U.S. Says Las Vegas Is Preferred Casino Destination: Atlantic City Places Third

Given the choice, more folks would prefer to spend a couple of days in Las Vegas than any other casino destination in America. According to a national telephone poll by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind™, 47% of adults nationwide make Las Vegas their top choice. Many fewer would make New Orleans (10%) or Atlantic City (8%) their first choice. Reno (5%) and St. Louis (4%) rounded out the list.

Atlantic City does much better as a second choice but not any better than other picks. Asked for their second choice, Atlantic City garners 23%, statistically the same as New Orleans (22%) and Las Vegas (21%), while Reno jumps up to 18%. The only city that doesn't do well in a second round is St. Louis (5%), home of riverfront gambling.

"Atlantic City is really in a national, if not international, competition for visitors," said Professor Donald Hoover, who teaches in FDU's International School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, following a career working for Tropicana in Atlantic City. "Businesses and planners need to start thinking and acting like they're in a national market."

Those who pick Atlantic City first or second tend to say its best characteristic is the beach (26%), followed distantly by the casinos (11%). They also suggest it is someplace new to go (8%), and some cite the entertainment (6%).

As for those who do not pick Atlantic City either as a first or a second choice, their reasons are scattered. One in ten (11%) simply say they, "like other destinations better" and one in ten (10%) say "it's too far." One in four (24%) don't give a reason.

"The fact that people don't offer a clear response as to why they do not choose Atlantic City as a destination is really good news," said Hoover. "It suggests that Atlantic City still has the opportunity to create a positive image."

Just 4% say the city is dirty or run down and just 3% say it's because they don't like New Jersey.

Also good news for Atlantic City is that among residents of the Northeastern states, it places a strong second behind Las Vegas: 22% compared to 39% for Las Vegas. But outside the Northeast, Atlantic City drops into single digits as a first choice.

As a second-choice destination A.C. does well in the Northeast with 25%, but Atlantic City does best in the West where, on the other side of the Rocky Mountains, 30% make A.C. a second pick.

"For years, Atlantic City has been scouring the nearest backyards for customers," added Hoover. "It's time the city reached a lot further."

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 711 adults nationwide was conducted by telephone using both landlines and cell phones from March 21, 2011, through March 27, 2011, and has a margin of error of +/-4 percentage points.

Background Memo and Tables

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from March 21, 2011, through March 27, 2011, using a randomly selected national sample of 711 adults permanently resident in the United States. The margin of error for a sample of 711 randomly selected respondents is +/- 4 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies by the size of that subgroup. Survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers. PublicMind interviews are conducted by Opinion America of Cedar Knolls, NJ, with professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a land-line phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected. Landline households are supplemented with a separate, randomly selected sample of cell-phone-only-households, interviewed in the same time frame. The total combined sample is mathematically weighted to match known demographics of age, race and gender among the voting population.

First Choice: If you had to spend a couple of days at a casino destination, at which one of these would you prefer to spend it... READ/ROTATE?

N=711	**All**	Gender		Age			
		Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Las Vegas	47%	50	43	54	54	44	41
New Orleans	10%	10	9	10	8	12	9
Atlantic City	8%	8	8	13	7	6	9
Reno	5%	4	5	-	7	7	4
St. Louis	4%	5	3	9	2	4	2
Other	5%	6	4	3	4	7	5
None (vol.)	17%	13	21	11	14	17	21
Unsure (vol.)	4%	4	6	-	5	3	9

	US Regions			
	Northeast	North Central	South	West
Las Vegas	39	49	42	61
New Orleans	7	10	9	12
Atlantic City	22	4	6	2
Reno	4	4	6	6
St. Louis	--	6	6	1
Other	9	5	4	3
None (vol.)	16	16	22	10
Unsure (vol.)	3	6	4	5

IF 1ST CHOICE, ASK FOR 2ND CHOICE: If you had to spend a couple of days at a casino destination, at which one of these would you prefer to spend it...?

2ND Choice N=555	All	Gender		Age			
		Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Atlantic City	23%	23	24	31	21	22	23
New Orleans	22%	22	21	13	35	21	17
Las Vegas	21%	21	20	24	16	24	19
Reno	18%	21	14	20	8	20	22
St. Louis	5%	3	7	6	3	5	7
Other	5%	4	6	4	8	3	5
None (vol)	3%	4	2	1	4	3	3
Unsure (vol)	3%	2	5	1	4	2	4

Rotate list	US Regions			
	Northeast	North Central	South	West
Atlantic City	25	20	19	30
New Orleans	20	27	27	11
Las Vegas	28	18	22	13
Reno	15	15	15	28
St. Louis	1	10	7	2
Other	2	7	4	8
None (vol.)	2	2	4	3
Unsure (vol.)	6	2	3	4

ASK THOSE WHO DID NOT CHOOSE ATLANTIC CITY AS FIRST OR SECOND CHOICE: What is the main reason you do not prefer Atlantic City to these others? OPEN END/DO NOT READ

N=526	All	Gender		Age			
		Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Just like others better	11%	13	10	17	14	9	10
Too far	10%	10	11	15	7	8	14
Dirty/Run down	4%	3	4	-	5	5	3
Dislike NJ	3%	5	2	5	6	4	1
crime	2%	2	3	2	2	3	2
All Others	41%	43	39	37	42	45	38
Don't Know	24%	21	27	24	23	21	28
Ref.	4%	2	5	--	--	4	5

ASK THOSE WHO CHOSE ATLANTIC CITY AS FIRST OR SECOND CHOICE: What is Atlantic City's BEST characteristic? OPEN END/DO NOT READ

N=185	All	Gender		Age			
		Men	Women	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Ocean/Beach	26%	28	24	7	38	29	29
Casinos	11%	12	11	24	2	13	8
Close by	11%	10	12	5	15	9	15
Its someplace new	8%	6	11	12	0	5	15
Entertainment	6%	6	7	17	6	2	3
Near other destinations	2%	3	1	2	0	5	2
Hotels	2%	1	3	0	0	4	3
All other	23%	28	18	26	29	18	19
Don't know	10%	6	14	7	10	15	6

Sample Characteristics

Gender
Male 50
Female 50

Age
18-29 15
30-44 23
45-59 29
60+ 31
ref. 2

In addition to being American, would you say you are…?
White 66
Black 13
Hispanic or Latino 10
Asian 6
Other/ref. 5

Census regions
Northeast 22
North central 25
South 33
West 20

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