

8 November 2006

**Coverage**

United Kingdom

**Theme**

Transport Travel and  
Tourism

## Travel Trends

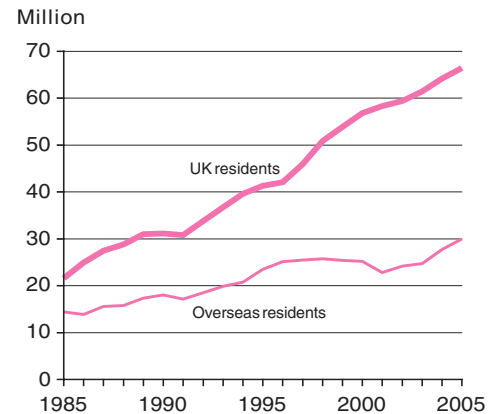
### International Passenger Survey 2005

Visits to the UK by overseas residents in 2005 were eight per cent higher than in 2004, and there was a nine per cent rise in spending, according to *Travel Trends*,\* published today by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

In 2005, overseas residents made a record 30.0 million visits to the UK, 2.2 million more than in 2004. While they were here, they spent a record £14.2 billion, an increase of £1.2 billion on 2004.

UK residents made a record 66.4 million visits abroad, an increase of four per cent on the previous year. UK residents also spent a record amount abroad: £32.2 billion - an increase of six per cent on 2004.

Visits to and from the UK



*Travel Trends* presents the main annual results of the International Passenger Survey (IPS) which collects information on travel to and from the UK. It is the key guide to travel patterns and shows why and how people travelled, where they stayed and how much they spent.

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Internet  
[www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

Next Publication  
Autumn 2007

\* *Travel Trends*. A report on the 2005 International Passenger Survey.

Palgrave Mcmillan £45.00.

ISBN (10)1 4039 9309 0.

ISBN (13)978 1 4039 9389 2.

An electronic version of *Travel Trends* is available from the National Statistics Website on: [www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=1391](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=1391).

## Overseas residents' visits to the UK

The number of visits to the UK by overseas residents decreased from a peak in 1998 to a low in 2001. There was a particularly large fall of more than nine per cent in 2001 following an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the UK between February and September, and the terrorist attacks in the USA of 11 September. Visits from overseas residents rose above the 1998 peak for the first time in 2004 and this trend has continued in 2005 to reach an all-time record.

## Purpose of visit

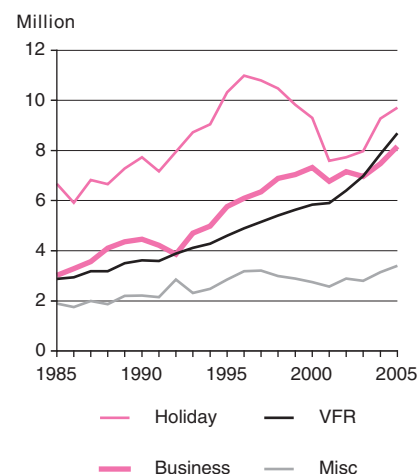
In 2005, as in previous years, holiday visits were the most popular reason for overseas residents to come to the UK and accounted for a third of all visits (32 per cent). This was followed by visits to friends or relatives (29 per cent) and business visits (27 per cent). Visitors on holiday in the UK spent the most, £4.5 billion in total or an average of £457 per visit, while business travellers, who spent £4.1 billion in total, tended to spend more per visit (£496 on average).

There were record numbers of visits by all reasons for visit except that of holiday. However, the number of holiday visits made to the UK by overseas residents rose above the level of 2000 for the first time.

## Country of residence

The majority of visits to the UK by overseas residents were from Europe (72 per cent). Visits from this region increased by 11 per cent from 19.4 million in 2004 to 21.6 million in 2005.

Overseas residents' visits to the UK by purpose of visit

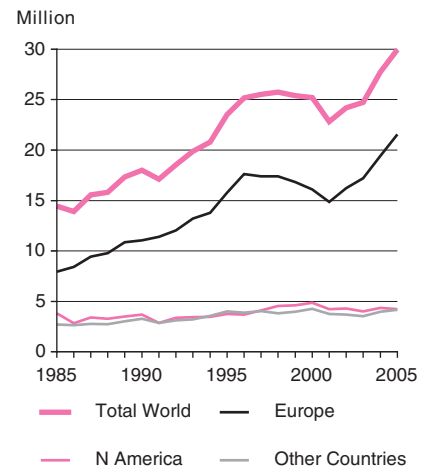


In 2005, residents of North America made 4.2 million visits to the UK. The number of visits from residents of North America was 3 per cent down on the previous year, and still 13 per cent down on the number of visits made in 2000. Up until 2001, visits by North American residents had been steadily increasing in number.

