



World Tourism Barometer

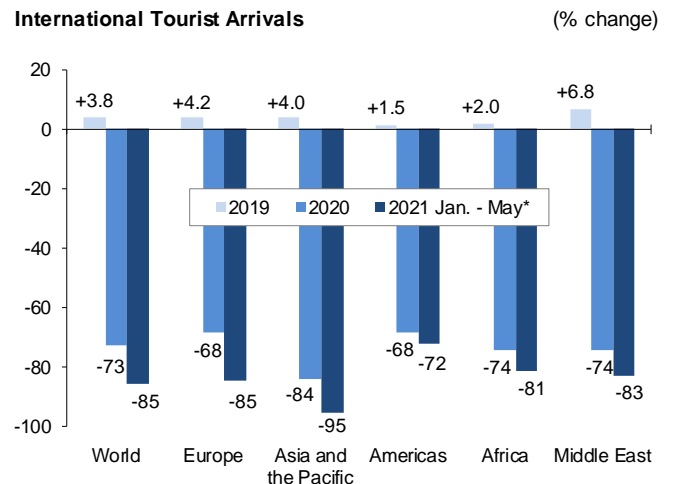
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International travel largely on hold despite uptick in May 2021

- International tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) dropped by 85% in January-May 2021 compared to the same period of pre-pandemic year 2019, or 65% over 2020, as travel restrictions remained high due to the coronavirus pandemic. This follows an unprecedented drop of 73% in 2020, the worst year on record for international tourism.
- This sharp decline represents a loss of some 147 million international arrivals compared to the same five months of 2020, or 460 million compared to 2019.
- By regions, Asia and the Pacific continued to suffer the largest decline with a 95% drop in international arrivals in the first five months of 2021 over the same period in 2019. Europe (-85%) recorded the second largest decline in arrivals, followed by the Middle East (-83%) and Africa (-81%). The Americas (-72%) saw a comparatively smaller decrease.
- Despite the weak results, international tourism saw a minor uptick in May 2021 with arrivals declining by 82% (versus May 2019), after falling by 86% in April, as some destinations started to ease travel restrictions and consumer confidence rose slightly.
- After an estimated 64% plunge in international tourism receipts in 2020, destinations continued to report very weak revenues in the first five months of 2021, ranging from 50% to 90% declines compared to 2019. However, several countries recorded a small uptick in the month of May following a minor improvement in international arrivals.
- In terms of outbound travel among the top 20 source markets, Saudi Arabia (-42%) and Belgium (-46%) saw relatively better results in January-May 2021, as

well as the Republic of Korea, Malaysia and Switzerland, all recording 50% declines in international tourism expenditure compared to the same period in 2019. France is also worth noting, with -54% in expenditure compared to 2019.

- International travel is slowly picking up from very low levels, though the recovery remains fragile and uneven amid much uncertainty. Domestic travel is driving the recovery of tourism in several destinations, especially those with large domestic markets. Domestic air seat capacity in China and Russia has already exceeded pre-crisis levels.
- Along with the ongoing vaccination roll-out, the safe and responsible restart of tourism will continue to depend on a coordinated response among countries regarding travel restrictions, harmonized safety protocols and effective communication to help restore consumer confidence.



Source: UNWTO

* Provisional data (% change over 2019)



The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the United Nations specialized agency mandated with the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.

UNWTO's membership includes 159 countries, 6 Associate Members, two Permanent Observers, and over 500 Affiliate Members representing the private sector, educational institutions, tourism associations and local tourism authorities.

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About the *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer*

The *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer* is a publication of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) that monitors short-term tourism trends on a regular basis to provide global tourism stakeholders with up-to-date analysis on international tourism.

The information is updated several times a year and includes an analysis of the latest data on tourism destinations (inbound tourism) and source markets (outbound tourism). The Barometer also includes three times a year a Confidence Index based on the UNWTO Panel of Tourism Experts survey, which provides an evaluation of recent performance and short-term prospects on international tourism.

The UNWTO Secretariat wishes to express its gratitude to those who have contributed to the production of this *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer*, in particular to institutions that supplied data, and to the members of the UNWTO Panel of Tourism Experts for their valuable feedback and analysis.

