

Travel between Canada and other countries, May 2019

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Highlights

The number of arrivals to Canada from overseas countries reached a record high for the month of May since modern record keeping started in 1972. This was also the seventh consecutive year-over-year increase for the month of May since 2013.

The number of trips to Canada by US residents rose for the third month in a row, while Canadian travel to the United States was down for the second consecutive month.

Travel by Canadian residents to overseas destinations increased in May following two consecutive monthly declines.

Record number of overseas travellers to Canada for the month of May

Residents of overseas countries (countries other than the United States) took a record 645,000 trips to Canada for the month of May, up 1.8% from April. This was also the seventh consecutive year-over-year increase for the month of May since 2013.

The increase from April 2019 was led by travellers from Europe, up 5.8% to 275,000. Arrivals from the United Kingdom, Canada's top source for overseas travellers, rose 8.0% in May. However, travel from France, the third largest source country for overseas travellers to Canada, edged down 0.5%.

Travel from Asia edged up 0.3% in May to 219,000. Arrivals from China, Canada's second source market of overseas travellers, were up 1.1% in May. However, there were 5.2% fewer air arrivals from China over the first five months of 2019 compared with the same period in 2018.

Arrivals from Australia, Canada's sixth largest source market of overseas travellers in 2018, edged down 0.1% in May. This partly offset the increase in arrivals from the rest of Oceania (+0.6%).

There were also fewer travellers from Mexico (-2.8%) and Brazil (-8.1%), the second- and third-largest sources of overseas travellers to Canada from the Americas after the United States.

US travel to Canada edges up

US residents made 2.1 million trips to Canada in May, up slightly (+0.1%) from April and the third consecutive monthly increase. There were also 5.6% more trips to Canada by US residents than in May 2018.

The year-over-year increase in travel from the United States to Canada coincided with an increase in the value of the US dollar. The value of the US dollar, a factor known to influence cross-border travel, increased year over year from CAN\$1.27 to CAN\$1.33 in May.

US residents made 1.4 million car trips to Canada in May, down 0.6% from the previous month. The number of same-day car trips to Canada edged up 0.4% in May to 699,000, while overnight car trips declined 1.6% to 698,000. On a year-over-year basis, however, car travel to Canada by US residents was up 3.6%.

The number of US residents arriving to Canada by air totalled 469,000 in May, up 9.2% year over year.



Travel to the United States by Canadian residents declines

Canadian residents made 3.6 million trips to the United States in May, down 1.2% from April and the second consecutive monthly decline. As was the case the previous month, all major modes of travel were down.

The monthly decline in travel to the United States in May was led by a 2.3% decrease in trips by plane to 825,000 trips. However, plane travel by Canadian residents to the United States was up 3.8% from May 2018.

Close to three-quarters of the trips made by Canadians to the United States were made by car. Canadians made 2.7 million car trips to the United States in May, down 1.3% from the previous month. Same-day car trips to the United States declined 1.6% in May to 1.8 million, while overnight car trips decreased 0.6% to 894,000. On a year-over-year basis, Canadians made fewer same-day (-7.9%) and overnight (-2.9%) car trips to the United States compared with May 2018.

May was the second consecutive month where spring flooding had washed out and cut off roadways in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick. Car travel to the United States declined in Quebec (-1.2%) and New Brunswick (-1.7%) in May and was unchanged in Ontario following a 2.0% decline in April.

Canadian travel to overseas countries increases

Canadian residents took 1.0 million trips to overseas destinations (countries other than the United States) in May, up 9.2% following two consecutive monthly declines. Canadians made 2.2% more trips to overseas countries over the first five months of 2019 than they did during the same period in 2018.

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 April 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).

The preliminary figures for April 2019 released last month included an issue that had been identified late in the production process and resulted in overstated commercial air figures at the port of Victoria. While the issue has been corrected for May 2019 data, figures for March and April 2019 will be adjusted in next month's release. Users are therefore advised to use caution when making month-to-month comparisons in air travel that include the port of Victoria.

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

	May 2018 ^r	April 2019 ^r	May 2019 ^p	April to May 2019
	thousands			% change ¹
Canadian trips abroad²	4,778	4,641	4,683	0.9
To the United States	3,785	3,686	3,640	-1.2
To other countries	993	955	1,042	9.2
Same-day car trips to the United States	1,960	1,835	1,806	-1.6
Total trips, one or more nights	2,783	2,664	2,756	3.5
United States ³	1,790	1,709	1,714	0.3
Car	921	901	895	-0.6
Plane	791	751	756	0.7
Other modes of transportation	78	58	63	9.3
Other countries	993	955	1,042	9.2
Travel to Canada²	2,551	2,728	2,741	0.5
From the United States	1,984	2,094	2,095	0.1
From other countries	567	634	645	1.8
Same-day car trips from the United States	665	696	699	0.4
Total trips, one or more nights	1,747	1,851	1,879	1.5
United States ³	1,193	1,244	1,260	1.3
Car	684	709	698	-1.6
Plane	355	449	434	-3.3
Other modes of transportation	154	85	128	50.1
Other countries ⁴	554	607	619	2.0
Travel to Canada: Top overseas markets,⁵ by country of origin^{6, 7}				
United Kingdom	67	75	81	8.0
China	63	65	66	1.1
France	51	57	57	-0.5
Mexico	32	45	44	-2.8
Germany	36	32	35	9.6
Australia	30	32	32	-0.1
India	24	31	31	0.6
Japan	21	26	23	-13.5
South Korea	23	18	19	6.2
Brazil	15	17	15	-8.1
Hong Kong	13	15	15	0.1
Netherlands	11	13	12	-7.0

^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 May 2019 issue of *International Travel, Advance Information*, Vol. 35, no. 5 ([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).