2026



MONTHLY TOURIST ARRIVALS REPORT:

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

October

Introduction

The following document provides a synthesis of the most recent October 2026 international visitor arrivals data sourced from the Department of Immigration & Emigration. The data is current as of 31st October 2026, 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

Sri Lanka recorded a total of 1,862,304 tourist arrivals during January–October 2026, compared with 1,890,687 arrivals during the corresponding period in 2025. This represents a marginal decline of 1.5%, equivalent to 28,383 fewer arrivals year-on-year. Despite the fluctuations experienced during the year, the cumulative performance indicates that Sri Lanka has remained relatively close to the previous year's arrival levels.

October 2026 recorded an encouraging improvement, with 168,625 tourist arrivals, compared with 165,193 in October 2025, representing a year-on-year increase of 2.1%. More notably, October 2026 recorded the highest number of tourist arrivals ever recorded for the month of October, surpassing the previous October record of 153,123 arrivals registered in 2018. This achievement is particularly significant given the challenges faced by the tourism industry during the year.

The October performance also marks a return to positive year-on-year growth following several months of declines. Although the increase is relatively modest, it indicates an improvement in visitor arrivals towards the latter part of the year. The fact that October arrivals exceeded the previous year's figure and established a new monthly record reflects the continued resilience of Sri Lanka's tourism sector.

India, the United Kingdom, China, Australia and Germany emerged as the key source markets for Sri Lanka in October 2026, highlighting the continued importance of these markets in supporting the country's tourism performance. According to the September 2026 UN Tourism World Tourism Barometer, the forecast for international tourist arrivals growth in 2026 has been revised downwards from 3%–4% to 1%–2%, reflecting geopolitical uncertainties, particularly the Middle East conflict, and its potential impact on oil prices, travel costs and global inflation. The report also highlights a shift in travel demand towards nearby and more accessible destinations, as travellers increasingly prioritise value for money and opt for closer-to-home or domestic travel amid rising costs and uncertainty.

Table 1. Monthly tourist arrivals, October 2026

Month	2025	2026	% Change 2026/25
January	252,761	277,327	9.7
February	240,217	279,328	16.2
March	229,298	183,979	(19.8)
April	174,608	135,643	(22.3)
May	132,919	145,745	9.6
June	138,241	124,551	(9.9)
July	200,244	196,845	(1.7)
August	198,235	191,704	(3.3)
September	158,971	158,557	(0.3)
October	165,193	168,625	2.1
November	212,906		
December	258,928		
TOTAL	2,362,521	1,862,304	



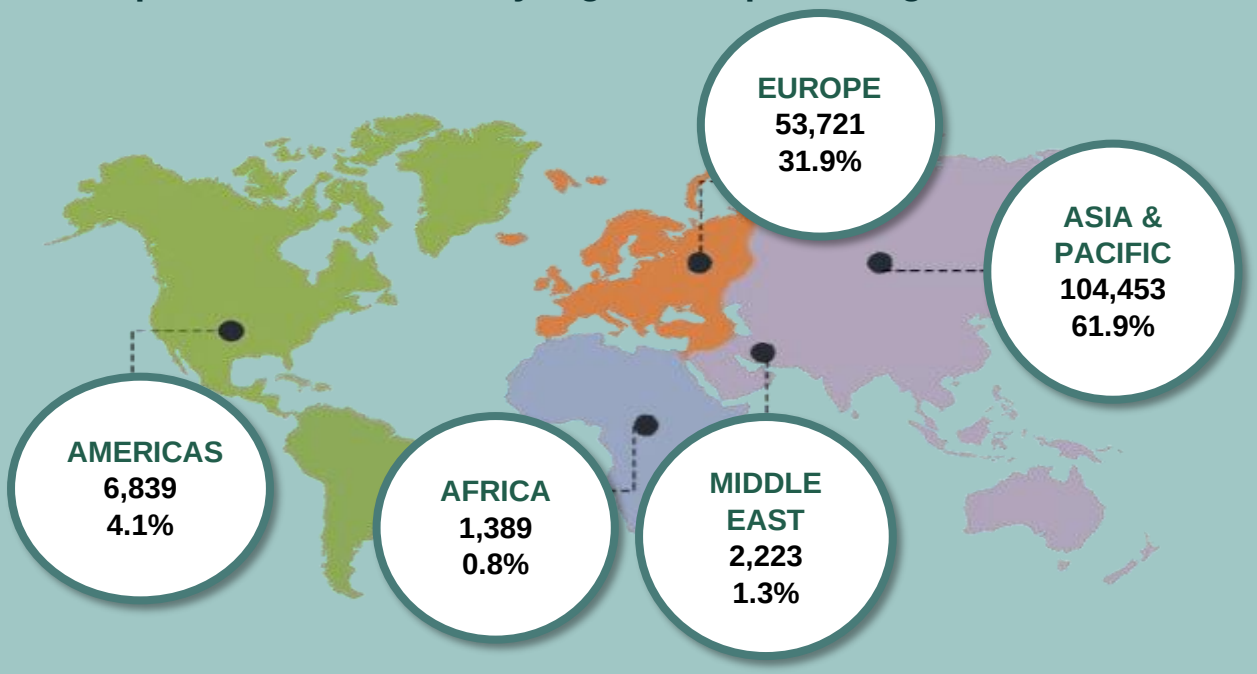
Tourist Arrivals | October 2026

168,625

Tourist arrivals by region and percentage share

October 2026

Map 1. Tourist arrivals by region and percentage share



The regional distribution of tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka in October 2026 highlights the continued dominance of the Asia and Pacific region, which accounted for the largest share of international visitors. Out of the total 168,625 arrivals recorded during the month, 104,453 visitors (61.9%) originated from this region, reinforcing its importance as the principal source region for Sri Lanka's tourism industry.

Europe remained the second-largest source region in October 2026, accounting for 53,721 arrivals (31.9%) of the total. Together, Europe and Asia and Pacific contributed 93.8% of all tourist arrivals, highlighting Sri Lanka's continued dependence on these two key regions. However, the European market faces several challenges, with widespread demonstrations and social unrest reported in countries such as France, Italy, Belgium and Portugal during October, largely driven by rising living costs, housing affordability and wage pressures. Coupled with persistent inflation and higher energy costs, these developments may place further pressure on household disposable incomes and influence overseas travel decisions. As a result, European travellers may become increasingly price-conscious, favouring shorter holidays, postponing long-haul trips or opting for more affordable destinations. Such changing travel behaviour could potentially affect demand for Sri Lanka from European source markets.

