

Canadians made fewer trips within Canada and around the world in 2019

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Highlights

Canadian residents made 313 million trips within Canada and around the world in 2019, when the emerging pandemic was not yet a consideration in travel decisions, down slightly (-0.9%) from 2018.

Canadians took fewer trips (-1.0%) domestically, while the number of trips to overseas countries (countries other than the United States) rose 4.0%. Trips to the United States were down 2.3%.

Despite making fewer trips overall, spending by Canadian residents while travelling rose 2.7% from 2018 to \$86.1 billion, led by a 6.2% increase in spending overseas.

This release completes a portrait of travel by Canadian residents during 2019, which will serve as an important benchmark to measure the full impact of COVID-19 on travel behaviour in 2020 and upcoming years.

More recent data on international travel to Canada are available in the releases "[Travel between Canada and other countries](#)" and "[National Travel Survey](#)."

Ontarians make more in-province visits

Canadians made 275 million domestic trips in 2019, down 1.0% from 2018. Spending on trips within Canada declined 0.3% year over year to \$45.9 billion.

While domestic trips represented 87.9% of all trips made by Canadians in 2019, Canadians' spending on domestic trips accounted for just over half of total travel expenditures.

On average, Canadian travellers spent \$170 per trip within Canada—\$80 per same-day trip and \$330 per overnight trip. The largest spending categories for Canadians travelling domestically were accommodation (accounting for 23.5% of expenditures), restaurants and bars (21.5%) and gas and other vehicle operation costs (14.2%).

Visiting friends or relatives (114.9 million trips) was the main trip purpose for roughly two out of every five domestic trips in 2019. About one-third of all domestic trips were for holidays, leisure or recreation (94.7 million trips).

Trip purposes also included other personal reasons such as attending conventions, trades or shopping (14.5%) and business-related reasons (9.4%).

Ontario, the most populous province, received 116.5 million visits in 2019, most of which were from Ontarians visiting within their province (93.3%). Another 7.9 million visits were made by out-of-province residents in Canada. Quebec (56.9 million visits) and British Columbia (34.2 million) were the next leading destinations, followed by Alberta (32.4 million).

Atlantic Canada had the largest shares of Canadian visitors from other provinces, led by Prince Edward Island, where 47.9% of visitors were from another province. For Atlantic Canada as a whole, the largest outside sources of Canadian visitors were Ontario (1.8 million visits), Quebec (747,000 visits) and Alberta (343,000 visits).

Canadian residents travel to the United States mainly for holidays, leisure or recreation

Travel to the United States by Canadian residents declined by 2.3% in 2019 to 27.1 million trips from 27.7 million trips in 2018. However, Canadian residents spent \$21.1 billion on their trips to the United States in 2019, up 4.8% from a year earlier.



Almost half (48.6%) of all trips by Canadians to the United States were for holidays, leisure or recreation. Other popular reasons were visiting friends or families (20.4%) and personal reasons such as shopping, attending conferences or trade shows (20.5%).

While travelling in the United States, Canadians spent an average of \$780 per trip in 2019, up from \$730 a year earlier. Average spending on overnight trips to the United States (\$1,240) was just over 10 times the amount spent on same-day visits (\$120).

For Canadians travelling in the United States, the largest expenditures were on accommodation (accounting for 39.6% of spending), restaurants and bars (18.6%), entertainment (6.3%) and commercial transportation within the United States (6.2%).

Ontario residents, representing just over one-third (38.7%) of the Canadian population, took almost half (47.8%) of all visits across the border in 2019, and accounted for 43.8% of total expenditures.

Residents of British Columbia made just over one-fifth of visits to the United States (21.1%), spending 19.9% of total travel expenditures in the United States.

More Canadian residents travelling overseas

In 2019, Canadian residents took 10.7 million trips to overseas countries (countries other than the United States), up 4.0% from 2018. This accounted for over one-quarter of all trips abroad during the year.

Spending on overseas trips increased from \$18.0 billion in 2018 to \$19.1 billion in 2019, almost half (47.5%) of total travel spending abroad by Canadians.

Excluding the cost of transportation booked in Canada for travel to or from the destinations, spending on overseas trips averaged \$1,780 per trip in 2019, up from \$1,740 in 2018. By comparison, Canadians who travelled to the United States on overnight visits during 2019 spent \$1,240 per trip on average.

The largest expense items for Canadians travelling overseas in 2019 were accommodation (accounting for 45.6% of spending), food and beverage services in restaurants and bars (20.1%), commercial transportation at the destination (9.4%) and entertainment (5.7%).

Holidays, leisure or recreation were the reason most commonly cited by Canadian residents for travelling overseas, accounting for 62.8% of the total. Visiting friends or relatives (26.7%) was next, followed by business purposes (6.8%) and all other personal reasons (3.6%).

The most popular overseas destinations visited by Canadians in 2019 were Mexico (1.8 million visits), Cuba (964,000), the United Kingdom (770,000), China (666,000) and Italy (619,000).

Canadians who travelled to China (64.1%) and India (62.7%) were more likely to report visiting with friends or relatives, while just under 91% of those travelling to the sunny destinations of Mexico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic did so for holidays, leisure or recreation.

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

	Trips	Travel expenditures
	thousands	millions of dollars
Trips by Canadian residents in Canada	275,418	45,858
Business	25,897	6,882
Pleasure	94,651	20,320
Visiting friends/relatives	114,897	12,427
Other ¹	39,973	6,228
Trips by Canadian residents abroad		
To the United States	27,117	21,125
Business	2,855	2,787
Pleasure	13,181	14,619
Visiting friends/relatives	5,531	2,240
Other ¹	5,550	1,479
To other countries	10,728	19,110
Business	734	1,463
Pleasure	6,741	13,141
Visiting friends/relatives	2,864	3,816
Other ¹	389	691

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 replace the Travel Survey of Residents of Canada and the Canadian resident component of the International Travel Survey, but is not comparable with either.

Target population is the civilian, non-institutionalized population 18 years of age and older in Canada's provinces, excluding persons living on Indian reserves and in the territories. Routine trips taken by commuters and diplomatic or military personnel are out-of-scope.

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

Same-day trips or visits take place within the same calendar day—that is, the traveller left and returned home on the same day—and must be a distance of 40 km or more away (one way).

Trips abroad are made by travellers residing in Canada who travelled outside of Canada for a period of less than 12 months before 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, a Canadian resident 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](#).

Final data from the National Travel Survey 2019 are now available.

The National Travel Survey public use microdata file for 2019 ([24250001](#)) is now available upon request.

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).