

Leading indicator of international arrivals to Canada, February 2022

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Highlights

In February, the number of international visitors to Canada rose from the same month in 2021, but remained well below pre-pandemic levels in February 2020.

Compared with February 2021, there were more than 12 times as many non-resident visitors arriving from abroad at Canadian airports equipped with electronic kiosks.

At the same time, the number of Canadian residents returning from visiting abroad via the same airports was almost 10 times higher than in February 2021.

US residents took 190,200 trips to Canada through land ports with electronic sensors in February 2022, almost 145,000 more than in February 2021.

Similarly, compared with February 2021, there were almost 200,000 more Canadian residents—for a total of 353,300—who returned from visits to the United States through the same land ports.

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

The Frontier Counts program has undergone a redesign, impacting the scope of this release. For more information, see the Note to readers.

Border restrictions begin to ease

In late November 2021, the World Health Organization declared a new variant of concern, Omicron, prompting Canada to implement new travel restrictions. On December 15, the Government of Canada advised Canadians to avoid non-essential travel outside Canada and effective December 21, all travellers entering Canada, regardless of the length of their trip, had to provide a negative COVID-19 molecular test for entry. In mid-February, the Government of Canada announced a phased easing of travel requirements.

As of February 28, as an alternative to a molecular test, travellers entering Canada have the option of a negative COVID-19 rapid antigen test taken the day prior to their scheduled flight or arrival at the land border, with only random on-arrival testing at airports. At the same time, restrictions as to where international passenger flights can arrive in Canada will lift, and international flights carrying passengers will be permitted to land at all remaining Canadian airports. These changes will not be reflected in February estimates.

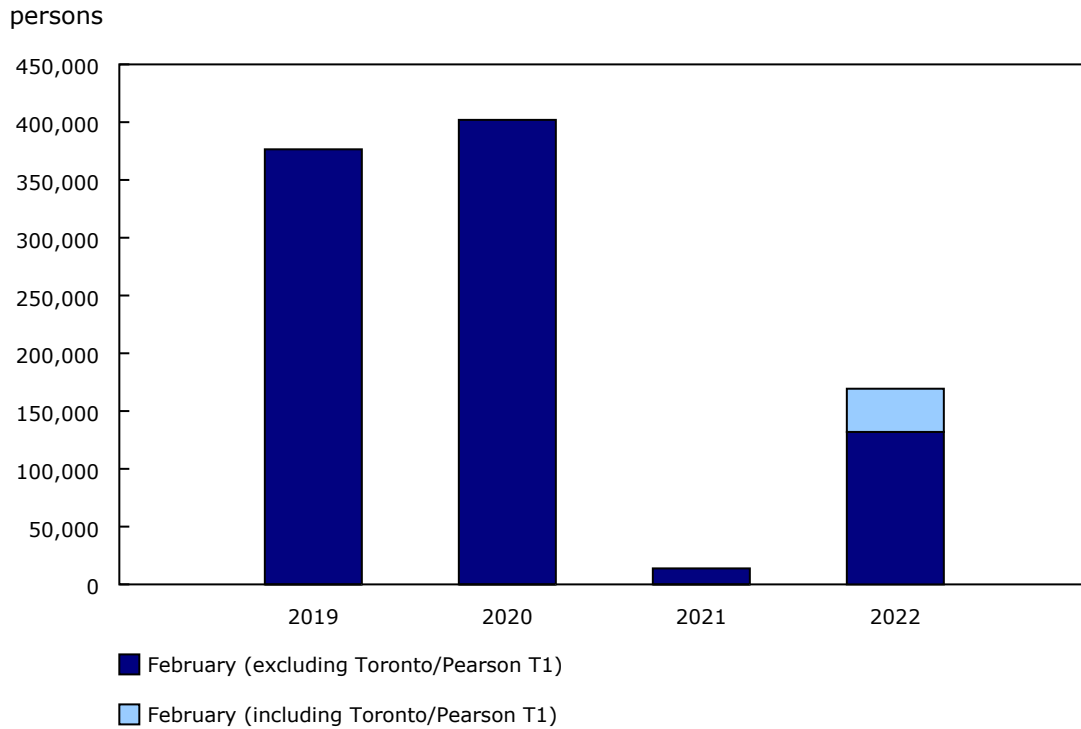
Non-resident arrivals by air

Arrivals of non-resident visitors—from overseas countries (96,100) and the United States (73,200)—at Canadian airports equipped with Primary Inspection Kiosks (PIKs) totalled 169,300 in February 2022, more than 12 times the number of arrivals (13,800) in February 2021. Despite the increase from 2021, it is just over two-fifths (42.1%) of the 402,000 arrivals observed during the same month in 2020.

Some of this increase reflects the inclusion of international arrivals at Toronto/Pearson International Airport Terminal 1, where the PIK system was implemented in June 2021 (see Note to readers).



