

The Statistics Iceland Travel Survey

1. Contact

1.1 Contact organisation	Statistics Iceland
1.2 Contact organisation unit	Analytics / Social Statistics
1.3 Contact name	Hjörvar Pétursson
1.6 Contact e-mail address	hjolvar.petursson@hagstofa.is
1.7 Contact phone number	528 1263

2. Metadata update

2.3 Metadata last update	July 17 th 2025
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3. Statistical presentation

3.1 Data description	<p>Data for the travel survey is collected both online and by phone and its aim is to gather information on residential travel, both for business and personal purposes, as long as they stay at least one night away from home. The survey is quarterly and has been conducted since 2021 in accordance with the legislation of the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) on tourism statistics.</p> <p>The questionnaire in Statistics Iceland's travel survey is in accordance with the legislation of the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) on tourism statistics. The methodology is based on directives of the European Union on tourism statistics, with the aim of making the results comparable with the results of similar surveys in other member states of the European Economic Area (EEA).</p>
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3.2 Classification system

Education

Information on education is obtained from the education register of Statistics Iceland. When calculating the weights in the travel survey, the highest degree of the participants according to the education register of Statistics Iceland is used in accordance with the education categories of ISCED, the International Standard Classification of Education. The three-level classification of education is based on the International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 2011 (<http://hagstofas3bucket.hagstofa.is/hagstofan/media/public/2018/37c1f0ac-47c8-47a3-8c16-2fc8add14d4f.pdf>). Basic education corresponds to categories 0-2, vocational, secondary and special education corresponds to categories 3-5, and higher education corresponds to categories 6-8.

Income

Information on income is obtained from Statistics Iceland's PAYE register. The weights are calculated using a four-part division into income groups. These groups are defined based on average income, the first group has 60% or less of average income, the second group has income between 60% of average and average income. The third income group has income between average income and 60% above average income, and the fourth group has income 60% above average or more.

Citizenship and residence

The National Register provides information on the respondents' citizenship and municipality. Residence is classified by the municipality number in the National Register.

3.3 Sector coverage

The sampling frame of the travel survey includes all Icelandic and foreign citizens aged 16–79 who are registered in the National Register and have legal residence in Iceland. The study is conducted in such a way that following each quarter, 1,550 individuals aged 16–79 who are Icelandic residents according to the National Register are contacted and asked about their travels in the previous quarter. For the final sample, those individuals who were found to be deceased, not resident in Iceland or not counted as part of the population for other reasons are excluded. The final response rate varies between quarters but is generally above 50%.

3.4 Statistical concepts and definition

Tourists

A tourist is a person who travels outside their usual everyday environment and stays at least one night at another location. Everyday environment refers to the place where one has a permanent residence and from where one goes to work or school.

Trips

A trip is a journey by an individual outside their usual everyday environment where they spend at least one night. The stay of seafarers onboard the ship on which they are crew members is not considered travel, nor is the accommodation of pilots/flight attendants for flights, as this is part of normal everyday environment. The same applies to hospital or prison stays. Regular trips to a summer house count as travel, even if people consider the summer house to be their second home.

Quarter

A trip is considered to have taken place in the quarter which includes the return from the trip, even if the trip began in the previous quarter.

Purpose of Trip

The survey divided trips into personal and business trips. Personal trips are trips where entertainment, recreation or other private business is the main purpose, including sports trips, trips to visit relatives and friends, and holiday trips. The main reason for the trip determines whether it is considered a personal or business trip.

Destination

The destination of a trip is considered the main destination of the trip or the place where the person stayed most nights. If the main destination is abroad, the trip is considered an international trip, even if one or more nights are spent in Iceland.

Population

People aged 16-79 years were asked about all trips with at least one overnight stay. Gender is recorded in the National Register of Iceland. Since individuals with a neutral gender are too few to be published separately, their gender is divided into men or women by random rule in cases where they are included in the sample.

Metadata

3.5 Statistical unit	Individual
3.6 Statistical population	<p>The population of the travel habits survey includes all Icelandic and foreign citizens aged 16–79 who are registered in the National Register and have legal residence in Iceland during the reference week of the survey.</p> <p>At the start of the travel habits survey in 2021, the population of the travel habits survey included all Icelandic and foreign citizens aged 16–79 who are registered in the National Register and have legal residence in Iceland. A new method for estimating the population that was introduced in March 2024 is based on a broader base of public data; tax data and student data in addition to the National Register (https://statice.is/publications/news-archive/inhabitants/the-population-on-1-january-2024/).</p> <p>For the final sample, those individuals who were found to be deceased, not residing in Iceland, or not counted as part of the population for other reasons are excluded.</p>
3.7 Reference area	Figures are given as sum totals for the entire country.
3.8 Time coverage	Quarterly figures starting in 2021.
3.9 Base period	Quarter.
4. Unit of measure	
4. Unit of measure	Number of trips.
5. Reference period	
5. Reference period	Data is collected throughout the year. The year is divided into quarters, and for each quarter the sample consists of 1,550 people.
6. Institutional mandate	

6.1 Legal acts and other agreements	EU Regulation No 692/2011 concerning European statistics on tourism Commission Implementing Regulation No 1051/ concerning European statistics on tourism , as regards the structure of the quality reports and the transmission of the data Text with EEA relevance Commission Implementing Regulation 2021/1179 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1051/2011 Laws and regulations pertaining to Statistics Iceland
7. Confidentiality	
7.1 Confidentiality - policy	Rules of Statistics Iceland regarding the handling of confidential data
7.2 Confidentiality – data treatment	As outlined in law nr. 163/2007 regarding Statistics Iceland and official statistics, and EC regulation 577/98, articles 10-13.
8. Release policy	
8.1 Release calendar	Rules on statistical releases
8.2 Release calendar access	Advance release calendar
8.3 User access	Figures are accessible on the Statistics Iceland website under the header “ Travel Survey ”
9. Frequency of dissemination	
9. Frequency of dissemination	Quarterly.
10. Accessibility and clarity	
10.1 News release	News releases based on the travel survey are released in conjunction with statistical updates, approximately six months after the end of the quarter.