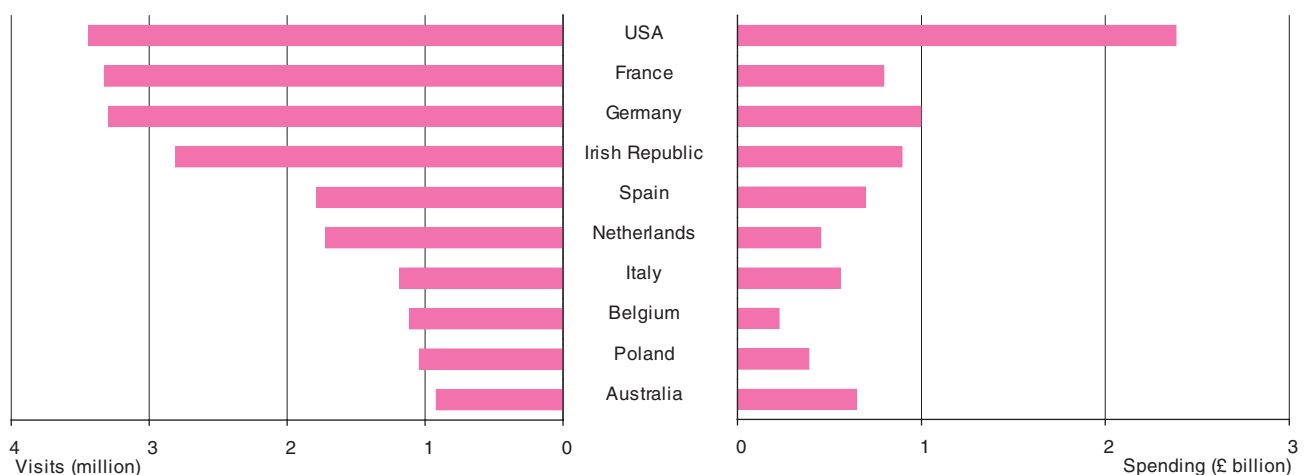
The number of visits from residents of 'Other Countries' increased by five per cent from 4.0 million to 4.2 million. This was lower than in 2000, when the UK received 4.3 million visits from residents of 'Other Countries'.

Among individual countries, residents of the USA continued to account for the largest share of visits to the UK (3.4 million) and to spend the most money (£2.4 billion). The residents of France and Germany made the second and third largest numbers of visits to the UK (3.32 million and 3.29 million visits respectively). Of the 1.8 million visits made to the UK by residents of Spain, 31 per cent were by travellers holding a UK passport.

Overseas residents' visits to the UK by region of residence



Overseas residents  
Visits and spending for the top 10 visiting countries



## Visits by residents of new member countries of the European Union

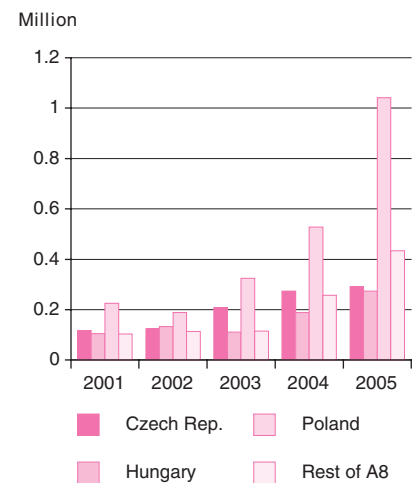
There has also been a marked rise in the number of visits from those countries which became full members of the European Union on 1 May 2004. Between 2001 and 2005 visits from residents of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic have shown average annual growth of 47 per cent, 27 per cent and 26 per cent respectively. Between 2004 and 2005, the number of visits by residents of Poland to the UK increased by 513 thousand visits. This was the largest increase in absolute numbers for any country. As a result Poland appeared in the 'top 10' countries with most visits to the UK (as illustrated at the bottom of page 2)) for the first time in 2005.

