MONTHLY TOURIST ARRIVALS REPORT:

A MONTHLY SNAPSHOT OF INTERNATIONAL ARRIVALS TO SRI LANKA FROM IMMIGRATION STATISTICS

FEBRUARY 2025

Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority

Introduction

The following document provides a synthesis of the most recent February 2025 international visitor arrivals data sourced from the Department of Immigration & Emigration. The data is current as of 28th February 2025, and subject to change. The data provides an overview of month-on-month and annual changes in visitor arrivals to Sri Lanka from international source markets. The data is meant to provide an overview of how travel and tourism is performing to Sri Lanka.

This report is developed by the Research & International Relations Division at Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA). Questions, comments and feedback are welcome and will support the future amendment and enhancement of the report to ensure it meets the data and insights needs of Sri Lanka’s Government and industry stakeholders.

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Summary

Bolstered by peak tourism season momentum and beneficial local and international conditions, Sri Lanka's tourism sector saw substantial growth in February 2025. International tourist arrivals reached 240,217, a 10.01% increase compared to February of the previous year, contributing to the revitalization of the industry. Collectively, the first two months of 2025 welcomed 492,978 visitors, marking the highest-ever arrivals for these months. This consistent growth highlights Sri Lanka's appeal as a preferred travel destination.

Key source markets such as India, Russia, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France significantly boosted Sri Lanka's tourism in February. Their contributions were instrumental in driving the increase in tourist arrivals, providing vital support to the nation's tourism industry. According to the UNWTO, international tourism experienced a significant rebound in 2024, with around 1.4 billion tourists traveling worldwide. This represents an 11% increase compared to 2023, bringing global tourism close to pre-pandemic levels. The recovery was driven by strong post-pandemic demand, solid performance from key source markets, and the continued revival of destinations in Asia and the Pacific. Improved air connectivity and easier visa processes further supported international travel. Looking forward, international tourist arrivals are expected to grow by 3% to 5% in 2025 compared to 2024, although economic and geopolitical challenges remain significant risks.

Table 1. Monthly tourist arrivals, February 2025

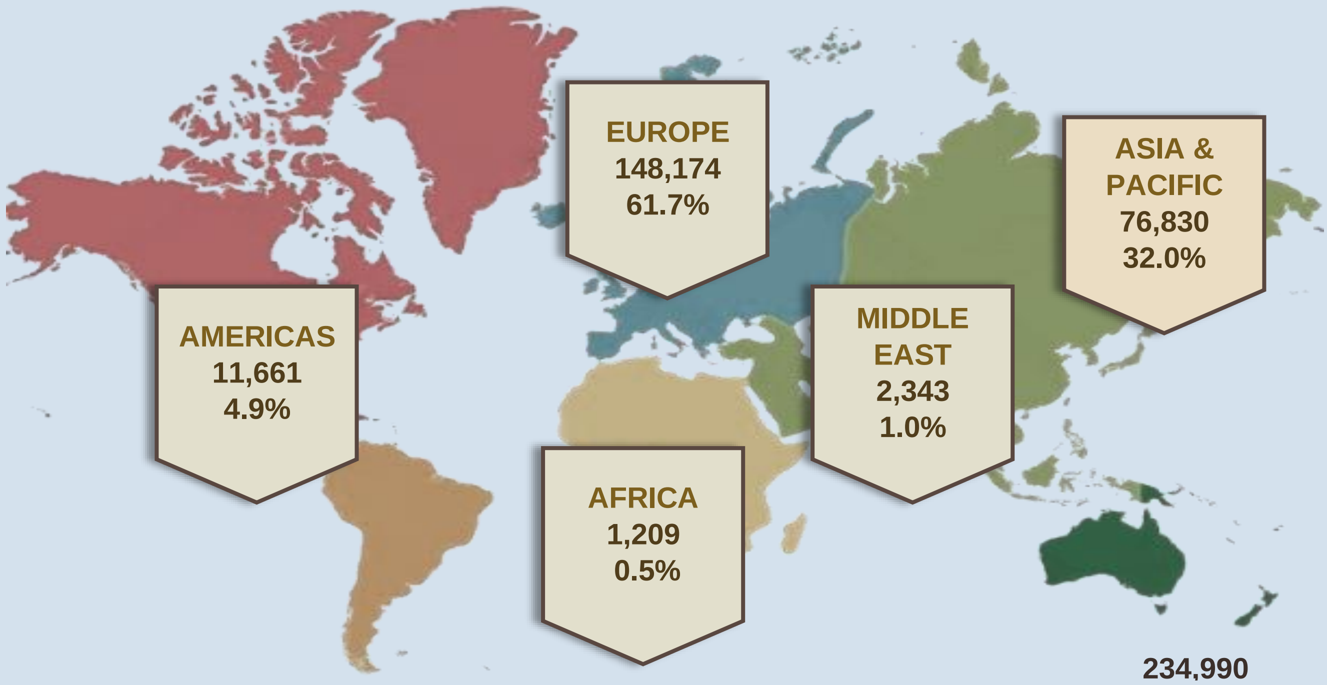
Month	2024	2025	% Change 2025/24
January	208,253	252,761	21.4
February	218,350	240,217	10.0
March	209,181		
April	148,867		
May	112,128		
June	113,470		
July	187,810		
August	164,609		
September	122,140		
October	135,907		
November	184,158		
December	248,592		
TOTAL	2,053,465	492,978	

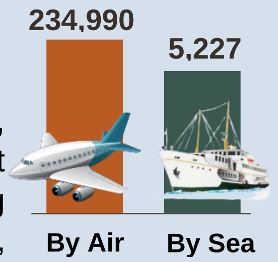
Tourist Arrivals | February 2025

240,217

Tourist arrivals by region and percentage share February 2025

Map 1. Tourist arrivals by region and percentage share





European visitors comprise the largest segment of Sri Lanka's tourism sector, accounting for 61.7% of total arrivals, followed closely by Asia and the Pacific at 32%. This highlights the dynamic nature of the industry, with both regions playing key roles in its expansion. The rise in demand from India, Russia, the UK, Germany, and France has significantly boosted Sri Lanka's tourism, supported by strong travel links and beneficial conditions. The Americas account for 4.9% of arrivals, while the Middle East and Africa contribute 1.0% and 0.5% respectively, adding to the diversity of Sri Lanka's tourism landscape.

The strong demand from Europe and the Asia-Pacific region highlights their importance to Sri Lanka's tourism sector, while the smaller contributions from the Americas, the Middle East, and Africa represent opportunities for focused marketing and diversification. Strengthening connections with these underrepresented regions could bolster the industry's resilience and support continued recovery and growth.

