Young, diverse lower-middle-income city dwellers

Who They Are

One of the largest segments, Friends & Roomies attracts mostly young singles and single-parent families to neighbourhoods in cities like Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg and Victoria. More than a third of maintainers are younger than 35, more than half under 44. A majority of the households contain single, divorced or separated individuals. With mixed educational achievement—from high school to university degrees—members hold a variety of predominantly service sector and white-collar jobs. Incomes are below average, and over three-quarters are renters, mostly in low-rise units. In this transitional segment, more than 60 percent of Friends & Roomies households moved in the past five years. Today, more than 40 percent of the population are first-generation Canadians, typically Black, Filipino and South Asian immigrants who identify as visible minorities. These young people are able to turn modest incomes into active social lives, enjoying bars, nightclubs and community theatres at high rates. And many like to shop—especially online—for video games, movies and music. In their diverse neighbourhoods, they enjoy Culture Sampling, incorporating the cultural influences of other groups into their lives.

The residents of Friends & Roomies find their entertainment on their streets and social media networks. Young and looking for romance, they frequent dance clubs, health clubs, art galleries and sporting events and play team sports, such as soccer, hockey and curling. In weekly grocery runs, they shop less for traditional meals than after-work grazing, picking up meat snacks, pretzels and chocolate granola bars. They prefer to grab meals on the run instead, patronizing Starbucks and Second Cup, as well as Burger King and Wendy’s. In the marketplace, they have their favourite brands—clothes from Joe Fresh and The Gap, books from Chapters/Indigo—and they shop both in-store and online using their mobile phones and computers. They also turn to their phones to access news, listen to music and podcasts, play games and stream movies and TV shows. Fluent in social media, they have high rates for using Instagram, Snapchat, Reddit and dating platforms. They’ve long ago cut the cord on cable TV and landline phones, but out-of-home digital screens in convenience stores, transit shelters and pubs can still catch their eye.

How They Think

The members of Friends & Roomies are liberal, tech-savvy and comfortable in their urban scene. They tend to be tolerant of non-traditional families (Flexible Families), think young people should have the same freedom as adults (Equal Relationship with Youth) and are open-minded about romantic relationships (Sexual Permissiveness). Living in diverse communities, they believe ethnic groups should retain their traditions rather than assimilate into the dominant culture (Multiculturalism), and they accept diversity within families (Racial Fusion). These independent young adults question authority and the need to play by the rules, indulge in risk-taking to get ahead and consider violence as simply a fact of life (Rejection of Authority, Penchant for Risk, Acceptance of Violence). With many feeling like they never have enough time to get everything done each day (Time Stress), they express a Need for Escape from their daily routines. But overall they’re confident in their ability to handle the complexities of modern life (Adaptability to Complexity). Given their Skepticism Towards Advertising, they do their research to make sure the products they’re considering are worthwhile, especially those in their areas of particular interest (Discriminating Consumerism, Consumptivity).

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Where They Live

How They Live

LEISURE
nightclubs/bars
art galleries/IMAX movies/
science centres
adventure sports
pro basketball

SHOPPING
Joe Fresh
London Drugs
Chapters/Indigo
second-hand stores

TRADITIONAL MEDIA
TV sci-fi/fantasy dramas
Comedy Network
classic hits radio
newspaper arts and
entertainment sections

INTERNET
use food delivery services
streaming videos online
play online games on
computer
purchase music online

FOOD/DRINK
chocolate granola bars
fruit drinks
Starbucks
Chinese restaurants

FINANCIAL
e-payment for purchases
condo insurance
spend less than $100 on
credit cards/month
donate to cultural groups

AUTOMOTIVE
one car
under $15,000 spent on
vehicle
Toyota
2017-2019 model years

SOCIAL
Reddit
Instagram
Snapchat
Twitter

MOBILE
listen to podcasts on phone
watch TV on phone
banking/finance apps
research products on phone

HEALTH
Use herbal garlic supplements

ATTITUDES
“Young people should be taught to question authority”
“From time to time, I like to do things that are dangerous or forbidden,
just for the sake of the risk and sensation”
“I often buy things just because they are beautiful, whether or not they
are practical”
“My phone touches every part of my life”