U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary of Transportation

Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Data Spotlight

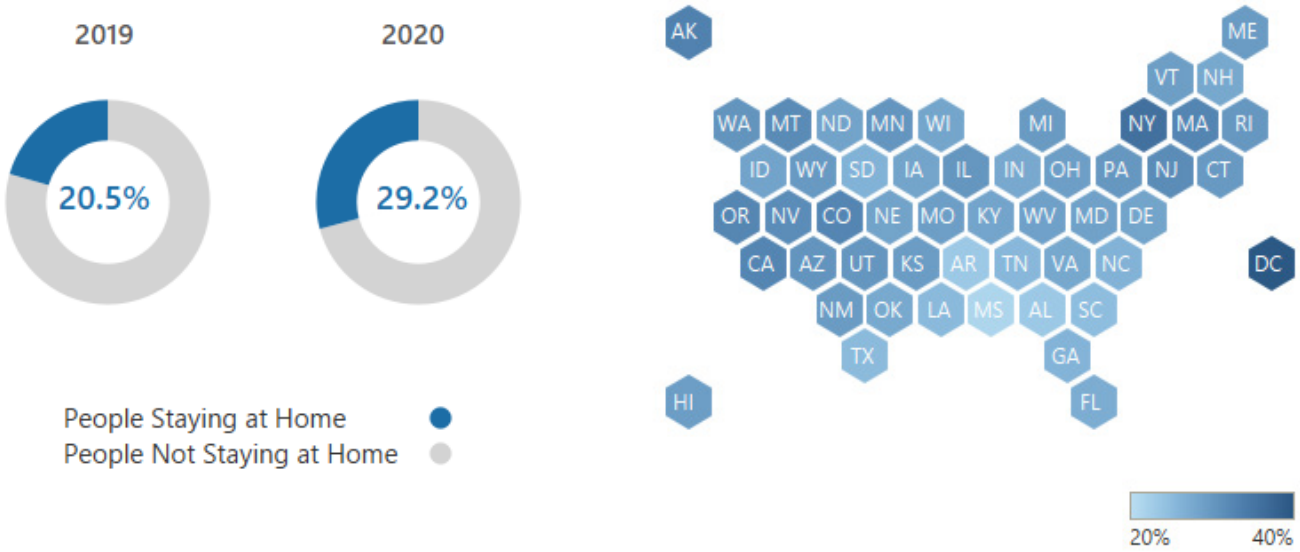
December 9, 2020

Thanksgiving Week Travel: Total Number of Trips Down, Long Distance Trips Up Over Last Year

The Thanksgiving 2020 travel data are in, and they indicate that the total number of trips taken this Thanksgiving was down significantly from 2019, but trips between 50 and 500 miles increased.

MORE AMERICANS STAY HOME ALTOGETHER EACH DAY

On average through the week, 29.2% of Americans stayed home each day compared with 20.5% during the same period in 2019. That's greater than the average percentage of people (24.8%) staying home each day during the 4th of July week this year. As the map below shows, Washington, DC (40%), and New York State (36%) led the nation in the percentage of people staying home.



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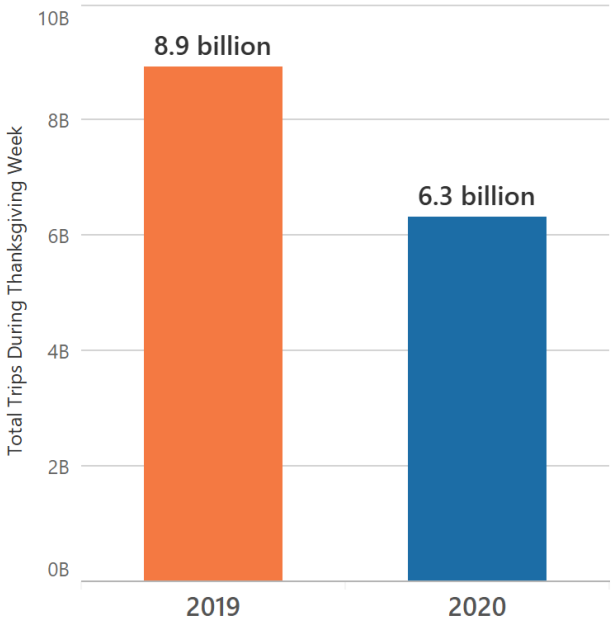
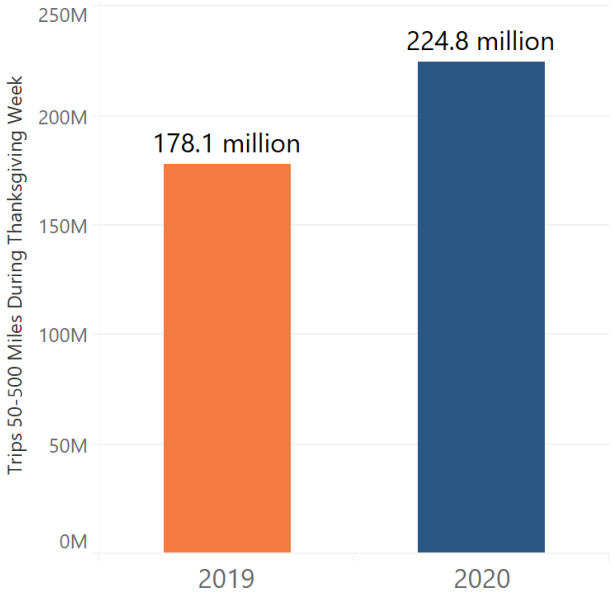
PREVIOUSLY OBSERVED DECLINES IN TOTAL NUMBER OF TRIPS CONTINUE THROUGH THANKSGIVING

