

International Travel and Migration: November 2011

Embargoed until 10:45am – 21 December 2011

Key facts

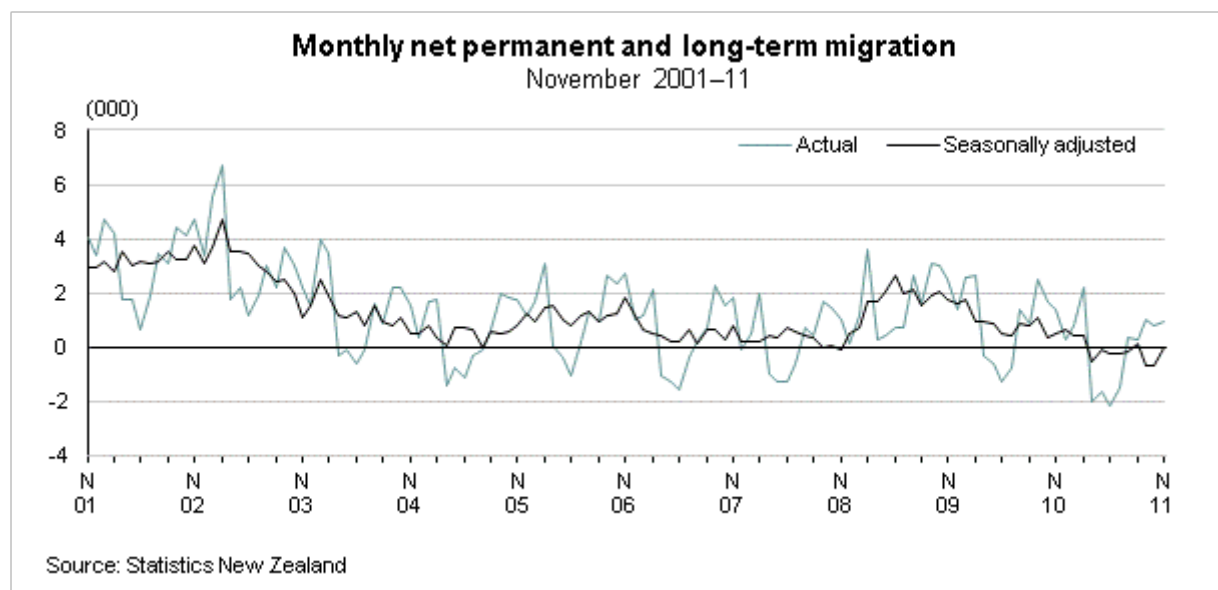
In November 2011 compared with November 2010:

- Visitor arrivals (230,300) were up 3,800. The biggest changes were in arrivals from:
 - Australia (up 6,400)
 - China (up 3,700)
 - Malaysia (up 1,300)
 - Japan (down 2,500)
 - Korea (down 1,600)
 - the United States (down 1,300)
 - the United Kingdom (down 1,200).

- Overseas trips by New Zealand residents (174,600) were up 13,700. The biggest changes were in departures to:
 - Australia (up 4,600)
 - India (up 1,100).

In November 2011:

- Seasonally adjusted figures showed a net loss of less than 100 migrants.



Geoff Bascand
Government Statistician

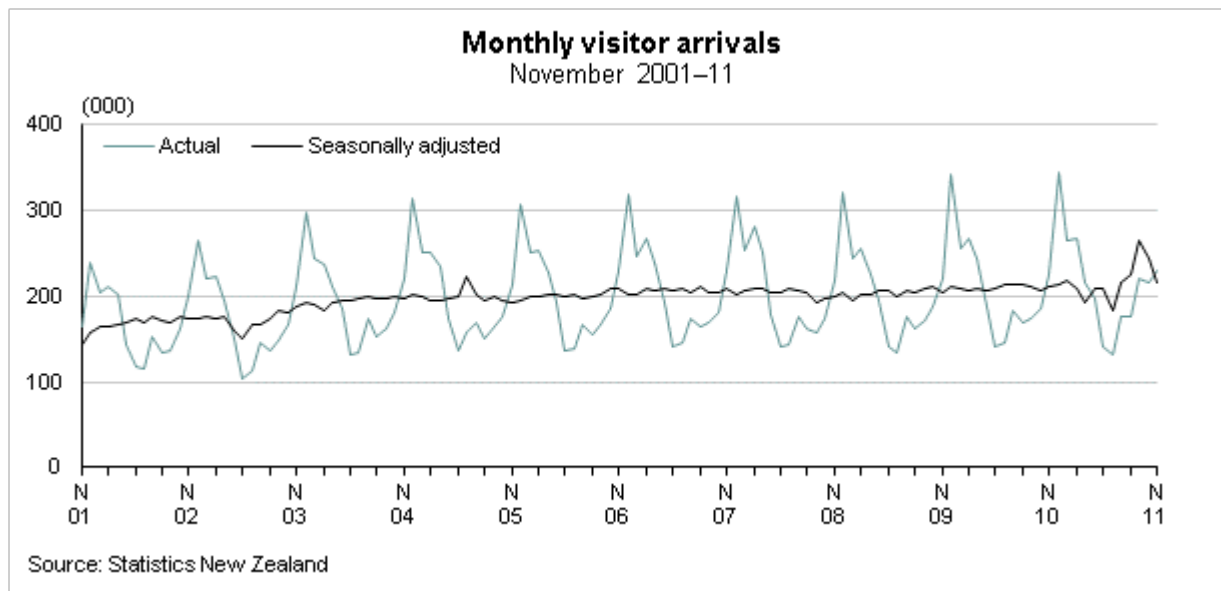
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Commentary

