

Paris Leads the Way in Travel and Tourism Recovery

(Courtesy of Mia Taylor, TravelPulse)



Paris' tourism recovery has been dramatic. (photo via iStock/Getty Images Plus/Querbeet)

In 2022, cities around the world began their true rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic and that recovery was most visible in five popular European urban centers.

With travel restrictions gradually being lifted last year and demand for international travel returning, leading cities reported a significant uptick in travel and tourism GDP, according to the latest [Cities Economic Impact report](#) from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC).

Globally, [Paris](#) experienced the most impressive recovery with a \$36 billion GDP linked to travel and tourism, followed by Beijing at \$33 billion and Orlando, Florida with \$31 billion.

A total of 82 cities worldwide were included in the study, which revealed that in 2019 the combined GDP for all of the cities was \$734 billion. In 2022, however, the combined GDP for the same 82 cities was \$582 billion. Meanwhile, the projected 2032 GDP for the 82 cities is \$1.1 trillion.

A total of five cities in Europe were identified as the economic powerhouses of 2022. Beyond Paris, [London](#), [Berlin](#), Madrid and Rome are also leading the way for the continent.

In London, the travel and tourism sector GDP amounted to nearly \$15 billion in 2022. In Berlin, that figure was \$7.7 billion, while in Madrid the GDP reached more than \$5.5 billion. Rounding out the top five, Rome's travel and tourism industry GDP is experiencing the slowest recovery,

reaching nearly \$7 billion in 2022, which is still 30 percent behind 2019 levels for the popular Italian city.

“Three years on from the pandemic...recovery is well underway,” Julia Simpson, the WTTC president and CEO, said in the report’s executive summary.

“Travelers are flocking back to Paris, London, Berlin, Madrid, and Rome,” added Simpson.

“Business travel is growing steadily. And China’s reopening is bringing welcome visitors to cities across Europe. Tourists provide a massive boost to both the economy and job creation.”



Panoramic aerial skyline view of London. (photo via ZoltanGabor/iStock/Getty Images Plus)

Speaking of jobs, the report said travel and tourism-related employment was on track to return to 2019 levels in a few key cities, specifically Rio de Janeiro, Johannesburg and Chicago.

Beyond just those three leading cities, travel and tourism jobs across all 82 of the urban centers studied are also trending upward. In 2019, for instance, direct travel and tourism jobs in the cities studied accounted for 18.4 million jobs. Though that figure slumped to 15.7 million for 2022, the projected estimate for 2023 is 25.2 million jobs.

Finally, the report notes that as tourism recovers, these popular urban centers may once again be faced with one of the biggest challenges of pre-pandemic life—overcrowding.

“Overcrowding in some destinations is a risk,” says the report. “It is, therefore, important for cities to have the right policies in place to address it. Such policies ought to be enacted in advance before the problem comes to fruition.”