

Leading indicator of international arrivals to Canada, November 2021

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Highlights

November saw the number of international arrivals to Canada increase from the same month last year, but the number remained well below the pre-pandemic levels of November 2019.

Compared with November 2020, over 10 times as many non-resident travellers arrived from abroad at Canadian airports equipped with electronic kiosks in November 2021.

At the same time, the number of Canadian residents returning from abroad via the same airports was over nine times greater than in November 2020.

US residents made almost a quarter of a million (246,900) trips to Canada through land ports with electronic sensors in November 2021, over 190,000 more than in November 2020.

Similarly, compared with November 2020, there were over 210,000 more Canadians—for a total of 347,100—who returned from the United States through the same land ports.

This release provides a first glimpse of international arrivals to Canada in November 2021. Complete counts will be available with November's "[Travel between Canada and other countries](#)" release on January 21, 2022.

US land border opens, but more restrictions looming

Early in September 2021, Canada's borders were opened to all fully vaccinated international travellers, and then, on November 8, the US land border was opened to all fully vaccinated Canadian travellers. As well, effective November 30, 2021, international flights carrying passengers were permitted to land at 8 more Canadian airports, in addition to the 10 eligible previously.

On November 26, 2021, however, the World Health Organization declared a new variant of concern named Omicron, prompting Canada to implement new travel restrictions. These include reinstating COVID-19 testing on all air travellers, except those from the United States, upon arrival in Canada and applying a travel ban to a list of nations. The extent to which November data already reflect Omicron's impact on travel is not clear.

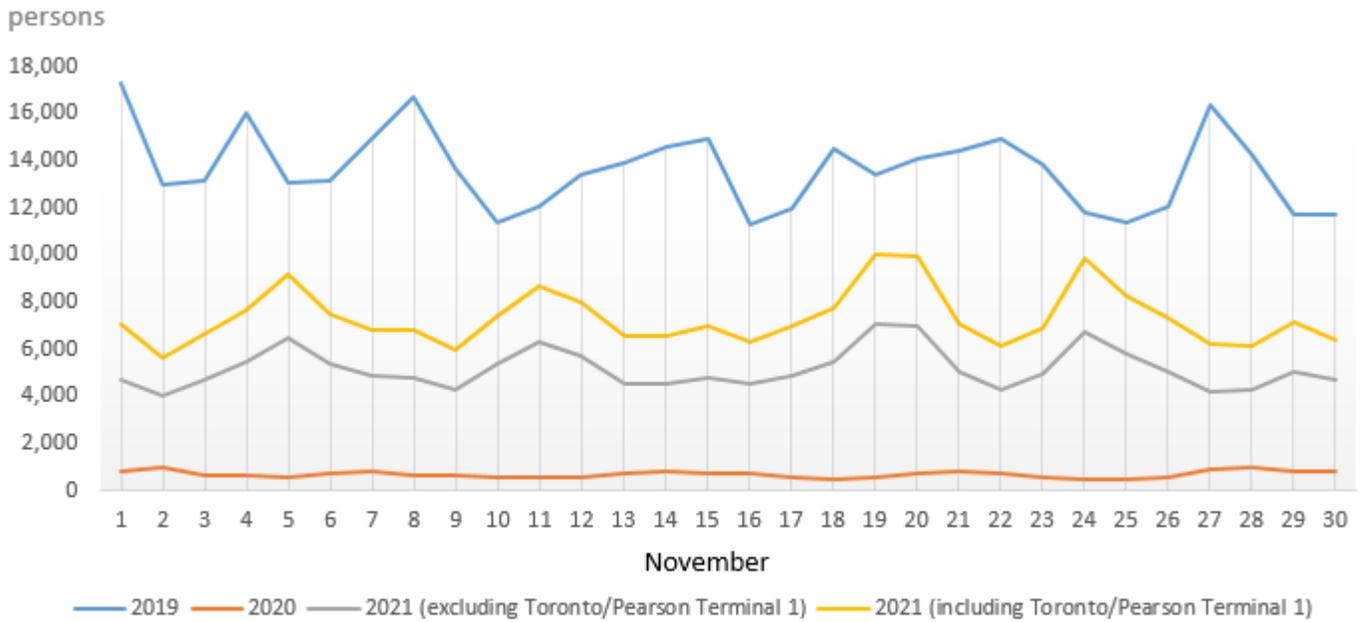
Non-resident arrivals by air

Arrivals of non-residents—from overseas countries (110,200) and the United States (109,400)—at Canadian airports equipped with Primary Inspection Kiosks (PIKs) numbered 219,600 in November 2021, up from 20,600 in November 2020. Despite this increase, it is just over half (53.7%) of the 408,600 such arrivals during the same month in 2019.

