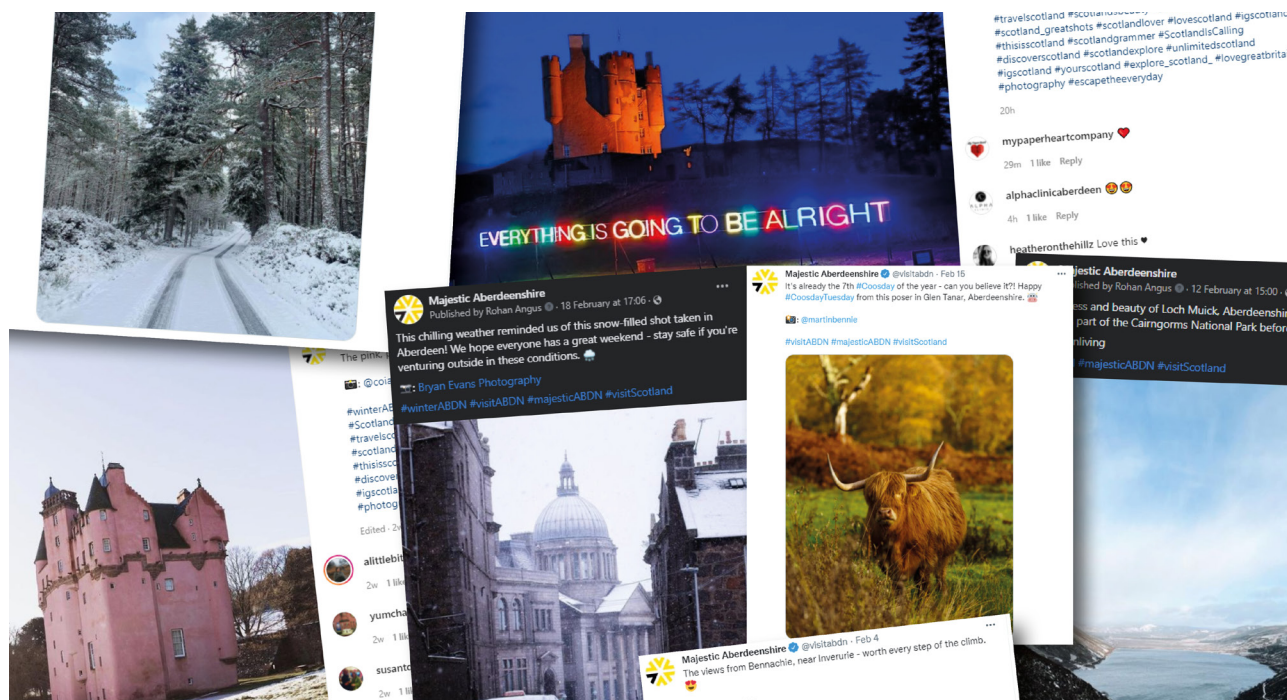


# DESTINATION SENTIMENT ANALYSIS: DEEP DIVE



VisitAberdeenshire is committed to learning and understanding as much as we can about our current and future visitors. This deeper understanding helps inform our own activity and that of the businesses within the region.

With this in mind, VisitAberdeenshire recently commissioned Glasgow based agency, Material, to carry out a deeper dive into online conversations and sentiment towards our region. One of the benefits of such an exercise is that it is an “at-arms-length” study, allowing the full exploration and investigation of all comments – good, bad and indifferent – to be carried out without the potential skew of being involved in the process.

## WHAT DID WE FOCUS ON?

Data from public social and digital sources was gathered using the Brandwatch analytics platform. Data was gathered for a period in total spanning 1 May to 31 October 2021.

We had a desire to understand conversations and sentiment in relation to our current identified destination strengths:



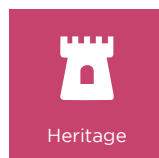
Adventure  
Tourism



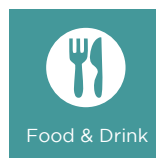
Touring



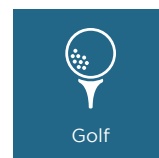
Culture &  
Events



Heritage



Food & Drink



Golf

During this exercise, a total of

**19,283**

pieces of data were pulled.

However, following cleansing  
(for example, removal of  
business content, football  
and political cleansing),

this was reduced to

**6,946**

pieces of data that could be  
progressed to the analysis stage.

This commission sought to identify the key conversational themes that emerged within each of these destination strengths. By themes, we mean specific assets, or attractions, or locations, or indeed destinations within each destination strength for example, specific towns and villages.

