

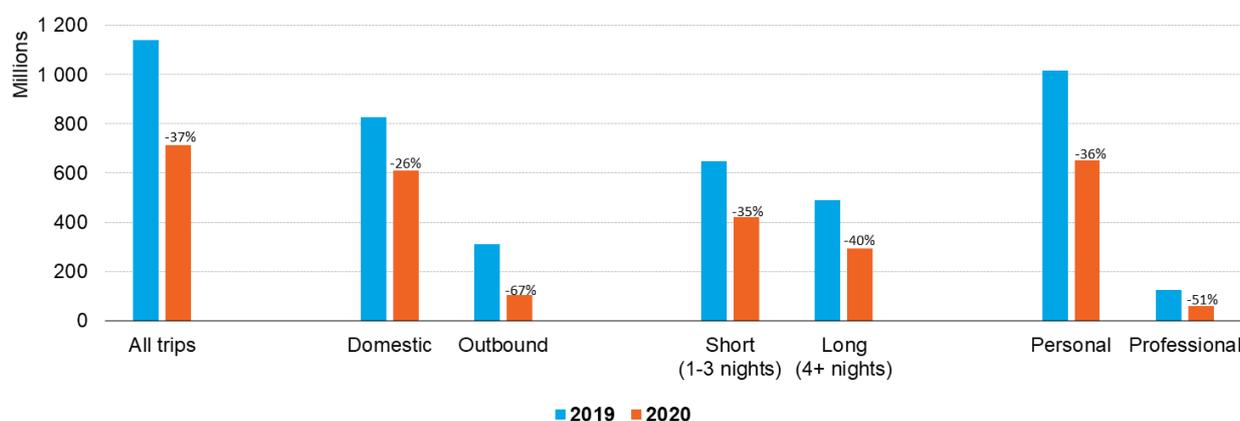
Tourism statistics - impact of Covid-19 on trips of Europeans

Statistics Explained

Data extracted in June 2022
No update planned for this article.

Highlights

Trips of EU residents, 2019 and 2020 (million)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_tttot)

eurostat

Trips of EU residents, 2019 and 2020 (million) Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tttot)

Tourism is one of the sectors most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2020, the number of nights spent in tourist accommodation establishments in the [European Union \(EU\)](#) decreased by 51 % compared with 2019. The accommodation sector in the EU started recovering in 2021, with 28 % more nights spent compared with 2020, reaching nearly two thirds of the pre-pandemic 2019 levels (see [article on Nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments](#)).

In 2020, 51 million fewer residents of the European Union made tourism trips (for personal purposes). While in the year before the pandemic 243 million Europeans made at least one tourism trip with overnights stays in the course of the year, this number dropped by 21% to 193 million in the year 2020 (see [article on Participation in tourism](#)). Expressed as a share of the population (aged 15 or over), 52 % participated in tourism in 2020, down from 65 % in 2019.

This article looks at the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the volume of trips made by Europeans and how the characteristics of those trips, for instance destination or type of accommodation, were affected, focusing on the first year of the pandemic (2020).

Trips and tourism nights spent by Europeans dropped by 37 % in 2020

In

2020, EU residents aged 15 and over made 713 million tourism trips where they spent 3.6 billion nights (see Table 1).

Trips, nights spent and average length of trips made by EU residents by destination, 2020

Country of residence of the tourist	Total (Thousand)	Trips of which (%)		Total (Thousand)	Nights of which (%)		Average length of trips (Nights)		
		Domestic	Outbound		Domestic	Outbound	All trips	Domestic	Outbound
EU	712 842	85.4	14.6	3 579 916	75.9	24.1	5.0	4.5	8.3
Belgium	9 221	36.6	63.4	66 602	19.3	80.7	7.2	3.8	9.2
Bulgaria	2 499	92.2	7.8	11 541	86.2	13.8	4.6	4.3	8.2
Czechia	23 091	89.6	10.4	100 703	85.3	14.7	4.4	4.2	6.2
Denmark	19 940	83.5	16.5	83 537	65.1	34.9	4.2	3.3	8.8
Germany	146 163	74.8	25.2	777 642	58.6	41.4	5.3	4.2	8.7
Estonia	2 699	79.1	20.9	9 179	48.1	51.9	3.4	2.1	8.4
Ireland	8 130	74.9	25.1	30 872	57.9	42.1	3.8	2.9	6.4
Greece	4 768	93.3	6.7	56 908	93.8	6.2	11.9	12.0	11.1
Spain	79 066	94.5	5.5	388 330	90.9	9.1	4.9	4.7	8.2
France	163 422	93.1	6.9	849 090	90.8	9.2	5.2	5.1	6.9
Croatia	3 004	83.6	16.4	19 449	78.9	21.1	6.5	6.1	8.3
Italy	32 273	90.3	9.7	191 721	86.2	13.8	5.9	5.7	8.4
Cyprus	2 170	78.3	21.7	10 448	44.4	55.6	4.8	2.7	12.3
Latvia	1 799	76.0	24.0	7 211	56.6	43.4	4.0	3.0	7.2
Lithuania	3 120	78.1	21.9	10 436	57.5	42.5	3.3	2.5	6.5
Luxembourg	1 599	8.7	91.3	11 664	3.5	96.5	7.3	2.9	7.7
Hungary	10 103	74.2	25.8	37 442	68.1	31.9	3.7	3.4	4.6
Malta	570	63.3	36.7	2 394	44.5	55.5	4.2	3.0	6.4
Netherlands	28 441	73.0	27.0	159 862	58.1	41.9	5.6	4.5	8.7
Austria	14 352	72.4	27.6	61 846	59.2	40.8	4.3	3.5	6.4
Poland	44 759	86.2	13.8	245 367	74.5	25.5	5.5	4.7	10.1
Portugal	12 433	94.5	5.5	60 603	90.8	9.2	4.9	4.7	8.1
Romania	11 633	96.6	3.4	42 926	93.2	6.8	3.7	3.6	7.3
Slovenia	2 401	52.6	47.4	11 260	35.7	64.3	4.7	3.2	6.4
Slovakia	5 462	80.9	19.1	21 276	76.3	23.7	3.9	3.7	4.8
Finland	25 671	90.9	9.1	118 050	76.5	23.5	4.6	3.9	11.9
Sweden	54 056	92.2	7.8	193 558	81.4	18.6	3.6	3.2	8.5
Switzerland	13 320	54.1	45.9	93 529	34.9	65.1	7.0	4.5	10.0
Albania	3 233	91.0	9.0	14 689	79.3	20.7	4.5	4.0	10.4

