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BLS Spotlight on Statistics: Travel

Bureau of Labor Statistics

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BLS Spotlight on Statistics: Travel

Abstract

[Excerpt] This Spotlight presents BLS data to provide insight into travel-related expenditures, overall employment within the leisure and hospitality industry, as well as employment and earnings of various travel-related occupations.

Comments

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Travel

July 2010

Is it time for you to take a vacation? Whether taking a lengthy vacation or just a short pleasure trip, travelers may have a lot to consider when thinking about where they want to go and how they want to get there.

The travel industry depends on travelers to support its businesses, and travelers rely on the travel industry to provide them with services such as transportation, lodging, food and beverages, and entertainment.

This Spotlight presents BLS data to provide insight into travel-related expenditures, overall employment within the leisure and hospitality industry, as well as employment and earnings of various travel-related occupations.

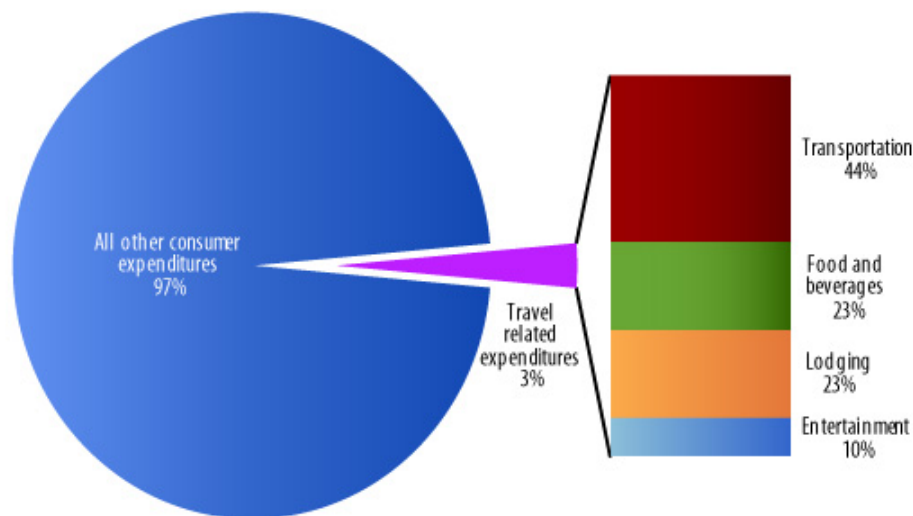


What portion of annual household expenditures is spent on travel?

In 2008, the most recent year for which expenditures data are available, U.S. households spent, on average, a total of \$1,415 on transportation, lodging, food and beverage, entertainment, and gifts while on vacation and pleasure trips—representing 3 percent of total household expenditures. The largest travel expense was for transportation, which represented 44 percent of the total amount spent. Households spent the least amount on the most discretionary travel-related expense, entertainment, which represented 10 percent of all travel-related expenses.

What portion of annual household expenditures is spent on travel?

