

United States

Tourism in the economy

Travel and tourism in the United States is a major contributor to the national economy, accounting for 2.9% of GVA. In 2018, inbound travel and tourism accounted for 10% of exports. According to the Travel and Tourism Satellite Account, the industry produced USD 1.6 trillion in total economic output in 2018 (USD 941 billion of direct tourism output and USD 682 billion of indirect tourism output by ancillary industries). The travel and tourism industry is one of the United States' largest employers, directly supporting 5.9 million jobs in 2018, of which 1.2 million were supported by travel and tourism-related exports. Travel exports represented 26.0% of total service exports in 2018.

The United States welcomed a record 79.7 million international visitors in 2018. The largest source markets were Canada (26.9% of international tourists) and Mexico (23.1%), followed by the United Kingdom (5.8%), Japan (4.4%) and China (3.8%). International visitors collectively spent USD 256 billion on travel to, and tourism-related activities within, the United States in 2018. In order of spending, the top international markets for U.S. tourism are China, Canada, Mexico, Japan and the United Kingdom.

Domestic tourists took 2.3 billion trips in 2018, up 1.9% over 2017, with 1.7 billion overnight tourists and 632.1 million day visitors

Tourism governance and funding

Travel and tourism in the United States is highly decentralised. In addition to the federal government, individual states and destinations manage travel and tourism for their jurisdictions, including marketing. These activities are undertaken by the federal government, state governments and destination marketing organisations.

The National Travel and Tourism Office (NTTO), within the International Trade Administration (ITA) of the United States Department of Commerce, serves as the central point of contact within the federal government. The NTTO is the source of official tourism statistics to inform public policy and private sector business decisions, and works to enhance the competitive position of the United States with respect to travel and tourism. The NTTO works closely with ITA's U.S. Commercial Service at U.S. embassies and consulates in more than 70 overseas markets to promote travel and tourism exports. The Corporation for Travel Promotion (CTP), formed in 2010 and operating as Brand USA, is a non-profit corporation established by federal statute that promotes travel to the United States and works with the government to provide useful information for international visitors. The NTTO is the official United States government liaison to Brand USA.

The federal government does not regulate travel and tourism as a distinct industry, although related sectors, such as transport, are regulated at the federal level. The Bureau of Consumer Protection at the Federal Trade Commission enforces federal laws against unfair, deceptive or fraudulent business practices, including in the travel and tourism industry. The Department of Commerce ensures that the views of the private sector are shared with other federal agencies and are considered in the development

conditions for growth, the United States is focused on reviewing and revising the National Strategy to include current initiatives and to ensure the tactics are still relevant.

To meet growing demand, the United States is evolving the entry and exit processes using biometrics (see box). In addition to U.S. Customs and Border Protection's trusted traveller programmes, the United States is piloting a biometric entry and exit system. The system aims to provide a more seamless travel experience and enhance security for inbound and outbound travel, improve business processes and enable stronger collaboration between government and the private sector. The biometrics entry/exit system enhances and facilitates data-sharing while utilising existing airport and airline infrastructure; leverages existing stakeholder systems and processes; and uses existing traveller data and IT infrastructure.

With record-low unemployment in the United States, and the emergence of new technology, a priority for the United States is ensuring that all sectors, including travel and tourism, have the workforce they need now and in the future. To address employment issues, in 2018, the U.S. government created the National Council for the American Worker to develop and implement a strategy to prepare workers for today's jobs and for the jobs of the future. The Administration also created an outside board—the American Workforce Policy Advisory Board to guide the National Council by bringing the latest thinking and experience from business, education, states and cities, organised labour, and other institutions that have a role in educating and training American workers.

U.S. Biometric Entry/Exit System

To meet growing customer demand while creating a seamless and more secure travel experience, the United States is evolving entry and exit processes using biometrics. The system enhances and facilitates data-sharing while utilising existing airport and airline infrastructure, leveraging existing stakeholder systems and processes, and using existing traveller data and IT infrastructure. The system aims to provide a more seamless travel experience, enhance security for inbound and outbound travel, improve business processes, and enable stronger collaboration between government and the private sector, including airlines, airports and other stakeholders. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is leading the transformation of the travel experience in partnership with industry stakeholders. Airline and technology partners are playing a critical role.

Just before entry or exit, each international traveller's photo is taken, either by CBP owned cameras or equipment provided by the airlines, airport authority or cruise line. CBP's biometric matching service, the Traveller Verification Service, compares the new photo with U.S. Department of Homeland Security data, which includes images from photographs taken by CBP during the entry inspection, photographs from U.S. passports, U.S. visas and other travel documents, as well as photographs from previous Department of Homeland Security encounters.

The Traveller Verification Service is hosted in a secure cloud-based environment and stores only the traveller's photo. For Citizens of the United States as well as all in-scope travellers, a photo is taken and submitted to the Traveller Verification Process, solely for the purpose of validating the identity of the traveller and ensuring that the passport being presented belongs to the bearer of the document. Only CBP has access to this biometric data. Industry partners only receive results of the "match/no match" determination and not any associated biographic information.

