

Characteristics of international overnight travellers, 2016

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Thursday, November 16, 2017

The number of overnight travellers to Canada rose in 2016 to its highest level since 2002. Travellers from abroad made 19.8 million overnight trips to Canada in 2016, spending \$19.6 billion. This was 11.0% more overnight trips than 2015.

At the same time, Canadian residents made 31.3 million overnight trips abroad in 2016, and spent almost twice as much as visitors to Canada, a total of \$39.5 billion. The number of overnight trips made by Canadian residents abroad was down 3.1% from 2015, the result of decreased travel to the United States. The decline in Canadian travel to the United States occurred as the value of the Canadian dollar fell for much of 2015 and early 2016, recording its lowest value since 2003. Canadians also spent less on overnight travel abroad, 0.6% less than in 2015. The decrease was led by a 5.5% decline in spending on overnight trips to the United States.

US residents accounted for around 7 of 10 overnight trips (70.1%) from abroad to Canada, about the same proportion as in 2015. However, when it came to spending, it was residents from overseas countries who spent more, accounting for 53.1% of all expenditures on overnight trips to Canada. In 2016, the share of overseas travellers to Canada out of all overnight travellers from abroad, was 29.9%, the highest since modern record-keeping began in 1972.

Of the overnight trips abroad by Canadians, 61.7% were to the United States, down from 64.2% in 2015. That was the lowest proportion since modern record-keeping began in 1972, as travel to overseas countries increased for the eighth consecutive year. Canadians spent more during overnight trips to overseas countries than on overnight trips to the United States. In 2016, spending in overseas countries accounted for 52.3% of all Canadian spending on overnight international trips.

Travel by US residents to Canada increased by nearly 10% in 2016

US residents made 13.9 million overnight trips to Canada in 2016, the highest figure since 2005 and 9.7% more than in 2015. This increase coincided with a rise in the average value of the US dollar in 2016, as well as a decline in gas prices in both Canada and the United States. Of the 13.9 million overnight trips, travel for pleasure was the most common trip purpose, accounting for 6.5 million trips and up 8.0% from 2015. The number of business overnight trips increased 23.0%, from 2.2 million in 2015 to 2.7 million in 2016. Overall, expenditures by US residents on overnight trips to Canada in 2016 totalled \$9.2 billion.

New York (1.8 million overnight trips), Washington (1.7 million overnight trips) and California (1.2 million overnight trips) were the top three states of origin, accounting for one-third of all overnight trips to Canada from the United States. During these trips, New York residents spent \$856 million while in Canada, Washington residents spent \$920 million and residents of California spent \$1.2 billion. While residents of New York and Washington were also the most frequent visitors on overnight trips to Canada in 2015, residents of California replaced Michigan in 2016 as the third-most common source of travellers to Canada.

On overnight trips to Canada, Ontario (6.7 million overnight visits), British Columbia (3.7 million overnight visits) and Quebec (2.2 million overnight visits) were the most-visited provinces in 2016. Together, these provinces accounted for 83.2% of all overnight visits by US residents to Canada. Ontario alone accounted for 44.0% of all overnight visits to Canada in 2016.



Visiting friends and relatives most common purpose for overnight travel to Canada by overseas residents

Residents from overseas countries took 5.9 million overnight trips to Canada in 2016, up 14.3% from 2015 and the highest figure on record. Of all overnight trips from overseas to Canada, visiting friends and relatives was the most common trip purpose, representing 2.2 million trips and down 4.2% from 2015. It was followed closely by pleasure travel, with 2.0 million trips, a 24.5% increase compared with the previous year. In 2016, residents of overseas countries spent \$10.4 billion on their overnight trips to Canada.

The United Kingdom (805,000 overnight trips) was the top overseas country of origin for overnight travel to Canada, followed by China (591,000) and France (515,000), the same top three countries of origin for visitors as 2015.

Florida remained most popular US destination for overnight travel by Canadians

Canadian residents made 19.3 million overnight trips to the United States in 2016, 6.8% fewer than in 2015, and the third consecutive year of decreased overnight travel from Canada to the United States.

These declines in 2015 and 2016 coincided with a declining value of the Canadian dollar that began in the second half of 2014. Over the two-year period from 2015 to 2016, the Canadian dollar stood at about US\$0.85 in January 2015, fell to US\$0.69 in January 2016 and remained below \$0.80US until the end of 2016. On average, the Canadian dollar was valued at US\$0.90 in 2014, US\$0.78 in 2015, and US\$0.75 in 2016.

