



December 16, 2013

U.S. Travel to International Destinations Increased Three Percent in 2012

*Growth in Outbound Travel Originated More from Western States than the East Coast
Demographic Data Enhanced in 2012*

The U.S. resident outbound market totaled 60.7 million in 2012, up three percent from 2011. Travel to overseas regions (28.5 million) increased five percent, to Canada (11.9 million) up three percent, however travel to Mexico (20.3 million), singly the largest outbound market, was down one percent.

The top five destination countries visited by U.S. residents in 2012 were: Mexico (20.3 million), Canada (11.9 million), followed by the overseas countries of the United Kingdom (2.5 million), the Dominican Republic (2.3 million) and France (2.0 million). Nine of the top 10 destinations visited by U.S. travelers posted increases in 2012.

The top origin regions/states from which U.S. residents traveled to overseas destinations were:

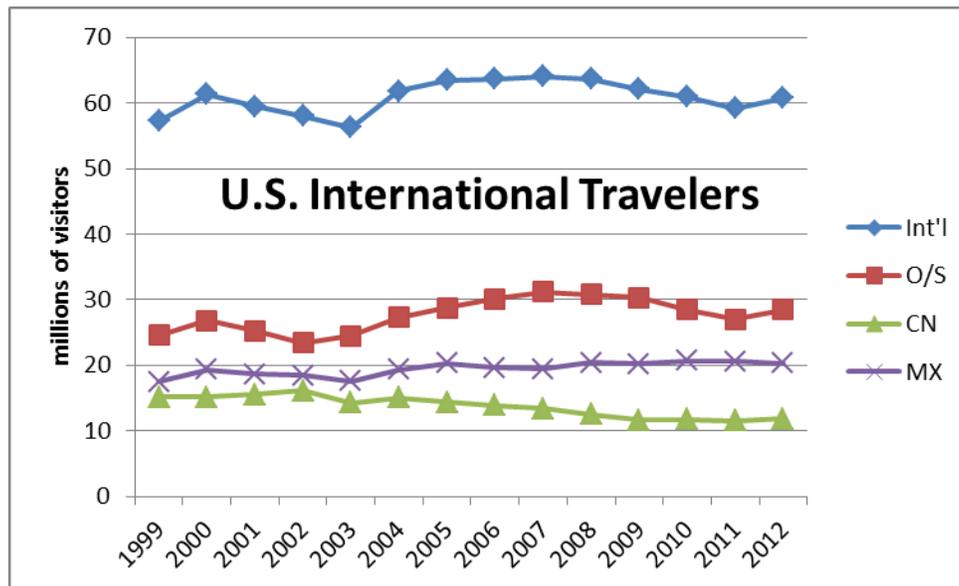
- Middle Atlantic States (New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania) a 26 percent share of all U.S. regions, however travel was flat compared to 2011.
- South Atlantic States (Florida, Georgia, Virginia, Washington, D.C., Maryland and North Carolina) accounted for 18 percent; however travel was down 18 percent.
- Pacific States (California) generated 15 percent of outbound travel was up 22 percent from 2011.
- Travel from East North Central (Illinois, Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin) accounted for 10 percent and was up 42 percent.
- West South Central States (Texas) registered 10 percent share and was up 35 percent.

U.S. Overseas Traveler Characteristics:

Select highlights from 2012:

- The **main trip purpose** was vacation/holiday for 47 percent of overseas travelers and was up 27 percent in volume from 2011. Visit friends and relatives (VFR) was the second highest main trip purpose 29 percent, but down in volume 13 percent from 2011. **Overall leisure/VFR travel was up eight percent** in 2012. Business travel, as main purpose, comprised 12 percent of outbound travel, but was down 27 percent from 2011. Convention travel was three percent of travel but more than doubled in 2012. **Overall business/convention was down 12 percent.**
- The top ten ports of departure for U.S. citizens were New York (JFK), Miami (MIA), Atlanta (ATL), Newark (EWR), Los Angeles (LAX), Chicago (ORD), Washington (IAD), San Francisco (SFO), Houston (IAH) and Philadelphia (PHL) which accounted for 77 percent of U.S. departures.

