



The Next Chapter — Following your Passion in Thompson Okanagan's Tourism Industry

A guide to exciting job opportunities in tourism



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Tourism Career Guide for Boomers

If you are a baby boomer, chances are you've been thinking about what's next in your work life.

For many people in this generation, born between about 1945 and 1962, retirement offers a chance to start something new.

That could be travel, study, hobbies, a business venture, or even a new career: perhaps a job that aligns with your interests and values, one related to lifelong hobbies, or maybe a role using skills you never knew you had.

This can be the time to put new meaning into the work you do. It's also an opportunity to continue earning income while enjoying social interaction, staying fit, honing skills, learning, and sharing your knowledge and experience.

Do these sound like things you have thought about? Consider exploring options in Thompson Okanagan's tourism industry. With four ski resorts, 50 golf courses, and hundreds of hotels, restaurants, attractions and wineries in the region, there are thousands of job openings. Many people have discovered vibrant second careers helping visitors enjoy their travel experiences and discover this amazing part of the world.



The Thompson Okanagan Tourism Industry

The Thompson Okanagan region, in Southern British Columbia, extends from the Canadian Rockies, through BC's lake and wine country to Canada's only desert. From beaches to ski slopes, the Thompson Okanagan is a four-season destination.

The region also rivals California's Napa Valley and Australia's Clare Valley for its world-class wineries and warm temperatures. In winter, four full-service ski resorts boast thick falls of Champagne powder. Outdoor activities, from biking and hiking to camping and fishing, are a key part of the lifestyle here.

FAQs: Why work in the tourism industry?



WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER A JOB IN TOURISM?

- Do you love fishing, skiing or hiking? How about camping or golf? Is your favourite activity exploring history & culture, or learning more about food and wine? Tourism work offers a chance to share your skills and passions with people from around the world.
 - You can interact and share new experiences with people from all walks of life. You may even change lives as you help guests encounter things they may never have experienced before.
 - Tourism work is flexible: with options to work full-time, part-time and seasonally, you can arrange a flexible schedule and still have time for other interests and travel.
 - You'll be able to mentor and support younger people in the workplace and share your lifetime of experience and leadership skills.
 - The social and leisure-friendly aspects of the tourism industry provide opportunities to remain connected and engaged in your local community.
- You are in demand! By 2020, it's projected that there will be over 100,000 new tourism jobs in BC. The Thompson Okanagan region is expected to have 12,334 new job openings with a labour shortage of 1,626.
 - As a baby boomer you bring a wealth of life, volunteer and work experiences that positions you well to find work in the tourism industry.



I'VE NEVER WORKED IN TOURISM. WHAT EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING DO I NEED?

- Direct tourism experience is not necessarily needed. You have already gained a wealth of transferable skills and knowledge through years of work experience.
- Through your experience, you have also already demonstrated you are committed and dependable – which is an asset to any employer.



WHAT KINDS OF JOBS ARE AVAILABLE?

- With over 400 occupations across five sectors in the tourism industry (accommodations, food & beverage services, transportation, travel services, and recreation & entertainment), there is a good chance of finding an opportunity that appeals to your interests, skills and experience.
- Many tourism jobs involve hosting and helping visitors, and making sure they have the best possible travel experience. These jobs can be anything from leading a tour group to hosting hotel guests or introducing visitors to local food and wine. Imagine, for example:
 - > creating memorable experiences serving local wines and farm-to-table meals;
 - > guiding visitors on scenic hiking and biking trips;
 - > welcoming guests to a lakefront or golf resort; and
 - > introducing tourists to local heritage attractions.
- Although many jobs are customer facing, the tourism industry also has openings in marketing, accounting, finance, IT, and skilled trades, etc.

I'M INTERESTED. WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

Have a look at the resources below to find out more about jobs available and how to connect with employers.



Career Planning Guide

Looking for a new job can be both exciting and intimidating, especially if you haven't applied for a job in years.

The good news is that, with current labour shortages, you are in demand. Employers recognize the skills and experience of this generation, and the basic process of research, networking, resumes and interviews has stayed fairly constant.



