



International tourism recovers pre-pandemic levels in 2024

Madrid, Spain, 20 January 2025 - With 1.4 billion international tourist arrivals recorded globally, 2024 marked the recovery of international tourism from the worst crisis in the sector's history. A majority of destinations welcomed more international tourists in 2024 than they did before the pandemic, while visitor spending also continued to grow strongly.

According to the latest World Tourism Barometer from UN Tourism, an estimated 1.4 billion tourists travelled internationally in 2024, indicating a virtual recovery (99%) of pre-pandemic levels. This represents an increase of 11% over 2023, or 140 million more international tourist arrivals, with results driven by strong post-pandemic demand, robust performance from large source markets and the ongoing recovery of destinations in Asia and the Pacific.

The Middle East, Europe and Africa see strongest results in 2024 relative to 2019

- The **Middle East** (95 million arrivals) remained the strongest-performing region when compared to 2019, with international arrivals 32% above pre-pandemic levels in 2024, though 1% higher compared to 2023.
- **Africa** (74 million) welcomed 7% more arrivals than in 2019, and 12% more than in 2023.
- **Europe**, the world's largest destination region, saw 747 million international arrivals in 2024 (+1% above 2019 levels and 5% over 2023) supported by strong intraregional demand. All European subregions surpassed pre-pandemic levels, except for Central and Eastern Europe where many destinations are still suffering from the lingering effects of the Russian aggression on Ukraine.
- The **Americas** (213 million) recovered 97% of pre-pandemic arrivals (-3% over 2019), with the Caribbean and Central America already exceeding 2019 levels. Compared to 2023, the region saw 7% growth.
- **Asia and the Pacific** (316 million) continued to experience a rapid recovery in 2024, though arrival numbers were still 87% of pre-pandemic levels, an improvement from 66% at the end of 2023. International arrivals grew 33% in 2024, an increase of 78 million from 2023.



By subregions, North Africa and Central America saw the strongest performance in 2024, with 22% and 17% more international arrivals than before the pandemic. Southern Mediterranean Europe (+8%) and the Caribbean (+7%) also enjoyed robust growth, as did Northern Europe (+5%) and Western Europe (+2%).

UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: “In 2024, global tourism completed its recovery from the pandemic and, in many places, tourist arrival and specially earnings are already higher than in 2019. Growth is expected to continue throughout 2025, driven by strong demand contributing to the socio-economic development of both mature and emerging destinations. This recalls our immense responsibility as a sector to accelerate transformation, placing people and planet at the center of the development of tourism.”

Majority of destinations reported arrival figures well above pre-pandemic levels in 2024

Most destinations reporting monthly data continued to enjoy strong results in 2024, with a majority exceeding pre-pandemic levels. Available data for the first 10 to 12 months of 2024 shows several destinations reporting double-digit growth compared to 2019:

- El Salvador (+81%), Saudi Arabia (+69%), Ethiopia (+40%), Morocco (+35%), Guatemala (+33%) and the Dominican Republic (+32%), all exceeded pre-pandemic levels by far in the full twelve months of 2024.
- Qatar (+137%), Albania (+80%), Colombia (+37%), Andorra (+35%), Malta and Serbia (both +29%) enjoyed strong growth through October or November 2024, compared to the same ten or eleven months of 2019.
- The full recovery of international tourism in 2024 is also reflected in the performance of other industry indicators. According to the [UN Tourism Tracker](#), both international air capacity and air traffic virtually recovered pre-pandemic levels through October 2024 (IATA). Global occupancy rates for accommodation reached 66% in November, slightly below 69% in November 2023 (based on STR data).

Exports from tourism reached a record USD 1.9 trillion in 2024

- International tourism receipts saw robust growth in 2024 after virtually already reaching pre-pandemic levels in 2023, in real terms (adjusting for inflation and exchange rate fluctuations).
- Receipts reached USD 1.6 trillion in 2024, about 3% more than in 2023 and 4% more than in 2019 (real terms), according to preliminary estimates.
- As growth stabilizes, average spending is gradually returning to pre-pandemic values, from nearly USD 1,400 per international arrival in 2020 and 2021, to an estimated USD 1,100 in 2024. This is still above the average of USD 1,000 of before the pandemic.

- Total exports from tourism (including passenger transport) reached a record USD 1.9 trillion in 2024, about 3% higher than before the pandemic (real terms), according to preliminary estimates.
- Several destinations reported outstanding growth in international tourism receipts during the first nine to eleven months of 2024. These include Kuwait (+232%), El Salvador (+206%), Saudi Arabia (+148%), Albania (+136%), Serbia (+98%), Republic of Moldova (+86%), and Canada (+70%), all in local currencies. These countries also enjoyed double-digit growth in receipts in 2024 compared to 2023.
- Among the world's top five tourism earners, the United Kingdom (+40%), Spain (+36%), France (+27%) and Italy (+23%) saw robust growth in the first nine to eleven months of 2024, compared to 2019.
- Data on international tourism expenditure reflects the same trend, especially among large source markets such as Germany, the United Kingdom (both +36% compared to 2019), the United States (+34%), Italy (+25%) and France (+11%). Expenditure from India remained high in the first half of 2024 (+81% above 2019 levels), after extraordinary growth in 2023.

Positive outlook for 2025 points to continued growth

- International tourist arrivals are expected to grow 3% to 5% in 2025 compared to 2024, assuming a continued recovery of Asia and the Pacific and solid growth in most other regions. This initial projection assumes global economic conditions remain favorable, inflation continues to recede, and geopolitical conflicts do not escalate.
- The outlook reflects a stabilization of growth rates after a strong rebound in international arrivals in 2023 (+33% vs 2022) and 2024 (+11% vs 2023).
- The latest UN Tourism Confidence Index confirms these positive expectations. Around 64% of UN Tourism Panel of Experts see 'better' or 'much better' prospects for 2025 compared to 2024. Some 26% expect similar performance in their destination, while only 9% believe 2025 be 'worse' or 'much worse' than last year.
- However, economic and geopolitical headwinds continue to pose significant risks. More than half of respondents point to high transport and accommodation costs and other economic factors such as volatile oil prices, as the main challenges international tourism will face in 2025. Against this backdrop, tourists are expected to continue to seek value for money.
- Geopolitical risks (aside from ongoing conflicts) are a growing concern among the Panel of Experts, which ranked them as the third main factor after the economic ones. Extreme weather events and staff shortages are also critical challenges, ranking fourth and fifth among the factors identified by the Panel of Experts.
- Balancing growth and sustainability will be critical in 2025, as reflected by two major trends identified by the Panel of Experts: the search for sustainable practices and the discovery of lesser-known destinations.

Related links:

[UN Tourism Barometer](#)

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