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International Visitors Spent \$14.4 Billion in the United States in March 2013

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Categories: [Press Releases](#) [1] [International Trade Administration](#) [2] [Deputy Secretary of Commerce Rebecca Blank](#) [3]

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First Quarter U.S. Travel and Tourism Exports Contribute \$43 Billion to the U.S. Economy

U.S. Deputy Secretary of Commerce Rebecca Blank highlighted new data today that shows spending by international visitors to the United States in March 2013 totaled more than \$14.4 billion, an increase of nearly 3 percent when compared to last year. International visitors spent \$43 billion on travel to, and tourism-related activities within, the United States during the first quarter of 2013. The data release coincides with National Travel and Tourism Week, celebrated each year to recognize the positive impact the industry has on our economy.

“International travel and tourism represents our country’s largest services export,” said Deputy Secretary Blank. “So far this year, international visitor spending in the United States has markedly outpaced U.S. spending abroad by more than \$13 billion, which continues our momentum from 2012’s record-setting year. Likewise, last week’s jobs report showed continued strong job growth in the leisure and hospitality industry. Travel and tourism is an important sector of our economy, which is why we are continuing to increase our efforts to attract more international tourists to vacation in the United States.”

Purchases of travel and tourism-related goods and services by international visitors traveling in the United States totaled \$11 billion during March. These goods and services include food, lodging, recreation, gifts, entertainment, local transportation in the United States, and other items incidental to foreign travel. Fares received by U.S. carriers (and U.S. vessel operators) from international visitors also increased by nearly 3 percent to \$3.4 billion for the month, an increase of \$70 million when compared to March 2012. Overall, the United States enjoyed a favorable balance of trade for the month of March in the travel and tourism sector, with a surplus of \$4.2 billion.

Travel and tourism-related industries as a whole support nearly 8 million American jobs. President Obama’s [National Travel and Tourism Strategy](#) [4], which was announced a year ago, aims to attract more than 100 million international tourists per year by 2021, visitors that would spend an estimated \$250 billion per

year, supporting more jobs and spurring economic growth in communities across the country.

Increasing U.S. travel and tourism will not come at the expense of national security. The President's plan for common sense immigration reform includes a number of proposals to support his commitment to increasing U.S. travel and tourism while maintaining our nation's security. Specifically, the President's **immigration proposal** [5] reforms the Visa Waiver Program to strengthen law enforcement cooperation while facilitating more efficient trade and tourism to the United States, securely streamlines visa and foreign visitor processing, and strengthens and improves infrastructure at ports of entry. These priorities are reflected in recently introduced bipartisan immigration reform legislation, which the Senate Judiciary Committee will begin considering this week.

To learn more about Commerce's ongoing efforts to promote international travel and tourism, visit <http://tinet.ita.doc.gov/> [6].

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Page Links:

[1] <http://www.commerce.gov/category/news-type/press-releases>

[2] <http://www.commerce.gov/category/bureaus-and-offices/international-trade-administration>

[3] <http://www.commerce.gov/officials/deputy-secretary-commerce-rebecca-blank>

[4] <http://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&pageid=295021>

[5] <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/01/29/fact-sheet-fixing-our-broken-immigration-system-so-everyone-plays-rules>

[6] <http://tinet.ita.doc.gov/>