



Chronicling 100 Years of the U.S. Economy

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U.S. Travel and Tourism Satellite Account for 2015–2019

By Sarah Osborne

The travel and tourism industry—as measured by the real output of goods and services sold directly to visitors—decelerated to 1.5 percent growth in 2019 after increasing 4.1 percent in 2018, according to the most recent statistics from the Travel and Tourism Satellite Account (TTSA) of the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA).¹ By comparison, the broader economy, as measured by real gross domestic product (GDP), increased 2.2 percent in 2019 after increasing 3.0 percent in 2018. Revised statistics on travel and tourism reflect the incorporation of the annual update of the Industry Economic Accounts, which was released on September 30, 2020.²

Highlights from the TTSA include the following:

- Real output increased in 19 of 24 commodities in 2019. The largest contributors to the increase included international passenger air transportation services, domestic passenger air transportation services, and automotive rental and leasing.
- Real output growth slowed to 1.5 percent in 2019 from 4.1 percent in 2018, reflecting downturns in purchases of gasoline and food and beverage services, as well as decelerations in domestic passenger air transportation services and traveler accommodations.
- Prices for tourism goods and services increased 1.4 percent in 2019. The largest contributor to the increase in 2019 was the price of traveler accommodations, which increased 3.0 percent and contributed 0.59 percentage point to tourism goods and services price growth.
- Price growth slowed to 1.4 percent in 2019 from 3.0 percent in 2018, primarily reflecting a downturn in the price of gasoline.

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 and prices, tourism value added, and employment.

Trends in Output and Prices

Real output

The leading contributors to the 1.5 percent growth in real travel and tourism output were international passenger air transportation services, which increased 10.6 percent and contributed 0.50 percentage point to real output growth; domestic passenger air transportation services, which increased 3.1 percent and contributed 0.46 percentage point; and shopping, which increased 3.2 percent and contributed 0.39 percentage point (table A and chart 1).

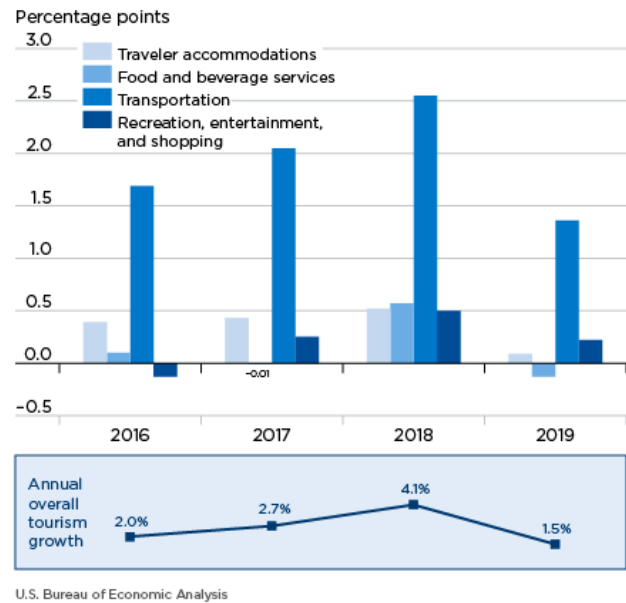
Table A. Annual Growth, Contributions to Growth, and Levels of Real Output by Tourism Commodity in 2016–2019

