

Overseas Travel and Tourism, July 2012



Coverage: UK

Date: 13 September 2012

Geographical Area: Region

Theme: People and Places

Key Points

- Overseas residents completed an estimated 3.2 million visits to the UK in July 2012, a fall of 5 per cent compared with a year earlier. Earnings of £2.0 billion from these visits were down 6 per cent.
- Despite the falls in July, visits and earnings in 2012 to date are both 1 per cent higher than in 2011.
- UK residents completed an estimated 5.7 million visits abroad in July 2012, broadly the same number as in July 2011. The number of visits abroad in 2012 to date is unchanged from 2011.
- UK residents have spent more on their visits abroad in 2012, a total of £17.9 billion year to date which is an increase of 3 per cent compared with 2011.
- The London Olympics opened on 27 July and closed on 12 August. Most visits to the UK for the Olympics will have been completed in August and will therefore not be reflected in this July publication.

Key Figures and Trends

Key Visit and Spending Estimates for Overseas Residents' Visits to UK in 2012

	Overseas residents' visits to UK			
	Visits (thousands)	% change from year earlier	Earnings (£ million)	% change from year earlier
Non seasonally adjusted				
July 2012	3,180	-5	2,010	-6
Year to date 2012	17,930	+1	9,825	+1
Seasonally adjusted				
January	2,620	+7	1,480	+9
February	2,480	0	1,460	+1
March	2,590	-2	1,470	-3
April	2,890	+10	1,560	+11
May	2,700	+8	1,550	+4
June	2,380	-10	1,450	-6
July	2,480	-6	1,470	-8

Table source: Office for National Statistics

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Key Visit and Spending Estimates for UK Residents' Visits Abroad in 2012

	UK residents' visits abroad			
	Visits (thousands)	% change from year earlier	Earnings (£ million)	% change from year earlier
Non seasonally adjusted				
July 2012	5,750	0	3,560	+4
Year to date 2012	31,700	0	17,900	+3
Seasonally adjusted				
January	4,360	-7	2,460	-4
February	4,730	+2	2,580	+1
March	4,700	-1	2,620	+2
April	4,850	+2	2,750	+7
May	4,670	-10	2,720	-4
June	5,040	+8	2,750	+5
July	4,730	+1	2,750	+6

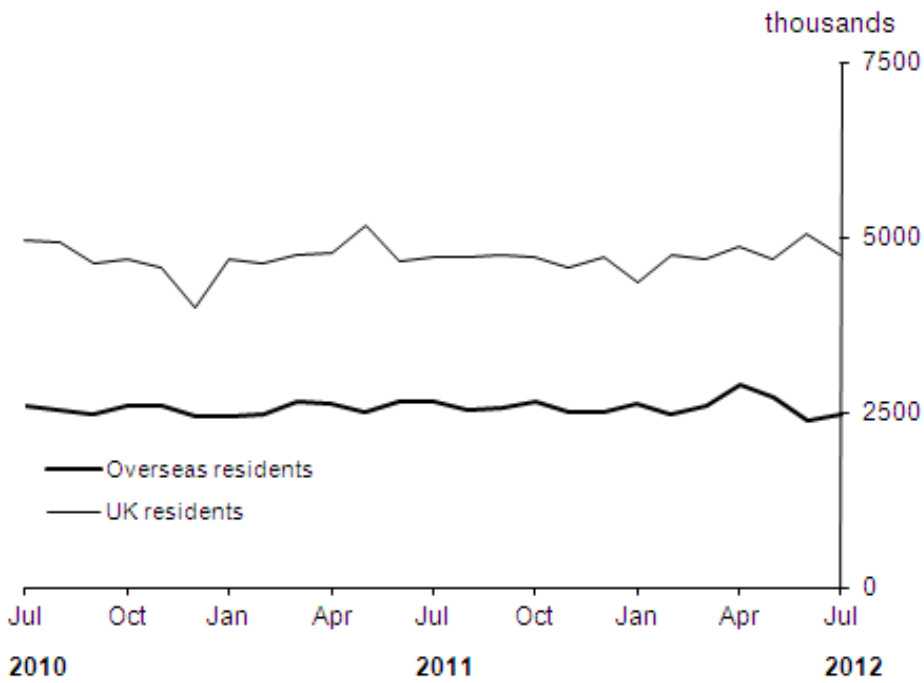
Table source: Office for National Statistics

