

Statistical bulletin

Overseas travel and tourism, provisional: July to September 2022

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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Notice

31 January 2023

We have identified and corrected an issue with data collected from the International Passenger Survey (IPS) from Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2021 to Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2022, linked to challenges collecting and publishing consistent data during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Details of passenger numbers at the Eurotunnel have been removed from the estimates, as the Office of National Statistics (ONS) was unable to interview at this site until July 2022. This has mainly impacted on visitor numbers from Europe, which are lower than previously published. There are also revisions to visitor and spend data at individual country level.

Corrections have been made to the accompanying data tables.

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1 . Main points

- Overseas residents made 10.0 million visits to the UK in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022; this was much higher than in Quarter 3 2021, when only 2.0 million visits were made.
- Overseas residents spent £9.1 billion on their visits to the UK in Quarter 3 2022, an increase of £7.3 billion compared with visits in Quarter 3 2021.
- UK residents made 24.9 million visits abroad in Quarter 3 2022; this compares with 8.1 million visits in Quarter 3 2021.
- UK residents spent £22.1 billion on visits abroad in Quarter 3 2022; this was £15.6 billion more than they spent in Quarter 3 2021.
- Holidays were the most popular reason for both overseas residents and UK residents for travelling in Quarter 3 2022; this has reverted to a more traditional reason after the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, when the most common reason for travel was to see friends and relatives.

The estimates provided for 2021 and the start of 2022 should be treated with caution as the numbers are smaller than pre-coronavirus pandemic years. The data exclude the Eurotunnel as the Office for National Statistics (ONS) were unable to interview at this site between January 2021 and June 2022. No estimates are included for any travel across the Irish border.

2 . International Passenger Survey and coronavirus (COVID-19)

This article analyses data from the International Passenger Survey (IPS), which collects details from overseas residents leaving the UK, and UK residents returning home. Sea and Eurotunnel data are excluded for some periods when, because of coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions, it was not possible to interview on board Dover ferries or the Eurotunnel. Interviewing restarted in Dover in July 2021 and on the Eurotunnel vehicles on trains in July 2022.

The figures shown for April to December 2020 are based on administrative sources and modelling, and the methods used are described in the [Data sources and quality section of our Overseas travel and tourism, provisional: April to June 2020 bulletin](#). The IPS was not run during this period because of the coronavirus pandemic.

3 . Overseas residents' visits to the UK: July to September 2022

Overseas residents made a total of 10.0 million visits to the UK during Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022, compared with 2.0 million visits in Quarter 3 2021. This increase in visits can be attributed to the easing of coronavirus (COVID-19) travel restrictions in 2022.

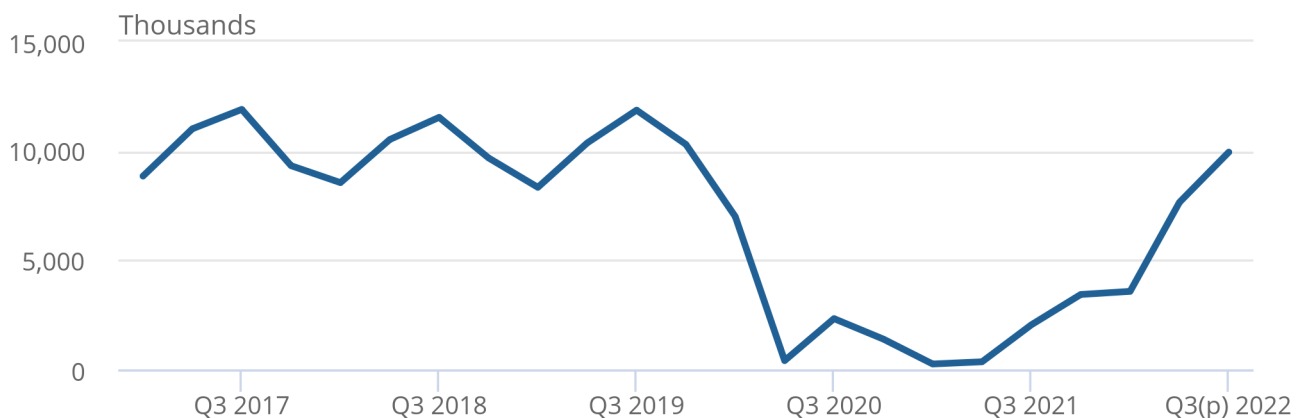
There were 11.9 million overseas visits made by overseas residents in Quarter 3 2019, before the coronavirus pandemic. In Quarter 3 2022, visits fell by 16% to 10.0 million although spending was similar in Quarter 3 2019 and Quarter 3 2022 (£9.2 billion and £9.1 billion, respectively). This shows visitor numbers and spending are heading towards pre-coronavirus pandemic levels, but spending is growing at a faster rate.