- Advance trip decision time and airline reservation time increased to an average of 96 days and 66 days prior to departure, respectively in 2012, up slightly when compared to 2011.
- As an information source for trip planning, airlines were most used (50 percent) along with online travel agencies (OTA) (31 percent) and conventional travel agencies (22 percent). Although over a third booked directly through the airlines (36 percent) a majority booked via either an internet booking service (28 percent) and/or the travel agency (22 percent).
- Pre-paid package usage declined slightly to 12 percent of U.S. travelers compared to 2011.
- The average length of trip (number of nights) outside the United States decreased to 18.3 nights in 2012, down one night.
- Six percent of travelers were on their first international trip, down one point from 2011, meaning that repeat travelers increased. The average number of international trips taken by U.S. travelers in the last 12 months was 2.7, up slightly from 2011.
- The number of destinations visited averaged 1.8 in 2011. The percentage visiting only one destination dropped from 65 percent to 55 percent, and those visiting three or more destinations increased from 16 percent to 21 percent in 2012.
- The modes of inter-city transportation used by U.S. travelers between destinations were airline (65 percent, up from 33 percent in 2011), railroad (15 percent) and bus (20 percent, up from 14 percent). The top modes of intra-city transit were taxicab/limo (33 percent) and subway/tram/bus (21 percent). The use of private and/or rented autos was 40 percent and 11 percent, respectively. Five percent traveled on cruise/river boat for overnight. Six percent took short scenic cruises or used a ferry/river taxi.
- Top leisure activities for U.S. travelers were sightseeing, shopping, visiting small town/countryside, experienced 'fine dining' (a new category), visiting historical locations, taking guided tours, visiting art galleries/museums and experiencing cultural/ethnic heritage sites.
- Average international airfare per visitor, per trip, was \$1,420 USD, up five percent from 2011, and average expenditures (travel payments) per visitor, per trip, while overseas were \$1,575, up 19 percent from 2011. The usage of credit cards remained at 53 percent. Cash brought from home and cash withdrawn from an ATM using credit/debit cards and purchases using debit cards comprised 47 percent.
- Airfare and convenient schedules were main factors in airline choice. Over 80 percent 'paid' for the ticket without the use of awards, upgrades or deeply discounted fares. Seventy five percent flew in coach or economy class.
- Females comprised 50 percent of U.S. travelers, slightly less from 2011. However, the number of women travelers continues to increase. (In 2000 women were 39 percent of U.S. outbound.) The average age of male travelers was 45.6, the same as in 2011; female travelers averaged 43.4 years, younger than in 2011.
- Average household income was \$106,300, up 19 percent from 2011.
- Fifteen percent of respondents identified themselves as Hispanic. Sixteen percent identified as Asian, nine percent as Black, and three percent as American Indian/Alaskan Native or Hawaiian Islander.
- Travel insurance was purchased for the trip by 27 percent of the respondents
- Twelve percent visited a health care provider in advance of their trip.



Source: National Travel and Tourism Office, U.S. Department of Commerce

Top Outbound Destination Markets

Mexico

Mexico was the top U.S. international destination again in 2012 with 20.3 million travelers, however it was down one percent from 2011. Longer haul travel, by air, totaled 5.8 million, up four percent from 2011. Travel to Mexico has remained relatively stable over the last 10 years. The strongest growth periods were in 2008 and 2010 (record). Spending by U.S. travelers to Mexico totaled \$10.6 billion, up 14 percent from 2011. The record for spending was also in 2008.

Canada

Canada continues to be the second most visited destination by U.S. international travelers. In 2012, 11.9 million U.S. travelers visited Canada, up three percent from 2011. Longer haul travel, by air (3.6 million), was up four percent. The peak year for U.S. travel to Canada was in 2002 with 16.2 million U.S. travelers. Since then, U.S. travel to Canada has declined in seven of the last 10 years. Spending by U.S. travelers to Canada in 2012 totaled \$7.6 billion, up five percent from 2011 following two prior annual increases. The record year in spending was 2007.

Overseas

In 2012, 28.5 million U.S. travelers visited overseas markets, an increase of five percent from 2011.

Travel was up to nine of the top ten overseas markets: the United Kingdom, Dominican Republic, France, Italy, Germany, Jamaica, China, Spain and Japan. Visitation to India was down one percent.

Spending by U.S. residents traveling overseas (imports) totaled \$99.9 billion, up eight percent from 2011. Spending within overseas countries (travel payments) amounted to \$66.8 billion, up six percent, and spending on air transportation, via foreign carriers (passenger fare payments), totaled \$33.0 billion in 2011, up 11 percent. Top countries for U.S. spending included the United Kingdom (\$9.7 billion), up 12 percent, Germany (\$6.5 billion), up 14 percent and a record, and Japan (\$5.5 billion), up 11 percent over 2011.

For more detail information, please go to the Outbound Overview page, which contains links to in-depth information on the outbound market at:

http://travel.trade.gov/outreachpages/outbound.general_information.outbound_overview.html

On the 2012 outbound section, interested parties will find:

- 2012 Profile of U.S. Resident Travelers Visiting Overseas Destinations. (The profile provides key information on the travel patterns, traveler characteristics and spending by U.S. travelers going abroad. In addition, a breakdown is provided on leisure/visiting friends and relatives (VFR) travelers and business/convention travelers.)
- 2012 U.S. to Europe Profile
- 2012 U.S. to Asia Profile
- 2012 U.S. to Overseas Destinations for Business/Conventions Profile
- 2012 U.S. to Overseas Destinations for leisure/VFR Profile
- Top Destinations Visited by U.S. Resident Travelers 2011-2012
- Top 30 Ports of Departure in 2012 for U.S. Citizens
- Total International Travelers Volume to/from the United States 2003 – 2012
- U.S. Resident Travel to Canada, Mexico and Overseas (Historical 2003 – 2012)
- U.S. Travel and Tourism Balance of Trade (Receipts & Payments 2000 – 2012)
- U.S. Travel and Tourism Balance of Trade (2012, by Country)
- 10 Year Historical Travel Import Timelines
- Monthly U.S. international non-stop air traffic figures. (While air traffic is not the same as ‘visitation’, it does provide a current indication of air traffic flows for U.S. citizen outbound travel.)

In addition to the data available on the web site, parties interested in subscribing to detailed standardized reports and/or customized data can do so by visiting the OTTI web site at:

<http://travel.trade.gov/research/programs/ifs/index.html>

If you do not find the information you need on the website or in the standard reports we sell, custom tables and reports are available from the database. Go to:

<http://travel.trade.gov/research/programs/ifs/customized.html>

The Survey data tables and standard national reports can assist the industry in understanding U.S. travelers going abroad. Also 48 subsets of the data are available based on 33 questions for the traveler.

For additional information or questions, please contact:

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