This report was prepared by the **UNWTO Tourism Market Intelligence and Competitiveness Department**, under the supervision of Sandra Carvão, Chief of the Department. Authors include (in alphabetical order): Fernando Alonso, Michel Julian, and Javier Ruescas.

For more information including copies of previous issues, please visit: www.e-unwto.org/loi/wtobarometereng.

We welcome your comments and suggestions at barom@unwto.org.

Data collection for this issue was closed mid-July 2021.

The next issue of the *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer* with more comprehensive results is scheduled to be published in September 2021.

Pages 1-4 of this document constitute the Excerpt of the *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer*. The full document is available free of charge for UNWTO Members and subscribers from the UNWTO eLibrary at www.e-unwto.org. This release is available in English, while the Statistical Annex is provided in English, French, Spanish and Russian.

Inbound tourism

International tourism down 85% in January-May 2021

- International tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) dropped by 85% in January-May 2021 compared to the same period of pre-pandemic year 2019¹, or 65% compared to 2020, as travel restrictions remained high due to the coronavirus pandemic. This follows an unprecedented drop of 73% in 2020, the worst year on record for international tourism.
- This sharp decline represents a loss of some 147 million international arrivals compared to the same five months of 2020, or 460 million compared to 2019.
- By regions, Asia and the Pacific continued to suffer the largest decline with a 95% drop in international arrivals in the first five months of 2021 over the same period in 2019. Europe (-85%) recorded the second largest decline in arrivals, followed by the Middle East (-83%) and Africa (-81%). The Americas (-72%) saw a comparatively smaller decrease.
- Despite the weak results, international tourism saw a minor uptick in May 2021 as some destinations started to ease travel restrictions and consumer confidence rose slightly. Arrivals declined by 82% (versus May 2019), after falling by 86% in April. The month of April saw little improvement, reflecting limited cross-border travel during the Easter period in most destinations.
- In May 2021, the number of completely closed destinations decreased to 63 (representing 25% of world arrivals) from 69 (34%) in February. Asia and the Pacific remains the region with the largest number of closed destinations (33, representing 65% of world arrivals), while Europe has the lowest with 7 (8%).
- By subregions, the Caribbean (-60% over 2019) recorded the best relative performance in January-May 2021. Growing travel from the United States has benefitted destinations in the Caribbean and Central America, as well as Mexico. Western Europe, Southern and Mediterranean Europe, South America and Central America all saw slightly better results in May than in April, though most world subregions recorded decreases of 80% to nearly 100% in the first five months of 2021.
- Only a small number of destinations saw decreases below 40% in May 2021, among which Mexico, El Salvador, Albania and island destinations Saint Maarten, Dominican Republic, Aruba, Seychelles and Maldives.
- When compared to 2020, April and May 2021 saw triple-digit growth in international tourist arrivals, given the extraordinarily low levels recorded last year. As international tourism came to a nearly complete halt in April and May 2020 due to widespread lockdowns and restrictions, year-on-year percentage changes in April and May 2021 are unusually high.

Minor improvement of international tourism receipts in May

- After an estimated 64% plunge in international tourism receipts in 2020, destinations continued to report very weak revenues in the first five months of 2021, ranging from 50% to 90% declines compared to 2019. However, several countries recorded a small uptick in the month of May following a minor improvement in international arrivals.
- In terms of outbound travel among the top 20 source markets, Saudi Arabia (-42%) and Belgium (-46%) saw the relatively best results in January-May 2021, despite the low levels. Other relatively good performers were the Republic of Korea, Malaysia and Switzerland, all recording 50% declines in international tourism expenditure compared to the same period in 2019. France is also worth noting, with a decrease of 54% in expenditure compared to 2019.
- Domestic travel is driving the recovery of tourism in several destinations, especially those with large domestic markets. Domestic air seat capacity in China and Russia has already exceeded pre-crisis levels.

¹ Due to the unprecedented and large pandemic-driven declines suffered by international tourism in 2020, comparisons are made

with the corresponding time period of pre-crisis year 2019 unless otherwise indicated.