### Spending per visit

In 2005, overseas residents spent an average of eight nights in the UK and spent an average of £57 per day. This resulted in an average spend per visit of £471. The average spending per visit by overseas residents varied according to their country of residence, purpose of visit and length of stay.

Residents of Pakistan had the highest average spend per visit for an individual country, of £1,697. Visits from Belgian residents had the lowest average spend per visit, of £203, although their daily spending (£72) was higher than the average of £52 for residents of Europe. The low spend per visit by Belgian residents reflected the length of their stays, just 3 nights on average.

Overseas residents' visits to the UK from new EU member states



## Length of stay

The majority of trips to the UK were either short trips lasting one to three nights (43 per cent) or longer stays of between four and 13 nights (37 per cent). The number of short trips made to the UK increased by 39 per cent over the last five years to 12.8 million in 2005, while those between four and 13 nights increased by 31 per cent to 11.2 million.

## Area of stay in the UK

London remained the most popular city for overseas visitors. Just over half of all visits to the UK that included an overnight stay (25.3 million) involved at least one night in the capital (13.9 million visits). These stays had spending of £6.9 billion associated with them.

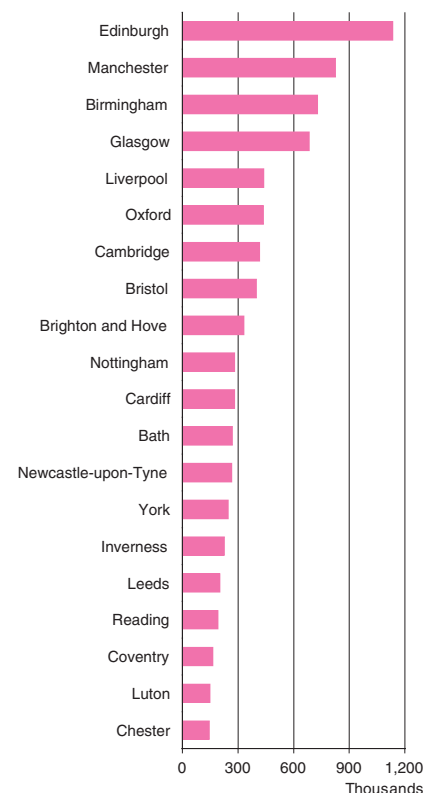
The most popular place outside of London to stay overnight was Edinburgh (1.0 million visits), followed by Manchester (0.8 million) and Birmingham (0.7 million).

## Impact of London bombings on overseas visitor numbers

On 7 July 2005 there were bombings in London, followed by failed attempts two weeks later. When compared with the previous year, there were high growth rates in visits to the UK in the first two quarters of 2005 (Quarter 1, 13 per cent and quarter 2, 12 per cent) but this fell to 4.2 per cent and 4.3 per cent in quarters 3 and 4.

For visits to London involving an overnight stay, there were falls of 3.7 per cent in quarter 3 and 1.2 per cent in quarter 4. This compared with increases of 13 per cent and 10 per cent in quarters 1 and 2 respectively.

**Overseas residents**  
Top towns visited (excluding London)  
by number of overnight visits 2005



Whereas the number of visits by North American residents to the UK fell during quarters 1 and 2 by more than 5 per cent, there was virtually no change in quarter 3 and an increase in quarter 4.

During quarter 3, the number of visits to London by residents of Europe and Other Countries fell by 4.6 per cent and 4.9 per cent respectively when compared with the previous year.

### UK residents' visits abroad

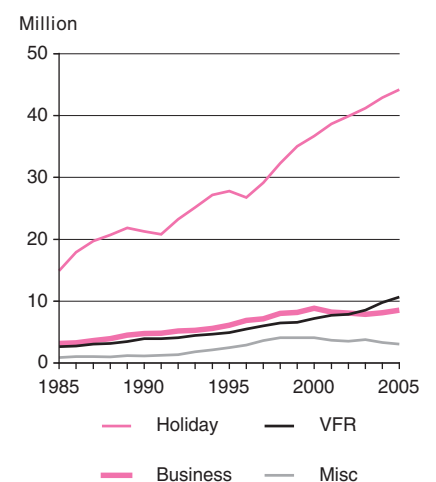
In 2005, UK residents made a record 66.4 million visits abroad, up by four per cent on the number of visits made in 2004. They spent a record £32.2 billion on these visits, £1.9 billion (six per cent) more than in 2004.