Figure 1: Overseas residents' visits to the UK increased by 7.9 million in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022 compared with Quarter 3 2021

Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2017 to Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 (all modes) and Quarter 1 to Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2021 (air only) with the addition of sea data from Quarter 3 2021 to Quarter 3 2022

Figure 1: Overseas residents' visits to the UK increased by 7.9 million in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022 compared with Quarter 3 2021

Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2017 to Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 (all modes) and Quarter 1 to Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2021 (air only) with the addition of sea data from Quarter 3 2021 to Quarter 3 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics – International Passenger Survey and Overseas travel and tourism

Visits to the UK by overseas visitors increased in Quarter 3 2022 when compared with the same period a year earlier. This increase is to be expected as restrictions on travel reduce. Taking holidays was the most popular reason for visiting the UK, with an increase from 313,000 to 4.3 million between Quarter 3 2021 and Quarter 3 2022. Visiting friends or relatives more than doubled from 1.2 million to 3.5 million visits, and business trips increased from 344,000 to 1.4 million. This is a change from recent quarters during the coronavirus pandemic, when visiting friends and relatives was the most popular reason for travel to the UK.

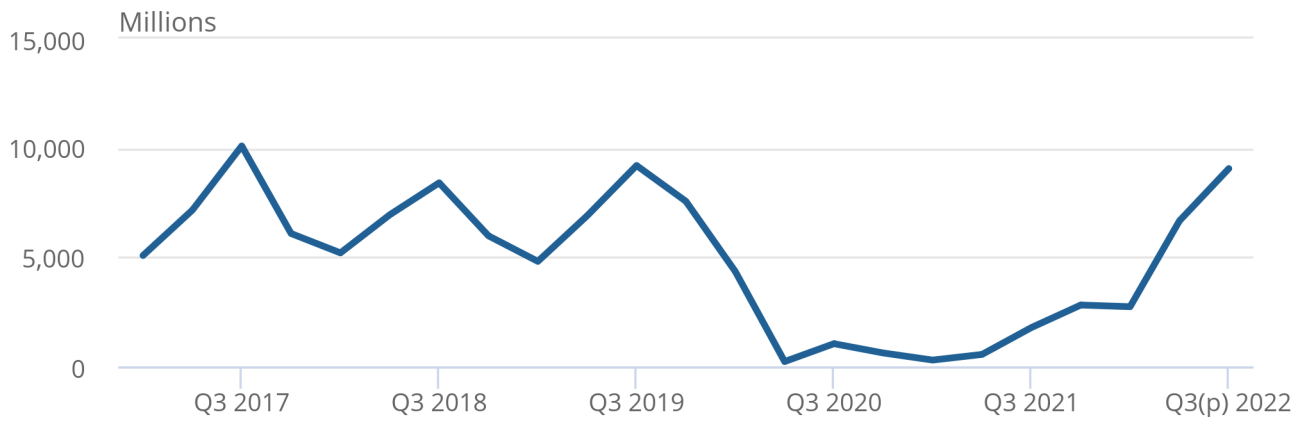
Estimated spending in the UK by overseas visitors was £9.1 billion in Quarter 3 2022, compared with £1.8 billion in Quarter 3 2021. An increase in spending was seen for all areas of the world but the largest rise was for residents from Europe. Spending by residents of Europe, in Quarter 3 2022, was four times the amount spent in the same quarter in the previous year.