Average annual travel-related expenditures, 2008



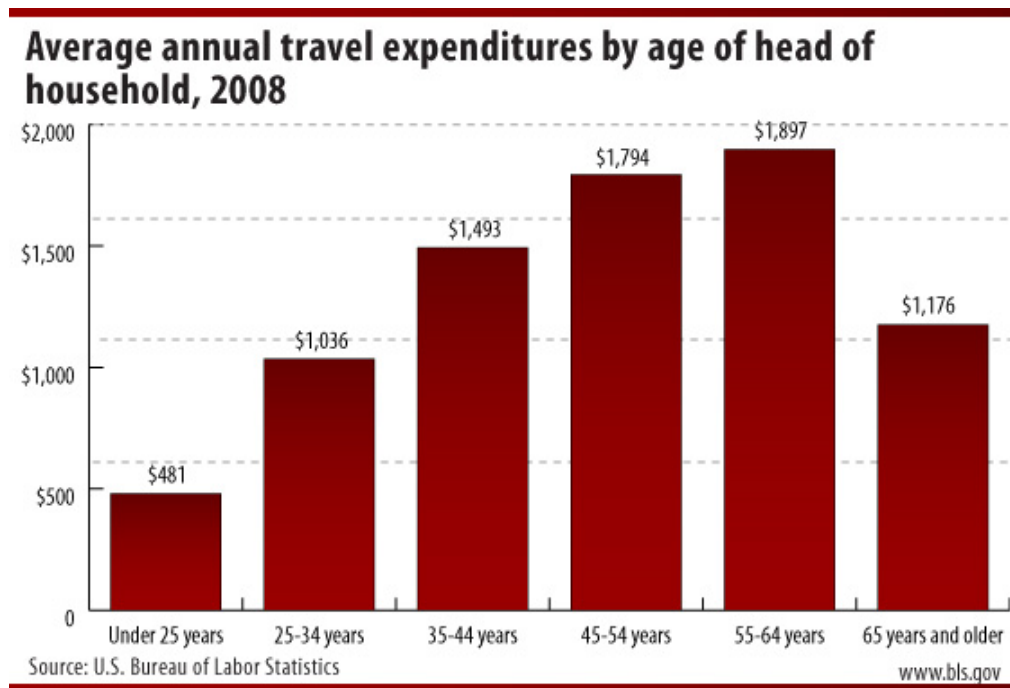
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

Source: Consumer Expenditure Program

Annual travel expenditures by age of head of household

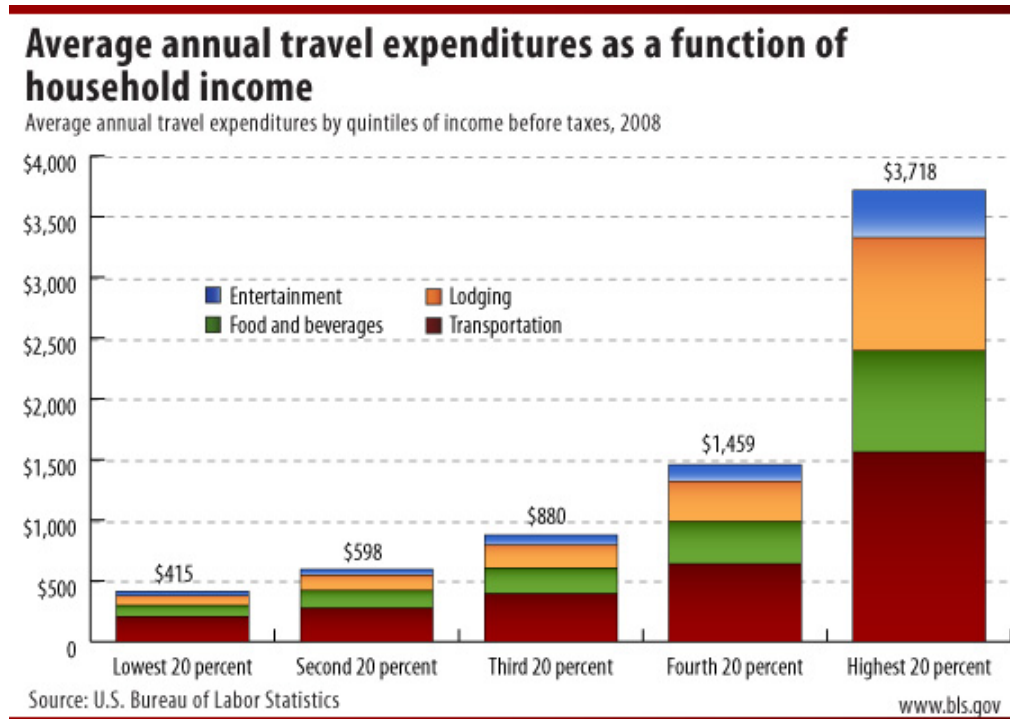
In 2008, households in which the head of household is 55- to 64-years-old spent, on average, more on travel than did households in other age groups. The older the age group, the more households spent on travel—with the exception of those households with head aged 65 years and older.



