

Tourism is big business in Scotland

A record number of almost two million international tourists flocked to Scotland in the first six months of this year, spending around £1.5 billion.

The latest figures from the Office for National Statistics for the International Passenger Survey (IPS) show Scotland continued to outperform other parts of the UK.

They show there were a total of 1,975,000 visits to Scotland, representing a 14% increase on the same period last year and an increase of 46% compared with 2019.

Between January and June, international visitors spent almost £1.5 billion – up 2% on last year and 30% on 2019, in real terms, when adjusted for inflation.

European visitors were responsible for just over half of all trips, followed by North American visitors who continued to show the largest growth in visits, up 54% on 2023 figures.

Vicki Miller, CEO of VisitScotland, said: “These figures show that Scotland continues to be a destination of choice for international visitors in 2024 and is still outperforming other parts of the UK.

“They are a testament to the strength of Scotland’s offering with visits and spend up on 2019 and 2023, which was a record-breaking year for international visitors.

“These visitors, who stay longer and spend more, are crucial to our industry and the visitor economy, supporting businesses and communities across the country.

“Scotland’s strong international recovery has been a result of the work carried out by VisitScotland, industry and partners to drive demand over the last few years.

“We must continue building on this across our key markets, inspiring both domestic and international visitors through the channels we know they use to drive the visitor economy, growing its value to Scotland.”

The figures show that between April and June alone there were over 1,358,000 international visitors, with a record spend of £1.2 billion.

According to VisitScotland’s 2023 visitor survey, more than 80% of international visitors said they were likely to recommend Scotland as a destination to friends and family, making this the top source of inspiration for visitors.

Over two thirds of European and nearly half of long-haul visitors said they were likely to return to Scotland in the next five years.

And more than 70% of international visitors revealed they stayed in two or more places during their trip.

The top drivers for taking a holiday in Scotland were landscapes and scenery, history and culture, outdoor activities, Scotland’s people and ancestral ties.

A recent VisitScotland survey also found that 89% of international and domestic visitors agreed their trip in Scotland “enhanced their physical and emotional wellbeing”.



Queensferry Crossing – one of the attractions in Scotland