US Leads Global Travel & Tourism Rebound says WTTC

Strong outbound growth from US Travellers

US Domestic Travel & Tourism market demonstrates its resilience

Millions more American jobs since 2021

Las Vegas, USA: The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), together with WTTC members ForwardKeys and Mabrian Technologies, today unveiled new insights into the strong expansion of the U.S. Travel & Tourism sector.

According to WTTC's Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2023 Global Trends Report, the GDP contribution of the U.S. Travel & Tourism sector grew by 16.9% in 2022, to reach $2TN. Additionally, the sector also created 2.7MN more jobs compared to 2021.

In 2023, WTTC forecasts the sector's GDP contribution will reach $2.2BN and that job numbers will total 17.4MN.

This impressive growth was fuelled by a strong resurgence in demand from international visitors, whose spending increased by more than 150% year-on-year, to reach $115.7BN in 2022.

The report also shows that domestic visitor spend has nearly regained its pre-pandemic levels with figures reaching $1.18TN in 2022, close to the $1.2TN spent by domestic visitors in 2019.

Measured by economic contribution, and spending by international and domestic visitors, the U.S. led, boasting the largest Travel & Tourism sector in the world, in both 2019 and 2022.

Outbound Travel Trends

Data from ForwardKeys reveals a 13% increase in forward-looking U.S. outbound travel, with prime growth destinations such as Greece, the Dominican Republic, Italy, Jamaica, and

Mexico seeing increases ranging from 30% to 63%. Families are leading the travel recovery, with family-sized groups witnessing a 21% growth over 2019.

The top international destinations for U.S. visitors are Mexico, Canada, and the UK, together making up 52% of all outbound departures in the U.S. in 2022.

U.S. Airports Witness Increased Passenger Numbers

The resurgence in travel is also reflected in U.S. airport statistics.

Statistics from Mabrian Technologies reveal that the U.S. continues to host some of the world's busiest airports. Denver International has witnessed the highest inbound passenger growth of any U.S. airport with almost 2.2MN more passengers between 2019 and 2023.

Orlando International also experienced a rise in inbound traffic, accommodating 1.8 million more travellers in 2022 compared to 2019. The recently rebranded Harry Reid International Airport in Nevada ranks third, with 1.7 million more travellers passing through its gates in 2023 as opposed to 2019.

Other major U.S. airports, such as Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International, Dallas Fort Worth International and O'Hare International, are also all forecast to be amongst the top ten busiest airports in the U.S. in 2023 in terms of total inbound passenger numbers.

Together, these figures underscore that airports across the U.S. welcomed a combined 9.6 million more passengers last year in comparison to the period just before the pandemic hit.

Future Outlook

Julia Simpson, WTTC President & CEO, highlighted "The U.S.'s performance is more than just numbers; it shows the resilience and enduring demand for Travel & Tourism.

"In 2019, one in ten jobs globally were in the Travel & Tourism sector and it's set to contribute $9.5TN to the global economy this year alone."

Global and European Heatwaves: A Shift in Destination Preferences

U.S. travellers have remained steadfast in their continued preferences for southern European destinations. Searches for vacations to southern Europe only saw a minimal 0.3% decrease according to ForwardKeys, highlighting Americans' sustained interest in the region, despite high summer temperatures.

With contributions reaching pre-pandemic levels, the U.S. Travel & Tourism sector's positive trajectory signals optimism and growth, reflecting the sector's resilience and potential.

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Editors Notes

The research was carried out in partnership with ForwardKeys and Mabrian Technologies, and also draws from the WTTC 2023 Global Economic Impact & Trends Report.

All monetary figures are given in USD.