The Americas contributed 6,839 visitors, representing 4.1% of total arrivals, while the Middle East accounted for 2,223 visitors (1.3%). Africa recorded the smallest contribution, with 1,389 arrivals, representing 0.8% of the total.

The regional distribution indicates that Sri Lanka's tourism demand remains largely concentrated in the Asian and European markets. The substantial contribution from Asia and the Pacific highlights the importance of maintaining strong regional connectivity and market engagement, particularly with established markets such as India and China. At the same time, Europe's sizeable contribution demonstrates the continued relevance of long-haul markets to the country's tourism

Top primary markets and top potential markets

Top primary markets, October 2026



India
Arrivals: **62,211 / % Share: 36.9**
01



Pakistan
Arrivals: **3,118 / % Share: 1.8**
11



United Kingdom
Arrivals: **12,402 / % Share: 7.4**
02



Spain
Arrivals: **3,009 / % Share: 1.8**
12



China
Arrivals: **11,190 / % Share: 6.6**
03



Japan
Arrivals: **2,605 / % Share: 1.5**
13



Australia
Arrivals: **8,509 / % Share: 5.0**
04



Canada
Arrivals: **2,431 / % Share: 1.4**
14



Germany
Arrivals: **8,027 / % Share: 4.8**
05



Netherlands
Arrivals: **2,057 / % Share: 1.2**
15



Russian Federation
Arrivals: **6,750 / % Share: 4.0**
06



Switzerland
Arrivals: **1,967 / % Share: 1.2**
16



France
Arrivals: **5,042 / % Share: 3.0**
07



Italy
Arrivals: **1,685 / % Share: 1.0**
17



Bangladesh
Arrivals: **4,528 / % Share: 2.7**
08



Malaysia
Arrivals: **1,532 / % Share: 0.9**
18



United States
Arrivals: **3,749 / % Share: 2.2**
09



Nepal
Arrivals: **1,108 / % Share: 0.7**
19



Maldives
Arrivals: **3,492 / % Share: 2.1**
10



New Zealand
Arrivals: **1,036 / % Share: 0.6**
20

Note: The top primary markets for Sri Lanka have been identified using visitor arrivals. The intention is to track these source markets on a go-forward basis to understand future performance of Sri Lanka's tourism economy.

Top potential markets, October 2026

Singapore 21
Arrivals: **993 / % Share: 0.6**

Poland 26
Arrivals: **891 / % Share: 0.5**

Indonesia 22
Arrivals: **963 / % Share: 0.6**

Belgium 27
Arrivals: **833 / % Share: 0.5**

Israel 23
Arrivals: **957 / % Share: 0.6**

Austria 28
Arrivals: **809 / % Share: 0.5**

Denmark 24
Arrivals: **922 / % Share: 0.5**

Thailand 29
Arrivals: **790 / % Share: 0.5**

Czech Republic 25
Arrivals: **916 / % Share 0.5**

South Korea 30
Arrivals: **734 / % Share: 0.4**

Note: The top potential markets for Sri Lanka have been identified using visitor arrivals data. The intention is to track these source markets on a go-forward basis to understand future performance of Sri Lanka's tourism economy.



Top ten source markets

October 2026

India continued to consolidate its position as Sri Lanka's leading source market in October 2026, recording 62,211 arrivals and a strong year-on-year growth of 29.3%. This substantial increase highlights the continued strength of the Indian market and its significant contribution to Sri Lanka's tourism performance. The United Kingdom retained its position as the second-largest source market, with 12,402 arrivals, although this represented a 4.1% decline compared to October 2025.

China ranked third, recording 11,190 arrivals and a modest year-on-year growth of 3.0%, indicating a positive trend in visitor arrivals from this market. Australia also performed favourably, accounting for approximately 5% of total arrivals and recording a growth of 7.7% compared to the corresponding month of the previous year.

Despite their continued presence among Sri Lanka's leading source markets, the remaining markets in the top ten recorded year-on-year declines. This suggests that the overall performance of major source markets was uneven, with the strong growth from India, China and Australia helping to offset weaker performance in several other markets. The figures also highlight the importance of maintaining momentum in high-performing markets while strengthening promotional and market-development efforts in source markets experiencing declines.