Commodity	Annual growth rates (percent change from preceding period)				Contributions (percentage points)				Real Output (millions of chained (2012) dollars)			
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2016	2017	2018	2019	2016	2017	2018	2019
All tourism goods and services	2.0	2.7	4.1	1.5	2.05	2.72	4.14	1.54	998,520	1,025,672	1,068,113	1,084,604
Traveler accommodations	1.9	2.1	2.6	0.5	0.39	0.43	0.52	0.09	182,268	186,061	190,859	191,755
Food and beverage services	0.7	−0.1	4.1	−0.9	0.10	−0.01	0.57	−0.13	125,100	124,969	130,135	128,916
Transportation	4.1	4.9	5.9	3.1	1.69	2.05	2.55	1.36	464,402	487,182	515,924	531,844
Passenger air transportation	1.7	4.4	4.2	4.9	0.34	0.85	0.83	0.96	196,379	205,027	213,705	224,146
Domestic passenger air transportation services	2.3	4.1	6.1	3.1	0.34	0.60	0.88	0.46	145,403	151,396	160,595	165,552
International passenger air transportation services	0.0	5.2	−1.2	10.6	0.00	0.26	−0.06	0.50	50,968	53,643	53,013	58,606
All other transportation-related commodities	0.7	11.2	14.1	1.6	1.35	1.20	1.73	0.40	214,894	239,052	272,681	277,174
Passenger rail transportation services	0.3	2.1	0.2	6.0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	2,216	2,262	2,267	2,403
Passenger water transportation services	−0.3	6.2	10.2	7.7	−0.01	0.10	0.16	0.13	14,878	15,799	17,416	18,758
Intercity bus services	−3.0	0.1	0.5	−2.5	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,281	1,282	1,288	1,256
Intercity charter bus services	−1.7	3.6	3.8	1.0	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	2,346	2,430	2,522	2,546
Local bus and other transportation services	13.4	24.6	3.6	8.9	0.07	0.14	0.03	0.06	5,236	6,522	6,759	7,361
Taxicab services	−5.3	10.1	7.9	14.5	−0.03	0.06	0.05	0.09	4,902	5,398	5,822	6,669
Scenic and sightseeing transportation services	−3.1	−3.3	1.3	4.0	−0.01	−0.01	0.00	0.01	3,078	2,977	3,015	3,136
Automotive rental and leasing	10.8	4.7	6.7	7.1	0.32	0.15	0.21	0.23	33,456	35,036	37,387	40,042
Other vehicle rental and leasing	1.3	5.7	11.3	7.2	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	627	663	738	791
Automotive repair services	7.7	2.0	3.3	0.1	0.09	0.02	0.04	0.00	11,363	11,586	11,967	11,973
Parking	−2.8	2.0	5.9	3.2	−0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01	2,260	2,305	2,441	2,518
Highway tolls	4.2	2.2	3.2	−0.5	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	835	853	880	876
Travel arrangement and reservation services	5.5	11.1	8.8	3.2	0.24	0.50	0.42	0.15	43,189	48,001	52,246	53,905
Gasoline	7.5	2.3	7.5	−2.6	0.68	0.22	0.78	−0.29	145,884	149,225	160,425	156,201
Recreation, entertainment, and shopping	−0.5	1.1	2.2	1.0	−0.13	0.25	0.50	0.22	208,987	211,258	215,872	217,982
Recreation and entertainment	2.2	2.4	0.8	−1.7	0.23	0.25	0.08	−0.17	91,070	93,238	93,963	92,369
Motion pictures and performing arts	−2.3	−2.2	−1.4	−3.5	−0.04	−0.04	−0.02	−0.06	16,680	16,312	16,090	15,520
Spectator sports	8.2	2.8	11.8	3.1	0.04	0.01	0.06	0.02	4,292	4,414	4,935	5,088
Participant sports	6.9	7.6	11.0	5.2	0.10	0.11	0.17	0.09	13,676	14,719	16,338	17,183
Gambling	1.9	2.4	1.6	2.2	0.10	0.13	0.09	0.11	49,349	50,520	51,339	52,464
All other recreation and entertainment	2.6	2.8	−14.1	−27.1	0.04	0.04	−0.21	−0.33	14,095	14,488	12,451	9,074
Shopping	−2.6	0.0	3.4	3.2	−0.35	0.00	0.42	0.39	130,147	130,155	134,569	138,930

The slowdown in real output growth was led by the downturn in gasoline spending, which decreased 2.6 percent in 2019. Other large contributors to the deceleration included food and beverage services, which decreased 0.9 percent after increasing 4.1 percent in 2018; domestic passenger air transportation services, which decelerated to 3.1 percent growth after increasing 6.1 percent in 2018; and traveler accommodations, which decelerated to 0.5 percent growth in 2019 after increasing 2.6 percent in 2018.

The deceleration in real output growth was partly offset by an upturn in international passenger air transportation services, which increased 10.6 percent after a decrease of 1.2 percent in 2018.

Chart 1. Contributions to Annual Growth in Real Tourism Output in 2016–2019



Prices

Travel and tourism prices increased 1.4 percent in 2019, the third sequential year of increasing prices. The price increase was led by a 3.0 percent increase in the price of traveler accommodations, contributing 0.59 percentage point to overall tourism price growth. Other contributors were the prices of domestic passenger air transportation services, which grew 3.4 percent and contributed 0.51 percentage point, and food and beverage services, which contributed 0.38 percentage point.