Source: Consumer Expenditure Program

Annual travel expenditures as a function of household income

In 2008, households earning a pretax income greater than or equal to \$93,358—which represented the highest 20 percent of all household incomes—spent, on average, more on travel than the combined total spent by households in the remaining lower four income groups. Regardless of the total amount spent by consumers in any given income group, all consumers spent about the same proportional amount on each travel expenditure category—transportation, lodging, food and beverages, and entertainment.



Source: Consumer Expenditure Program

The cost of airline fares and lodging away from home

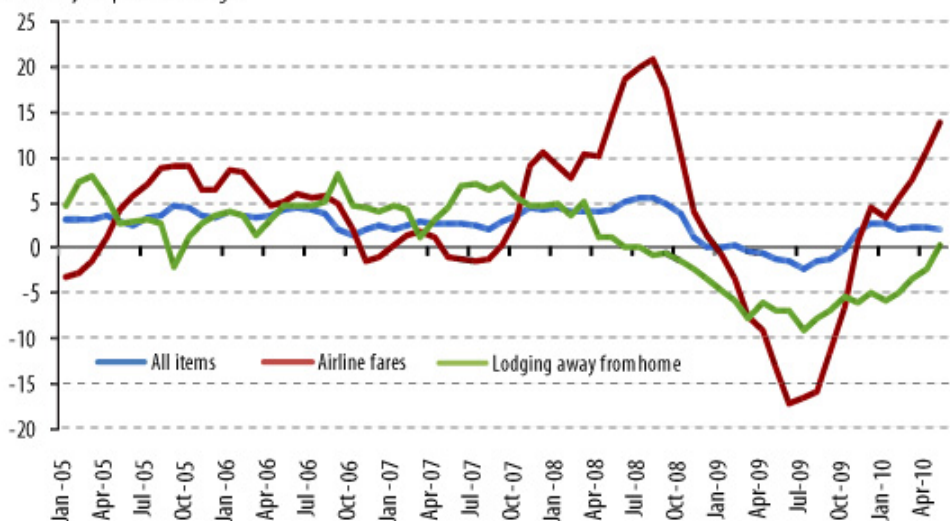
When planning a vacation, many travelers look at the cost of transportation and lodging to determine where they can afford to go and how long they can afford to stay where they are going.

After showing steep declines in 2009, airline fares have started to increase and are now rising faster than consumer prices for all items.

After declining since mid-2008, consumer prices for lodging away from home increased slightly from May 2009 to May 2010—though at a slower rate than consumer prices for all items and airline fares.

The cost of airline fares and lodging away from home

Over-the-year percent change



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

Source: Consumer Price Indexes

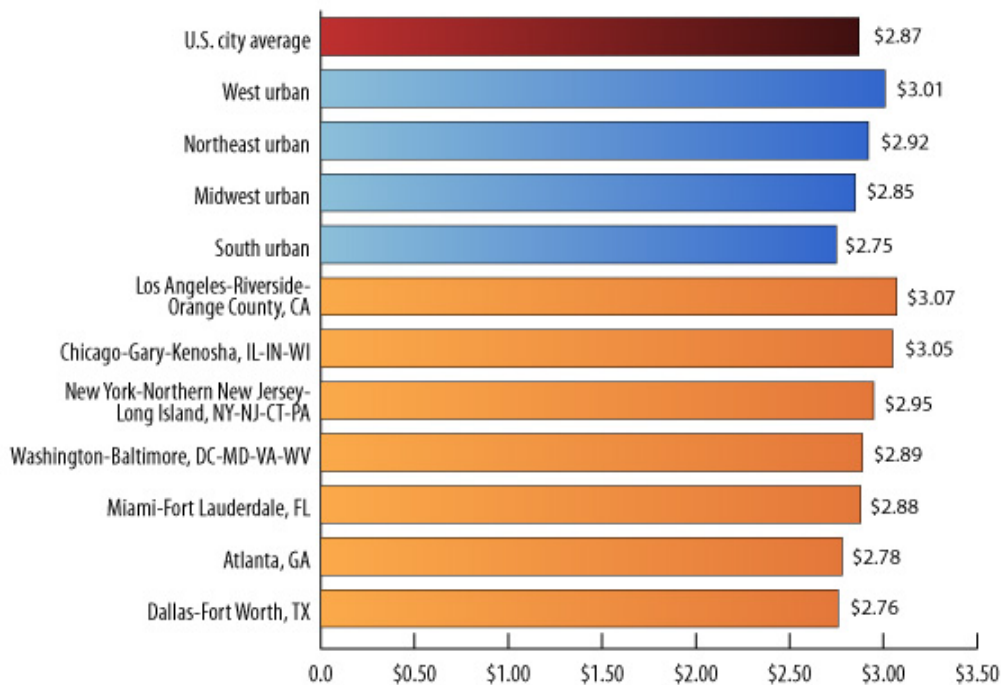
Gasoline prices vary depending on where you are travelling

