

# Leisure Trends - Canada - 2023

Report Price: £3695 | \$4995 | €4400

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## This report looks at the following areas:

- Recent leisure activities.
- The at-home leisure activities consumers would engage in if they had more free time.
- The out-of-home leisure activities consumers would engage in if they had more time.
- How leisure behaviours have changed compared to a year ago.
- The role of technology and media in leisure activities.

Digital technology has changed the way consumers spend their leisure time. TV, movies, music and radio have been available for decades – but never in such a flexible way. Streaming video on-demand, wireless personal audio and mobile devices have all made tech and media a central part of modern leisure time. And with the ubiquity of social media and smartphone cameras, leisure time is no longer just about content consumption – spare time is now an opportunity for content creation, too. Traditional behaviours like reading, travelling or exercising will always be common leisure activities – but tech and media are undoubtedly evolving how Canadians spend their free time.

Leisure activities have continued to be affected by external market factors. The COVID-19 pandemic had unprecedented impacts on these behaviours – in particular, business closures and consumers’ concerns about spending time around others – and continues to be a factor for a considerable proportion of consumers. Economic changes like rapid inflation and rising interest rates have also affected leisure habits by squeezing Canadians’ budgets and making them reconsider every expense.

Those market factors create a significant challenge for out-of-home leisure activities. The pandemic was a catalyst for in-home investments (eg home entertainment, renovations) that made living spaces more comfortable; it also created hesitancy to be around others, for fear of exposure to the virus. Once budgets tightened amid inflation (and rising interest rates), it was a perfect



“Leisure behaviours are evolving; digital tech is making media a more central part of leisure time while also allowing leisure activities during work. Meanwhile, market factors are driving a shift from out-of-home to in-home leisure time – creating a major threat for the former and sparking growth opportunities for the latter.”  
– **Scott Stewart, Associate Director, Lifestyles & Retail**

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storm to curb leisure spending. Looking ahead, the challenge is that at-home leisure habits could cement themselves and make it difficult to get out-of-home behaviours back to pre-2020 levels – such as less demand for movie theatres or restaurants.

That said, there is ample opportunity for leisure activities overall. Digital technology has made it easier to create leisure time where it didn't exist before – such as streaming a movie on public transit, or listening to a podcast while mowing the lawn. Consumers have become adept at multitasking, blurring the lines between work and leisure time. That means there is white space for leisure stakeholders that can create new leisure occasions rather than competing directly with each other.

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