Chart 1. Top ten source markets to Sri Lanka, October 2026

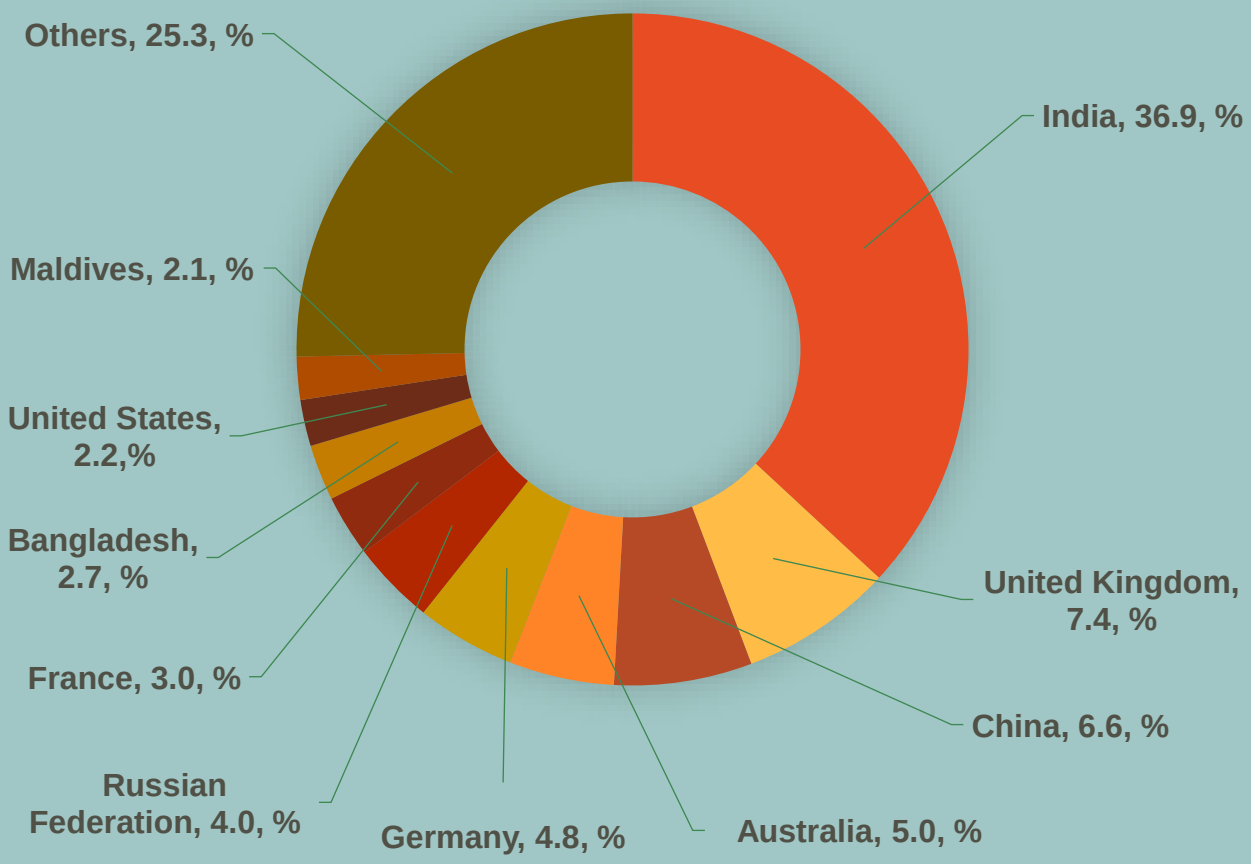
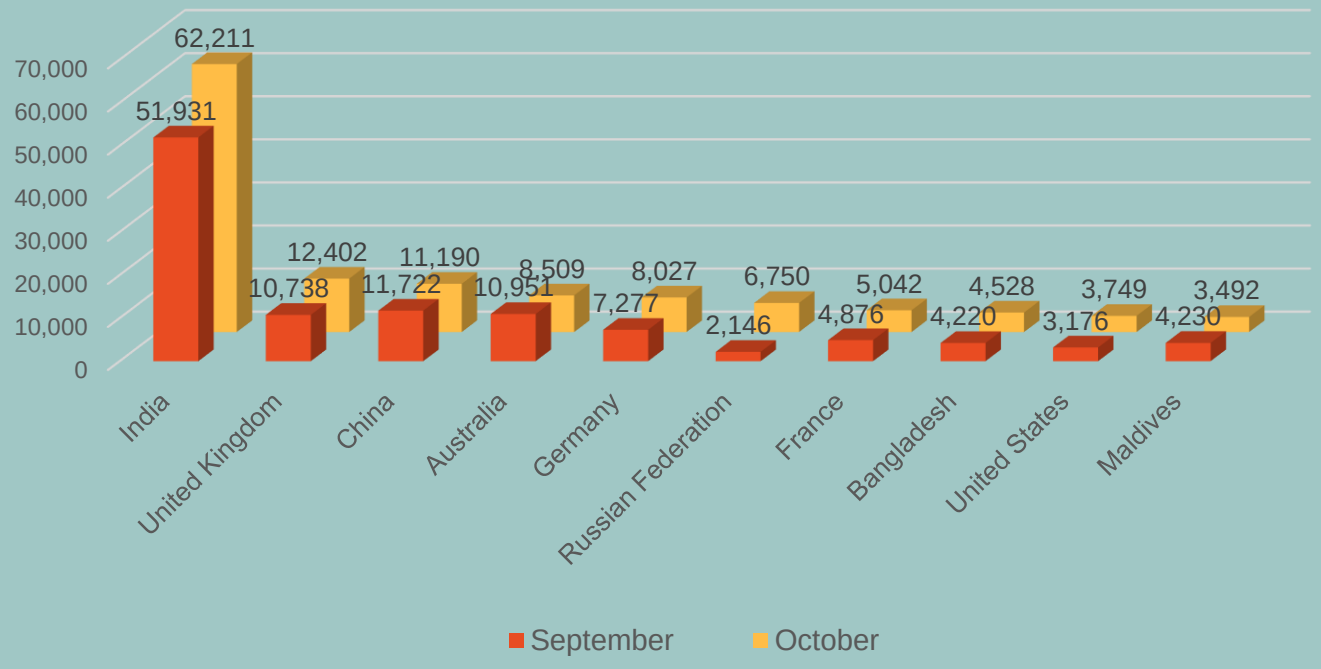


Table 2. Top ten source markets to Sri Lanka, October 2026

Rank	Country of Residence	Tourist arrivals (October 2026)			Tourist arrivals	
		By Air	By Sea	Total	October 2025	Percentage Change (2026/2025) October
1	India	60,134	2,077	62,211	48,113	29.3
2	United Kingdom	12,384	18	12,402	12,934	(4.1)
3	China	11,190	0	11,190	10,864	3.0
4	Australia	8,508	01	8,509	7,903	7.7
5	Germany	8,026	01	8,027	9,753	(17.7)
6	Russian Federation	6,750	0	6,750	11,496	(41.3)
7	France	5,028	14	5,042	5,157	(2.2)
8	Bangladesh	4,528	0	4,528	5,521	(18.0)
9	United States	3,731	18	3,749	3,991	(6.1)
10	Maldives	3,492	0	3,492	2,780	(25.6)

Chart 2: Comparison of arrivals from top ten markets to Sri Lanka, September / Oct– 2026





Top ten source markets

January to October 2026

Sri Lanka's tourism performance during January–October 2026 reflects a mixed pattern across its major source markets, with growth concentrated in selected markets, particularly India, China and Australia, while several traditional European markets and Russia recorded notable declines.

The country recorded a total of 1,862,304 tourist arrivals, compared with 1,890,687 arrivals during the corresponding period in 2025, representing an overall decline of approximately 1.5%. Despite the contraction in total arrivals, the performance of several Asian and regional markets indicates a continuing shift in the composition of Sri Lanka's tourism source markets.

India continued to dominate as Sri Lanka's largest source market, recording 499,625 arrivals, an increase of 18.0% compared with the corresponding period in 2025. India accounted for approximately 26.8% of total arrivals, reinforcing its importance to Sri Lanka's tourism industry. This performance highlights the resilience of the Indian market and its significant contribution to sustaining tourist arrivals amid declining demand from several other key markets.

China retained its position as the third-largest source market, recording 123,740 arrivals, reflecting a 10.0% increase. Similarly, Australia recorded a positive growth of 12.0%, with 95,498 arrivals. These increases indicate improving demand from selected Asian and long-haul markets and provide some balance against the weaker performance of other traditional markets.