The November increase comes partly from the inclusion of international arrivals at Toronto/Pearson Terminal 1, where the PIK system was fully implemented as of June 22, 2021 (see Note to readers). Infographic 1 shows the counts both including and excluding international arrivals at Toronto/Pearson Terminal 1.



Infographic 1 – Non-resident air travellers arriving in Canada, November 2019, 2020, and 2021

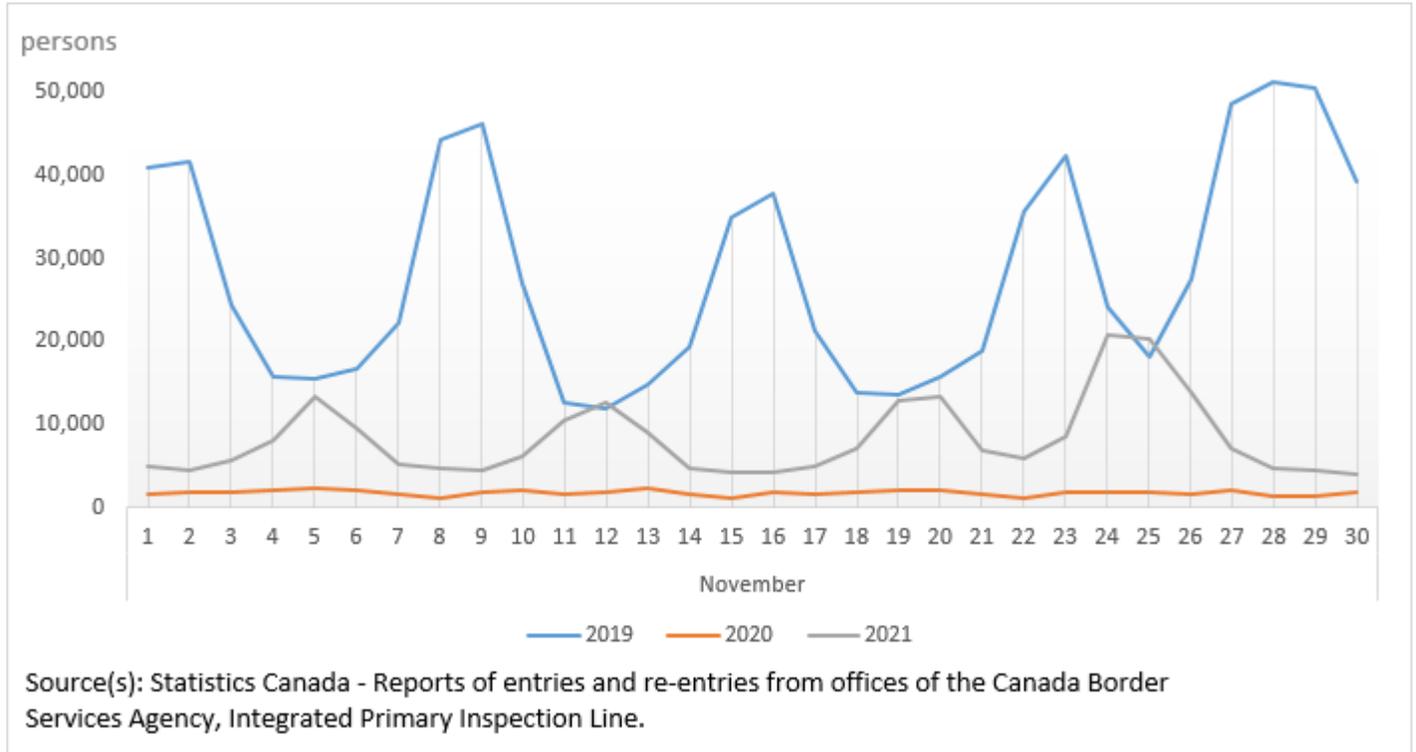


Source(s): Statistics Canada - Reports of entries and re-entries from offices of the Canada Border Services Agency, Primary Inspection Kiosks.