Top primary markets and top potential markets

Top primary markets, January 2025

India
Arrivals: **35,728 / % Share: 14.9** **01**

Russia
Arrivals: **30,295 / % Share: 12.6** **02**

United Kingdom
Arrivals: **25,528 / % Share: 10.6** **03**

Germany
Arrivals: **17,233 / % Share: 7.2** **04**

France
Arrivals: **15,469 / % Share: 6.4** **05**

China
Arrivals: **11,690 / % Share: 4.9** **06**

Australia
Arrivals: **8,778 / % Share: 3.7** **07**

Poland
Arrivals: **8,519 / % Share: 3.5** **08**

United States
Arrivals: **6,439 / % Share: 2.7** **09**

Netherlands
Arrivals: **5,589 / % Share: 2.3** **10**

Bangladesh
Arrivals: **5,262 / % Share: 2.2** **11**

Canada
Arrivals: **4,550 / % Share: 1.9** **12**

Italy
Arrivals: **4,115 / % Share: 1.7** **13**

Japan
Arrivals: **3,527 / % Share: 1.5** **14**

Czech Republic
Arrivals: **3,370 / % Share: 1.4** **15**

Switzerland
Arrivals: **3,266 / % Share: 1.4** **16**

Israel
Arrivals: **2,959 / % Share: 1.2** **17**

Maldives
Arrivals: **2,843 / % Share: 1.2** **18**

Denmark
Arrivals: **2,713 / % Share: 1.1** **19**

Austria
Arrivals: **2,640 / % Share: 1.1** **20**

Note: The top primary markets for Sri Lanka have been identified using visitor arrivals. The previous methodology used to identify the markets was altered due to the current arrival trends in the source markets and the socio-economic factors in Sri Lanka. The intention is to track these source markets on a go-forward basis to understand future performance of Sri Lanka's tourism economy, including during the projected international tourism recovery period, 2022-2025.

Top potential markets, January 2025

Spain — Arrivals: **2,528 / % Share: 1.0** — **01**

Kazakhstan — Arrivals: **2,463 / % Share: 1.0** — **02**

Sweden — Arrivals: **2,007 / % Share: 0.8** — **03**

Belgium — Arrivals: **1,994 / % Share: 0.8** — **04**

South Korea — Arrivals: **1,471 / % Share: 0.6** — **05**

Belarus — Arrivals: **1,455 / % Share: 0.6** — **06**

Malaysia — Arrivals: **1,415 / % Share: 0.6** — **07**

Norway — Arrivals: **1,400 / % Share: 0.6** — **08**

Ukraine — Arrivals: **1,387 / % Share: 0.6** — **09**

Lithuania — Arrivals: **1,354 / % Share: 0.6** — **10**

Note: The top potential markets for Sri Lanka have been identified using visitor arrivals data. The previous methodology used to identify the markets was altered due to the current arrival trends in the source markets and the socio-economic factors in Sri Lanka. The intention is to track these source markets on a go-forward basis to understand future performance of Sri Lanka's tourism economy, including during the projected international tourism recovery period, 2022-2025.

Top ten source markets

February 2025

In February, India stood out as the leading source market for tourists traveling to Sri Lanka, representing 14.9% of total arrivals. The Russian Federation followed closely at 12.6%, while the United Kingdom and Germany contributed 10.6% and 7.2%, respectively, and France accounted for 6.4%. These figures highlight shifting travel patterns, with a notable rise in visitors from emerging markets like Poland and Netherland, alongside steady contributions from traditional markets such as Germany, compared to the previous year. It is noteworthy that tourist arrivals from Russia and China have declined. This shift may be attributed to various factors, including changing economic conditions, geopolitical issues, or evolving travel preferences among tourists from these countries

Additionally, the rise in visitors from emerging markets like Poland and Netherland may reflect increasing disposable incomes and a growing appetite for international travel in these regions, while the sustained performance of traditional markets underscores Sri Lanka's enduring appeal among established tourist demographics.

Chart 1. Top ten source markets to Sri Lanka, February 2025

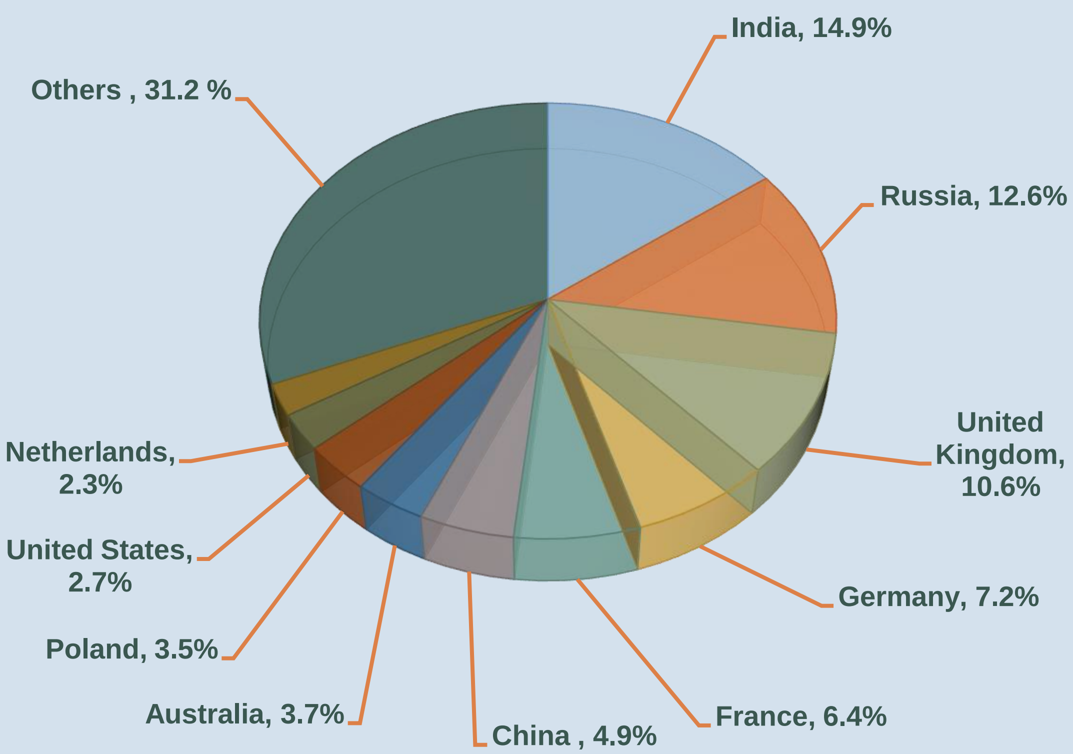
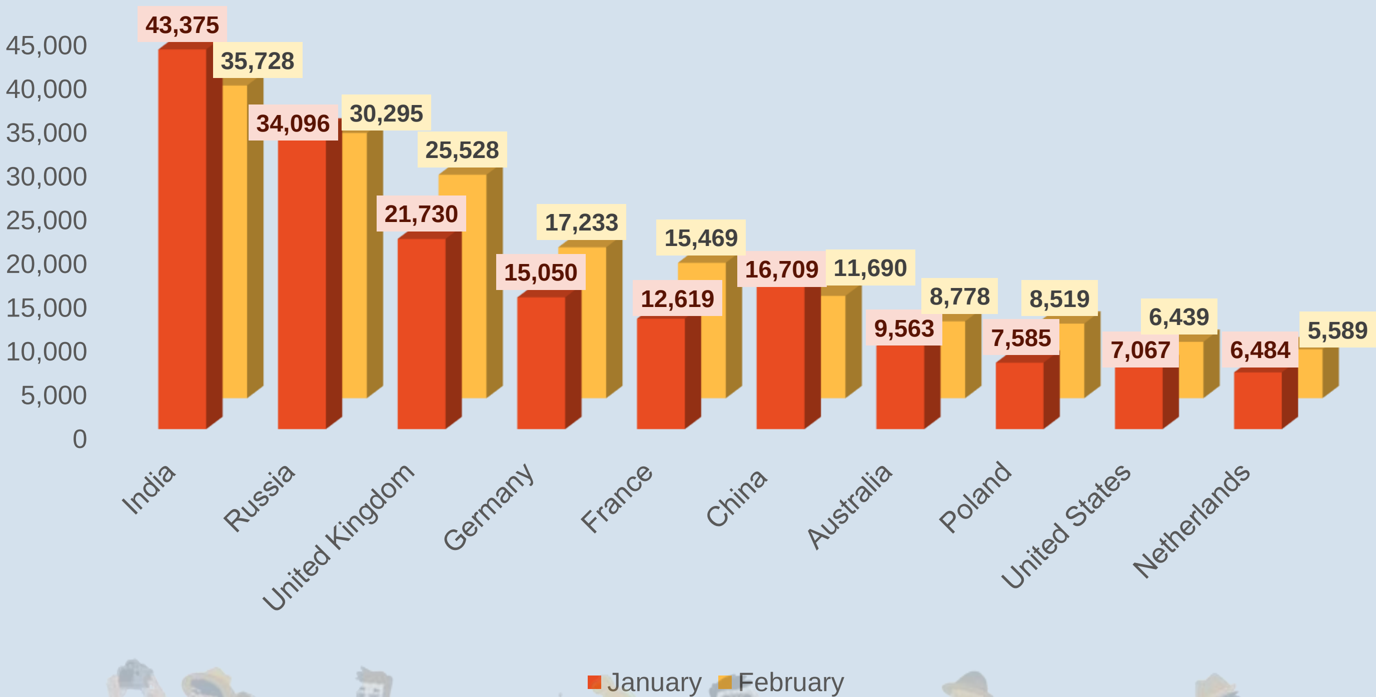


