

More Than 25 Million Americans Will Travel Overseas This Summer, Says AAA's New International Forecast

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In a first-ever summer forecast for foreign travel, AAA expects 25.1 million Americans will be travelling internationally this summer, an increase of 2.6 percent over the 24.5 million who were estimated to have traveled overseas last summer. The report includes all travel outside of the United States, including Canada and Mexico.

According to the report, which was produced by Global Insight, American travelers will be spending \$30.7 billion while traveling internationally during the months of June, July and August. American spending overseas will increase by 5.7 percent, primarily due to inflation and the weakness of the U.S. dollar compared to several major currencies.

"Americans are working harder and longer than ever, and they feel their vacation is a benefit that they have earned," said Betsy Sell, Managing Director of Travel for AAA. "Foreign travel is still the ideal trip for many Americans, and summer is the prime season to go. So, Americans will rearrange their budgets and postpone some trips, but they are still interested in traveling abroad."

China and India are expected to see the largest increases in travel from the U.S. this summer, with China expected to see a 13.4 percent increase (573,000 American travelers) and India up 13.1 percent (227,000 American travelers). Travel to Canada and Mexico this summer is expected to be similar to last year, with Canada expecting to see a slight drop of 0.8 percent (5 million American travelers) and Mexico likely increasing by 1.3 percent (5.8 million American travelers).

Many of the other destinations that are expected to see big increases this summer are in Europe. Travel from the U.S. to France is expected to be up 6.7 percent (1.1 million American travelers), Ireland up 6.6 percent (337,000 American travelers), Italy up 4.7 percent (1.6 million American travelers) and Germany up 4.4 percent (724,000 American travelers). These increases are consistent with AAA's own bookings, which show a 5 percent increase in tours to Europe.

Americans traveling overseas will be spending more this summer due to global inflation and the weaker U.S. dollar. The report estimates that Americans will be spending 5.7 percent more than they did last summer and international spending by U.S. travelers will reach \$30.7 billion. Canada and Mexico will see the largest amount of traveler spending, with American travelers planning to spend \$5.6 billion in Mexico and \$4 billion in Canada. The next highest destinations for traveler spending are expected to be Italy (\$2.6 billion), the United Kingdom (\$2.0 billion), France (\$1.7 billion), Germany (\$1.2 billion) and Hong Kong (\$645 million).

"The potential for Americans to travel overseas is enormous," said Sell. "Americans love to travel and they have lost their anxiety about traveling internationally. Now, with more Americans required to get passports as part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), we are going to have more people looking to explore other parts of the world this summer."

The Global Insight report is based on an economic model that includes data about the state of the U.S. economy, domestic spending, foreign exchange rates, historic travel data, travel inflation and other factors. It is the first forecast that looks at the number of Americans who will travel overseas during summer, the heaviest travel period of the year.

The report also provides a forecast for the number of U.S. residents travelling outside the country broken down by census region and the top 15 states of origin. To see the full report, log on to AAA.com/news.

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