In contrast, Russia recorded the steepest decline among the top ten source markets, with arrivals falling by 32.8% from 133,640 to 89,741. This represents a substantial reduction in arrivals from a market that has traditionally made an important contribution to Sri Lanka's tourism industry. The Netherlands also experienced a considerable decline of 22.0%, followed by Bangladesh (-26.3%), France (-10.1%) and Germany (-9.8%). These developments suggest that the contraction in arrivals from several European and regional markets has weighed on overall tourism performance.

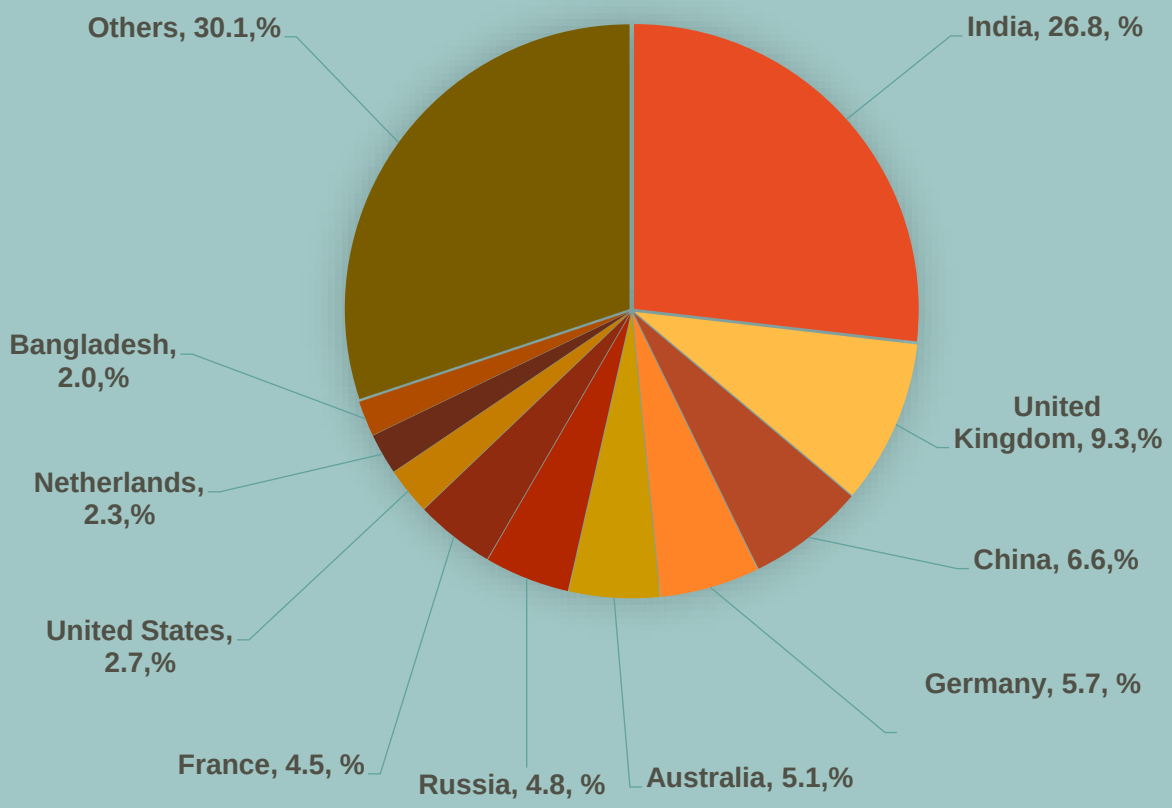
The United Kingdom, Sri Lanka's second-largest source market, recorded a marginal decline of 1.0%, with 173,129 arrivals. Despite this slight reduction, the UK continued to demonstrate relative stability compared with the more pronounced declines observed in Germany, France, Russia and the Netherlands. The United States also recorded a moderate decline of 5.2%, with 49,435 arrivals.

Although Sri Lanka recorded a marginal contraction in overall tourist arrivals during the first ten months of 2026, the performance was not uniformly negative across source markets. Growth in India, China and Australia provided some support to the industry, while significant declines in Russia and several European markets constrained overall performance. The results underline the importance of strengthening existing high-performing markets while revitalising demand from declining traditional markets. A more balanced source-market portfolio would help improve the resilience and sustainability of Sri Lanka's tourism industry.

Table 3. Top ten markets to Sri Lanka, January to October 2026

Rank	Country of Residence	Tourist Arrivals (Jan -October 2026)	Tourist Arrivals (Jan -October 2025)	Percentage Change Jan – October 2026/2025
1	India	499,625	423,405	18.0
2	United Kingdom	173,129	174,827	(1.0)
3	China	123,740	112,454	10.0
4	Germany	105,305	116,741	(9.8)
5	Australia	95,498	85,283	12.0
6	Russia	89,741	133,640	(32.8)
7	France	83,902	93,312	(10.1)
8	United States	49,435	52,165	(5.2)
9	Netherlands	43,400	55,651	(22.0)
10	Bangladesh	37,580	50,959	(26.3)
11	Others	560,949	592,250	(5.3)
	Total	**1,862,304**	**1,890,687**	

Chart 3. Top ten source markets to Sri Lanka, January to October 2026



Tourist arrivals by purpose of visit
October 2026

The distribution of tourist arrivals by purpose of visit in October 2026 indicates that Pleasure/Vacation remained the dominant travel purpose, accounting for 121,814 visitors or 72.24% of total arrivals (168,625). This highlights the continued importance of leisure tourism as the principal driver of international visitor demand for Sri Lanka.

Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) was the second-largest category, recording 16,340 visitors (9.69%), followed closely by Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE), which attracted 15,505 visitors (9.19%). The relatively significant share of MICE arrivals reflects the contribution of business events and professional engagements to the country's tourism industry, highlighting opportunities to further develop Sri Lanka as a regional MICE destination. Business-related travel accounted for 4,833 arrivals (2.87%).

Health/Ayurvedic tourism recorded 1,376 visitors, representing 0.82% of total arrivals. Although this segment accounted for a relatively small share of the market, it highlights the continued demand for Sri Lanka's traditional healing and wellness experiences. Sports-related travel contributed 876 visitors (0.52%), followed by Education (770 visitors; 0.46%) and Religious tourism (609 visitors; 0.36%).