Table 2. Top ten source markets to Sri Lanka, February

Rank	Country of Residence	Tourist Arrivals (February 2025)			Tourist Arrivals (February 2024)
		By Air	By Sea	Total	
1	India	35,481	247	35,728	30,027
2	Russian Federation	30,258	37	30,295	32,030
3	United Kingdom	23,077	2,451	25,528	20,614
4	Germany	17,128	105	17,233	16,259
5	France	15,455	14	15,469	12,503
6	China	11,678	12	11,690	16,279
7	Australia	8,355	423	8,778	6,265
8	Poland	8,519	0	8,519	6,909
9	United States	5,566	873	6,439	5,709
10	Netherlands	5,561	28	5,589	4,011

Chart 2: Comparison of arrivals from top ten markets to Sri Lanka, January / February 2025



Top ten source markets

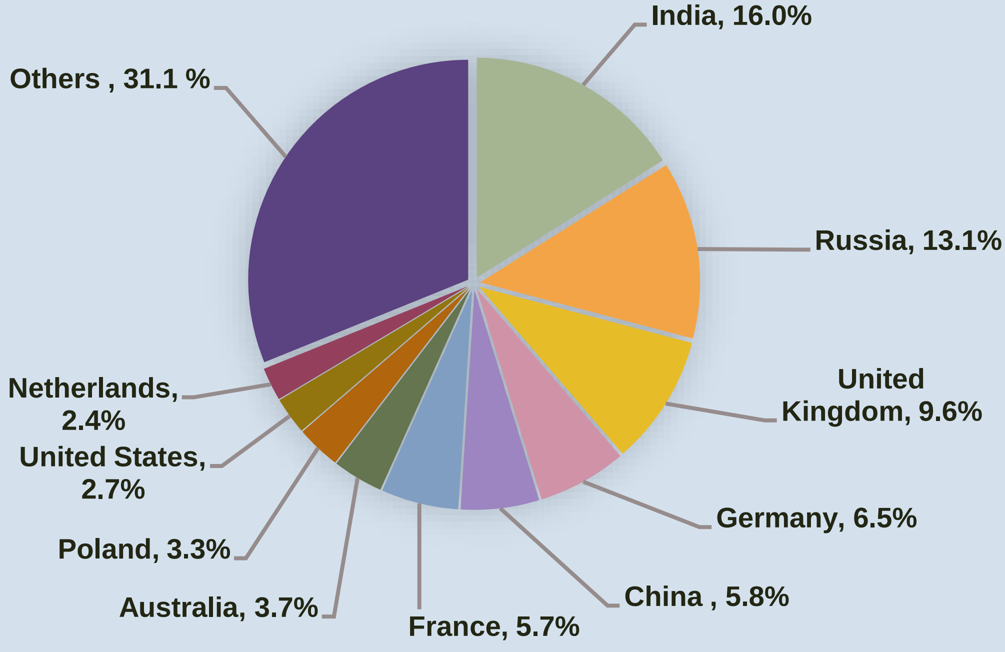
January to February 2025

Between January and February 2025, Sri Lanka witnessed a significant surge in tourist arrivals from India, the Russian Federation, the UK, Germany, and China, establishing these countries as the top five international visitor markets. Notably, there was also considerable growth in visitors from Australia and the Netherlands, highlighting Sri Lanka's increasing appeal in these regions. However, the decline in Chinese tourists is noteworthy. This combination of growth and decline underscores the importance for Sri Lanka to diversify its tourism markets, thereby enhancing resilience and fostering a sustainable tourism approach in a changing travel climate. By expanding its reach to emerging and diverse markets, Sri Lanka can better navigate regional disruptions and build a stronger foundation for sustained growth in its tourism sector.

Table 3. Top ten markets to Sri Lanka, January to February 2025

Rank	Country of Residence	Tourist Arrivals (Jan ~ Feb. 2025)	Tourist Arrivals Jan ~ Feb. 2024)
1	India	79,103	64,426
2	Russian Federation	64,391	63,189
3	United Kingdom	47,258	37,279
4	Germany	32,283	29,852
5	China	28,399	28,807
6	France	28,088	22,422
7	Australia	18,341	12,910
8	Poland	16,104	14,709
9	United States	13,506	11,421
10	Netherlands	12,073	8,542
11	Other	153,432	133,046
Total		**492,978**	**426,603**

Chart 3. Top ten source markets to Sri Lanka, January to February 2025



Tourist arrivals by purpose of visit

February 2025

The breakdown of tourist purposes for visiting Sri Lanka reveals that leisure or pleasure is the dominant motivation, accounting for 55% of all visits. This highlights Sri Lanka’s strong appeal as a leisure destination, offering diverse attractions such as beaches, cultural heritage sites, wildlife, and scenic landscapes. The high percentage underscores the importance of promoting Sri Lanka as a vacation hotspot to sustain and grow this segment. Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) represents 6% of tourist visits, indicating that Sri Lanka has a diaspora or expatriate community that attracts travelers for personal connections. This segment, while smaller, is significant as it often leads to repeat visits and contributes to the local economy through longer stays and spending on local goods and services.

Business-related travel accounts for 2% of visits, suggesting that Sri Lanka is gradually emerging as a destination for professional engagements. While this is a smaller segment, it has potential for growth, particularly with the rise of remote work and global business collaborations. Health tourism, including Ayurveda and wellness, makes up 1% of visits. This niche segment reflects Sri Lanka’s growing reputation as a destination for holistic health and wellness. With targeted marketing and infrastructure development, this segment could expand further, especially among travelers seeking alternative and traditional healing practices.

MICE tourism (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) represents 7% of visits, indicating a growing interest in Sri Lanka as a destination for corporate and large-scale events. This segment is promising, as it typically involves high-spending travelers and can boost the hospitality and event management sectors. Sports tourism accounts for 0.43% of visits, a relatively small but emerging segment. Sri Lanka’s potential for adventure sports, cricket, and other activities could be further developed to attract sports enthusiasts and event organizers.

