

# 4

## Domestic and international creative tourists in Portugal: Insights for practitioners

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A great diversity of definitions of creative tourists exist, ranging from those who refer to visitors of dance, art, or handicraft workshops, to those who include people who take up temporary artistic residences to practice their creative expression and develop their art forms. In recent decades, we have observed the emergence of a new generation of travellers.<sup>1</sup> These tourists are increasingly seeking co-creation processes, leading to more relational forms of cultural tourism, and active participation in creative experiences (Richards, 2020).

And yet, pinning down the diverse, niche-oriented creative tourist has been an ongoing challenge. Internationally, a number of studies have been conducted to profile the creative tourist (see Remoaldo *et al.*, 2020) but no overarching comparative framework has yet been developed, and in Portugal no study on the creative tourist had previously been conducted. Within the project CREATOUR® (Creative Tourism Destination Development in Small Cities and Rural Areas), we developed a detailed questionnaire for participants in the creative tourism pilot activities organized within the project, which was applied by the 40 participating organizations as they conducted their pilot activities in 2017, 2018, and 2019.

These activities were developed and situated in small cities and rural areas in the Norte, Centro, Alentejo, and Algarve regions of the Portugal mainland. They ranged from small-scale participatory cultural festivals to gastronomy workshops to handicraft, mosaic-making, and other hands-on workshops. The common thread was an aspiration to develop creative tourism activities adhering to the CREATOUR® approach to creative tourism, which incorporates active participation, learning, opportunities for creative self-expression, and connections to the local community.

The questionnaire enabled us to gain insights on socio-demographic characteristics, motivations, behaviours, experiences, and perceptions of the activities – providing a rich source of insights on the creative tourist in Portugal. In this chapter, we present highlights of these questionnaire results, segmented by place of residence (i.e. domestic or international visitors) and suggest some implications of these findings. A motivational analysis of creative tourist participants can be found in Remoaldo *et al.* (2020). Based on socio-demographic, travel behaviour, and motivation-based criteria, three clusters were found: novelty seekers, knowledge and skills learners, and leisure creative seekers.

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## Developing a profile of creative tourists in Portugal

### Questionnaire development and setting

In 2017, a detailed questionnaire was developed by CREATOUR® researchers based on the key dimensions in research on tourists and a literature review of creative tourism, tourist motivations, and cultural tourist profiles. The questionnaire consisted of 31 closed questions oriented to the participant's profile, motivations, perceptions, and evaluation of activities, as well as the impacts on the local economy (e.g. accommodation, meals, and local commerce). It was prepared in English, Portuguese, Spanish, and French, and distributed and applied by the 40 participating organizations as they conducted their creative tourism pilot activities in 2017, 2018, and 2019. A total of 814 individuals completed these questionnaires after they participated in one of the CREATOUR® creative tourism pilot activities. Completed questionnaires were returned to the in-region research centre involved in CREATOUR® to be entered into a central database and subsequently analysed.

### Data analysis procedure

To analyse the data, a descriptive analysis was adopted, divided into two groups of analysis: (i) socio-demographic profile and (ii) travel behaviour and motivations. The criteria 'place of residence' was used to split the data into two groups in order to compare international and domestic participants. In order to identify differences among the two groups, T-tests were adopted to validate the statistical differences.

### Who are the creative tourists in Portugal?

Both domestic and foreign tourists participated in the CREATOUR® creative tourism pilot activities and completed the questionnaires. Overall, 75% of the questionnaires were completed by domestic travellers. Both groups included all age segments, from children through to seniors (65 years and over) (see Table 4.1). In both groups, the largest age segment was 35–54 years. Domestic (Portuguese) creative tourists included most of the children reported, likely indicating families (see also the interview with Wolfram in Chapter 6). Overall,

**Table 4.1.** Sociodemographic profile of domestic and international creative tourists in Portugal. Source: CREATOUR (2019)