- Monthly visitor arrivals reach November month high
- Annual visitor arrivals up 2 percent
- More trips by New Zealand residents in November
- Annual trips by New Zealand residents up 4 percent
- Net loss of migrants continues
- Largest annual net loss of migrants since 2001

Monthly visitor arrivals reach November month high

Short-term overseas visitor arrivals to New Zealand in November 2011 (230,300) were up 2 percent from November 2010 (226,500). This is a new high for a November month, surpassing the previous November high recorded in 2006 (229,900).



Visitor arrivals by country of residence

The biggest changes in visitor arrivals by country of residence between November 2010 and November 2011 were in arrivals from:

- Australia (up 6,400)
- China (up 3,700)
- Malaysia (up 1,300)
- Japan (down 2,500)
- Korea (down 1,600)
- the United States (down 1,300)
- the United Kingdom (down 1,200).

The increase in visitors from Australia in November 2011 was due to more visitors from Queensland (up 3,000), New South Wales and Victoria (each up 1,000), and Western Australia (up 700).

Arrivals from Malaysia, China, and Singapore have been boosted by new flights from Singapore (from March 2011), Guangzhou (from April 2011), and Kuala Lumpur (from April 2011). Arrivals from China have now increased in every month since May 2010, compared with the same month of the previous year.

Arrivals from Japan and Korea have been decreasing since the Christchurch earthquake on 22 February 2011. Visits from Japan were further affected after that country experienced its own devastating earthquake and tsunami in March 2011.

Visitor arrivals by travel purpose

The biggest changes in visitor arrivals by travel purpose between November 2010 and November 2011 were in arrivals for:

- visiting friends and relatives (up 7,000)
- holidays (down 3,400).

Of the increase in people arriving to visit friends and relatives, 5,600 were from Australia (4,400 of these were New Zealand citizens). The number of people arriving to visit friends and relatives (67,900) reached a November month high, surpassing the previous high recorded in 2009 (62,500).