If you like to travel by car, the cost of gasoline may influence your decision to select a travel destination closer to or further away from home. If you are undecided as to your mode of transportation, the cost of gasoline may encourage you to either travel by car or opt for a different mode of transportation, such as flying.

The average price of a gallon of unleaded regular gasoline varies depending on where in the United States the gas is being purchased. In May 2010, the average price of unleaded regular gasoline in all cities within the United States was \$2.87 per gallon. In urban cities within the West region of the country, the average price per gallon of unleaded regular gasoline is higher than the average price paid in all cities within the United States, while in the South region the average price per gallon is lower.

Gasoline prices vary depending on where you are travelling

Average price of gasoline (unleaded regular) by region and select metropolitan areas, per gallon, May 2010



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

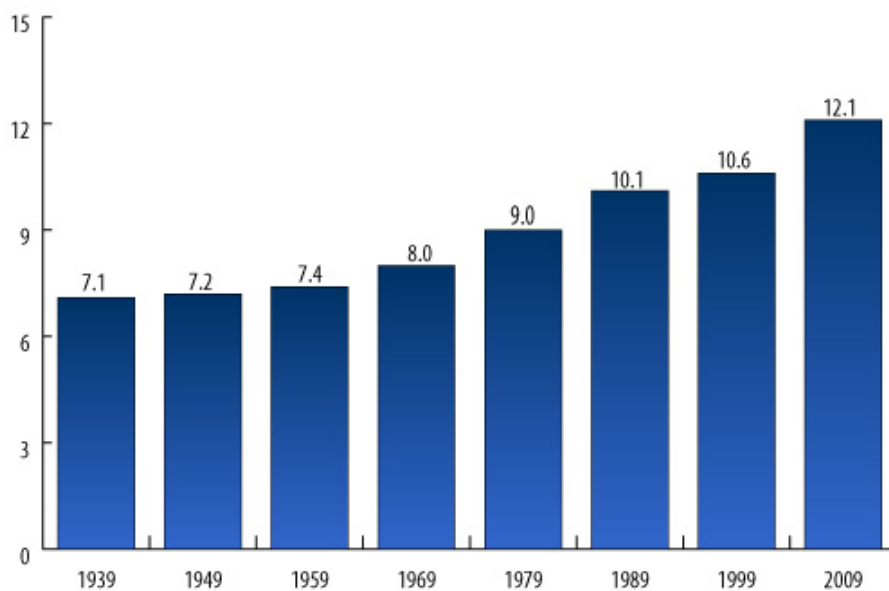
Source: Consumer Price Indexes

Many work so that others may play

Many of those employed in the leisure and hospitality industry provide services for travelers while they are on vacation. These services include those provided at hotels and motels, restaurants, and amusement parks. Over each of the last eight decades since 1939, employment in the leisure and hospitality industry as a percentage of total private-sector employment has increased—from 7.1 percent in 1939 to 12.1 percent in 2009. Over that same period, employment in leisure and hospitality has also grown—from 1.9 million to 13.1 million jobs.

