

Overseas Travel and Tourism, Provisional Results, Quarter 3 (July to September) 2015

Coverage: UK

Date: **21 January 2016**

Geographical Area: **Region**

Theme: **Travel and Transport**

Theme: **People and Places**

Latest trends

Compared with the same quarter a year ago, visits to the UK by overseas residents increased by 4.7% to 10.5 million in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2015. The number of nights spent in the UK by overseas residents, also rose by 6.0%, but the estimated earnings from these visits fell by 3.8% to £7.1 billion.

Visits abroad by UK residents during quarter 3 2015 increased by 9.1% to 22.4 million compared with Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2014. The number of nights spent abroad by UK residents rose by 13.4% and expenditure during these visits increased by 13.6% to £14.4 billion.

About the estimates

Overseas Travel and Tourism quarterly estimates are revised during the processing of the annual dataset. The most up-to-date and accurate estimates for previous year's published quarters can be found in the latest edition of [Travel Trends](#).

The UK Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs
- are well explained and readily accessible
- are produced according to sound methods
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

Further information about the estimates:

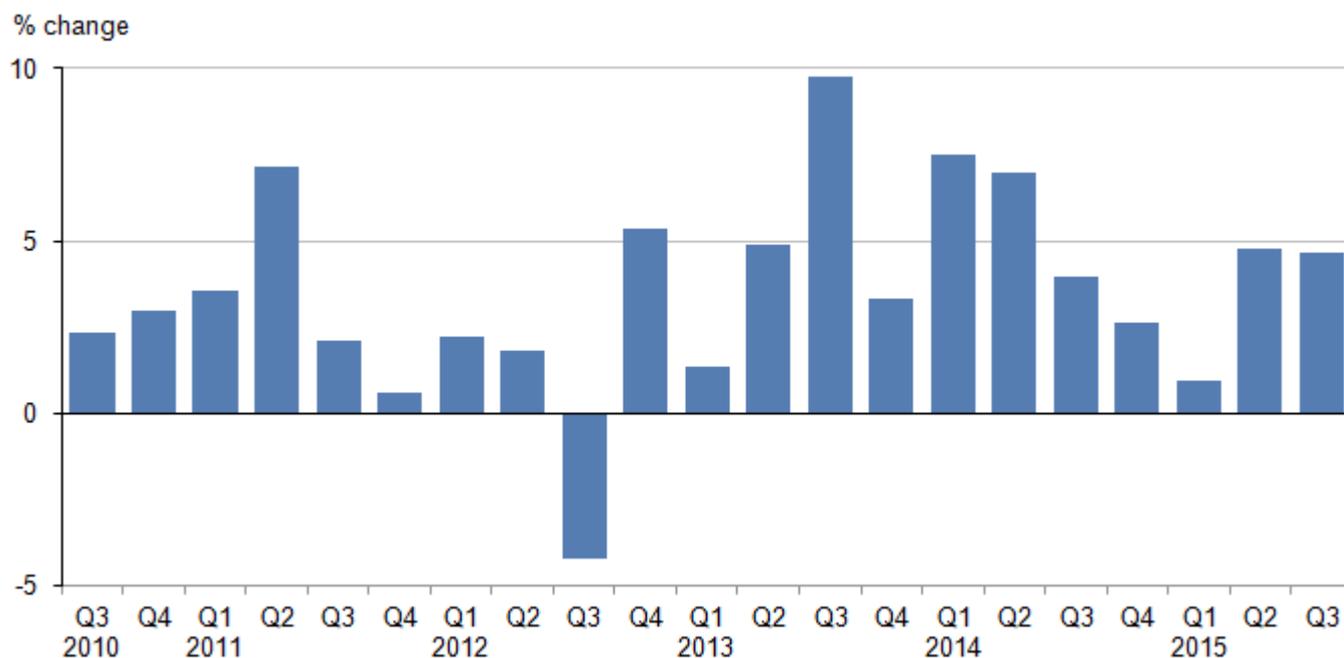
- the sample profile and responses are calibrated to international passenger traffic for the reporting period
- estimates are based on interviews conducted when passengers end their visit – therefore any visits commencing in the reported quarter but not completed until later are not included in estimates for the reported quarter
- the reported spend for visits includes any spending associated with the visit, which may occur before, during or after the trip
- in January 2015 the methodology for treating outliers was improved – for further information please [contact the IPS team](#)
- parts of the report refer to countries visited abroad – it should be noted that if a UK resident visited more than 1 country on a trip abroad, the country recorded as visited in this publication is the country that was visited for the longest period
- estimates are subject to sampling error and confidence intervals are provided to help readers interpret the estimates (see background note: Accuracy of IPS estimates) – further guidance is provided about the quality of [Overseas Travel and Tourism estimates \(404.8 Kb Pdf\)](#)

Visits to the UK by overseas residents

International visits to the UK by overseas residents continued to rise in the third quarter (July to Sept) of 2015. An estimated 10.5 million visits were made in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2015, this was an increase of 4.7% when compared with 10.0 million visits made during the same period in 2014.