Note: Due to rounding, deviations can occur between total and subtotals.

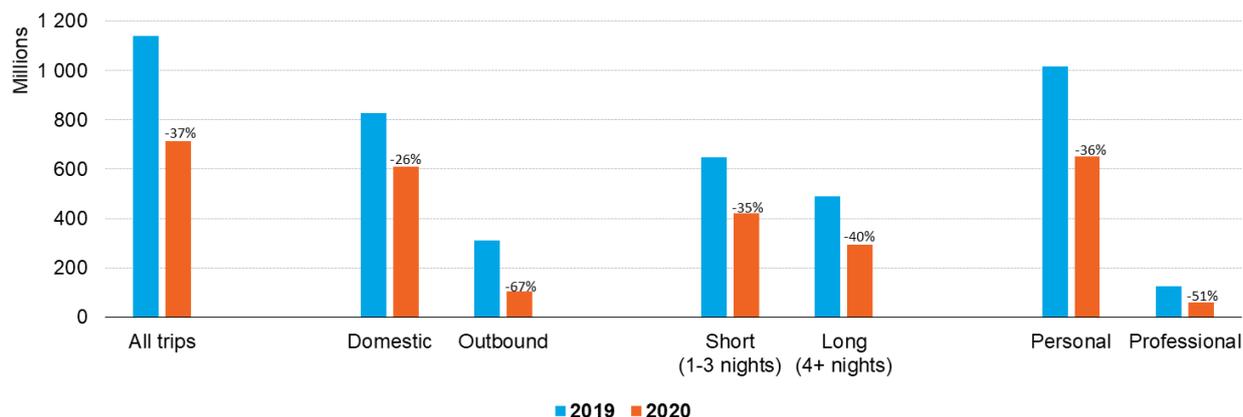
Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_tttot, tour_dem_tntot)

eurostat 

Table 1: Trips, nights spent and average length of trips made by EU residents by destination, 2020 Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tttot) (tour_dem_tntot)

Compared with pre-pandemic levels, both the number of trips and the number of nights spent decreased by 37 % (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). Looking at the data broken down by destination, duration or purpose, the drops were more pronounced for outbound trips (-67 % vs -26 % for domestic), long trips (-40 % versus -35 % for short trips) and professional trips (-51 % versus -36 % for personal trips). In other words, Europeans made relatively fewer outbound trips, fewer long trips and fewer professional trips. The pattern was similar in terms of nights spent. However, the number of nights spent on domestic trips dropped less significantly than the number of domestic trips, meaning that domestic trips were, on average, a bit longer than before the pandemic. This could indicate that domestic trips became more important as a destination for the main holiday in the year.

Trips of EU residents, 2019 and 2020 (million)

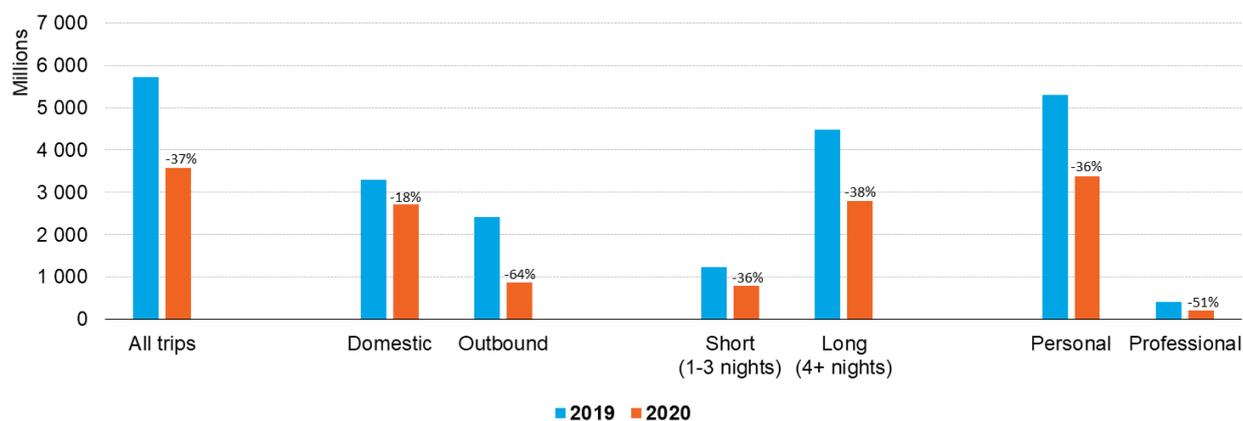


Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_tttot)

eurostat

Figure 1: Trips of EU residents, 2019 and 2020 (million) Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tttot)