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Overseas residents' visits to the UK and UK residents' visits abroad (seasonally adjusted)



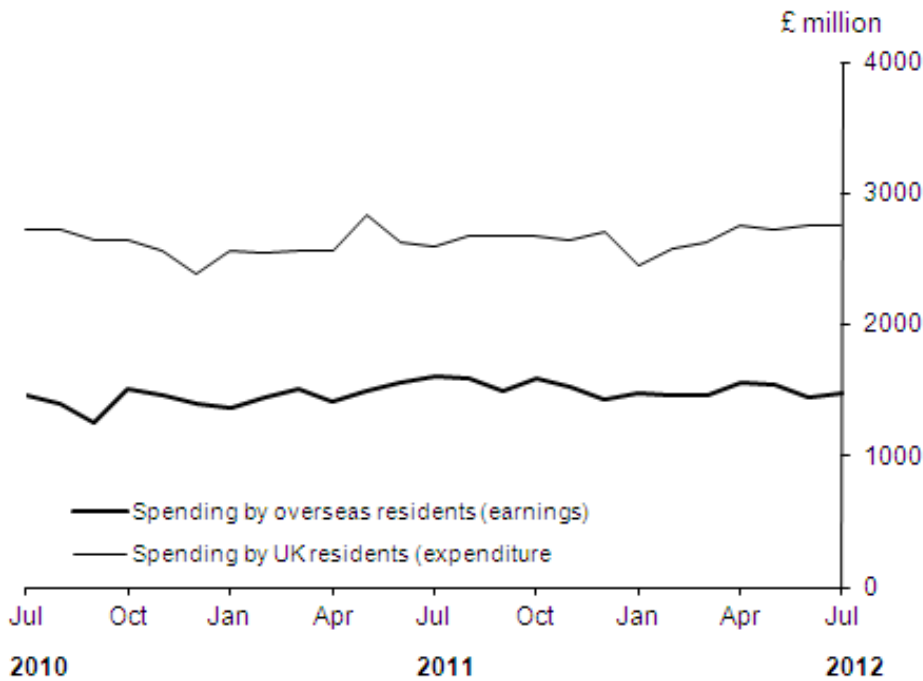
Source: International Passenger Survey (IPS) - Office for National Statistics

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Spending by overseas residents in the UK and spending by UK residents overseas by month (seasonally adjusted)



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

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About this release

The Overseas Travel and Tourism estimates contained in this publication relate to international visits of less than 12 months to and from the UK, and earnings and expenditure associated with these visits.