Statistical Profile

United States: Domestic, inbound and outbound tourism

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
TOURISM FLOWS, THOUSAND					
Domestic tourism					
Total domestic trips	2 109 300	2 178 700	2 206 600	2 247 900	2 291 100
Overnight visitors (tourists)	1 455 417	1 525 090	1 566 686	1 618 488	1 658 950
Same-day visitors (excursionists)	653 883	653 610	639 914	629 412	632 150
Nights in all types of accommodation	..	..	..	..	..
Hotels and similar establishments	875 112	899 505	933 749	973 743	998 087
Other collective establishments	..	..	..	..	..
Private accommodation	..	..	..	..	..
Inbound tourism					
Total international arrivals	177 953	176 864	175 262	174 292	169 325
Overnight visitors (tourists)	75 022	77 774	76 407	77 187	79 746
Same-day visitors (excursionists)	102 932	99 091	98 854	97 105	89 579
Top markets					
Canada	23 014	20 699	19 287	20 493	21 475
Mexico	17 070	18 374	18 991	17 788	18 387
United Kingdom	4 149	4 915	4 587	4 483	4 659
Japan	3 620	3 793	3 604	3 596	3 493
China	2 190	2 629	3 050	3 174	2 992
Nights in all types of accommodation	369 323	398 710	391 311	404 677	405 682
Hotels and similar establishments	188 939	204 281	210 147	208 138	212 207
Other collective establishments	16 327	21 707	15 177	17 050	18 546
Private accommodation	164 057	172 721	165 987	179 489	174 930
Outbound tourism					
Total international departures	121 709	130 907	141 526	148 056	157 873
Overnight visitors (tourists)	68 185	74 191	80 223	87 657	92 564
Same-day visitors (excursionists)	53 523	56 716	61 303	60 398	65 308
Top destinations					
Mexico	25 882	28 733	31 194	35 050	36 449
Canada	11 523	12 669	13 892	14 280	14 341
United Kingdom	2 832	2 885	3 197	3 756	3 927
France	2 124	2 361	2 178	2 645	3 008
Italy	1 908	2 033	2 214	2 338	2 924
TOURISM RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE, MILLION USD					
Inbound tourism					
Total international receipts	235 989	249 183	245 991	251 544	256 145
International travel receipts	191 918	206 936	206 650	210 655	214 680
International passenger transport receipts	44 071	42 247	39 341	40 889	41 465
Outbound tourism					
Total international expenditure	140 558	150 042	160 959	173 760	186 506
International travel expenditure	105 668	114 548	123 549	134 868	144 463
International passenger transport expenditure	34 890	35 494	37 410	38 892	42 043

.. Not available

Source: OECD Tourism Statistics (Database).

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888934078148>

United States: Enterprises and employment in tourism

	Number of establishments	Number of persons employed				
	2018	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total	..	5 572 258	5 688 460	5 789 287	5 834 793	5 924 757
Tourism industries	903 717	4 806 198	4 891 641	4 989 468	5 041 636	5 118 502
Accommodation services for visitors	61 505	1 430 315	1 460 092	1 480 957	1 512 714	1 537 916
Hotels and similar establishments	56 697	..	..	..	..	..
Food and beverage serving industry	642 027	14 668	13 927	13 390	13 151	12 854
Passenger transport	..	2 318 355	2 366 630	2 402 796	2 405 071	2 430 743
Air passenger transport	4 074	2 149 553	2 192 196	2 223 307	2 221 510	2 247 142
Railways passenger transport	..	9 367	9 996	9 691	9 426	9 025
Road passenger transport	16 427	120 907	126 968	131 105	134 645	132 470
Water passenger transport	562	38 528	37 470	38 692	39 490	42 106
Passenger transport supporting services	..	347 767	360 690	370 958	371 205	371 915
Transport equipment rental	9 753	163 859	170 613	176 128	177 834	180 172
Travel agencies and other reservation services industry	22 091	56 197	56 149	58 098	56 360	58 740
Cultural industry	63 494	39 162	39 633	41 529	42 223	45 657
Sports and recreation industry	83 784	435 875	423 908	445 612	463 077	480 505
Retail trade of country-specific tourism characteristic goods	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other country-specific tourism industries	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other industries	..	766 060	796 819	799 818	793 157	806 254

.. Not available

Source: OECD Tourism Statistics (Database).

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888934078167>

United States: Internal tourism consumption

Million USD

	2018		
	Domestic tourism expenditure	Inbound tourism expenditure	Internal tourism consumption
Total	1 089 672	198 264	39 377 330
Consumption products	956 196	198 264	39 243 853
Tourism characteristic products	849 730	148 873	2 832 021
Accommodation services for visitors	170 707	45 101	215 808
Food and beverage serving services	108 993	32 166	1 010 048
Passenger transport services	250 078	46 414	356 226
Air passenger transport services	209 458	45 195	254 654
Railways passenger transport services	2 305	59	2 364
Road passenger transport services	19 163	560	78 456
Water passenger transport services	19 152	599	20 753
Passenger transport supporting services	141 325	1 289	728 315
Transport equipment rental services	34 965	201	48 705
Travel agencies and other reservation services industry	50 192	646	54 864
Cultural services	18 936	2 530	92 911
Sports and recreation services	74 533	20 526	325 145
Country-specific tourism characteristic goods	..	..	..
Country-specific tourism characteristic services	..	..	..
Other consumption products	106 466	49 391	36 411 832
Tourism connected products	106 466	49 391	4 706 569
Non-tourism related consumption products	0	0	31 705 263
Non-consumption products	..	..	..

.. Not available

Source: OECD Tourism Statistics (Database).

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888934078186>



From:
OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2020

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/6b47b985-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2020), "United States", in *OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2020*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/7af173ce-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document, as well as any data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area. Extracts from publications may be subject to additional disclaimers, which are set out in the complete version of the publication, available at the link provided.

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the Terms and Conditions to be found at <http://www.oecd.org/termsandconditions>.