Overall, the October 2026 arrival profile demonstrates a strong concentration of visitor demand in leisure tourism, which accounted for nearly three-quarters of total arrivals. At the same time, the combined contribution of VFR, MICE and business travel indicates the importance of diversifying Sri Lanka's tourism offering beyond conventional leisure travel. Strengthening niche segments such as wellness, sports, education and religious tourism could provide opportunities to broaden the visitor base, reduce reliance on a single travel purpose and enhance the resilience and year-round competitiveness of the tourism sector.

Chart 4: Purpose of visit, October 2026

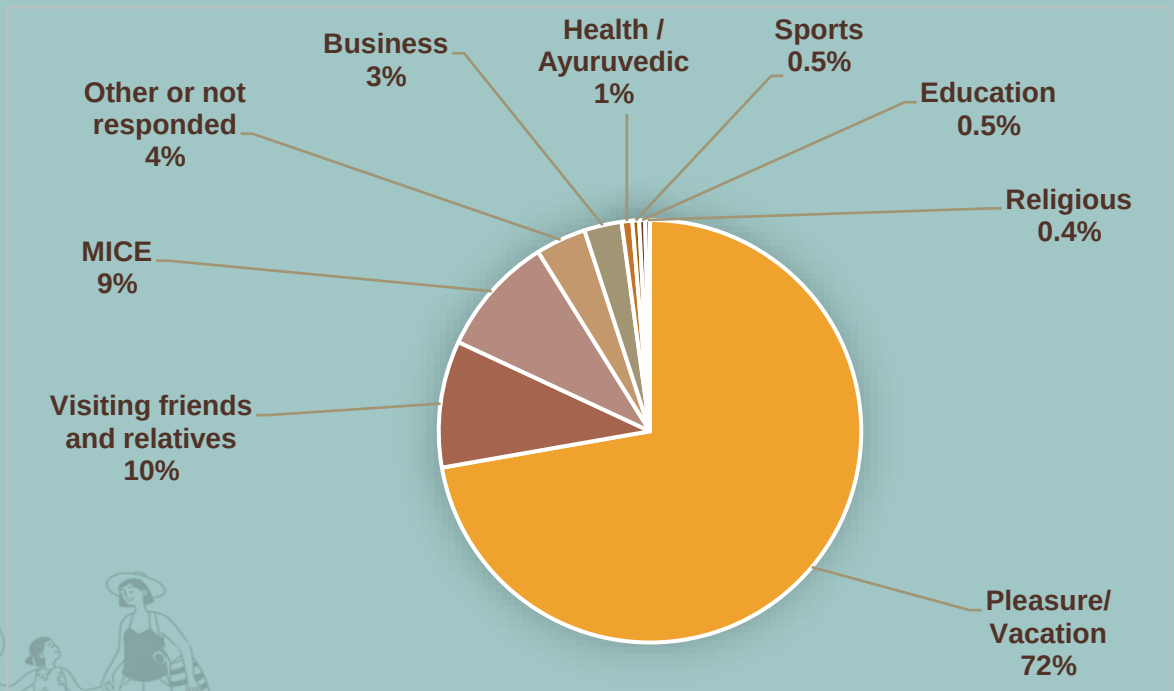
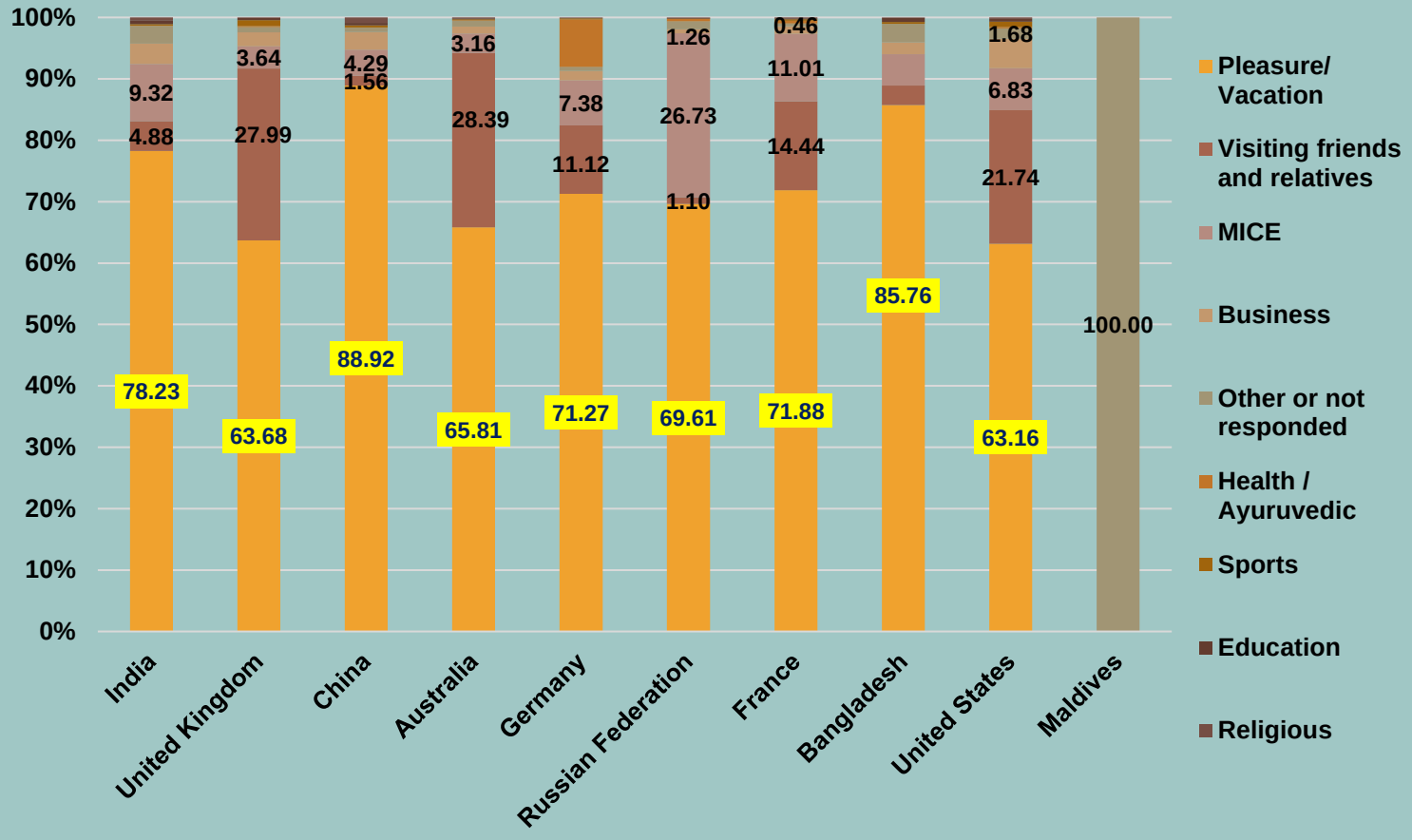


Chart 5: Purpose of visit vs main source markets



An analysis of tourist arrivals by purpose of visit across Sri Lanka's major source markets in October 2026 reveals notable differences in travel motivations among nationalities, although Pleasure/Vacation remains the predominant purpose across almost all markets. The findings highlight the importance of understanding market specific travel behaviour when developing targeted tourism promotion strategies and diversifying the country's tourism product portfolio.