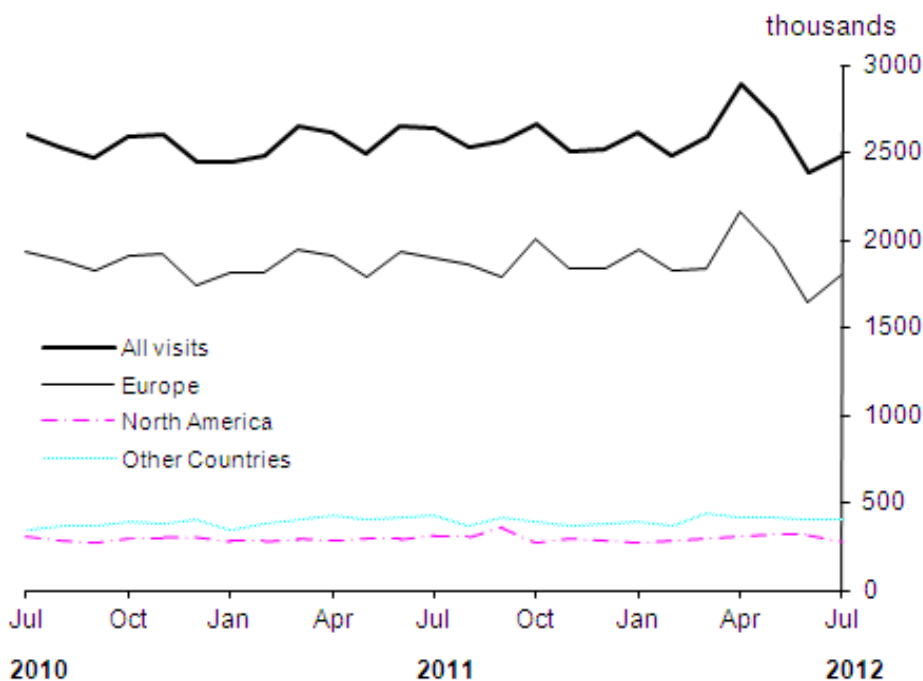
The estimates are provided as early indicators of latest monthly trends, analysed at broad region of the world and purpose of visit level. They are derived from responses collected on the International Passenger Survey (IPS) conducted by the Office for National Statistics. Details of the survey and the IPS quality report can be found here, [IPS methodology](#).

The ONS has published a [Special Events Policy](#) with an associated [calendar of special events](#). Reference to this calendar of special events may help users in interpreting estimates included in this Statistical Bulletin.

Visits to the UK by Overseas Residents (Reference tables 1,2,3,6)

- Visits to the UK by overseas residents fell by 5 per cent in July compared with a year earlier. Earnings from these visits fell 6 per cent.
- The recent fall in visit numbers follows a period of growth in early 2012. For 2012 to date both the number of visits to the UK and earnings from these visits are up 1 per cent.
- Visits to friends or relatives are the main growth area in 2012, up 4 per cent to 5.1 million visits in 2012 to date. Business visits have risen by 1 per cent (to 4.3 million) and holidays are unchanged (at 7.0 million).
- Visits from each of North America, Europe and other countries have all either remained unchanged in 2012 or increased by a small percentage.

Overseas residents' visits to the UK by month (seasonally adjusted)



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

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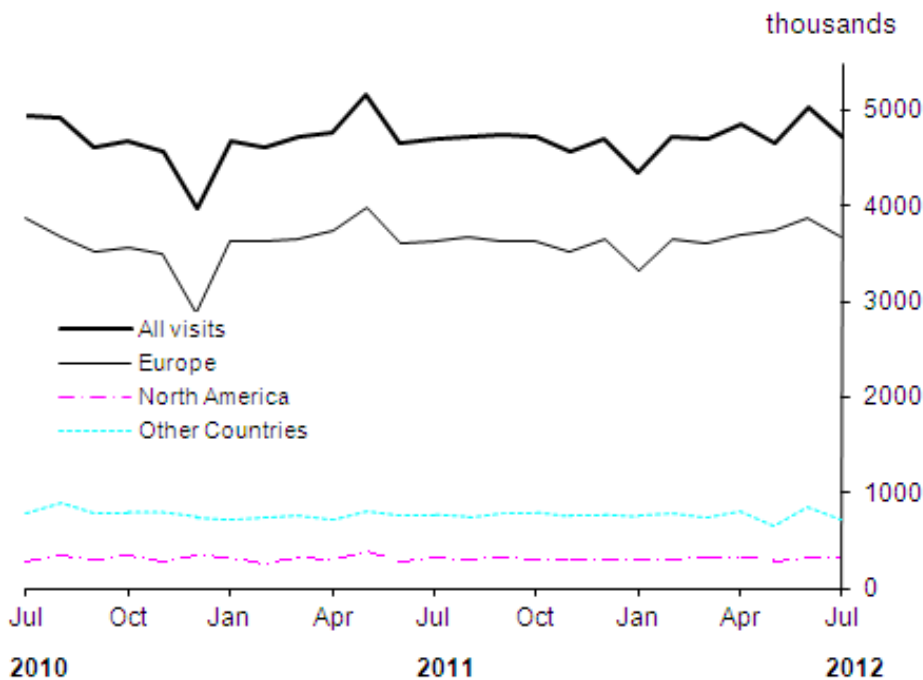
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Visits abroad by UK Residents (Reference tables 1,4,5,6)

