

Travel and Tourism in the USA in the Light of COVID-19. Major Selected Points

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Abstract:

Prior to COVID-19, travel and tourism had grown to be one of the most significant sectors in the global economy, accounting for 10% of global GDP and more than 320 million employments globally. The worldwide epidemic, the first of its kind in a new era of interconnection, has threatened 100 million jobs, many of them in micro, small, and medium-sized businesses that employ a large proportion of women, who make up 54 percent of the tourist sector. Tourism-dependent countries are likely to bear the brunt of the crisis's consequences for far longer than other economies. Contact-intensive services critical to the tourist and travel industries have been disproportionately impacted by the epidemic and will continue to struggle until people feel comfortable enough to travel in large numbers again.

The aim of the paper is the assessment of the situation of travel and tourism in the USA in the light of COVID-19 pandemic. The following research problems were put forward: What is the diversification of situation of the tourism in the USA in the light of COVID-19? Which of the researched aspects of tourism in the USA in the light of COVID-19 have the highest and lowest level in the researched time scope? In the theoretical part of the paper was depicted the literature review. The studies were carried out within the documentation, statistical, comparative, dynamics analysis. The results showed that the situation of travel and tourism in the USA in the light of COVID-19 had different tendencies. The inference process took place in a deductive way.

Keywords: travel; tourism; SPA industry; monuments; vacation; USA; COVID-19; pandemic.

JEL Classification: A19; L83; O50; Z30.

Introduction

COVID-19 has infected over 514,754,303 individuals and killed over 6,266,100 by May 2022 (WHO 2022). Currently the situation is better as it was at the beginning of the pandemic. Coronavirus deaths in the United States are expected to reach 1 million in the coming weeks, but for now, daily death reports continue to decline. Fewer than 350 deaths are currently being announced each day, a decrease of more than 20,00% in the past two weeks of April 2022 (TNYT 2022). It should be mentioned that at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, foreign travel has been almost completely halted, while domestic tourism has been hampered by lockdown conditions enforced in many countries. Although, the majority places have begun to open up.

Tourism is an important part of the global economy. In 2021, global tourism increased by 4,00% over the previous year (415 million versus 400 million). However, according to preliminary United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) figures, foreign tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) were still 72,00% lower than in the pre-pandemic year of 2019. This follows on from 2020, which was the worst year on record for tourism, with overseas arrivals dropping by 73,00%. According to the inaugural edition of the World Tourism Barometer for 2022, improving vaccination rates, together with relaxing of travel restrictions due to greater cross-border cooperation and protocols, have all contributed to the release of pent-up demand (UNWTO 2022).

International tourism recovered modestly in the second half of 2021, with international arrivals down 62,00% in both the third and fourth quarters of 2021 when compared to pre-pandemic levels. According to limited data, international arrivals in December were 65,00% below 2019 levels. The entire impact of the Omicron variation and the increase in COVID-19 patients is still unknown. The essential conditions suggested by experts for the effective return of international tourism are a swift and extensive vaccine roll-out, followed by a significant reduction of travel

restrictions, and improved coordination and clearer information on travel norms. According to UNWTO projections, foreign visitor visits might increase by 30,00% to 78,00% in 2022 compared to 2021. However, this would still be 50,00% to 63,00% lower than pre-pandemic levels. The current increase in COVID-19 cases and the Omicron variant are expected to derail the recovery and undermine trust until half of 2022, when some governments impose travel bans and restrictions for certain markets. At the same time, vaccine coverage remains unequal, and several destinations, mostly in Asia and the Pacific, continue to have their borders entirely blocked. With the jump in oil prices, increase in inflation, prospective rise in interest rates, high debt levels, and prolonged disruption in supply chains, a hard economic climate might put extra pressure on the effective recovery of international tourism (WHO 2022).

However, the ongoing tourist recovery in many countries, namely in Europe and the Americas, along with extensive vaccine rollout and a significant coordinated removal of travel restrictions, may assist to restore consumer confidence and speed international tourism recovery in 2022. While international tourism is rebounding, domestic tourism is driving the sector's recovery in a growing number of locations, particularly those with strong domestic markets (UNWTO 2022). Domestic tourism and travel close to home, as well as open-air activities, nature-based products, and rural tourism, are among the primary travel trends that will continue to shape tourism in 2022.