Figure 1: Quarterly change from a year earlier in visits to the UK from overseas residents

Quarter 3 2010 to Quarter 3 2015



Source: International Passenger Survey (IPS) - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

- Throughout this release Q1 refers to Quarter 1 (January to March), Q2 refers to Quarter 2 (April to June), Q3 refers to Quarter 3 (July to September) and Q4 refers to Quarter 4 (October to December).

Download chart
[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(24.5 Kb)

“Holiday Visits” were the most popular reason for overseas resident's visits to the UK in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2015, with 4.4 million holiday visits to the UK. The number of visits has remained relatively stable from Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2014.

Among all visits to the UK by overseas residents in quarter 3 of 2015 compared with the same quarter in 2014, visiting friends or relatives recorded the largest increase of 12.0% from a year earlier. Business visits also increased by 5.6%. Visiting friends and relatives saw the largest increase in visits from North American residents, increasing by 19.9%, compared with Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2014. For Europe this also rose by 11.8% while visits from “Other Countries” increased by 8.6%. Business visits also saw an increase from North America and Europe (5.8% and 6.5% respectively) but the number remained relatively stable from “Other Countries” (down 0.6%).

Visits from residents of Europe and North America rose by 2.6% and 11.8% respectively while “Other Countries” rose by 7.2% to 2.1 million.

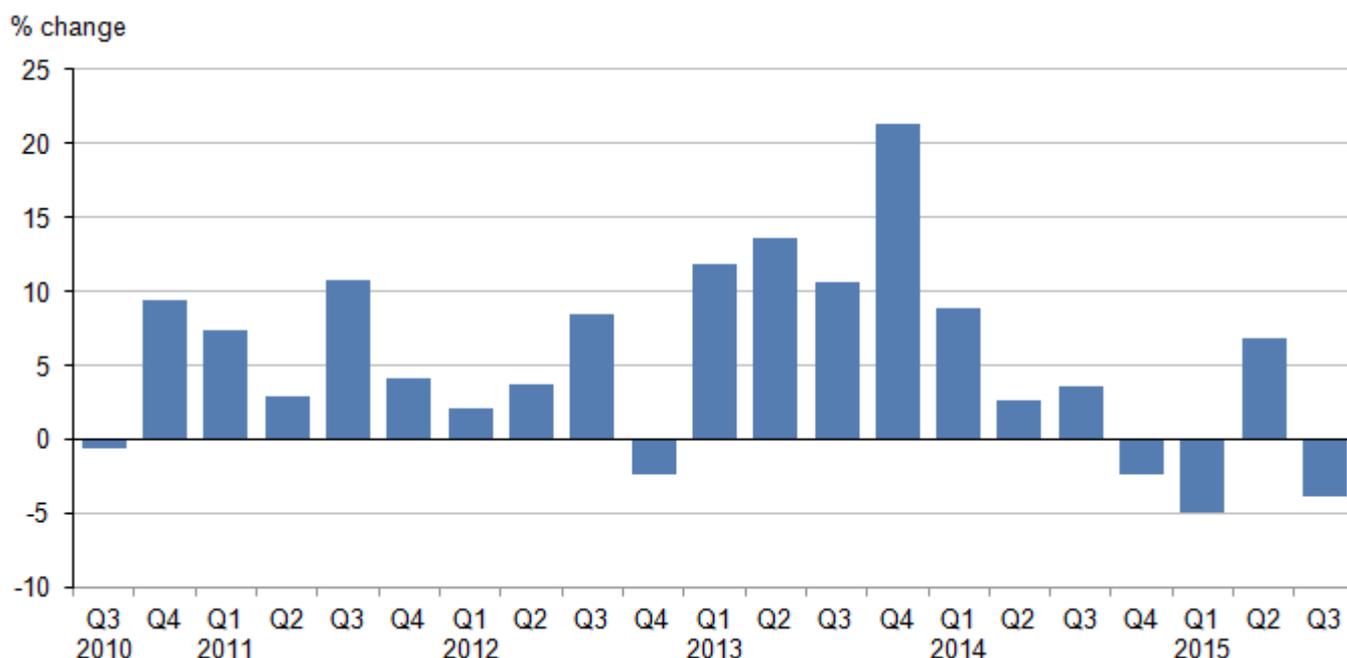
Overall, an estimated total of 97.0 million nights were spent in the UK by overseas residents this quarter, an increase of 6.0% compared with Quarter 3 (July to Sept) in 2014. The number of nights spent in the UK by overseas visitors from North America increased by 11.7% while the number of nights spent by residents of Europe and “Other Countries” increased by 6.9% and 2.3% respectively in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2015.

