

Travel between Canada and other countries, March 2019

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Wednesday, May 22, 2019

Highlights

Travel was up between the United States and Canada from February to March, while travel between Canada and overseas countries declined.

Every major mode of transportation was up between the United States and Canada—most notably travel by car.

The number of Canadian residents travelling to overseas countries declined 1.5% to 1.0 million in March.

The number of overseas travellers to Canada edged down, as fewer travellers from Europe were almost offset by more arrivals from Asia and South America.

Number of Canadians returning from the United States rises in March

Canadian residents made 3.8 million trips to the United States in March, up 4.0% from February. The gain was led by car trips, with same-day car trips (+4.4%) and overnight trips (+3.3%) both increasing.

The number of car trips to the United States rose in every province. British Columbia posted the largest gain (+8.1%), following a 2.5% decline in February when heavy snowstorms affected much of the Pacific Northwest.

On a year-over-year basis, Canadians made 2.8% fewer car trips to the United States in March. The value of the Canadian dollar, a factor known to influence cross-border travel, fell from \$US 0.77 year over year to \$US 0.75 in March.

Canadian residents made 883,000 trips by plane to the United States in March, up 3.7% from the previous month. Ontario led the increase in travel by plane to the United States (+3.5%), followed by Alberta (+5.7%) and British Columbia (+3.6%).

Travel from United States increases following two months of decline

Canada welcomed just under 2.1 million travellers from the United States in March, up 4.9% after two consecutive months of decline. March also saw a 2.1% year-over-year increase. All major modes of travel transportation increased, with car trips up 6.0% to 1.4 million, while travel by plane rose 1.4% to 479,000.

Overnight car trips to Canada by US residents rose 6.8% to 714,000, while same-day car trips increased 5.2% to 690,000.

The number of car travellers from the United States rose in every province. British Columbia (+16.1%) led the gain following declines in February that corresponded with heavy snowstorms across the Pacific Northwest.

Travel from overseas countries edges down

The number of travellers to Canada from overseas countries (countries other than the United States) edged down 0.1% to 598,000 in March. Despite the monthly decline, the number of overseas travellers in March was up 3.3% year over year.

Travel from Europe decreased 0.9%, led by a 4.2% decline in the numbers of visitors from Germany, Canada's third-largest source of travellers from Europe, and an 8.0% decrease from Switzerland.



On a seasonally adjusted basis, the number of travellers to Canada from Germany was the lowest since February 2017. The decline in March may have been partially attributable to heavy storms in Germany in mid-March that affected much of the country, disrupting rail, road and air traffic.

Meanwhile, more people arrived from the United Kingdom (+0.7%) and France (+1.5%), respectively Canada's first- and second-largest source countries for travellers from Europe.

Increased arrivals from Asia (+0.8%) and South America (+5.2%) moderated the overall decline in the numbers of travellers from overseas.

Arrivals from India rose 7.2% in March and accounted for most of the gain in the number of travellers from Asia. The number of travellers to Canada from India, which has risen annually by an average of 14.0% over the last five years, rose 17.5% year over year in the first quarter.

Arrivals from China (+2.8%) also increased in March. However, on a year-to-date basis, the number of plane arrivals from China was 3.0% lower compared with the same period in 2018.

The increase in the number of travellers from South America was led by a 6.4% increase in arrivals from Brazil.

Fewer Canadians travel overseas

The number of Canadian residents travelling overseas declined 1.5% in March to just over 1.0 million. On a year-to-date basis, the number of Canadian residents travelling to countries other than the United States rose 4.3%.

Note to readers

Monthly data are seasonally adjusted. For information on seasonal adjustment, see [Seasonally adjusted data – Frequently asked questions](#). Year-to-date figures are based on unadjusted data.

Seasonally adjusted data from January 2018 to February 2019 have been revised. No revisions were made to non-seasonally adjusted data.

Data for Statistics Canada's Frontier Counts program are produced using administrative data received from the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) on all international travellers who have been cleared for entry or re-entry into Canada. This includes residents of Canada, the United States and overseas entering Canada from abroad.

Starting with January 2019 data, Statistics Canada updated the method of determining trip durations for US residents travelling to Canada and Canadian residents returning from the United States. This change affects the relative proportions of same-day/overnight travellers arriving in Canada by air and 'other' modes of transportation (train, marine private, pedestrians, other vehicles). Trip durations for travel by automobile and bus are not affected. Caution is therefore advised when comparing 2019 data with earlier time periods for these modes of transportation. Users analyzing trends in the same-day or overnight portions of these modes are advised to also compare trends for the total as comparison.

In 2017, the CBSA began introducing the electronic Primary Inspection Kiosk (PIK) system at airports in Canada. The PIK system replaces the E311 Declaration Cards that were completed by international travellers to Canada.

