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U.S. Travel and Tourism Satellite Account for 2017–2021

By Sarah Osborne | February 9, 2023

The travel and tourism industry—as measured by the real output of goods and services sold directly to visitors—increased 64.4 percent in 2021 after decreasing 50.7 percent in 2020, according to the most recent statistics from the Travel and Tourism Satellite Account (TTSA) of the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). By comparison, the broader economy, as measured by real gross domestic product (GDP), increased 5.9 percent in 2021 after decreasing 2.8 percent in 2020. Revised statistics on travel and tourism reflect the incorporation of the annual update of the National Economic Accounts, which was released on September 29, 2022.

Highlights from the TTSA include the following:

- As the industry entered the recovery period of the COVID–19 pandemic, travel and tourism's share of GDP increased from 1.54 percent in 2020 to 2.15 percent in 2021 (table A).
- The travel and tourism industry's real output increased \$362.0 billion in 2021 but has not fully recovered from the pandemic. Travel and tourism's real output for 2021 was 81.1 percent of its 2019 level (table B).
 - The increase in 2021 is the largest expansion in real output since BEA began measuring these statistics in 1998.
 - In 2021, real output increased for 21 of 24 commodities. The largest contributors to the increase were food and beverage services and shopping.
- Prices for travel and tourism goods and services increased 7.7 percent in 2021 after decreasing 5.0 percent in 2020. The largest contributors to the increase were gasoline, traveler accommodations, and automotive rental and leasing (table C).
- The TTSA is available on the BEA website; see the box "Data Availability."

The remainder of this article includes a discussion of trends in travel and tourism output, prices, value added, and employment.

Table A. Travel and Tourism as a Share of Gross Domestic Product in 2017–2021

	Billions of	Percent						
Year	Gross domestic product (GDP)	Tourism value added	Tourism value added as a share of GDP					
2017	19,477	565	2.90					
2018	20,533	595	2.90					
2019	21,381	640	2.99					
2020	20,061	308	1.54					
2021	23,315	502	2.15					

Trends in Output and Prices

Real output

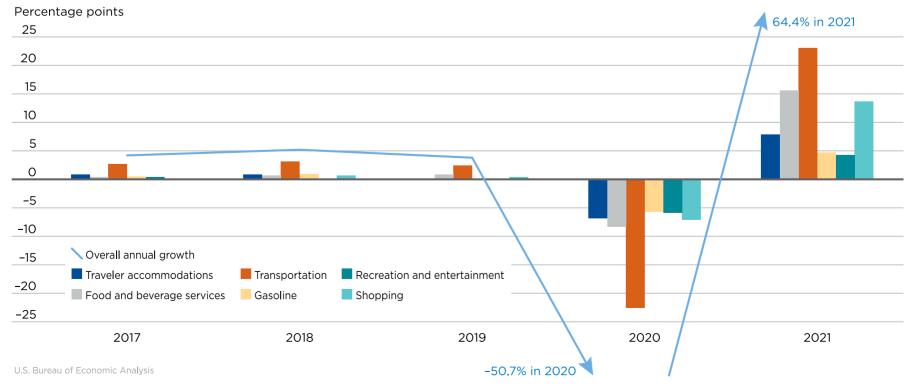
Travel and tourism real output increased 64.4 percent in 2021. The largest contributors were food and beverage services, shopping, domestic passenger air transportation services, and traveler accommodations (table B and chart 1).

The upturn in real output (from a decrease of 50.7 percent in 2020 to an increase 64.4 percent in 2021) was led by upturns in food and beverage services, shopping, domestic passenger air transportation service, and traveler accommodations.