1. Literature Review

There is no commonly admitted meaning of the term "tourism" (Buckley 2012). Tourism involves a expanded scope of economic, environmental, and social actions (Perles & Ivars, 2018). The World Tourism Organization (WTO) explains tourism as "individuals traveling to and staying in places outside their constant conditions for leisure, business, and other expectations not associated to the movement of an action reimbursed from within the spot visited for not more than one running year" (UNWTO 2022).

The sightseeing trade constitutes a significant component in the worldwide economy. It has a beneficial influence on regional economies by establishing and stimulating small and medium-sized enterprises, bringing about the establishment of millions of occupations. It also aids rising economies thrive financially (Robin, Pedroche & Astorga, 2017; Boluk, Cavaliere & Higgins-Desbiolles, 2019; Batle, Orfila-Sintes & Moon, 2018). Nevertheless, the tourism sector has a damaging effect on the environment, resulting in environmental impairment, contamination, biodiversity destruction, and heritage corrosion (Costa, Rodrigues & Pacheco, 2020; Girard & Nocca, 2017).

The maturation and development of the tourism sector involve the considerable growth of means such as water and electricity, as well as the formation of a meaningful quantity of waste (solid waste and sewage) that must be correctly handled. Enlarged tourism also drives to greater movability, that raises road overcrowding, noise, and air pollution, and, in a consequence, CO₂ emissions. As a result, the unsuitable inequality amid economic and environmental components, may have an influence on the expansion of tourism spots in the middle and long period (Boley, 2014; Pan et al., 2018; Girard & Nocca 2017).

Publications examined argue that COVID-19 shows a possibility to modify the ongoing tourism sector against a more continuous and ecologically beneficial model. For the reason that multinational movability and travel constraints imposed to restrain the development of the virus, the evolution of the new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) has led to the fall of tourism-supported enterprises globally. The tourism suspension has caused less pollution (Ioannides, Gyimothy 2020), prompting remuneration of the sustainability and resilience of the pre-existing socio-economic organization (Renaud, 2020) along with the environmental connotations of tourism, such as carbon footprint or climate modification (Iaquinto, 2020). Furthermore, in the matter of an epidemic with such a large hazard of pollution, the sanitary methods of social distancing, mask application, and hygiene implemented worldwide brought other problems, such as the practicability of mass tourism, with cruise tourism (Renaud 2020) and urban tourism (Montanari, 2020) being two of the most well-known issues. The epidemic has the opportunity to vary worldwide travel models in the long term (Ioannides & Gyimothy 2020).

Consequently, it is discussed that COVID-19 could stimulate more proper and continual tourism (Renaud, 2020; Sheller, 2020; Ioannides & Gyimothy, 2020; Gossling et al., 2020; Mackenzie & Goodnow, 2020; Zielinski & Botero, 2020; Wen et al., 2020) that articulates the climate and destination arrangement questions put by the enduring tourism model (McGinlay et al., 2020). The requirement for short-term economic regaining, in contrast, may balance out this benefit. The fact that tourism is a chief action for many nations' economies (Iaquinto, 2020) may endanger this alternation action. As a matter of fact, examples depict that tourism regains quickly in the field of difficulty, such as the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunamis, volcano eruptions, terrorist attacks, and diversified health crises such as SARS in China

(Ioannides & Gyimothy, 2020), and the 2008 economic-based crisis. These actions were incomplete to clarify the global tourism expansion downtrend (Gossling et al., 2020).

The principal discrepancy amid this and former crises is that the consequences of climate alternations are developing into more visible (and global) and, while not as instant as those of the COVID-19 pandemic, they have the possibility to be rougher (Gossling et al., 2020). As a consequence, there is worldwide settlement on the demand to adaptation to a more unbiased and supportable tourism pattern for the environment basically, and tourist destinations and their populations especially (Sheller, 2020). This conversion procedure is precise more significant in tropical countries and small island emerging states (SIDS), that are not only substantially conditioned on tourism but also extraordinarily exposed to the damaging outcomes of climate modification (Gossling et al., 2020; Sheller, 2020). Additionally, there is a coherent dissimilarity in benefits and performance schemes amid visitors and residents in those states, that is repeatedly clarified as an expansion of colonialism (Sheller, 2020).