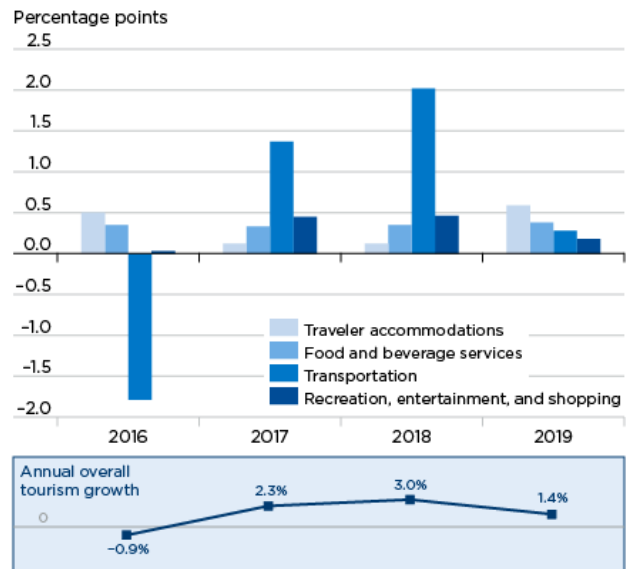
The increase in overall tourism prices was partly offset by a 3.6 percent decrease in gasoline prices, which contributed -0.40 percentage point (table B and chart 2).

Table B. Annual Growth, Contributions to Growth, and Levels of Chain-Type Price Indexes for Tourism Commodities in 2016–2019

Commodity	Annual growth rates (percent change from preceding period)				Contributions (percentage points)				Price Indexes (index number, 2012=100)			
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2016	2017	2018	2019	2016	2017	2018	2019
All tourism goods and services	-0.9	2.3	3.0	1.4	-0.91	2.26	2.96	1.43	97.6	99.8	102.8	104.2
Traveler accommodations	2.5	0.6	0.6	3.0	0.50	0.12	0.12	0.59	111.3	111.9	112.6	116.0
Food and beverage services	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.8	0.35	0.33	0.35	0.38	110.2	112.7	115.6	118.9
Transportation	-4.2	3.2	4.7	0.6	-1.79	1.37	2.02	0.28	87.3	90.1	94.3	94.9
Passenger air transportation	-2.7	0.5	2.5	2.7	-0.55	0.09	0.50	0.53	97.2	97.6	100.1	102.8
Domestic passenger air transportation services	-2.3	0.7	1.8	3.4	-0.34	0.10	0.27	0.51	98.2	98.9	100.7	104.2
International passenger air transportation services	-4.1	-0.3	4.8	0.5	-0.21	-0.01	0.23	0.02	94.1	93.8	98.3	98.8
All other transportation-related commodities	-5.5	5.7	6.4	-1.0	-1.24	1.27	1.52	-0.25	79.6	84.2	89.6	88.7
Passenger rail transportation services	2.2	3.3	0.3	-0.7	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	100.3	103.5	103.9	103.2
Passenger water transportation services	3.6	0.9	0.3	-0.6	0.05	0.01	0.00	-0.01	104.0	105.0	105.3	104.6
Intercity bus services	3.6	0.9	0.2	-0.6	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	104.1	105.0	105.3	104.6
Intercity charter bus services	3.6	0.9	0.3	-0.7	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	104.1	105.0	105.3	104.6
Local bus and other transportation services	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.1	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	109.7	111.6	113.5	114.8
Taxicab services	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.1	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	109.6	111.6	113.5	114.8
Scenic and sightseeing transportation services	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.3	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	107.8	110.6	113.2	115.8
Automotive rental and leasing	-7.5	0.4	2.2	-0.5	-0.24	0.01	0.07	-0.02	91.6	91.9	94.0	93.5
Other vehicle rental and leasing	2.6	-2.2	-1.0	0.5	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	105.7	103.3	102.3	102.8
Automotive repair services	1.6	1.8	1.9	3.3	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.04	106.5	108.5	110.5	114.1
Parking	2.8	2.4	2.3	2.8	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	111.8	114.6	117.2	120.5
Highway tolls	2.7	2.4	2.3	2.8	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	111.8	114.5	117.2	120.5
Travel arrangement and reservation services	-0.1	-0.2	0.5	2.1	0.00	-0.01	0.03	0.10	101.5	101.3	101.9	104.0
Gasoline	-11.4	13.2	13.5	-3.6	-1.12	1.18	1.36	-0.40	60.2	68.2	77.3	74.6
Recreation, entertainment, and shopping	0.1	1.9	2.0	0.8	0.03	0.45	0.46	0.18	100.1	102.1	104.1	105.0
Recreation and entertainment	1.9	2.3	2.2	1.9	0.19	0.24	0.23	0.19	105.9	108.3	110.6	112.7
Motion pictures and performing arts	3.6	2.6	2.1	1.9	0.07	0.05	0.04	0.03	109.0	111.8	114.2	116.3
Spectator sports	3.3	2.2	1.8	2.0	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	117.0	119.6	121.7	124.2
Participant sports	1.6	2.3	2.8	2.6	0.02	0.04	0.05	0.04	105.4	107.8	110.9	113.8
Gambling	1.3	2.1	2.4	1.8	0.07	0.11	0.13	0.09	104.5	106.8	109.4	111.4
All other recreation and entertainment	1.6	2.3	0.6	1.1	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.01	104.2	106.6	107.2	108.4
Shopping	-1.3	1.6	1.9	-0.1	-0.16	0.21	0.24	-0.01	95.9	97.4	99.3	99.2