The 6.3 billion trips taken in the U.S. during the Monday-Sunday week of Thanksgiving this year are 29% lower than the 8.9 billion trips recorded last year. A trip is considered a movement that includes at least 1 stay of longer than 10 minutes at an anonymized location away from home.

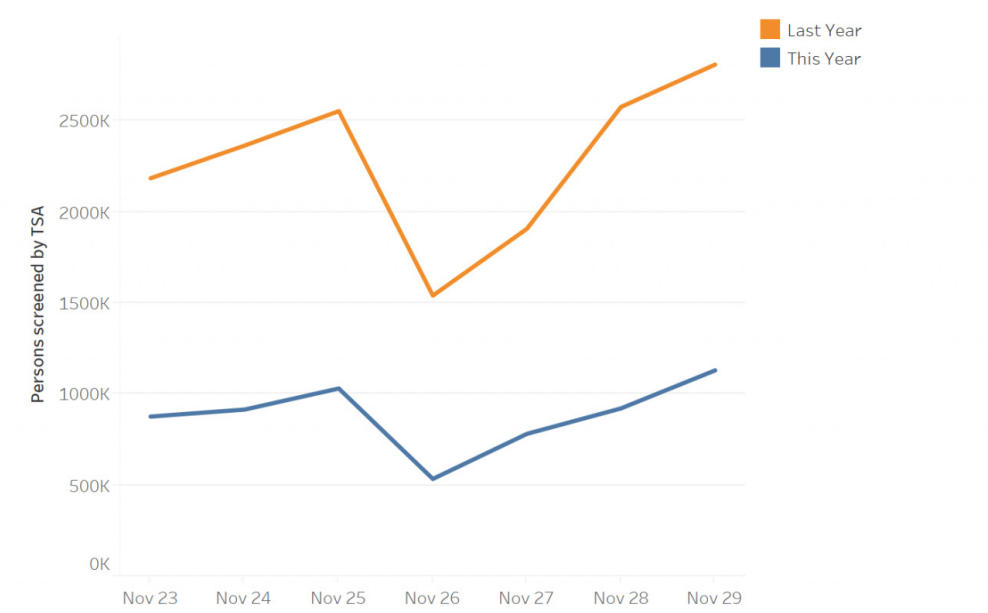


LONG-DISTANCE TRIPS SHOW STRONG PULL OF HOLIDAY TRAVEL DESPITE THE PANDEMIC

The number of trips between 50 and 500 miles during Thanksgiving week increased this year by 46.7 million over last year. Trips greater than 500 miles decreased by 3.5 million.



It has been widely reported that, last Sunday, the Transportation Security Administration screened the most air travelers in a single day since March. Nonetheless, the 6.2 million persons screened for the Thanksgiving week was still down 61% from last year. This indication of a decline in air travel is consistent with the observed year-over-year decline in trips over 500 miles and might indicate substitution of surface for air travel.



SOURCE

Data prepared for the Bureau of Transportation Statistics by the Maryland Transportation Institute and Center for Advanced Transportation Technology Laboratory at the University of Maryland from a mobile device data panel from merged multiple data sources. Numbers are subject to change.

NOTES

These data are experimental and may not meet all of our quality standards. Experimental data products are created using new data sources or methodologies that benefit data users in the absence of other relevant products. We are seeking feedback from data users and stakeholders on the quality and usefulness of these new products. Experimental data products that meet our quality standards and demonstrate sufficient user demand may enter regular production if resources permit.

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