Religious tourism makes up 0.25% of visits, reflecting the country’s rich spiritual heritage, including Buddhist, Hindu, and other religious sites. Education-related travel is the smallest segment at 0.05%, indicating limited engagement in academic or educational exchanges.

Chart 4: Purpose of visit

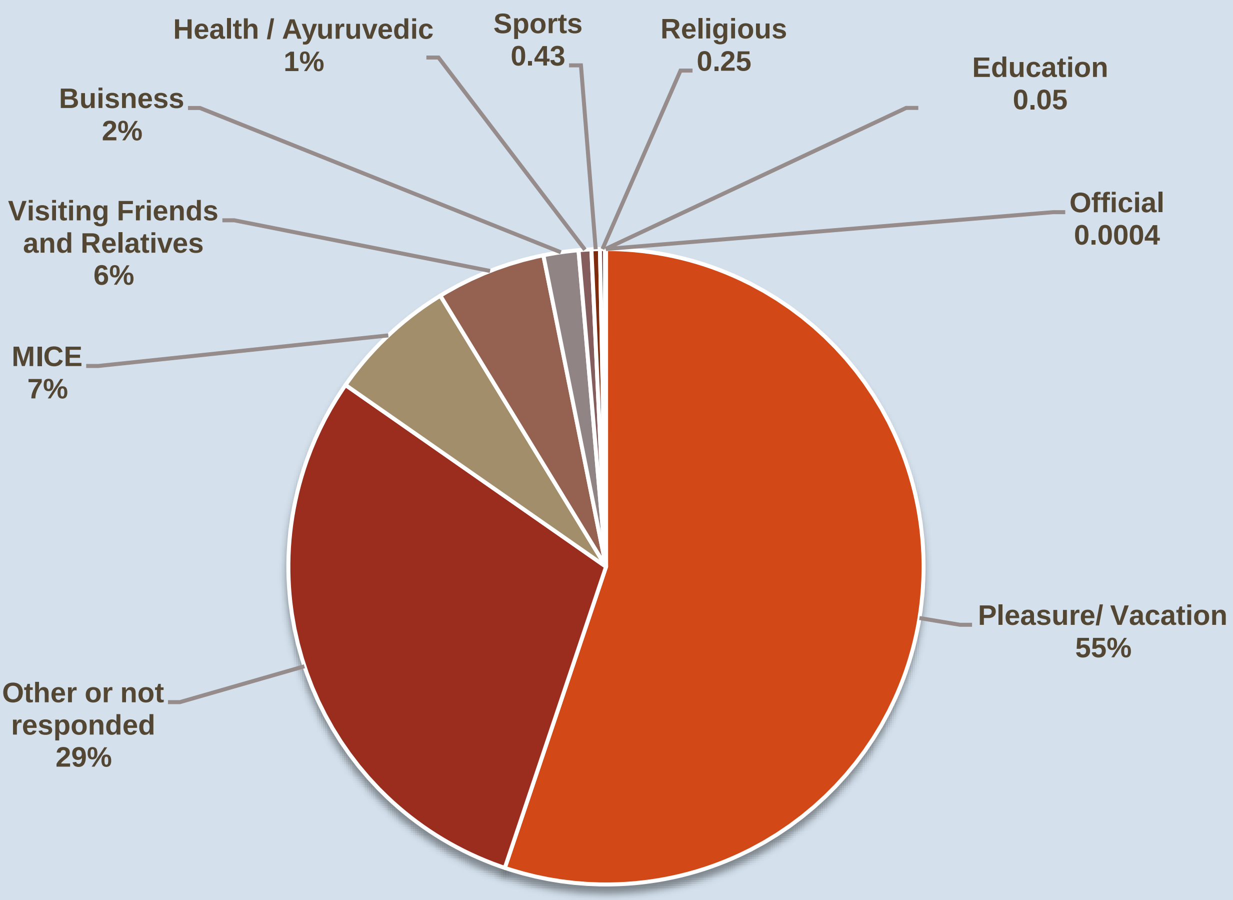
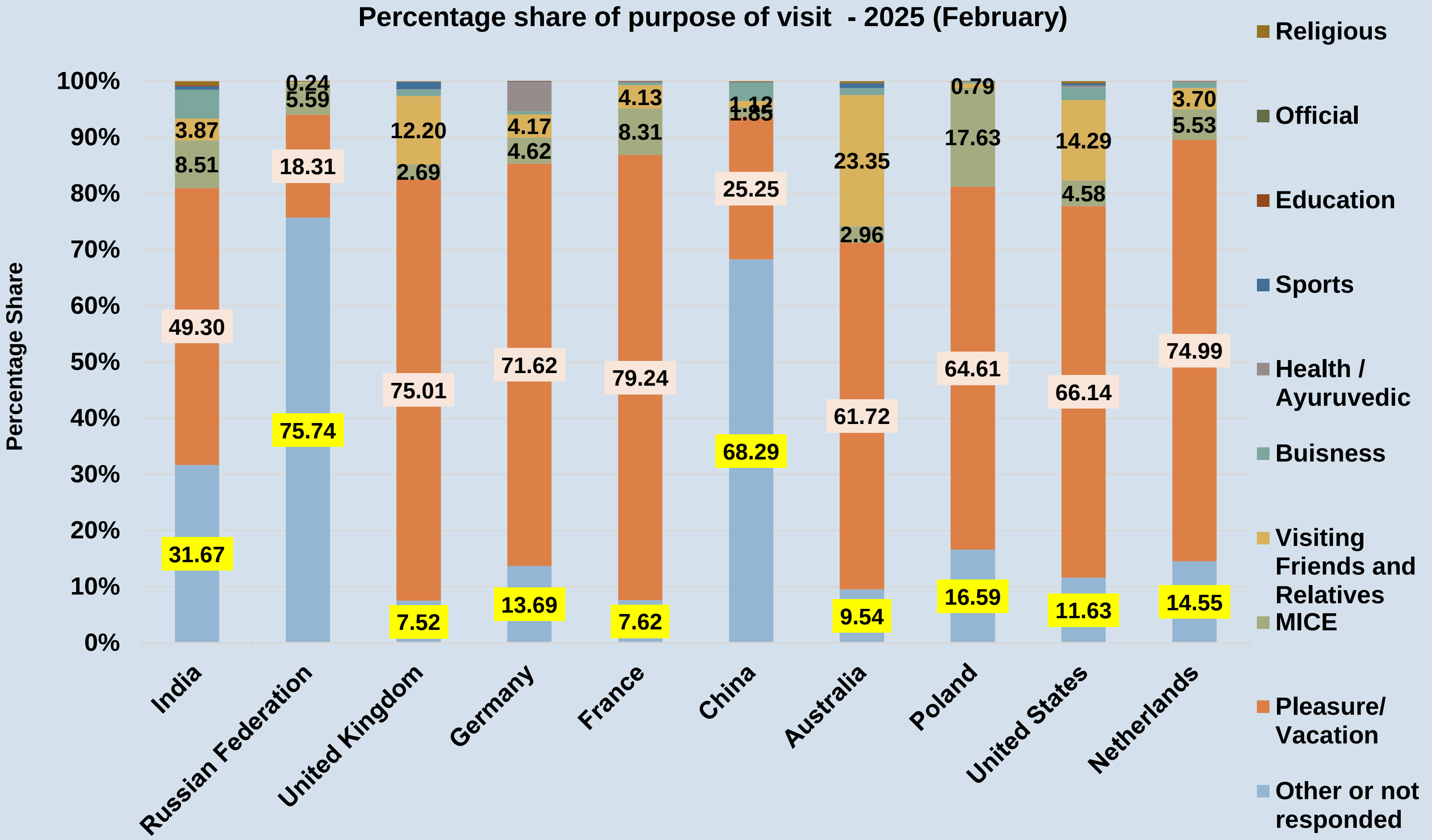


Chart 5: Purpose of visit vs main source markets



The breakdown of tourist purpose for visiting Sri Lanka reveals leisure and vacation pursuits are the predominant motivations for tourists visiting Sri Lanka, accounting for 55% of all arrivals.