Leisure travel was particularly prominent among visitors from China (88.92%), Bangladesh (85.76%) and India (78.23%). Germany (71.27%), France (71.88%) and the Russian Federation (69.61%) also recorded relatively high proportions of leisure travellers. These figures demonstrate the strong holiday oriented nature of Sri Lanka's appeal across both Asian and European markets. The United Kingdom (63.68%), Australia (65.81%) and the United States (63.16%) recorded comparatively lower shares of leisure visitors, reflecting a more diversified distribution of travel purposes in these markets.

Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) accounted for a considerable proportion of arrivals from Australia (28.39%), the United Kingdom (27.99%) and the United States (21.74%). This pattern is consistent with the presence of established Sri Lankan diaspora communities in these countries and highlights the importance of family and social connections in generating visitor arrivals. France (14.44%) and Germany (11.12%) also recorded notable shares under this category

An interesting feature of the October arrival profile is the relatively high contribution of MICE tourism from the Russian Federation, where 26.73% of arrivals were recorded under this purpose. This was considerably higher than the corresponding proportions in other major source markets. India (9.32%), Germany (7.38%) and France (11.01%) also recorded notable MICE-related shares. These findings suggest opportunities to further strengthen Sri Lanka's position in the international business events market through targeted engagement with countries demonstrating an interest in MICE travel.

Health and Ayurvedic tourism displayed a particularly distinctive market concentration. Germany recorded the highest proportion of visitors travelling for health and Ayurvedic purposes, at 7.80%, substantially exceeding the corresponding shares in other markets. The proportions recorded in the Russian Federation (0.44%), France (0.42%) and the United Kingdom (0.23%) were comparatively modest. This reinforces Germany's importance as a potential priority market for promoting Sri Lanka's traditional healing systems, Ayurveda-based treatments and wellness experiences.

Business travel accounted for relatively small shares across the major source markets, although the United States (4.83%) and India (3.33%) recorded comparatively higher proportions. Sports tourism remained a relatively minor travel purpose across all markets, with the United Kingdom (0.95%) and the United States (0.85%) recording the highest shares. Educational and religious travel also represented relatively small segments, with no substantial concentration observed across the markets examined.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Sri Lanka's major source markets differ considerably in their travel motivations, despite the dominance of leisure tourism. While China, Bangladesh and India exhibit a strong concentration in holiday travel, markets such as the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States offer opportunities to attract visitors through VFR and other travel segments. The relatively high MICE share from the Russian Federation and the distinctive concentration of health and Ayurvedic visitors from Germany further illustrate the importance of market-specific promotional approaches. These differences provide useful insights for refining international marketing strategies, developing specialised tourism products and expanding the contribution of niche segments to Sri Lanka's tourism industry.



The Rise of the Kidfluencers: A New Generation Shaping Family Travel

Family travel is evolving, with children increasingly taking an active role in deciding where families travel, what they do and how they spend their holidays. Recent research by Tripadvisor highlights this changing trend, showing that children are no longer simply accompanying their parents on family vacations but are becoming influential participants in the travel planning process. Described as “kidfluencers”, these young travellers are shaping family holiday choices through their interests, preferences and expectations.

This trend is also reflected in Sri Lanka's inbound tourism market. According to the SLTDA Survey on Inbound Tourists conducted during 2024/25, 41% of the 11,731 international visitors surveyed travelled with their families. Family travel was more prevalent among visitors from the United Kingdom, UAE, Switzerland, Greece, Spain, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Romania, Poland, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Lebanon, Kazakhstan, Jordan, Italy, Iran, Hungary, France, the Czech Republic, Belgium, Belarus and Australia. This pattern suggests a stronger preference among visitors from these markets for shared leisure experiences, which may include family holidays and multi-generational travel. The findings highlight the relevance of the family travel segment to Sri Lanka's inbound tourism market and the importance of understanding the needs and expectations of different family groups.

Tripadvisor's research further highlights the growing influence of children in family travel decisions. Around 80% of children aged 1–17 have an influence on where their families travel, while 42% are identified as the main influence. This involvement begins at an early age, with approximately 70% of children participating in the initial inspiration and research stages of trip planning. By the age of seven, around four in ten children are already influencing family travel choices, increasing to almost two-thirds by the age of ten. This suggests that travel preferences are being shaped from a much younger age than traditionally assumed.

Children's influence is also reflected in the types of activities included in family itineraries. Tripadvisor's research indicates that Viator has recorded a 50% increase in bookings for child-related experiences, including city tours and visits to aquariums. Theme parks remain a popular choice among children across age groups, with an average preference of 52%, followed by beach experiences at 47.5%. However, preferences vary according to age. Children aged 0–7 show a greater interest in nature and wildlife experiences (43%), while those aged 8–13 are more attracted to active adventures (38%). Teenagers aged 14–17 tend to favour urban exploration, city trips and sightseeing (33%). These differences demonstrate the importance of offering a diverse range of activities that cater to different age groups and interests.

Popular entertainment and digital media are also playing an increasingly important role in influencing family travel choices. Around 29% of parents indicate that television programmes, films and video games influence their decisions on where to travel. This figure rises to 36% among families with children aged 8–10. Characters, destinations and experiences featured in popular entertainment, including Bluey, Minecraft and K-pop-related content, can therefore become sources of inspiration for family holidays.

Another notable trend is the increasing importance of advance planning. Family holidays are closely linked to school calendars, making early booking an important consideration for parents. According to the research, 41% of families book their holidays at least four months in advance, while only 12% tend to make last-minute travel and experience bookings. Families increasingly prefer confirmed itineraries, pre-arranged activities and convenient travel arrangements rather than leaving decisions until arrival.

