



International tourist arrivals grew 5% in Q1 2025

Madrid, Spain, 27 May 2025 - International tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) increased by 5% in the first quarter of 2025 though results were mixed among regions and sub-regions.

According to the May 2025 World Tourism Barometer from UN Tourism, over 300 million tourists travelled internationally in the first three months of 2025, about 14 million more than in the same months of 2024. That represents a 5% rise on last year and is 3% more than in pre-pandemic year 2019. The robust performance came despite the sector facing a range of geopolitical and trade tensions, as well as high inflation in travel and tourism services.

UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: "In every global region, tourism stands out as a major services sector, supporting millions of jobs and businesses of all sizes. The continued good performance in international arrivals combined with stronger visitor spending in many destinations highlights the resilience of the sector in the face of numerous challenges and is good news for economies and workers everywhere."

Africa shows solid results, while Asia Pacific rebounds strongly

The World Tourism Barometer breaks down the data for the first quarter of 2025 by region and sub-region. Key highlights show:

- **Europe** welcomed 125 million international tourists in the first three months of the year, up 2% from Q1 2024, and 5% more than the same period before the pandemic.
- In Southern Mediterranean Europe arrivals increased 2%, reflecting growing demand for off-season travel to some destinations.
- Central and Eastern Europe rebounded strongly (+8% over 2024), especially Baltic destinations, though visitor numbers in the subregion remain below 2019 levels.
- **Africa** recorded 9% growth in arrivals in Q1 2025, compared to 2024, exceeding pre-pandemic traveller numbers by 16%.
- The **Americas** saw 2% more international arrivals, with several destinations in South America (+13%) enjoying strong results during the Southern Hemisphere summer season.

- The **Middle East** recorded 1% growth compared to 2024, a more modest increase following the extraordinary performance in recent years. However, arrivals stood 44% above pre-pandemic levels this first quarter of the year.
- Arrivals in **Asia and the Pacific** grew 12%, reaching 92% of pre-pandemic numbers. North-East Asia saw the strongest performance among world subregions with a 23% rebound in Q1 2025 to reach 91% of 2019 levels.

According to IATA, international air travel demand grew 8% in January-March 2025 versus Q1 2024, while international air capacity was up 7%. Global occupancy rates in accommodation establishments reached 64% in March, about the same level as in March 2024 (65%). Industry indicators are available at the [UN Tourism Data Dashboard](#).

Strong growth in receipts across many destinations in early 2025

Available data on international tourism receipts for Q1 2025 shows solid growth in visitor spending in many destinations:

- Spain, the world's second largest tourism earner, reported 9% growth in the first two months of 2025 (compared to the same period in 2024), after a remarkable 16% increase in the year 2024.
- Also in Southern Mediterranean Europe, Türkiye (+7%) posted solid results in Q1 2025, as did Greece, Italy and Portugal (all +4%).
- France recorded 6% growth in international tourism receipts, Norway 20% and Denmark 11%, in the first quarter of 2025.
- In Asia and the Pacific, Japan continued to enjoy a surge in receipts in Q1 (+34%), while Nepal (+18%), the Republic of Korea and Mongolia (both +14%) also recorded double-digit growth.
- The United States, the world's top tourism earner, reported 3% growth in January-March 2025, after a 14% increase in the year 2024.

2024 export revenues from tourism revised upwards to USD 2.0 trillion

Revised data shows that total export revenues from international tourism (receipts and passenger transport) grew by 11% (real terms) to reach a record USD 2.0 trillion in 2024, about 15% above pre-pandemic levels. This represents about 6% of the world's total exports of goods and services and 23% of global trade in services.

- International tourism receipts, the main component of tourism service exports, grew 11% to USD 1.7 trillion, also in real terms (adjusted for inflation and exchange rate fluctuations).
- Average spending remained at USD 1,170 per international trip in 2024, above the pre-pandemic average of USD 1,000 (both in constant dollars).

Growth in earnings from international tourism in 2024 was fueled by strong spending from large source markets such as the United Kingdom (+16% from 2023), Canada (+13%), the United States (+12%), Australia (+8%) and France (+7%). China, the world's top tourism spender saw outbound expenditure climb 30% to USD 251 billion, about 3% above pre-pandemic levels.

Other major markets reporting strong growth in spending last year include Saudi Arabia (+17%) which already saw remarkable growth in 2023, Spain (+14%), Belgium (+14%), Netherlands (+13%) and Austria (+11%).

Looking ahead: Headwinds continue to pose significant risks

The latest Panel of Tourism Experts survey points to economic factors including weaker economic growth, high travel costs and the increase in tariffs as the main three challenges that could impact international tourism in 2025.

Uncertainty derived from geopolitical and trade tensions are also weighing on travel confidence. Lower consumer confidence was ranked as the fourth main factor affecting tourism this year, while geopolitical risks (aside from ongoing conflicts) ranked fifth.

According to the survey, tourists will continue to seek value for money, but could also travel closer to home or make shorter trips.

Cautious optimism for upcoming Northern Hemisphere summer season

The latest UN Tourism Confidence Index reflects cautious optimism for the period May-August 2025. Some 45% of Panel experts point to better (40%) or much better (5%) prospects for this 4-month period, while 33% foresee similar performance than in the same period of 2024. Some 22% expect tourism performance to be worse.

- Experts highlighted the uncertainty and unpredictability derived from trade tariffs and its potential impact on travel sentiment.
- While one third of survey respondents expect little or no impact from trade tensions on tourism performance, some 25% expect some impact in the near future.

Despite global uncertainty, travel demand is expected to remain resilient. UN Tourism's January projection of 3% to 5% growth in international arrivals for 2025 remains unchanged.

Related links:

[UN Tourism Barometer](#)

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