Overnight visits to London increased in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2015 by 5.9% to 5.2 million, as did overnight visits to the rest of England, which saw an increase of 8.5%. However, overnight visits to Scotland decreased by 2.7%, as did overnight visits to Wales which were down by 2.7% when compared with the same period in 2014.

Estimated earnings from all visits to the UK fell by 3.8% from £7.4 billion (Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2014) to £7.1 billion (Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2015). Spending by residents of “Other Countries” during their visit to the UK saw the biggest decrease in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2015, falling by 4.6% to £2.6 billion after seeing a large increase in the previous quarter. Spending by residents of Europe also fell by 3.6% and “North America” fell by 2.6% when compared with Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2014.

Figure 2: Quarterly change from a year earlier in earnings from visits to the UK

Quarter 3 2010 to Quarter 3 2015



Source: International Passenger Survey (IPS) - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

- Throughout this release Q1 refers to Quarter 1 (January to March), Q2 refers to Quarter 2 (April to June), Q3 refers to Quarter 3 (July to September) and Q4 refers to Quarter 4 (October to December).

Download chart

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

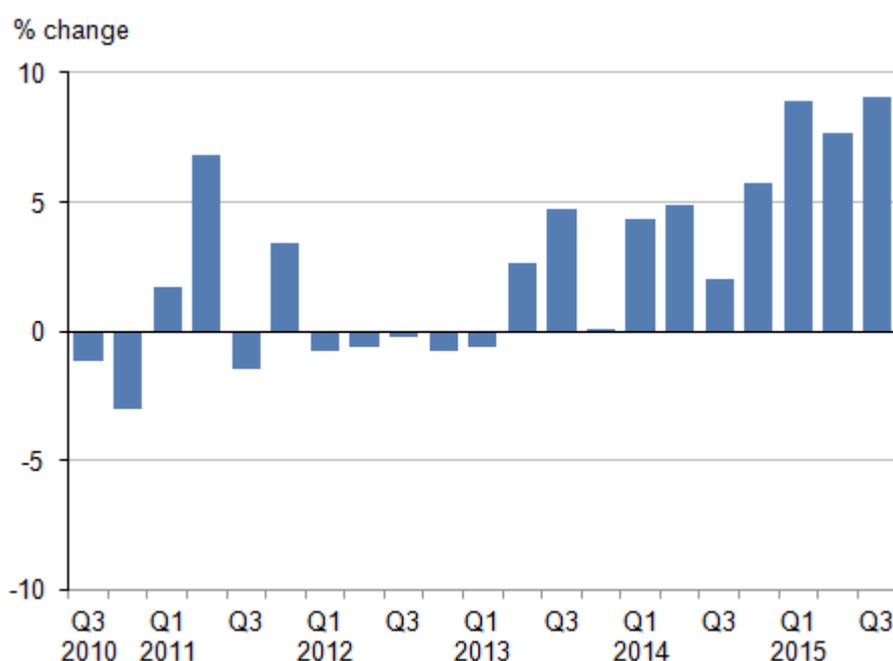
(25 Kb)

Visits abroad by UK residents

UK residents made 22.4 million visits abroad in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2015, an increase of 9.1% when compared with the same quarter in 2014. Visits to North America saw the largest increase of 14.7% to 1.4 million whilst visits to Europe and “Other Countries” also increased by 8.6% and 9.6% respectively when compared with Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2014.

Figure 3: Quarterly change from a year earlier in visits abroad by UK residents

Quarter 3 2010 to Quarter 3 2015



Source: International Passenger Survey (IPS) - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

- Throughout this release Q1 refers to Quarter 1 (January to March), Q2 refers to Quarter 2 (April to June), Q3 refers to Quarter 3 (July to September) and Q4 refers to Quarter 4 (October to December).

Download chart

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(30 Kb)