Tourism nights spent by EU residents, 2019 and 2020 (million)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_tntot)

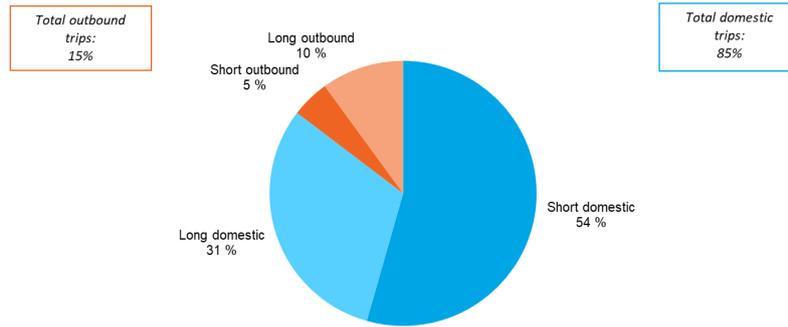
eurostat

Figure 2: Tourism nights spent by EU residents, 2019 and 2020 (million) Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tntot)

In 2020 EU residents spent more than 8 out of 10 of their tourism trips inside their own country

The findings in the previous section are confirmed in Figure 3 and Figure 4, showing the distribution of trips by duration and destination in 2019 and in 2020. The share of domestic trips increased in 2020 from 73 % to 85 %, including a big increase in the share of long domestic trips (trips of at least 4 nights). More than half (54 %) of all trips were short domestic trips (1 to 3 nights), while the share of trips abroad shrank to 5 % for short outbound and to 10 % for long outbound trips. As mentioned above, the number of domestic trips dropped by 26 %, from 827 million trips in 2019 to 608 million in 2020. The number of outbound trips was cut by 2 thirds, decreasing from 311 million trips to 104 million trips.

Trips of EU residents by destination and duration, 2020 (% of all trips)



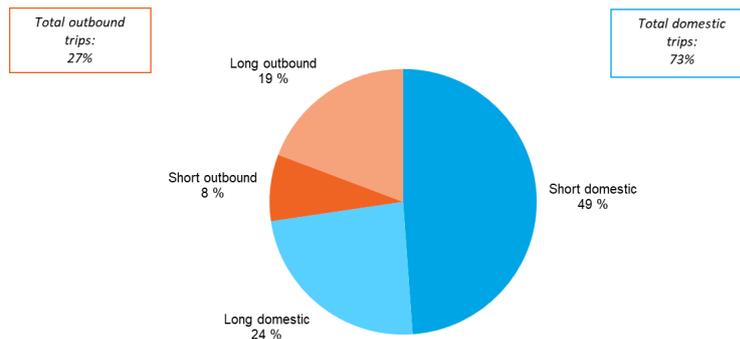
Note: Due to rounding, deviations can occur between total and subtotals.

- Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_tttot)

eurostat

Figure 3 -Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tttot)

Trips of EU residents by destination and duration, 2019 (% of all trips)



Note: Due to rounding, deviations can occur between total and subtotals.

- Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_tttot)

eurostat

Figure 4 -Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tttot)

The same distribution in terms of nights spent is shown in Figure 5 and Figure 6. While in 2019 the nights spent on long outbound trips accounted for more or less the same share in total nights spent as long domestic trips (39 % and 40 % respectively), long outbound trips accounted for only 22 % of nights spent in 2020, as compared with the share of long domestic trips increasing to 56 %.

Tourism nights of EU residents by destination and duration, 2020 (% of all nights)

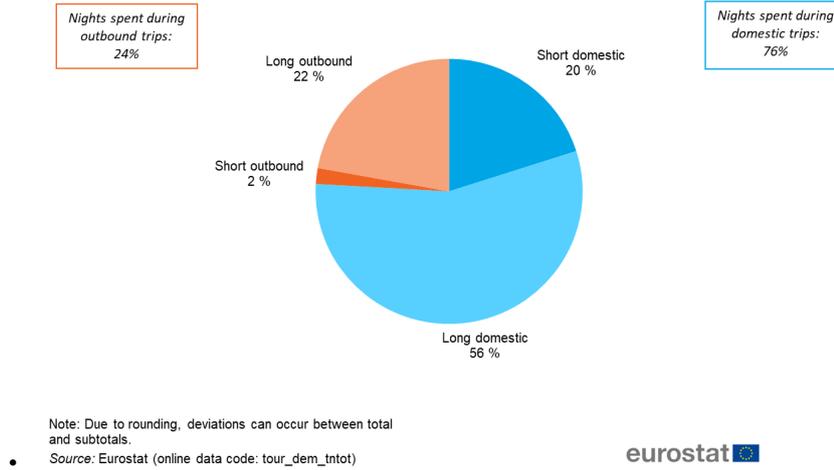


Figure 5 -Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tntot)

Tourism nights of EU residents by destination and duration, 2019 (% of all nights)