Variables	Categories	Domestic (%)	International (%)
Age	<12 years old	8.4	0.5
	13–19 years	7.4	7.4
	20–34 years	21.2	27.5
	35–54 years	<b>42.6</b>	<b>37.3</b>
	55–64 years	11.7	19.1
	≥65 years	8.6	8.3
Marital status	Single	<b>53.8</b>	<b>45.6</b>
	Married	36.2	44.0
	Divorced	7.4	10.4
	Widow	2.7	0.0
Education	Primary education (up to 6 years of schooling)	10.6	1.5
	Secondary education (up to 9 years)	10.3	3.0
	Tertiary education (up to 12 years)	8.4	8.5
	Professional training (up to 12 years)	9.2	12.0
	Bachelor's degree	<b>34.1</b>	<b>39.0</b>
	Post-graduation/master's degree	22.4	27.0
	Doctoral degree	4.8	8.5
	Other	0.1	0.5
Socio-professional situation	Employed	<b>62.2</b>	<b>67.5</b>
	Student	20.4	17.0
	Retired	9.8	9.0
	Unemployed	5.9	4.5
	Domestic	1.7	2.0

women accounted for about two-thirds of all participants (Remoaldo *et al.*, 2020). About 61% of domestic tourists and 75% of international participants held a university or post-graduate degree. About two-thirds of both groups were employed, with students representing the next largest group (17–20%), then retired individuals (9–10%).

Most participants were accompanied, with friend(s) and spouse/partner most commonly mentioned (see Fig. 4.1). Children formed part of the participating group for 21% of domestic participants and 26% of international participants. These findings suggest that the designer of creative tourism activities should have in mind how to attract and facilitate the participation of small groups, and – if it can be accommodated – the involvement of children. Solitary travellers made up only 20% of domestic participants and 16% of international participants.

### Awareness and decision to participate: How did they find out? What are they looking for?

Participants became aware of the activity/experience mainly through friends or family, and secondarily

through social networks (see Fig. 4.2). For 17.5% of the international visitors, they became aware of the experience when they were passing by the site; this was the case for only 8.4% of the domestic participants.

Based on a selection of possible reasons listed in the questionnaire, the highest-ranked reasons for choosing a creative tourism activity, for both domestic and international travellers, was that it is ‘culturally motivating’ and ‘original’ (Table 4.2). There are statistically significant differences by place of residence, for the reasons ‘For being fun’, ‘For allowing to know and interact with the local community’, and ‘For knowing the promoter of the activity’. The ‘fun’ factor was more important for the international travellers, while interaction with the local community was more important for domestic travellers. The (less important) ‘knowing the promoter’ factor is understandably more likely to be relevant for domestic rather than international tourists.

### Characterizing and evaluating the experience

The questionnaire included a list of emotions to describe the creative tourism experience (based on

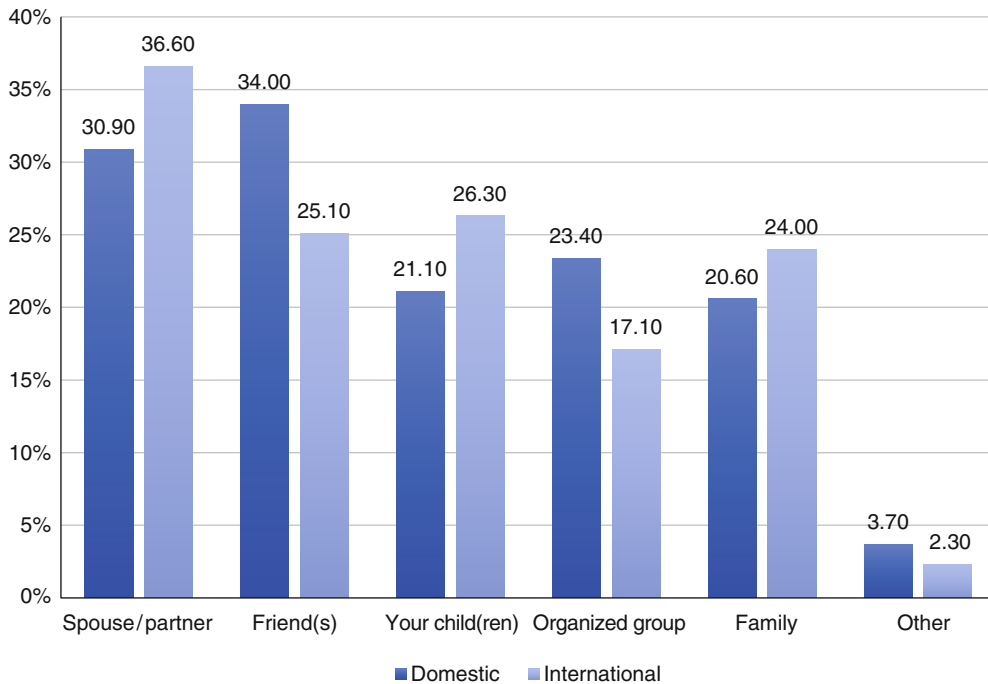
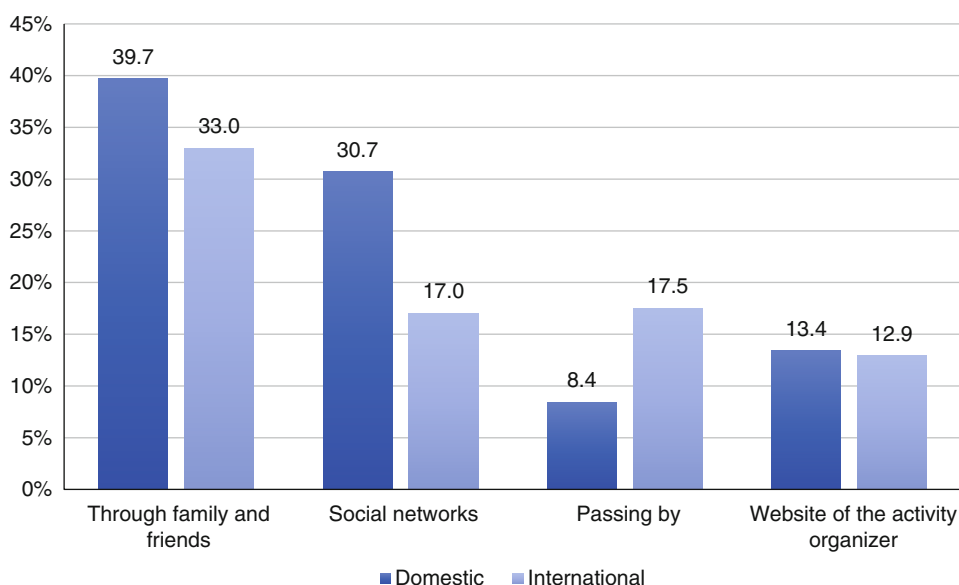