2. Research Questions and Methodology

The paper regards the selected aspects within the tourism in the USA. The fundamental aim of the paper is the assessment of the situation of travel and tourism in the USA in the light of COVID-19 pandemic. The author presents the following research problems:

- What is the diversification of situation of the tourism in the USA in the light of COVID-19 pandemic?
- Which of the researched aspects of tourism in the USA in the light of COVID-19 have the highest and lowest level in the 2016-2020?

In the theoretical part of the paper is depicted the literature review. The studies were carried out within documentation, statistical, comparative, dynamics analysis. The paper was prepared on the basis of the print, digital and electronic sources: reports, data bases, books, textbooks, academic and trade journals, scientific papers.

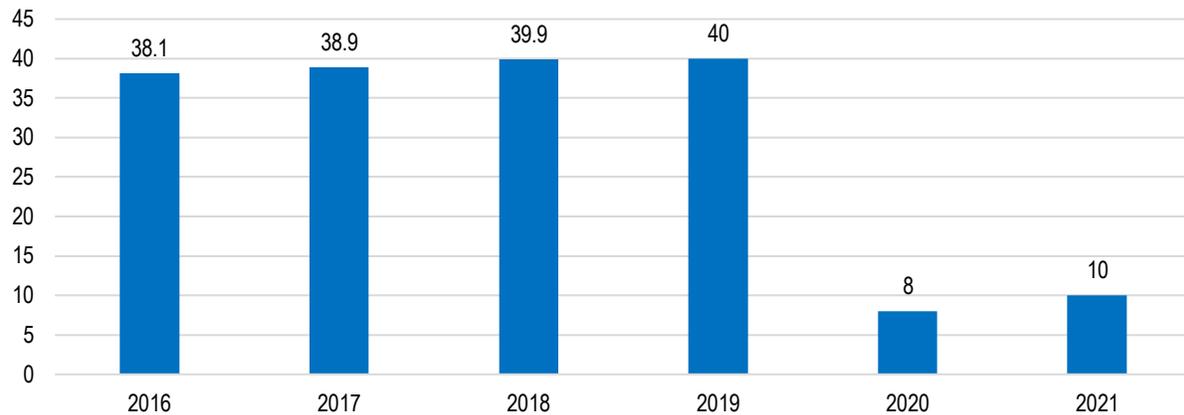
3. Analysis and Research Results

The research was carried out within the documentation, statistical, comparative, dynamics analysis. The time scope of the research was 2016-2020, but in some aspects was broaden. The territorial scope of the study was the United States of America. The analysis was carried out on the following issues:

- number of overseas arrivals to the United States from 2016 to 2021, Figure 1;
- revenue of the spa industry in the United States from 2016 to 2020, in billion US Dollars, Figure 2;
- number of recreational visitors to the Lincoln Memorial in the United States from 2016 to 2021, in millions, Figure 3;
- number of recreational visitors to the Statue of Liberty National Monument in the United States from 2016 to 2021, in millions, Figure 4;
- share of travelers in the United States that have had travel plans affected by the coronavirus pandemic in the United States from February to April 2020, Figure 5;
- share of people that miss traveling as a result of the coronavirus and can't wait to travel again in the United States as of April 2020, Figure 6;
- share of adults that have taken a staycation during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the United States as of August 2020, Figure 7;
- most affordable cities for backpacking in the US as of January 2020, by daily price, in US dollars, Figure 8.

Data from Figure 1 show that the highest level of the number of overseas arrivals to the United States from 2016 to 2021 was recorded in 2019 (40 million). The pre-pandemic period characterized itself with the rising trends, in the stable way within the research variable. As a result of travel restrictions connected to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the number of arrivals fell to the lowest level of the 8 million in 2020.