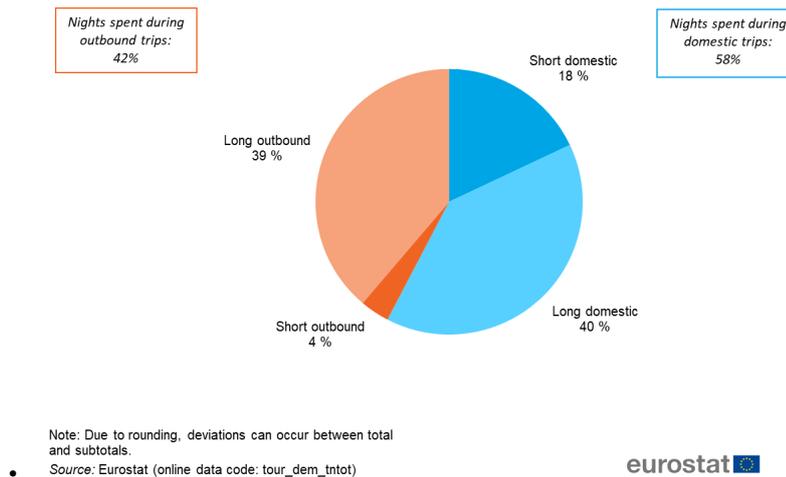
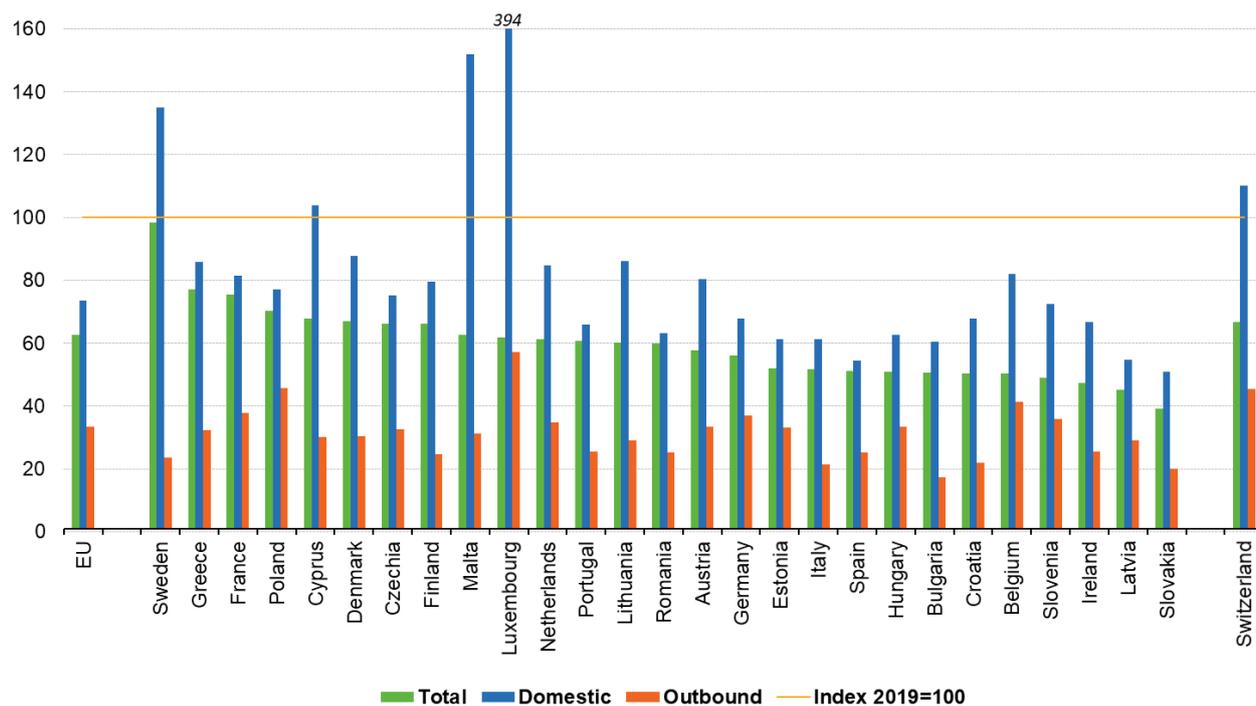


Figure 6 -Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tntot)

The impact of Covid-19 at country level is shown in Figure 7, comparing the number of trips made in 2019 and 2020. The biggest drops were observed for residents of Slovakia, Latvia, Ireland and Slovenia, with less than half as many trips in 2020. On the other hand, in Sweden the impact was minimal with only 2 % fewer trips made by its residents, mainly because of a significant increase of 35 % in the number of domestic trips. Sharp increases in domestic trips were also recorded in Malta (+52%) and Luxembourg (four times higher, but still relatively unimportant compared with the volume of outbound trips). The pattern in Figure 7 shows that, across all countries, the impact of the pandemic on tourism trips was much heavier for outbound tourism than for domestic tourism.

Trips of EU residents by destination, 2020 compared with 2019 (%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_tttot)

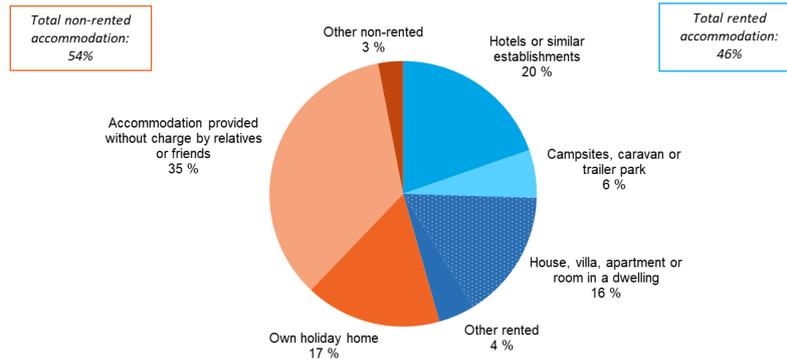


Figure 7: Trips of EU residents by destination, 2020 compared with 2019 (%) Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tttot)

Over half of all overnight stays in 2020 were in non-rented accommodation

EU residents made a total of 3.6 billion overnight stays during tourism trips in 2020. More than half of these nights (54 %) were spent in non-rented accommodation, which was an unusually high share compared to pre-pandemic levels (44 % in 2019). Figure 8 and Figure 9 look at the distribution of the tourism nights by choice of accommodation in 2019 and in 2020. At EU level, in 2020 the biggest share of nights (35 % vs 28 % in 2019) were spent in accommodation provided by relatives or friends. Nights spent in own holiday homes also went up from 13 % to 17 %. This can indicate that tourists preferred accommodation options with people they know or with fewer people around. This observation is supported by the drop in the share of nights spent in hotels or similar accommodation (from 32 % in 2019 to 20 % in 2020).

