

## **Life beyond the trails**

You *can* take it with you

When you're planning a get-away, do you choose your destination based on a place that offers multiple things to do, a place where you can pursue more than one interest?

If you said yes, you'd be in the majority.

According to the people who study these things\*, there is a growing body of evidence that underscores the merging of "experience" tourism with shopping. They found that survey respondents report that visits to destinations with retail experiences complement other kinds of tourism, such as recreational or cultural.

In other words, shopping is part of the adventure, whether travelers are looking for a new fly rod, brand-name outdoor gear, or they just want to stroll the boutiques, markets, or local galleries. Retail and tourism go hand in hand.

The value of retail therapy, offering visitors a chance to take home a one-of-a-kind artisan product, or physical reminder of their trip, is an opportunity to create conversation with family and friends when they return home so they too may choose that destination. A physical product also creates long-lasting memories that may spur future, or multiple, visits.

South Canadian Rockies is full of independent, mostly locally owned shops and markets that carry the necessities for a trip, as well as not-to-be-missed souvenirs. Small town charm and personalized customer satisfaction add value to a tourist's experience and has them talking about us long after they've put away their golf clubs for the season.

Businesses can benefit from each other so that everyone profits from the economic impact retail tourism offers. Shop till you drop takes on a whole new meaning.

\*World Travel & Tourism Council, Global Retail Tourism Trends & Insights