Figure 1. Number of overseas arrivals to the United States from 2016 to 2021 (in millions)

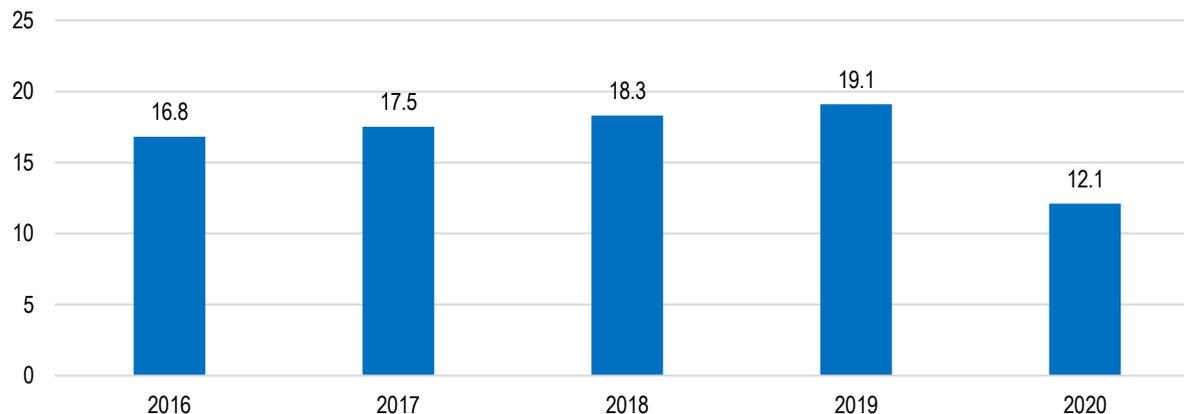


Source: Own elaboration on the base of Statista, Overseas arrivals to the US

It should be noted that during the research period were observed the decreases in the values form - 0,25% to - 120,00%. However, the only one year characterized itself with an increase of 80,00% in 2020, in comparison with 2019. Such development of phenomenon indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic affected in a significant way on that sector. People stayed at home, in the light of implementing new order within socio-economic life.

The data from Figure 2 present that highest level of the number of revenues of the spa industry in the United States from 2016 to 2020 was recorded in 2019 (19,1 billion US Dollars).

Figure 2. Revenue of the spa industry in the United States from 2016 to 2020 (in billion US Dollars)



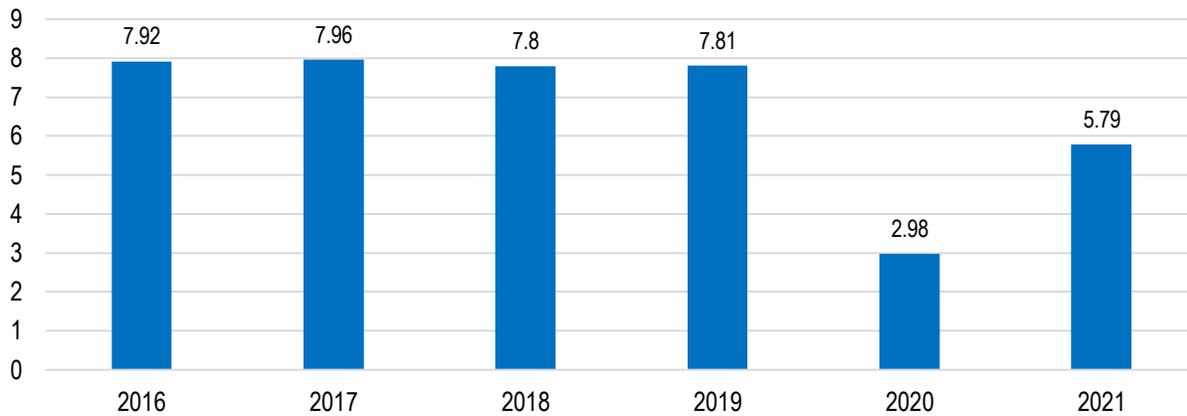
Source: Own elaboration on the base of Statista, US spa industry revenue

The research variable depicts the growing in the moderate way tendencies to the moment of breaking out of the COVID-19 pandemic. The lowest level of the researched variable was recorded in 2020 (12,1 billion US dollars). This difference represents a fall of more than 36,00% from the original 2020 projections and can be ascribed to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which necessitated the temporary and, in some cases, permanent closure of health centers and spas throughout the United States. It should be noted that the research period characterized itself in the majority of cases increases reaching from 2017 (+4,17%) compared to 2016, to 4,57% in 2018, compared with 2017. Going to the spa is a popular way to unwind and relax from the worries of daily life. In 2019, the average revenue per spa visit in the United States was over \$99.5 USD. By 2020, the average income per spa visit had fallen marginally to \$97.5 USD. Despite the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the spa industry in the United States reported 124 million visitors that year. This amount, however, was surpassed in 2019 by the number of spa visits in the United States (SPAS 2022). Approximately 192 million Americans attended spas in the United States during the time. Fewer Americans frequented spas in 2020 as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic and its considerable impact on health facilities and spas across the United States. This raises concerns about the public's comfort level in attending a spa after companies reopen in the United States (SPAA, 2022). As of April 2020, 47,00% of Americans said they were