Fig. 4.1. Travelling companions of domestic and international creative tourists in Portugal (%).



**Fig. 4.2.** How did you learn about the experience?

**Table 4.2.** Reasons to choose a tourism creative activity, by place of residence. Source: CREATOUR (2019)

	Domestic	International	T-test	
	Mean	Mean	Value	<i>p-value</i>
It is culturally motivating	4.7	4.7	0.153	0.878
It is original	4.5	4.5	-0.959	0.338
For being fun	4.3	4.4	-2.760	<b>0.006</b>
To stimulate my creativity	4.3	4.3	-0.429	0.668
It enables me to meet and interact with the local community	4.3	4.1	2.315	<b>0.021</b>
It permitted interaction with other participants	4.1	4.1	0.340	0.734
It is suitable for the whole family	4.0	3.9	0.868	0.386
Because of its location	3.9	3.9	-0.036	0.972
To accompany someone	3.2	3.3	-0.683	0.495
I know the promoter of the activity	2.7	2.4	2.093	<b>0.037</b>

\*significant at the 5% level

\*\*likert scale: 1 - disagree completely, 5 - agree completely

a review of relevant literature). For both groups of tourists, all positive emotions (i.e. creative, enriching, original, stimulating, memorable, absorbent) attained a high average level of agreement, while negative emotions (i.e. tired, frustrating, annoyed) had a low average level of agreement (see Table 4.3). Only the characteristics ‘original’ and ‘absorbent’ reveal statistically significant differences, the former being more relevant for international tourists and the latter for domestic tourists.

Regarding the participants’ evaluation of the experience, the ordering of the array of statements

on the questionnaire was similar for both domestic and international participants, with ‘I had fun’, ‘I met interesting people’, and ‘I tried a new activity’ at the top. Only the statement ‘I contributed to the local community’ revealed a lower level of agreement; while still positive (3.6/5), this indicates that the design of the pilot creative tourism activities did not emphasize this dimension. Only the statement ‘I met interesting people’ shows a statistically significant difference between the two groups, with this characteristic of the experience being more valued by international tourists (Table 4.3).