The slowdown in tourism price growth was led by the downturn in the price of gasoline, a 3.6 percent decrease following a 13.5 percent increase in 2018. Additionally, the price of nondurable commodities other than gasoline, more commonly termed shopping, turned down, decreasing 0.1 percent after increasing 1.9 percent in 2018, while the price of international passenger air transportation services slowed to 0.5 percent growth after increasing 4.8 percent in 2018. This is offset to some extent by the acceleration in the price of traveler accommodations, which increased 3.0 percent after an increase of 0.6 percent.

Chart 2. Contributions to Annual Growth in the Chain-Type Price Index for Tourism Goods and Services in 2016-2019



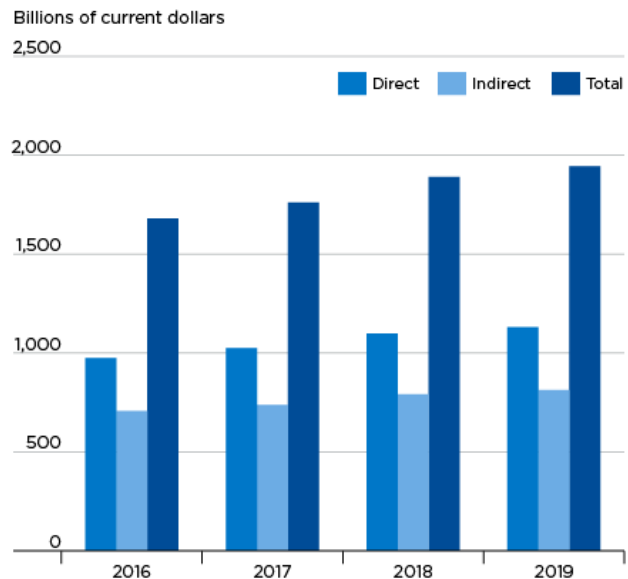
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Total output

Total tourism-related nominal output increased to \$1.94 trillion in 2019, increasing 2.9 percent from \$1.89 trillion in 2018. In 2019, total output consisted of \$1.13 trillion in direct tourism output and \$813.4 billion in indirect tourism output. The 1.72 ratio of total output to direct output in 2019 means that every dollar of direct tourism output requires an additional 72 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.

Chart 3. Total Tourism-Related Output in 2016-2019



U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Tourism Value Added and Employment

Value added

A sector's value added measures its contribution to gross domestic product. In 2019, the travel and tourism industry's share of GDP was 2.9 percent (table C). Travel and tourism accounted for a larger share of GDP than several industries, including broadcasting and telecommunications, utilities, mining, and agriculture.

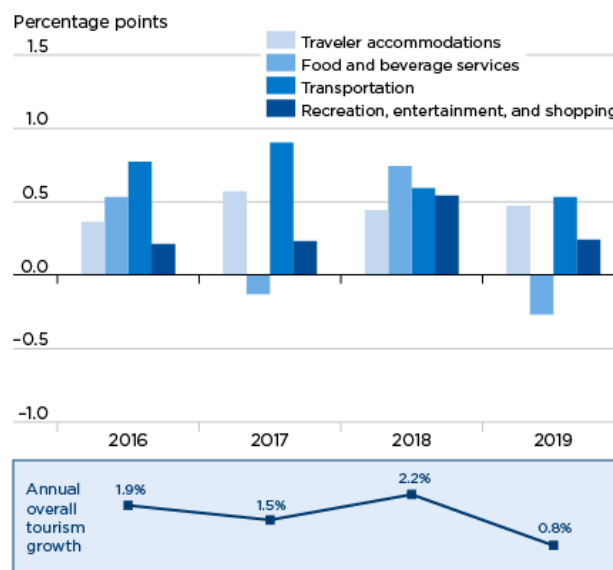
Table C. Travel and Tourism as a Share of Gross Domestic Product in 2008–2019

