

Statistical bulletin

Overseas travel and tourism: July and August 2022 provisional results

Visits to the UK by overseas residents, visits abroad by UK residents and spending by travellers, using provisional passenger traffic data.

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1 . Main points

- There were 3.5 million visits to the UK by overseas visitors in August 2022, an increase from 3.4 million visits in July 2022.
- Overseas visitors' visits to the UK in August 2022 are still lower than pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels, down 21% from 4.4 million in August 2019.
- Overseas residents spent £3.0 billion in the UK in August 2022, and £3.1 billion in the UK in July 2022.
- UK residents made 9.0 million visits overseas in August 2022, up 31% from the previous month.
- UK residents' visits overseas in August 2022 were down 22% from August 2019, when there were 11.6 million visits overseas by UK residents.
- UK residents spent £8.1 billion while overseas in August 2022, and £6.2 billion on visits overseas in July 2022.

The estimates provided from January 2021 should be treated with caution, as the numbers are smaller than pre-coronavirus pandemic years. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) was unable to interview at the Eurotunnel site until July 2022, but the total passenger numbers are included when the data are processed and therefore included in the monthly figures. No estimates are included for any travel across the Irish border. Data for the first six months of 2021 are shown for air visits only.

2 . Trends in visits to the UK by overseas residents

The upward trend of visits to the UK continued, and visits to the UK reached 3.4 million in July 2022 and 3.5 million in August 2022.

Spending by overseas residents reached a peak for the year when it increased between June and July 2022, from an estimated £2.7 billion to £3.1 billion. The amount spent fell slightly in August 2022 to £3.0 billion.

Visits to the UK in July and August were still down from pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels. In July 2019, there were an estimated 4.2 million visits to the UK compared with 3.4 million in July 2022, an 18% decrease. In August 2019, there were 4.4 million visits compared with 3.5 million in 2022, a fall of 21%.

Spending was much nearer to pre-coronavirus pandemic levels in July 2022 (£3.1 billion), when it was estimated to be 1% higher than in July 2019 (£3.0 billion). In August, however, it was down 13% from £3.5 billion in 2019 to £3.0 billion in 2022.

Different trends were observed for different areas of the world in July and August 2022. Visitors from North America peaked for the year so far in June, but declined in July and August. However, visitors from Europe have increased each month since June 2022.

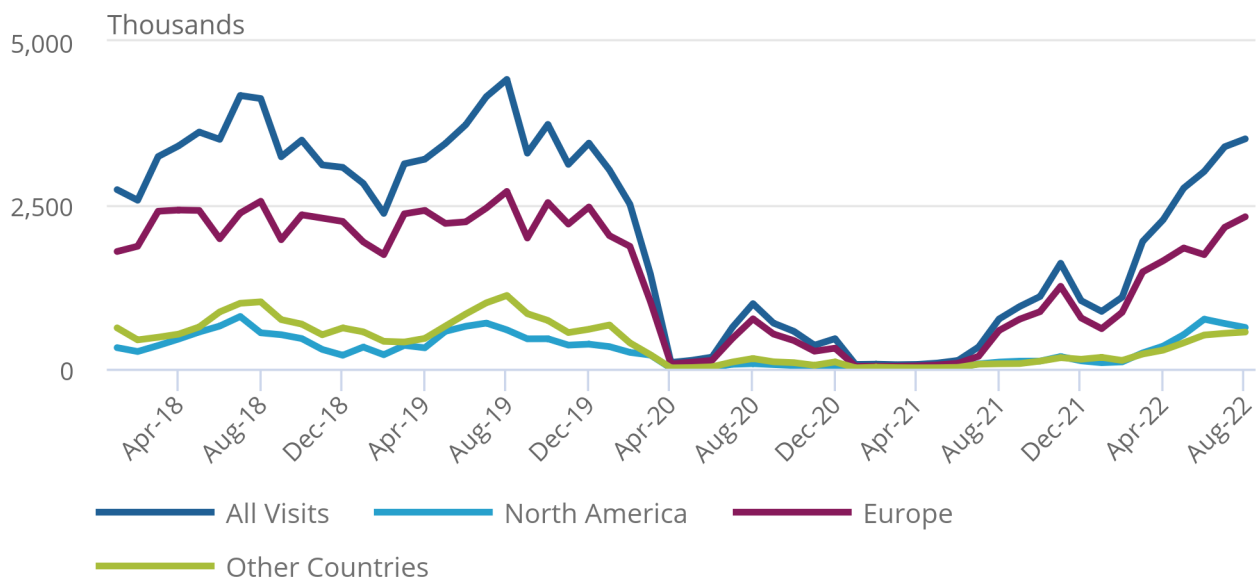
Holidays were the main reason overseas residents visited the UK since April this year. That trend continues through July and August, with 1.5 million visits (43% of total) made for this reason in July and 1.6 million (47% of the total) in August. The next-most common reason in both July and August was visiting friends or relatives (1.2 million visits in July and 1.3 million in August).