**Table 4.3.** Characterizing and evaluating the creative tourism experience, by place of residence. Source: CREATOUR (2019)

	Domestic	International	T-test	
	Mean	Mean	Value	p-value
<b>Characterization of the experience</b>				
Creative	<b>4.6</b>	4.6	-1.595	0.112
Enriching	<b>4.6</b>	4.5	0.841	0.401
Original	4.5	<b>4.7</b>	-2.530	<b>0.012</b>
Stimulating	4.4	4.5	-0.193	0.847
Memorable	4.3	4.4	-1.808	0.071
Absorbing	4.2	4.0	2.300	<b>0.022</b>
Emotive	4.0	4.1	-1.261	0.208
Tiring	1.3	1.3	-0.349	0.727
Frustrating	1.2	1.3	-1.147	0.252
Annoying	1.1	1.2	-0.946	0.345
<b>Evaluation of the experience</b>				
I had fun	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.7</b>	-1.312	0.190
I met interesting people	4.3	4.5	-2.986	<b>0.003</b>
I tried a new activity	4.3	4.4	-1.344	0.179
I learned more about the local culture	4.2	4.2	-0.514	0.607
I learned to do something	4.2	4.1	1.214	0.225
I interacted with the local community	4.0	4.0	-0.453	0.651
I acquired new skills	4.0	3.9	1.303	0.193
I contributed to the local community	3.6	3.6	0.217	0.828

\*significant at the 5% level

\*\*likert scale: 1 - disagree completely, 5 - agree completely

These two scales may be useful in terms of structuring more in-depth discussions with visitor participants about their creative tourism experiences. Creative tourism activities can provide, on the one hand, individual-focused experiential take-aways and skills development opportunities and, on the other hand, social interactions among the visitor participants as well as with the local community. Furthermore, the activities may be structured to allow visitors to contribute to the local community in an explicit way. Realizing each dimension requires strategic planning and careful implementation.

### **Creative tourism attracts travellers, with local economic benefits – and they can become serial participants**

We found that creative tourism activities can attract travellers to a location: both domestic (76%) and international tourists (64%) indicated that the primary reason for visiting the locale was to participate in the creative tourism experience. This was an important finding for us given that the locations were small cities and rural areas – and some were quite remote.

The questionnaire findings also revealed that these visitors generated wider economic impacts in the locale. Almost 70% of domestic participants were staying in the creative tourism locale overnight, for an average of about three nights, with 42% of these staying in a hotel or similar establishment (see Table 4.4). Although only 32% of international participants stayed overnight, they stayed for a longer period of time, on average five nights. In keeping with the longer period of staying in the locale, international participants were much more likely to indicate having meals in the locale, reporting about twice as many meals compared to domestic travellers. In regard to other local purchases, domestic participants were more likely to purchase something from a local store (68%) than were international participants (42%).

For most participants (68.7% Portuguese and 72.6% international tourists), the activity was their first experience with creative tourism. For those who had participated in creative tourism previously, Portuguese tourists indicated a higher number of experiences (on average) than the international tourists (2.42 versus 1.67).

The majority of the participating tourists (over 92%) indicated they were interested in repeating, recommending, or participating in more activities

with the same organization. Over 85% of participating tourists indicated they would be interested in participating in creative tourism activities elsewhere in Portugal (see Table 4.5). These findings suggest the potential for repeat visitors – and the need to continually evolve activities to re-attract their interest – as well as the value of operating in a network where travellers' participation in a creative tourism activity at one location can lead to participation in other activities elsewhere. This potentially virtuous cycle can strengthen awareness and connectedness among organizers of creative tourism activities in smaller places and rural areas.

### A few closing remarks

The results of this initial research on the creative tourist in Portugal revealed variety in the profile of

individuals participating in the CREATOUR® pilot project activities, providing data on their demographic, socio-economic, behaviour, and motivational characteristics, and thus can support efforts of market segmentation and product design. Marketing strategies are needed in order to match specific creative tourism activities with the needs and the expectations of target participants (see Chapter 19 by Delisle). This research is a starting point for further analysis of the profile of participants for specific types of creative activities to enable organizers to adapt their creative tourism activities to the motivations and preferences of particular participant groups.

Based on this initial research, we can say that creative tourism has an enormous potential outside large city centres because it can successfully attract a great diversity of people and enable new and

**Table 4.4.** Accommodation, meals, and shopping behaviour by place of residence. Source: CREATOUR (2019)

	Domestic	International
<b>Did you stay or will you stay (overnight)? Yes:</b>	<b>69.5%</b>	31.5%
If yes, how many nights? (mean)	3.32	5.23
<b>Where did you stay?</b>		
Hotel or similar establishments	42.2%	35.1%
Accommodation provided free by family/friends	19.6%	20.6%
Other private accommodation	16.1%	21.4%
House rented	15.1%	19.1%
Second residence (includes own home)	8.0%	5.3%
Room rented in private home	2.0%	4.6%
<b>Outside this activity, did you have any meals on site? Yes:</b>	45.9%	<b>73.4%</b>
If yes, how many meals: (mean)	2.25	4.43
<b>Did you shop at a local store? Yes:</b>	<b>67.7%</b>	41.9%
<b>If yes, type of product:</b>		
Other local products	48.9%	50.5%
Artisan crafts	33.9%	41.2%
Souvenirs	23.0%	37.1%
Guides	15.5%	6.2%

