

U.S. WELCOME 77 MILLION INTERNATIONAL VISITORS



The United States welcomed approximately 77 million international visitors in 2017. After five months of waiting, the numbers have just been released last week, by the Department of Commerce International Trade Administration's National Travel and Tourism Office (NTTO) and they reveal an unprecedented record spending of US\$ 251.4 billion, a 2% growth compared to the previous year.

The travel and tourism industry was accountable for supporting more than 1.2 million jobs in the country.

The increase in foreigner visitors was shy, with 0.7% overall. **The most noticeable increase of foreign source market was South Korea (+ 17,8%).** Brazil appears as the second largest growing market, with 11%. The other source countries of international visitors which demonstrated a significant growth in the number of tourists were Argentina (+10%), Ireland (+9%) and Canada (+4,8%).

"International travelers keep hitting new spending records when visiting the United States, and I expect that trend to continue in 2018, spawning further job growth," said the body's Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross.

"The U.S. Tourism Industry, which has generated a trade surplus of more than \$77,4 billion last year, continues to help drive our economy to new heights.", he added.

North American tourism-related exports accounted for almost 32% of all exports of services in the US and 11% of all exports, with goods and services combined.

Spending on personal travel, including leisure, education and health-related travel, as well as passenger air transportation, increased by 3.1% and 3.4%, respectively. Educational-related travel accounted for nearly two thirds (65%) of the increase in personal travel, according to the institution.

In April of this year, NTTO temporarily suspended the publication of overseas arrival data, due to anomalies in records received from U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

Together, NTTO and CBP identified approximately 4.5 million records that had been misclassified with respect to residency, due to a programming error.

The misclassification had not been identified until it became obvious that the records were not showing trends consistent with other indicators of overseas travel to the United States.

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