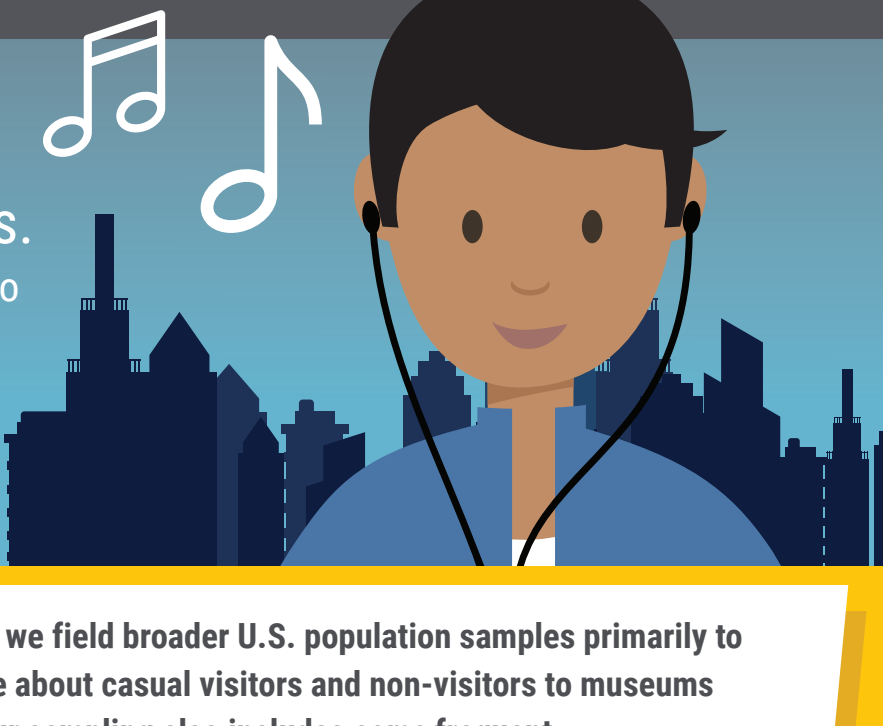


LEISURE TIME PATTERNS AMONG U.S. ADULTS

A 2021 BROADER POPULATION DATA STORYSM

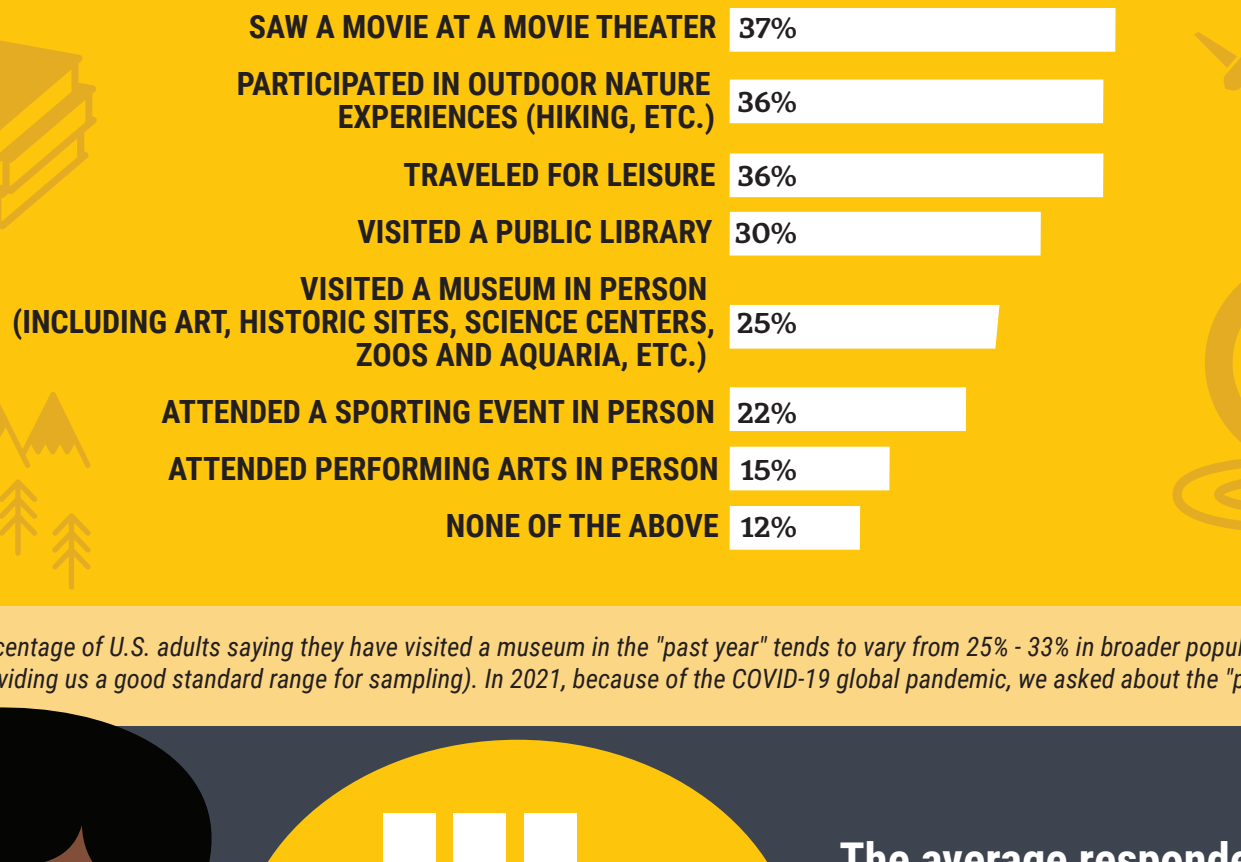
People spend their leisure time in lots of different ways.