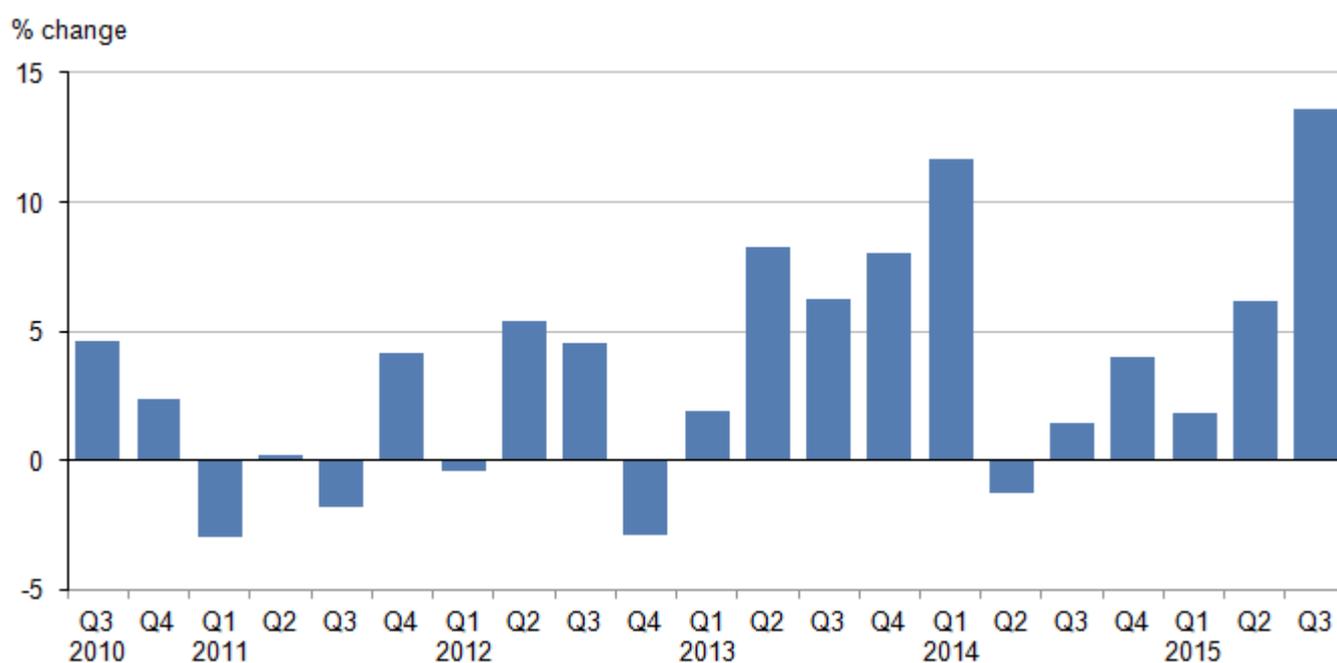
Holiday visits continue to be the main purpose for UK visits abroad. In Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2015, there were 15.7 million holiday visits, which was an increase of 8.0% compared with the same quarter a year ago. Visits to friends or relatives showed the biggest increase at 12.6% in this quarter followed by business visits with an increase of 10.3%.

In Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2015, UK residents spent 268.9 million nights abroad, this was an increase of 13.4% compared with Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2014. The rise in visits to North America is reflected in the increase in nights spent in North America by UK residents which increased 18% in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2015. The number of nights that were spent in Europe in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2015 saw an increase of 11.5% compared with Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2014, and nights spent in “Other Countries” saw an increase of 17.0% in this quarter.

UK residents spent £14.4 billion during visits abroad in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2015, an increase of 13.6% compared with £12.7 billion spent in the same period of 2014. Expenditure in Europe rose by 14.3% and spending in North America increased by 25.9% reflecting the increase in visits to North America. “Other countries” also rose by 4.3%.

Figure 4: Quarterly change from a year earlier in expenditure from UK residents visits abroad

Quarter 3 2010 to Quarter 3 2015



Source: International Passenger Survey (IPS) - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

- Throughout this release Q1 refers to Quarter 1 (January to March), Q2 refers to Quarter 2 (April to June), Q3 refers to Quarter 3 (July to September) and Q4 refers to Quarter 4 (October to December).

Download chart

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(30 Kb)

Other overseas travel and tourism releases

Further analysis of overseas travel and tourism trends are provided in the publications:

- [Monthly Overseas Travel and Tourism](#), latest publication October 2015 published in December 2015; next release November 2015 to be published on the 29 January 2016
- [Travel Trends](#), latest publication Travel Trends 2014 published May 20 2015, next publication Travel Trends 2015 to be published spring 2016. This publication provides more detailed analysis of visits and spending, including analysis by demographics, towns in the UK visited and countries visited by residents of different parts of the UK
- [Travelpac](#) is a data set which allows users to conduct their own analysis of quarterly and annual data on main variables. The datasets are provided in SPSS and Excel, latest publication Travelpac Quarter 3 (July to September) 2015 published 21 January 2016
- note that estimates are subject to revision between the monthly statistical bulletin and the quarterly publication and again when Travel Trends is published – revisions result from more accurate passenger figures being made available, more information about the IPS revisions policy is available in the [Quality and Methodology Information \(350.4 Kb Pdf\)](#)
- note that, although data by the International Passenger Survey (IPS) also feeds into the calculation of migration statistics, the Overseas Travel and Tourism publications do not provide any information relating to international migration

Contact details

General IPS queries and requests

For general questions about IPS and requests for ad hoc data analysis (a service governed by the ONS Income and Charging policy):

Tel: Data Advice Relations Team: +44 (0)1633 455678

Email: socialsurveys@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Other customer enquiries

Media enquiries Tel: +44 (0)845 601 3034

ONS Customer Contact Centre Tel: +44 (0)845 604 1858

Statistical contact

For information about the content of this publication:

Tel: Data Advice Relations Team: +44 (0)1633 455678

Email: socialsurveys@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Copyright and reproduction

©Crown copyright 2016

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence.