➤ 1. DECIDE WHAT KIND OF JOB YOU'D LIKE TO DO

The first step is to determine which of the over 400 occupations available in tourism you're interested in and qualified for.

A good place to start is to visit [go2HR's Career Explorer](#).

With the [Career Explorer](#), you can search for information about the many tourism jobs available in BC. You'll find job descriptions, career profiles, training information, job-search tips, and current job openings for a range of career options.

You can look for jobs in any of the five sectors; here are some ideas:

Industry Sector	Where you can work	What you can do
Accommodations	bed & breakfasts, campgrounds, lodges, hotels, motels, resorts	campground operator, concierge, front desk agent, night auditor, reservation sales agent, room attendant
Food & Beverage Services	cafés, caterers, dining rooms, lounges, night clubs, pubs, restaurants, wineries	bartender, catering manager, chef, cook, food service supervisor, server, sommelier, tasting room associate
Recreation & Entertainment	Aboriginal tourism attractions, casinos, ecotourism operations, fishing areas, galleries, golf courses, heritage & historical sites, hunting facilities, parks, museums, ski resorts, theatres	casino dealer, fishing & hunting guide, golf course attendant, golf pro, groundskeeper, guide outfitter, heritage interpreter, maintenance worker, outdoor adventure guide, ski instructor, tour guide
Transportation	airlines, bus tour companies, houseboat rentals, railways, rental car companies	limousine driver, motor coach driver, pilot, reservations sales agent, shuttle driver, step on guide, tour escort
Travel Services	destination marketing organizations, government agencies, tour companies, travel agencies, visitor centres	event planner, tourism researcher, tour operator, travel agent, visitor information counsellor

Don't forget that the tourism industry also needs people in IT, finance, accounting, human resources, marketing and trades, etc. If you prefer to stay behind the scenes, there is also something for you!

➤ 2. FIND OUT WHAT SKILLS, QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE YOU NEED

A lot of this information is available on [go2HR's Career Explorer](#). Other sources include job ads and the industry organizations listed below in section 5 under "Start Networking".

Consider also arranging an informational interview, in which you talk to someone working in the field that interests you about what's needed for the job.

➤ 3. CONNECT YOUR EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS TO THE JOB REQUIREMENTS



The key here is to think about transferable skills, especially any experience you've had in customer service, teamwork, and helping people try new things. Draw on skills you've gained in volunteer activities, travel, sports and hobbies as well as in paid work.

Remember that industry-specific training and qualifications are not always necessary. Many tourism employers are more concerned about an applicant's attitude and people skills, and are willing to provide the necessary technical training.

Some qualifications are fairly easy to acquire. Serving It Right training, for example, is required for any job that involves serving alcohol and can be completed online in a few hours. SuperHost, customer service training for front-line staff, can be completed in a classroom or online at your own pace.

> 4. CREATE YOUR TOOL KIT: YOUR RESUME AND COVER LETTER

Resume

A resume continues to be the foundation of any successful job search, and it's worth spending some time reviewing and updating yours. If you haven't updated your resume in a while, it may be best to rebuild it from scratch rather than simply updating what you have.

- > Provide details only of the jobs you've held in the last ten years and focus on quantifiable results and accomplishments (such as increasing sales or improving safety records) rather than listing your job duties.
- > You may include jobs held more than ten years ago, but don't provide details of these on your resume.
- > One of the most important things to do, especially if you are looking to transition from another line of work into tourism, is to update your resume with any relevant transferable skills. Any experience in working with the public, customer service, teamwork, multi-tasking, problem solving, and helping people feel comfortable are all assets to highlight.
- > Do include your education and any relevant professional development on your resume, but there is no need to include the year you graduated. In general, your education should be towards the bottom of your resume.
- > Also include any tourism-related training or certificates such as FOODSAFE, Serving It Right, SuperHost, or first aid, as well as language skills and any relevant hobbies and volunteer activities.
- > Keep your resume no longer than two pages.

Cover letter

A cover letter is customized and written specifically for each job application. It connects the dots on your resume, highlighting skills and experience that are most relevant to the position and can place you as the best candidate for the job.

