

# Travel between Canada and other countries, January 2020

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Monday, March 23, 2020

---

## Highlights

Arrivals from China were up 3.3% in January, partly due to the peak in travel that preceded the Chinese New Year on January 25, 2020.

Travel restrictions between Canada and China were introduced in late January in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

Bad weather in the southern part of British Columbia may have played a role in reducing car travel both ways (-6.2%) across the Canada-US border in January.

Travel by Canadians to overseas countries was down 1.1% in January, the first decline since August 2019.

## More overseas travellers from every region except South America

After adjusting for normal seasonal variation, residents of overseas countries (countries other than the United States) made 628,000 trips to Canada in January, up 0.5% from December.

Arrivals to Canada increased from every overseas region in the world except South America (-15.0%).

Residents of France (+4.5%), the United Kingdom (+3.1%) and Mexico (+1.7%) took more trips to Canada in January compared with December, while travel from Brazil (-19.7%), India (-9.6%) and South Korea (-3.7%) declined.

China, at 749,000 trips, was Canada's second-largest source market for overseas travellers in 2019, following the United Kingdom (909,000 trips).

Arrivals from China increased 3.3% over December to 64,000, due in part to additional travel from China that usually precedes the Chinese New Year.

## Impact of the Chinese New Year on air arrivals

When making year-over-year comparisons in numbers of Chinese travellers to Canada, the date of the Chinese New Year must be taken into account. The Chinese New Year falls anywhere from January 21 to February 21 each year and travel from China to Canada shifts to align with the holiday.

In 2019, for example, arrivals from China began to rise in late January and then peaked in February prior to the New Year on February 5. In 2020, however, arrivals from China rose and then peaked entirely in January prior to the New Year on January 25.

In response to the coronavirus outbreak, travel restrictions between Canada and China were introduced in late January, but the consequences will be felt in the coming months.

These impacts can be illustrated using data from the electronic system used by the Canada Border Services Agency to collect customs declarations from international travellers to Canada arriving at most major Canadian airports—the Primary Inspection Kiosk (PIK) system.

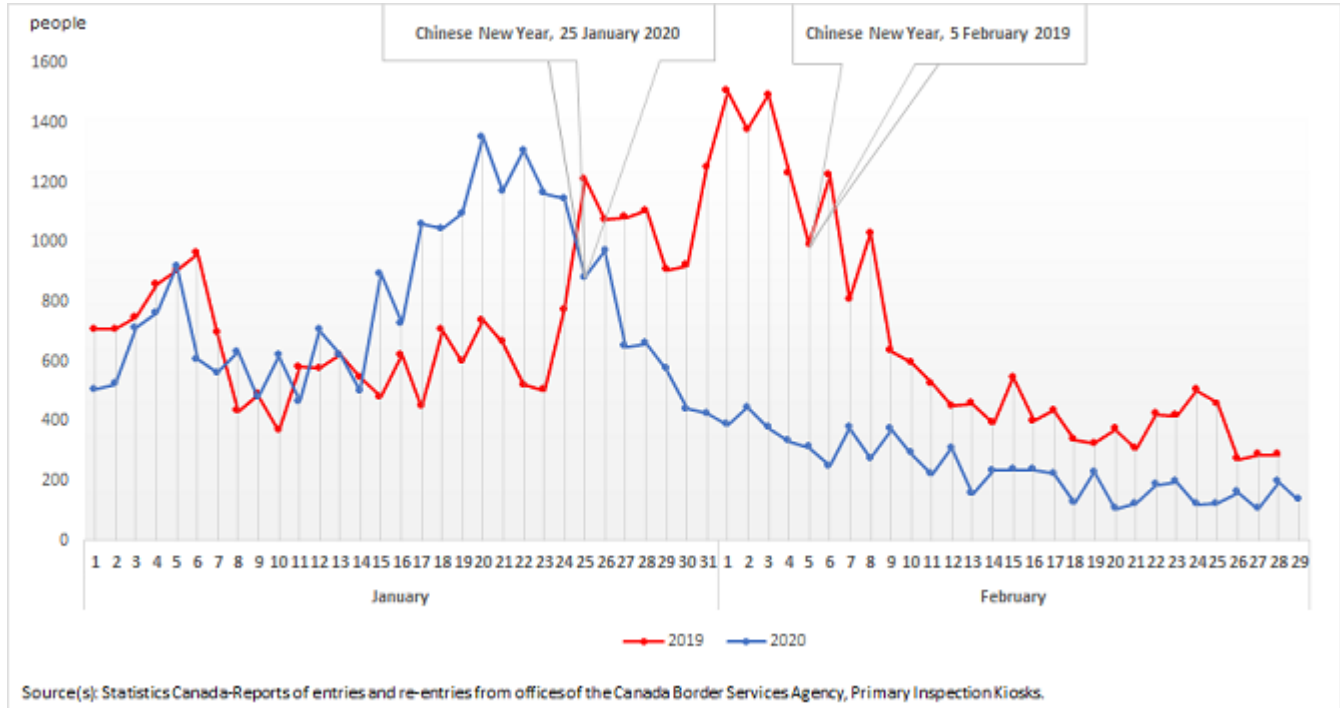
Vancouver International Airport was the port of entry for almost half (48.8%) of all air arrivals in Canada from China in 2019.



According to the PIK data, more than 24,000 travellers from China arrived at Vancouver International Airport in January 2020. This was higher than the figure of 23,000 recorded a year earlier.

