

Foreign tourism to the US drops sharply

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 15 September, 2025



Dhaka: The U.S. tourism industry is grappling with a sharp decline in international visitors this summer, with spending down 7pc, amounting to a \$12.5 billion loss, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC).

New data from Tourism Economics and the U.S. Travel Association points to a 9.4pc drop in arrivals versus pre-pandemic levels.

Key Drivers of the Downturn

Visa & Entry Costs: The newly introduced \$250 “visa integrity fee” and stricter immigration checks have deterred travelers from non-visa waiver countries, particularly in Africa and the Middle East.

Political Tone: International perception of the U.S. has soured, with rhetoric from U.S. officials raising concerns among would-be tourists.

Strong U.S. Dollar: Oxford Economics notes the dollar's strength is making trips to the U.S. more expensive, especially for European and Asian travelers.

Most Affected Regions

Canada: Road crossings down 37pc, flights down 26pc in July 2025. Canadians now less likely to visit the U.S.—a reversal not seen since before the pandemic.

Europe: Visitor numbers down 19% from Denmark, 10pc from Germany, and 6.6% from France.

Asia & Africa: Double-digit drops from countries including Hong Kong, the Philippines, and several African nations.

Economic Consequences

Revenue Loss: Canada's decline alone could cost \$2.1 billion annually and over 14,000 jobs.

Urban Impact: Cities like New York and D.C. are seeing reduced hotel demand and visitor traffic.

Cultural Fallout: Museums, events, and public programs are scaling back due to falling attendance.

Domestic Tourism: A Partial Buffer

Domestic travel remains stable, with a 2pc rise in air traffic and strong bookings over Labor Day weekend. However, it falls short of offsetting the higher spending power of international tourists.

Responses & Remedies

Targeted Marketing: Cities like Washington, D.C. and Buffalo are promoting local tourism to U.S. residents.

Policy Advocacy: Industry bodies like the WTTC are calling for visa reforms and more welcoming messaging.

Strategic Shifts: Businesses are refocusing efforts on domestic markets as foreign demand wanes.

Outlook

Unless addressed, the international tourism slump threatens long-term recovery. Experts stress the need for more open policies, cost relief, and a global effort to rebuild the U.S.'s image as a top travel destination.

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