



International tourism up 5% in first half of 2025 despite global challenges

Madrid, Spain, 9 September 2025 – International tourist arrivals grew 5% in the first six months of 2025 compared to same period of 2024. This is about 4% above pre-pandemic levels.

According to UN Tourism, almost 690 million tourists travelled internationally between January and June 2025, about 33 million more than in the same period of 2024, though results were mixed among regions and subregions.

UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: “In the face of global challenges, international tourism continues to see strong momentum and resilience. The first half of 2025 brought growing arrival numbers and revenues for most destinations around the world, which contribute to local economies, jobs and livelihoods. Yet, this also reminds us of our great responsibility to ensure this growth is sustainable and inclusive and to work with all local stakeholders in that sense.”

Africa saw strongest performance while Asia Pacific continued to rebound

The newest edition of the World Tourism Barometer assesses the sector’s performance by region and sub-region in the first six months of 2025. Key takeaways include:

- Africa saw a 12% increase in January-June 2025 compared to the same period last year. Both North Africa (+14%) and Sub-Saharan Africa (+11%) recorded double-digit growth this period.
- Europe welcomed nearly 340 million international tourists this first half of 2025, about 4% more than in 2024 and 7% more than in 2019. Northern, Western and Southern Mediterranean Europe all recorded 3% growth this period despite uneven monthly results. Central and Eastern Europe continued to rebound strongly (+9%), but remained 11% below 2019 levels, according to available data.
- The Americas recorded 3% growth in January-June 2025, with mixed results across subregions. While South America (+14%) continued to enjoy solid growth, Central America saw a 2% increase in arrivals and North America saw flat results (+0%) mostly due to small declines in the United States and Canada. The Caribbean (+0%) also saw weaker performance partly due to softening demand from its major source market, the United States.



- The Middle East recorded 4% fewer arrivals this six-month period, though after a very strong post-pandemic rebound, with 29% more arrivals than the same period of 2019, the strongest regional results relative to 2019.
- Arrivals in Asia and the Pacific grew 11% this period, which is 92% of the pre-pandemic figure (-8% compared to 2019). North-East Asia (+20%) saw the strongest performance relative to 2024, though it remained 8% below 2019 levels.
- Some of the highest growth rates among large destinations in H1 2025 were recorded by Japan and Vietnam (+21%), the Republic of Korea (+15%), Morocco (+19%), Mexico and the Netherlands (+7%). Malaysia and Indonesia both recorded 9% growth and Hong Kong (China) 7%, though arrivals remained somewhat below 2019 levels in these destinations.
- The world's top destinations France (+5% through May) and Spain (+5%) also recorded solid growth in arrivals this period.
- According to IATA, both international air traffic (RPKs) and international air capacity (ASKs) grew 7% in January-June 2025 versus 2024. Global occupancy in accommodation establishments reached 69% in June 2025, slightly below 70% in June 2024. Occupancy reached 71% in July 2025 (same as in July 2024) based on STR data.

Many destinations reported strong growth in receipts in the first half of 2025

- Monthly data on international tourism receipts show strong earnings through June 2025 in major destinations such as Japan (+18%), the United Kingdom (+13% through March), France (+9%), Spain (+8%) and Türkiye (+8%).
- Strong travel demand can also be seen in outbound spending from some large markets such as China (+16% through March), Spain (+16%), the UK (+15% through March), Singapore (+10%) and the Republic of Korea (+8%).
- In 2024 international tourism receipts grew 11% to a record 1,734 billion US dollars, about 14% above pre-pandemic levels (real terms) reflecting already strong visitor spending around the world last year.

Economic and geopolitical factors continue to pose important risks

As in previous surveys, the September survey of the Panel of Tourism Experts and the UN Tourism Confidence Index point to high transport and accommodation costs as well as other economic factors as the top two challenges impacting international tourism in 2025.

Tourism inflation is expected to ease from 8.0% in 2024 to 6.8% in 2025 (projections using tourism inflation proxy) but would remain well above the pre-pandemic value of 3.1% and significantly above overall inflation (4.3%). According to the Panel, tourists will continue to

seek value for money, but could also travel closer to home, make shorter trips or spend less, in response to elevated prices.

Uncertainty derived from economic and geopolitical tensions can also weigh on travel confidence. Lower consumer confidence was ranked as the third main factor affecting tourism in the September 2025 survey, while geopolitical risks (aside from ongoing conflicts) ranked fourth. The increase in trade tariffs (5th) and Travel requirements (6th) were also major concerns expressed by the Panel of Experts.

Slight uptick in confidence levels for September-December 2025

The latest UN Tourism Confidence Index shows a slight uptick in confidence levels for the last four months of 2025. On a scale of 0 to 200 (where 100 indicates equal performance), Panel Experts gave the period September-December 2025 a score of 120, up from 114 for May-August.

Some 50% of Panel experts expressed better (44%) or much better (6%) prospects for September-December, while 33% foresee similar performance than in 2024. Some 16% expect tourism performance to be worse. This positive though still cautious outlook is also reflected in the higher percentage of 'better' and 'much better' prospects for the year 2025 overall (60% in the September survey versus 49% in May) according to Panel Experts.

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

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