International Tourist Arrivals by (Sub)region

	Monthly/quarterly data series																
	(million)		Share (%)	Change		Percentage change (%)*											
				Change (%)		2021 over 2020					2021 over 2019						
	2019	2020*	2020*	19/18	20/19	YTD	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr. ²	May ²	YTD	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May
World	1,466	399	100	3.8	-72.8	-65.1	-85.8	-86.1	-61.0	331.7	299.0	-85.4	-85.8	-88.1	-86.3	-85.7	-81.7
Advanced economies ¹	777	214	53.6	2.1	-72.5	-70.2	-88.2	-90.1	-68.8	301.7	260.7	-88.4	-88.2	-91.4	-90.4	-89.6	-84.0
Emerging economies ¹	689	185	46.4	5.7	-73.1	-60.5	-83.8	-82.3	-54.8	352.8	344.0	-82.1	-83.6	-85.1	-82.1	-81.4	-78.7
<i>By UNWTO regions:</i>																	
Europe	746.3	235.9	59.1	4.2	-68.4	-63.1	-84.0	-87.0	-66.0	309.4	268.6	-84.7	-83.3	-86.7	-86.8	-86.7	-81.0
Northern Europe	83.7	21.5	5.4	3.3	-74.3	-82.5	-86.9	-92.1	-88.1	113.1	53.8	-92.1	-86.1	-91.8	-94.9	-92.8	-93.5
Western Europe	205.4	79.0	19.8	2.6	-61.5	-70.4	-86.8	-94.1	-76.4	282.0	211.3	-87.2	-86.1	-93.8	-92.3	-88.1	-78.2
Central/Eastern Eur.	153.2	47.2	11.8	4.8	-69.2	-58.3	-80.6	-78.7	-67.3	280.6	274.6	-80.8	-81.0	-79.7	-80.9	-81.9	-80.4
Southern/Medit. Eur.	304.0	88.2	22.1	5.3	-71.0	-52.7	-82.9	-83.9	-45.7	433.5	377.5	-82.7	-81.4	-83.2	-83.1	-86.5	-79.8
- of which EU-27	540.7	178.6	44.8	3.2	-67.0	-67.4	-86.0	-89.0	-69.2	191.6	199.5	-86.7	-85.4	-88.6	-89.3	-89.7	-82.0
Asia and the Pacific	360.4	56.9	14.3	4.0	-84.2	-86.2	-95.6	-94.0	-73.5	392.1	295.9	-95.5	-95.8	-97.1	-95.3	-94.7	-94.5
North-East Asia	170.3	20.2	5.1	0.7	-88.1	-74.5	-94.0	-86.2	-1.4	816.8	485.9	-94.7	-95.1	-97.3	-94.5	-93.4	-93.8
South-East Asia	138.6	25.5	6.4	7.8	-81.6	-94.7	-98.0	-97.3	-92.1	37.8	45.3	-97.8	-97.9	-98.3	-97.8	-97.6	-97.2
Oceania	17.5	3.6	0.9	2.4	-79.4	-93.1	-98.3	-98.6	-96.8	840.7	↑	-96.7	-98.2	-98.9	-98.7	-94.7	-91.4
South Asia	34.0	7.6	1.9	7.5	-77.6	-79.5	-90.2	-90.5	-58.0	↑	755.3	-89.4	-89.6	-90.9	-87.9	-89.4	-88.9
Americas	219.3	69.9	17.5	1.5	-68.1	-46.9	-76.2	-79.2	-45.3	379.3	389.7	-71.9	-76.0	-78.3	-72.3	-69.5	-63.9
North America	146.6	46.7	11.7	3.1	-68.1	-42.1	-71.3	-76.1	-46.5	258.0	255.2	-69.8	-70.4	-75.3	-70.7	-68.8	-65.0
Caribbean	26.3	10.3	2.6	2.0	-60.7	-24.2	-71.4	-71.5	-9.1	↑	↑	-59.8	-70.6	-69.5	-58.2	-52.4	-47.4
Central America	10.9	3.1	0.8	0.8	-71.7	-48.6	-79.5	-81.1	-36.0	955.1	↑	-72.6	-80.0	-79.9	-71.2	-70.0	-58.3
South America	35.4	9.7	2.4	-4.7	-72.6	-79.3	-92.1	-92.5	-79.1	905.4	↑	-88.6	-92.5	-92.3	-91.3	-87.0	-75.1
Africa	70.1	18.1	4.5	2.0	-74.2	-66.2	-81.4	-82.5	-70.6	107.8	105.4	-81.0	-81.3	-82.4	-82.0	-81.1	-78.2
North Africa	25.6	5.5	1.4	6.4	-78.4	-62.4	-79.1	-82.1	-58.0	↑	↑	-82.8	-78.7	-80.5	-85.4	-84.7	-83.7
Subsaharan Africa	44.5	12.5	3.1	-0.3	-71.9	-67.6	-82.4	-82.6	-73.6	48.8	55.4	-80.2	-82.4	-83.3	-80.2	-79.1	-75.3
Middle East	70.0	18.2	4.6	6.8	-74.0	-63.5	-83.6	-83.7	-36.9	↑	↑	-82.6	-82.1	-83.0	-82.0	-84.4	-81.5

Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) ©

(Data as collected by UNWTO, July 2021)

* Provisional data

¹ Classification based on the International Monetary Fund (IMF), see the Statistical Annex of the IMF World Economic Outlook of April 2017, page 175, at www.imf.org/external/ns/cs.aspx?id=29.² Arrows (↑) indicate percentage change over 1000. (See Methodological Notes).

See box in page 'Annex-1' for explanation of abbreviations and symbols used.

For regularly updated data, please check the UNWTO Tourism Recovery Tracker:

<https://www.unwto.org/unwto-tourism-recovery-tracker>

Slight improvement of international air travel in May, while domestic travel strengthens the recovery

- According to **IATA**, total demand for air travel continued to recover in May 2021 (measured in revenue passenger kilometres or RPKs) thanks to the relative strength of domestic travel. Global passenger traffic fell by 63% compared to the same month of pre-crisis year 2019, slightly up from the 65% decrease recorded in April 2021.
- International passenger traffic declined by 87% in January-May 2021 compared to the same period of 2019 (or -71% over 2020). This result was in line with the drop recorded in international tourist arrivals in the same period.
- All regions saw sharp declines in the first five months of 2021. Asia and the Pacific recorded the largest decrease in international RPKs (-95%), followed by Europe (-87%), the Middle East (-82%), Latin America (-80%), North America (-79%) and Africa (-72%).
- The recovery of international air travel demand (-87% RPKs) lagged way behind domestic demand in the first five months of 2021 (-36% RPKs) compared to the same period in 2019
- IATA indicates that international RPKs had been 87%-88% lower than pre-crisis levels since February, weighed down by international travel restrictions in place amid the pandemic. International passenger demand in May 2021 was 85% below May 2019, a small improvement from the 87% decline recorded in April. All regions with the exception of Asia and the Pacific contributed to this modest improvement.
- Africa (-71% RPKs) continued to be the best performing region in May 2021, partly thanks to softer restrictions. International air demand in North America (-74%) improved as the vaccination roll-out gained momentum, while Latin America (-75%) saw better performance. Asia and the Pacific (-95% RPKs) continued to post the largest decline, followed by Europe (-88%) and the Middle East (-82%).
- According to IATA, domestic travel continued to strengthen in May (-24% versus pre-crisis levels). China and Russia were the two large domestic markets that exceeded pre-crisis levels. Domestic traffic strengthened further in the United States May (26% lower than May 2019). Domestic RPKs also showed steeped recovery in May in both Australia

(-31% RPKs) and Brazil (-44%), while results worsened in Japan (-69%) and India (-71%) amid new variants and outbreaks.

- Domestic air capacity (-28%) continued to recover faster than international capacity (-75%) in May 2021 compared to pre-crisis levels, according to ICAO. In May, domestic capacity grew above 2019 levels in Russia (+28%) and China (+13%).
- Data from **ForwardKeys** indicates an 83% drop in international air bookings made between 1 January and 28 May 2021 (versus 2019) for any future travel. By departure region, Asia and the Pacific (-97%) suffered the biggest drop, followed by Europe (-81%). Bookings from the Americas (-69%), as well as Africa and the Middle East (-79%) were comparatively better. The Caribbean and Central America showed encouraging signs of recovery, according to air booking data from those subregions, with global bookings for any future travel 57% and 58% below the same period in 2019 respectively. Strong bookings were recorded from the United States, particularly to Mexico and Caribbean destinations.
- Data from **STR** showed a slight improvement in global hotel occupancy in May when it reached 48%, up from 46% in April. However, performance among regions continued to be mixed. Data for May 2021 shows occupancy in both the Americas (55%) and Asia and the Pacific (54%) above 50%. Occupancy reached 48% in the Middle East, 33% in Africa and the lowest in Europe at 31%. By subregions, North America (58%), North-East Asia and Oceania (both 57%) saw the highest occupancy rates in May. (Data by region are based on STR statistical regions).