Data users are cautioned that the switch from E311 cards to PIK has affected the historical comparability of some data series. Most notably, there has been an increased tendency of Canadian travellers returning from overseas trips via the United States to report in PIK that they are returning from the United States and not from overseas via the United States. In the Frontier Counts, this has led to increases in the numbers of Canadian residents returning from the United States by air, and decreases in the numbers of Canadian residents returning from countries other than the United States by air via the United States (as well as more aggregated series to which these data contribute). Data for other series that include international travellers to Canada by air do not appear to be affected by the switch from E311 to PIK and hence comparisons with data for other reference months can be made.

Further information on the switch from E311 cards to PIK is available in the document "[Impacts of PIK on Tourism Data](#)."

During 2018, Statistics Canada undertook a review of sources of data on overseas residents entering Canada at land ports. Overseas residents who enter Canada at land ports represent about 10% of total overseas travellers to Canada. Total counts of overseas travellers were revised to reflect new sources of data at some ports. In addition, starting with August 2018 data, Statistics Canada implemented a new method for estimating the country of residence breakdowns of these overseas travellers entering Canada at most land ports. These changes have varying degrees of impact on the total counts of travellers to Canada from individual countries. Users are therefore advised to use caution when comparing changes in travel to Canada with previous months for individual overseas countries.

Data users making comparisons between the data for March 2018 and March 2019 are advised that the entirety of the Easter weekend took place in April in 2019, compared with March and April in 2018 (Easter Sunday was April 1, 2018).

Overseas countries refer to countries other than the United States.

A **Canadian resident traveller** is a Canadian resident who has travelled outside Canada for a period of less than 12 months.

A **non-resident traveller** is a resident of a country other than Canada who is travelling to Canada for a period of less than 12 months.

An **overnight traveller or a tourist** is a traveller whose trip includes one or more night's stay.

Table 1
Travel between Canada and other countries – Seasonally adjusted

	March 2018 ^r	February 2019 ^r	March 2019 ^p	February to March 2019
	thousands			% change ¹
Canadian trips abroad²	4,780	4,678	4,808	2.8
To the United States	3,778	3,649	3,794	4.0
To other countries	1,002	1,029	1,013	-1.5
Same-day car trips to the United States	1,979	1,785	1,863	4.4
Total trips, one or more nights	2,765	2,766	2,790	0.8
United States ³	1,763	1,737	1,776	2.2
Car	901	906	935	3.3
Plane	783	764	770	0.8
Other modes of transportation	78	67	71	4.8
Other countries	1,002	1,029	1,013	-1.5
Travel to Canada²	2,620	2,586	2,682	3.7
From the United States	2,041	1,987	2,084	4.9
From other countries	579	599	598	-0.1
Same-day car trips from the United States	683	656	690	5.2
Total trips, one or more nights	1,771	1,756	1,815	3.4
United States ³	1,203	1,190	1,247	4.8
Car	673	668	714	6.8
Plane	391	419	424	1.2
Other modes of transportation	139	103	109	6.2
Other countries ⁴	568	566	569	0.5
Travel to Canada: Top overseas markets,⁵ by country of origin^{6, 7}				
United Kingdom	68	67	68	0.7
China	63	65	66	2.8
France	52	53	54	1.5
Mexico	34	41	40	-3.1
Australia	29	33	33	-1.0
Germany	34	33	32	-4.2
India	25	28	30	7.2
Japan	22	21	21	1.3
South Korea	23	21	19	-9.1
Brazil	18	16	17	6.4
Hong Kong	14	15	15	-0.9
Netherlands	12	12	12	0.8

^r revised

^p preliminary

1. Percentage change is based on unrounded data.

2. Totals exceed the sum of "same-day car trips" and "total trips, one or more nights" because they include all of the same-day trips.

3. Data for the United States include counts of cars and buses, and data for planes, trains, boats and other methods of transportation.

4. Figures for other countries exclude same-day entries by land only via the United States.

5. Overseas markets refer to countries other than the United States.

6. Includes same-day and overnight trips.

7. Starting with August 2018 data, Statistics Canada implemented a new method for estimating the country of residence breakdowns of overseas travellers entering Canada at land ports where this breakdown was not available. This change has varying degrees of impact on the total counts of travellers to Canada from individual countries. Users are therefore advised to use caution when comparing changes in travel to Canada with previous months for individual overseas countries.

Source(s): Tables [24-10-0005-01](#), [24-10-0043-01](#) and [24-10-0006-01](#).

Available tables: [24-10-0002-01](#), [24-10-0003-01](#), [24-10-0005-01](#), [24-10-0006-01](#), [24-10-0041-01](#) and [24-10-0043-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5005](#).

The March 2019 issue of *International Travel, Advance Information*, Vol. 35, no. 2 ([66-001-P](#)), is now available.

For more information regarding the impacts on Statistics Canada travel and tourism data resulting from the replacement of E311 cards with the Primary Inspection Kiosk (PIK), please consult the document "[Impacts of PIK on Tourism Data](#)."

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).