

National Travel Survey, second quarter 2019

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Highlights

Canadian residents made 76.9 million trips within Canada and abroad in the second quarter, down 1.4% from the same quarter a year earlier. Domestic travel declined 1.7%, as travel during the quarter was hampered by spring flooding in Ontario and Quebec and severe weather conditions on the Prairies. Meanwhile, travel abroad by Canadian residents during the spring months rose 0.4%.

Travel within Canada down, but spending up

Canadian residents made 67.0 million trips within Canada during the second quarter, down 1.7% from the same quarter of 2018. Spending on domestic travel, however, increased 1.6% year over year to \$10.8 billion.

During their domestic travels, Canadian residents spent the most on food and beverages in restaurants and bars (22.3%), accommodation (21.8%) and vehicle operation expenses (14.7%).

The average trip expense for Canadian residents travelling within Canada increased year over year from \$156 per trip to \$161. With higher gasoline prices in some cities across Canada as well as higher domestic air fares nationally this spring, Canadians spent more on commercial local transportation (+26.3%) and vehicle operating costs (+3.9%) compared with the second quarter of 2018. In contrast, spending on clothing (-11.4%), accommodation (-3.3%) and recreation (-2.4%) declined.

Visiting friends and relatives, the most common trip purpose, increased 4.5% year over year to 28.7 million domestic trips during the second quarter. Travel domestically for business-related purposes such as attending conferences, conventions or trade shows rose 3.3% to 7.2 million.

The number of domestic trips for holiday, leisure or recreation (-9.3%) and for other personal reasons such as shopping (-4.1%) were down compared with the second quarter of 2018.

Unusually wet weather and spring flooding in Eastern Canada in April and May corresponded with fewer domestic visits in Ontario (-4.8% to 28.2 million visits) and Quebec (-3.9% to 12.7 million visits), the most-visited provinces during the quarter.

Meanwhile, domestic visits in Manitoba declined 8.3% amid highway closures and travel delays caused by a spring snowstorm and severe weather conditions on the Prairies at the beginning of the second quarter.

Canadian travel to the United States unchanged, but spending increases

Residents of Canada took 7.3 million trips to the United States during the second quarter, essentially unchanged from the second quarter of 2018. However, the total amount spent on trips to the United States rose 4.2% to \$5.5 billion.

Average spending by Canadian travellers in the United States rose from \$723 to \$753 per trip. The value of the Canadian dollar—a factor known to influence cross-border travel—contributed to higher travel costs for Canadian travellers in the United States. The Canadian dollar declined from \$0.77 USD in the second quarter of 2018 to \$0.75 USD in the second quarter of 2019.

Accommodation, the largest single expense item, represented 41.6% of total travel expenditures made by Canadians in the United States, followed by expenses on food and beverages in restaurants and bars (17.9%).

Spending on accommodation (+9.7%) and food and beverages in restaurants and bars (+4.9%) in the United States were both up from the same quarter of 2018.



Travel to the United States for holiday, leisure or recreation—the most commonly cited trip purpose in the second quarter—declined 6.7% to 3.2 million trips. Visiting friends and relatives, the next most commonly reported reason for travelling to the United States, decreased 3.0% to 1.5 million trips.

Residents of Quebec (-8.5%) and Alberta (-12.0%) reported fewer trips to the United States during the second quarter, while residents of British Columbia (+1.9%) and Ontario (+2.0%) reported increases.

More Canadians travel overseas

Canadian residents took 2.6 million trips to overseas countries (countries other than the United States) in the second quarter, up 1.7% year over year.

Spending by Canadian residents during trips to overseas countries increased 12.2% to almost \$5.0 billion during the quarter. Accommodation (48.0%) and food and beverages in restaurants and bars (18.2%) accounted for the largest shares of total overseas travel expenses (excluding the cost of commercial transportation booked in Canada for travel to and from the overseas destination).

Mexico (415,000 visits), the United Kingdom (249,000 visits), Cuba (233,000 visits) and China (194,000 visits) were the most commonly visited overseas countries during the quarter.

Almost two-thirds of Canadian residents who travelled overseas during the quarter reported holidays, leisure or recreation (65.6%) as their main reason for travel. This was the most commonly reported trip purpose for Canadian travellers to Mexico, the United Kingdom and Cuba. Meanwhile, reuniting with friends and relatives was the most common trip purpose for travellers visiting China.

Table 1
Travel by Canadian residents in Canada and abroad by trip purpose, second quarter of 2019

	Trips	Travel expenditures
	thousands	millions of dollars
Trips by Canadian residents in Canada	67,000	10,800
Business	7,200	2,100
Pleasure	21,100	4,000
Visiting friends/relatives	28,700	2,900
Other ¹	10,100	1,700
Trips by Canadian residents abroad	9,900	10,500
To the United States	7,300	5,500
Business	1,000	840
Pleasure	3,200	3,900
Visiting friends/relatives	1,500	470
Other ¹	1,500	340
To other countries	2,600	5,000
Business	180	460
Pleasure	1,700	3,400
Visiting friends/relatives	600	850
Other ¹	110	280

1. The "Other" category includes travel to shop, to attend a personal conference, convention or trade show, or for other personal reasons.

Source(s):

National Travel Survey (5232).
Table 24-10-0045-01.

Note to readers

The National Travel Survey (NTS) collects information about the domestic and international travel of Canadian residents.

The NTS was developed to fully replace the Travel Survey of Residents of Canada and the Canadian resident component of the International Travel Survey. Please note that NTS data are not comparable with data from these two surveys because the NTS was designed using a different survey methodology.

NTS estimates are based on a sample and are therefore subject to sampling variability. Estimates for smaller geographic areas and categories have more variability. Users are advised to exercise caution when conducting analysis using estimates with a high coefficient of variation, as indicated by the letter quality indicators attached to each survey estimate.

Users are advised that changes to procedures for contacting households selected to participate in the NTS survey were introduced in 2019. The changes in these procedures may have resulted in differences in the non-response bias present in NTS results of 2018 and 2019, which would affect the comparability of results between these two years.

The target population is the civilian, non-institutionalized population 18 years and older in Canada's provinces. Not included in the survey's coverage are persons living on Indian reserves and persons living in the territories. Also excluded are out-of-scope trips such as routine trips and trips taken by commuters and diplomatic or military personnel.

Domestic trips are made by travellers residing in Canada who have travelled inside Canada for a period of less than 12 months and who are returning to their place of residence.

Same-day trips or visits are considered to have taken place within the same calendar day, that is, the traveller left and returned home on the same day, and have to be 40 km or more (one way) in length.

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.

A trip abroad for persons residing in Canada starts when they cross the border to exit Canada and ends when they first re-enter Canada.

Trips and visits. A trip can consist of one or more visits. A Canadian traveller on a trip abroad may cross into several countries or US states before being recorded as having re-entered Canada. Each of these crossings represents a visit. Similarly, Canadian residents travelling in Canada may stay in several locations during their trip. Each stay at a Canadian location (for example, a province) within a given trip represents a visit.

Available tables: table [24-10-0045-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5232](#).

Data from the National Travel Survey for second quarter of 2019 are now available. Other tables, including statistical profiles of Canadian 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).