

Global travel prospects: taking stock two years into the pandemic



Due to the pandemic, cross border travel fell this year to 25 percent (55 million) of the 220 million households that traveled in 2019*.

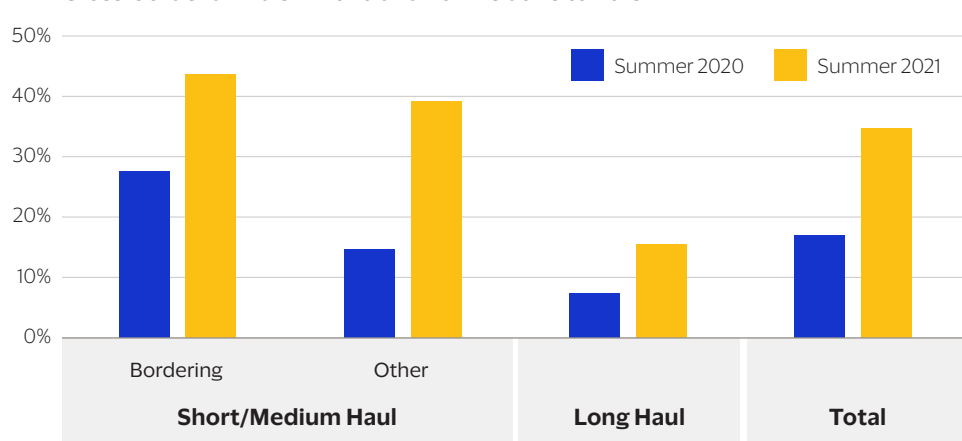
But current trends suggest that getting back to pre-pandemic levels of travel could be closer than the aggregate numbers alone suggest.

Only **55 million** households traveled internationally in the first nine months of 2021

Lifting travel bans

Up until early June 2021, a majority of countries imposed total or partial bans on cross-border travel, and thus reduced the availability of travel to many potential travelers.

Cross-border arrivals in 2020 and 2021 relative to 2019



Global cross-border travel between countries that share a land border in the summer of 2021:

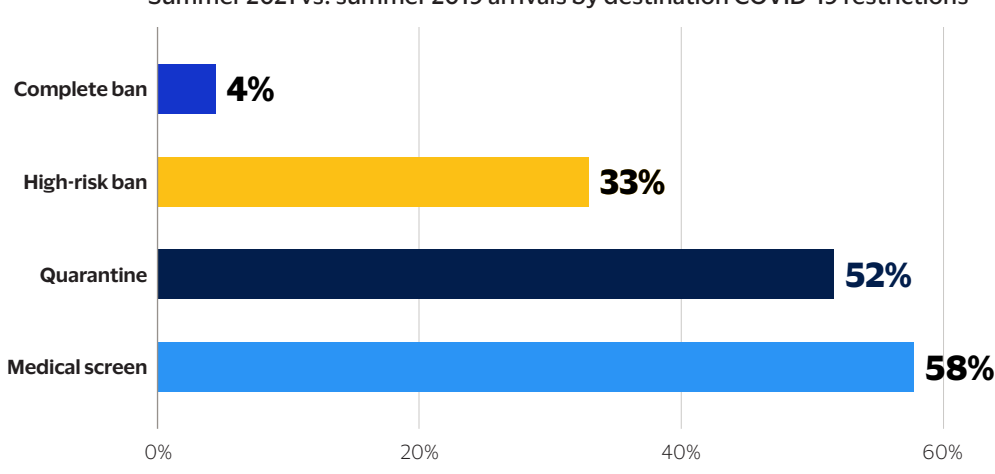
45% of its 2019 volume

All of the top 10 countries—accounting for 40 percent of global travel—have re-opened for business.

Lifting cross-border travel bans can increase cross-border travel by

50%

Summer 2021 vs. summer 2019 arrivals by destination COVID-19 restrictions



Speed of recovery

Travel between bordering countries has recovered the fastest, followed by travel over short/medium distances between non-adjacent countries, and long-distance travel recovering the slowest.



Some short/medium-haul travel corridors recovered nearly two-thirds of their 2019 volume in summer 2021.