Mixed outlook for the remaining of 2021

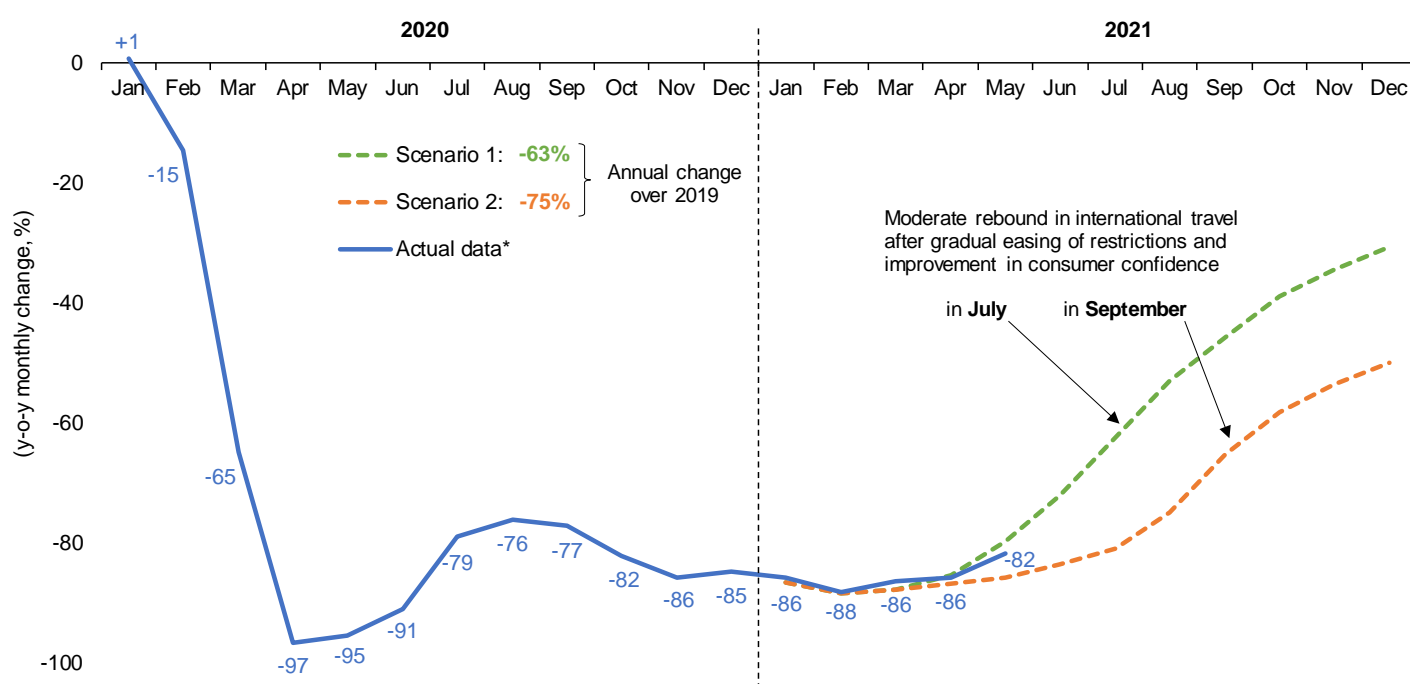
- International tourism is slowly picking up from very low levels, though the recovery remains fragile and uneven amid much uncertainty.
- Some green shoots have emerged such as the re-opening of European Union destinations to safe travel including from top outbound markets the United Kingdom and the United States. Air travel demand continues its moderate recovery and summer bookings to several Mediterranean and Caribbean destinations are on the rise. Domestic tourism continues to rebound in many parts of the world.