**Table 4.5.** Degree of interest to participate in creative tourism activities in future or to recommend, by place of residence. Source: CREATOUR (2019)

Degree of interest to ...	Domestic		International	
	% less interest	% higher interest	% less interest	% higher interest
Repeat the experience	2.1%	<b>92.5%</b>	1.9%	<b>93.2%</b>
Recommend the experience	1.1%	<b>94.0%</b>	1.0%	<b>98.6%</b>
To participate in more activities of this organization	1.4%	<b>93.7%</b>	0.5%	<b>90.6%</b>
<b>Would you be interested in participating in creative tourism activities in other locations in Portugal?</b>				
Yes	<b>87.1%</b>		<b>85.5%</b>	

different activities to be developed based on endogenous resources and local ingenuity. But it is challenging and requires better co-operation between a range of different stakeholders so that organizers can successfully reach and attract interested travellers. Importantly, providing meaningful connections with the local community, which the ‘new traveller’ craves, requires local co-operation, strategic planning, and an ethos and practice of collaboration (Bakas *et al.*, 2019).

Caution should be applied when adopting the results of this research, however, due to the non-random sample and the data collection process, which was not balanced among the regions where the survey was applied nor adjusted for the type of creative tourism activity involved. In the current analysis, we analysed all the questionnaires that were completed by participants in the CREATOUR® pilot projects. Some organizations carried out more activities than others and provided a greater number of completed questionnaires than others. Also, activities had varying numbers of participants, with some activities designed for smaller numbers of visitors while others were open to larger groups. A further limitation is concerned with the non-inclusion of seasonal effects in this analysis. Further analysis using this dataset can examine the participants of different event types more closely and segment the activities by the time of year they were organized.

### Take-aways for practitioners

1. The characteristics of creative tourism participants vary widely, but they usually travel accompanied, with one in four or five participants accompanied by their children. Give attention to the design of the activities to enable these small groups to interact with one another (as well as others), and for the possibility of engaging and involving children in the activities.
2. Creative tourism activities are not yet widely experienced, and activity organizers should plan for ‘first time’ creative tourism participants.
3. Creative tourism activities provide opportunities for both individual-focused experiences and skills development, as well as social interactions among visitor participants and with the local community. Furthermore, the activities may be structured to allow visitors to contribute to the local community in an explicit way. To realize each of these dimensions, strategic planning and careful implementation are required.

4. Creative tourism activities can attract both domestic and international travellers to small cities and rural locations. In the current COVID-19 era, attention to domestic tourism is rising, and creative tourism activities can be an engaging component of packages to attract domestic travellers to extra-metropolitan locales.

5. Organizers should use a diverse range of channels of communication to publicise their activities. They also need to establish partnerships with local entities and institutions (tourist offices, local accommodation, etc.) so that tourists are more likely to encounter information about the activities.

6. Creative tourism activities can be combined with hotel and other experiences to create packages that may keep travellers in a locale longer. For example, strategically inserting creative tourism activities within the programming of established cultural events is a good strategy to consolidate the creative activities within local promotional and organizational networks.

7. Tourists are not generally willing to repeat the same activity, but they can be lured with related or evolved offers in areas in which they are passionate. They also want to try other creative tourism activities. Our findings suggest the potential for repeat visitors – and the need to continually evolve activities to re-attract their interest.

8. Operating in a network may create collective benefits for multiple agents and locales, where travellers’ participation in a creative tourism activity at one location can lead to participation in other activities elsewhere. This potentially virtuous cycle can strengthen awareness and connectedness among organizers of creative tourism activities in smaller places and rural areas.

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## Note

1. These 'new' tourists have been called 'creative consumers' (Richards, 2009; Richards and Wilson, 2006; Pappalepore *et al.*, 2014; Zhang and Yu, 2018), creative tourists (Raymond, 2003; Tan *et al.*, 2014; Smith, 2016; Zhang and Yu, 2018; Remoaldo *et al.*, 2020), and postmodern travellers (O'Dell, 2007; Tan *et al.*, 2014; Pappalepore *et al.*, 2014).

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