Non-resident arrivals by car

In November, US residents took 246,900 trips to Canada in US-licensed automobiles through 111 land ports equipped with the automated Integrated Primary Inspection Line (IPIL) application. While almost five times more than the 53,300 trips taken in November 2020, it remained less than one-third (29.2%) of the 846,400 US arrivals by car during the same month in 2019.

Infographic 2 – US residents entering Canada in US-licensed automobiles, November 2019, 2020, and 2021

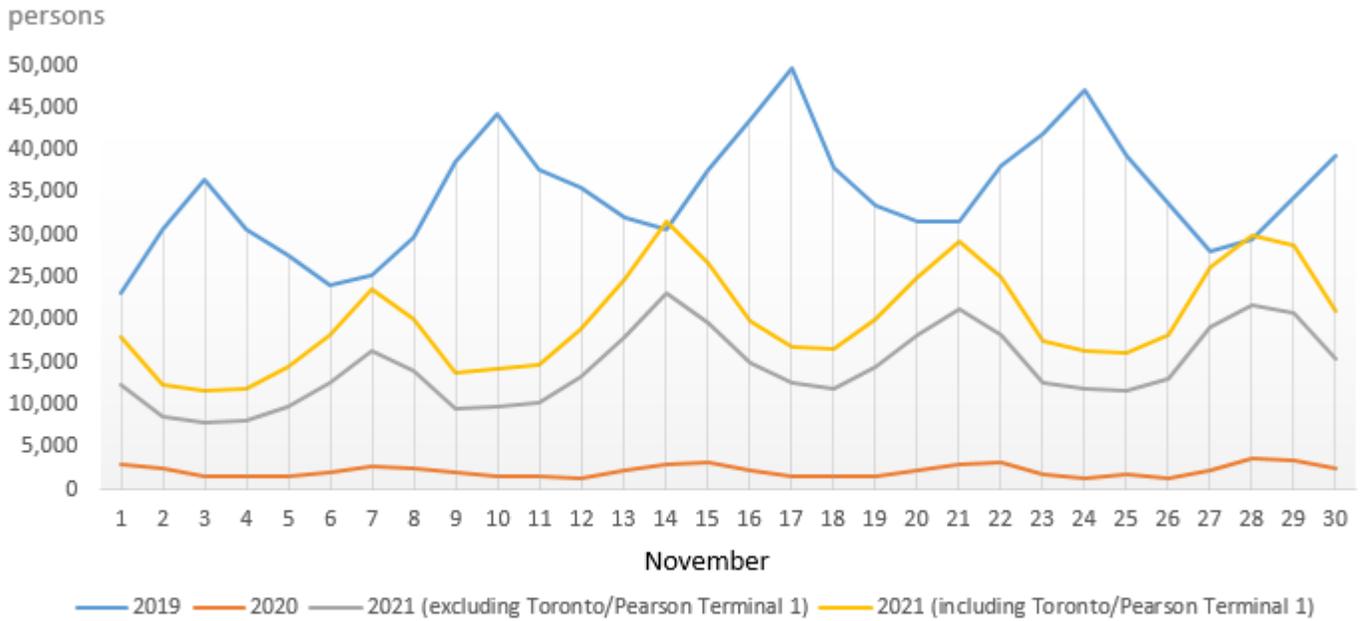


Canadians returning by air

The number of Canadian residents flying back from abroad in November via airports equipped with PIKs was 601,500, up from 65,000 in November 2020. For the second consecutive month, this is more than half (57.7%) of the number recorded for the same month in pre-pandemic 2019.

Again, some of the increase in November reflects the inclusion of international arrivals at Toronto/Pearson Terminal 1 (see Note to readers).

