

National Travel Survey, fourth quarter 2018 and annual 2018

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Canadian residents made 72.3 million trips in Canada and abroad in the fourth quarter of 2018, spending \$17.2 billion.

Of these trips, 63.8 million (88.2%) were domestic trips within Canada. While travelling in Canada, Canadians spent \$9.0 billion on accommodation, food, gas and other travel-related purchases. Trips to visit friends or relatives represented almost half (47.1% or 30.1 million) of all domestic trips by Canadians during the quarter.

Just over 1 in 10 trips (11.8%) made by Canadians in the fourth quarter were to destinations abroad, that is, either to the United States or overseas.

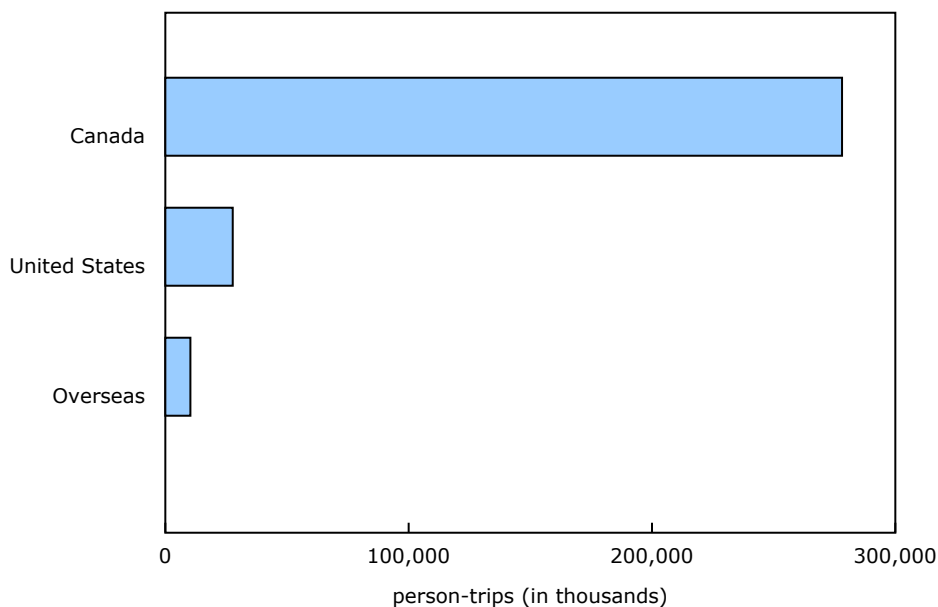
The United States was the destination for 6.3 million trips by Canadians (74.3% of trips abroad) in the fourth quarter and accounted for \$4.3 billion in travel spending. Of these trips to the United States, 42.8% were for holidays, leisure or recreation (2.7 million trips).

Canadian residents made 2.2 million trips overseas during the quarter, accounting for just over one-quarter of all trips abroad. Spending on overseas trips represented 47.4% (\$3.9 billion) of total travel spending abroad by Canadian residents. Holidays, leisure or recreation was the most commonly cited reason for travelling overseas (1.4 million trips).

Year-end review, 2018

Throughout 2018, Canadian residents took 316 million trips in Canada and abroad, spending \$83.8 billion.

Chart 1
Travel by Canadian residents in Canada and abroad (thousands), 2018



Source(s): National Travel Survey (5232).



Ontarians make more in-province visits than residents of other provinces

Canadians made 278 million domestic trips in 2018, representing 88.0% of all trips made by residents of Canada. Spending by Canadians on trips within Canada totalled \$45.7 billion, or over half of their total travel expenditures in 2018.

Ontario, the most populous province, received 117.5 million visits, most of which were Ontarians visiting within their home province (93.4%). Another 7.7 million visits were made by out-of-province residents in Canada. In addition to having the highest proportion of in-province visits, Ontario also had the second-highest percentage of same-day visits (66.4%).

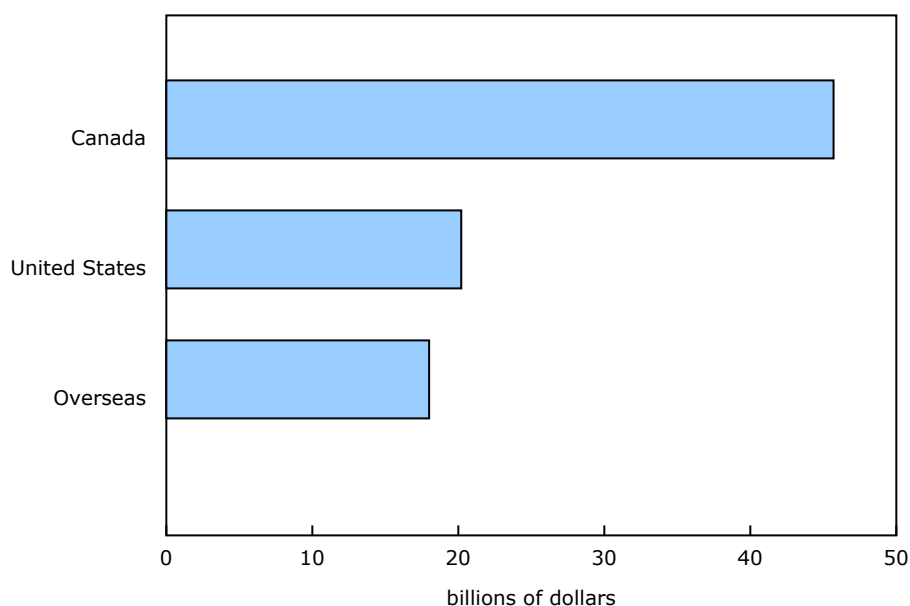
Quebec (57.5 million visits) and British Columbia (34.2 million visits) were the second- and third-most visited provinces, followed by Alberta (33.0 million visits).