Many work so that others may play

Employment in leisure and hospitality industry as a percentage of total private employment, 1939-2009



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

Source: Current Employment Statistics

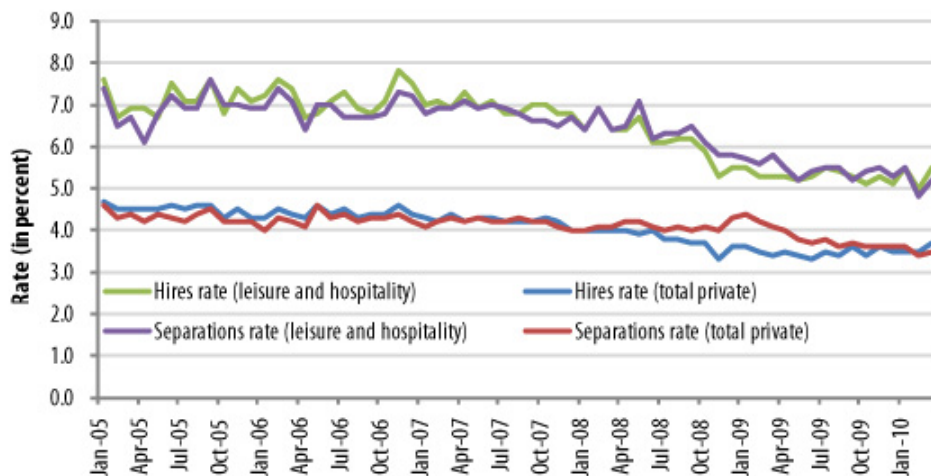
Note: Within the leisure and hospitality industry, due to industrial classification, employment related to vacation travel cannot be distinguished from that which is not related to vacation travel. For example, employment in the Food Services and Drinking Places industry cannot be broken out into tourist-related employment and non-tourist related.

Labor turnover in the leisure and hospitality industry

The leisure and hospitality industry is characterized by a large number of seasonal and part-time jobs, as well as the employment of many relatively young workers. Low entry requirements for many jobs in this industry lead to high turnover and replacement needs. The hires and total separations rates—which includes quits (voluntary separations), layoffs and discharges (involuntary separations), and other separations (including retirements)—experienced by the leisure and hospitality industry have always been higher than those experienced by the overall private sector.

Labor turnover in the leisure and hospitality industry

Hires and separations rates, total private and leisure and hospitality industries, seasonally adjusted, Jan. 2005-Mar. 2010



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

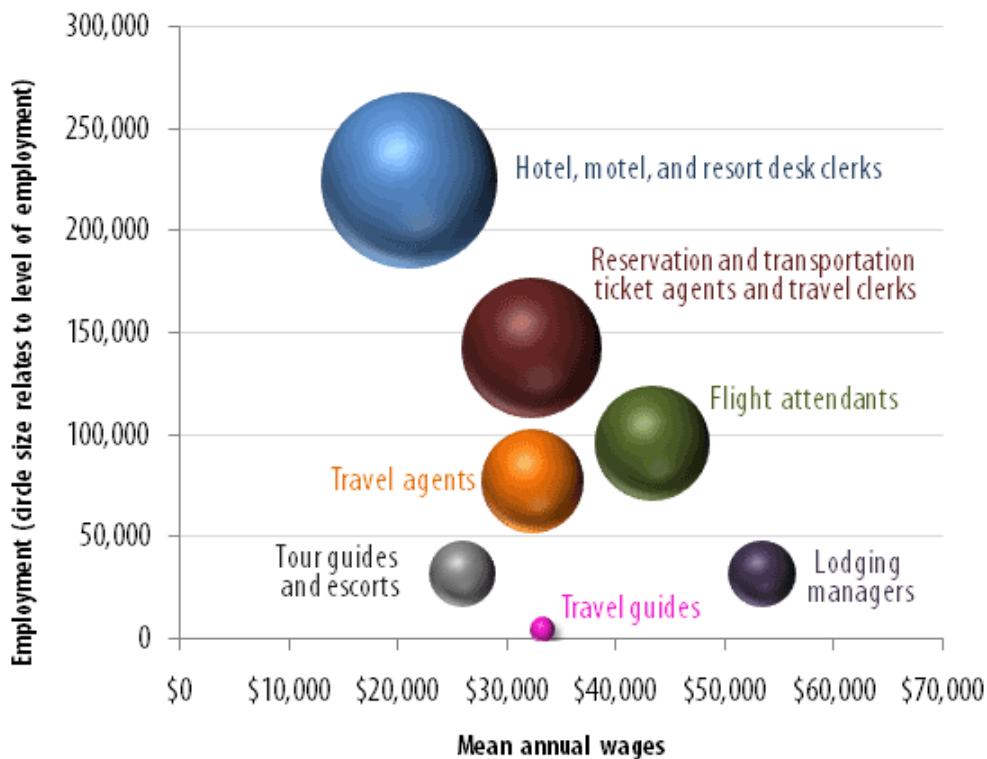
Source: *Job Openings and Labor Turnover Statistics*