Tourism nights spent by EU residents by mode of accommodation, 2020 (%)



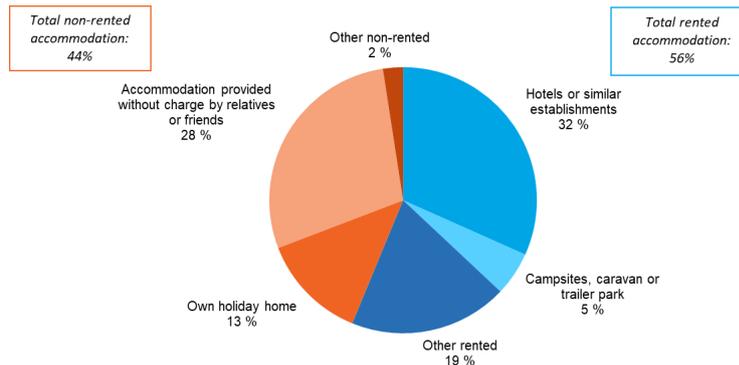
Note: Due to rounding, deviations can occur between total and subtotals.

- Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_tnac)

eurostat

Figure 8 -Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tnac)

Tourism nights spent by EU residents by mode of accommodation, 2019 (%)



Note: Due to rounding, deviations can occur between total and subtotals.

- Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_tnac)

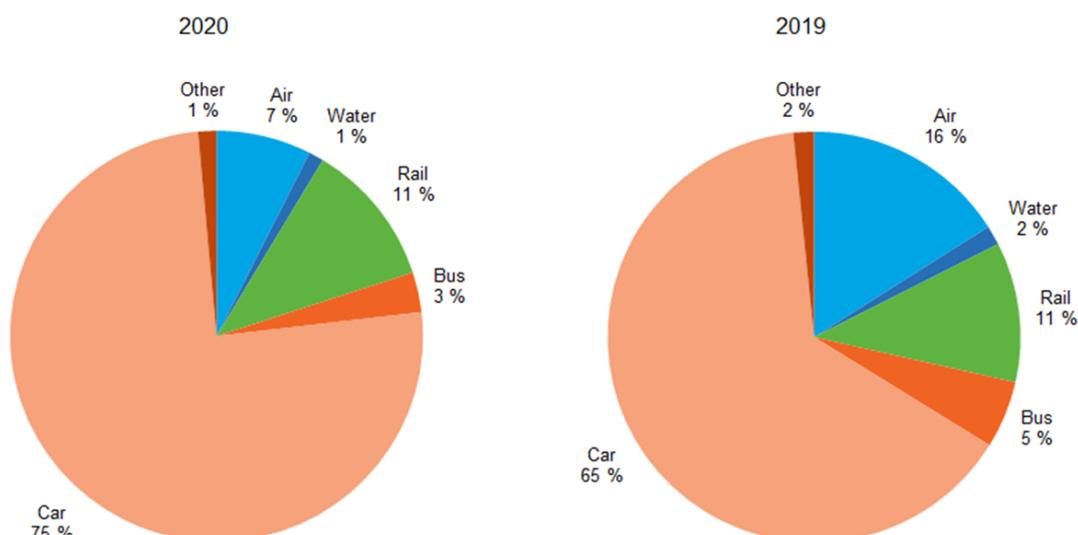
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Figure 9 -Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tnac)

71 % or 129 million fewer trips made by air plane in 2020 than in 2019

Motor vehicles (private or rented) were the main means of transport for 75 % of all trips in 2020 (see Figure 10). This share increased by 10 percentage points compared with 2019 (65 %), while the share of trips by airplane dropped from 16 % in 2019 to 7 % in 2020. This loss signifies 71 % or 129 million fewer trips made by airplane in 2020 than in 2019.

Trips of EU residents by mode of transport, 2020 and 2019 (% of all trips)



Note: Due to rounding, deviations can occur between total and subtotals.