This underscores the country's appeal as a premier destination for relaxation and recreation. Notably, a significant proportion of tourists from key markets such as India (49.3%), the UK (75.01%), Germany (71.62%), France (79.24%), Poland (64.61%), the United States (66.14%), and the Netherlands (74.9%) cite leisure as their primary reason for visiting.

Visiting friends and relatives (VFR) is another notable motivation, particularly among tourists from the UK (12.2%), Australia (23.35%), and the US (14.29%). This reflects the strong diaspora connections and personal ties that draw visitors to the island. Additionally, there is a growing interest in Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism, with 17.63% of Polish visitors and 8.51% of Indian tourists traveling for this purpose. Moreover, some German tourists (5.23%) are motivated by health and Ayurvedic tourism, highlighting Sri Lanka's emerging reputation in wellness tourism.

These diverse motivations illustrate Sri Lanka's multifaceted appeal, ranging from leisure and cultural experiences to business and wellness tourism.

The Best Choice for Sri Lanka as a Destination Package vs. Non-Package Tourists:

Sri Lanka, with its rich cultural heritage, stunning landscapes, and diverse experiences, has long been a sought-after destination for international travelers. As the country continues to rebuild and reposition itself in the global tourism market, a critical question arises: **Are package tourists or non-package tourists the best choice for Sri Lanka as a destination?** To answer this, it is essential to analyze the impact of both types of travelers from the perspective of Sri Lanka's economic, social, and environmental sustainability. A recent ongoing survey involving 5,536 inbound tourists to Sri Lanka revealed that 40% traveled as package tourists, while 60% were free independent travelers (FITs). This trend towards independent travel is influenced by advancements in technology, including artificial intelligence, and the availability of diverse booking platforms catering to the preferences of modern travelers, particularly younger demographics. Notably, tourists from countries such as India, China, Poland, and Russia are more inclined to opt for package tours. The operation of charter flights to Sri Lanka during specific seasons by airlines like Red Wings, Enter Air, Air Astana, Air Seychelles, and Bulgarian Airlines etc. Further supports this observation.

Package Tourists: Structured and Predictable

The history of package tours dates back to 1841 when Thomas Cook persuaded the Midland Counties Railway Company to run a special train between Leicester and Loughborough for a temperance meeting. By 1855 he was leading tours to the continent and by 1866 to the United States, with his first round-the-world tour following in 18 72. The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw a surge in the popularity of package tours. The advent of railways and steamships made travel more accessible and affordable. Companies began offering inclusive tours that combined transportation, accommodation, and activities, catering to the growing middle class's desire to explore new destinations. Over time, package tours have evolved significantly, adapting to changing traveler preferences and technological advancements. Despite these changes, they continue to thrive, offering diverse experiences to meet the varied interests of modern tourists.

Package tourists are those who book pre-arranged travel itineraries through tour operators or travel agencies. These packages typically include flights, accommodations, transportation, and guided tours, offering a hassle-free experience for travelers.

Advantages for Sri Lanka:

1. **Economic Impact**:
   - Package tourists often spend more on high-end accommodations, guided tours, and curated experiences, contributing significantly to the local economy.
   - Their spending is more predictable and concentrated in specific areas, making it easier for businesses to plan and optimize their services.
2. **Ease of Management**:
   - Package tourists follow structured itineraries, which helps distribute tourist traffic across key attractions and reduces overcrowding in popular areas.
   - This structure allows for better resource management and reduces the strain on local infrastructure.

3. **Promotion of Lesser-Known Destinations**:
    - Tour operators often include off-the-beaten-path destinations in their packages, helping to promote underdeveloped regions and distribute economic benefits more evenly.
4. **Higher Spending on Local Services**:
    - Package tourists are more likely to use local guides, drivers, and other services included in their packages, directly supporting local livelihoods.

Challenges:

1. **Limited Flexibility**:
    - Package tourists may have less freedom to explore independently, which can limit their exposure to local culture and smaller businesses.
2. **Environmental Impact**:
    - Concentrated tourist flows to popular destinations can lead to environmental degradation if not managed sustainably.

Non-Package Tourists: Independent and Exploratory

Except for few key markets such as India, China, Poland and Russia travelers to Sri Lanka are predominantly free independent travelers (FITs) Non-package tourists, often referred to as independent or backpacker travelers, plan their trips without pre-arranged itineraries. They tend to seek authentic, off-the-beaten-path experiences and often stay longer in the country.

Advantages for Sri Lanka:

1. **Economic Diversification**:
    - Independent travelers often spend money on local businesses, such as small guesthouses, street food vendors, and local transport, spreading economic benefits more widely.
    - Their spending patterns support micro-entrepreneurs and informal sectors, which are crucial for inclusive economic growth.
2. **Cultural Exchange**:
    - Non-package tourists are more likely to engage with local communities, fostering cultural exchange and promoting Sri Lanka's rich heritage.
    - Their interactions often lead to positive word-of-mouth promotion, attracting like-minded travelers.
3. **Longer Stays**:
    - Independent travelers tend to stay longer in the country, contributing to sustained revenue generation and reducing the seasonality of tourism.
4. **Sustainability**:
    - Many independent travelers are environmentally conscious and seek eco-friendly accommodations and experiences, aligning with Sri Lanka's goals of promoting sustainable tourism.

Challenges:

1. **Unpredictable Spending**:
   - Independent travelers may have lower daily spending compared to package tourists, as they often seek budget-friendly options.
2. **Strain on Infrastructure**:
   - Their exploratory nature can lead to overcrowding in lesser-known areas, putting pressure on local infrastructure and resources.
3. **Safety and Management**:
   - Independent travelers may venture into remote or underdeveloped areas, requiring better safety measures and infrastructure to support their needs.

Which is the Best Choice for Sri Lanka?

The answer lies in **striking a balance** between package and non-package tourists. Both types of travelers bring unique benefits and challenges, and Sri Lanka's tourism strategy should aim to leverage the strengths of each while mitigating their drawbacks.

1. **Targeting High-Value Package Tourists**:

   Sri Lanka should focus on attracting high-value package tourists who contribute significantly to the economy while ensuring that their itineraries include sustainable practices and support for local communities.
2. **Encouraging Independent Travelers**:

   Independent travelers should be encouraged through targeted marketing campaigns that highlight Sri Lanka's authenticity, cultural richness, and eco-friendly options. Improving infrastructure in lesser-known areas can help accommodate their exploratory nature.
3. **Promoting Sustainable Tourism**:

   Both types of travelers should be encouraged to adopt sustainable practices, such as supporting eco-friendly accommodations, respecting local cultures, and minimizing environmental impact.
4. **Diversifying Tourism Offerings**:

Sri Lanka should diversify its tourism offerings to cater to both package and non-package tourists. This includes developing niche markets such as adventure tourism, wellness tourism, and cultural tourism.