The Maritime provinces had the largest shares of Canadian visitors coming from other provinces. In Prince Edward Island, 53.0% of all visits in the province by Canadians were by out-of-province residents. The proportions of out-of-province resident visits were 25.0% in New Brunswick and 21.8% in Nova Scotia. For the Maritimes as a whole, the largest outside sources of Canadian visitors were Ontario (1.4 million visits), Quebec (760,000 visits) and Alberta (224,000 visits).

On average, Canadian travellers spent \$160 per trip within Canada—\$80 per same-day trip and \$330 per overnight trip. The largest spending categories for Canadians travelling domestically were accommodation (23.2%), food and beverage services in restaurants and bars (21.4%) and gas and other vehicle operation costs (14.8%). Other significant expense items were in-store grocery purchases (10.1%), recreation (6.2%) and clothing (5.7%).

Visiting friends or relatives (115.6 million trips) was the main trip purpose for roughly two out of every five trips in Canada by Canadians in 2018. About one-third of all domestic trips were for holidays, leisure or recreation (96.4 million trips). Trips for other reasons such as attending conventions, trade shows or shopping represented 14.2% of all domestic trips, while 9.6% were for business-related purposes.

Chart 2
Travel spending by Canadian residents in Canada and abroad (billions of dollars), 2018



Source(s): National Travel Survey (5232).

Canadians travel to the United States mostly for holidays, leisure or recreation

Canadian residents made 27.7 million trips to the United States in 2018 (72.9% of trips abroad), spending \$20.2 billion.

Residents of Ontario, which represented 38.7% of the Canadian population, took 45.5% of all trips by Canadians to the United States in 2018 and accounted for 40.5% of total expenditures on trips across the border.

Residents of British Columbia, the second most frequent visitors to the United States, made more than one-fifth of these trips (22.6%), spending 20.3% of total travel expenditures in the United States.

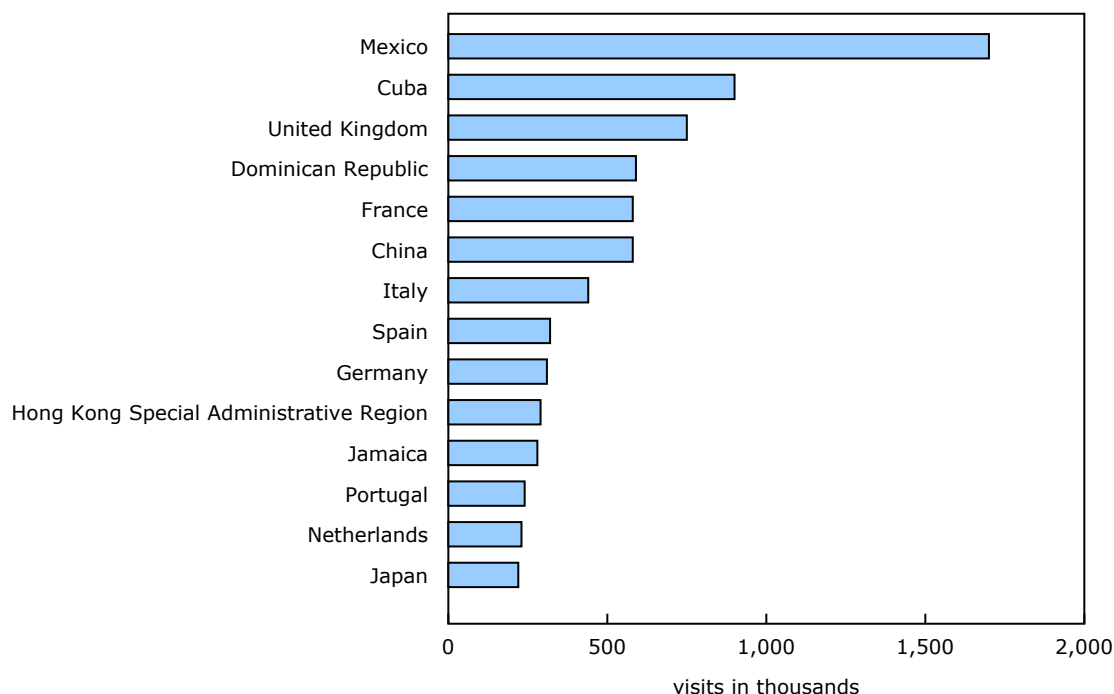
While travelling in the United States, Canadians spent an average of \$730 per trip. Average spending on overnight trips to the United States (\$1,180) was nine times the amount spent on same-day visits (\$130).