Despite efforts to manage holiday expenses, children's preferences can also influence family spending. Approximately 83% of parents reported spending more than originally planned due to requests from their children, while 25% said this happens frequently. This indicates that families may be willing to increase their spending to accommodate activities and experiences that create enjoyable memories for their children. At the same time, familiarity and positive past experiences remain important, with 73% of parents indicating that they return to destinations or types of holidays they have previously enjoyed. Interestingly, family travel is not limited to parents and children, as 47% of children have also travelled independently with their grandparents.

While children increasingly influence the choice of destinations and activities, parents continue to place considerable importance on convenience, safety and comfort. Direct flights, flexible cancellation arrangements, clean accommodation, convenient locations and breakfast-inclusive packages are among the factors that influence family travel decisions. Facilities such as swimming pools designed for children, family rooms, safe play areas and child-friendly dining options are also important. For families with younger children, easy access to familiar food and secure recreational facilities can make a significant difference, while older children and teenagers may be more interested in cooking classes, night markets, guided adventures and opportunities to explore local culture.

Food is another essential component of the family travel experience. Many families prefer a combination of dining at restaurants and preparing meals at their accommodation. This provides greater flexibility, helps manage expenses and makes mealtimes easier, particularly when travelling with young children who may have specific food preferences.

Overall, these findings point to an important shift in the family travel market. Children are becoming active participants in travel decisions, while parents increasingly seek experiences that balance the interests of all family members. For tourism destinations and service providers, this presents an opportunity to develop more inclusive and age-appropriate tourism products, supported by convenient travel arrangements, family-friendly accommodation and engaging experiences.

For Sri Lanka, the findings of the SLTDA inbound tourist survey, together with the emerging global trends identified by Tripadvisor, highlight the potential to further strengthen the family tourism segment. The country's diverse tourism offering provides opportunities to develop attractive family holiday experiences by combining beach holidays, wildlife and nature experiences, cultural attractions, adventure activities and interactive learning opportunities. Wildlife safaris, visits to national parks, boat rides, cooking demonstrations, cultural excursions and nature-based activities can appeal to different age groups while allowing families to explore the destination together. Greater attention to family-friendly accommodation, safe transport, convenient facilities and well-organised itineraries could further enhance Sri Lanka's appeal to international family travellers.

Ultimately, successful family tourism is not simply about providing activities for children. It is about creating memorable experiences that bring families together, meet the expectations of different generations and encourage visitors to return. As the influence of young travellers continues to grow, destinations and tourism businesses that recognise and respond to their preferences will be better positioned to capture this evolving market.

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International tourist arrivals by country of residence

	October 2026 Tourist arrivals			Tourist arrivals Oct 2025	% change Oct (26/25)	Total tourist arrivals up to Oct 2026	Total tourist arrivals up to Oct 2025	% change up to Oct (26/25)
	By Air	By Sea	Total					
AMERICAS	**6,816**	**23**	**6,839**	**7,030**	**(2.7)**	**92,217**	**97,051**	**(5.0)**
North America	**6,310**	**23**	**6,333**	**6,529**	**(3.0)**	**87,114**	**91,911**	**(5.2)**
Canada	2,426	05	2,431	2,444	(0.5)	36,617	38,868	(5.8)
Mexico	153	0	153	94	62.8	1,062	878	21.0
United States	3,731	18	3,749	3,991	(6.1)	49,435	52,165	(5.2)
Caribbean & Central America	**111**	**0**	**111**	**99**	**12.1**	**969**	**880**	**10.1**
Costa Rica	08	0	08	11	(27.3)	88	94	(6.4)
Jamaica	09	0	09	05	80.0	68	41	65.9
Others	94	0	94	83	13.3	813	745	9.1
South America	**395**	**0**	**395**	**402**	**(1.7)**	**4,134**	**4,260**	**(3.0)**
Argentina	45	0	45	70	(35.7)	863	774	11.5
Brazil	152	0	152	156	(2.6)	1,417	1,590	(10.9)
Chile	52	0	52	54	(3.7)	499	543	(8.1)
Colombia	87	0	87	67	29.9	682	588	16.0
Others	59	0	59	55	7.3	673	765	(12.0)
AFRICA	**1,387**	**02**	**1,389**	**1,220**	**13.9**	**13,721**	**13,403**	**2.4**
North Africa	**311**	**0**	**311**	**287**	**8.4**	**3,055**	**2,986**	**2.3**
Morocco	75	0	75	82	(8.5)	888	930	(4.5)
Sudan	89	0	89	90	(1.1)	1,128	1,011	11.6
Others	147	0	147	115	27.8	1,039	1,045	(0.6)
Sub-Saharan Africa	**1,076**	**02**	**1,078**	**933**	**15.5**	**10,066**	**10,417**	**2.4**
Kenya	134	0	134	88	52.3	883	991	(10.9)
Mauritius	50	0	50	69	(27.5)	809	648	24.8
Nigeria	21	0	21	39	(46.2)	126	145	(13.1)
South Africa	324	02	326	437	(25.4)	3,775	4,064	(7.1)
Others	547	0	547	300	82.3	5,073	4,569	11.0

