California Tourism Highlights, 2008 Data

Importance of travel and tourism to the California economy

- Visitors to California spent $97.6 billion in 2008. Travel spending increased by 0.8 percent over the preceding year. [1]
- During 2008, travel spending in California directly supported 924,000 jobs with earnings of $30.6 billion. Travel spending generated the greatest number of jobs in accommodation and food services (533,000) and arts, entertainment and recreation (227,400 jobs) [1]
- Over 19 percent of all travel spending in the state in 2008 was attributable to international travel.
- Travel spending in 2008 generated $2.2 billion in local taxes and $3.6 billion in state taxes. [1]

Visitor volume and market share

- Approximately 351 million domestic and international visitors traveled to and through California in 2008. [2,4,5,6,9]

Domestic Travel

- 338 million domestic visitors traveled to and through California in 2008, down -1.0 percent from 2007.[2] Californians themselves are the mainstay of the state's travel and tourism industry, comprising 86 percent of domestic travel, or 290 million person-stays[2].
- California's top out-of-state domestic markets are Arizona, Nevada, Texas, Oregon, Washington and Illinois.[3]
- Total leisure visitor volume increased three percent in 2008 as gas prices fell in the second half of the year. California tourism also benefited from in-state travel in 2008 as travelers focused on closer-to- home destinations amidst rising airfares and a waning economy. [2]
- California has the largest market share of domestic travel among all 50 states with a mark of 11.3 percent in 2008[2] (latest data available). California had a 11.4 percent share of domestic leisure travel in 2008.[2]

- Approximately 22.7 million domestic travelers flew on U.S. carriers to California from other states in 2008. Total domestic air traffic at California airports decreased by 3.6 percent over 2007. [7,8,9]

International Travel

- Of California's approximately 13.4 million international visitors 5.5 million were from overseas in 2008. California enjoyed a 21.7 percent share of all overseas travel to the U.S. [4,9]
- California's top overseas visitor markets in 2008 were: United Kingdom (818,000), Japan (629,000), Germany (393,000), Australia (341,000), France (301,000), S. Korea (300,000), China PRC- not including Hong Kong (273,000), and Taiwan (189,000).[4,9]
- Approximately 8.1 million Mexicans visited California in 2008. Of this total, 378,000 arrived by air, with the remainder traveling to California by land or sea. Both overall Mexican travel, -8.7%, and Mexican air travel, -11.7%, declined in 2008 primarily because of poor economic conditions in Mexico including a weak exchange rate for the peso.[4,6,9]
- Approximately 1.3 million Canadians traveled to and through California in 2008, a 7% increase over 2007. This total represents 7.5% of all Canadian travel to the US. About 73% of Canadian travel to California is by air, with the remainder by land and sea. Eight-five percent of California's Canadian visitors, too, are from British Columbia, Alberta, or Ontario.[5,9]

Sources:

(1) California Travel Impacts by County, 1992-2007, 2008 Prelim. State Estimates, Dean Runyan Associates, Inc., March, 2009.
(2) D.K. Shifflet & Associates.
(3) TNS TravelsAmerica, 2008.
(4) Overseas and Mexican Visitors to California, 2008, CIC Research, Inc., July, 2009.
(5) Statistics Canada.
(6) "Mexican Visitors to California, 2008", special analysis for the CTTC by CIC Research, August, 2009.
(7) California Air Traffic Analysis - Interactive Tool, Dean Runyan Associates, Inc. 2008-2009.
(8) Individual California Airports.
(9) CTTC Research.