

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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International Visitation to the U.S. on the Rise Visitor Spending Hits Record High in May

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Department of Commerce today announced that 4.3 million international visitors traveled to the United States in May, an increase of 14 percent over May 2007. For the first five months of 2008, visitation was up 12 percent compared to 2007. International visitors also spent a record \$11.8 billion in May, a 21 percent increase from May 2007. Spending by international travelers while in the United States, including travel receipts and passenger fares, is defined as a U.S. export.

“The United States continues to be a favorite destination for international travelers,” said Commerce Manufacturing and Services Assistant Secretary William G. Sutton. “These record-breaking May numbers underscore the strength of the U.S. tourism industry and highlight the economic importance of America’s openness to the world.”

Highlights of International Arrivals to the United States for May and Year-to-Date 2008

- Overseas arrivals (excluding Canada and Mexico) increased 14 percent for the month compared to May 2007 and 10 percent year-to-date 2008.
- Visitation from Canada was up 16 percent for the month and 17 percent for the year.
- Mexican travel to the U.S. ‘interior’¹ was up 8 percent in May and up 4 percent for the first five months of 2008.
- Visitation from Western Europe increased 21 percent in May and 16 percent for the year.
- Arrivals from the United Kingdom were up 11 percent in May and 8 percent for the year.
- Visitation from other top Western European markets all increased by double-digits for the month of May 2008 as well as the first five months of the year. German, French, Dutch and Italian arrivals were up 29 percent, 34 percent, 21 percent and 34 percent, respectively, in May. Eastern Europe generated a 14 percent increase in May arrivals.
- Arrivals from South America were up 18 percent in May and 17 percent for the year.
- Visitation from Asia was up 7 percent in May, with arrivals from China and Japan up 39 percent and 2 percent, respectively.

Background

Manufacturing and Services’ Office of Travel and Tourism Industries (OTTI) collects, analyzes, and disseminates international travel and tourism statistics for the U.S. Travel and Tourism Statistical System. To view OTTI visitation data tables, please visit:
<http://www.tinet.ita.doc.gov/view/m-2008-I-001/index.html> .

¹ The U.S. ‘interior’ begins 40 kilometers (25 miles) north of the U.S.-Mexico border. This distinguishes longer-haul travelers, including air passengers, from short-haul border crossers.