The majority of overnight trips to the United States – 11.0 million – were for pleasure, down 8.7% from 2015. There was a 7.9% increase in business trips from Canada to United States, from 3.0 million in 2015 to 3.2 million in 2016. Canadians made 2.6 million overnight trips to visit friends and relatives in the United States, down 8.8% from 2015.

Florida (3.4 million overnight visits), New York (3.1 million) and Washington (2.5 million) continued to be the three states most visited by Canadians on overnight trips in 2016. However, all three states received fewer Canadian overnight visitors in 2016 compared with 2015. The number of overnight visits to Florida declined by 9.7%, to New York by 8.3%, and to Washington by 8.7%.

Spending by Canadian residents on overnight trips to the United States in 2016 totalled \$18.8 billion, a 5.5% decline compared with 2015.

Mexico was the second most-visited country by Canadian residents in 2016, after United States

Canadians made 12.0 million overnight trips to overseas countries (countries other than the United States), up 3.7% from 2015. Canadians spent \$20.7 billion on overnight trips overseas in 2016, up 4.4% compared with the previous year. The number of Canadians making overnight trips to overseas countries has been on an upward trend since 2002, increasing more than 150% over the period.

Out of all overnight trips to overseas countries, the majority (7.1 million) were for pleasure, up 6.0% from the previous year. More than 2.6 million of these trips were for business purposes, down 1.8% from 2015. About 1.7 million overnight trips to overseas countries were primarily to visit friends and relatives, up 2.8% compared with 2015.

With 2.1 million overnight visits, Mexico was the overseas country most visited by Canadians in 2016, followed by the United Kingdom with 1.3 million overnight visits, and France with 1.2 million overnight visits.

Table 1
Overnight travel to and from Canada by trip purpose

	Annual 2016 - Trips	Annual 2015 - Trips	Annual 2015 to Annual 2016 - Trips
	thousands		% change
Canadian trips abroad	31,278	32,267	-3.1%
To the United States	19,288	20,702	-6.8%
Business	3,247	3,010	7.9%
Pleasure	10,953	11,993	-8.7%
Visiting friends/relatives	2,612	2,863	-8.8%
Other ¹	2,475	2,836	-12.7%
To overseas countries	11,990	11,565	3.7%
Business	2,618	2,667	-1.8%
Pleasure	7,055	6,656	6.0%
Visiting friends/relatives	1,706	1,659	2.8%
Other ¹	611	582	5.0%
Travel to Canada	19,822	17,859	11.0%
From the United States	13,892	12,669	9.7%
Business	2,666	2,167	23.0%
Pleasure	6,529	6,043	8.0%
Visiting friends/relatives	3,136	2,997	4.6%
Other ¹	1,560	1,461	6.8%
From overseas countries	5,931	5,191	14.3%
Business	946	957	-1.1%
Pleasure	2,035	1,634	24.5%
Visiting friends/relatives	2,170	2,082	-4.2%
Other ¹	780	518	50.6%

1. Other includes travel to shop, to go to school or to study, for medical or health reasons, for religious reasons, or for other personal reasons

Source(s): International Travel Survey

Note to readers

Overseas countries refer to countries other than the United States.

Canadian trips abroad are made by travellers residing in Canada who have travelled outside of Canada for a period of less than 12 months and who are returning to Canada. Foreign citizens who are residing in Canada and travel abroad are included as Canadian resident travellers.

Trips to Canada are made by residents of a country other than Canada who are cleared through Canada Border Services Agency points of entry on a visit for a period of less than 12 months. A Canadian citizen residing outside Canada for more than 12 months who comes to Canada is included as a traveller from a country other than Canada.

A **trip** abroad for a person residing in Canada starts when a person crosses the border to exit Canada and ends when he/she first re-enters Canada.

A **trip** to Canada for a person residing in a country other than Canada starts when he/she is cleared through a Canada Border Services Agency point of entry to enter Canada and ends when he/she exits Canada.

Overnight travel encompasses travellers from abroad who stay in Canada for at least 24 hours or Canadian travellers who stay outside Canada for at least 24 hours.

A trip can consist of one or more visits. A Canadian traveller on a trip abroad may cross into several countries or states before being recorded as having re-entered Canada. Each of these crossings represent a **visit**. A traveller from a country other than Canada may stay in several locations during a trip to Canada. Each stay at a Canadian location (e.g. a province) within a given trip represents a **visit**.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3152](#).

Data and some summary tables for the 2016 International Travel Survey are now available. Other tables, including statistical profiles of international travellers, are available upon request.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).