- Vaccination programs around the world, together with softer restrictions for vaccinated travellers and the use of digital tools to facilitate safe travel such as the EU Digital COVID Certificate, are all contributing to the gradual normalization of travel.
- Two forward-looking scenarios were outlined in the May issue of the World Tourism Barometer which assumed a gradual re-opening of borders and improvement in traveller confidence in the months of July and September 2021, in line with the increase in vaccination, expected improvement in traveller confidence and better coordination of travel requirements. These scenarios point to 63% and 75% declines in international tourist arrivals respectively in 2021, compared to 2019.
- As of 20 July 2021, almost 27% of the world population had received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine (data from “Our World in Data” contained in the [UNWTO/IATA Destination Tracker](#)). This was particularly high in Europe, with 46% of the population at least partly vaccinated and 57% in the EU. Along with the increase in vaccination and the relaxation of restrictions, many destinations are gradually opening up and data shows a minor improvement in May, with international tourism results currently between Scenario 1 and 2.
- However, rising concerns over the Delta and other variants have led several countries to reimpose

restrictive measures. The Delta variant is spreading rapidly and driving a new spike of cases in different parts of the world.

- Despite the progress made, the pace of vaccination remains uneven among world regions. While 46% of the population in North America and 39% in South America have received at least one dose, this is only 3% in Africa. In Asia (24%), vaccination has also been comparatively slower. Asia and the Pacific remains the region with the highest number of destinations with complete border closures. This includes the world’s largest outbound market, China. In many parts of Asia and the Pacific, tourism was still practically at a standstill in June.
- In addition, the multiple forms and volatility of entry requirements, coupled with the lack of clear communication on ever changing travel restrictions could continue to weigh on the effective resumption of international travel during the Northern Hemisphere summer season.
- Along with the ongoing vaccination roll-out, the safe and responsible restart of tourism will continue to depend on a coordinated response among countries regarding travel restrictions, harmonized safety protocols and effective communication to help restore consumer confidence.

International tourist arrivals in 2020 and Scenarios for 2021 (y-o-y monthly change over 2019, %)



Source: UNWTO * Actual data for 2021 is preliminary and based on estimates for destinations which have not yet reported results.

(Data as of July 2021)

Shifting travel restrictions continue to impact international tourism

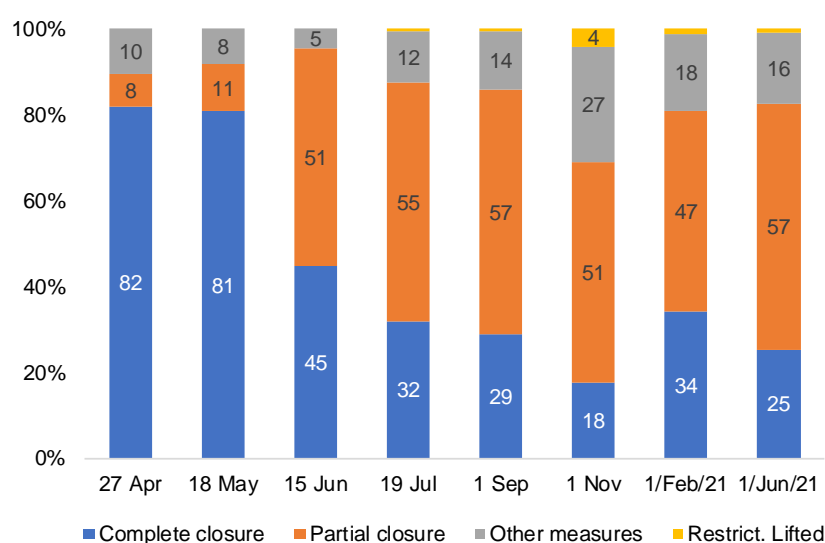
- Global travel restrictions and low traveller confidence have severely impacted tourism since the outbreak of the pandemic in early 2020. International travel came to a nearly complete halt in April and May 2020 as more than 150 destinations around the world closed their borders (see [UNWTO's tenth report on travel restrictions](#)) representing over 80% of the world's international arrivals. Between June and August, tourism numbers improved slightly as some countries reopened, especially in Europe. By September, the number of closed destinations had fallen to 93, equivalent to 29% of global 2019 arrivals².
- However, the resurgence of coronavirus cases at the end of the summer season in the Northern Hemisphere led to stricter restrictions and weaker tourism demand. International arrivals plunged 77% in September and 82% in October 2020. Still, the proportion of closed destinations dropped to 18% by early November, as many countries changed their policy of full shutdowns to partial restrictions, such as compulsory quarantines or travel bans for certain markets.
- Global tourism suffered another setback in the beginning of 2021 as countries tightened travel restrictions in response to new virus strains and increased infections in different parts of the world.

