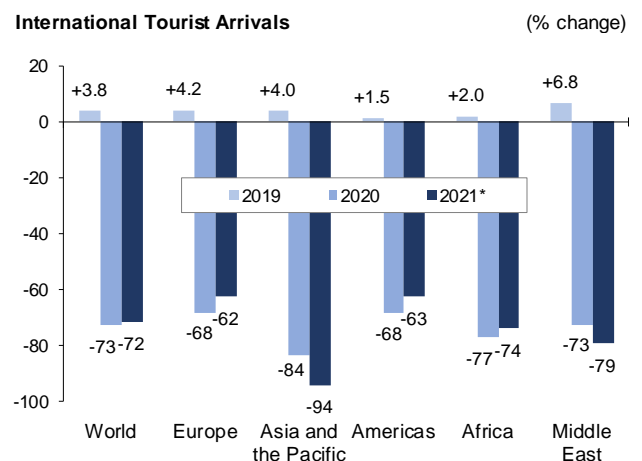




International tourism up 4% in 2021 but still 72% below pre-pandemic levels

- Global tourism experienced a mild 4% upturn in 2021, with 15 million more international tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) than in 2020 but remained 72% below the levels of pre-pandemic year 2019 according to preliminary estimates.
- This follows a 73% plunge in international travel in 2020, the worst year on record for tourism due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- International tourism rebounded moderately in the second half of 2021, with international arrivals down 62% in both the third and fourth quarters, compared to the same periods in 2019.
- Rising vaccination rates combined with softer travel restrictions due to increased cross-border coordination and protocols, have all helped release pent up demand in 2021.
- Europe and the Americas recorded the strongest results by region relative to 2020 with arrivals up 19% and 17% respectively, though both remained 63% below 2019 levels.
- Africa saw a 12% increase in 2021 compared to 2020, though remained 74% below 2019 levels. In the Middle East arrivals declined 24% compared to 2020 and 79% over 2019. In Asia and the Pacific, arrivals dropped 65% from 2020 levels and 94% when compared to pre-pandemic values.
- By subregion, the Caribbean saw the best performance in 2021, with international arrivals up 63% over 2020, though 37% below 2019, with some destinations coming close to, or exceeding pre-pandemic levels.
- The economic contribution of tourism (tourism direct gross domestic product) is estimated at US\$1.9 trillion in 2021, above the US\$1.6 trillion in 2020, but still well below the pre-pandemic value of US\$ 3.5 trillion.
- The latest UNWTO Panel of Experts survey indicates that 61% of tourism professionals expect better performance in 2022 than in 2021. However, most experts (64%) also believe international tourism will not return to 2019 levels until 2024 or later.
- The recent surge in COVID-19 cases and the emergence of the Omicron variant could disrupt the recovery of tourism in early 2022.
- UNWTO scenarios point to 30% to 78% growth in international tourist arrivals in 2022 depending on various factors, which would be 50% to 63% below pre-pandemic levels.
- While international tourism bounces back, domestic tourism will continue to drive the recovery of the sector in an increasing number of destinations. Domestic travel is fueled by demand for destinations which are closer to home and have low population density, as tourists look for open-air activities, nature-based products and rural tourism



Source: UNWTO

* Provisional data (% change over 2019)



The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the United Nations specialized agency mandated with the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.

UNWTO's membership includes 159 countries, 6 Associate Members, two Permanent Observers, and over 500 Affiliate Members representing the private sector, educational institutions, tourism associations and local tourism authorities.

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About the *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer*

The *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer* is a publication of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) that monitors short-term tourism trends on a regular basis to provide global tourism stakeholders with up-to-date analysis on international tourism.

The information is updated several times a year and includes an analysis of the latest data on tourism destinations (inbound tourism) and source markets (outbound tourism). The Barometer also includes three times a year a Confidence Index based on the UNWTO Panel of Tourism Experts survey, which provides an evaluation of recent performance and short-term prospects on international tourism.

The UNWTO Secretariat wishes to express its gratitude to those who have contributed to the production of this *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer*, in particular to institutions that supplied data, and to the members of the UNWTO Panel of Tourism Experts for their valuable feedback and analysis.

This report was prepared by the **UNWTO Tourism Market Intelligence and Competitiveness Department**, under the supervision of Sandra Carvão, Chief of the Department. Authors include (in alphabetical order): Fernando Alonso, Michel Julian, and Javier Ruescas.

