

US VISIT LEVELS RECOVER IN STYLE



American tourism makes full recover from the 9-11 attacks. Bordering countries make the biggest contributions.

The US welcomed a record **58 million foreign visitors** from abroad in 2008 which is an overall 4% increase according to the figures of the U.S. Commerce Department. Several individual countries generated record numbers of their own, whilst the neighbouring Canada and Mexico account for most overseas visitors. **Canada was top of the list** with 18.9 million representatives in 2008 whereas Mexico came in second place (13,7 m). The statistics were taken from border points and from inland air arrivals.

Despite the results U.S. Travel Association warned of a continuing lag in the rise of foreign visitors. Even with recent increases, arrivals from overseas have not returned to pre-9/11 traffic levels, which peaked at 26 million in 2000.

There was a short period after the infamous September 11 attacks on the United States when nobody apart from journalists really wanted to visit the USA. The reluctance to go to USA somewhat died down in the few years to follow 9/11 yet there was then a new problem to be faced by the American tourism sector: security alerts. Simply, tourists were not willing to be continually searched at airports and border checks and flying to and from the U.S. became a bureaucratic nightmare. With the threat of terrorist attacks still on American doorsteps, most rules concerning security have stayed the same. The only difference is that most tourists have become used to them.

Let's not forget that America has far more to offer than merely the twin towers and the White House. In terms of geography, it has absolutely everything: ocean, forest, desert, wildlife etc. Unless you are a cricket fan, it could be said that almost all interests may be catered for. Thus, once the negatives are taken away, there is no reason why the United States should not break records for foreign visitors. Recent figures are confirming this notion.

2008 top 10 inbound markets

	Arrivals	% Change
1. Canada	18,925,000	6.6

2. Mexico	13,763,000	-3.9
3. U.K	4,564,895	1.5
4. Japan	3,249,578	-8.0
5. Germany	1,782,299	16.9
6. France	1,243,942	24.7
7. Italy	779,463	22.9
8. Brazil	769,232	20.3
9. South Korea	759,394	-5.8
10. Australia	689,927	3.0

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