hesitant to visit a spa after companies reopened. In comparison, 25,00% of respondents said they were very apprehensive about visiting a spa, while 28,00% said they were not nervous at all (MR 2022).

The data from figure 3. presents that the highest-level Number of recreational visitors to the Lincoln Memorial in the United States from 2016 to 2021 (in millions) was recorded in 2017 (7,96 million) and 2016 (7,92 million) respectively. From 2016 to 2017 it was noticed the mounting trend within the values but in 2018 it was observed a little decline that do not continued in 2019. The stable level was disrupted in 2020 when the COVID-19 developed itself in the significant way.

Figure 3. Number of recreational visitors to the Lincoln Memorial in the United States from 2016 to 2021 (in millions)

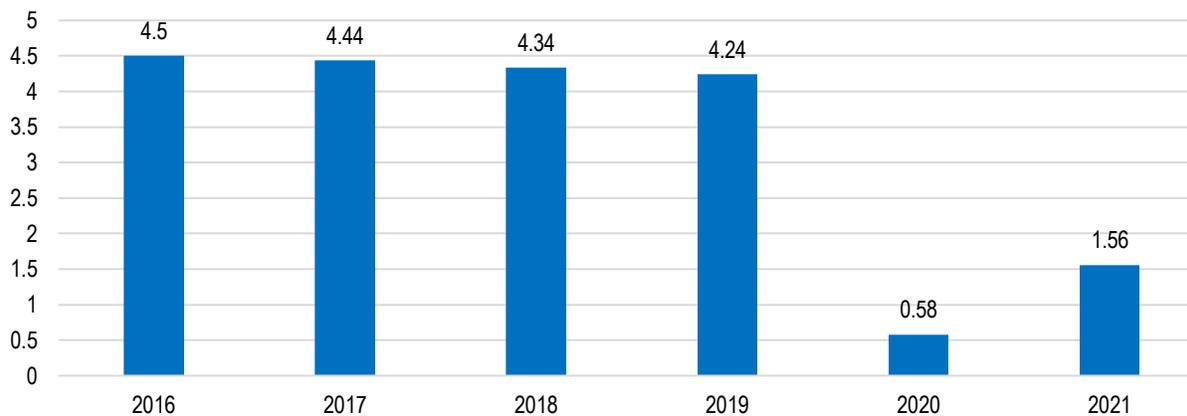


Source: Own elaboration on the base of Statista, Lincoln Memorial visitors 2021 (2022)

The lowest level of the researched variable was recorded in 2020 (2,98 million). It should be noted that during the research period existed the highest increase in 2021 (+94,30%), in comparison with 2020 within the research variable. The biggest decline within the explored period characterized itself with a downturn of -61,84% in 2020, in comparison with 2019 (NPSa, 2022). In 2021, the number of visitors to the Lincoln Memorial reached 5.79 million. While attendance to the memorial did not match pre-pandemic levels in 2021, the number of people received was a significant gain over the previous year.

The data from Figure 4 depict that the highest number of recreational visitors to the Statue of Liberty National Monument in the United States from 2016 to 2021 (in millions) was recorded in 2016 (4,5 million) and 2017 (4,44 million) respectively.