Conclusion

Sri Lanka's tourism industry stands to benefit significantly from both package and non-package tourists. Package tourists bring structured, high-value contributions to the economy, while independent travelers foster cultural exchange and support local businesses. By adopting a balanced approach, Sri Lanka can maximize the benefits of both types of travelers while promoting sustainable and inclusive growth. The key lies in creating a diverse and resilient tourism ecosystem that caters to the needs of all travelers while preserving the country's natural and cultural heritage for future generations.

International tourist arrivals by country of residence

	February 2025 Tourist arrivals			Tourist arrivals Feb 2024	% Change Feb (25/24)	Total tourist arrivals up to Feb 2025	Total tourist arrivals up to Feb 2024	% Change up to Feb (25/24)
	By Air	By Sea	Total					
AMERICAS	**10,250**	**1,411**	**11,661**	**10,304**	**13.2**	**23,887**	**20,870**	**14.5**
North America	**9,747**	**1,360**	**11,107**	**9,716**	**14.3**	**22,714**	**19,650**	**15.6**
Canada	4,100	450	4,550	3,912	16.3	9,008	8,038	12.1
Mexico	81	37	118	95	24.2	200	191	4.7
United States	5,566	873	6,439	5,709	12.8	13,506	11,421	18.3
Caribbean & Central America	**78**	**9**	**87**	**97**	**(10.3)**	**156**	**182**	**(14.3)**
Costa Rica	13	0	13	14	(7.1)	22	34	(35.3)
Jamaica	03	02	05	11	(54.5)	08	15	(46.7)
Others	62	07	69	72	(4.2)	126	133	(5.3)
South America	**425**	**42**	**467**	**491**	**(4.9)**	**1,017**	**1,038**	**(2.0)**
Argentina	74	05	79	79	-	243	220	10.5
Brazil	159	18	177	212	(16.5)	411	448	(8.3)
Chile	62	15	77	61	26.2	122	117	4.3
Colombia	43	01	44	70	(37.1)	89	124	(28.2)
Others	87	03	90	69	30.4	152	129	17.8
AFRICA	**1,186**	**23**	**1,209**	**1,091**	**10.8**	**2,454**	**2,047**	**19.9**
North Africa	**322**	**0**	**322**	**319**	**0.9**	**545**	**512**	**6.4**
Morocco	102	0	102	103	(1.0)	184	165	11.5
Sudan	53	0	53	42	26.2	125	99	26.3
Others	167	0	167	174	(4.0)	236	248	(4.8)
Sub-Saharan Africa	**864**	**23**	**887**	**772**	**14.9**	**1,909**	**1,535**	**24.4**
Kenya	55	0	55	64	(14.1)	97	106	(8.5)
Mauritius	88	02	90	53	69.8	139	101	37.6
Nigeria	04	0	04	11	(63.6)	18	12	50.0
South Africa	376	17	393	350	12.3	758	682	11.1
Others	341	04	345	294	17.3	897	634	41.5

	February 2025 Tourist arrivals By Air	By Sea	Total	Tourist arrivals Feb 2024	% Change Feb (25/24)	Total tourist arrivals up to Feb 2025	Total tourist arrivals Up to Feb 2024	% Change up to Feb (25/24)
ASIA & PACIFIC	**76,026**	**804**	**76,830**	**70,115**	**9.6**	**167,984**	**139,018**	**20.8**
North East Asia	**16,672**	**20**	**16,692**	**19,781**	**(15.6)**	**38,209**	**35,994**	**6.2**
China	11,678	12	11,690	16,279	(28.2)	28,399	28,807	(1.4)
Japan	3,519	08	3,527	2,666	32.3	6,158	4,659	32.2
South Korea	1,471	0	1,471	830	77.2	3,620	2,507	44.4
Others	04	0	04	06	(33.3)	32	21	52.4
South East Asia	**4,524**	**37**	**4,561**	**5,024**	**(9.2)**	**9,494**	**8,238**	**15.2**
Cambodia	131	01	132	41	222.0	158	83	90.4
Indonesia	511	04	515	320	60.9	795	544	46.1
Malaysia	1,402	13	1,415	2,250	(37.1)	3,540	3,346	5.8
Myanmar	82	0	82	101	(18.8)	179	207	(13.5)
Philippines	375	06	381	440	(13.4)	805	702	14.7
Singapore	1,018	06	1,024	862	18.8	2,072	1,666	24.4
Thailand	714	05	719	716	0.4	1,344	1,221	10.1
Vietnam	251	02	253	270	(6.3)	510	436	17.0
Others	40	0	40	24	66.7	91	33	175.8
Oceania	**9,049**	**500**	**9,549**	**6,845**	**39.5**	**20,150**	**14,244**	**41.5**
Australia	8,355	423	8,778	6,265	40.1	18,341	12,910	42.1
New Zealand	664	77	741	567	30.7	1,738	1,299	33.8
Others	30	0	30	13	130.8	71	35	102.9
South Asia	**45,781**	**247**	**46,028**	**38,465**	**19.7**	**100,131**	**80,542**	**24.3**
Afghanistan	15	0	15	21	(28.6)	21	47	(55.3)
Bangladesh	5,262	0	5,262	2,389	120.3	9,888	4,718	109.6
Bhutan	39	0	39	67	(41.8)	131	202	(35.1)
India	35,481	247	35,728	30,027	19.0	79,103	64,426	22.8
Iran	615	0	615	919	(33.1)	1,501	1,607	(6.6)
Maldives	2,843	0	2,843	3,235	(12.1)	5,842	6,154	(5.1)
Nepal	374	0	374	508	(26.4)	1,063	1,133	(6.2)
Pakistan	1,152	0	1,152	1,299	(11.3)	2,582	2,255	14.5
EUROPE	**145,188**	**2,986**	**148,174**	**134,387**	**10.3**	**294,221**	**260,012**	**13.2**
Norther Europe	**30,918**	**2,625**	**33,543**	**27,574**	**21.6**	**63,847**	**51,503**	**24.0**
Denmark	2,677	36	2,713	2,160	25.6	5,535	4,702	17.7
Finland	767	23	790	666	18.6	1,598	1,403	13.9
Norway	1,376	24	1,400	1,329	5.3	3,065	2,555	20.0
Sweden	1,995	12	2,007	1,903	5.5	4,242	3,824	10.9
United Kingdom	23,077	2,451	25,528	20,614	23.8	47,258	37,279	26.8
Others	1,026	79	1,105	902	22.5	2,149	1,740	23.5