Year	Billions of dollars		Percent
	Gross domestic product (GDP)	Tourism value added	Tourism value added as a share of GDP
2008	14,713	399	2.71
2009	14,449	372	2.57
2010	14,992	392	2.61
2011	15,543	419	2.70
2012	16,197	435	2.69
2013	16,785	466	2.78
2014	17,527	489	2.79
2015	18,238	527	2.89
2016	18,745	539	2.88
2017	19,543	565	2.89
2018	20,612	598	2.90
2019	21,433	621	2.90

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 0.8 percent in 2019 after increasing 2.2 percent in 2018. The largest contributors to the increase were traveler accommodations, which added 29,000 jobs in 2019, and air transportation services, which added 15,000 jobs (chart 4 and table D).

Chart 4. Contributions to Annual Growth in Direct Tourism Employment in 2016–2019



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Table D. Annual Growth, Contributions to Growth, and Levels of Direct Employment by Tourism Industry in 2016–2019

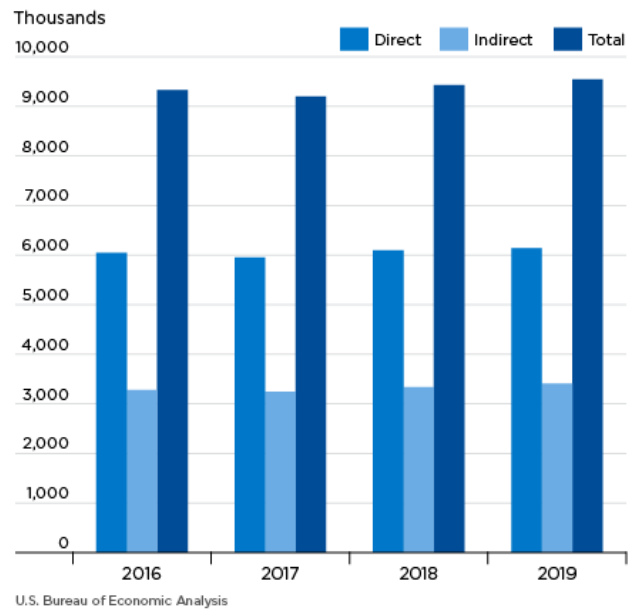
Commodity	Annual growth rates (percent change from preceding period)				Contributions (percentage points)				Direct employment (thousands)			
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2016	2017	2018	2019	2016	2017	2018	2019
All tourism industries	1.9	1.5	2.2	0.8	1.89	1.51	2.23	0.76	5848	5936	6069	6115
Traveler accommodations	1.4	2.3	1.7	1.9	0.36	0.57	0.44	0.47	1482	1516	1542	1571
Vacation Home Rentals	-3.6	-2.5	-1.9	-2.3	-0.01	-0.01	0.00	-0.01	14	13	13	13
Food services and drinking places	1.8	-0.4	2.6	-0.9	0.53	-0.13	0.74	-0.27	1728	1720	1765	1748
Transportation	3.4	3.9	2.5	2.3	0.77	0.90	0.59	0.53	1335	1388	1423	1455
Air transportation services	2.2	6.3	2.7	2.6	0.20	0.59	0.26	0.25	547	581	597	612
All other transportation-related industries	4.3	2.3	2.4	2.1	0.57	0.30	0.33	0.28	789	806	826	843
Rail transportation services	-2.4	-2.6	-3.6	4.0	0.00	0.00	-0.01	0.01	10	9	9	9
Water transportation services	3.0	4.0	4.3	6.5	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.05	40	41	43	46
Interurban bus transportation	-2.0	3.1	-1.0	0.3	-0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	18	19	18	18
Interurban charter bus transportation	0.2	1.7	-0.3	-2.3	0.00	0.01	0.00	-0.01	20	20	20	19
Urban transit systems and other transportation	7.8	6.3	-3.0	10.1	0.08	0.07	-0.03	0.10	61	64	63	69
Taxi service	-9.3	-10.4	-8.1	2.9	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	0.00	8	7	6	7
Scenic and sightseeing transportation services	3.5	1.6	1.0	2.4	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	31	31	32	32
Automotive equipment rental and leasing	1.8	3.8	4.9	6.1	0.03	0.06	0.08	0.11	99	103	108	114
Automotive repair services	3.8	-1.5	2.2	1.4	0.05	-0.02	0.03	0.02	75	74	76	77
Parking lots and garages	-0.5	0.3	7.5	6.0	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.04	36	36	38	41
Toll highways	4.3	5.2	11.8	-0.1	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	4	5	5	5
Travel arrangement and reservation services	6.7	1.0	0.0	-1.1	0.22	0.03	0.00	-0.04	201	203	203	201
Petroleum refineries	5.5	0.5	-0.5	-0.6	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	9	9	9	9
Gasoline service stations	5.8	4.0	5.9	-0.3	0.17	0.12	0.18	-0.01	177	184	195	194
Recreation, entertainment, and shopping	1.4	1.2	2.3	0.3	0.25	0.21	0.41	0.05	1049	1062	1086	1089
Recreation and entertainment	4.2	4.4	4.7	-0.1	0.37	0.40	0.43	-0.01	529	552	578	578
Motion pictures and performing arts	-3.3	-5.9	-4.6	-5.4	-0.03	-0.05	-0.04	-0.04	51	48	46	44
Spectator sports	6.3	2.1	7.3	0.3	0.04	0.01	0.05	0.00	40	41	44	44
Participant sports	8.9	7.6	11.4	5.3	0.35	0.32	0.50	0.25	243	261	291	306
Gambling	-1.1	6.4	2.2	-1.3	-0.02	0.13	0.05	-0.03	124	132	134	133
All other recreation and entertainment	3.3	-1.3	-10.8	-18.3	0.04	-0.02	-0.13	-0.19	72	71	63	51
Shopping	-1.3	-2.1	-0.3	0.7	-0.12	-0.19	-0.02	0.05	520	509	508	511
Industries producing nondurable PCE commodities, excluding petroleum refineries	-1.5	-1.7	-0.1	2.7	-0.04	-0.04	0.00	0.06	134	132	132	135
Retail trade services, excluding gasoline service stations	-1.3	-2.2	-0.3	-0.1	-0.09	-0.15	-0.02	0.00	386	378	376	376
All other industries	-0.5	-0.8	1.1	-0.5	-0.01	-0.02	0.01	-0.04	239	238	240	239
All other industries, excluding Wholesale trade and transportation services	-0.6	-1.6	0.4	-3.2	-0.01	-0.02	0.01	-0.04	80	79	79	76
Wholesale trade and transportation services	-0.4	-0.4	1.4	0.9	-0.01	-0.01	0.04	0.02	160	159	161	163