Accommodation (37.6%) and food and beverages in restaurants and bars (18.5%) were the largest single expense items for Canadians travelling in the United States. Entertainment expenses (6.9%) and clothing (6.3%) were the next largest spending categories.

Almost half of all trips by Canadians to the United States were for holidays, leisure or recreation (13.5 million trips). Another 5.8 million trips to the United States were for other personal reasons such as shopping, attending personal conferences or trade shows (20.8%). A slightly smaller share of trips was for visiting friends or families (20.2%), while 10.3% of trips were for business-related purposes.

Mexico and Cuba the most visited overseas destinations

Chart 3
Visits by Canadian residents to overseas countries (thousands), 2018



Source(s): National Travel Survey (5232).

In 2018, Canadian residents made 10.3 million trips to overseas countries (countries other than the United States), accounting for over one-quarter of all trips abroad during the year. Spending on overseas trips, at \$18.0 billion, comprised 47.2% of total travel spending abroad by Canadians.

The overseas countries most visited by Canadians in 2018 were Mexico (1,694,000 visits) and Cuba (895,000 visits), followed by the United Kingdom (748,000 visits), the Dominican Republic (585,000 visits) and China (580,000).

For the sunny destinations of Mexico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic, over 90.6% of visits by Canadians in 2018 were for holidays, leisure or recreation—and nearly half of visits during the year took place during the winter months of January, February and March.

From July to September 2018, Canadians made more visits to the United Kingdom than to any other overseas destination, mostly to visit friends or relatives, or for holidays.

Canadians who travelled to China (54.7%) and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (60.6%) were more likely to report visiting for the purpose of reuniting with friends or relatives compared with the other most commonly visited overseas destinations in 2018.

Spending on overnight trips overseas averaged \$1,730 per trip, excluding the cost of transportation booked in Canada for travel to or from the overseas destinations. In comparison, Canadians who travelled to the United States for overnight visits spent \$1,180 per trip on average.

About two-thirds of Canadians' total travel spending overseas was allotted to accommodation and food and beverage services in restaurants and bars, the largest expense items for Canadians travelling overseas. Commercial transportation within the overseas countries visited (8.9%) and entertainment (5.5%) were other significant expense items.

Holidays, leisure or recreation was the reason most commonly cited by Canadian residents for travelling overseas, accounting for 6.7 million trips or 65.3% of the total. Visiting friends or relatives (23.2%) was the second most common reason for overseas travel, followed by travelling overseas for business purposes (7.0%) and all other personal reasons (4.5%).

Table 1
Travel by Canadian residents in Canada and abroad by trip purpose, fourth quarter of 2018

	Trips	Travel expenditures
	thousands	millions of dollars
Trips by Canadian residents in Canada	63,800	9,000
Business	7,300	1,600
Pleasure	16,400	2,900
Visiting friends/relatives	30,100	2,900
Other ¹	10,000	1,600
Trips by Canadian residents abroad	8,500	8,200
To the United States	6,300	4,300
Business	730	660
Pleasure	2,700	2,700
Visiting friends/relatives	1,400	560
Other ¹	1,500	370
To other countries	2,200	3,900
Business	160	370
Pleasure	1,400	2,700
Visiting friends/relatives	500	660
Other ¹	80	150

1. Other 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

This is the fourth release of quarterly data for the 2018 National Travel Survey (NTS). The NTS collects information about the domestic and international travel of Canadian residents.

The NTS was developed to fully replace the Travel Survey of Residents of Canada and the Canadian resident component of the International Travel Survey. Please note that NTS data are not comparable with data from these two surveys because the NTS was designed using a different survey methodology.

The target population is the civilian, non-institutionalized population 18 years and older in Canada's provinces. Not included in the survey's coverage are persons living on Indian reserves and persons living in the territories. Also excluded are out-of-scope trips such as routine trips and trips taken by commuters and diplomatic or military personnel.

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

***Same-day trip or visit** is considered a same-day trip and has to be 40 km or more (one way) in which the traveller left and returned home on the same day.*

***Trips abroad** are made by travellers residing in Canada who have travelled outside of Canada for a period of less than 12 months and who are returning to Canada. Foreign citizens who are residing in Canada and travel abroad are included as Canadian resident travellers.*

***A trip abroad** for a person residing in Canada starts when a person crosses 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](#).

Data from the National Travel Survey, for fourth quarter 2018 and annual 2018, are now available. 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).