Table B. Annual Growth, Contributions to Growth, and Levels of Real Output by Tourism Commodity in 2017-2021

Commodity	Annual gr	owth rates	Contributions (percentage points)					Real Output (millions of chained (2012) dollars)							
Commonly	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
All tourism goods and services	4.2	5.2	3.8	-50.7	64.4	4.2	5.2	3.8	-50.7	64.4	1,043,774	1,097,743	1,139,150	562,170	924,175
Traveler accommodations	3.9	4.0	0.1	-35.6	31.9	0.80	0.81	0.02	-6.79	7.86	187,976	195,579	195,741	125,992	166,242
Food and beverage services	3.0	5.0	6.1	-55.2	110.4	0.43	0.69	0.85	-8.32	15.60	128,891	135,312	143,571	64,281	135,244
Transportation	6.3	7.2	5.4	-51.5	54.0	2.65	3.12	2.40	-22.56	23.05	497,857	533,719	562,626	272,851	420,106
Passenger air transportation	4.6	4.5	6.1	-55.2	64.8	0.90	0.87	1.17	-10.67	10.63	207,277	216,643	229,805	102,902	169,616
Domestic passenger air transportation services	4.4	6.3	5.4	-53.2	63.4	0.64	0.91	0.78	-7.74	8.17	153,474	163,211	171,955	80,484	131,550
International passenger air transportation services	5.4	-0.8	8.3	-61.4	69.9	0.26	-0.04	0.39	-2.93	2.46	53,836	53,394	57,841	22,323	37,929
All other transportation-related commodities	7.8	9.4	4.9	-48.6	47.2	1.75	2.25	1.23	-11.90	12.43	292,955	320,360	336,096	172,846	254,481
Passenger rail transportation services	1.6	-2.7	9.1	-75.3	55.1	0.00	-0.01	0.02	-0.15	0.06	2,225	2,166	2,364	583	904
Passenger water transportation services	2.0	13.3	8.0	-63.0	-19.7	0.03	0.19	0.12	-1.00	-0.23	14,680	16,626	17,951	6,635	5,325
Intercity bus services	6.7	0.6	0.6	-34.2	5.8	0.01	0.00	0.00	-0.04	0.01	1,455	1,464	1,473	969	1,025
Intercity charter bus services	4.0	4.3	7.9	-48.2	40.3	0.01	0.01	0.02	-0.12	0.10	2,444	2,550	2,751	1,425	1,999
Local bus and other transportation services	25.5	38.1	10.2	-75.8	228.1	0.15	0.27	0.09	-0.75	1.09	6,580	9,087	10,013	2,420	7,939
Taxicab services	67.1	-14.4	-8.2	-58.5	70.0	0.30	-0.10	-0.05	-0.30	0.30	6,751	5,777	5,304	2,203	3,745
Scenic and sightseeing transportation services	1.2	1.7	-0.5	-55.1	83.8	0.00	0.01	0.00	-0.18	0.25	3,223	3,279	3,262	1,465	2,693
Automotive rental and leasing	3.7	12.6	18.2	-31.5	20.4	0.11	0.39	0.59	-1.15	1.12	34,940	39,351	46,528	31,855	38,361
Other vehicle rental and leasing	6.8	7.3	0.7	-13.2	-15.9	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.01	-0.02	671	720	725	629	529
Automotive repair services	5.8	1.0	1.9	-9.4	-26.6	0.07	0.01	0.02	-0.11	-0.58	11,345	11,460	11,682	10,581	7,764
Parking	3.3	1.2	3.3	-51.9	113.4	0.01	0.00	0.01	-0.13	0.28	2,347	2,375	2,453	1,181	2,520
Highway tolls	-36.8	24.6	14.1	-57.0	116.1	-0.07	0.03	0.02	-0.09	0.17	1,118	1,393	1,589	684	1,478
Travel arrangement and reservation services	13.3	10.3	4.9	-43.6	93.1	0.61	0.50	0.25	-2.21	5.14	50,856	56,104	58,875	33,184	64,074
Gasoline	5.3	8.8	1.2	-55.7	49.1	0.51	0.94	0.14	-5.65	4.73	155,217	168,921	170,972	75,738	112,908
Recreation, entertainment, and shopping	1.3	2.4	2.3	-58.8	96.5	0.30	0.54	0.50	-12.97	17.88	210,153	215,199	220,154	90,696	178,174
Recreation and entertainment	3.6	-0.8	0.8	-60.1	53.7	0.37	-0.09	0.08	-5.86	4.28	92,778	92,003	92,719	37,026	56,920
Motion pictures and performing arts	-0.8	-3.2	18.3	-32.0	14.7	-0.01	-0.05	0.27	-0.56	0.36	15,074	14,593	17,268	11,741	13,465
Spectator sports	3.4	9.5	1.6	-49.9	44.9	0.02	0.05	0.01	-0.26	0.24	4,375	4,791	4,867	2,436	3,529
Participant sports	13.9	0.9	11.8	-58.0	62.1	0.20	0.01	0.18	-0.98	0.89	15,118	15,252	17,045	7,163	11,608
Gambling	2.0	1.8	-0.1	-70.6	40.2	0.10	0.09	0.00	-3.50	1.21	50,410	51,310	51,264	15,056	21,115
All other recreation and entertainment	4.2	-12.5	-30.5	-66.5	279.9	0.06	-0.19	-0.38	-0.56	1.59	14,870	13,009	9,036	3,025	11,493
Shopping	-0.6	5.1	3.5	-57.8	128.6	-0.07	0.63	0.43	-7.11	13.61	132,713	139,492	144,399	60,932	139,271