Figure 1: Visits to the UK continue to rise towards pre-coronavirus pandemic levels

Overseas residents' visits to the UK by month, January 2018 to August 2022

Figure 1: Visits to the UK continue to rise towards pre-coronavirus pandemic levels

Overseas residents' visits to the UK by month, January 2018 to August 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics – International Passenger Survey

3 . Trends in overseas visits by UK residents

Visits overseas by UK residents saw a 12% decrease between June and July, from 7.8 million visits to 6.9 million visits. Visitor numbers then increased significantly in August to 9.0 million, an increase of 31%.

The dip in visits abroad between June and July, and subsequent rise in August, is a repeat of patterns seen in years before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Visits abroad by UK residents show the same pattern between 2017 and 2019.

Visits abroad are still down compared to pre-coronavirus pandemic levels. There were 6.9 million visits abroad in July 2022, 20% less than July 2019 (8.6 million). Visits in August 2022 (9.0 million) were down 22% from 2019 (11.6 million).

The amount of money UK residents spent in July 2022 remained similar to June, with £6.2 billion spent in each month. Money spent abroad increased to a 2022 high of £8.1 billion in August 2022.

Despite the visits being down by 20%, the amount that UK residents spent overseas in July 2022 was slightly higher than in 2019. In August, when visits were down by 22% from 2019, spending fell by a smaller amount, just 6%. The fact that spending is closer to pre-coronavirus pandemic levels than visits could be explained by the higher cost of living being experienced globally. The value of sterling is low which would also have influenced spending abroad.

The majority of visits abroad were made to Europe. In July 2022, 83% (5.7 million) of visits were to European countries. In August 2022, it was 80% (7.2 million).

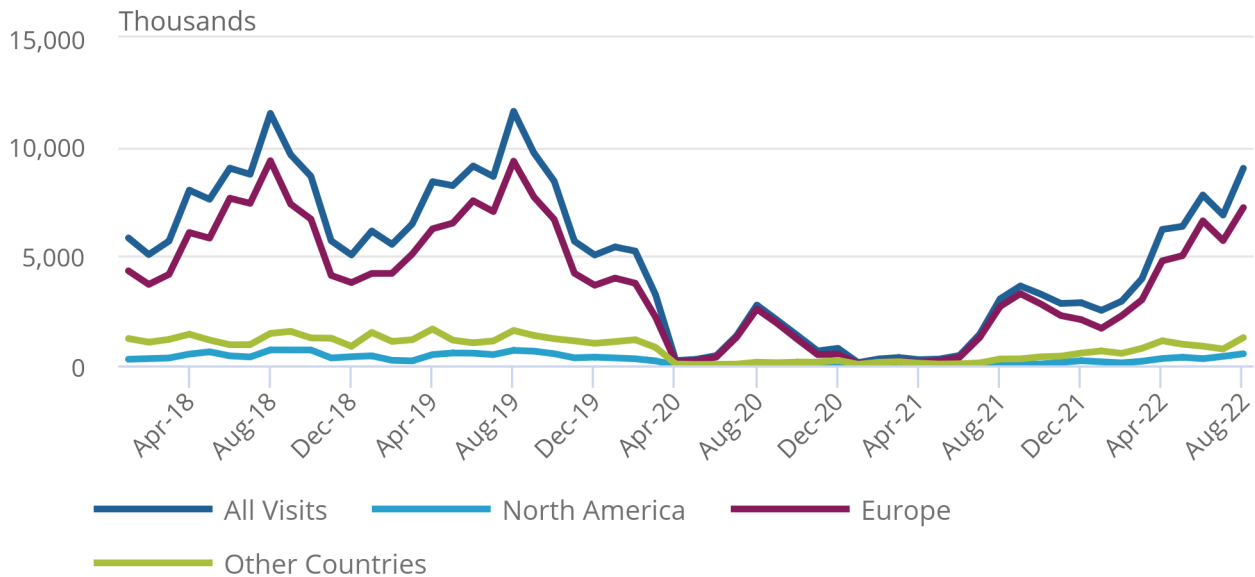
Going on holiday was the most common reason for UK residents visiting overseas, with 74% (5.1 million) of visits in July 2022 and 69% (6.2 million) in August 2022 being made for this reason. After going on holiday, visiting friends or family was the next-most common reason for travel. There were 1.4 million visits made for this reason in July 2022, and 2.4 million in August.