Infographic 3 – Canadian residents returning by air from abroad, November 2019, 2020, and 2021



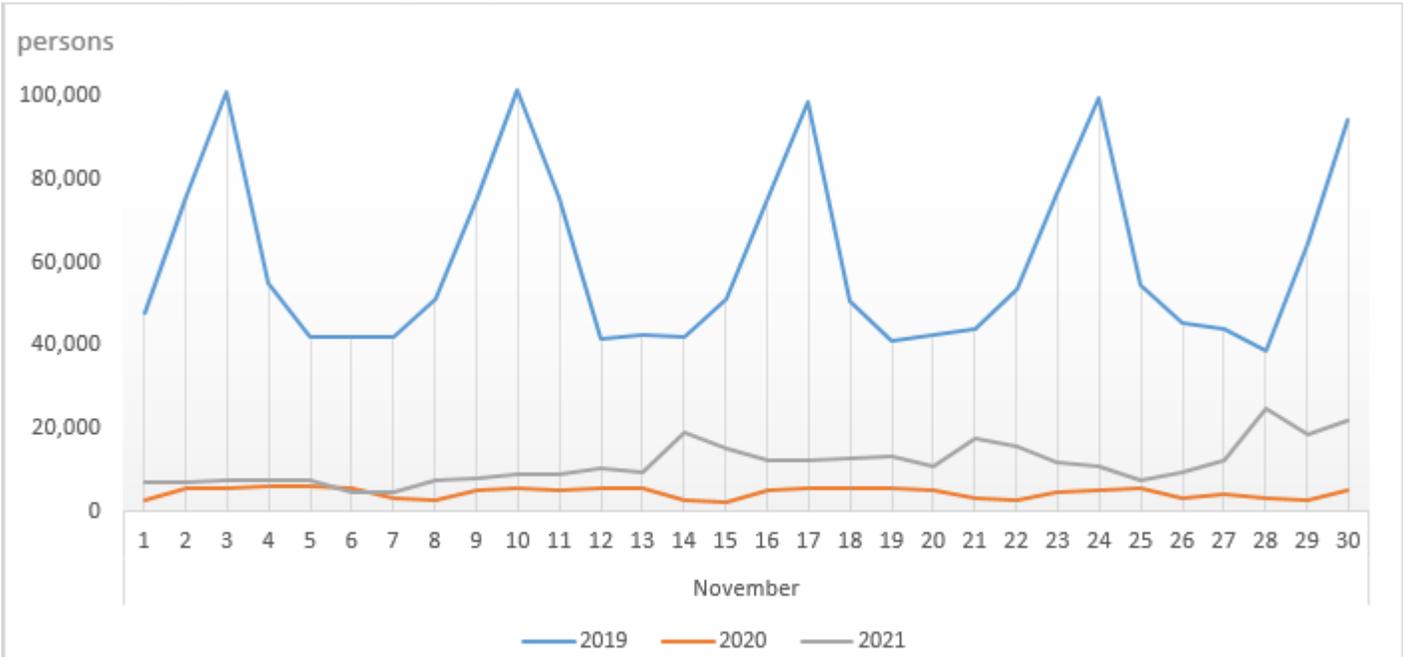
Source(s): Statistics Canada - Reports of entries and re-entries from offices of the Canada Border Services Agency, Primary Inspection Kiosks.

Canadians returning by car

In November, there were 347,100 Canadian residents who returned from the United States in Canadian-licensed automobiles via the 111 IPIL-equipped ports. Despite this jump from 136,900 recorded in November 2020, it is less than one-fifth (19.1%) of the 1.8 million such trips in the same month of 2019.

The impact of opening US land borders was clear. In the first week of November, when the US border was closed to non-essential travel, an average of 6,500 Canadian residents returned from the United States per day. After the US border was opened, this average doubled (13,100) for the remainder of the month.

Infographic 4 – Canadian residents returning from the United States in Canadian-licensed automobiles, November 2019, 2020, and 2021



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

Note to readers

This indicator uses administrative data from the Canada Border Services Agency on international travellers entering the country by automobile and by air.

Counts of travellers entering the country by air are from the Primary Inspection Kiosk (PIK) system and represent a subset of arrivals by air. Pre-pandemic PIK systems captured approximately 58% of international arrivals, as it excluded Toronto/Pearson Terminal 1, where PIKs were not yet deployed.

PIKs have been deployed at Toronto/Pearson Terminal 1 since June 22, 2021, and starting with the July reference period, these arrivals are included in the total counts and will raise coverage accordingly. The coverage statement will be amended when a complete year of international traffic is observed for all Canadian airports receiving international flights.

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, and by the province of entry into Canada.

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

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5005.

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; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).