Chart 1. Contributions to Annual Growth in Real Tourism Output in 2017-2021

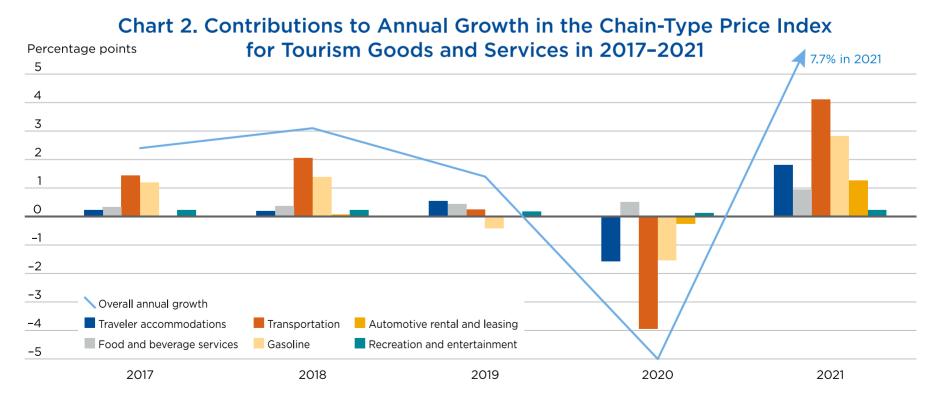


Prices

Travel and tourism prices turned up in 2021, increasing 7.7 percent after decreasing 5.0 percent in 2020, with prices of 21 of 24 commodities contributing to the increase (table C and chart 2). The upturn was led by upturns in gasoline, traveler accommodations, and automotive rental and leasing and a smaller decrease in domestic passenger air transportation.

Table C. Annual Growth, Contributions to Growth, and Levels of Chain-Type Price Indexes for Tourism Commodities in 2017-2021