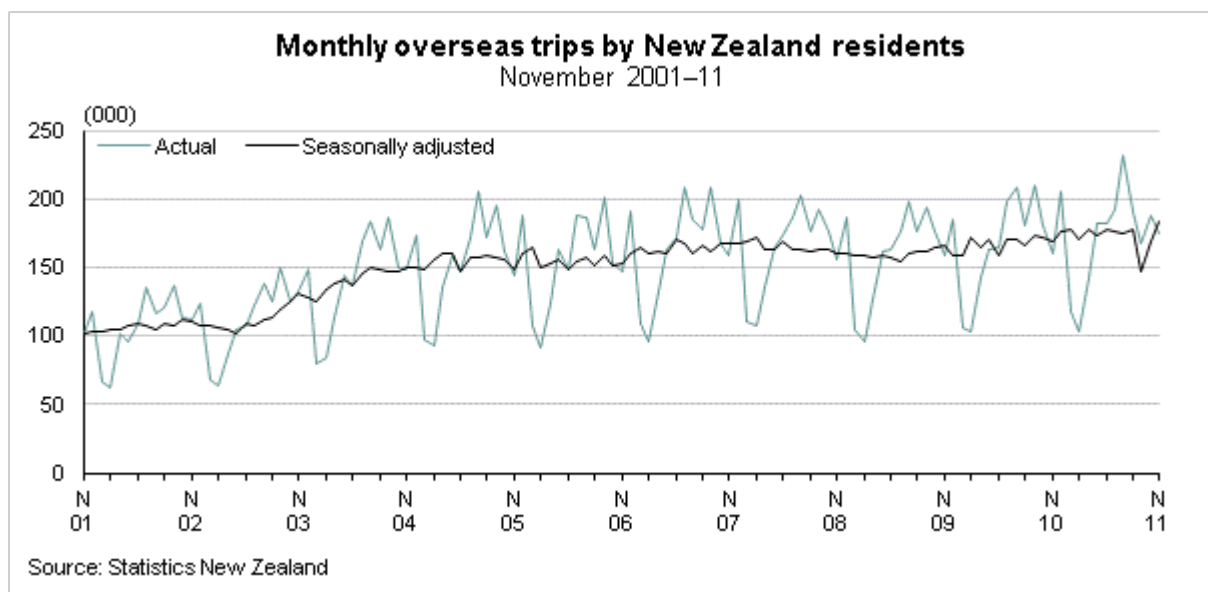
Annual visitor arrivals up 2 percent

There were 2.583 million visitor arrivals to New Zealand in the November 2011 year. This was up 2 percent from the November 2010 year (2.521 million). A number of major events affected visitor arrivals in 2011, including the Canterbury earthquakes, flight disruptions due to volcanic ash, and the Rugby World Cup.

For more detailed data about visitor arrivals, see the Excel tables in the 'Downloads' box.

More trips by New Zealand residents in November

New Zealand residents departed on 9 percent more overseas trips in November 2011 (174,600) than in November 2010 (160,800). This was a record for a November month, and was possibly boosted by people delaying their trips until after the Rugby World Cup. Departures in the combined months of September and October 2011, which coincided with the Rugby World Cup, were down 9 percent when compared with the same period in 2010.



Overseas trips by country of main destination

The biggest changes in overseas trips by country of main destination (where the person will spend the most time when overseas) between November 2010 and November 2011 were in trips to:

- Australia (up 4,600)
- India (up 1,100)
- Fiji (up 900)
- China (up 800).

Overseas trips to Australia (84,100) reached a November month high, surpassing the previous high recorded in 2007 (81,900).

Visiting friends and family (up 900) was the main reason that New Zealand residents travelled to India. Residents born in either China or India (5,600 and 4,500, respectively) made almost three-quarters of the trips to China (7,800) and India (6,100) in November.

Annual trips by New Zealand residents up 4 percent

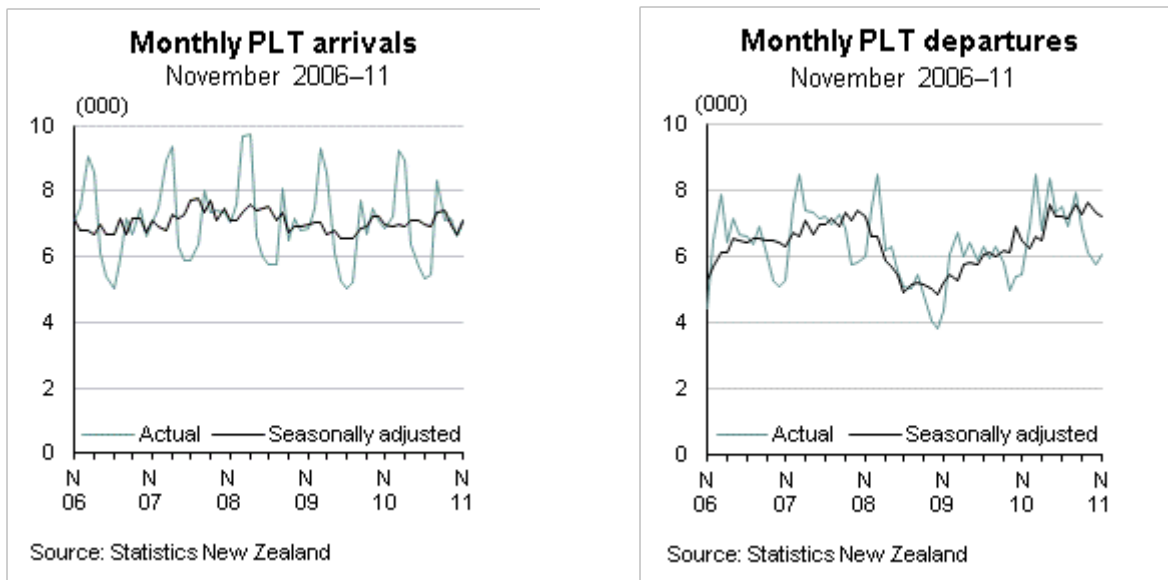
Trips taken by New Zealand residents in the November 2011 year (2.080 million) were up 4 percent from the November 2010 year (2.005 million). Much of the increase came from trips to Asia (up 12 percent), boosted by new flights to Singapore, Guangzhou, and Kuala Lumpur. There were more trips to Thailand, the Cook Islands, Singapore, Fiji, the United States, and India. There were fewer trips to Japan, following Japan's devastating earthquake and tsunami in March 2011, and to Samoa.