For more information including copies of previous issues, please visit: www.e-unwto.org/loi/wtobarometereng.

We welcome your comments and suggestions at barom@unwto.org.

Data collection for this issue was closed mid-December 2021.

The next issue of the *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer* with more comprehensive results is scheduled to be published in May 2022.

Pages 1-4 of this document constitute the Excerpt of the *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer*. The full document is available free of charge for UNWTO Members and subscribers from the UNWTO eLibrary at www.e-unwto.org. This release is available in English, while the Statistical Annex is provided in English, French, Spanish and Russian.

Inbound tourism

2021 saw a mild 4% increase or 15 million more international arrivals than in 2020

- According to preliminary estimates, international tourism experienced a mild 4% upturn in 2021, with 15 million more international tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) than in 2020. However, arrivals remained 72% below the levels of pre-pandemic year 2019.
- This follows a 73% plunge in international travel in 2020, the worst year on record for tourism due to the unprecedented impact from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- An estimated 415 million international arrivals were recorded globally in 2021 versus 400 million in 2020.
- After a weak first half of 2021, international tourism rebounded moderately in the second half of the year. Indeed, the first half of 2021 saw 117 million international arrivals (28% of the 2021 total), while the second half saw 298 million (72%).
- International arrivals declined 62% during both the third and fourth quarters of 2021, compared to 2019. October (-59%) and November (-63%) saw relatively better performance following the upturn experienced during the Northern Hemisphere summer months. These results compare favorably with October and November 2020, when arrivals declined by more than 80%, due the re-introduction of travel restrictions in many countries amid the resurgence of the virus.
- The uplift in demand in 2021 was driven by increased traveler confidence amid rapid progress on vaccinations and the easing of entry restrictions in many destinations.
- As countries again relaxed their restrictions for the 2021 Northern Hemisphere summer season, the destinations with complete border closure dropped to 63 in June and 46 in November 2021, the lowest since the start of the pandemic (see the UNWTO Sustainable Development of Tourism Department's eleventh report on COVID-19 travel restrictions)
- International tourism is estimated to have dropped 66% in December 2021, amid the rise of the new Omicron variant and a surge in COVID-19 cases.
- Africa saw a 12% increase in 2021 compared to 2020, though remained 74% below 2019 levels. In the Middle East arrivals declined 24% compared to 2020 and -79% over 2019.
- In Asia and the Pacific arrivals were 94% below 2019 levels in 2021, as many destinations remained closed to non-essential travel.
- By subregion, the Caribbean saw the strongest performance in 2021, with international arrivals up 63% over 2020, though 37% below 2019. According to available data, some islands in the Caribbean came close to, or exceeded pre-pandemic levels.
- Southern Mediterranean Europe (+57%) and Central America (+54%) also enjoyed a significant rebound over 2020, but remained 54% and 56% below 2019 levels respectively. North America (+17%) and Central Eastern Europe (+18%) climbed above 2020 levels as well.
- Among the destinations with available data for January-November 2021, several islands in the Caribbean and Asia and the Pacific, together with some small European destinations recorded the best results compared to 2019: US Virgin Islands (+29%), Puerto Rico (+4%), Albania (-11%), San Marino (-19%), Maldives (-24%), Saint Maarten (-26%), Dominican Republic (-27%), Liechtenstein (-29%) and Aruba (-30%). Major destination Mexico saw a decline of 30% through November 2021.
- Despite the overall improvement, the pace of recovery remains slow and uneven across world regions due to varying degrees of mobility restrictions, vaccination rates and traveler confidence.
- While international tourism gradually recovers, domestic travel continues to contribute to the recovery of the overall tourism sector, especially in several destinations with large domestic markets.

Europe and the Americas recorded the strongest results in 2021

- Europe and the Americas recorded the best results in 2021, with arrivals up 19% and 17% respectively compared to 2020, but still 63% below pre-pandemic levels in both cases.

