

Leading indicator of international arrivals to Canada, January 2021

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Friday, February 12, 2021

Highlights

In January, international arrivals to Canada by land and air remained low as restrictions on non-essential travel continued throughout the month.

US travellers made 45,700 trips to Canada by automobile through land ports with electronic sensors, down 93.3% compared with January 2020, while 136,500 Canadians returned from the United States by automobile through these same ports, down 91.4% from the same month a year earlier.

Similarly, non-resident arrivals from abroad in airports equipped with electronic kiosks dropped 94.7% year over year in January. While the number of Canadian residents returning from abroad via these same airports appeared to increase steadily toward the end of the month, it was still 90.4% lower than in January 2020.

This release provides a first glimpse of international arrivals to Canada in January. Complete data on international travel to Canada for all modes of transportation and ports of entry will be available with January's [Travel between Canada and other countries](#).

January marks the tenth month of restrictions

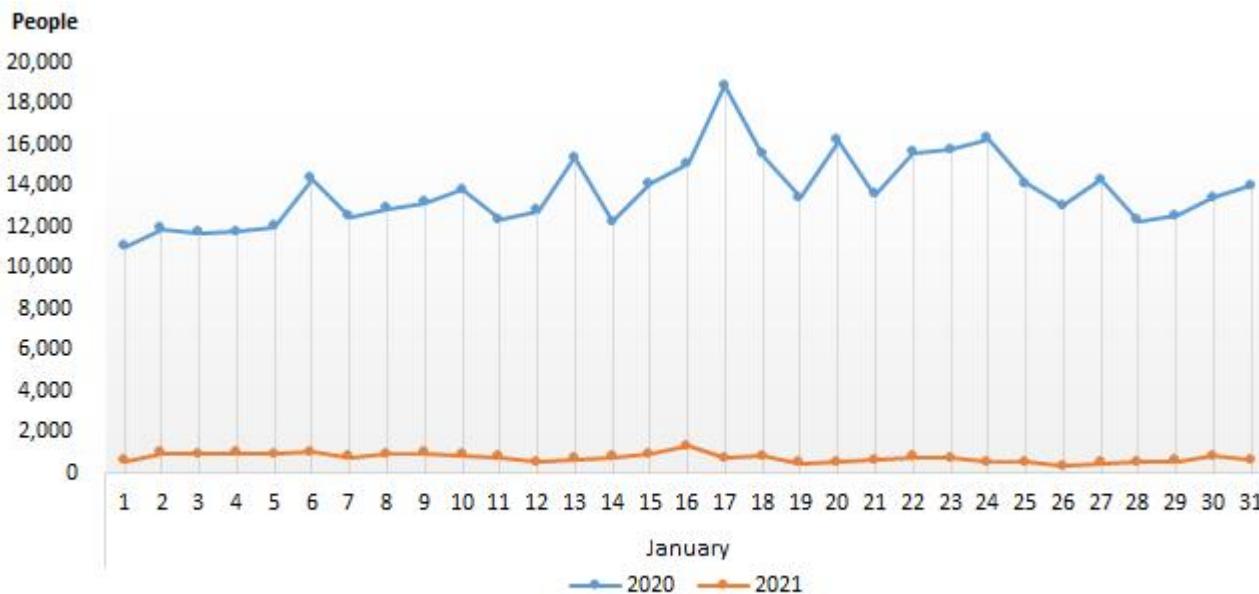
Restrictions on non-essential travel into Canada remained in effect throughout January, as did the mandatory 14-day quarantine period for Canadians returning from abroad. International flights to Canada have been redirected to four airports since last March: Toronto/Pearson, Vancouver International, Montreal/Trudeau and Calgary International.

Restrictions on non-essential travel between Canada and the United States—which initially took effect last March—were extended on January 21, 2021, for another 30 days. Additional travel requirements were announced by the federal government at the end of January.



Non-resident arrivals by air

Infographic 1 – Non-resident air travellers arriving in Canada, January 2020 and 2021