For more detailed data on overseas trips by New Zealand residents, see the Excel tables in the 'Downloads' box.

Net loss of migrants continues

Seasonally adjusted permanent and long-term (PLT) migration figures showed a small net loss (an excess of departures over arrivals) of less than 100 migrants in November 2011. Since

the February 2011 earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand has had a net loss of migrants in all months except August 2011.



Unadjusted figures showed a net inflow of 900 migrants in November 2011, compared with 1,400 in November 2010. The main changes were:

- 600 more departures of New Zealand citizens to Australia
- 300 more arrivals of non-New Zealand citizens, including 200 more on work visas
- 200 more departures of non-New Zealand citizens.

In November 2011, there were net gains of migrants from the United Kingdom (1,100), India (400), China (300), the Philippines, the United States of America, France, and Ireland (each 200).

There was a net loss of 2,500 migrants to Australia, up from 1,700 in November 2010. The highest-ever net loss for a November month was in 2008 (2,600).

Migration to and from Christchurch stabilised in November

Five hundred Christchurch residents moved overseas in November 2011, the same as in November 2010. Since the devastating earthquake on 22 February 2011, there have been 6,500 departures from Christchurch, compared with 4,200 during the same period in 2010.

Five hundred migrants arrived from overseas to settle in Christchurch in November 2011, also the same as in November 2010. Since the February earthquake, there have been 3,700 arrivals to Christchurch, compared with 4,800 during the same period in 2010.

Largest annual net loss of migrants since 2001

There were 84,400 PLT arrivals in the November 2011 year, up 2 percent from the November 2010 year. There were 85,000 PLT departures, up 19 percent from the previous year. This meant that there was a net loss of 600 migrants in the November 2011 year.

This net loss is the largest since the September 2001 year (1,700). New Zealand has experienced numerous periods of negative net migration. The highest net loss since the PLT migration series started (in April 1921) was 43,600 people in the July 1979 year.

New Zealand's net loss of migrants in the November 2011 year was due to a net loss of 35,800 people to Australia. This is the highest-ever recorded net loss to Australia, surpassing the previous high of 35,400 people in the December 2008 year. The November 2011 year figure resulted from 50,100 departures to Australia, offset by 14,400 arrivals from Australia. In both directions, most migrants were New Zealand citizens.

There were net gains of migrants from most other countries, led by the United Kingdom (5,800), India (5,100), and China (4,600) in the November 2011 year.

For more detailed data about permanent and long-term migration, see the Excel tables in the 'Downloads' box.

Definitions

About the International Travel and Migration statistics

International travel and migration statistics count passengers arriving into and departing from New Zealand. Passengers are split into one of three passenger types: overseas visitors, New Zealand-resident travellers, and permanent and long-term migrants.

Arrivals and departures of overseas visitors and New Zealand resident travellers are key indicators of tourism and travel. Permanent and long-term migration is a component in New Zealand's population change (along with births and deaths), measuring changes in the characteristics of the population as well as population size.

More definitions

Citizenship: determined from the country that issued the passport the person uses when arriving or departing. A person may hold passports from more than one country.

Country of main destination: the country where a New Zealand-resident traveller will spend the most time while overseas. Departure cards do not ask travellers which other countries they intend to visit on the same trip.

Country of residence: for arrivals, this is the country the person last lived in for 12 months or more. For departures, it is the country the person will next live in for 12 months or more.

New Zealand-resident travellers: people who live in New Zealand and are travelling overseas for less than 12 months.

Overseas visitors: people who live overseas and are visiting New Zealand for less than 12 months.