To view this licence, go to the [National Archives](#) or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU. Email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Background notes: publication tables

Notes to tables

Table 5: Overseas earnings and expenditure at constant (1995) prices – includes estimates for the Channel Islands.

Table 7: Nights spent abroad by UK residents includes cruises allocated to "Other Areas" (see note 8 under "sample methodology").

Table 11: Spending by overseas residents by area and purpose of visit. See notes 10, 11 and 12 under "Definitions".

Exclusions

Trippers who cross the Channel or the North Sea but do not alight from the boat.

Migrants and persons travelling overseas to take up prearranged employment, together with military and diplomatic personnel, merchant seamen and airline personnel on duty.

Overseas residents passing through the UK en route to other destinations (often known as transit passengers) but who do not stay overnight (however any spending whilst here is included in the figures for earnings).

Symbols

P = Provisional

R = Revised

- = Not available or no sample

0 = visits less than 500 or spending less than £50,000

VFR = Visiting friends or relatives

Please note: due to rounding, constituent items in the tables may not add exactly to totals.

Background notes: definitions

1. The figures relate to the number of completed visits, not the number of visitors. Anyone entering or leaving more than once in the same period is counted on each visit. The count of visits relates to UK residents returning to this country and to overseas residents leaving it.

2. "Day-visits" (that is, trips that do not involve an overnight stay) abroad by UK residents as well as day trips to the UK by overseas residents are included in the figures for visits and expenditure. Details of such visits are shown separately in Tables 8 to 11 and 19 to 22 under the heading "day visits". Please note they do not cover day visits to or from the Republic of Ireland across the land border, although they are included in total visits. For overseas residents in transit through the UK see note 9.
3. An "overseas visitor" means a person who, being permanently resident in a country outside the United Kingdom, visits the UK for a period of less than 12 months. UK citizens resident overseas for 12 months or more coming home on leave are included in this category. Visits abroad are visits for a period of less than 12 months by people permanently resident in the UK (who may be of foreign nationality).
4. When a resident of the UK has visited more than 1 country the entire visit, expenditure and stay are allocated to the "country stayed in for the longest time".
5. Visits for "miscellaneous" purposes include those for study, to attend sporting events, for shopping, health, religious, or for other purposes, together with visits for more than 1 purpose when none predominates (for example, visits both on business and on holiday). Overseas visitors staying overnight in the UK en route to other destinations are also included in miscellaneous purposes.
6. Estimates relating to tourist flows across the "land border" between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland are, for convenience, included in the figures for sea. Where not shown separately, flows through the Channel Tunnel are also included under the figures for sea.
7. Regional Analysis (Table 13). The information relating to visitors using the land border from the Republic of Ireland is not collected and so is excluded from the table. Also excluded (except from the "Total" section) are all visits that did not include an overnight stay in the UK. Visits by overseas residents to Northern Ireland although included in the "total" column are not separately analysed. More than 1 region can be visited by an individual whilst in the United Kingdom and so the total of the visits to all regions will therefore sometimes be greater than the total number of visits to the UK.
8. Adjustments are made to the reported cost of an "inclusive tour" so that only the amount earned by the country of visit (for example, accommodation costs, car hire, etc.) is included. This estimate is then added to an individual's spending to give the total spending in the country of visit (see also note 10).
9. "Length of stay" for UK residents cover the time spent, including the journey outside the UK, whilst for overseas residents it refers to the time spent within the UK.
10. The term "earnings" refers to spending in the UK by overseas residents, whereas expenditure refers to spending abroad by UK residents.
11. "Earnings and expenditure" figures cover the same categories of travellers as do the number of visits, except that in addition the earnings figures include the expenditure by same day transit passengers, and the foreign exchange earnings and expenditure due to travel relating to the Channel Islands. They exclude payments for air, sea and rail travel to and from the UK. For any traveller on an inclusive tour an estimate of the return fare is deducted from the total tour price.
12. Earnings do not include the personal export of cars that have been purchased in the United Kingdom by overseas residents. Similarly spending excludes the personal import of cars by UK residents.
13. An estimate for purchases by overseas visitors at airport "duty free" shops is included in the figures for earnings. Such purchases on British carriers are still excluded.

14. The question to identify whether the cost of fares and accommodation can be separated was simplified in the 2014 questionnaire. Up to December 2013 the question read: "Was your accommodation abroad paid for as part of an inclusive tour or holiday where fares and accommodation cannot be separated?" From January 2014 the question read: "Can you separate the cost of your fares and accommodation?" The routing to this question has remained constant and all respondents are routed to this question, regardless of purpose of visit. If they answer yes they are then asked to supply the breakdown of costs. Respondents whose purpose for visits was not "holiday" are still able to answer that they cannot separate fare and accommodation costs. This change should improve the cost breakdown of information collected.