Figure 2: The number of UK residents' visits abroad falls in July 2022, but continues to rise in August

UK residents' visits overseas by month, January 2018 to August 2022

Figure 2: The number of UK residents' visits abroad falls in July 2022, but continues to rise in August

UK residents' visits overseas by month, January 2018 to August 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics – International Passenger Survey

Notes:

1. The monthly figures for the first two quarters of 2021 (Jan to June) do not match the total quarterly figures, as these estimates exclude visits and spend for sea travel.

4 . Overseas travel and tourism data

[Overseas travel and tourism, monthly](#)

Dataset | Released 5 December 2022

Seasonally and non-seasonally adjusted estimates of completed international visits to and from the UK.

[Overseas travel and tourism time series](#)

Dataset | Released 5 December 2022

Seasonally and non-seasonally adjusted estimates of completed international visits to and from the UK.

Based on International Passenger Survey data.

5 . Glossary

Visits

The figures relate to the number of completed visits, not the number of visitors. Anyone entering or leaving more than once in the same period is counted on each visit.

Day visits

Trips that do not involve an overnight stay abroad by UK residents, as well as day trips to the UK by overseas residents, are included in the total figures for visits and expenditure. However, figures presented at lower levels of geography relate to overnight stays only.

Overseas visitor

A person who, being permanently resident in a country outside the UK, visits the UK for a period of less than 12 months. UK citizens who are resident overseas for 12 months or more coming home on leave are included in this category. Visits abroad are visits for a period of less than 12 months by people permanently resident in the UK (who may be of foreign nationality).

Visiting multiple countries

When a resident of the UK has visited more than one country, expenditure and stay are allocated to the country stayed in for the longest time.

Miscellaneous visits

Visits for miscellaneous purposes include:

- those for study
- to attend sporting events
- for shopping
- health
- religious
- other purposes,

These include visits for more than one purpose, where none predominates (for example, visits both on business and on holiday). Overseas visitors staying overnight in the UK on their way to other destinations are also included in miscellaneous purposes.

Earnings and expenditure

Earnings refer to spending in the UK by overseas residents. Expenditure refers to spending abroad by UK residents.

6 . Measuring the data

International Passenger Survey (IPS) data are collected by a team of over 200 interviewers who are recruited and trained specifically to work on the IPS. They carry out interviews at air and sea ports, onboard vessels leaving or returning to the UK, or on board the Eurotunnel trains. Interviews are carried out on all days of the year, apart from:

- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day
- New Year's Day

We have made methodological improvements to the travel and tourism estimates from the IPS. These relate to the survey's weighting process and were used to produce the data presented in this bulletin. The improvements were introduced in our [Travel trends: 2019 article](#), and are described in Section 5: Improved methodology for the estimates. A detailed technical paper will be published in due course, comprehensively setting out the changes. These changes affect only travel and tourism, not estimates of long-term international migration.