Chart 1
Non-resident visitors arriving in Canada by commercial aircraft, February, 2019 to 2022

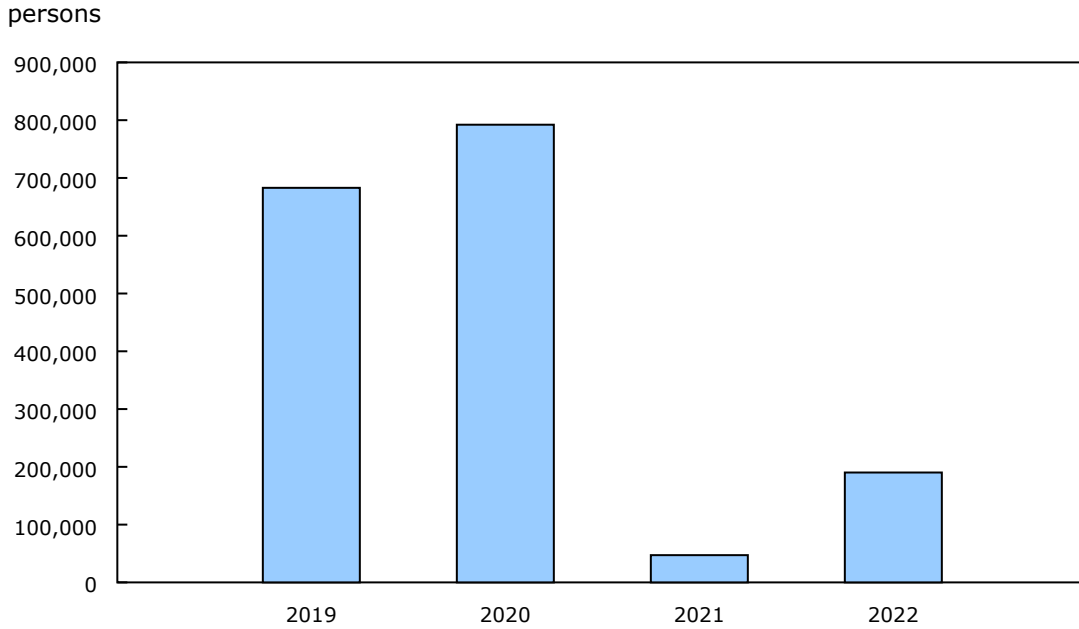


Source(s): Table 24-10-0056-01.

Non-resident arrivals by land

In February, US residents took 190,200 trips by automobile to Canada crossing at land ports equipped with the automated Integrated Primary Inspection Line (IPIL) application. While this was more than 143,000 higher than the number of trips taken in February 2021, it was less than one-quarter (24.0%) of the 792,200 land arrivals by automobile during the same month in 2020.

Chart 2
US-resident visitors arriving in Canada by automobile, February, 2019 to 2022



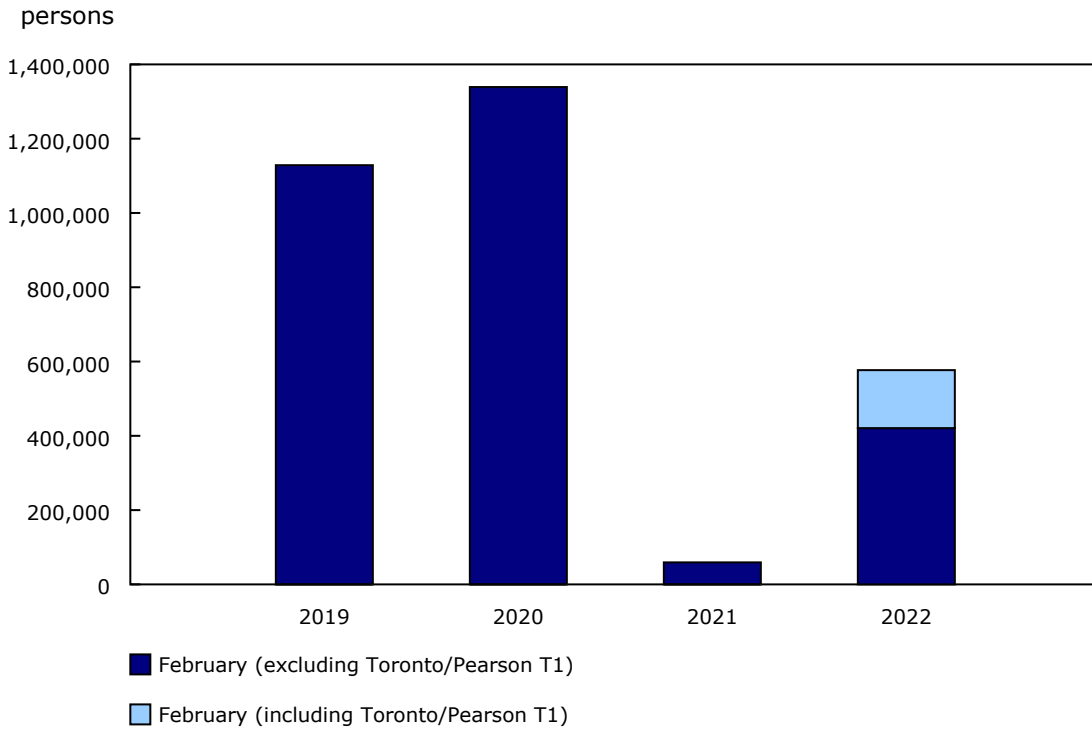
Source(s): Table [24-10-0057-01](#).