Figure 4. Number of recreational visitors to the Statue of Liberty National Monument in the US from 2016 to 2021 (in millions)



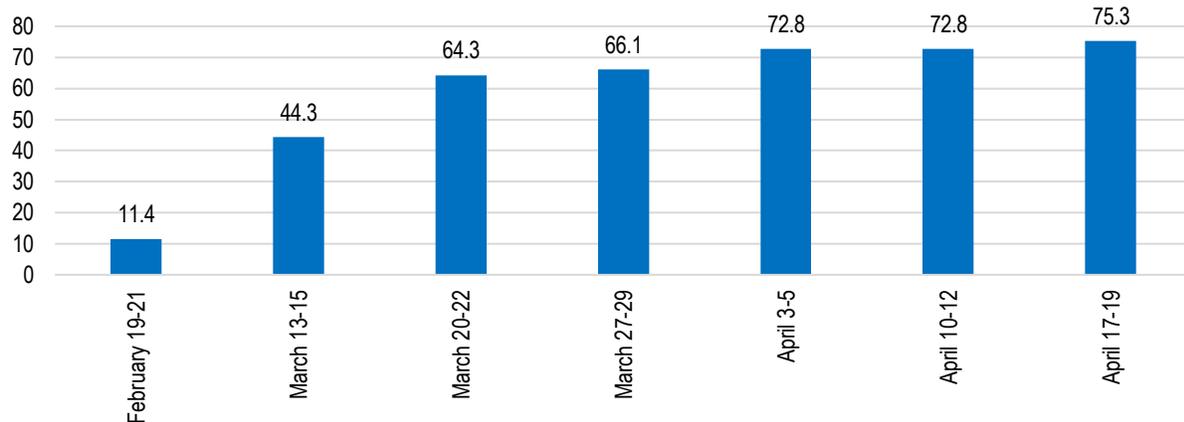
Source: Own elaboration on the base of Statista, Statue of Liberty visitors 2021 (2022)

The lowest level of the researched variable was recorded in 2020 (0,58 million). It should be noted that during the research period the highest increase existed in 2021 (+168,97%), in comparison with 2020 within the research

variable. The biggest decline within the explored period characterized itself with the downturn of -86,32% in 2020, in comparison with 2019 (NPSb 2022). Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic visitation fell to a comparable level in 2013 as a result of the monument's closure due to Hurricane Sandy damage. In 1924, the United States government designated the statue as a national monument. It was given to the National Parks Service some ten years later, and it has remained in its care to this day. Along with Liberty Island, the Statue of Liberty National Monument now includes Ellis Island (renowned for its origins as a federal immigration station). Since then, visitors to Ellis Island have been included in the Statue of Liberty's visitor count. The Statue of Liberty's appeal is indisputable, with many other sites failing to attract comparable crowds. However, due to the global health crisis, the monument was unable to receive as many tourists as normal. During this time, numerous other well-known attractions in the United States fared far better. Mount Rushmore, located in South Dakota, is one of these sites, attracting about four times the number of visitors to the Statue of Liberty in 2020 (SOL 2022). In the same year, nearly six times as many people visited the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC as the Statue of Liberty.

The data from Figure 5 depict that the highest share of travelers in the United States that have had travel plans affected by the coronavirus pandemic in the United States from February to April 2020 (in %) was recorded on April 17-19, 2020 (75,30%).

Figure 5. Share of travelers in the US that have had travel plans affected by the coronavirus pandemic in the US from February to April 2020 (in %)

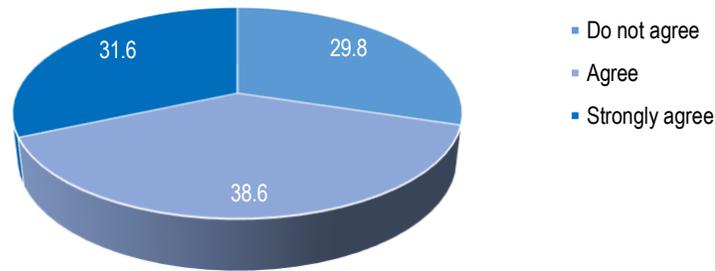


Source: Own elaboration on the base of Statista, COVID-19: impact on travel plans US 2020 (2022)

This covers meetings for pleasure, business, or groups. Travel arrangements all throughout the world were disrupted as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Such situation was connected with the dynamic spreading of the COVID-19 pandemic (DEL 2022). In the result of that the governors of the particular states-imposed restrictions on travel, issuing an order or directive requiring a traveler to quarantine upon arrival, present a negative COVID-19 test, or provide proof of vaccination. Beginning in March 2020, 27 states and Washington D.C. enacted travel restrictions during the pandemic. In some states were extended the travel restrictions on out-of-state travelers and residents returning to the state, the 14-day travel requirement for out-of-state travelers from coronavirus hot spot areas. In comparison, only 11,40% of tourists polled between February 19 and 21, 2020 said the coronavirus virus had an impact on their trip plans (USTA 2022).

