

International Visitation and Spending Up in the First Quarter of 2008

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The U.S. Department of Commerce today announced international visitation to the United States rose 15 percent, and visitor spending increased by 20 percent in the first quarter of 2008 over last year. In March 2008, visitation to the United States climbed substantially to 4.7 million, an increase of 19 percent over March 2007.

International visitors spent a record \$11.4 billion in March, accounting for the 20 percent increase from March 2007. Spending by international travelers while in the United States, including travel receipts and passenger fares, is defined as a U.S. export. Travel and tourism to the United States contributes positively to the overall economy.

'America's success is its openness, and being open to international travel and tourism to the United States boosts the U.S. economy,' said Commerce Assistant Secretary William G. Sutton. 'Rising international visitation continues to have a positive impact on our travel and tourism industry. The strong start in the first quarter of 2008 builds on the momentum set in 2007, a record-breaking year for international arrivals and receipts.'

Highlights of International Arrivals to the United States for March and the First Quarter, 2008:

-Overseas arrivals (excluding Canada and Mexico) increased 10 percent for the month compared to March 2007 and also for the first quarter of 2008.

Visitation from Canada was up 26 percent for the month and 21 percent for the quarter.

-Mexican travel to the U.S. interior [1] was up 31 percent in March and 18 percent for the quarter.

-Visitation from Western Europe increased 15 percent in March and 14 percent for the quarter.

-Arrivals from the United Kingdom were up 3 percent in March and 6 percent for the quarter.

Visitation from other top Western European markets all increased by double-digits for the month of March 2008 as well as the first quarter compared to last year. German, French and Italian arrivals were up 20 percent, 11 percent and 36 percent, respectively, in March compared to March, 2007. The Netherlands, Spain, Ireland and Sweden were up 17 percent, 48 percent, 24 percent and 25 percent, respectively, for the month.

Background

Manufacturing and Services' Office of Travel and Tourism Industries (OTTI) collects, analyzes, and disseminates international travel and tourism statistics for the U.S. Travel and Tourism Statistical System. To view OTTI visitation data tables, please visit: <http://www.tinet.ita.doc.gov/view/m-2008-I-001/index.html>.

[1] The U.S. 'interior' begins 40 kilometers (25 miles) north of the U.S.-Mexico border. This distinguishes longer-haul travelers, including air passengers, from short-haul border crossers.

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