Passenger type: each passenger is classed as an overseas visitor, a New-Zealand resident traveller, or a permanent and long-term migrant. Passenger type is not related to legal permanent residence in a country or the visa type a person holds. It is based on the time spent in and out of New Zealand. This is primarily determined from responses on the arrival and departure cards to questions about how long the person is in or away from New Zealand, and where they last lived and will next live for 12 months or more.

Permanent and long-term arrivals: people from overseas arriving to live in New Zealand for 12 months or more (including permanently), and New Zealanders returning after an absence of 12 months or more overseas.

Permanent and long-term departures: New Zealanders departing for an absence of 12 months or more (including permanently), and people from overseas who are departing after a stay of 12 months or more in New Zealand.

Travel purpose: The main purpose for the visit to New Zealand or trip overseas. Categories are holiday, visiting friends and relatives, business, conferences and conventions, education, and other.

Related links

Upcoming releases

International Travel and Migration: December 2011 will be released on 3 February 2012.

The [Release calendar](#) lists all our upcoming information releases by date of release.

Past releases

See [International Travel and Migration – information releases](#) for links to past releases.

Related information

Information about international travel

[International Visitor Arrivals to New Zealand](#) contains detailed tables about the number and characteristics of visitor arrivals. It is released two working days after each *International Travel and Migration* information release.

[Provisional international travel statistics](#) provide the latest weekly and four-weekly figures for visitor arrivals and New Zealand-resident traveller departures, including figures for 10 major source and destination countries. These are released weekly, usually at 3pm on a Friday.

[International travel and migration articles](#) are occasional publications that provide analysis of selected topics.

Statistics NZ's [Tourism](#) web page lists tourism-related data sources, such as the Accommodation Survey and the Tourism Satellite Account.

[The Tourism Strategy Group research website](#) (part of the Ministry of Economic Development) provides tourism data such as the International Visitor Survey and tourism forecasts.

[Tourism New Zealand](#) provides guides to New Zealand's key tourism markets, which include the outlook for future months.

Information about international migration

[International travel and migration articles](#) are occasional publications that provide analysis of selected topics.

Statistics NZ's [Migration](#) web page lists migration-related data sources, such as the Longitudinal Immigration Survey.

[Labour and Immigration Research Centre](#), on the Department of Labour's website, includes information about the immigration research programme and published research reports.

[Immigration New Zealand statistics](#), published by the Department of Labour, include application and approval numbers for the main immigration visa types.

Data quality

Data source

International travel and migration statistics are based on electronic arrival and departure records for each international passenger, supplied to Statistics New Zealand by the New Zealand Customs Service. These electronic records include flight and passport details, such as date of travel, date of birth, sex, and country of citizenship.

The New Zealand Customs Service also supplies Statistics NZ with arrival and departure cards completed by passengers. Additional detail such as country of residence and travel purpose is captured from these cards and added to the information from electronic records.

Arrival and departure cards are owned by Immigration New Zealand, and are used to administer numerous New Zealand laws in addition to the production of statistics. Statistics NZ captures information from the cards only for statistical purposes, and passes the cards to Immigration NZ after data capture is complete.

A copy of the [arrival card](#) (PDF, 84kb) is available on the New Zealand Customs Service website. A copy of the [departure card](#) is available on the Statistics NZ website. These are for reference only.

Accuracy of the data

Data collection

Statistics NZ scans every arrival and departure card, and uses image recognition technology to automatically recognise and code responses. Processing staff then manually capture any required information not captured automatically – as not every response can be clearly recognised by automated software.

The imaging system automatically determines all of the information required for around 9 in every 10 cards, meaning about 1 million records are completed manually each year.

Some response fields are required from every card. These include passport number and birth date, which are used to match each card with the corresponding electronic record containing flight and passport details. Some fields are only required for certain passenger types, or for a sample of passengers.

Changes in recorded passenger intentions

All arrivals and departures are processed so they can be allocated to one of three passenger types: overseas visitors, New Zealand-resident travellers, and permanent and long-term migrants.

A person may change their intentions after their arrival or departure, which may mean the recorded passenger type becomes incorrect. Statistics NZ does not revise published statistics to adjust for such changes.

Sampling

Some fields are only collected for a sample of passengers. Data from the sample is used to estimate the characteristics of the full population. This still provides a good picture of the characteristics of travellers, while greatly decreasing the time and cost of capturing the data.