The data from Figure 6 depict that the highest share of people that miss traveling as a result of the coronavirus and can't wait to travel again in the United States as of April 2020 (in %) was recorded within the category "Agree" (38,60%).

Figure 6. People that miss traveling as a result of the COVID-19 and can't wait to travel again in US as of April, 2020 (in %)

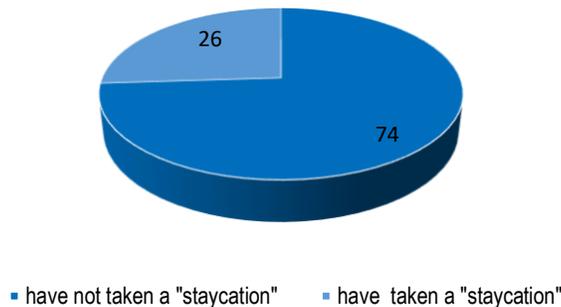


Source: Own elaboration on the base of Statista, COVID-19; excitement for future travel US 2020 (2022)

The lowest level of the researched variable was recorded within the category “Do not agree” (29,80%). Travel arrangements all over the world have been disrupted as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic. The epidemic has caused havoc on the global travel and hotel industries. The United States has been particularly heavily struck. From March to November 2020, three out of every ten Americans made an overnight excursion. Furthermore, because the pandemic has caused many businesses to shift to remote work, just 8,00% had an overnight business trip between March and November 2020. In addition to the hotel business, airlines were suffering as a result of several nations implementing severe travel limits and enforced quarantines for visitors. Separate statistics submitted with the Bureau of Transportation Statistics stated that air passenger traffic in September 2020 fell by 65,00% when compared to the same period in 2019 (USN 2022).

The data from Figure 7 depict that the highest share of adults that have taken a staycation during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the United States as of August 2020 (in %) was recorded within the category “have not taken a staycation” (74,00%).

Figure 7. Share of adults that have taken a staycation during the COVID-19 in the United States as of August 2020 (in %)

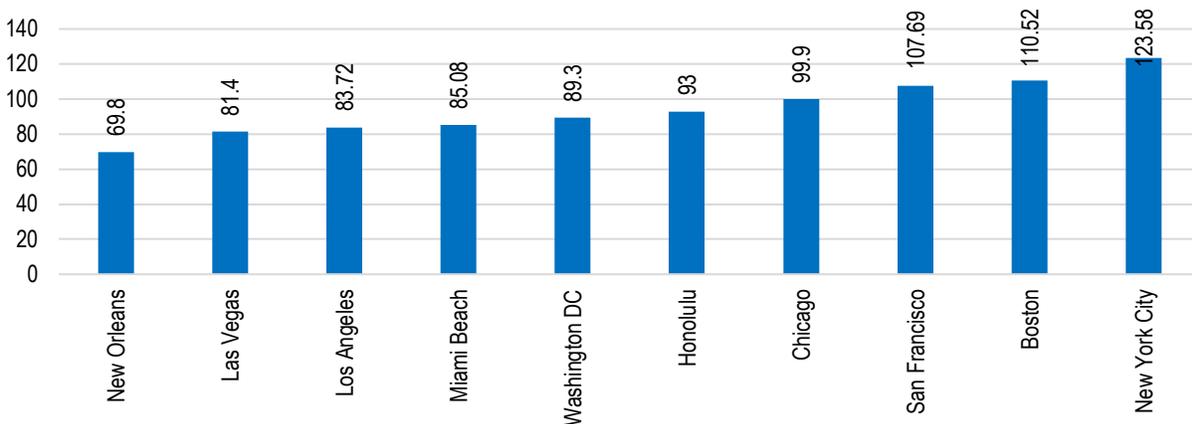


Source: Own elaboration on the base of Statista, COVID-19: US adults who took a staycation 2020 (2022)

The lowest level of the researched variable was recorded within the category “have taken a staycation” (26,00%). Stay-at-home restrictions triggered by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic impacted travel in the United States in 2020. As a result, some people sought vacation alternatives in their home nation or local area. This is known as a “staycation”, which is a vacation spent in one's home country rather than abroad, or a vacation spent at home with day trips to local sights. According to an August 2020 study, 26,00% of respondents in the United States took a vacation during the coronavirus epidemic. Surprisingly, 62,00% stated they regretted taking their trip. One-fifth reported they couldn't totally relax, and 27% claimed COVID-19 made them anxious during their trip. While 55,00% claimed COVID-19 made their holidays longer (the average trip was 4.5 days), 62,00% said they spent less money on vacations. One-third bought travel insurance (TAC 2022).