PCE Personal consumption expenditures

Total employment

Total tourism-related employment (the sum of direct and indirect jobs) increased to 9.5 million jobs in 2019 from 9.4 million jobs in 2018. The 9.5 million jobs consisted of 6.1 million direct tourism jobs and 3.4 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 also generated by the businesses that supply goods and services to the tourism sector, such as refinery workers producing jet fuel. The most recent data indicate that for every 100 jobs supported directly by the travel and tourism industry, an additional 55 indirect tourism jobs are also required.

Chart 5. Total Tourism-Related Employment in 2016-2019



Data Availability

The complete set of detailed annual statistics for 1998 through 2019 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).

1. In the travel and tourism satellite account, 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 Travel and Tourism Satellite Account is based on a list of primary activities of visitors that was developed from recommendations by the 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 Survey (Bureau of Labor Statistics) uses 75 miles from home; private surveys by the Travel Industry Association, 50–100 miles from home; and surveys by D.K. Shifflet and Associates, 50 miles from home.

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Paul V. Kern of the Expenditure and Income Division supervised the preparation of the estimates. Sarah Osborne prepared the estimates.

Staff members of the Expenditure and Income Division, the Industry Economics Division, the Balance of Payments Division, and the Regional Product Division contributed to the development of the estimates.

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1. All measures of travel and tourism activity not identified as being in “real,” inflation-adjusted terms are current-dollar estimates.
2. For more information see, “[The 2020 Annual Update of the Industry Economic Accounts: Revised Statistics for 2015–2019 and the First Quarter of 2020](#),” *Survey of Current Business* 100 (October 2020).