All figures for permanent and long-term migrants are actual counts (not derived from a sample). Arrival and departure totals for overseas visitors and New Zealand-resident travellers are also actual counts. More detailed data for overseas visitors and New Zealand-resident travellers, such as figures by country or travel purpose, are derived from a sample.

The sample ratios currently used are:

- Overseas visitor arrivals: 1 in 16
- Overseas visitor departures: 1 in 26
- New Zealand-resident traveller arrivals: 1 in 26
- New Zealand-resident traveller departures: 1 in 20.

Figures derived from a sample may contain sample error (a difference from the actual figure). Small numbers are more likely to contain a large sample error as a percentage of the actual figure, and should be used with caution.

Tables showing the sample errors for selected cell sizes are available from the [Information about international travel and migration](#) page on the Statistics NZ website.

Seasonally adjusted and trend series

The purpose of seasonally adjusting a time series is to measure and remove the varying seasonal components in the series (for example, there are more visitor arrivals during the New Zealand summer, due to the warmer weather and longer daylight hours). This makes the data for adjacent periods more comparable.

The seasonal adjustment process for international travel and migration statistics uses Statistics NZ's standard seasonal adjustment package, X-12-ARIMA, with enhancements that allow the specification and adjustment of additional calendar effects. These include the number and type of trading days in the month (as more people generally arrive and depart on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday), and holiday periods, which have important effects on travel but can occur in different months each year (eg Easter can be in March or April).

Both monthly and quarterly seasonally adjusted series are available. The quarterly series are adjusted independently of the adjustments made to the monthly series. Hence, quarterly figures may not equal the sum of monthly seasonally adjusted figures.

Seasonally adjusted and trend data back to January 1996 is subject to revision each period. The size of these revisions is expected to be minimal, with the largest revisions occurring in the periods immediately before the current month or quarter. Data before January 1996 is not revised. This cut-off is used because of the change to a four-term school year in 1996, which resulted in changes to the seasonal patterns of the New Zealand-resident traveller series.

Interpreting the data

Passenger counts

The statistics in this release relate to the number of passenger movements to and from New Zealand, rather than to the number of people – that is, the multiple movements of individual people during a given reference period are each counted separately. For example, a New Zealand resident making five business trips overseas within a year would be counted as five arrivals and five departures.

Timing of published data

Final international travel and migration statistics: released approximately three weeks after the end of the reference month. This delay is longer for December and January data due to the peak travel period coinciding with the Christmas and New Year holidays.

New Zealand and overseas port data: becomes available two working days after the international travel and migration release.

Provisional international travel statistics: normally released at 3pm every Friday on the [Provisional international travel statistics](#) web page. These show the latest weekly and four-weekly figures for visitor arrivals and New Zealand-resident traveller departures, including figures for 10 major source and destination countries. No further data is available until the monthly release of final statistics.

Confidentiality

Statistics NZ releases statistics derived from arriving and departing passenger records. It does not release the records of individual passengers.

More information

More [information about international travel and migration](#) is available on our website.

Liability

While all care and diligence has been used in processing, analysing, and extracting data and information in this publication, Statistics NZ gives no warranty it is error-free and will not be liable for any loss or damage suffered by the use directly, or indirectly, of the information in this publication.

Timing

Timed statistical releases are delivered using postal and electronic services provided by third parties. Delivery of these releases may be delayed by circumstances outside the control of Statistics NZ. Statistics NZ accepts no responsibility for any such delays.

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Tables

The following tables are included with this release. They are available in Excel format from the 'Downloads' box of *International Travel and Migration: November 2011* on the Statistics NZ website.

If you do not have access to Excel, you may use the [Excel file viewer](#) to view, print, and export the contents of the file.

1. International travel and migration, by direction and passenger type, actual counts
2. International travel and migration, by direction and passenger type, seasonally adjusted and trend series
3. Short-term overseas visitor arrivals, by country of last permanent residence
4. Short-term overseas visitor arrivals, by travel purpose and country of last permanent residence
5. Short-term New Zealand-resident traveller departures, by country of main destination
6. Permanent and long-term arrivals, by country of last permanent residence
7. Permanent and long-term departures, by country of next permanent residence
8. Net permanent and long-term migration, by country of last/next permanent residence
9. Permanent and long-term migration, by citizenship

Access more data on Infoshare

Use [Infoshare](#), a free, online database to access time-series data specific to your needs. To access the release time series on Infoshare, select the following categories from the homepage:

Subject category: **Tourism**

Group: **International Travel and Migration**