- > Include a sentence explaining why you want to work at that particular organization, and make it specific to that organization. Demonstrate that you know a little about them and what appeals to you about the workplace.
- > A cover letter is also your opportunity to address any resistance or preconceptions that the hiring manager may have. It is likely that someone much younger than you will be reading your application; they may believe that you are over-qualified or simply don't understand your interest in that particular job. Be open: explain your situation and your motivations for wanting to continue to work. Address also the issue of wages and indicate clearly that you are fine with the prevailing wage rates.
- > Keep your cover letter to one page and use bullet points or short paragraphs.

“Tourism and working in a park like this is much more pleasant. The hours are good, the environment is good, people are nice; it's a great place to work.” – Scott Simpson, Facilities Supervisor, BC Wildlife Park

Contact information

- > Include your email address and phone number at the top of both your resume and cover letter. Make it easy for employers to contact you.

Ensure that both your cover letter and resume are free of spelling and grammatical errors. It helps to have someone else proofread them for you.

Format your resume and cover letter as a PDF unless otherwise stated; in which case, follow the application instructions.

Having a strong resume and cover letter will help you land an in-person interview where you can let your skills and personality shine.

> 5. START NETWORKING



- > Start making contacts through attending hiring/job fairs and industry events.
- > Consider volunteering at local festivals and events; it's fun and you'll make contacts in areas that interest you.
- > If you have friends and acquaintances in the industry, let them know you are interested in a tourism job.

- > If you use Facebook and other social media, check that it reflects what you'd like an employer to see. Employers often look at social media pages to learn more about applicants.
- > Consider getting involved with relevant industry groups, such as sector associations, chambers of commerce, or destination marketing associations. Destination BC's list of [industry partners](#) is a great place to start.

➤ 6. PREPARE FOR INTERVIEWS

If you haven't been to a job interview in a long time, or if interviews have always made you nervous, some advance research and practice will help.

- > Before the interview, research the organization, the people you will be meeting, and the job you are applying for. Think about, and be prepared to explain, how your skills match the job and how your personality will fit into the workplace culture.
- > Be prepared for scenario-based interview questions – questions that ask how you have handled certain situations. You should be able to predict some of these questions based on the job you've applied for. For instance, if you are interviewing for a hotel front desk clerk position, you should expect questions about customer service, teamwork, flexibility, working under pressure, multi-tasking and handling conflict. Before the interview, spend some time thinking about your experience in these situations so that examples come quickly to mind when needed. Remember that you may have encountered these situations outside of paid employment, for example, in teams or volunteer work.
- > You can find many excellent interview preparation articles online by Googling "Job Interview Questions".
- > Prepare some questions of your own, either about the job or about the organization. Demonstrate that you have done some research and that you have spent time thinking about the role. And remember that hiring is a two-way process — you also need to feel comfortable with the employer and the job.
- > Asking about pay or benefits at your first interview is a bit tricky. You need this information, but you don't want to leave the impression that this is all you care about. If the process includes more than one interview, then it's best to leave this question for the second interview. Otherwise, leave this discussion until after you've received a job offer.
- > If the information isn't volunteered, you may ask for details about the next steps in the interview process.
- > Remember to follow up after the interview by sending a short email thanking the interviewers for their time.

"We don't necessarily hire on skill set. For somebody who comes in for a job in the wine shop, we can teach you about wine. That's the fun stuff. That's the easy part. It's that personality, the genuine people who want to be hospitable, who want to welcome...we're a family here." – Michael Harris, Director of Operations, Quails' Gate Winery

Career Success Stories

YOLANTA MALKOVSKA

Tasting Bar Host,
8th Generation Vineyards



If anyone knows about exemplary customer service, it's Yolanta Malkovska. A tasting bar host at 8th Generation Vineyards in Summerland, Malkovska won the 2017 BC Tourism Industry Customer Service Award. The province's highest customer service accolade, the award recognizes a front-line tourism employee who creates outstanding travel experiences for visitors. That's certainly true of Malkovska, who's been making visits to the family-run winery unforgettable since 2007.

Malkovska, 60, started at the vineyard before opening day, applying her interior design skills to the tasting room. Since then, her job has grown from serving customers to playing a role in virtually every part of the business.

