

Measuring Price Change for Export Travel and Tourism in the U.S. Import/Export Price Indexes



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The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Export Travel and Tourism Index measures changes in prices for travel-related goods and services paid by foreign visitors when traveling in the United States. BLS first began to publish the Export Travel and Tourism Index in 2007 and discontinued publication in 2008. The index was published with a one-month lag due to the availability of pricing data. BLS publishes international services price indexes for air freight and air passenger fares. Historical data are available for crude oil tanker freight and ocean liner freight (<http://www.bls.gov/web/discsrv.htm>), education (<http://www.bls.gov/web/srv3.htm>) and travel and tourism services (<http://www.bls.gov/web/srv2.htm>).

The Export Travel and Tourism Index measures price changes for lodging, food and beverage, entertainment, local transportation, gifts and souvenirs, and other goods and services purchased in the United States by foreign visitors. For example, the price paid by a resident of France for a hotel stay in New York City would be included in the Export Travel and Tourism Index. Expenditures by foreign visitors traveling to the United States for business, education, or medical treatment are excluded from this index. The indexes for export travel and tourism are published according to the visitor's country of residence. Regional groupings follow the definitions set by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Survey of International Air Travelers. The U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) is a primary user of the Export Travel and Tourism Index. BEA uses these indexes to adjust the Balance of Payments Accounts and to deflate the Gross Domestic Product.

Sample Design and Selection

The Export Travel and Tourism Index comprises a subset of data from the BLS Consumer Price Index (CPI) since foreign visitors generally pay the same price for travel-related goods and services in the United States as U.S. residents pay.

The subset of CPI data supporting the index is selected based on expenditures by foreign visitors in selected U.S. metropolitan travel destinations across the broad categories of lodging, food and beverage, entertainment, local transportation, gifts and souvenirs, and other expenditures. The specific transactions selected adhere to CPI's sampling methodology.

Pricing

Pricing data for the Export Travel and Tourism Index are obtained monthly from the BLS CPI. The pricing data are a combination of CPI basic indexes and item prices. The CPI basic indexes are not seasonally adjusted and include taxes. The item prices also include taxes. Prices for tour packages are excluded from this index. Prices for international airfare also are excluded from this index since these price changes are measured by other U.S. Import/Export Price Indexes.

Trade Value Weights

The revenue weights used for index calculation are derived from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Survey of International Air Travelers, as well as expenditure figures from Statistics Canada and the Mexican Ministry of Tourism. The trade dollar value weights are updated annually with a two year lag.

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Additional Information

Additional information on the U.S. Import/Export Price Indexes can be found in "International Price Indexes," *BLS Handbook of Methods*, Bulletin 2490 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1997), Chapter 15. This chapter also is available on the BLS Internet site (<http://www.bls.gov/mxp>) under the topic "Publications." You may contact the International Price Program of BLS by telephone at (202) 691-7101 or by e-mail at mxpinfo@bls.gov.

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