# WHAT DID WE FIND OUT?

## MOST TALKED ABOUT DESTINATION STRENGTHS

By content volume, Adventure Tourism and Touring were the most talked about Destination Strengths between May and October 2021, followed by Culture & Events.



Destination Strengths by Conversational Volume

## WHICH DESTINATION STRENGTHS DROVE THE MOST POSITIVE CONTENT?

Amidst what was, overall, a very positive group of data sets, Adventure Tourism was the most positive current destination strength.

Golf was the most “neutral” topic (tending to relate to play and course features).

Negative sentiment topics were very specific, often related to incidental events or externalities around destinations or assets rather than the actual assets themselves.

Destination Strengths by Sentiment



● positive  
● neutral  
● negative

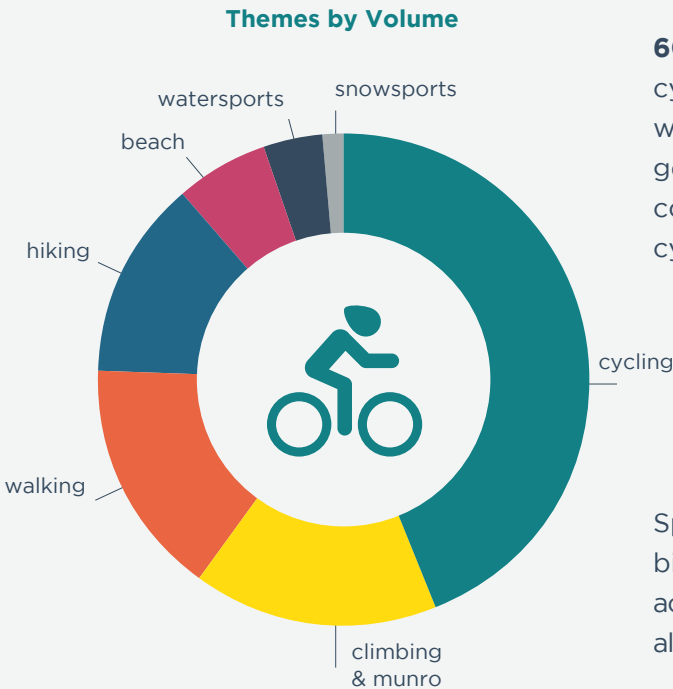
## WHAT KEY THEMES\* DROVE POSITIVE USER CONVERSATION IN EACH OF OUR BIG DESTINATION STRENGTHS?

### ADVENTURE TOURISM

44%

of all Adventure Tourism content over the tracking period related to **cycling**, followed by climbing, walking and hiking.

\*ASSETS/LOCATIONS/ACTIVITIES /ATTRACTIONS



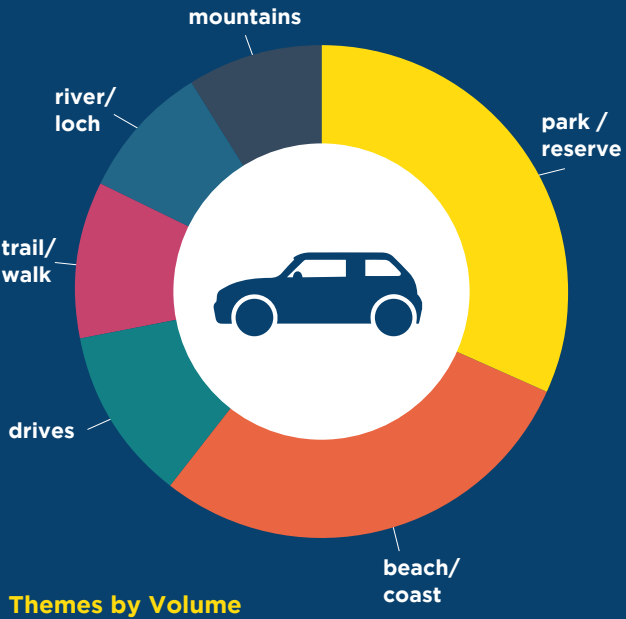
60% of all cycling content was classed as general (general country and town cycling).

Specific mountain biking mentions accounted for 19% of all cycling content.

## TOURING

Parks and Reserves (32%) and Beaches/Coasts (29%) dominated conversational themes around touring between May and October.

**Cairngorms National Park** and **Aberdeen Beach** were key drivers within these themes. The River Dee, the Deeside Way and Bennachie were also key asset themes that emerged within the Touring theme.



## CULTURE & EVENTS

35%

Visitor Attractions dominated cultural destination strength content at 35% of all mentions



17%

and Venues at 17%.