International Tourist Arrivals by (Sub)region

								Monthly/quarterly data series							
	(million)			Share (%)	Change (%)			Change (%)*							
								2021 over 2020 ²				2021 over 2019			
	2019	2020*	2021*	2021*	20/19	21/20*	21/19*	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
World	1,464	400	415	100	-72.7	3.8	-71.7	-80.7	244.9	67.5	132.6	-86.0	-80.1	-62.0	-62.3
Advanced economies ¹	777	215	218	52.5	-72.3	1.2	-72.0	-85.0	167.4	43.7	200.6	-89.5	-83.6	-61.5	-58.9
Emerging economies ¹	687	185	197	47.5	-73.1	6.8	-71.3	-76.9	355.0	116.6	82.8	-82.6	-75.8	-62.7	-65.7
<i>By UNWTO regions:</i>															
Europe	746.1	235.7	279.8	67.4	-68.4	18.7	-62.5	-80.3	186.5	54.4	182.2	-84.5	-78.9	-50.0	-45.9
Northern Europe	83.5	21.7	15.1	3.6	-74.0	-30.3	-81.9	-89.0	72.0	0.7	82.9	-91.0	-91.5	-78.9	-75.4
Western Europe	205.4	79.8	71.7	17.3	-61.1	-10.2	-65.1	-85.1	100.8	13.6	231.2	-88.4	-79.1	-52.1	-48.4
Central/Eastern Eur.	153.2	46.0	54.5	13.1	-70.0	18.4	-64.4	-73.8	272.5	69.1	133.3	-78.7	-75.8	-54.2	-52.9
Southern/Medit. Eur.	304.0	88.2	138.5	33.4	-71.0	57.1	-54.4	-77.2	259.6	92.0	200.9	-82.6	-77.0	-40.1	-30.9
- of which EU-27	540.5	178.4	203.9	49.1	-67.0	14.3	-62.3	-82.7	133.2	41.4	222.0	-86.7	-79.9	-49.6	-43.4
Asia and the Pacific	360.4	59.4	20.9	5.0	-83.5	-64.8	-94.2	-91.8	301.3	76.2	55.8	-95.5	-94.4	-94.2	-92.2
North-East Asia	170.3	20.3	11.3	2.7	-88.1	-44.3	-93.4	-84.8	538.1	64.2	-1.1	-94.7	-93.0	-92.9	-92.8
South-East Asia	138.6	25.4	3.3	0.8	-81.7	-87.0	-97.6	-97.2	13.9	0.5	87.2	-98.2	-98.0	-98.0	-96.3
Oceania	17.5	3.7	0.7	0.2	-79.0	-81.4	-96.1	-98.2	935.5	184.1	95.5	-98.6	-86.4	-94.1	-96.2
South Asia	34.0	10.0	5.6	1.4	-70.5	-43.8	-83.4	-86.7	426.0	263.5	236.1	-87.1	-90.7	-85.2	-72.6
Americas	219.3	69.9	81.9	19.7	-68.1	17.2	-62.7	-70.5	417.0	183.1	93.4	-75.2	-61.2	-59.8	-52.1
North America	146.6	46.7	54.8	13.2	-68.2	17.3	-62.7	-67.1	263.8	138.2	73.7	-72.0	-64.5	-62.4	-53.0
Caribbean	26.3	10.3	16.7	4.0	-61.0	62.8	-36.5	-57.2	↑	250.3	116.5	-64.4	-22.9	-15.0	-23.0
Central America	10.9	3.1	4.8	1.1	-71.6	53.7	-56.4	-71.7	↑	↑	218.3	-76.7	-58.1	-48.3	-40.1
South America	35.4	9.8	5.7	1.4	-72.2	-42.4	-84.0	-90.5	↑	530.5	182.6	-92.2	-79.9	-81.0	-72.0
Africa	68.6	15.9	17.9	4.3	-76.8	12.4	-73.9	-78.9	144.5	96.5	55.0	-81.6	-76.7	-73.5	-66.2
North Africa	25.6	5.5	6.1	1.5	-78.4	10.4	-76.1	-77.1	↑	188.0	91.6	-81.7	-79.0	-76.3	-68.9
Subsaharan Africa	42.9	10.4	11.8	2.8	-75.9	13.5	-72.6	-79.6	66.1	61.4	42.6	-81.6	-75.3	-71.1	-64.8
Middle East	69.9	19.0	14.5	3.5	-72.8	-23.7	-79.3	-77.5	↑	130.1	64.5	-82.2	-82.9	-81.3	-70.6

Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

(Data as collected by UNWTO, January 2022)

For regularly updated data, please check the *UNWTO Tourism Recovery Tracker*:<https://www.unwto.org/unwto-tourism-recovery-tracker>