



# MEXICO

## INTERNATIONAL INBOUND TRAVEL MARKET PROFILE

**U.S. TRAVEL**  
ASSOCIATION



After seven years of continued growth in Mexican visitation to the United States, arrivals from Mexico declined by 6.1 percent in 2017.

While visitations from many other countries (most noticeably Canada) declined in 2015 and 2016 in the wake of the strengthening U.S. dollar, Mexicans continued to visit the U.S. in relatively high numbers through most of 2016. This all changed, however, in the final months of 2016, around the time of the U.S. presidential election. In fact, visitation from Mexico in November and December 2016 was 10 percent lower than during the same months in 2015. These declines in Mexican visitations persisted through 2017.

Mexico is the United States' second-largest inbound market and third-largest travel export market. Therefore, this decline in travel from Mexico has a strong impact on overall international inbound travel to the U.S.

## ARRIVALS

- In 2017, 17.8 million Mexican travelers visited the United States, down from 19.0 million in 2016 (a 6.1 percent decline).
- Mexico represented nearly a quarter of all international arrivals to the United States in 2017.
- Despite the decline in visitations to the U.S., a whopping 85 percent of all Mexican international overnight trips in 2017 were destined to the United States (down from 87 percent in 2016).
- Most Mexicans enter the U.S. over the land border. Arrivals by air accounted for about 13 percent of all Mexican arrivals (or 2.5 million visitations) in 2016 (2017 data is not yet available).

## ECONOMIC IMPACT (2016 DATA)

- U.S. travel exports to Mexico reached \$20.3 billion in 2016 (2017 data is not yet available), about \$8 billion of which was accounted for by spending from Mexican border and seasonal workers. Mexico is the United States' third-largest travel export market.
- Travel accounts for nearly 8 percent of all U.S. goods and services exports to Mexico.
- The U.S. enjoyed an overall positive travel trade balance of \$1.9 billion with Mexico in 2016, thanks to spending by Mexican border and seasonal workers. Though significant, this was the lowest travel trade surplus with Mexico in recent history, largely due to the depreciated Mexican peso and the increased number of Americans opting for cheap vacations in Mexico. Although official data is not yet available as of March 2018, spending from Mexico has likewise declined in 2017, and the travel trade surplus has likely declined even further.
- General travel spending by Mexican visitors—that is, travel exports excluding spending by seasonal and border workers, education/health-related spending and passenger fares—amounted to \$8.4 billion in 2016 and was significantly lower than U.S. travel spending in Mexico (\$15.7 billion), leading to a \$7.4 billion travel spending deficit. The 2016 deficit was 22 percent higher than in 2015, and nearly 160 percent higher than the \$2.8 billion travel spending deficit in 2013. This is, again, a factor of the depreciating Mexican peso.

## Mexico Inbound Market Summary, 2016-2017

VISITATIONS (2017)	
U.S. Visitations from Mexico (thousands)	17,824
Total Outbound Travel from Mexico	21,103
U.S. Share of Travel from Mexico	84.5%
SPENDING AND TRAVEL TRADE (2016)	
U.S. Travel Exports (\$ million)	20,334
Travel spending (\$ million)	8,360
Education-related (\$ million)	617
Passenger fare receipts (\$ million)	2,875
Spending by border and seasonal workers and health-related (\$ million)	8,482
Percent of total U.S. exports to Mexico (%)	7.8
U.S. Travel Imports (\$ million)	18,480
U.S. Travel Trade Balance (\$ million)	1,854

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Travel Association and Oxford Economics

1. Travel exports include all spending by international visitors from a given country in the United States. International standards now use a broader definition of travel exports than previously used which, in addition to general travel spending by visitors, includes education-related and health-related spending, as well as expenditures on goods and services by border, seasonal, and other short-term workers in the United States. For more information, please visit <http://travel.trade.gov/pdf/restructuring-travel.pdf>.

## LOOKING FORWARD

- Mexico will always be a vital inbound market for the U.S., but recent political developments —particularly the discussion regarding a border wall and increased border security measures—coupled with a relatively weak Mexican peso strongly affected the number of Mexican visitations in 2017.
- After a 6.1 percent decline in 2017, it is estimated that visitations from Mexico will recover slightly in 2018.