In February of 2020, however, with the pre-New Year peak having shifted back from February to January in 2020 and some suspended flight services from Beijing and Shanghai to Vancouver International Airport, the number of travellers from China declined from 18,000 to 7,000 trips.

### Infographic 1 – Travellers to Vancouver International Airport from China



### Fewer US residents travel to Canada in January

US residents took 2.1 million trips to Canada in January, down 2.0% from December. Both plane (-2.9%) and car (-0.9%) arrivals declined.

In January, travellers from the United States made 464,000 trips to Canada by plane. Most provinces recorded a decline, including Ontario (-5.2%) and British Columbia (-4.0%). In contrast, there were more US travellers by plane to Quebec (+3.8%) and Newfoundland and Labrador (+5.3%).

Quebec received 78,000 US travellers by air in January, the month of many winter festivities in the province, and marked the highest level on record for the month since 2000. Montréal was the port of entry for most US travellers (95.0%) arriving in Quebec by plane.

US travellers took 1.4 million trips to Canada by car in January, down 0.9% from December. Same-day car trips to Canada by US residents declined 2.9% to 696,000, offsetting the increase in overnight car arrivals (+1.0% to 739,000).

### Travel to the United States by Canadians declines in January

Trips by Canadian residents to the United States decreased 3.0% from December to 3.6 million trips in January. However, this was 1.5% above the level reported 12 months earlier.

Over three-quarters of these trips to the United States were made by car, down 1.4% to 2.7 million trips. Car travel across the border was down in every province except Ontario (+3.1%).

There were 710,000 car trips from British Columbia to the United States in January, down 6.5% from December. The decline coincided with a snowstorm that hit the southern part of the province in mid-January, prompting car travellers to stay off roads. Both same-day (-6.0% to 498,000 trips) and overnight (-7.8% to 212,000 trips) car travel from British Columbia to the United States declined.

Air travel to the United States by Canadian residents was down 6.6% in January to 843,000 trips. The decline was concentrated in Ontario, where the number of residents returning from the United States by plane decreased 11.0%.

## Overseas travel by Canadians declines

Canadian residents took 1.0 million trips to overseas destinations in January, down 1.1% from December. This was the first monthly decline following five consecutive monthly increases going back to August 2019.

### Note to readers

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 countries entering Canada from abroad.

Monthly data are seasonally adjusted. Seasonally adjusted data for January 2015 to December 2019 have been revised.

For information on seasonal adjustment, see [Seasonally adjusted data – Frequently asked questions](#).

Revisions were also made to data for January to December 2019 to account for a) additional information received from certain ports and b) updated information for assigning trip durations (same-day or overnight) and country of residence for travellers entering by modes other than automobile or air.

In 2017, CBSA began introducing the electronic Primary Inspection Kiosk (PIK) system at certain airports in Canada to replace 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.

Please note data on air arrivals from the CBSA's PIK system are not seasonally adjusted. As such, data users making comparisons between February 2019 and February 2020 are advised to note that February 2019 had 28 days, while February 2020 had 29 days.

Further information on the switch from E311 cards to PIK is available in the document "[Impacts on Statistics Canada travel and tourism data resulting from replacement of E311 declaration cards with Primary Inspection Kiosks](#)".

**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 nights' stay.

**Table 1**  
**Travel between Canada and other countries – Seasonally adjusted**

	January 2019 <sup>r</sup>	December 2019 <sup>r</sup>	January 2020 <sup>p</sup>	December 2019 to January 2020
	thousands			% change <sup>1</sup>
<b>Canadian trips abroad<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>4,595</b>	<b>4,813</b>	<b>4,689</b>	<b>-2.6</b>
To the United States	3,587	3,752	3,640	-3.0
To other countries	1,008	1,061	1,049	-1.1
Same-day car trips to the United States	1,756	1,761	1,769	0.5
Total trips, one or more nights	2,717	2,884	2,800	-2.9
United States <sup>3</sup>	1,709	1,823	1,750	-4.0
Car	920	961	915	-4.8
Plane	725	786	770	-2.0
Other modes of transportation	64	76	65	-13.8
Other countries	1,008	1,061	1,049	-1.1
<b>Travel to Canada<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>2,629</b>	<b>2,761</b>	<b>2,722</b>	<b>-1.4</b>
From the United States	2,012	2,136	2,094	-2.0
From other countries	617	625	628	0.5
Same-day car trips from the United States	661	717	696	-2.9
Total trips, one or more nights	1,803	1,876	1,862	-0.7
United States <sup>3</sup>	1,211	1,278	1,263	-1.2
Car	689	732	739	1.0
Plane	406	435	418	-4.0
Other modes of transportation	116	111	106	-5.3
Other countries <sup>4</sup>	592	598	600	0.3
<b>Travel to Canada: Top overseas markets,<sup>5</sup> by country of origin<sup>6, 7</sup></b>				
United Kingdom	71	73	75	3.1
China	72	62	64	3.3
France	56	55	58	4.5
Mexico	40	44	45	1.7
Germany	35	35	34	-2.0
Australia	33	31	31	2.7
India	29	33	30	-9.6
South Korea	22	25	24	-3.7
Japan	21	21	22	3.4
Hong Kong	14	16	17	5.5
Brazil	16	15	12	-19.7
Netherlands	12	12	12	0.5

<sup>r</sup> revised

<sup>p</sup> 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 the totals include same-day trips by all modes of transportation.

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 January 2020 issue of *International Travel, Advance Information*, Vol. 36, no. 1 ([66-001-P](#)), is now available.

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](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).