"I've been here from day one - I'm involved with everything that needs to be done at the winery, from the tasting room and wine shop to private tastings and special events," she says.

The winery is a natural fit for the outgoing Malkovska. Originally trained in fashion design in her native Poland, she has been involved in retail and customer service since arriving in Vancouver in 1982. A stint in Tofino, working with a vacation rental firm and later operating her own property management company, drew her into the tourism industry. A move to Summerland ("I wanted more dry land," she quips) led to a meeting with winery owners Stefanie and Bernd Schales and a new career in the wine industry.

Malkovska works full time most of the year, but has time for hobbies (especially painting) and travel during the winter.

She clearly loves her job: "It helps that we have amazing wine and a beautiful new tasting room. We also have owners with a lot of integrity and pride in what they do and a fabulous team of various ages."

The younger staff members are fantastic, but the baby boomers have a lot to offer too, observes Malkovska. "We have more life experience, we can read people and understand what they need, and we have more patience. We are also in a position in life where we are more relaxed and we pass that lightness on to customers."

It goes both ways: jobs have a lot to offer baby boomers too. "Most of the boomers on the team don't really need to work, but they like the social interaction and the opportunity to learn new things – and in the wine world there's no end to how much you can learn," she says.

"Ultimately, working with people is fun and rewarding, especially when they're on holiday. When you see people leave with a smile, or you see them come back because they enjoyed it so much the first time, you realize that you can make a real difference for people."

<https://www.go2hr.ca/tasting-bar-host>

Career Success Stories

HERMAN SCHNEIDER

Boat Rentals, Summerland
Waterfront Resort & Spa

Lift Operations Manager,
Apex Mountain Resort



Herman Schneider enjoys the best of both worlds in the Thompson Okanagan, working on Okanagan Lake in the summer and in the nearby mountains when the snow falls. From May through September each year, Schneider manages the boat rentals at Summerland Waterfront Resort & Spa, where he supervises a staff of 12 people.

“I hire and train staff, organize the office, and manage the reservation system. I’m also responsible for risk management, boating operations and safety, fleet maintenance and, of course, helping customers,” says Schneider.

In the winter, the 56-year-old swaps his sun hat for a toque and takes on the management of lift operations at Apex Mountain Resort near Penticton. An avid skier, Schneider manages a network of four lifts and supervises 60 seasonal staff.

Originally from Manitoba, Schneider completed a business administration diploma in Winnipeg before heading west — drawn by the lure of skiing and the outdoors in BC’s Thompson Okanagan.

“I’ve worked at Apex since I was in my early twenties and I’ve done a variety of jobs over the years. I started out as a waiter and later worked in night audit, guest services, and in special events,” he says.

These jobs led to a decade-long career in the

Apex marketing department. Schneider went on to launch his own tourism marketing firm, a company that produced regional guides, organized conferences, and was at the forefront of promoting agri-tourism in the Thompson Okanagan.

Over time, indoor life began to pale. “I was writing and taking pictures of people having a great time, but most of my time was spent in the office. Recognizing I was happiest outdoors, I decided to go back to Apex as the lift operations manager. After that, the boat rentals work just gelled with the winter job,” he recalls. The two jobs offer a perfect mix of indoor and outdoor work.

“I also enjoy having a beginning and an end to each season,” he adds. Schneider makes the most of the month-long break between seasons pursuing his love of sailing, hiking and the outdoors.

Overall, the best part of the job is seeing guests enjoy themselves. “I’ve always been a people person. I think you have to be to work in this business.”

And you can’t beat the lifestyle, he adds: “Tourism jobs, summer and winter, are great for baby boomers who want to slow down and spend more time working outdoors. I think working on a ski hill for a season is something everyone should have an opportunity to do.”

<https://www.go2hr.ca/outdoor-recreation-manager>

Career Success Stories

KEITH ARCHER

Assistant Engineering Manager,
Summerland Waterfront Resort
and Spa



After a fulfilling 30-year career managing golf clubs and resorts across Western Canada, Keith Archer has found a niche in Summerland. As the assistant engineering manager at Summerland Waterfront Resort and Spa, Archer is part of a team of three keeping the lakefront getaway in top shape year round.