### Purpose of visit

Holidays were the most popular reason for UK residents to go abroad. In 2004, two-thirds of visits made by UK residents were to go on holiday, with a record 44.2 million holidays taken. Just under half (43 per cent) of these were package holidays. Over the five-year period from 2001 to 2005, holidays showed very strong growth, increasing by an average of three per cent each year.

Business trips and visits to friends or relatives were the next most popular reasons for going abroad. In 2005, UK residents made 8.6 million business trips and 10.6 million visits to friends or relatives abroad. There was a five per cent

UK residents  
Visits abroad by purpose of visit



increase in the number of business visits between 2004 and 2005. Visits to friends or relatives have risen each year between 2001 and 2005, with a 9 per cent increase between 2004 and 2005.

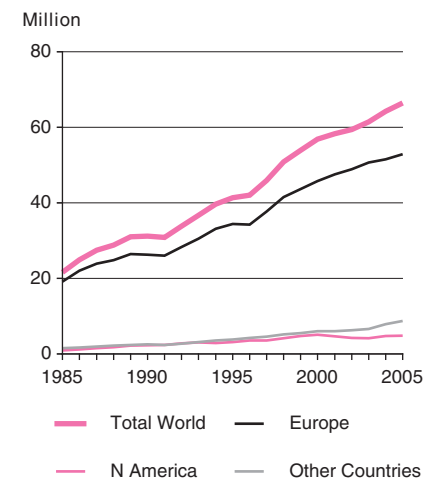
Visits abroad by UK residents for miscellaneous reasons (such as shopping, study and medical visits) fell to 3.1 million in 2005, an eight per cent decrease since 2004, and the lowest level since 1996.

### Country of visit

Four-fifths of all visits abroad made by UK residents were to Europe and these accounted for 63 per cent (£20.3 billion) of all spending overseas. In contrast, only seven per cent of UK residents' visits abroad were to North America although these accounted for 13 per cent of total spending overseas. While visits to all other regions of the world generally increased every year in the five years since 2001, the number of visits to North America declined each year until 2004. Between 2004 and 2005 they rose by two per cent to 4.9 million.

Spain and France were the most popular countries visited by UK residents, with 13.8 million and 11.1 million visits respectively. Together, these two countries accounted for 38 per cent of all visits abroad by UK residents. As in previous years, nine out of the ten most popular countries UK residents visited in 2005 were in Europe. The exception was the USA.

UK residents' visits abroad  
region of visit



Although the majority of spending overseas by UK residents occurred in Europe, the average spend on a trip to North America and other, non-European countries was higher. The region where average spend per visit was highest was in 'Other Countries' (£877) and North America (£865) and lowest in Europe (£383). In part, this reflected the longer stays of visits to North America and 'Other Countries', 14 nights and 22 nights compared with eight nights in Europe.

In 2005, UK residents spent the most in Spain (£5.8 billion), followed by the USA (£3.7 billion) and France (£3.6 billion).

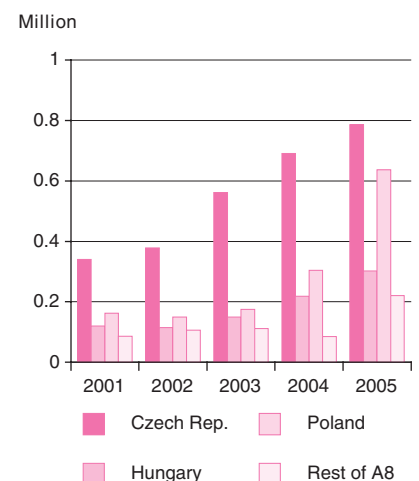
Visits to new European Union member countries have also seen growth. Of these, visits to Poland doubled between 2004 and 2005, with Hungary (39 per cent) and the Czech Republic (14 per cent) also experiencing strong increases. Of the UK residents visiting Poland, over half were of Polish nationality.

