



**December 4, 2017**

**U.S. Resident Travel to International Destinations Increased Eight Percent in 2016**

*Strong Growth in U.S. Outbound Travel from the South/Middle Atlantic and Pacific States  
Vacation/Holiday and Visit Friends/Relatives Travel Showed Strong Growth*

The U.S. resident outbound market totaled 80.2 million in 2016, up eight percent from 2015. Travel to overseas countries (35.1 million) increased seven percent, to Canada (13.9 million) up 10 percent and travel to Mexico (31.2 million), singly the largest outbound market, was up nine percent. The 'outbound' market has been strong since 2014 (see graph, below)

The top five destination countries visited by U.S. residents in 2016 were: Mexico (31.2 million) and Canada (13.9 million), followed by the overseas countries of the United Kingdom (3.2 million), Dominican Republic (2.7 million) and Italy (2.2 million). Seven of the top 10 destinations visited by U.S. travelers posted increases in 2016.

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

- South Atlantic States (primarily Florida, Georgia, Virginia, Washington, D.C., Maryland and North Carolina) accounted for 24 percent and travel was up 10 percent.
- Middle Atlantic States (New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania), with a 20 percent share of all U.S. regions, was up eight percent from 2015.
- Pacific States (California and Washington) generated 17 percent of outbound travel was up 26 percent from 2015.
- Travel from East North Central (primarily Illinois, Ohio and Michigan) accounted for 10 percent and was up three percent
- West South-Central States (mainly Texas) registered a nine percent share and travel was down 13 percent.
- Travel from the Mountain region (Nevada, Arizona and Colorado) was up 24 percent.

**U.S. Overseas Traveler and Trip Characteristics:**

Select highlights from 2016:

- **Main trip purpose.** **Vacation/holiday** estimated at 55 percent of U.S. overseas travelers was up 11 percent in volume from 2015. **Visiting friends and relatives (VFR)** was the second-highest main trip purpose, at 27 percent, and was up nine percent in volume from 2015. **Business** travel, as the main purpose of trip, composed eight percent of outbound travel, but volume was down 11 percent from 2015. **Convention** travel was three percent of travel and the number of convention travelers with no growth from 2015. Educational travel was up seven percent.
- The top ten **ports of departure** for U.S. citizens were New York (JFK), Los Angeles (LAX), Miami (MIA), Atlanta (ATL), Newark (EWR), Chicago (ORD), San Francisco (SFO), Houston (IAH), Washington (IAD) and Boston (BOS) which accounted for 76 percent of U.S. departures.

- **Advance trip decision** time and airline reservation time increased to an average of 104 days and 73 days prior to departure, respectively, in 2016.
- As an **information source** for trip planning, airlines were most used (53 percent), along with online travel agencies (OTA) (33 percent) and conventional travel agencies (17 percent). Almost 40 percent of travelers **booked** directly through the airlines, a majority booked indirectly via either an Internet booking service (33 percent) and/or a travel agency (17 percent).
- **Pre-paid package** usage decreased to 12 percent of U.S. travelers from 13 percent.
- The average **length of stay** (number of nights) outside the United States was 17.2 nights in 2016, no change from 2015.
- Seven percent of travelers were on their **first international trip**, up slightly from 2015. The average **number of international trips** taken by U.S. travelers in the last 12 months was 2.5, slightly less than in 2015.
- The number of **destinations visited** again averaged 1.8 in 2016. The percentage visiting only one destination was again 57 percent. Those visiting three or more destinations were also 20 percent as in 2015.
- Travel **party size** held at 1.6.
- The **modes** of inter-city transportation used by U.S. travelers **between destinations** overseas were airline (63 percent, down from 65 percent in 2015), bus (20 percent), and railroad (14 percent). The top modes of intra-city transit were taxicab/limo (29 percent) and subway/tram/bus (21 percent). ‘Ride Sharing Services’ (new category) accounted for eight percent. The use of private and/or rented autos was 39 percent and 12 percent, respectively. Six percent traveled on cruise/river boat for overnight trips. 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, visiting historical locations, experiencing ‘fine dining’ (gastronomy), taking guided tours, visiting art galleries/museums, experiencing cultural/ethnic heritage sites, visiting national parks/monuments and ‘nightclubbing’.
- Average international airfare per visitor, per trip, was \$1,117 USD, down 10 percent from 2015, and average expenditures (travel payments) per visitor, per trip, while overseas were \$1,464, down slightly from 2015. The ‘strong dollar’ may have been a contributor. The usage of credit cards increased slightly to 58 percent. Cash brought from home and cash withdrawn from an ATM using credit/debit cards and purchases using debit cards accounted for 42 percent.
- Airfare and convenient schedules were main factors in airline choice. Over 81 percent ‘paid’ for the ticket without the use of awards, upgrades or deeply discounted fares. Seventy eight percent flew in coach or economy class.
- Travel insurance was purchased for the trip by 31 percent of respondents, up from 30 percent in 2015.
- Twelve percent visited a health care provider in advance of their trip, the same as in 2015.