	February 2025			Tourist arrivals Feb 2024	% Change Feb (25/24)	Total tourist arrivals Up to Feb 2025	Total tourist arrivals Up to Feb 2024	% Change up to Feb (25/24)
	Tourist arrivals							
	By Air	By Sea	Total					
Western Europe	**46,121**	**180**	**46,301**	**39,716**	**16.6**	**88,092**	**74,490**	**18.3**
Austria	2,636	04	2,640	2,372	11.3	5,132	4,757	7.9
Belgium	1,982	12	1,994	1,577	26.4	3,733	2,890	29.2
France	15,455	14	15,469	12,503	23.7	28,088	22,422	25.3
Germany	17,128	105	17,233	16,259	6.0	32,283	29,852	8.1
Netherlands	5,561	28	5,589	4,011	39.3	12,073	8,542	41.3
Switzerland	3,252	14	3,266	2,888	13.1	6,588	5,839	12.8
Others	107	03	110	106	3.8	195	188	3.7
Central/Eastern Europe	**55,127**	**95**	**55,222**	**56,833**	**(2.8)**	**115,069**	**114,864**	**0.2**
Belarus	1,451	04	1,455	1,884	(22.8)	3,505	4,226	(17.1)
Czech Republic	3,366	04	3,370	3,852	(12.5)	6,124	7,336	(16.5)
Estonia	934	0	934	898	4.0	1,849	1,808	2.3
Hungary	1,083	06	1,089	1,311	(16.9)	2,477	2,855	(13.2)
Kazakhstan	2,463	0	2,463	2,682	(8.2)	5,478	6,032	(9.2)
Lithuania	1,353	01	1,354	1,601	(15.4)	2,993	2,616	14.4
Poland	8,519	0	8,519	6,909	23.3	16,104	14,709	9.5
Romania	872	22	894	940	(4.9)	1,782	1,793	(0.6)
Russia	30,258	37	30,295	32,030	(5.4)	64,391	63,189	1.9
Slovakia	1,207	02	1,209	1,179	2.5	2,326	2,169	7.2
Ukraine	1,376	11	1,387	1,193	16.3	3,259	2,678	21.7
Others	2,245	08	2,253	2,354	(4.3)	4,781	5,453	(12.3)
Southern/ Mediterranean Europe	**13,022**	**86**	**13,108**	**10,264**	**27.7**	**27,213**	**19,155**	**42.1**
Greece	386	09	395	264	49.6	810	528	53.4
Italy	4,105	10	4,115	3,194	28.8	8,893	6,679	33.1
Portugal	669	30	699	654	6.9	1,488	1,141	30.4
Spain	2,501	27	2,528	2,036	24.2	5,224	4,040	29.3
Turkey	728	0	728	663	9.8	1,880	1,380	36.2
Israel	2,957	02	2,959	1,988	48.8	5,689	2,761	106.0
Others	1,676	08	1,684	1,465	14.9	3,229	2,626	23.0
MIDDLE EAST	**2,340**	**03**	**2,343**	**2,453**	**(4.5)**	**4,432**	**4,656**	**(4.8)**
Bahrain	49	0	49	81	(39.5)	208	203	2.5
Egypt	467	02	469	476	(1.5)	826	872	(5.3)
Iraq	114	0	114	74	54.1	245	128	91.4
Jordan	296	01	297	227	30.8	475	407	16.7
Kuwait	204	0	204	222	(8.1)	378	453	(16.6)
Lebanon	357	0	357	293	21.8	502	448	12.1
Oman	212	0	212	116	82.8	368	352	4.5
Qatar	46	0	46	45	2.2	79	86	(8.1)
Saudi Arabia	358	0	358	549	(34.8)	845	1,060	(20.3)
United Arab Emirates	171	0	171	227	(24.7)	362	446	(18.8)
Others	66	0	66	143	(53.8)	144	201	(28.4)
TOTAL	**234,990**	**5,227**	**240,217**	**218,350**	**10.0**	**492,978**	**426,603**	**15.6**

Main last departure airports and airlines to Sri Lanka, February 2025

Air travel plays a vital role in Sri Lanka's tourism industry, serving as the primary mode of transportation for international visitors to reach the island. Approximately 34% of travelers have their final layovers in major transit hubs such as Dubai, Doha, and Abu Dhabi before arriving in Sri Lanka. Key airlines like Sri Lankan Airlines, Qatar Airways, and Emirates are instrumental in driving tourism, collectively accounting for 44% of tourist arrivals.

The reliance on specific airlines and major transit hubs underscores the significance of strategic air connectivity and partnerships in shaping Sri Lanka's tourism landscape. By strengthening collaborations with leading airlines and enhancing connectivity through these hubs, Sri Lanka can improve accessibility, attract more visitors, and foster sustainable growth in its tourism sector.

Chart 6. Main last departure airports to Sri Lanka, February 2025

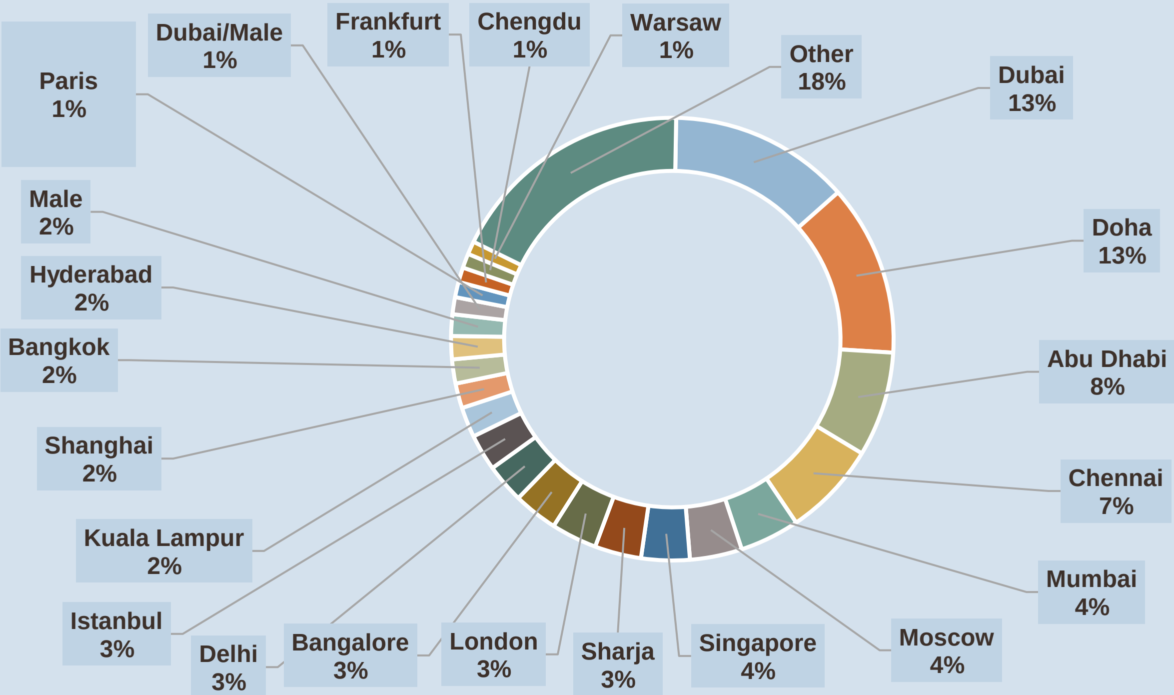
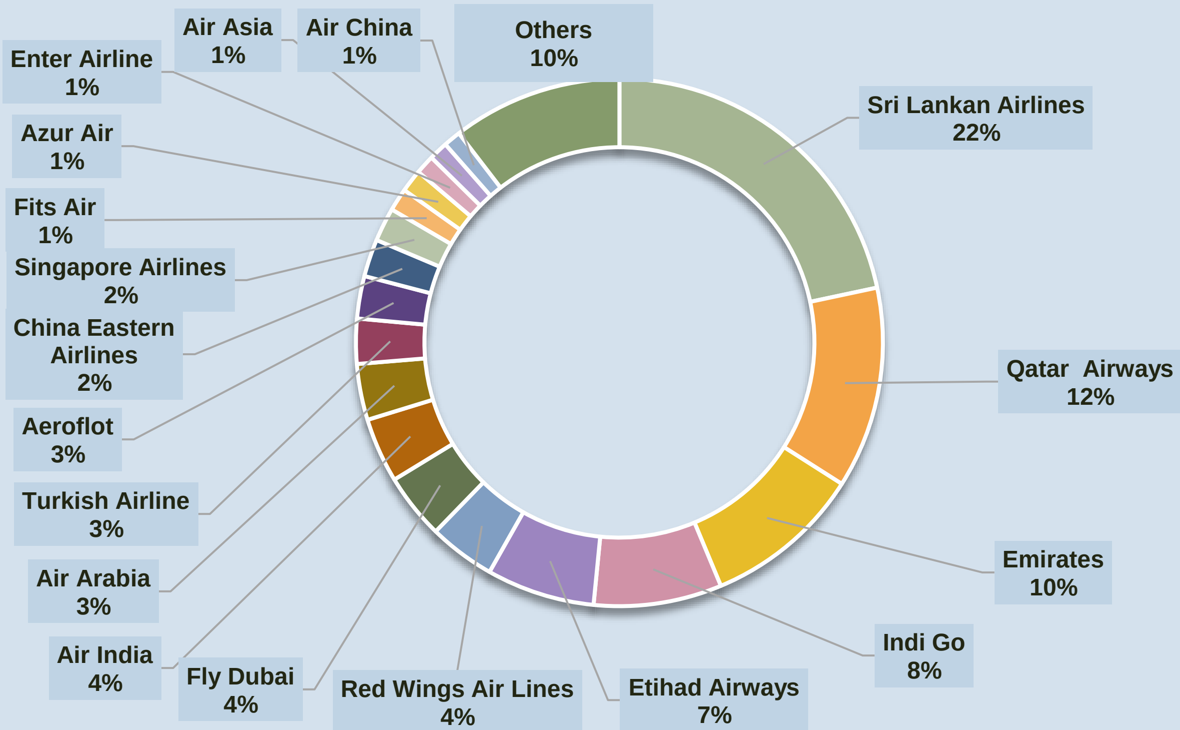


