

Travel

In this section:

[Coverage and definitions](#)

[Estimation methods overview](#)

[U.S. receipts](#)

[U.S. payments](#)

Coverage and definitions

The travel accounts (lines 6 and 23) cover purchases of goods and services by U.S. travelers abroad and by foreign travelers in the United States (see [table 4](#)). Unlike most other services accounts, travel is not a specific type of service but an assortment of goods and services purchased by travelers. Travelers' purchases include expenditures for food, lodging, recreation, gifts, entertainment, and other items incidental to a foreign visit. Expenditures for local transportation in the country of travel are also covered. Passenger fares for travel between the United States and other countries, when paid by U.S. travelers to foreign carriers or paid by foreign travelers to U.S. carriers, are excluded; they are covered in the passenger fares accounts (lines 7 and 24).

A traveler is defined as a person who stays for a period of less than one year in a country of which he or she is not a resident. However, certain groups of persons staying outside their country of residence are not classified as travelers, regardless of their length of stay. Their expenditures are excluded from the travel accounts and included in other international transactions accounts. Expenditures abroad of the U.S. Department of Defense's military and civilian personnel (and their dependents) stationed abroad are included

in direct defense expenditures (line 22). Expenditures abroad of U.S. government nonmilitary personnel (and their dependents) stationed abroad are included in U.S. government miscellaneous services (line 28). Expenditures of foreign workers, both private and government, employed temporarily in the United States are included in other private services receipts (line 10) and expenditures of U.S. workers employed temporarily abroad are included in other private services payments (line 27). Education-related expenditures of students and health-related expenditures of medical patients are included as receipts in other private services (line 10) and as payments in other private services (line 27).

Estimation methods overview

The method for estimating the travel accounts for overseas countries (countries other than Canada and Mexico) involves, in general, multiplying data on the number of travelers by estimates of average expenditures. Numbers of travelers are provided by U.S. immigration authorities. Average expenditures are derived from surveys of travelers. For Canada and Mexico, BEA uses data provided by Statistics Canada and the Bank of Mexico, respectively.

1 U.S. Receipts (line 6)

1.1 Overseas countries

1.1.1 BEA estimates foreign travelers' expenditures in the United States by multiplying the number of foreign travelers by their average travel expenditures. The number of foreign travelers in the United States is based on counts collected by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of Immigration Statistics, on its I-94 form. The I-94 data include the number of foreign residents arriving in the United States, by country of residence. Average expenditures

of foreign travelers in the United States from each major area or country are estimated on the basis of a survey of international air travelers, the Survey of International Air Travelers (SIAT), which is administered by the Office of Travel and Tourism Industries (OTTI), International Trade Administration (ITA), U.S. Department of Commerce. The survey is conducted either in the gate area at airports or aboard a sample of scheduled flights departing the United States. More than 70 U.S. and foreign carriers, which account for more than 95 percent of the passengers in the international travel market, participate in the survey. Sample results are expanded to universe estimates to account for nonresponse of passengers on each sampled flight, for coverage of all flights on each major airline route, and for all international routes. The expansion factor is based on the total number of passengers arriving in the United States, which BEA obtains from the DHS. The airfare paid by nonresidents to U.S. carriers is included in passenger fare receipts (line 7).

1.2 Canada

1.2.1 BEA uses estimates provided by Statistics Canada of Canadian travel expenditures in the United States to measure U.S. travel receipts from Canada. The estimates from Statistics Canada are derived from questionnaires completed by Canadian residents returning to Canada from the United States; average expenditures developed from these questionnaires are applied to the number of Canadian residents returning. Travel transactions between the United States and Canada include border transactions, which often result from trips of less than 24 hours.

1.3 Mexico

1.3.1 BEA uses estimates provided by the Bank of Mexico of Mexican travel expenditures in the United States as a measure of U.S. travel receipts from Mexico. The Bank of Mexico provides U.S. travel receipts separately for expenditures of Mexican travelers in the interior of the United States and in the U.S. border area. Expenditures in the border area often result from trips of less than 24 hours. The estimates from the Bank of Mexico are derived from questionnaires completed by Mexican residents returning to Mexico

from the United States; average expenditures are developed from these questionnaires and applied to the number of Mexican residents returning. Expenditures in the United States of seasonal foreign workers and of Mexican workers who commute to jobs in the U.S. border area are not included in travel receipts; they are included in other private services receipts (line 10).

2 U.S. Payments (line 23)

2.1 Overseas countries

2.1.1 BEA estimates U.S. travelers' expenditures overseas by multiplying the number of U.S. travelers by their average travel expenditures. The number of U.S. travelers overseas is based on data collected by the DHS, Office of Immigration Statistics on its Advance Passenger Information System (APIS). The APIS data include the number of U.S. citizens departing the United States by country or area of debarkation. To account for multiple country visits, BEA adjusts the APIS data using information from the OTTI Survey of International Air Travelers (SIAT), which is described in paragraph 1.1.1. Average expenditures of U.S. travelers to each major country or area overseas are estimated on the basis of the SIAT. The SIAT asks travelers departing the United States how much they intend to spend while abroad; thus, it is a survey of anticipated expenditures rather than of actual expenditures. Beginning with 1997, the data on anticipated expenditures are adjusted to better represent U.S. travelers' actual expenditures abroad. The adjustment factors, which are ratios of actual to anticipated expenditures by major region, were derived from a one-time survey covering 1998. The survey was distributed to travelers upon their return to the United States. The airfare paid by U.S. residents to foreign carriers is included in passenger fare payments (line 24).

2.2 Canada

2.2.1 BEA uses estimates provided by Statistics Canada of U.S. residents' travel expenditures in Canada to measure U.S. travel payments to Canada. The estimates from Statistics Canada are derived from questionnaires completed by U.S. residents returning to the United States from Canada, from which average

expenditures are developed and applied to the number of U.S. residents returning. Travel transactions between the United States and Canada include border transactions, which often result from trips of less than 24 hours.

2.3 Mexico

2.3.1 BEA uses estimates provided by the Bank of Mexico of U.S. residents' travel expenditures in Mexico to measure U.S. travel payments to Mexico. The

Bank of Mexico provides U.S. travel payments separately for expenditures of U.S. travelers in the interior of Mexico and in the Mexican border area. Expenditures in the border area often result from trips of less than 24 hours. The estimates from the Bank of Mexico are derived from questionnaires completed by U.S. residents returning to the United States from Mexico, from which average expenditures are developed and applied to the number of U.S. residents returning.

**Table 4. U.S. Travel Receipts and Payments,
by Areas and Countries, 2009 (Line 6 and Line 23)**
[Millions of dollars]

| | Receipts | Payments |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| Total | 93,917 | 73,230 |
| Europe | 29,376 | 20,721 |
| European Union..... | 26,674 | 18,453 |
| United Kingdom | 8,753 | 4,365 |
| Euro area | 15,411 | 12,681 |
| Germany | 4,434 | 2,382 |
| France | 3,193 | 2,256 |
| Canada | 12,819 | 5,909 |
| Latin America and Other Western Hemisphere..... | 23,195 | 23,565 |
| Mexico | 5,991 | 8,867 |
| Asia and Pacific | 24,309 | 17,069 |
| Japan | 9,483 | 3,570 |
| Middle East..... | 2,726 | 2,671 |
| Africa | 1,492 | 3,295 |