Background notes: geographical areas

1. North America: Canada (including Greenland and St Pierre at Miquelon), USA (including Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands).
2. Europe: All countries listed within the European Union (see below for listing) plus the following central and eastern European countries; North Cyprus; Gibraltar; Iceland (including Faroe Islands); Norway; Switzerland (including Liechtenstein); Turkey; the former USSR; and the states of former Yugoslavia.
3. EU15: All countries that joined the European Union before 1 January 2004; Austria; Belgium; Denmark; France (including Monaco); Finland; Germany; Greece; Republic of Ireland; Italy (including San Marino and Vatican City); Luxembourg; Netherlands; Portugal (including Azores and Madeira); Spain (including Canary Islands; the Balearic Islands and Andorra); and Sweden. Note that the UK is among the 15 countries that formed the European Union prior to January 2004, but due to the nature of the data displayed in the IPS reference tables data for the UK is excluded.
4. European Union: All countries that are current members of the European Union; Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia*, Cyprus**, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France (including Monaco), Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Republic of Ireland, Italy (including San Marino and Vatican City), Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal (including Azores and Madeira), Romania, Spain (including Canary Islands, the Balearic Islands and Andorra), Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden. Note that the UK is a member of the European Union but due to the nature of the data displayed in the IPS reference tables data for the UK is excluded.
5. Other European Union: All countries that joined the European Union from 1 January 2004 onwards; Bulgaria, Croatia*, Cyprus**, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.
6. North Africa: Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Sudan.
7. Other Middle East: Bahrain; Iran; Iraq; Jordan; Kuwait; Lebanon; Oman; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; Syria; and the Yemen.
8. Central and South America: Argentina; Belize; Bolivia; British Antarctica; Brazil; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; Ecuador; El Salvador; the Falkland Islands; French Guiana; Guatemala; Guyana; Honduras; Nicaragua; Panama (including Canal Zone); Paraguay; Peru; Surinam; Uruguay; and Venezuela.
9. Other Caribbean: Antigua; Bahamas; Bermuda; British Virgin Islands; Cayman Islands; Cuba; Dominica; the Dominican Republic; Grenada; Haiti; Martinique; Montserrat; St Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla; St. Lucia; St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Trinidad and Tobago; Turks and the Caicos Islands.

* Croatia joined the European Union on 1 July 2013 and data relating to Croatia collected from that date onwards has been included in the "European Union", "Other EU" and "Europe" categories. Data relating to Croatia collected prior to 1 July 2013 is included in the "Europe" category only.

** Only the south of Cyprus is a member of the EU but the IPS is unable to separate North and South Cyprus for the period before May 2004 and so all of Cyprus is included in the European Union section until May 2004. From May 2004, only southern Cyprus is included in the European Union figures.

Background notes: purpose groupings

1. Holiday: Holiday/pleasure, to play amateur sport, cruise
2. Business: Business
3. Visit friends or relatives: Visit family, visit friends
4. Miscellaneous: Other reasons or cases where the respondent is not able to give a single purpose as the main reason for visit
5. People migrating (to or from the UK) or travelling as crew of aircraft, ships or trains are excluded from analysis in this publication

Background notes: sample methodology

1. The International Passenger Survey (IPS) produces estimates that are based on interviews with a stratified random sample of passengers entering and leaving the UK on the principal air, tunnel and sea routes. The main features of the stratification are: mode of transport (that is air, tunnel or sea), port and time of day.
2. The frequency of sampling within each stratum depends mainly on the variation of tourist expenditure and on the volume of migrants, for which the survey is also used to collect statistics. To collect Overseas Travel and Tourism information, travellers passing through passport control are randomly selected for interview and in all some 295,000 interviews were conducted in 2012. Only interviews carried out at the end of a visit are used to generate estimates of expenditure and stay. Of these interviews around 45,000 provided the published information on foreign visitors to the UK and around 59,000 were used for the estimate of UK residents travelling abroad. The interviews were conducted on a purely voluntary and anonymous basis.
3. Despite the introduction in April 1999 of interviewing on air and sea routes to and from the Republic of Ireland the results from the IPS are still supplemented with estimates of travel between UK and the Republic of Ireland over the land border where no IPS interviewing takes place. Estimates for travel by land are based on information provided by the Central Statistics Office of the Republic of Ireland. Estimates of earnings and expenditure are also supplemented with figures from the Economic Advisor's Office of the States of Jersey, who provide information about the Channel Islands.
4. Over 95% of passengers entering and leaving the UK (excluding those travelling by land to and from the Republic of Ireland) travel on routes covered by the survey. The remainder are either passengers travelling at night when interviewing is suspended, or on those routes too small in volume to be covered. For those passengers, estimates are made and input into the main results of the survey.