Chart 7. Main airlines to Sri Lanka, February 2025



Top ten markets versus main last departure airports and Main airlines to Sri Lanka

February 2025

Travelers' airline preferences play a significant role in shaping their experiences in Sri Lanka, often influenced by their country of origin. For example, Indian tourists frequently choose Sri Lankan Airlines and IndiGo, reflecting the strong air connectivity between the two countries. Russian visitors tend to opt for Red Wings and Aeroflot, while Chinese travelers prefer China Eastern Airlines and Air China, demonstrating a preference for their national carriers. Polish tourists primarily travel with Enter Air, a charter flight operator, highlighting the direct correlation between charter flights and the influx of package tourists from countries like Russia and Poland.

Sri Lankan Airlines is a popular choice among travelers from India, the UK, Australia, and the United States, showcasing its broad appeal across key markets. Chennai serves as the main departure airport for Indian travelers, while Doha acts as the primary gateway for tourists from the UK, Germany, France, the USA, and the Netherlands. Additionally, Singapore, Moscow, London, and Shanghai are key transit cities for travelers from Australia, Russia, the United Kingdom, and China, respectively.

These patterns underscore the critical role of accessibility in promoting tourism in Sri Lanka, as travelers' choices of airlines and airports are heavily influenced by their home countries. To attract global visitors and sustain the growth of Sri Lanka's tourism industry, it is essential to strengthen travel connections and expand links with major international hubs. Enhancing these partnerships will not only improve accessibility but also support the continued development of the tourism sector.

Table 4. Top ten markets vs. main airlines to Sri Lanka, February

Country	Dubai	Doha	Abu Dhabi	Chennai	Mumbai	Moscow.	Singapore	Sharja	London	Bangalore	Delhi	Istanbul	Kuala Lampur	Shanghai	Bangkok	Hyderabad	Male	Dubai/Male	Paris	Others	Total
India	815	148	188	11,330	6,588	1	175	145	12	6,152	3,425	5	168	2	325	3,333	140	23	11	2,742	35,728
Russian Federation	1,683	363	3,314	136	128	8,657	68	4,674	14	62	29	52	159	121	96	38	157	92	4	10,448	30,295
United Kingdom	4,402	5,002	2,289	732	445	2	448	65	6,466	214	387	144	402	39	269	99	169	292	41	3,621	25,528
Germany	4,063	4,150	2,381	213	821	8	204	129	107	140	230	924	272	12	271	34	117	342	97	2,718	17,233
France	2,609	4,442	1,915	251	701	1	218	51	111	227	495	790	164	10	150	13	80	234	2,213	794	15,469
China	116	32	19	26	41	0	576	27	7	10	10	1	708	3,238	722	5	169	58	3	5,922	11,690
Australia	159	74	73	142	96	0	3,896	7	17	55	264	10	487	7	117	18	38	12	1	3,305	8,778
Poland	2,176	1,256	358	73	200	48	25	731	40	61	96	102	32	3	18	8	76	90	4	3,122	8,519
United States	618	1,172	492	395	369	0	367	14	83	280	279	125	149	20	229	153	79	61	15	1,539	6,439
Netherlands	1,119	1,937	1,042	68	58	0	100	18	87	38	279	271	114	6	75	16	27	94	8	232	5,589

Table 5. Top ten markets vs. main last departure airports to Sri Lanka, February

Country	Sri Lankan Airlines	Qatar Airways	Emirates	Indi Go	Etihad Airways	Red Wings Air Lines	Fly Dubai	Air India	Air Arabia	Turkish Airline	Aeroflot	China Eastern Airlines	Singapore Airline	Fits Air	Azur Air	Enter Airline	Air Asia	Air China	Others	Total
India	42.08	0.38	1.25	36.66	0.30	0.00	0.51	15.49	0.41	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.11	1.28	0.00	0.00	0.13	0.00	1.36	100.00
Russian Federation	1.07	1.19	2.15	0.63	4.58	31.26	2.94	0.38	15.43	0.17	20.05	0.44	0.02	0.78	10.31	0.00	0.42	0.03	8.15	100.00
United Kingdom	32.79	19.59	16.73	2.72	8.86	0.00	1.19	2.10	0.35	0.58	0.01	0.18	0.61	0.31	0.00	0.00	0.96	0.03	12.98	100.00
Germany	18.28	23.97	21.44	1.60	13.71	0.00	3.82	3.26	0.75	5.52	0.02	0.19	0.44	0.46	0.05	0.06	1.10	0.02	5.32	100.00
France	24.70	28.62	15.24	1.91	12.33	0.00	2.93	2.83	0.33	5.18	0.01	0.10	0.40	0.18	0.00	0.01	0.71	0.00	4.49	100.00
China	10.39	0.27	0.86	0.35	0.14	0.00	0.23	0.12	0.23	0.01	0.00	36.36	2.99	0.93	0.00	0.01	2.93	21.03	23.15	100.00
Australia	44.96	0.79	1.54	1.96	0.81	0.00	0.28	1.30	0.08	0.11	0.00	0.08	32.17	0.16	0.00	0.00	2.37	0.00	13.39	100.00
Poland	5.18	14.49	6.29	0.73	3.39	0.00	20.13	1.01	8.59	1.23	0.56	0.13	0.01	0.59	0.00	32.09	0.26	0.04	5.28	100.00
United States	20.28	18.06	8.40	10.22	7.50	0.02	1.27	5.30	0.26	2.00	0.00	0.39	4.05	0.47	0.00	0.00	1.35	0.14	20.28	100.00
Netherlands	6.67	34.42	19.57	1.59	18.57	0.00	2.02	4.96	0.32	4.90	0.00	0.18	0.39	0.23	0.00	0.07	1.52	0.00	4.56	100.00

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