- The number of visits abroad by UK residents is generally stable. The estimate of 5.7 million visits in July is in line with the figure in July 2011, and there is no change in number of visits both in the past three months and year to date compared with the same periods in 2011. Expenditure on these visits has increased, up 3 per cent in 2012 to date.
- There are some changes in number of visits by purpose. UK residents have taken less holidays in 2012 (down 2 per cent compared with 2011) but have completed more business visits and visits to friends or relatives (up 3 and 2 per cent respectively).
- The number of visits to different regions of the world is broadly stable in 2012.

UK residents' visits abroad by month (seasonally adjusted)



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

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Overseas Travel and Tourism and the Olympics

The London 2012 Olympic Games opened on 27 July and closed on 12 August. Most visits to the UK for the Olympics will have been completed in August meaning that they will not have been recorded in this July 2012 Statistical Bulletin. The Overseas Travel and Tourism August Statistical Bulletin will include estimates of visits to the Olympics.

Although the IPS is not designed to produce estimates of visits or earnings/expenditure relating to an individual event, the importance of London 2012 drove a decision to revise the sampling design of IPS in early August 2012 to enable estimates of visits to the UK for the Olympics to be produced. The revision involved increased coverage at ports in the South East of England. This decision received backing from IPS data users such as Department for Culture Media and Sport and Visit Britain who also part sponsored the inclusion of some Olympics-based questions asked to overseas residents at the end of their visit to the UK.

The IPS is a multi-purpose survey and actions have been taken to ensure that the revision to sampling design will not impact on the accuracy of other IPS-based estimates.

Other Overseas Travel and Tourism releases

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

- [Overseas Travel and Tourism Quarterly](#), latest publication Quarter 1 2012 published July 2012; next release Quarter 2 2012 to be published 11 October 2012. This publication provides more detailed analysis of visits and spending, isolating aspects such as countries of visit, mode of travel used, nationality of visitors, regions of the UK visited.
- [Travel Trends](#), latest publication Travel Trends 2011 published July 2012, next publication Travel Trends 2012 to be published July 2013. 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 key variables. The datasets are provided in spss and Excel.

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 to ONS.

Reference Tables Definitions

Abbreviations used in the tables:

NA ...not available

SA ...seasonally adjusted

NSA ...not seasonally adjusted

† ...point of earliest revision

1 ...estimate (rounded to nearest 10,000 visits or £5 million)

Geographical areas:

- North America:

Canada (including Greenland and St Pierre et Miquelon), USA (including Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands).

- Europe:

All countries listed under EU27 plus other central & Eastern Europe, North Cyprus, Gibraltar, Iceland (including Faroe Islands), Norway, Switzerland (including Liechtenstein), Turkey, the former USSR and the states of former Yugoslavia

- EU15:

Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France (including Monaco), Finland, Germany, Greece, Irish Republic, 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.

- EU25:

As for EU15 plus, Cyprus*, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

- EU27:

As for EU25 plus, Bulgaria and Romania.

- A12:

All countries included in EU27 but not included in EU15.

*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 EU27 section until May 2004. From May 2004, only southern Cyprus is included in the EU27 figures.

Background notes

1. The estimates contained in this publication focus on travel and tourism with analysis based on visits (for any purpose) of less than 12 months duration by:
 - a) overseas residents to the UK, and
 - b) UK residents abroad

Estimates of the number and profile of visits to the UK by overseas residents are drawn from interviews conducted on the International Passenger Survey (IPS) with overseas residents as they leave the UK at the end of their visit. Visits abroad by UK residents are drawn from interviews conducted UK residents as they return to the UK at the end of their visit abroad. In the case of UK residents, if more than one country was visited on a trip, the country recorded as

visited in ONS's Overseas Travel and Tourism publications is the country that was visited for the longest period.