### Gateways to and from the UK

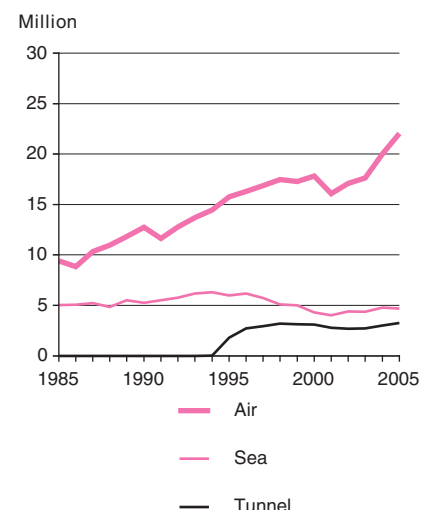
Air travel was the most popular mode of travel for both UK residents travelling abroad and for overseas residents visiting the UK. In 2005, UK residents made a record 53.6 million visits by air, representing almost four-fifths of all visits abroad. Overseas residents made 22.0 million visits to the UK by air (74 per cent of all visits to the UK).

Overall, Channel Tunnel visits accounted for seven per cent of UK residents' visits abroad and 11 per cent of overseas visits

UK residents' visits to the new EU member states by country visited



Overseas residents' visits to the UK by mode of travel

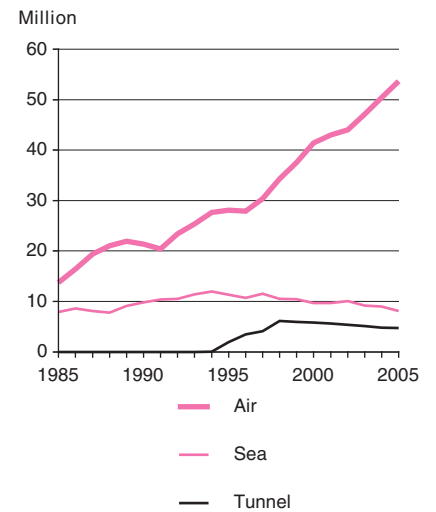


to the UK. Visits by sea accounted for 12 per cent of UK residents' visits abroad and 16 per cent of overseas residents' visits to the UK.

The mode of transport and gateway used varied according to where people were travelling to or from. In general, Heathrow continued to be the most popular gateway for visits to and from the UK. It was the most popular gateway for overseas visitors from every region of the world with 30 per cent of all overseas residents visiting the UK entering through Heathrow. Heathrow also accounted for over a fifth of all visits overseas by UK residents.

Visits to destinations outside Europe by UK residents were almost entirely made by air whereas over a quarter of visits to Europe were made by sea or via the Tunnel. Just under a third of visits to the UK made by residents of Europe were by sea or Channel Tunnel.

UK residents visits abroad by mode of travel



## BACKGROUND NOTES

### 1 How the information is collected.

The International Passenger Survey (IPS) is a continuous survey carried out at major air and sea ports in the UK, and from 1994 the Channel Tunnel. It has been running since 1961 and is carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

About 276,000 interviews were conducted in 2005 with a response rate of 83 per cent. All the interviews were carried out on a voluntary and anonymous basis.

### 2 What information is collected?

The IPS database has over 110 variables relating to a wide range of subjects which for 2005 included: numbers of visits, expenditure, length of stay, age group and sex, country of visit (or of residence), nationality, purpose of the visit, mode of transport used, UK port used, overseas ports used, fares and regions stayed in the UK by overseas residents.

For the first time in 1999, IPS interviews were carried out on air and sea routes between the UK and the Irish Republic, therefore care should be taken when comparing results from 1999 to 2005 with earlier years.

3 Why the information is collected.

The main purposes of the IPS are to collect information:

- i) on expenditure into and from the UK for the travel account of the balance of payments;
- ii) for tourism policy; and
- iii) on international migration.

5 Is more IPS information available?

In addition to Travel Trends, IPS results are issued monthly in a National Statistics First Release, and in the quarterly publication entitled MQ6 Transport Travel and Tourism which are available on the National Statistics website:

[www.statistics.gov.uk/ips/](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ips/).

For those wishing to make other analyses of the IPS data, a companion product, a data set entitled Travepac, covering the period 1993 to 2005, is available on the National Statistics web site.

6 Details of the National Statistics policy governing the release of new data are available from the Press Office.

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