

Travel between Canada and other countries, May 2021

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Highlights

May marked more than a full year of border restrictions in effect to contain the spread of COVID-19. Although historically low, the number of international arrivals to Canada during May increased from the same month last year.

Travellers from overseas countries made 26,800 trips to Canada in May, almost twice the number of May 2020, but still down 96.0% from May 2019, before the pandemic.

In May, there were over 40,000 more Americans travelling to Canada than in May 2020, yet this was down 94.7% from the same month in 2019.

Canadians took 363,200 return trips home from abroad in May. While up by 167,600 from May 2020, the month after the nationwide lockdown came into force, this number was down 92.3% from May 2019.

Travel restrictions continue

Restrictions on travel to and from Canada have been in place for just over one year. In May, the advisory against non-essential travel outside Canada remained in effect, as did the mandatory 14-day quarantine period for Canadians returning from abroad. Additional requirements for international air travellers—testing upon arrival with a hotel stopover—have been in force since February and remained in effect in May.

Overseas arrivals up but far below pre-pandemic levels

The number of residents from overseas countries arriving in Canada jumped to 26,800 in May, from 14,300 in May of last year. This was, however, down 96.0% from the 673,900 overseas arrivals during pre-pandemic May 2019.

Travel originating from Europe more than doubled compared with a year earlier, increasing from 2,800 in May 2020 to 6,400 in May 2021. However, this remained significantly lower than the 270,700 arrivals in May 2019.

Arrivals from Asia, Canada's largest market, were up year over year, from 3,900 in May 2020 to 9,100 in May 2021, but down 96.3% compared with the pre-pandemic level in May 2019. Travel from other major markets also remained low throughout May.

More Americans crossing into Canada

In May, US residents took 113,500 trips to Canada, up 57.4% from the same month last year, but just a fraction of the 2.1 million such trips made in May 2019.

With new requirements for testing in effect, 5,600 US residents arrived by plane in May. While more than the 3,700 recorded in May 2020, it pales in comparison to the 470,300 who flew into Canada during the same month in 2019.

American residents arriving by car increased to 105,300 in May, up more than one and a half times from last year but less than 10% of the 1.4 million arrivals in pre-pandemic May 2019. Almost three out of four of these car trips involved a same-day return (74,800) while the remainder were overnight (30,500).



US visits by Canadians remain low

The number of Canadian residents returning from the United States in May was 311,800, up from 169,300 in May 2020, but far below the pre-pandemic level in May 2019, when 3.7 million Canadians returned home from trips to the United States.

Car arrivals rose 76.8% year over year to 277,300, of which 206,900 were same-day trips. However, this was down from the 2.8 million return trips by car that Canadian residents took in May 2019.

Despite ongoing travel advisories and restrictions, air arrivals rose from 9,600 in May 2020 to 28,200 in May 2021. However, the number of Canadians flying back from the United States in May was down 96.5% from the same month in 2019.

Fewer Canadians returning from overseas

In May, 51,400 Canadian residents returned home from travel overseas, up from 26,300 in May 2020, but 94.7% lower than the pre-pandemic level in May 2019.

Table 1
Travel between Canada and other countries – Seasonally adjusted

| | May 2020 ^r | April 2021 ^r | May 2021 ^p | April to May 2021 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| | thousands | | | % change ¹ |
| Canadian trips abroad² | 183 | 321 | 356 | 11.0 |
| To the United States | 150 | 268 | 294 | 9.9 |
| To other countries | 33 | 53 | 62 | 16.5 |
| Same-day car trips to the United States | 118 | 190 | 191 | 0.1 |
| Total trips, one or more nights | 60 | 124 | 154 | 24.0 |
| United States ³ | 27 | 71 | 92 | 29.7 |
| Car | 18 | 53 | 65 | 24.0 |
| Plane | 9 | 17 | 25 | 44.9 |
| Other modes of transportation | 0 | 1 | 2 | 66.2 |
| Other countries | 33 | 53 | 62 | 16.5 |
| Travel to Canada² | 57 | 152 | 124 | -18.4 |
| From the United States | 48 | 111 | 102 | -8.5 |
| From other countries | 9 | 41 | 23 | -45.0 |
| Same-day car trips from the United States | 38 | 73 | 66 | -8.8 |
| Total trips, one or more nights | 16 | 74 | 54 | -27.0 |
| United States ³ | 9 | 34 | 33 | -5.2 |
| Car | 7 | 29 | 28 | -5.1 |
| Plane | 2 | 5 | 4 | -6.4 |
| Other modes of transportation | 0 | 1 | 1 | -4.5 |
| Other countries ⁴ | 8 | 40 | 22 | -45.8 |
| Travel to Canada: Top overseas markets,⁵ by country of origin^{6, 7} | | | | |
| India | 0 | 8 | 0 | -96.7 |
| Mexico | 2 | 8 | 4 | -50.1 |
| China | 1 | 3 | 2 | -37.3 |
| United Kingdom | 0 | 1 | 1 | -17.8 |
| France | 0 | 1 | 1 | -3.2 |
| Netherlands | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4.3 |
| Hong Kong | 0 | 1 | 0 | -27.3 |
| Australia | 0 | 0 | 0 | -68.2 |
| Japan | 0 | 1 | 0 | -64.0 |
| Germany | 0 | 1 | 1 | -61.1 |
| South Korea | 0 | 1 | 0 | -51.2 |
| Brazil | 0 | 0 | 0 | 153.5 |

^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 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](#).

Note to readers

Statistics Canada's Frontier Counts program uses administrative data from the Canada Border Services Agency on all international travellers who have been cleared for entry or re-entry into Canada.

Since April 2020, releases have been based on unadjusted data (not seasonally adjusted) to emphasize the change in actual volumes.

Seasonally adjusted data from February to April 2021 have been revised.

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.

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 2021 issue of *International Travel, Advance Information*, Vol. 39, no. 5 ([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) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).