5. At the major airports a sample of half days is taken and a fixed proportion of passengers are interviewed, whilst the smaller airports are sampled occasionally with the number of visits depending on the number of international passengers.
6. On the sea routes either particular cross-channel sailings are sampled and a fixed proportion of passengers interviewed on board, or a sample of days is taken and the passengers interviewed on the quay side.
7. In all, approximately 281,000 travellers were interviewed in 2014; the proportion varies from port to port.
8. UK residents who left a cruise boat at a foreign port and returned home on a scheduled air or sea service (for example, fly-cruises) are included in the IPS. Information on the number of passengers on cruises finishing in the UK is estimated in terms of the number of visits, length of stay and expenditure. These estimates are added to the cruise data collected from the IPS and included under the headings for "other areas", "holiday", and "sea". In 2010 a review took place of the methodology used to estimate the number of such visits. This review has led to more accurate methodology for estimating these visits and has resulted in an annual increase from approximately 20,000 to 200,000 such visits. The new estimates have been included since the publication *Travel Trends 2010*, published in late July 2011.
9. A complex weighting procedure is used in the survey results taking account of passengers' movement statistics produced by the BAA plc and AGS Airports Limited for air traffic, by the Department for Transport for sea traffic, EuroTunnel and EuroStar for tunnel traffic. In addition, for the monthly travel and tourism estimates, air passenger movement statistics from Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh and East Midlands Airports are also incorporated where final CAA statistics are not yet available. For Heathrow, Gatwick and Manchester allowances are made for passengers in transit who do not pass through passport control and hence do not cross the IPS counting line. The organisations, listed above, that carried out the original collection and analysis of the passenger flow data, bear no responsibility for the further analysis or production of outputs and interpretation.
10. For further information please read the [IPS Methodology Report](#)

Background notes: accuracy of the results

Figures for the most recent quarter are provisional and subject to revision in light of additional passenger data obtained at the end of each year.

IPS quarterly estimates are revised in line with the IPS revisions policy. The revisions policy is available in the [IPS Quality and Methodology Information \(350.4 Kb Pdf\)](#) paper to assist users in the understanding of the cycle and frequency of data revisions. Users of this report are strongly advised to read this policy before using this data for research or policy related purposes.

Planned revisions usually arise from either the receipt of revised passenger traffic data or the correction of errors to existing data identified later in the annual processing cycle. Those of significant magnitude will be highlighted and explained.

Revisions to published quarterly IPS estimates can be expected in the publication of the annual overseas travel and tourism report (*Travel Trends*).

All other revisions will be regarded as unplanned and will be dealt with by non-standard releases. All revisions will be released in compliance with the same principles as other new information. Please refer to the [ONS guide to statistical revisions](#).

The main series are seasonally adjusted. This aids interpretation by identifying seasonal patterns and calendar effects and removing them from the unadjusted data. The resulting figures give a more accurate indication of underlying movements in the series.

The estimates produced from the IPS are subject to sampling errors that result because not every traveller to or from the UK is interviewed on the survey. Sampling errors are determined both by the sample design and by the sample size – generally speaking, the larger the sample supporting a particular estimate, the proportionately smaller is its sampling error. The survey sample size is approximately 70,000 per quarter.

Table 1 shows the 95% confidence intervals for the main quarterly estimates of the total number of visits, nights and expenditure for both overseas residents visiting the UK and UK residents going abroad. These represent the interval into which there are 19 chances out of 20 that the true figure (had all travellers been surveyed) would lie.

If, for example, the relative 95% confidence interval relating to an estimate of 10,000 was 5.0% there would be 19 chances out of 20 that the true figure (if all travellers had been surveyed) would lie in the range 9,500 to 10,500.

Table 1: Sampling Errors, Quarter 3 (July to September) 2015

	Estimate	Relative 95% Confidence Interval (+/- % the estimate)
Overseas visitors to the UK		
Number of visits (thousands)	10,498	3.6%
Total earnings (£million)	7,133	4.9%
Number of visitor nights (thousands)	96,955	4.9%
UK residents going abroad		
Number of visits (thousands)	22,396	1.8%
Total earnings (£million)	14,405	5.3%
Number of visitor nights (thousands)	268,922	3.1%

Table source: Office for National Statistics

Download table

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)
(25 Kb)

Sampling errors relating to visits, nights and expenditure across regions of the world and purpose groups together with countries visited / visits from and region of the UK visited are provided within the [Confidence intervals, Quarter 3 \(July to September\) 2015 tables \(46 Kb Excel sheet\)](#).

Further guidance for readers is provided about the quality of [Overseas Travel and Tourism estimates \(404.8 Kb Pdf\)](#).