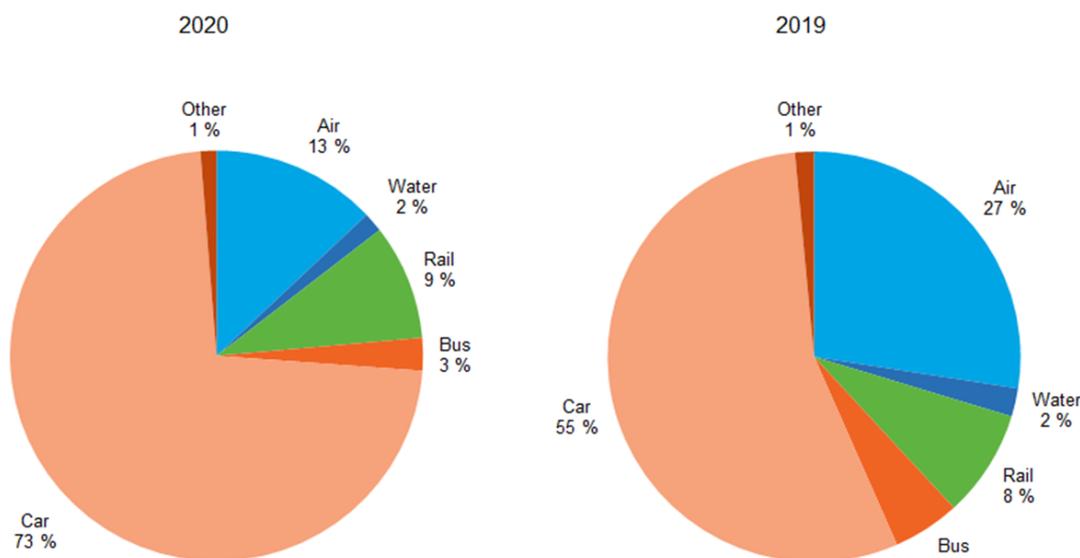
Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_tttra)

eurostat 

Figure 10: Trips of EU residents by mode of transport, 2020 and 2019 (% of all trips) Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tttra)

The shift to travelling by car instead of airplane was even more significant in the segment of long trips (see Figure 11); in 2020, 73 % of long trips were made by car while this share was 55 % in 2019. The shift towards destinations closer to home, for instance domestic trips rather than outbound trips, most likely explains the drop in air travel, jointly with concerns about distancing rules in shared modes of transport.

Long trips of EU residents by mode of transport, 2020 and 2019 (% of all long trips)



Note: Due to rounding, deviations can occur between total and subtotals.

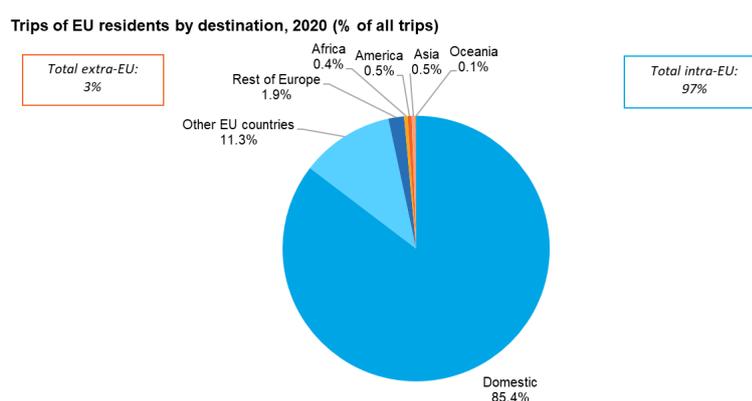
Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_tttra)

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Figure 11: Long trips of EU residents by mode of transport, 2020 and 2019 (% of all long trips) Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tttra)

In terms of number of trips, Austria was the top foreign destination for EU residents in 2020, while in terms of nights spent, Spain was on top

As discussed above, Europeans turned to domestic tourism in 2020. Figures 12 and 13 show that the shares of trips to all destinations abroad decreased compared with 2019. On average for the EU, 15 % of all trips were made in a foreign country: more than 11 % in another EU Member State and just over 3 % outside the EU. One year earlier, this was 20 % and 8 % respectively.



Note: Due to rounding, deviations can occur between total and subtotals.

• Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_ttw)

eurostat

Figure 12 -Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_ttw)

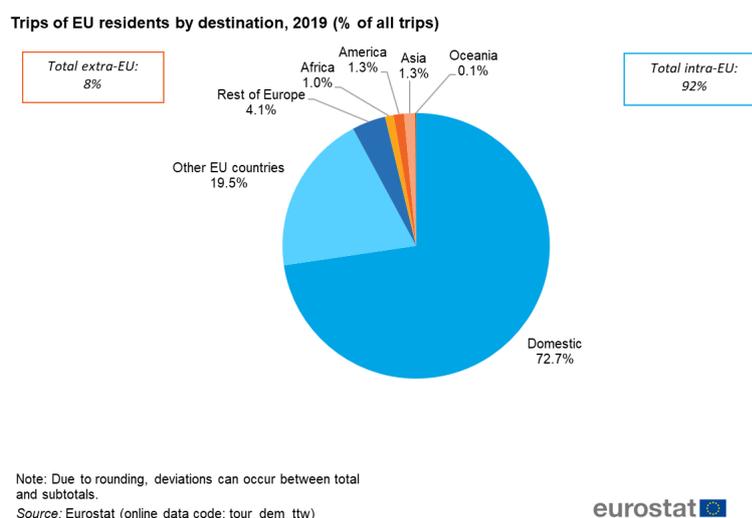


Figure 13 -Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_ttw)

In terms of number of trips, Austria was the number one foreign destination for EU residents (10.6 million trips, see Table 2), possibly because of the winter season at the beginning of 2020, just before tourism came to a stop in March 2020. In terms of number of nights spent, Spain was on top (92.2 million nights spent). 10 % of all outbound trips made by Europeans were spent in Austria, followed by Italy and Germany (8 % each), while 11 % of tourism nights were spent in Spain, followed by France (9 %) and Austria (8%).

A neighbouring or nearby country has always been a popular foreign destination for trips of nearly all European tourists. However, in 2020, the proximity of the destination became more important (see Table 3 in the excel file).