21%

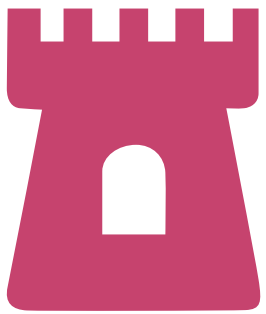
followed by Galleries at 21%

Aberdeen Harbour topped Visitor Attraction mentions followed by the Aberdeen Science Centre, Duff House, Braemar Highland Games Centre and Haddo House. Whilst not identified as an “attraction” at the outset of the research, it emerged that the Harbour area provided a focus for user generated content in relation to sunrise, sunset and skyline imagery.

**Aberdeen Art Gallery** led Gallery conversation, while **The Lemon Tree** led venue content followed by P&J Live and then the Aberdeen Music Hall.

## HERITAGE

The Heritage content was dominated by Castles in Aberdeenshire.



41%  
MENTIONS  
RELATING  
TO  
CASTLES

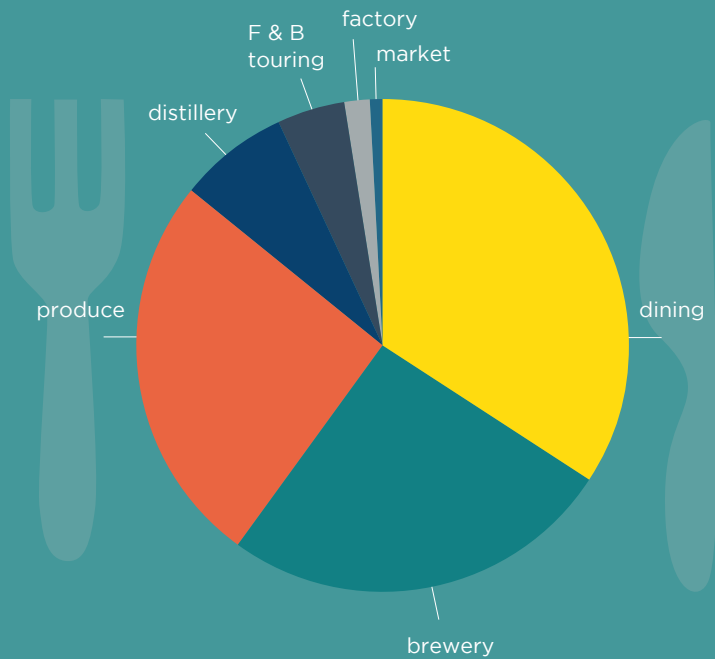
Of the 376 mentions relating to Castles, 43% - or 160 - related to **Dunnottar Castle**, with Huntly Castle and Slains Castle the next most mentioned.

**Old Aberdeen** was also a popular heritage experience.

**Monuments** emerged as the 4th most popular theme in heritage with 14 named by visitors.

# FOOD & DRINK

3 themes led the Food & Drink destination strength – Dining with **34%** (301) of the 881 mentions and Breweries and Produce both at **26%** (229 and 227 respectively). 221 of the 229 “Brewery” mentions relate to Brewdog. Produce content related to Aberdeen Angus Beef, Mackie’s, fresh seafood and local/seasonal produce (on menus and in general). Surprisingly low volume of distillery tour/experience mentions in comparison to other Food & Drink categories. This could have been due to travel restrictions during the research period, and/or a latent opportunity.



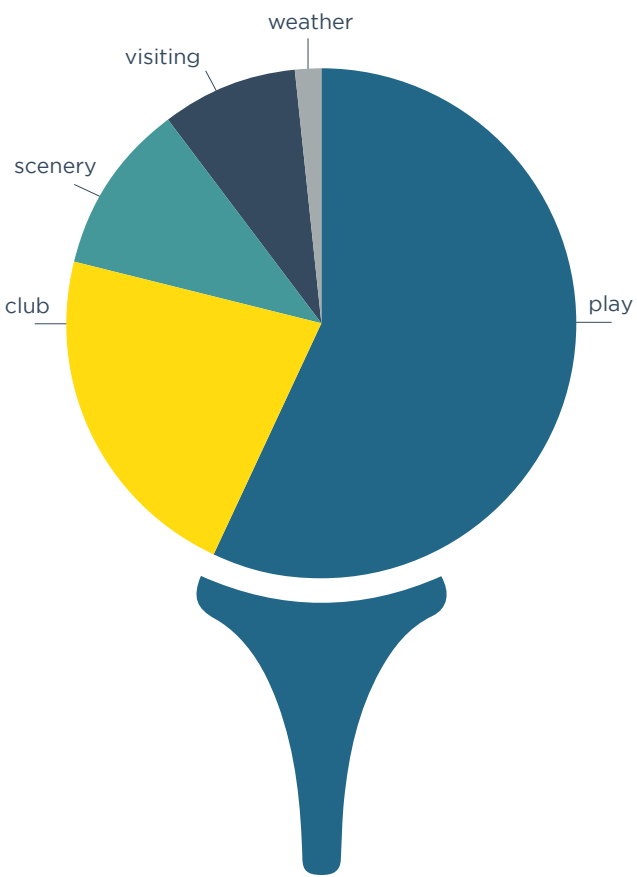
Themes by Volume

# GOLF

Golf content is dominated (**57%**) by references to play (good and bad shots and rounds) rather than destination drivers. **22%** related to clubs and club features and **11%** related to scenery.