Metadata

10.2 Publication	-
10.3 On-line database	Statistics are available through web tables on Statistics Iceland's website.
10.4 Micro-data access	Access to microdata for scientific research is available for access through applications to Statistics Iceland's Research Services.
10.5 Other	-
10.6 Documentation on methodology	Not available
10.7 Quality documentation	Not available
11. Quality management	
11.1 Quality assurance	Quality and security policy of Statistics Iceland
11.2 Quality assessment	The work is carried out according to accepted methods for sample surveys.
12. Relevance	
12.1 User needs	Main users are tourism stakeholders, ministries, institutions, the media and the public.
12.2 User satisfaction	Not available
12.3 Completeness	-
13. Accuracy and reliability	
13.1 Overall accuracy	-

13.2 Sampling errors

The travel survey is a sample survey. Sample surveys always involve uncertainty as the sample is not an exact replica of the entire register or population. Therefore, since there are fewer responses for each breakdown as the breakdown increases, the results are subject to greater uncertainty. The weights are based on nationality, gender, educational level, age and income on the PAYE database.

It is worth pointing out that figures for individual groups are based on considerable breakdown. This means that there is considerable uncertainty about counts in those groups that are based on a detailed breakdown (for example, for individual age groups).

13.3 Non-sampling errors

The main errors in the travel survey, other than sampling errors, are coverage errors and non-response errors.

Coverage errors

On the one hand, coverage errors arise from the fact that the register on which the sample is based, i.e. the sampling frame, is not exhaustive. On the other hand, they arise from the fact that the frame includes individuals or units that do not belong there. This is called undercoverage on the one hand and overcoverage on the other. For example, the National Register often includes a group of people who are based abroad for study or work for more than 6 months at a time each year, which thus fall outside the population definition of the study. If this group is not subtracted from the population aged 16-79, the estimate of the total size will be overestimated by the same amount. This type of error is called overcoverage. It is much more difficult to identify undercoverage, i.e. people who should be included in the population. This group includes Icelandic citizens registered with legal residence abroad but who reside in the country, and people from the European Economic Area who live and work in Iceland without registration of legal residence.

Non-response bias

In all studies, results can be biased because non-response in the sample is distributed unevenly across groups. The main reasons for non-response are refusals, impediments due to illness or disability, absence from home during the survey, or failure to locate the address or telephone number of those in the sample. In the travel survey, non-response bias is seen as the most likely source of bias.

14. Timeliness and punctuality

14.1 Timeliness	Data collection and processing takes place each quarter for the previous quarter. The aim is to have each quarter's figures available no later than six months after the end of the quarter or as soon as possible.
14.2 Punctuality	Results of the travel survey are generally published on previously announced dates.
15. Coherence and comparability	
15.1 Comparability – geographical	The travel survey contributes to Eurostat's international data collection, which is intended to collect information on travel habits. Emphasis is placed on harmonised data collection and processing methods between European countries, with the aim of ensuring comparability of results across countries participating in the European Statistical Cooperation.
15.2 Comparability – over time	The travel habits study began in 2021, and both the questionnaire and the research design have remained unchanged since then.
15.3 Coherence – cross domain	The Icelandic Tourist Board estimates the number of Icelanders traveling abroad through Keflavík Airport based on a systematic sample taken from passengers before entering the departure area of Keflavík Airport. Metadata for passenger departure counts from Iceland are available on the Icelandic Tourist Board's website. Since this estimate uses nationality based on passport and not residence, these figures are not fully comparable with Statistics Iceland's travel survey.
15.4 Coherence – internal	-
16. Cost and burden	
16. Cost and burden	Participants in the sample are free to refuse to participate in the study. The average interview time is about 15 minutes, shorter if participants did not travel at all in the last quarter.
17. Data revision	
17.1 Data revision - policy	See Statistics Iceland's policy on statistical revisions

17.2 Data revision -practice	Time series on the number of trips are reviewed with each publication and updated as necessary.
18. Statistical processing	
18.1 Source data	This is a sample study, based on responses of individuals to online and telephone surveys.
18.2 Frequency of data collection	Quarterly
18.3 Data collection	Information in Statistics Iceland's travel survey is collected by completing questionnaires in web forms (CAWI) and telephone interviews (CATI) and recorded in the BLAISE data collection system. This program saves time during the survey, makes it easier for interviewers to choose the right order of questions and reduces errors. Calls are mainly made in the evenings and on weekends. During the day, attempts are also made to call participants who, according to information from other household members, are most receptive at that time. Extensive attempts are made to track down those who have changed their address or have not registered a telephone number. Participants are not sought out for in-person interviews. Interviewers call participants from Statistics Iceland's call centre. Beforehand, interviewers are instructed in interviewing techniques and the questionnaire, the computer system are reviewed, and any lack of clarity is cleared up.
18.4 Data validation	Data validation is performed during data collection, where responses must meet certain rules for internal consistency for each respondent. In data processing, other rules are applied to examine the data set and the consistency between different variables.
18.5 Data compilation	All results are weighted by response probabilities based on origin, gender, educational level, age, and income based on the PAYE register. Data processing is performed in SQL and the statistical program R.
18.6 Adjustment	The estimated population in the results of the habits survey is based on the population in the National Register, by gender and age, minus the estimated number who are not residents of the country at the given time (https://statice.is/publications/news-archive/inhabitants/the-population-on-1-january-2024/).
19. Comment	

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