The percentage of closed destinations increased for the first time since the start of the pandemic, rising to 34% in February, from 18% in November 2020. Mandatory quarantines also deterred the awaited resumption of travel. As a result, international arrivals remained 85% below 2019 levels in the period January-May 2021.

Softer restrictions ahead of the Northern Hemisphere summer season

- Starting in May, several European destinations relaxed their travel restrictions ahead of the summer season and the share of closed destinations again dropped, to 25% by the end of May. Despite the very low numbers, international arrivals edged up slightly from -86% in April to -82% in May.
- By regions, only Europe saw a decline in closed destinations, from 28% in February to 8% in late May, as European policymakers aimed to encourage travel during the summer months. In contrast, Africa saw an increase of closed destinations from 9% in February to 28% in May. The share also increased slightly in Asia and the Pacific, from 63% to 65% in the same period, while it remained unchanged in the Middle East (27%) and the Americas (18%).

World destinations by type of travel restriction, 2020 - June 2021 (% share)
(% of world arrivals)*



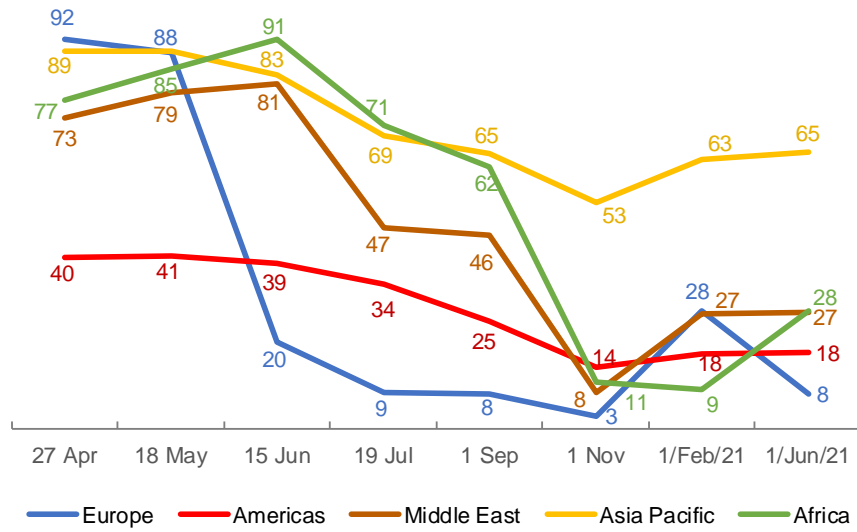
Note: "Other measures" category is "PCR testing or quarantines" from Feb. 2021 onwards.

*Shares calculated in terms of 2019 international arrivals

Source: UNWTO

² Percentages of closed destinations are expressed in terms of the 2019 international arrivals they represent.

Share of destinations with complete closure of borders, by region, 2020-June 2021 (%)
 (% of region's arrivals)*



*Shares calculated in terms of 2019 international arrivals

Source: UNWTO

Latest update: 21/07/2021

NEW: 2021 data is now compared to 2019 volumes where applicable to better reflect the current state of recovery



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UNWTO TOURISM RECOVERY TRACKER

As tourism slowly restarts in an increasing number of countries, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has developed the **first comprehensive tourism recovery tracker worldwide**, monitoring a number of relevant indicators throughout the recovery of tourism.



OVERVIEW



MONTHLY DATA
BY REGIONS



MONTHLY DATA
BY TOP 10 DESTINATIONS



MONTHLY DATA
BY TOP 10 SOURCE MARKETS



COMPARE INDICATORS

Methodology

Availability of data