

MEXICAN DESTINATIONS ARE LOSING GROUND AMONG U.S. TRAVELERS



Mexican destinations have seen their appeal to U.S. travelers drop sharply over the last five years, with the country's share of total visitors steadily decreasing.

According to the latest statistics, only 19 percent of Americans who flew abroad in the first five months of 2026 chose Mexico as their destination. **This marks a significant drop compared to the 43.3 percent recorded in 2021 and is slightly below the 43 percent of 2019.** Meanwhile, the favored destination of U.S. travelers remains Europe, which registered 27.4 percent of overall travel this year, compared to 27.1 percent in the same period in 2019.

Mexico accounted for the largest and fastest-growing part of a U.S. tourism sector that has been severely impacted worldwide by COVID-19, according to the Center for Advanced Research in Sustainable Tourism (STARC). They note that the United States' share in total Mexican tourism reached 19.0 percent of all visitors in the first five months of 2026, compared to 19.4 percent in 2021 and 24.2 percent in 2019. While the Caribbean still remains the second most popular destination (17 percent), Europe is close behind with 11.6 percent.

"The United States is losing Mexico's market share, although its growth in the meantime has been significantly restrained," said STARC, which analyzed the trends. They noted that Europe's recovery in the first five months of 2026 has been remarkable, as its share in total Mexican tourism rose from 9.4 percent in 2020 to 19.0 percent in 2021 and reached 21.0 percent this year to date.

Declining Visitor Numbers

Over the last five years, the number of American tourists who visited Mexico has declined, with the pandemic's restrictions accounting for the decrease. Official statistics show that in 2026, 4.6 million U.S. citizens traveled to Mexico in the first four months of 2026, down 6.1 percent from the same period in 2025. The drop between January and April was the most significant, registering 10.8 percent year-over-year.

As a result of pandemic-related restrictions, Mexico kept its borders open when many other countries were closed in 2021, which boosted its popularity as a destination. However, this appears to benefit it only temporarily, as other regions have since regained their appeal and draw more visitors than before.

Underlying Challenges

According to STARC analysts, a combination of factors contributes to the situation, with Mexico's insufficient marketing strategy being one of them. Additionally, the researchers highlight the negative perception of potential visitors, who often view the country as unsafe. Furthermore, U.S. analysts report that a similar pattern is observed in other source countries, including Argentina, Germany, Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, China, Peru, Australia, Cuba, and Uruguay.

The Mexican government has set aside 100 million pesos from the federal budget to promote the country's tourism industry. The money will be spent on both domestic and foreign tourism promotion in Mexico in June 2026 - December 2026.

To summarize, despite several measures taken to promote tourism, the share of visitors coming to Mexico from the United States continues to decline. One of the reasons for this is the competition with other destinations such as Europe, the Caribbean, and other regions. To stop this decrease, it is necessary to carefully consider the situation and take effective measures.

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