Employment and earnings of travel-related occupations

In 2009, earnings in travel-related occupations were typically lower than the average for all occupations (\$43,460), reflecting the large number of part-time, seasonal and lesser-skilled jobs. Travel guides, travel agents, and hotel, motel and resort desk clerks earned less than the average wage for all occupations, while lodging managers earned more.

Occupations such as hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks are the first line of customer service for a lodging property. These clerks register arriving guests, assign rooms, and answer guests' questions on hotel services and other matters. Night and weekend work is common and approximately 1 in 4 desk clerks works part time. There were 224,360 hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks employed in 2009.

Employment and earnings of travel-related occupations, 2009



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

Source: Occupational Employment Statistics

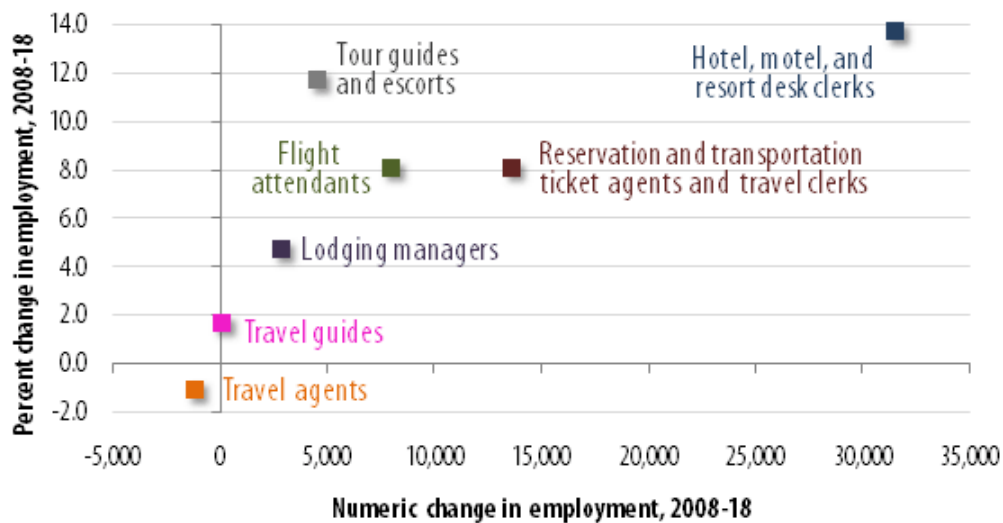
Employment projections for travel-related occupations

Over the 2008-18 period, occupations such as hotel, motel and resort desk clerks, tour guides and escorts, and flight attendants are all projected to increase in employment. Over that same period, however, employment of travel agents is expected to decline by 1 percent.

The ease of Internet use and the ready availability of travel and airline Web sites that allow people to research and plan their own trips, make their own reservations, and purchase their own tickets will result in less demand for travel agents for routine travel arrangements. However, as more travelers take exotic and customized trips, the demand for some of the specialized services offered by travel agents will grow. Additionally, the increasing number of international visitors to the United States represents a growing market for travel agents who organize and sell tours to these international visitors.

Employment projections for travel-related occupations

Numeric and percent change in wage and salary employment, 2008-18 (projected)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

Source: *Employment Projections*

More Information

More information from BLS related to travel.

- Consumer Expenditure Program
- Consumer Price Indexes
- Current Employment Statistics
- Occupational Employment Statistics
- Employment Projections

Note: Data in text, charts and tables are the latest available at the time of publication. Internet links may lead to more recent data.

General Information

For more information, please call (202) 691-5200.

Media Contact

The news media can contact the BLS Press Officer at (202) 691-5902.