Golfers may travel for their game, but their golf content it seems is predominantly about the game above most else.

88 specific mentions of clubs were observed including (in order, high to low): Trump International, Royal Aberdeen, Cruden Bay, Murcar Links, Fraserburgh, Braemar, Nigg Bay and Aboyne.



## WHAT ARE THE TOP 10 HASHTAGS USED BY OUR CONSUMERS?

### ADVENTURE TOURISM

- #aberdeenshire
- #aberdeen
- #scotland
- #cycling
- #hiking
- #walking
- #cairngorms
- #stonehaven
- #visitabdn
- #deeside

### TOURING

- #scotland
- #aberdeen
- #aberdeenshire
- #cairngorms
- #tourofbritain
- #beach
- #visitscotland
- #nature
- #bennachie
- #birdwatching

### CULTURE & EVENTS

- #aberdeen
- #scotland
- #art
- #aberdeenshire
- #comedy
- #streetart
- #bas9
- #nuart
- #banff
- #theatre

### HERITAGE

- #scotland
- #aberdeenshire
- #aberdeen
- #history
- #architecture
- #castle
- #stonehaven
- #visitscotland
- #dunnottar
- #cairngorms

### FOOD & DRINK

- #aberdeen
- #scotland
- #aberdeenshire
- #food
- #foodie
- #supportlocal
- #brewdog
- #lunch
- #scottish
- #visitscotland

### GOLF

- #golf
- #aberdeenshire
- #scottishgolf
- #scotland
- #aberdeen
- #fraserburgh
- #golfaboyne
- #golfing
- #visitabdn
- #golfabdn

# HOW CAN VISITABERDEENSHIRE AND THE REGION'S TOURISM BUSINESSES USE THESE RESULTS?

Key take-outs identified by the agency, Material, for each of our current destination strengths:



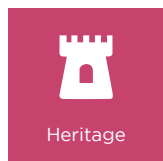
**Adventure Tourism:** Ensure you appeal to cyclists and cycling in as broad and inclusive a manner as possible (given the % of content that related to cycling in general). This covers beginners and family track cycling to mountain biking).



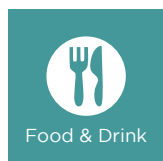
**Touring:** Appeal to tourers by promoting Aberdeenshire's parks, reserves, beaches, coasts and mountains.



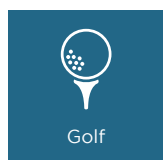
**Culture & Events:** Promote cultural and event led assets to domestic and touring day-trippers, where possible – bundle/cluster visitor attraction day itineraries on type and proximity.



**Heritage:** Castles are the jewel in Aberdeenshire's heritage crown – continue to promote specific Castle itineraries. Also, promote Monument Tour itineraries and consider ways to dial up Old Aberdeen as a standalone experience.



**Food & Drink:** Notably, content around lunch dominated the key driver of food content. Promoting lunch destinations within other itineraries (eg. heritage, touring, adventure) may help further support local businesses.



**Golf:** Golfers do appreciate the beautiful views of the courses in Aberdeenshire and respond warmly to images of these. Those unable to travel to Scotland/Aberdeenshire were observed to be “yearning” to visit.

In relation to the top 10 hashtags used by consumers within each destination strength, the recommendation is to mirror this behaviour and use, as appropriate, within your own media messaging to further engage the consumer.

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

Within Brandwatch, data was drawn from the following social and digital sources: Twitter, Facebook, Blogs, Instagram, Forums, Reviews, Reddit, TripAdvisor and TrustPilot. Historic and real-time data was gathered to back-fill the period of research prior to the research briefing as follows:

Real-time data from 27 August to 31 October from all sources.

Historic data from 1 May to 26 August, excluding Instagram and Facebook.

The work was commissioned in Autumn of 2021, with the full findings being presented to VisitAberdeenshire early December 2021.

## INSIGHTS & EVALUATION AT VISITABERDEENSHIRE

To discuss these findings in more detail, or any aspects of Insights in relation to your business do contact us on [insights@visitabdn.com](mailto:insights@visitabdn.com)



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