Cross-border arrivals by destinations and distances traveled in the summer of 2021 (relative to 2019)

Destination Region	Short/Medium Haul		Long Haul	Total
	Bordering	Other		
Europe	62%	55%	17%	47%
Asia Pacific	8%	1%	5%	4%
North America	15%	56%	11%	15%
LAC	63%	65%	32%	56%
Other	40%	43%	27%	38%
World	44%	39%	16%	35%

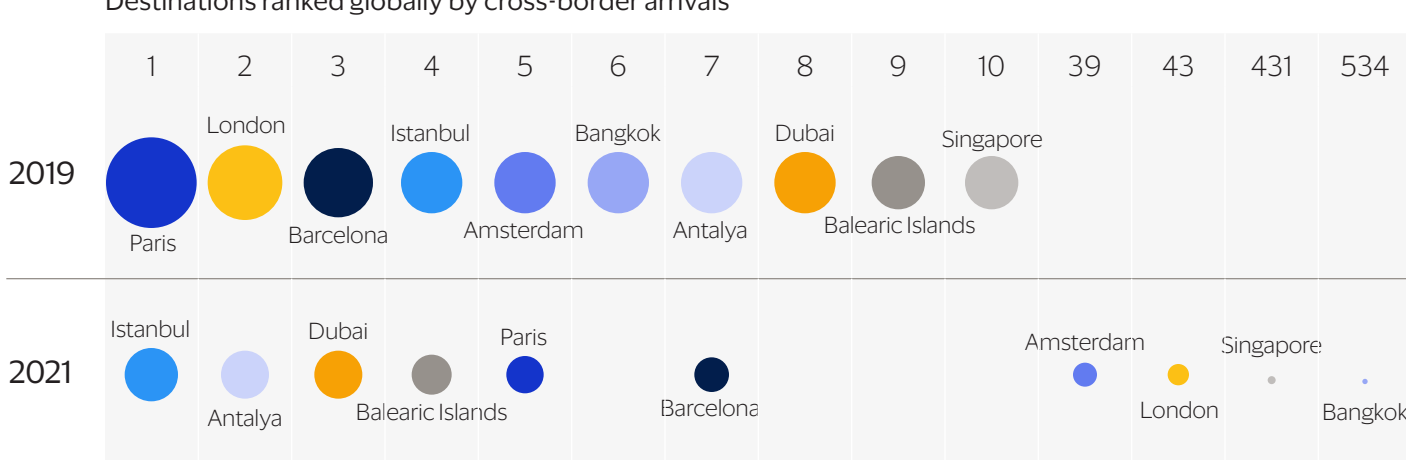
Source: Visa International Travel Platform

Short-term changes

There has been a profound shift in the popularity of key destinations as cross-border travel resumes.

Top 10 global travel destinations (first nine months of 2019 vs. 2021)

Destinations ranked globally by cross-border arrivals



Source: Visa International Travel Platform

Bubble's size based on estimated cross-border arrivals



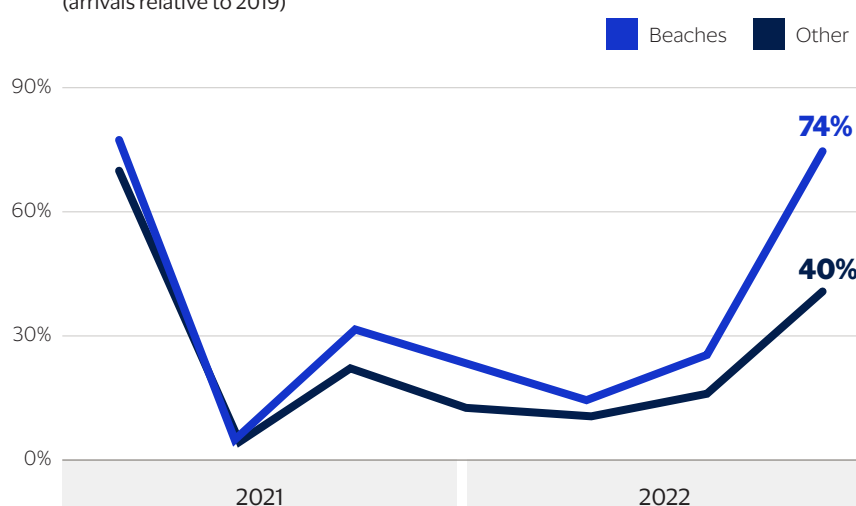
But as the restrictions are relaxed and travelers return, old patterns should re-emerge over the next few years.

Winter travel looks strong

Beach destinations are also well positioned to benefit from the relaxation in travel restrictions, according to our analysis of summer 2021 travel.



Globally, beach destinations have staged a faster recovery in 2021 (arrivals relative to 2019)



Source: Visa International Travel Platform

Beach Destinations	
Cancun (Mexico)	107%
Rijeka (Croatia)	100%
Pula (Croatia)	99%
Cyclades (Greece)	99%
Polygyros (Greece)	94%
Rhodes (Greece)	90%
Split (Croatia)	83%
Antalya (Turkey)	82%
Mugla (Turkey)	82%
Palma (Spain)	73%

Globally, beach destinations in Mexico, Croatia, Greece and Turkey were especially popular in the summer of 2021, at the same time U.S. tourists flocked to areas around the Caribbean.



Want to see more? [View the full report.](#)