

U.S. Travel & Tourism Rebounds in 2021, May Surpass Pre-Pandemic Levels in 2022

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FULL TEXT

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LONDON, Nov. 11, 2021 /PRNewswire/ – The latest research from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) reveals the U.S. Travel & Tourism sector could experience year-over-year growth of 35.6% in 2021, significantly outpacing the year's overall global tourism recovery.

The outlook is even more rosy for 2022, with the travel sector in the U.S. expected to grow by another 28.4%, reaching nearly \$2 trillion of the U.S. economy for a contribution exceeding pre-pandemic levels.

By comparison, in 2019, the U.S. Travel & Tourism sector's contribution to GDP represented nearly \$1.9 trillion (8.6% of the U.S. economy). However, in 2020, when the pandemic brought international travel to an almost complete standstill, the contribution to the sector dropped 41% to just \$1.1 trillion (5.3% of the U.S. economy).

WTTC TRAVEL RECOVERY SURVEY SUMMARY

Based on the latest research from the WTTC –which represents the global Travel & Tourism sector –produced in partnership with Oxford Economics, below is a summary of key findings for the U.S. Travel & Tourism sector for 2021 and 2022:

U.S. Travel & Tourism –GDP Contribution and Growth

- In 2021, the U.S. Travel & Tourism sector can expect a year-over-year growth of **35.6%**, representing an increase of **\$393 billion**, for a total contribution of nearly **\$1.5 trillion** to the U.S. GDP. In comparison, the global economy is set to receive a 30.7% year-over-year increase from the travel & tourism sector in 2021.
- At the current recovery rate, in 2022, the U.S. could experience a further year-over-year growth of **28.4%**, representing an increase of **\$425 billion** and bringing the sector's total contribution to the U.S. economy beyond pre-pandemic levels at over **\$1.9 trillion**.

Travel Spending

- The nation's economy has benefited from a rise in domestic travel, with spending set to increase 40.4% (\$261 billion) in 2021, with a further year-over-year rise of 22.9% expected in 2022.
- Although international spending by travelers in the U.S. is set to grow by a mere 1.9% this year due to prolonged travel restrictions throughout the year, recent changes to international travel restrictions will provide a significant year-over-year boost of almost 228% in 2022, representing an increase of **\$98 billion** and total contribution of **\$141 billion**.

Jobs

- After the U.S. travel sector's loss of more than 5.5 million jobs last year, employment is set to rise by **26.2%** in 2021, representing an increase of **2.9 million** jobs and total contribution of nearly **14 million** jobs. In comparison,

2019 contribution represented more than 16.5 million jobs.

- In 2022, employment is set to increase a further **19.7%**, representing a year-over-year increase of **2.75 million** jobs and bringing total jobs across the U.S. Travel & Tourism sector above pre-pandemic levels at **16.72 million** jobs.

"Our research shows that while the global travel & tourism sector is slowly beginning to recover, the U.S. is recovering faster than many other regions," said Julia Simpson, WTTC President & CEO. "Last year, the pandemic decimated more than five million Travel & Tourism jobs across the U.S.; however, due to a predicted rise in international and domestic spend this year and next, both jobs and GDP are on the rise."

Simpson added: "The U.S. opening its borders and easing restrictions to major source markets such as the UK and the EU will provide a massive boost to economies on both sides of the Atlantic. However, the long-term recovery of the sector in the U.S. and around the world depends on the U.S. border remaining open to international visitors and making travel easier."

MEASURES TO BOOST GDP AND JOB GROWTH

According to the research, the sector's contribution to the U.S. GDP and the rise in jobs could be more positive this year and next, especially if governments worldwide put the measures below in place to facilitate global travel.

These measures include:

- Allowing fully vaccinated travelers to move freely, irrespective of their origin or eventual destination.
- The implementation of digital solutions that enable travelers to easily prove their COVID status, in turn speeding up the process at borders around the world.
- For safe international travel to fully restart, governments must recognize all vaccines authorized by WHO.
- Continued support of the COVAX/UNICEF initiative to ensure equitable distribution of vaccines around the world.
- Finally, the continued implementation of enhanced health and safety protocols, which will underpin consumer confidence.

THE FUTURE COULD BE BRIGHTER FOR THE U.S.

If these five measures are followed before the end of 2021, research shows the impact on the economy and jobs across the U.S. could be considerable.

Travel & Tourism's contribution to GDP could rise by 40.9% (more than \$450 billion) by the end of this year, followed by a year-over-year increase of a further 30.9% (\$480 billion) in 2022. This would equate to a \$165 billion increase in contribution to the U.S. economy compared to pre-pandemic levels.

International spending would also benefit from government action, and experience a growth of 5.4% this year, and a significant boost of 253% in 2022.

The sector's growth could also have a positive impact on employment, with a 31.1% increase in jobs in 2021.

However, with the right measures to support Travel & Tourism, the number of those employed in the sector next year could surpass pre-pandemic levels in 2022, with a year-over-year increase of 22%, reaching more than 17.7 million jobs.

WTTC SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Please visit the WTTC website for the [full methodology report](#).

About the World Travel & Tourism Council

The World Travel & Tourism Council ([WTTC](#)) represents the global travel & tourism private sector. Members include

200 CEOs, Chairs and Presidents of the world's leading travel & tourism companies from all geographies covering all industries. For more than 30 years, WTTC has been committed to raising the awareness of governments and the public of the economic and social significance of the travel & tourism sector.

According to WTTC's 2021 Economic Impact Report, during 2020, a year in which it was devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Travel & Tourism made a 5.5% contribution to global GDP and was responsible for 272 million jobs.

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