Figure 2: Spending by overseas residents in the UK increased by £7.3 billion in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022 compared with Quarter 3 2021

Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2017 to Quarter 4 2020 (all modes) and Quarter 1 to Quarter 2 2021 (air only) with the addition of sea data from Quarter 3 2021 to Quarter 3 2022

Figure 2: Spending by overseas residents in the UK increased by £7.3 billion in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022 compared with Quarter 3 2021

Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2017 to Quarter 4 2020 (all modes) and Quarter 1 to Quarter 2 2021 (air only) with the addition of sea data from Quarter 3 2021 to Quarter 3 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics – International Passenger Survey and Overseas travel and tourism

4 . Visits abroad by UK residents

UK residents made 24.9 million visits abroad in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022. This compares with 8.1 million visits in the same quarter in 2021. This large increase in visits abroad could be because of the easing of coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic travel restrictions. Visits abroad in Quarter 3 2022 were still lower than pre-coronavirus pandemic levels; down by 17% on Quarter 3 2019. Disruptions at some airports across the UK caused by staff shortages and the rising cost of living could partly be the reason for this.

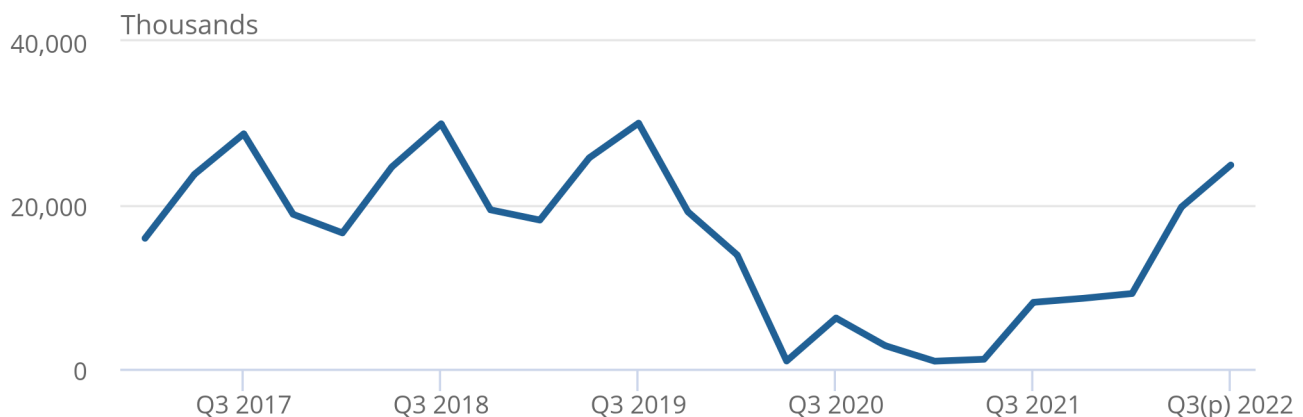
The largest number of visits abroad were made to Europe (20.4 million), a much larger number than the same quarter in 2021 when the visits were just 7.3 million. Large increases were made by all residents of the world between Quarter 3 2021 and Quarter 3 2022.

Figure 3: UK residents' visits abroad increased by 16.7 million in Quarter 3 2022 compared with Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2021

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Source: Office for National Statistics – International Passenger Survey and Overseas travel and tourism

Holidays were the most common reason for UK residents' visits abroad in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022, accounting for 69% of all visits (17.3 million). The next most common reason for travelling was to visit friends or family, 6.0 million visits. Business trips also increased between Quarter 3 2021 and Quarter 3 2022 from 395,000 to 1.3 million, but this was only a quarter of these visits in the same time period in 2019.