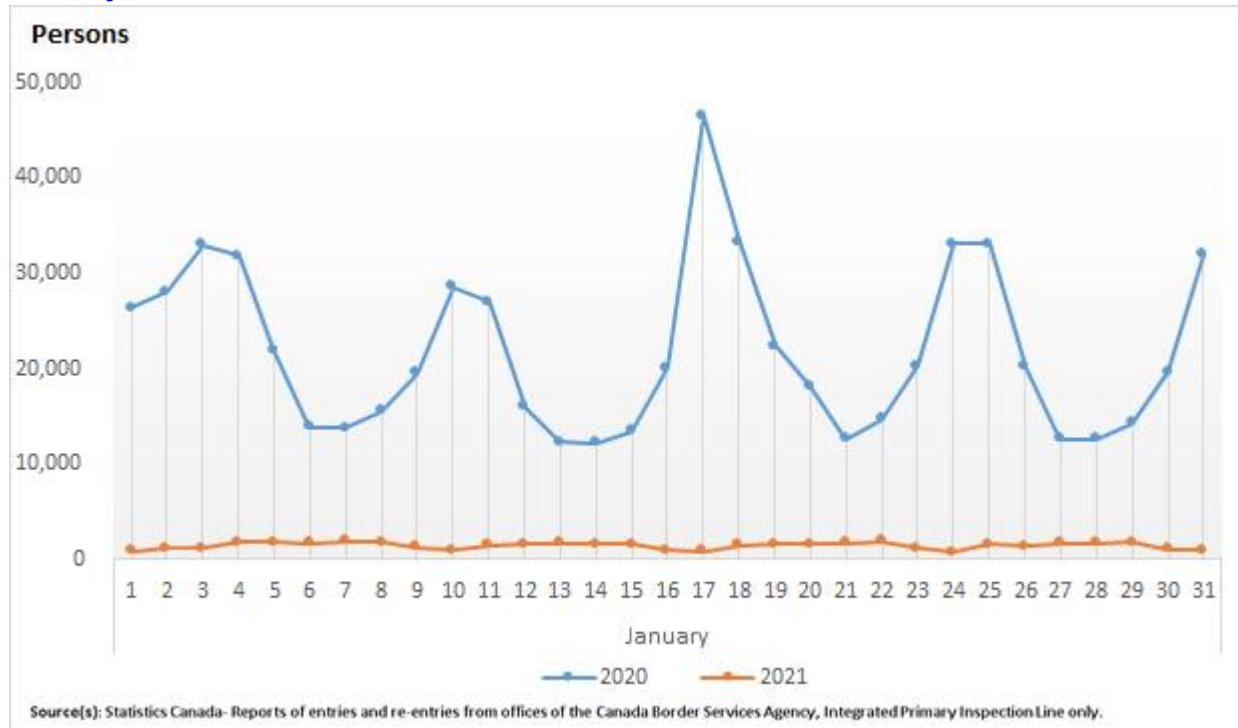
Source(s): Statistics Canada- Reports of entries and re-entries from offices of the Canada Border Services Agency, Primary Inspection Kiosks.

Air arrivals of non-residents from abroad—from both overseas countries and the United States—at Canadian airports equipped with Primary Inspection Kiosks (PIKs) totalled 22,500 in January, down from 425,400 in January 2020.

The number of overseas residents arriving by air totalled 16,200 during the month. Air arrivals by US residents to Canada in January reached 6,300, with the average daily volume declining from 385 in December 2020 to 204 in January 2021.

Non-resident arrivals by car (United States)

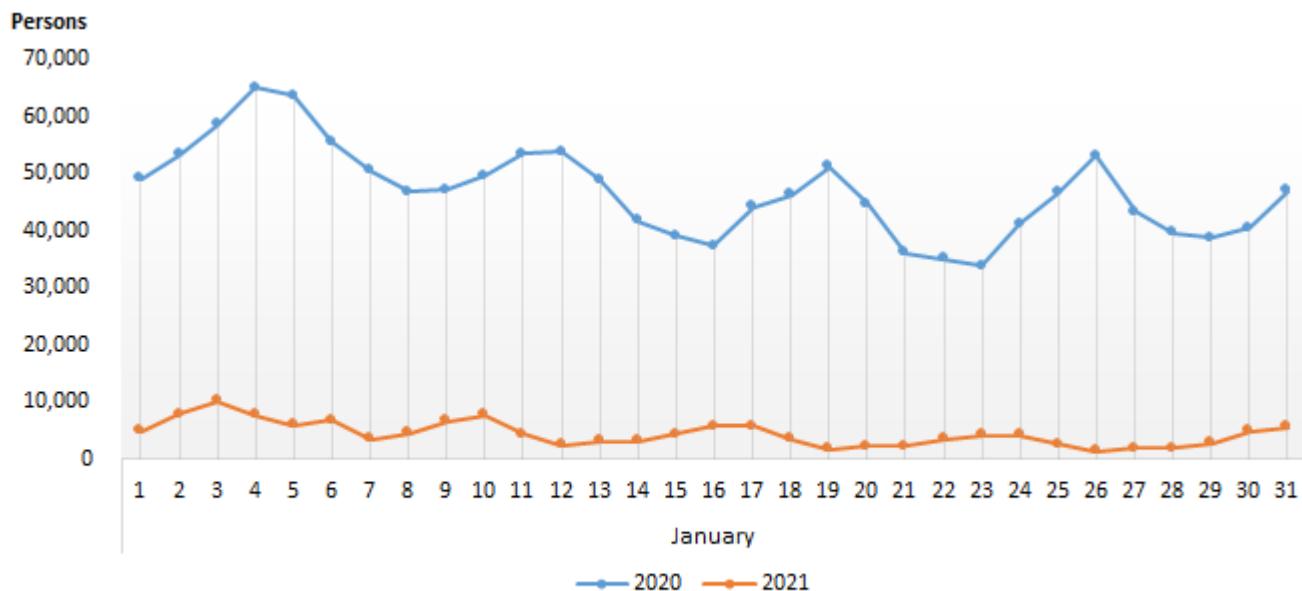
Infographic 2 – US residents entering Canada in US-licensed automobiles, January 2020 and 2021