Aside from the things virtually all of us do (watch TV, spend time with family or friends), it is useful to find out what kinds of activities people pursue.



Each year, we field broader U.S. population samples primarily to learn more about casual visitors and non-visitors to museums (though our sampling also includes some frequent museum-goers). In 2021, this is how 1,203 U.S. adults responded.

Which of the following have you done in the past two years? (Choose all that apply.)



*The percentage of U.S. adults saying they have visited a museum in the "past year" tends to vary from 25% - 33% in broader population sampling (thus providing us a good standard range for sampling). In 2021, because of the COVID-19 global pandemic, we asked about the "past two years."



But *who* is more likely to do what activities? A very simple answer, and one we tend to share a lot, is that "the do mores do more." That is, once someone gets involved with one thing, they tend to become curious about related topics, and then expand into those related activities.

Who is a "do more?" Generally, they tend to be resource-rich, well-educated individuals:

the average college graduate averaged 4.1 activities



while those with a high school diploma or GED averaged 2.7.



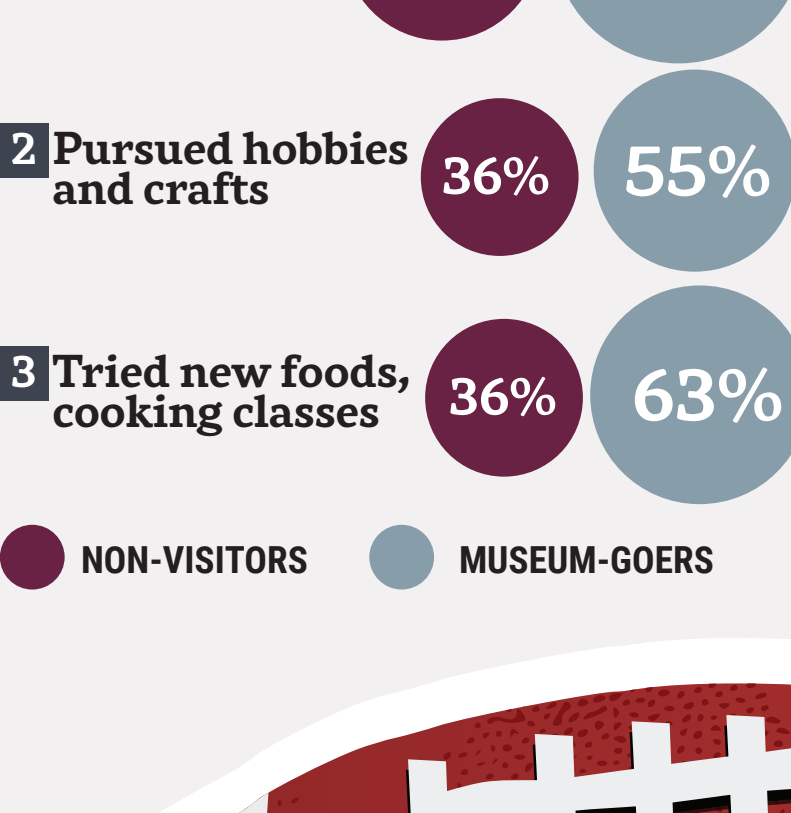
With that higher education tends to come greater resources of money, time, and energy ... all incredibly helpful to pursue these kinds of activities.



Museum-goers—those who said they had been to a museum in the past two years—fit this pattern as well, averaging over twice as many activities as non-visitors.



So what do people who don't visit museums do in their leisure time? On all of the activities we measured, non-visitors had significantly lower levels of engagement across the board than those who do visit museums. The top three activities for non-visitors were:



In contrast, people who visit museums do a whole lot of other activities as well.