One indication of the reliability of the main indicators in this release can be obtained by monitoring the size of revisions. The [monthly statistical bulletin](#) provides information about the size and pattern of revisions to the quarterly IPS data which have occurred over the last 5 years to the following main seasonally adjusted estimates:

- the number of visits by overseas residents to the UK (GMAT)
- the number of visits abroad by UK residents (GMAX)
- earnings made from overseas residents in the UK (GMAZ)
- expenditure abroad by UK residents (GMBB)

Additional spreadsheets giving details of how the revisions have affected the provisional monthly and quarterly estimates are available in the [data section of the monthly statistical bulletin](#).

Background notes: important change in IPS sampling

Traffic at all airports and seaports is monitored regularly to assess if they should be included in the IPS sample. As a consequence Liverpool and Prestwick airports were introduced into the sample at the beginning of 2005. Between 2000 and 2004, traffic through Liverpool had quadrupled to “over 2 and a half million” international passengers, while at Prestwick there was a fivefold increase to nearly “1 and a half million” passengers over the same period. The inclusion of these ports in the IPS sample were shown to cause a discontinuity in regional results and methodology was modified to account for this. Similarly in early 2008 each of Doncaster, Bournemouth, Southampton and Heathrow Terminal 5 were added to the sample and in 2009 Aberdeen and Belfast International airports were added. Heathrow Terminal 2 was added to the sample from August 2014. Newhaven to Dieppe crossing was added to the sample from October 2014. Heathrow Terminal 1 ceased operation in July 2015 and was therefore removed from the International Passenger Survey sample.

Background notes: changes to the IPS in 2009

1. From January 2009 certain elements of the IPS have been revised to address recommendations put forward by the Interdepartmental Task Force on Migration Statistics, 2006. The changes involve revision to sample design, weighting and imputation methodology. These changes resulted in some discontinuity in estimates. An analysis was conducted and published in 2009. More details are available from the IPS team.
2. The model used to produce seasonal adjustment estimates is reviewed approximately every 2 years. A review was conducted in late 2009 and the new model was used for the first time to produce the seasonally adjusted estimates used in the December 2009 statistical bulletin publication. Details of the seasonal adjustment model can be obtained from the IPS team using the contact details attached.

Background notes: special events

Statistical series are affected by special events. However, as explained in our special events policy, it is not possible to make an estimate of the effect of particular events only on the basis of information collected in those series. However, we publish a [special events calendar](#) which may help the reader put some context on reported estimates.

There were a number of special events in 2012. The Diamond Jubilee celebrations saw changes to the normal pattern of bank holidays in May and June and an additional day's holiday in June; all of these changes affected estimates for Quarter 2 April to June of 2012, and an article gave [more information on how estimates were compiled over this period](#). The Olympics took place from 27 July to 12 August 2012 (with a few events starting on 25 July), and Paralympics from 29 August to 9 September. The direct effect of the Olympics and Paralympics were reflected in the estimates for the months of Quarter 3 July to September of 2012. More details of [how certain series were expected to be affected](#) were given in an information note. We published a detailed article describing [possible effects on GDP and comparing with earlier Olympic Games \(229 Kb Pdf\)](#) on 25 October 2012. Wider effects, for example the presence of the Olympics influencing the number of non-Olympic tourist visits, may of course have affected any of the summer months.

The result of these special events in 2012 has been to introduce additional uncertainty in the interpretation of movements between Quarter 2 April to June and Quarter 3 July to September and between Quarter 3 July to September and Quarter 4 October to December. Users should therefore consider all information available when interpreting the statistics.

Background notes: further statistics and other analyses

IPS data files

IPS data for the years 1993 onwards are available online from [our website](#). Travelpac is a free and simple to use data set for those wishing to make further analyses of IPS data. It contains files provided in Excel and SPSS formats. More details can be found at [Travelpac, Quarter 3 \(July to September\) 2015](#).

Monthly figures of overseas travel and tourism

These are published in the [Overseas Travel and Tourism Statistical Bulletin](#) available from:

Office for National Statistics, Government Buildings, Cardiff Road, Newport, NP10 8XG.

Telephone: +44 (0)1633 455296 or from our [website](#).

Further statistics

More detailed statistics covering 1980 to 2014 may be found in the 2014 annual report, Travel Trends which we produced. A copy can be downloaded at [Travel Trends, 2014](#).

Other analyses

For general questions about the IPS and requests for ad hoc data analysis (a service governed by our income and charging policy):

Telephone: +44 (0)1633 455678

Email: socialsurveys@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Background notes

1. The information provided to us by respondents is treated as strictly confidential as directed by the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#). It is used to produce statistics that will not identify any individuals.
2. A list of the job titles of those given [pre-publication access](#) to the contents of this statistical bulletin is available on our website.
3. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.
4. Next publication: Quarter 4 (October to December), 2015 data will be published within the annual publication Travel Trends, 2015 due to be published in spring 2016.
5. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html or from the Media Relations Office email: media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Copyright

© Crown copyright 2016

You may use or re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/ or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This document is also available on our website at www.ons.gov.uk.