o 15	Annual grov	Contr	ibution	s (perce	ntage p	oints)	Price Indexes (index number, 2012=100)								
Commodity	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
All tourism goods and services	2.4	3.1	1.4	-5.0	7.7	2.4	3.1	1.4	-5.0	7.7	100.0	103.0	104.5	99.3	106.9
Traveler accommodations	1.1	1.0	2.9	-7.1	8.1	0.22	0.20	0.55	-1.58	1.80	113.0	114.1	117.3	109.0	117.8
Food and beverage services	2.4	2.6	3.1	3.7	5.8	0.34	0.36	0.44	0.51	0.94	113.0	115.9	119.5	124.0	131.1
Transportation	3.4	4.7	0.5	-8.9	10.0	1.44	2.05	0.24	-3.94	4.11	90.0	94.3	94.8	86.3	95.0
Passenger air transportation	0.8	2.5	2.6	-9.1	-1.4	0.15	0.49	0.51	-1.71	-0.25	97.2	99.7	102.3	93.0	91.6
Domestic passenger air transportation services	0.9	1.8	3.4	-9.8	-1.1	0.14	0.27	0.49	-1.42	-0.15	98.2	100.0	103.3	93.3	92.2
International passenger air transportation services	0.3	4.7	0.3	-6.8	-2.6	0.02	0.22	0.01	-0.29	-0.10	94.3	98.8	99.1	92.4	90.0
All other transportation-related commodities	5.7	6.5	-1.1	-8.8	18.3	1.29	1.56	-0.27	-2.23	4.36	84.2	89.6	88.7	80.9	95.7
Passenger rail transportation services	3.3	1.6	-5.0	2.1	6.7	0.01	0.00	-0.01	0.00	0.01	103.5	105.2	99.9	102.0	108.8
Passenger water transportation services	0.9	0.3	-0.6	-4.0	6.4	0.01	0.00	-0.01	-0.06	0.06	104.9	105.3	104.6	100.4	106.8
Intercity bus services	0.8	0.3	-0.6	-4.2	6.6	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.01	0.01	105.0	105.3	104.6	100.2	106.8
Intercity charter bus services	0.8	0.3	-0.7	-3.7	6.0	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.01	0.01	104.9	105.3	104.6	100.7	106.8
Local bus and other transportation services	1.7	1.8	1.1	-1.5	2.0	0.01	0.01	0.01	-0.01	0.01	111.6	113.5	114.8	113.1	115.3
Taxicab services	1.8	1.7	1.1	-1.8	2.3	0.01	0.01	0.01	-0.01	0.01	111.6	113.5	114.8	112.7	115.2
Scenic and sightseeing transportation services	2.5	2.4	2.3	1.5	1.5	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	110.6	113.2	115.8	117.5	119.3
Automotive rental and leasing	0.4	2.2	-0.5	-6.1	29.3	0.01	0.07	-0.02	-0.26	1.27	91.9	94.0	93.5	87.8	113.6
Other vehicle rental and leasing	-2.2	-1.0	0.6	0.8	48.4	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	103.4	102.3	102.9	103.7	153.9
Automotive repair services	1.8	1.9	3.3	3.2	4.1	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.05	0.07	108.5	110.5	114.2	117.8	122.6
Parking	2.4	2.3	2.8	0.7	3.5	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	114.6	117.2	120.4	121.3	125.6
Highway tolls	2.5	2.3	2.8	0.7	3.6	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	114.6	117.2	120.5	121.3	125.6
Travel arrangement and reservation services	-0.2	0.5	2.1	-7.4	0.4	-0.01	0.03	0.11	-0.41	0.03	101.3	101.9	104.0	96.3	96.7
Gasoline	13.1	13.5	-3.6	-15.1	34.5	1.20	1.39	-0.41	-1.53	2.82	68.2	77.3	74.6	63.3	85.2
Recreation, entertainment, and shopping	1.9	2.0	0.8	0.2	3.8	0.45	0.46	0.17	0.04	0.80	102.0	104.1	104.9	105.1	109.1
Recreation and entertainment	2.3	2.2	1.9	1.4	2.8	0.23	0.22	0.18	0.12	0.22	108.3	110.6	112.7	114.2	117.4
Motion pictures and performing arts	2.6	2.1	1.9	1.4	3.8	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.08	111.8	114.2	116.3	117.9	122.4
Spectator sports	2.2	1.8	2.1	3.3	-3.0	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	-0.02	119.6	121.7	124.2	128.2	124.4
Participant sports	2.3	2.9	2.6	1.4	0.9	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.01	107.8	110.9	113.8	115.4	116.4
Gambling	2.1	2.4	1.8	1.4	4.6	0.11	0.12	0.09	0.05	0.13	106.8	109.4	111.4	112.9	118.1
All other recreation and entertainment	2.3	0.6	1.0	-0.3	1.4	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	106.6	107.2	108.2	107.9	109.3
Shopping	1.6	1.9	-0.1	-0.7	4.5	0.21	0.24	-0.01	-0.07	0.58	97.5	99.3	99.2	98.6	103.0