“Hospitality has been my life; I love interacting with people,” he says.

Originally from a farming family in Dauphin, Manitoba, Archer has worked in hospitality since graduating from Winnipeg’s Red River Community College in Hotel & Restaurant Management in 1975. Following an internship at the Banff Springs Hotel, he launched his career as the maître d’ at the Charterhouse Hotel in Winnipeg.

Two years later, the young executive joined Edmonton’s Royal Glenora Club, a well-known private sports club, as general manager in charge of food and beverage, supervising about 75 people. From there, he rose through the ranks with management roles at Silver Springs Golf and Country Club in Calgary, Glendale Golf and Country Club in Winnipeg and finally from 1992 to 2006 general manager at Summerland Golf and Country Club.

“After 30 years, I’d had a good long career as a hospitality manager and I was looking around for something else to do. Then, in 2006, Tom Matthews, the general manager at Summerland Waterfront Resort and Spa, said: ‘Why not come

and work as the maintenance guy at the new resort?’”

It was a perfect fit, recalls Archer: “I wanted to stay in the Okanagan, I love interacting with people, and, as a farm kid from Dauphin, I’ve always enjoyed working with my hands.”

“If you can imagine anything that needs to be fixed in the hotel, that’s what I do. This includes managing the computerized heating and air conditioning systems and maintaining the pool and hot tubs,” he explains.

And the work is year round: “the winter is actually our busiest time because that’s when we do most of the maintenance. It’s a high-end resort so we have to keep the rooms pristine,” he says.

A big part of the appeal is Summerland itself. “When I first came to the Okanagan as a 15-year-old cadet I fell in love with the area and I’ve always wanted to live here,” he recalls.

Now, more than 50 years later, the lakeside town is still Archer’s favourite place. “I’m a big fisherman and a golfer and I don’t have to go far to enjoy any of that, and my kids and grandkids love to visit because it’s a holiday place. The job is wonderful to come to as well — it’s close to home and it’s right on the lake,” he says. “My life and my work just fit like a glove right now,” he says.

<https://www.go2hr.ca/assistant-engineering-manager>

Where can I get more information?

Sign up for the [BC Tourism Careers Newsletter](#) which has up-to-date information about BC's tourism labour market, upcoming job and career fairs, career profiles, the latest jobs, and more.

Have a look at online job sites, including:

- > [go2HR's Thompson Okanagan job board](#)
- > [WorkBC](#), BC's provincial government-run job site
- > [Job Bank](#), operated by the Government of Canada
- > [Hcareers](#), for hotel and hospitality jobs
- > General job search websites: [monster.ca](#), [workopolis.com](#), and [indeed.ca](#)

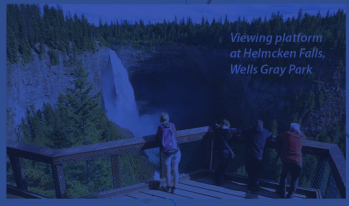
"[Baby boomers] have a wide range of experience, plus they've got life experience. They know how to deal with people. They generally remain calm in certain situations, where the rest of us might go a little bit crazy."
– Emily Oxley, Employee Experience Coordinator, Big White Resort



Check out the complementary video to this guide:

https://youtu.be/z-Hon9_uTBO

THOMPSON OKANAGAN



Viewing platform at Helmcken Falls, Wells Gray Park

DRIVING DISTANCES - km (mi)

Kelowna Int'l Airport to:

Banff	404 (251)	Osoyoos	137 (85)
Calgary	595 (370)	Penticton	77 (48)
Edmonton	883 (549)	Salmon Arm	101 (63)
Jasper	597 (371)	Vancouver	402 (250)
Grand Forks	209 (130)	Seattle	515 (320)
Kamloops	157 (98)	Spokane	411 (255)
Merritt	141 (88)	Valemount	475 (295)

LEGEND

- Trans-Canada Hwy
- Crowsnest Hwy
- Yellowhead Hwy
- Route 97
- Airport
- UNESCO site
- Ski Resort
- Border Crossing
- Main Rail Line
- Regional Areas