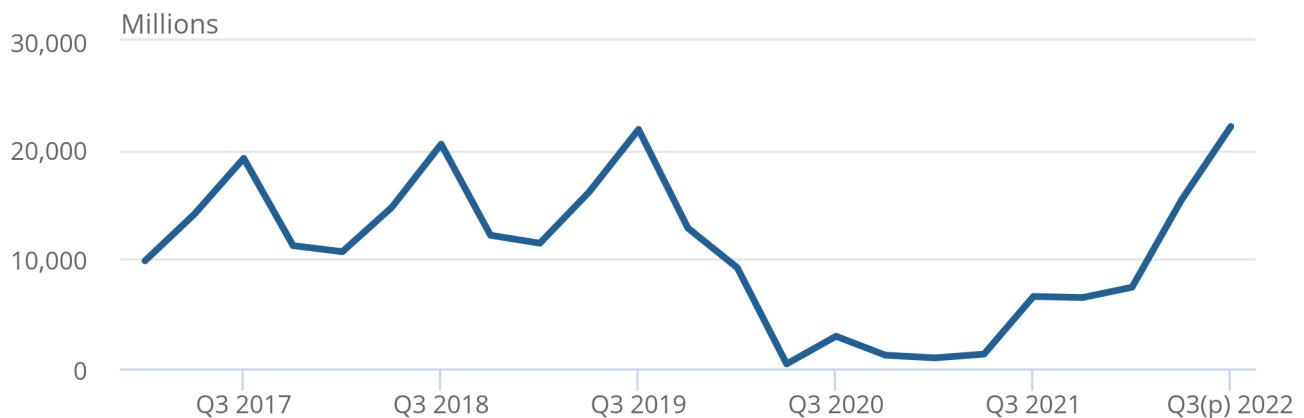
UK residents spent £22.1 billion during visits abroad in Quarter 3 2022. This was an increase of £15.6 billion when compared with the same period in 2021. This level of spending is similar to pre-coronavirus pandemic estimates and could be an indication of the increased cost of living globally.

Figure 4: Spending by UK residents abroad increased by £15.6 billion in Quarter 3 2022 compared with Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2021

Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2017 to Quarter 4 2020 (all modes) and Quarter 1 to Quarter 2 2021 (air only) with the addition of sea data from Quarter 3 2021 to Quarter 3 2022

Figure 4: Spending by UK residents abroad increased by £15.6 billion in Quarter 3 2022 compared with Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2021

Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2017 to Quarter 4 2020 (all modes) and Quarter 1 to Quarter 2 2021 (air only) with the addition of sea data from Quarter 3 2021 to Quarter 3 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics – International Passenger Survey and Overseas travel and tourism

5 . Overseas travel and tourism data

[Estimates of overseas residents' visits and spending in the UK](#)

Dataset | Released on 31 January 2023

Quarterly estimates of overseas residents' visits and spending from the International Passenger Survey, using administrative sources and modelling.

[Estimates of UK residents' visits and spending abroad](#)

Dataset | Released on 31 January 2023

Quarterly estimates of UK residents' visits and spending abroad from the International Passenger Survey, using administrative sources and modelling.

6 . 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.

Overseas visitor

An overseas visitor is 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 residing 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 residing 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 that was stayed in for the longest time.

Miscellaneous visits

Visits for miscellaneous purposes include:

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

It also includes visits for more than one purpose when 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, whereas expenditure refers to spending abroad by UK residents.

7 . Measuring the data

Accuracy of the International Passenger Survey (IPS) estimates

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

Collection of the IPS data

IPS data are collected by a team of over 200 interviewers who are recruited and trained specifically to work on the IPS. Interviews are carried out at air and sea ports, on board 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 and New Year's Day.

Further guidance is available about the quality of overseas travel and tourism estimates in our [IPS Quality and methodology information \(QMI\) report](#). This report will be updated shortly to reflect recent changes to the survey's processes.

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

Visits to the UK by overseas residents, visits abroad by UK residents and spending estimates by travellers.

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

Bulletin | Released 31 January 2023

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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