Trips and nights spent by EU residents - Domestic, outbound and top 3 outbound destinations, 2020

	Total (Thousand)	Domestic trips (Thousand) (% of total)	Outbound trips (Thousand) (% of total)	Top 3 destination countries for outbound trips in 2020 Share on total outbound trips of the residents of the declaring country (%)			Top 3 destination countries for outbound trips in 2019 (% change 2020/2019)		
				Austria	Italy	Germany	Spain	Italy	Germany
Trips	712 842	608 641 85%	104 202 15%	10%	8%	8%	-74%	-69%	-60%
Nights	3 579 916	2 716 660 76%	863 256 24%	11%	9%	8%	-67%	-68%	-50%

Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_ttw, tour_dem_tnw)

eurostat

Table 2: Trips and nights spent by EU residents - Domestic, outbound and top 3 outbound destinations, 2020 Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_ttw) (tour_dem_tnw)

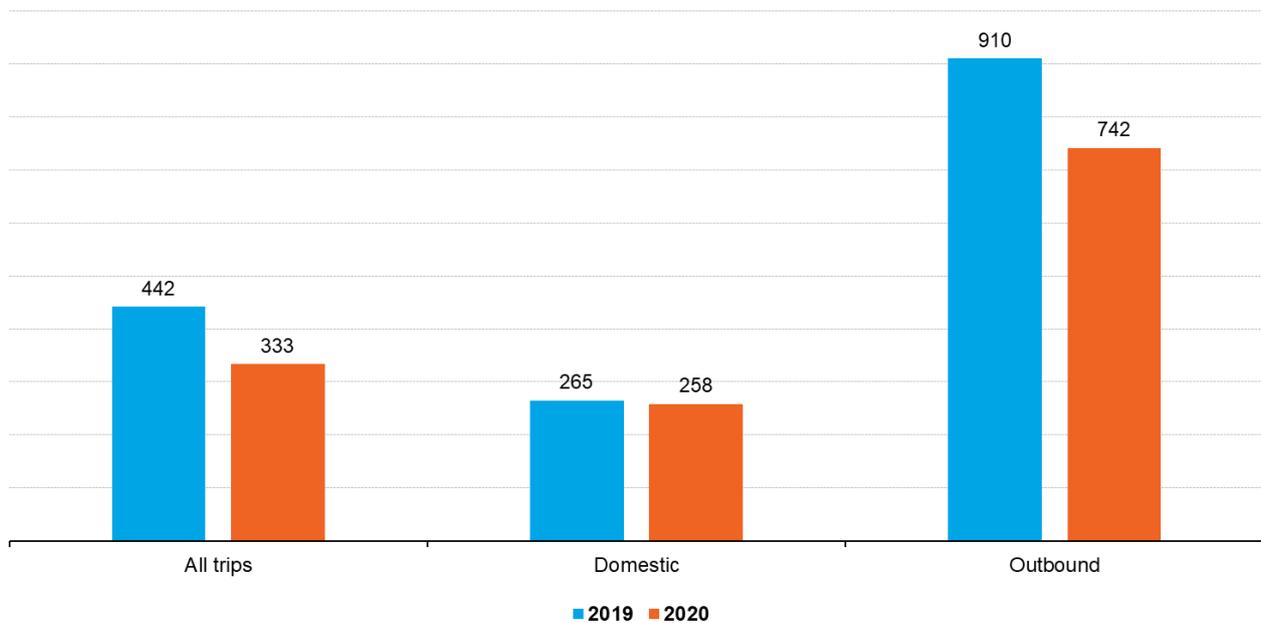
In 2020, Europeans spent less than half of what they had spent on their trips in 2019

These closing paragraphs look at tourism spending by EU residents living in the [euro area](#). Tourists from those 19 Member States spent € 215 billion less on tourism trips, with tourism expenditure down from € 396 billion in 2019

to € 181 billion in 2020.

When taking into account the fact that the number of trips and nights dropped significantly in 2020, tourists still spent, on average, less per trip and per night than one year earlier. The average spending per trip dropped by 25 % from € 442 per trip to € 333 per trip (see Figure 14). While the average spending per trip stayed relatively stable for domestic trips, the impact was more pronounced for trips abroad.

Average tourism expenditure per trip of residents of the Euro area, by destination (domestic/outbound), 2019 and 2020, (€)



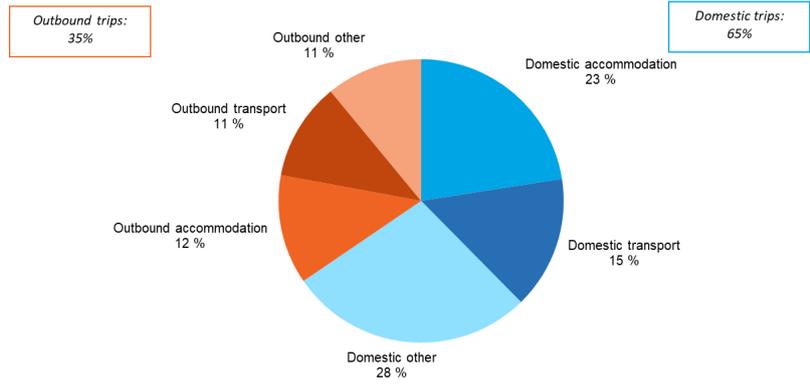
Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_extot)

eurostat 

Figure 14: Average tourism expenditure per trip of residents of the Euro area, by destination (domestic/outbound), 2019 and 2020, (EUR) Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_extot)

Tourists from euro area countries spent relatively more in their own economies in 2020 compared with 2019, with domestic tourism accounting for 65 % of all tourism expenditure (up from 44 % - see Figure 15 and Figure 16). Notwithstanding this comparative advantage, total expenditure on domestic tourism decreased in 2020 (-29 % for accommodation, -35 % for transport, -31 % for other expenditure), but less dramatically than the absolute values for expenditure on outbound trips (respectively -72 %, -73 % and -70 % - see Figure 17).