### **Demographic Data:**

- Fifteen percent of respondents identified themselves as Hispanic. Sixteen percent identified as Asian, eight percent as Black, and two percent as American Indian/Alaskan Native or Hawaiian Islander. Sixty three percent of U.S. citizens who visited Asia in 2015 identified themselves as Asian. Forty seven percent of those visiting South America had identified as Hispanic.

- Females again composed slightly over half (50.6%) of U.S. travelers to overseas. 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 45.2, slightly up from 2015; female travelers averaged 43.9 years, also slightly up from 2015.
- Average household income was \$122,000, down from 2015. First time traveler households reported \$94,000 and repeat traveler households reported \$125,000 annual income. Seven percent of traveler households earned \$300,000 or more. Business and convention travelers earned an average \$154,000.

## **Top Outbound Destination Markets**

### **Mexico**

Mexico was the top U.S. international destination again in 2016 with a record 31.2 million travelers, up nine percent from 2015. According to Banco de Mexico ‘Tourist’ (non-border) travel increased 12 percent in 2016. Those who only traveled across the border for 1+ nights increased five percent. Longer-haul travel by air totaled 8.9 million, and was up 12 percent from 2015. Travel to Mexico has remained relatively stable over the last 10 years. The strongest growth periods were from 2013 through 2016.

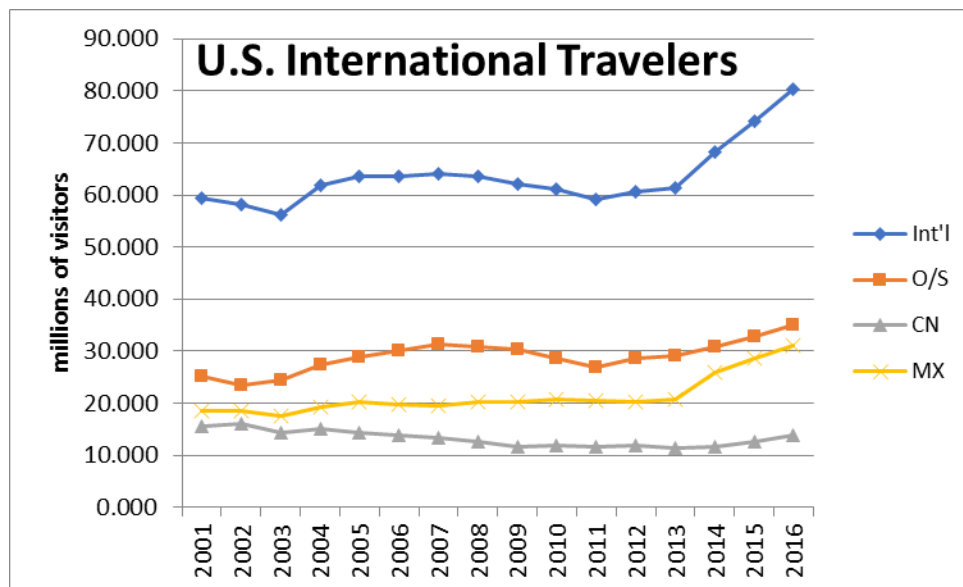
### **Canada**

Canada continues to be the second-most visited country by U.S. travelers. In 2016, 13.9 million U.S. travelers visited Canada, up 10 percent from 2015. Longer haul travel, by air (4.5 million), was up 17 percent. The peak year for U.S. travel to Canada was in 2002 with 16.2 million U.S. travelers. Since 2008, U.S. travel to Canada has increased in four years the strongest in 2015 and 2016.

### **Overseas**

In 2016, 35.1 million U.S. travelers visited overseas markets, up seven percent from 2015.

Travel was up in seven of the top ten overseas markets: The United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Jamaica, Spain, China (PRC), India and Costa Rica.



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

For more detailed information, please go to the Outbound Overview page on NTTO's website, which contains links to in-depth information on the outbound market:

[http://travel.trade.gov/outreachpages/outbound.general\\_information.outbound\\_overview.html](http://travel.trade.gov/outreachpages/outbound.general_information.outbound_overview.html)

In the 2016 outbound section, interested parties will find:

- 2016 Profile of U.S. Resident Travelers Visiting Overseas Destinations. (The profile provides key information on travel patterns, traveler characteristics and spending by U.S. travelers going abroad. Several new tables have been included since the 2012 questionnaire change. In addition, a breakdown is provided on leisure/visiting friends and relatives (VFR) travelers and business/convention travelers.)
- 2016 U.S. to Europe Profile
- 2016 U.S. to Asia Profile
- 2016 U.S. to Overseas Destinations for Business/Conventions Profile
- 2016 U.S. to Overseas Destinations for Leisure/VFR Profile
- Top Destinations Visited by U.S. Resident Travelers 2015-2016
- Top 30 Ports of Departure (to overseas) in 2016 for U.S. Citizens
- Total International Travelers Volume to/from the United States 2008 – 2016
- U.S. Resident Travel to Canada, Mexico and Overseas (Historical 2000 – 2016)
- 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 NTTO web site at:

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

If the information needed is not on the website or in the standard reports sold by NTTO, custom tables and reports are available from the database. Go to:

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

The Survey data tables and standard national reports can assist the industry in understanding U.S. travelers going abroad. 48 subsets of the data are also available based on 40 questions asked of U.S. outbound travelers.

For additional information or questions, please contact:

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