In particular, they were:

3.6x more likely to attend performing arts in person

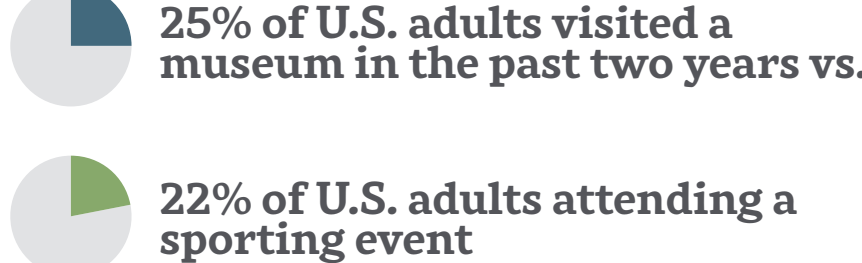
2.3x more likely to attend a sporting event in person

2.2x more likely to participate in outdoor nature experiences

Let's take a look at sporting events specifically (after all, we like to say more Americans visit museums than attend professional sporting events!).

In our question, we didn't limit sporting events to "professional," but instead simply said "sporting events," which includes college/university sports as well as high school games or even a child's soccer league.

Even with this broader definition of "sporting events," museums still edge them out:



(Museums have consistently edged out sporting events over the past several years of our data.)

And, as we saw above, museum-goers are more likely to attend a sporting event than non-visitors, 39% vs. 17% (that's 2.3x more likely).

Why are these lower numbers than museums? After all, millions of Americans are interested in sports.

It likely comes down to the same barriers museum-going has. That is, it is expensive to participate ... and not just financially (though that certainly comes into play). It is an expensive commitment of time, energy, and know-how to navigate, and many U.S. adults don't have those resources to dedicate to in-person sports attendance.



Professional sports in particular have a far higher financial barrier to attendance than museums. Among professional sports, the average individual ticket price ranges from \$107 (NFL) to \$34 (MLB).² These averages don't include transportation/parking or food/drink.

Unsurprisingly, then, we find that college graduates (who tend to have higher incomes) are significantly more likely to attend sporting events than those with less education ... just like museum visitation. They are more likely to be able to afford to do so.

Additionally, playing sports is increasingly something only those with resources can do. In 2018, the U.S. Census Bureau found that high-income children were about twice as likely to participate in sports than children living in poverty. That means those high-income families are about twice as likely to have a child's game to attend than low-income families.³

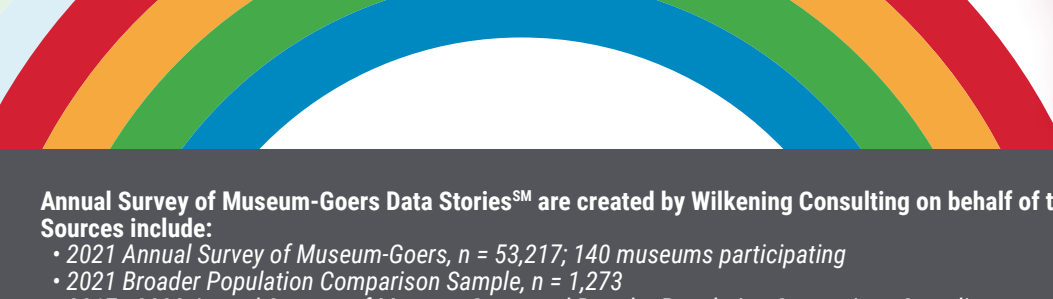


And while we used sports as an example, we see similar patterns for many of the other leisure-time activities as well. Engagement with leisure-time activities correlates with greater resources ... and those who can afford the time, energy, and financial commitment "do more" than those who can't.

This has important ramifications for our society, but in particular for our children. When we think of the resource constraints millions of families experience, it results in millions of children who don't have the time and space to develop their interests and curiosities. And that has lifelong consequences as highly-resourced children are more likely to have advantages that follow them throughout their lifetimes ... and resource-constrained children are more likely to fall further behind.



This begs a question: How can museums work more effectively with our partners in libraries, environmental organizations and parks, sports, performing arts, and more to reduce these inequities, so all children can thrive?



Annual Survey of Museum-Goers Data StoriesSM are created by Wilkening Consulting on behalf of the American Alliance of Museums.

Sources include:
 • 2021 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers, n = 53,217; 140 museums participating
 • 2021 Broader Population Comparison Sample, n = 1,273
 • 2017 - 2020 Annual Surveys of Museum-Goers and Broader Population Comparison Sampling

*Data Stories share research about both frequent museum-goers (typically visit multiple museums each year) and the broader population (including casual and non-visitors to museums).

¹See our 2021 Data StoriesSM on virtual audiences and engagement at <http://www.wilkeningconsulting.com/data-stories.html>

²Statista.com

³U.S. Census Bureau

More Data StoriesSM can be found at wilkeningconsulting.com/data-stories.



Data Story release date: January 18, 2022

© 2022 Wilkening Consulting, LLC