Tourism expenditure of residents of Euro area by type of expenditure, 2020 (% of total expenditure)



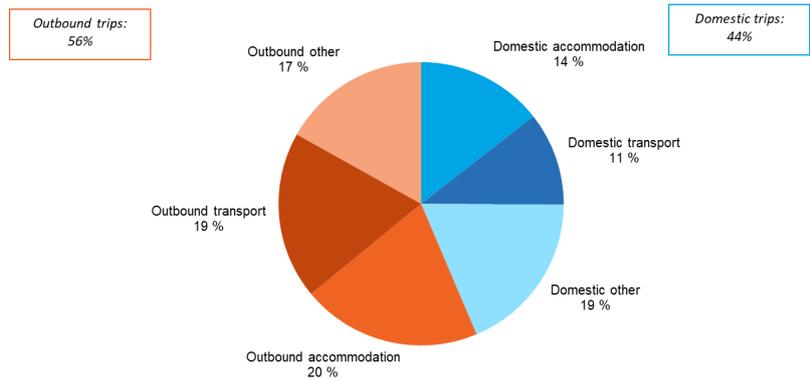
Note: Due to rounding, deviations can occur between total and subtotals.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_exexp)



Figure 15 -Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_exexp)

Tourism expenditure of residents of Euro area by type of expenditure, 2019 (% of total expenditure)



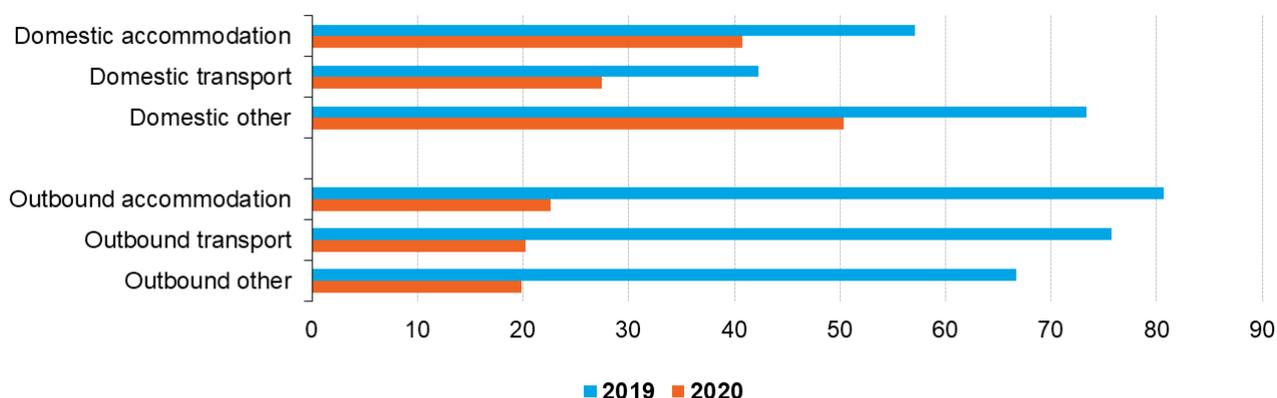
Note: Due to rounding, deviations can occur between total and subtotals.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_exexp)



Figure 16 -Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_exexp)

Tourism expenditure of residents of Euro area by type of expenditure, 2019 and 2020 (in million euro)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_exexp)

eurostat 

Figure 17: Tourism expenditure of residents of Euro area by type of expenditure, 2019 and 2020 (in million euro) Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_exexp)

Source data for tables and graphs

- [Download Excel file](#)

Data sources

Collection of annual data on trips of EU residents

The collection consists of harmonised data collected by the Member States in the frame of the [Regulation \(EU\) No 692/2011](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning European statistics on [tourism](#) .

The scope of observation for data on tourism trips are all tourism trips with at least one overnight stay, made by the [resident population](#) aged 15 and over. It includes trips made for private or professional purpose, outside the usual environment.

Context

The EU is a major tourist destination, with four Member States among the world's top ten destinations for holidaymakers, according to [UNWTO](#) data. Tourism is an important activity in the EU which has the potential to contribute towards employment and economic growth, as well as to development in rural, peripheral or less-developed areas. These characteristics drive the demand for reliable and harmonised statistics within this field, as well as within the wider context of regional policy and sustainable development policy areas.

Explore further

Other articles

- [All articles on tourism statistics](#)

Database

- [Tourism \(tour\)](#) , see:

Annual data on trips of EU residents (tour_dem)

Thematic section

- [Tourism statistics](#)

Publications

- [Recent Eurostat publications on tourism](#)

Selected datasets

- [Tourism \(t_tour\)](#) , see:

Annual data on trips of EU residents (t_tour_dem)

Methodology

- [Annual data on trips of EU residents](#) (ESMS metadata file — tour_dem_esms)
- [Methodological manual for tourism statistics](#)

External links

- [European Commission - Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs - Tourism](#)

Legislation

- **Use Eur-Lex icon on the ribbon tool at the top of the statistical article to enter the year and reference of your regulation or directive.**
- **See example of what should be issued hereafter**
- [Regulation \(EU\) No 1013/2016](#)

Visualisation

- [Regional Statistics Illustrated](#) - select statistical domain 'xxx' (= *Agriculture, Economy, Education, Health, Information society, Labour market, Population, Science and technology, Tourism or Transport*) (top right)