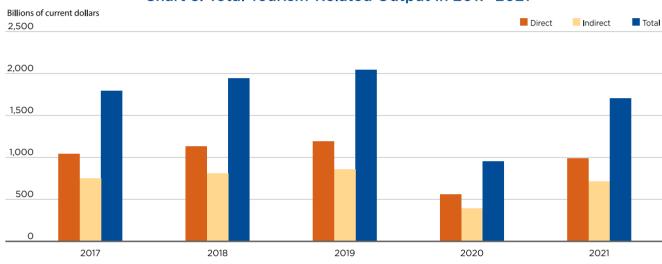


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Total output

Total tourism-related current-dollar, or nominal, output increased to \$1.70 trillion in 2021, up from \$952.0 billion in 2020. In 2021, total output consisted of \$987.7 billion in direct tourism output and \$716.3 billion in indirect tourism output. The 1.73 ratio of total output to direct output in 2021 means that every dollar of direct tourism output requires an additional 73 cents of indirect tourism output (chart 3).

Direct tourism output includes goods and services sold directly to visitors, such as passenger air travel. Indirect tourism output includes sales of all goods and services used to produce that direct output, such as jet fuel to fly the plane and catering services for longer flights.



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Tourism Value Added and Employment

Value added

A sector's value added measures its share of gross domestic product. The travel and tourism industry's share of GDP was 2.15 percent in 2021, 1.54 percent in 2020, and 2.99 in 2019 (table A). This pattern indicates that travel and tourism industries contracted and expanded disproportionately to non-travel and tourism industries during the COVID–19 pandemic.

Direct employment

Direct tourism employment refers to jobs that are directly related to visitor spending on goods and services. Airline pilots, hotel clerks, and travel agents are examples of such employees. Overall, direct employment increased by 1.3 million jobs in 2021 after decreasing by 2.9 million jobs in 2020. The largest contributors to the 2021 increase were food services and drinking places, which gained 730,000 jobs in 2021; shopping, which gained 206,000 jobs; and participant sports, which gained 86,000 jobs (chart 4 and table D).

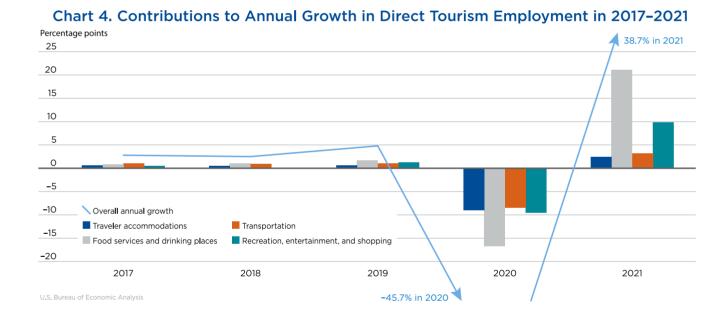


Table D. Annual Growth, Contributions to Growth, and Levels of Direct Employment by Tourism Industry in 2017–2021