Canadians returning by air

The number of Canadian residents flying back from a trip abroad in February through airports equipped with PIKs was 576,900, up by more than 517,600 from February 2021 (59,300), but still less than one-half (43.1%) of the arrivals observed during the same month in 2020.

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

Chart 3
Canadian residents returning from visiting abroad by commercial aircraft, February, 2019 to 2022

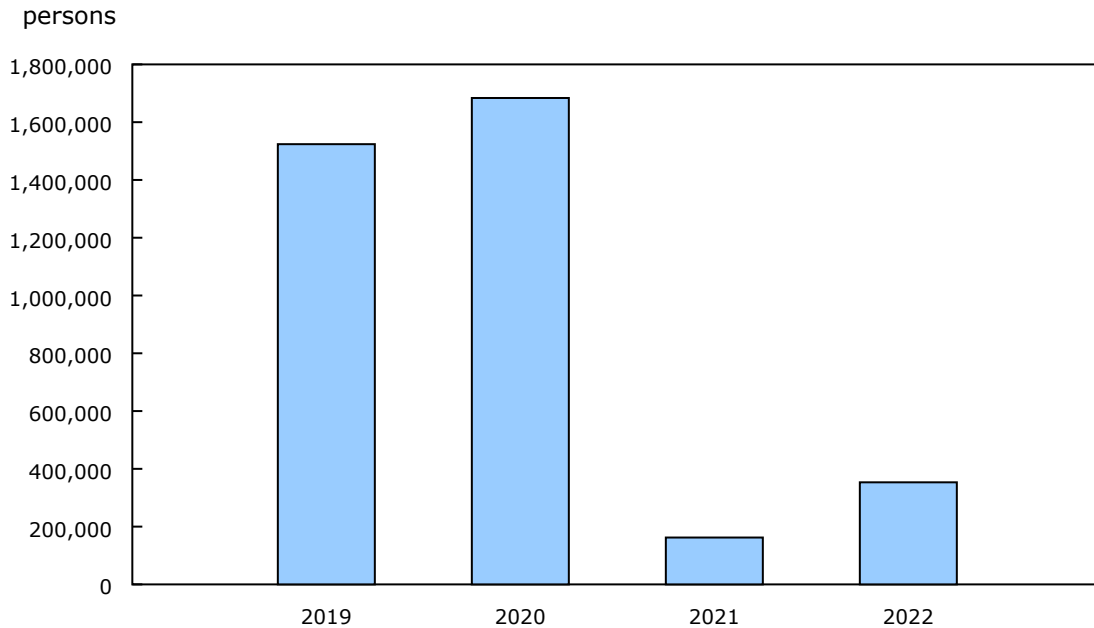


Source(s): Table 24-10-0056-01.

Canadians returning by land

In February, 353,300 Canadian residents returned by automobile from visits to the United States, crossing at land IPIL-equipped ports. Despite there being almost 200,000 more return trips than February 2021, it is just over one-fifth (21.0%) of the 1.7 million trips recorded in the same month of 2020.

Chart 4
Canadian residents returning from visiting abroad by automobile, February, 2019 to 2022



Source(s): Table 24-10-0057-01.

Note to readers

Counts of visitors entering the country by commercial aircraft are from the Primary Inspection Kiosk (PIK) system. In 2020, the subset of arrivals by air represented approximately 58% of all international arrivals. PIKs were deployed at Toronto/Pearson International Airport Terminal 1 on June 22, 2021. As of July, these additional arrivals are included in the total counts, which has consequently improved coverage. The coverage statement will be amended when a complete year of international traffic is observed for all Canadian airports.

Counts of visitors entering the country by automobile through land ports equipped with the automated Integrated Primary Inspection Line (IPIIL) system represent a subset of US visitors and Canadians returning visitors by automobile. In January 2021, the IPIIL land ports captured approximately 82% of all automobile entries. However, vehicles crossing the border with NEXUS authorization continue to be excluded.

Elements of Statistics Canada's Frontier Counts program have recently been modified. For example, counts of US residents and returning Canadians crossing the border are no longer restricted to US- and Canadian-plated automobiles, respectively. In addition, coverage has increased from a subset of 111 IPIIL ports to all land ports equipped with the IPIIL system. Although these changes will not have a significant impact on total estimates, readers are encouraged to review the concepts, definitions, data sources and methods for [Frontier Counts](#), especially when making historical comparisons and examining specific regions.

Traveller: A person making an entry into Canada for any purpose and any duration.

Visitor: A traveller whose trip purpose is related to tourism, namely personal, business, study, to be a crew member in a private vehicle (private aircraft or private boat) or whose purpose is not known, and whose trip duration is less than one year.

Available tables: [24-10-0056-01](#) to [24-10-0059-01](#) .

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).