Note that, although data by the *International Passenger Survey (IPS)* also feeds into the calculation of migration statistics, this report does not provide any information relating to International migration.

2. Figures for the most recent months are provisional and subject to revision in light of (a) more accurate data on passenger figures becoming available at the end of each quarter and (b) additional passenger data obtained at the end of each year.
3. 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 model used to produce seasonal adjustment estimates is reviewed by ONS approximately every two 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 publication. Since the July 2010 publication, seasonal adjustment analysis has been undertaken using X-12-ARIMA. Details of the seasonal adjustment model can be requested from the IPS team using the statistical contact details listed at the end of these notes.

4. The estimates produced from the IPS are subject to sampling errors that result because not every traveler to 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 its sampling error. The survey sample size is approximately 70,000 per quarter.

ONS publishes both standard errors and confidence intervals relating to quarterly figures in its publication [Quarterly Overseas Travel and Tourism](#) under the heading, 'Accuracy of IPS Estimates'.

The relative confidence interval associated with three-monthly estimates is approximately 5 per cent for visits to the UK and 3 per cent for visits abroad. Confidence intervals for 12-monthly estimates are approximately 2 per cent and 1.2 per cent respectively.

5. One indication of the reliability of the key indicators in this release can be obtained by monitoring the size of revisions. The table below records the size and pattern of revisions which have occurred over the last five years to the following key 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) and
 - Expenditure abroad by UK residents (GMBB)

Revisions over the last five years


	Value in the latest period (2012 Q2)	Revisions between first publications and estimates three years later	
		Averages over the last five years (bias)	Average over the last five years without regard to sign (average absolute revision)
GMAT	7,960	36.50	158.50
GMAX	14,270	155	304
GMAZ	4,480	*76.25	*121.75
GMBB	7,960	*176	*179

Table source: Office for National Statistics

Table notes:

1. Units: GMAT and GMAX in thousands, GMAZ and GMBB in £million.
2. A statistical test has been applied to find out if the mean revision to each key indicator is statistically different from zero. An asterisk (*) indicates where the mean revision has been significantly different from zero.

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Spreadsheets giving revisions triangles (real time databases) of estimates for the period illustrated in the table, and calculations behind the averages shown, are available in the data section of this publication.

Please note that all estimates, including revised estimates, are based on a sample survey and are therefore subject to sampling and other sources of error. Further information on the [ONS revisions policy](#).

6. Constituent items in the tables may not add exactly to totals due to rounding.
7. The information provided to the ONS 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.
8. Queens Diamond Jubilee

As part of the celebrations for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee there were changes to bank holidays in May and June 2012. The late May bank holiday moved into June, and there was an additional day's holiday. The change to the holidays counted as a statistical special event in line

with ONS's policy on [Special Events](#). Caution should be taken when interpreting the movements in affected outputs that involve May and June 2012.

Olympics and Paralympics

The Olympics took place from 27 July to 12 August (with a few events starting on 25 July). The Paralympics began on 29 August and continued to 9 September. For most economic statistics, any direct effect of the Olympics will be mainly seen in August estimates. Some July estimates may also be effected, particularly:

- changes to travel patterns
- additional short term-employment connected with the Olympics
- inclusion of a proportion of ticket receipts in output and overseas trade

Wider effects, for example if the presence of the Olympics has influenced the number of non-Olympics tourist visits, may of course affect any of the summer months.

This commentary is intended to help users to interpret the statistics in the light of events. As explained in ONS's [Special Events policy](#), it is not possible to make an estimate of the effect of the Olympics and Paralympics on particular series only on the basis of information collected in those series. More details of how certain series are affected are in an [Information Note](#), and an article explaining how various elements are reflected in the [National Accounts](#) was published in July 2012.

9. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.
10. Next publication: 11 October 2012

General IPS queries:

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

E-mail socialsurveys@ons.gsi.gov.uk

11. 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

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