In January, US residents took 45,700 trips to Canada in US-licensed automobiles through 111 land ports equipped with the automated Integrated Primary Inspection Line (IPIL) system, down 93.3% from the 679,500 trips taken in January 2020.

Returning Canadians by air

Infographic 3 – Canadian residents returning by air from abroad, January 2020 and 2021



Source(s): Statistics Canada, Reports of entries and re-entries from offices of the Canada Border Services Agency, Primary Inspection Kiosks.

The number of Canadians returning by air remained well below pre-pandemic levels.

The number of Canadian residents who flew back in January via airports equipped with PIKs reached 139,500, with the average daily volume increasing for the fourth consecutive month, from 3,025 per day in December to 4,502 in January.

Returning Canadians by car (from the United States)

Infographic 4 – Canadian residents returning from the United States in Canadian-licensed automobiles, January 2020 and 2021

Persons



Source(s): Statistics Canada- Reports of entries and re-entries from offices of the Canada Border Services Agency, Integrated Primary Inspection Line only.

In January, 91.4% fewer Canadian residents returned from the United States in Canadian-licensed automobiles via the 111 IPIL ports compared with January 2020. The number of returning Canadians fell from 1.6 million in January 2020 to 136,500 in January 2021.

Note to readers

Starting this month, the monthly [Leading indicator of cross-border traveller volume](#) and the quarterly [Leading indicator of international arrivals to Canada by air](#) are integrated into a single monthly release titled [Leading indicator of international arrivals to Canada](#). This indicator uses administrative data from the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) on international travellers entering the country by automobile and by air.

Counts of cross-border travel by automobile through 111 land ports equipped with the automated Integrated Primary Inspection Line (IPIL) system are available by the traveller's state or province of residence based on the licence plate of the automobile used to enter Canada and by the province of entry into Canada.

The IPIL data are a subset of Canadian and US residents entering Canada by automobile. In 2020, the 111 IPIL ports captured approximately 80% of cross-border automobile traffic between Canada and the United States.

IPIL counts exclude automobile travellers who cross the border using a NEXUS card and at ports not equipped with the system. These counts also exclude US travellers in automobiles with Canadian licence plates and Canadian travellers in automobiles with US licence plates.

The data source on travellers entering the country by air is the Primary Inspection Kiosk (PIK) system, which—at most major airports—has replaced the paper E311 declaration cards that were completed by travellers and submitted to CBSA officers upon arrival to Canada. Data are available by the traveller's country of residence and by airports equipped with PIK kiosks.

The PIK data are a subset of Canadian residents and non-residents entering Canada by air. In 2020, airports equipped with PIKs captured approximately 59% of the air traffic between Canada and the rest of the world. Deployment of the PIK system has been phased in at Canadian airports starting in March 2017.

The data used in this analysis exclude Toronto/Pearson Terminal 1, where PIKs have not been deployed fully. Data users are cautioned that the phased PIK deployment has affected the historical comparability of some series and caution is advised when comparing historical data.

The PIK data exclude travellers who cross the Canadian border using a NEXUS card, travellers arriving by private aircraft and entries at ports that are not equipped with the PIK system, as well as some cases at PIK-equipped airports where arrivals are processed outside of the PIK system because of traveller volume, system outages or other extenuating circumstances. As such, the PIK leading indicator represents only a subset of travellers entering Canada by air.

Please note that this is the first monthly release of the Leading indicator of international arrivals to Canada.

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).