The data from Figure 8 depict that the most affordable cities for backpacking in the United States as of January 2020, by daily price (in USD) was recorded in New York City (123,58 USD) and Boston (110,52 USD) respectively.

Figure 8. Most affordable cities for backpacking in the United States as of January 2020, by daily price (in USD)



Source: Own elaboration on the base of Statista, Backpacking; most affordable cities in the US 2020 (2022)

The lowest level of the researched variable was recorded in New Orleans (69,8 USD), and Las Vegas (81,4 USD). According to the source, New Orleans had the cheapest daily total, with an average cost of 69.80 USD per day. It includes: a dorm room at a nice and cheap hostel, three budget meals, two public transportation rides, one paid cultural attraction, and three cheap drinks (as a “entertainment fund”). Before the pandemic, the US travel industry had grown for ten years in a run, owing to the strength of the domestic leisure, domestic business, and international inbound travel segments. Travel is an important economic engine in every part of the country, accounting for one out of every ten jobs and producing a travel trade surplus. Domestic corporate travel spending remained 56,00% below 2019 levels in 2021, while foreign travel spending maintained 78,00% below 2019 levels (OOU, 2022).

Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic outburst is increasing by the day, and the World Health Organization has maintained that the global economy is now experiencing a terrible time consequent World War II. The consternation of virus epidemic maintains people at home, but it will also carry individuals away from approaching travel institutions. As a consequence, the travel trade is kept between a rock and a hard place. So, keeping off direct communication, managing social limitations, and fastening to safekeeping regulations are the profound manners to bypass virus illness, and restraint is more appropriate than remedy.

The worldwide health dilemma has been the horridest catastrophe for the tourism trade, as stated by an analysis of the influence of the COVID-19 epidemic on globetrotter’s influx in USA. It was not the shock that officers had prognosticated, but they now necessitate to reconsider and remodel the economy away from tourism as the specific economic ground. Regardless, there is inspiration that the tourism sector will return stronger than forevermore experiencing from its contradicting circumstances. As maintained by Stuart-Hill and Sutfin (2020), every single strike or predicament in the tourism sector is continually accompanied by a term of restoration and then steadiness.

The most demanding responsibility through the revival time is reattaining passengers’ and business possessors’ trust, by reason of the vaccine does not secure a 100% prospect of gaining the infection. The abovementioned movements should be attentively examined in an attempt to extensively restore the tourism sector development possibilities. In addition, all participants, involving commuters, inhabitants, laborers, business possessors, and tour operators, must play their roles by regular keeping a mask and keeping social distance. Eventually, there is meaningful that the increasing body of knowledge about how the worldwide health catastrophe influences the tourism sector. On account of the virus is still bringing devastation globally, more research is required to establish the complete scope of the COVID-19 crisis’s range and whether the vaccine will aid regain tourists’ assurance in fully resuming the tourism trade. Travel and tourism are a significant economic driver in the United States, with the ability to support employment through the country. Travel and tourism policy involve a broad scope of enterprise activities in a globalization, regarding those outdoor the travel and tourist industry. The President has made the expansion of travel and tourism a fundamental significance for the United States government. In that attitude, it will be implemented National Travel and Tourism Strategy and instantly initiate crafting comprehensive projects to substantiate the possibility of the policies,

mechanisms, and suggestions overviewed in this document. To guarantee agency leadership's complete attention, the Tourism Policy Council will classify the realization of this National Strategy in agreement with Executive Order 13597, as well as the expansion of metrics to monitor progress. With the engaged partaking of the Administration's greatest levels, organizations will synchronize responsibilities and cooperate with corporate industry collaborators in addition to state, local, tribal, and territory authorities to accomplish expansion within the travel and tourist sector. These actions will help to rise economic prospects and employment expansion in the United States.

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