Industry	Annua		n rates (preceding	percent c	hange	Cont	ribution	ıs (perc	entage po	ints)	Direct employment (thousands)						
mausay	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021		
All tourism industries	2.8	2.5	4.8	-45.7	38.7	2.8	2.5	4.8	-45.7	38.7	5,945	6,091	6,386	3,466	4,807		
Traveler accommodations	2.1	1.7	2.3	-36.4	8.2	0.54	0.44	0.58	-8.96	2.38	1,512	1,538	1,573	1,001	1,083		
Vacation home rentals	2.4	-1.1	0.9	-4.5	-7.4	0.01	0.00	0.00	-0.01	-0.03	16	15	16	15	14		
Food services and drinking places	2.6	3.5	5.6	-54.8	83.2	0.78	1.05	1.69	-16.64	21.06	1,774	1,836	1,939	877	1,607		
Transportation	4.4	4.1	4.1	-35.8	11.4	1.02	0.95	0.98	-8.44	3.17	1,390	1,447	1,507	968	1,077		
Air transportation services	6.3	2.6	3.8	-27.1	5.2	0.59	0.26	0.37	-2.62	0.68	579	595	617	450	474		
All other transportation- related industries	3.1	5.1	4.3	-41.8	16.7	0.42	0.70	0.61	-5.83	2.49	811	852	889	517	604		
Rail transportation services	-2.3	-3.8	5.0	-68.7	55.3	0.00	-0.01	0.01	-0.10	0.05	9	9	9	3	4		
Water transportation services	-1.5	6.4	9.0	-58.8	-26.4	-0.01	0.04	0.06	-0.39	-0.13	36	38	42	17	13		
Interurban bus transportation	3.1	-1.0	0.9	-27.1	-2.5	0.01	0.00	0.00	-0.08	-0.01	18	18	18	13	13		
Interurban charter bus transportation	1.3	2.0	-1.1	-46.6	16.1	0.00	0.01	0.00	-0.15	0.05	20	20	20	11	12		
Urban transit systems and other transportation	17.3	25.2	8.5	-71.0	148.0	0.18	0.30	0.12	-1.06	1.18	70	88	96	28	69		
Taxi service	38.8	-36.6	0.3	-46.9	47.7	0.05	-0.07	0.00	-0.05	0.05	11	7	7	4	5		
Scenic and sightseeing transportation services	1.7	1.2	2.6	-45.0	23.1	0.01	0.01	0.01	-0.23	0.12	31	32	33	18	22		
Automotive equipment rental and leasing	3.5	10.7	13.2	-38.2	17.8	0.06	0.19	0.25	-0.77	0.41	102	113	128	79	93		
Automotive repair services	1.0	0.5	-0.5	-4.0	-28.4	0.01	0.01	-0.01	-0.05	-0.57	73	73	73	70	50		
Parking lots and garages	0.6	3.2	7.2	-55.1	60.3	0.00	0.02	0.04	-0.34	0.31	36	37	40	18	29		
Toll highways Travel arrangement	-34.4	28.9	13.8	-66.6	153.2	-0.06	0.03	0.02	-0.10	0.14	6	8	9	3	8		
and reservation services	0.7	-0.1	-0.5	-27.9	-9.0	0.03	0.00	-0.02	-0.89	-0.38	204	204	203	146	133		
Petroleum refineries	4.0	2.4	4.5	-50.1	25.7	0.01	0.00	0.01	-0.08	0.04	10	10	10	5	6		
Gasoline service stations	4.3	5.9	3.6	-49.3	42.3	0.13	0.18	0.12	-1.56	1.25	184	195	202	102	146		
Recreation, entertainment, and shopping	3.0	-0.2	7.4	-55.0	68.7	0.52	-0.03	1.25	-9.50	9.83	1,028	1,026	1,103	496	837		
Recreation and entertainment	7.0	-1.5	1.0	-56.3	54.8	0.64	-0.15	0.10	-4.95	3.88	564	555	561	245	379		
Motion pictures and performing arts	-2.4	-9.3	0.1	-50.6	33.8	-0.02	-0.08	0.00	-0.36	0.22	50	46	46	23	30		
Spectator sports	2.9 12.8	3.2 1.5	8.5 10.8	-37.2 -52.9	18.0 60.2	0.02	0.02	0.06	-0.27 -2.50	0.15 2.48	41 269	42 273	46 303	29 143	34 229		
Participant sports Gambling	5.6	-0.8	-8.7	-52.9 -70.1	23.9	0.53	-0.02	-0.19	-2.50 -1.32	0.25	133	132	121	36	45		
All other recreation and entertainment	-0.6	-11.6	-25.2	-67.6	178.4	-0.01	-0.14	-0.26	-0.49	0.78	71	62	47	15	42		
Shopping	-1.5	1.5	15.0	-53.7	82.3	-0.13	0.12	1.16	-4.55	5.96	464	471	541	251	457		
Industries producing nondurable personal consumption expenditures commodities excluding petroleum refineries	-2.4	1.9	20.0	-57.4	107.2	-0.05	0.04	0.39	-1.27	1.86	116	118	141	60	125		
Retail trade services excluding gasoline service stations	-1.2	1.3	13.3	-52.4	74.5	-0.08	0.08	0.77	-3.28	4.10	348	353	400	191	333		
All other industries	-0.3	1.4	8.8	-55.8	72.3	0.01	-0.02	0.08	-0.70	0.81	225	228	248	110	189		
All other industries excluding wholesale trade and transportation services	0.6	-1.6	6.7	-56.0	80.3	0.01	-0.02	0.08	-0.70	0.81	76	75	80	35	63		
Wholesale trade and transportation services	-0.7	2.9	9.8	-55.7	68.5	-0.02	0.07	0.25	-1.47	1.47	149	153	168	75	126		

