to LGBT travelers is key to increasing loyalty to the Hawaiian Islands. For example, the studies found that LGBT travelers would be highly likely to visit Hawai'i for an LGBT multi-island cruise or outdoor adventure week, and they prefer nightclubs and bars catering to Hawai'i's LGBT community. However, the research showed such a preference does not exist for activities like a dinner cruise, catamaran sail, lū'au, tour, and hikes.

Various market studies estimate that LGBT travel to Hawai'i can be up to 6 percent of total visitors from both Japan and Canada, up to 7 percent of total visitors from the U.S. West, and up to 9 percent of total visitors from the U.S. East.

Noteworthy points from each of the four studies on LGBT travel to Hawai'i include the following:

United States

- 70% of those surveyed consider Hawai'i an LGBT-friendly destination, but only 27% expressed interest in making a trip to the Islands in the next two years.
- Hawai'i is competing against sun and surf destinations in Florida and southern California, as well as urban destinations like San Francisco, Las Vegas and Western Europe.

- The typical LGBT U.S. visitor to Hawai'i has a household income of more than \$100,000.
- 71% of LGBT U.S. visitors to Hawai'i travel with a partner.

Canada

- Only 50% of those surveyed gave Hawai'i a positive rating as an LGBT-friendly destination, indicating additional education is needed about LGBT Hawai'i attributes.
- Other destinations that rank favorably with LGBT Canadians include Vancouver (96%), Los Angeles (79%), Sydney (74%), and Miami/Fort Lauderdale (72%).
- LGBT Canadians are most likely to agree that Hawai'i offers unique scenery, is a place to relax, and is romantic.
- Hawai'i scores low as a place to easily meet other LGBT people, and also low for good value.

China

- An estimated 65 million LGBT Chinese live in Mainland China and have a purchasing power of \$470 billion.
- LGBT Chinese are more likely to live in urban areas due to economic opportunities and more tolerant social environments.
- Thailand is the top destination for LGBT Chinese, while Taiwan ranks second.
- Most LGBT Chinese are first-time international travelers and want to explore attractions of general interest before seeking out LGBT options.

Australia

- 12% of LGBT Australians traveled to Hawai'i in the past three years. California is a main competitor to Hawai'i, as 32% of LGBT Australians traveled to northern or southern California.
- LGBT Australians rank Hawai'i as a place where the people are friendly (68% agree).
- 35% said they would travel to Hawai'i for a LGBT Pride Festival (compared to 25% of U.S. visitors).
- The top three travel interests of LGBT Australians are interesting cuisine, historical sites and culture.

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About the Hawai'i Tourism Authority

The [Hawai'i Tourism Authority](#) is responsible for strategically managing the State of Hawai'i's marketing initiatives to support tourism. HTA's goal is to optimize tourism's benefits for Hawai'i, while being attentive to the interests of travelers, the community and visitor industry. Established in 1998 to support Hawai'i's leading industry and largest employer, HTA continually strives to help ensure the sustainability of tourism's success.

For more information about HTA, please visit www.hawaiiauthority.org. Follow updates about HTA on Facebook, Twitter ([@HawaiiHTA](#)) and its YouTube Channel.

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