The new method was used to produce final results for 2019 and a revised series for 2009 to 2018. The effects of the new method, and how these differ from the old, are presented in Section 6: Impacts of the new IPS methodology, in our [Travel trends: 2019 article](#).

7 . Data sources and quality

Methods used to produce these estimates

Apart from the time when the survey was not running (16 March 2020 to 18 January 2021), figures shown are produced from results of the International Passenger Survey (IPS). These results do not include any travel via the Eurotunnel vehicle trains, as the trains were isolated, and no interviewing could take place until July 2022 and after. It was also not possible to obtain any survey results from Dover to France until August 2021. It should be noted that there was very little travel-related traffic at that time. Results for when the survey was not operating were limited to totals, and the method used can be found in Section 6 of our [Overseas travel and tourism, provisional: April to June 2020 bulletin](#). Although traffic volumes have increased during 2021, figures should be treated with caution. This is because the numbers are much smaller than in the past, and are subject to higher sampling errors than previous estimates released.

Accuracy of the IPS estimates

Estimates produced from the IPS are subject to sampling errors, because not every traveller to or from the UK is interviewed on the survey. Sampling errors are determined both by the sample design and by the sample size. Generally, the larger the sample supporting a particular estimate, the proportionately smaller is its sampling error. The survey sample size in 2021 is much smaller than in previous years because of the travel restrictions resulting from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The estimates presented in this article for the whole of 2020 must be treated with particular caution, since the methods used have not been fully scrutinised or tested. The estimates presented in this article make the best use of the available data and methods to produce estimates of international visits and spending. However, the numbers are small, and the results should be treated with caution.

Uncertainty

The accuracy of the estimates is expressed in terms of confidence intervals. For more information on how we measure and communicate uncertainty for our surveys, see our [Uncertainty and how we measure it web page](#).

The following guidelines are provided to aid in the interpretation of the estimates, and to enable their reliability to be assessed:

- confidence interval below 10%: precise
- confidence interval between 10% and 20%: reasonably precise
- confidence interval between 20% and 40%: acceptable
- confidence interval over 40%: unreliable (these estimates should be used with caution for practical purposes)

Table 1 shows the 95% confidence intervals for the estimates of the total number of visits and expenditure for both overseas residents visiting the UK and UK residents going abroad.

Table 1: Confidence intervals relating to overseas travel and tourism estimates, July 2022

July 2022 monthly estimates	Estimate	Relative 95% Confidence Interval (+/- % of the estimate)
Visits to UK by overseas residents (thousands)	3,390	6.1%
Earnings from visits to UK (£ million)	3,120	8.9%
Visits abroad by UK residents (thousands)	6,880	5.2%
Expenditure on visits abroad (£ million)	6,160	6.5%

Source: Office for National Statistics – International Passenger Survey

Table 2: Confidence intervals relating to overseas travel and tourism estimates, August 2022

August 2022 monthly estimates	Estimate	Relative 95% Confidence Interval (+/- % of the estimate)
Visits to UK by overseas residents (thousands)	3,510	9.0%
Earnings from visits to UK (£ million)	3,040	11.2%
Visits abroad by UK residents (thousands)	9,020	5.5%
Expenditure on visits abroad (£ million)	8,130	7.0%

Source: Office for National Statistics – International Passenger Survey

8 . Related links

[Travelpac: travel to and from the UK](#)

Dataset | Released 7 November 2022

Quarterly data on travel to and from the UK, taken from the International Passenger Survey (IPS). Includes detail on age and sex of travellers, purpose and length of trip, and spending. These data are in a form suitable for small businesses and students.

[Travel trends: 2021](#)

Article | Released 15 June 2022

Annual estimates of travel and tourism visits to the UK (of less than 12 months' duration) and associated earnings and expenditure between the UK and the rest of the world.

[Overseas travel and tourism, UK, provisional: April to June 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 07 November 2022

Visits to the UK by overseas residents, visits abroad by UK residents and spending by travellers, using provisional passenger traffic data.

[Overseas travel and tourism: June 2022 provisional results](#)

Bulletin | Released 07 November 2022

Visits to the UK by overseas residents, visits abroad by UK residents and spending by travellers, using provisional passenger traffic data.

9 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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