Total employment

U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Total tourism-related employment (the sum of direct and indirect jobs) increased to 7.4 million jobs in 2021 from 5.5 million jobs in 2020. The 7.4 million jobs consisted of 4.8 million direct tourism jobs and 2.6 million indirect tourism jobs (chart 5). While direct tourism employment includes jobs that produce direct tourism output, such as airline pilots, indirect tourism employment is generated by the businesses that supply goods and services to the tourism sector, such as refinery workers producing jet fuel. Data for 2021 indicate that for every 100 jobs supported directly by the travel and tourism industry, an additional 53 indirect tourism jobs are also required.

Thousands of jobs Indirect Total 10,000 8,000 6,000 4,000 2,000 0 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

Chart 5. Total Tourism-Related Employment in 2017–2021

Data Availability

The complete set of detailed annual statistics for 1998 through 2021 are available on BEA's website.

Key Terms

The following key terms are used to describe the Travel and Tourism Satellite Account.

- **Domestic tourism.** Travel-related expenditures by U.S. residents traveling within the United States. It comprises travel by resident households, business travel, and travel by government employees.
- **Inbound tourism.** Travel-related expenditures by nonresidents traveling within the United States and expenditures by nonresidents on international transportation purchased from U.S. providers. These expenditures exclude expenditures for travel to study in the United States and for medical reasons ¹
- **Tourism commodities.** Goods and services that are typically purchased by visitors, such as airline passenger transportation, hotel accommodations, and meals.²
- Tourism employment. Total tourism-related employment consists of direct tourism employment plus indirect tourism employment. Direct tourism employment comprises all jobs where the workers are engaged in the production of direct tourism output (for example, hotel staff and airline pilots), and indirect tourism employment comprises all jobs where the workers are engaged in the production of indirect tourism output (for example, workers producing hotel toiletries and delivering fuel to airlines).
- **Tourism output.** Total tourism-related output consists of direct tourism output and indirect tourism output. Direct tourism output comprises all domestically produced goods and services purchased by travelers (for example, traveler accommodations and passenger air transportation), and indirect tourism output comprises all output required to support the production of direct tourism output (for example, toiletries for hotel guests and fuel for airplanes).
- **Visitor.** A person who travels outside of his or her usual environment (more than 50–100 miles from the area of normal, everyday activities) for less than a year or who stays overnight in a hotel or motel.³ The visitor may travel for pleasure or business (private sector or government). Visitors exclude travelers who expect to be compensated at the location of their visit (such as migrant workers, persons traveling to new assignments, and diplomatic and military personnel traveling to and from their duty stations and their home countries).

Key terms footnotes

- 1. In the TTSA, inbound and outbound visitors are not differentiated by type of visitor, because the data to prepare these estimates are not available.
- 2. The classification of tourism commodities in the TTSA is based on a list of primary activities of visitors that was developed from recommendations by the United Nations World Tourism Organization, by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and from various surveys of U.S. visitors.
- 3. The distance criterion differs by source data. The Consumer Expenditures Surveys (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics) use 75 miles from home; private surveys by the U.S. Travel Association and surveys by D.K. Shifflet & Associates use 50 miles from home.

Footnotes

- 1. All measures of travel and tourism activity not identified as being in "real," inflation-adjusted terms are current-dollar, or nominal, estimates.
- 2. For more information see "The 2022 Annual Update of the National Economic Accounts," Survey of Current Business 102 (November 2022).

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