	October 2026			Tourist arrivals Oct 2025	% change Oct (26/25)	Total tourist arrivals up to Oct 2026	Total tourist arrivals up to Oct 2025	% change up to Oct (26/25)
	Tourist arrivals							
	By Air	By Sea	Total					
ASIA & PACIFIC	**102,309**	**2,144**	**104,453**	**87,477**	**19.4**	**942,622**	**841,627**	**12.0**
North East Asia	**14,540**	**0**	**14,540**	**14,241**	**2.1**	**168,940**	**153,466**	**10.1**
China	11,190	0	11,190	10,864	3.0	123,740	112,454	10.0
Japan	2,605	0	2,605	2,253	15.6	36,266	31,052	16.8
South Korea	734	0	734	1,105	(33.6)	8,740	9,783	(10.7)
Others	11	0	11	19	(42.1)	194	177	9.6
South East Asia	**5,614**	**04**	**5,618**	**4,980**	**12.8**	**64,522**	**54,327**	**18.8**
Cambodia	101	0	101	29	248.3	1,240	1,062	16.8
Indonesia	963	0	963	356	170.5	6,688	3,983	67.9
Malaysia	1,532	0	1,532	1,810	(15.4)	19,882	19,281	3.1
Myanmar	201	0	201	172	16.9	4,441	2,030	118.8
Philippines	518	0	518	588	(11.9)	5,846	5,689	2.8
Singapore	989	04	993	1,011	(1.8)	11,868	11,828	0.3
Thailand	790	0	790	724	9.1	7,508	6,981	7.5
Vietnam	476	0	476	273	74.4	6,560	3,170	106.9
Others	44	0	44	17	158.8	489	303	61.4
Oceania	**9,577**	**02**	**9,579**	**9,023**	**6.2**	**107,549**	**96,143**	**11.9**
Australia	8,508	01	8,509	7,903	7.7	95,498	85,283	12.0
New Zealand	1,035	01	1,036	1,069	(3.1)	11,586	10,480	10.6
Others	34	0	34	51	(33.3)	465	380	22.4
South Asia	**72,578**	**2,138**	**74,716**	**59,233**	**26.1**	**601,611**	**537,691**	**11.9**
Afghanistan	22	0	22	04	450.0	83	69	20.3
Bangladesh	4,528	0	4,528	5,521	(18.0)	37,580	50,959	(26.3)
Bhutan	66	0	66	51	29.4	535	538	(0.6)
India	60,134	2,077	62,211	48,113	29.3	499,625	423,405	18.0
Iran	171	0	171	632	(72.9)	1,728	8,092	(78.6)
Maldives	3,492	0	3,492	2,780	25.6	34,162	30,921	10.5
Nepal	1,047	61	1,108	455	143.5	6,333	4,727	34.0
Pakistan	3,118	0	3,118	1,677	85.9	21,565	18,980	13.6
EUROPE	**53,668**	**53**	**53,721**	**67,121**	**(20.0)**	**786,820**	**911,991**	**(13.7)**
Northern Europe	**15,503**	**23**	**15,526**	**16,565**	**(6.3)**	**217,504**	**220,992**	**(1.6)**
Denmark	920	02	922	969	(4.9)	14,201	14,284	(0.6)
Finland	318	0	318	450	(29.3)	3,513	3,545	(0.9)
Norway	491	01	492	574	(14.3)	8,716	10,316	(15.5)
Sweden	730	01	731	861	(15.1)	9,187	9,387	(2.1)
United Kingdom	12,384	18	12,402	12,934	(4.1)	173,129	174,827	(1.0)
Others	660	01	661	777	(14.9)	8,758	8,633	1.4

	October 2026			Tourist arrivals Oct 2025	% change Oct (26/25)	Total tourist arrivals up to Oct 2026	Total tourist arrivals up to Oct 2025	% change up to Oct (26/25)
	Tourist arrivals							
	By Air	By Sea	Total					
Western Europe	**18,738**	**20**	**18,758**	**22,208**	**(15.5)**	**287,350**	**325,122**	**(11.6)**
Austria	809	0	809	878	(7.9)	12,164	13,802	(11.9)
Belgium	833	0	833	877	(5.0)	15,955	17,931	(11.0)
France	5,028	14	5,042	5,157	(2.2)	83,902	93,312	(10.1)
Germany	8,026	01	8,027	9,753	(17.7)	105,305	116,741	(9.8)
Netherlands	2,054	03	2,057	3,441	(40.2)	43,400	55,651	(22.0)
Switzerland	1,965	02	1,967	2,079	(5.4)	25,897	26,911	(3.8)
Others	23	0	23	23	0.0	727	774	(6.1)
Central/Eastern Europe	**12,214**	**03**	**12,217**	**18,755**	**(34.9)**	**174,888**	**242,031**	**(27.7)**
Belarus	438	0	438	719	(39.1)	6,658	6,677	(0.3)
Czech Republic	916	0	916	875	4.7	12,442	14,353	(13.3)
Estonia	129	0	129	176	(26.7)	2,438	3,013	(19.1)
Hungary	344	0	344	434	(20.7)	4,254	4,926	(13.6)
Kazakhstan	535	0	535	246	117.5	4,580	8,212	(44.2)
Lithuania	280	0	280	271	3.3	3,351	5,338	(37.2)
Poland	888	03	891	2,182	(59.2)	28,121	37,788	(25.6)
Romania	249	0	249	352	(29.3)	3,635	4,585	(20.7)
Russia	6,750	0	6,750	11,496	(41.3)	89,741	133,640	(32.8)
Slovakia	354	0	354	385	(8.1)	4,489	5,516	(18.6)
Ukraine	343	0	343	529	(35.2)	5,779	6,620	(12.7)
Others	988	0	988	1,090	(9.4)	9,400	11,363	(17.3)
Southern/ Mediterranean Europe	**7,213**	**07**	**7,220**	**9,593**	**(24.7)**	**107,078**	**123,846**	**(13.5)**
Greece	256	0	256	269	(4.8)	3,208	3,304	(2.9)
Italy	1,684	01	1,685	1,913	(11.9)	33,212	40,943	(18.9)
Portugal	366	01	367	492	(25.4)	4,712	6,260	(24.7)
Spain	3,005	04	3,009	3,692	(18.5)	30,278	38,128	(20.6)
Turkey	485	0	485	583	(16.8)	7,293	6,668	9.4
Israel	957	0	957	1,929	(50.4)	21,741	19,482	11.6
Others	460	01	461	715	(35.5)	6,634	9,061	(26.8)
MIDDLE EAST	**2,223**	**0**	**2,223**	**2,345**	**(5.2)**	**26,924**	**26,615**	**1.2**
Bahrain	143	0	143	61	134.4	1,370	1,124	21.9
Egypt	303	0	303	305	(0.7)	2,876	3,427	(16.1)
Iraq	150	0	150	194	(22.7)	1,534	1,459	5.1
Jordan	164	0	164	254	(35.4)	1,942	2,353	(17.5)
Kuwait	122	0	122	111	9.9	1,312	1,640	(20.0)
Lebanon	137	0	137	242	(43.4)	2,244	2,752	(18.5)
Oman	247	0	247	200	23.5	3,836	2,303	66.6
Qatar	69	0	69	38	81.6	721	771	(6.5)
Saudi Arabia	258	0	258	321	(19.6)	4,644	4,960	(6.4)
United Arab Emirates	562	0	562	532	5.6	5,402	4,827	11.9
Others	68	0	68	87	(21.8)	1,043	999	4.4
TOTAL	**166,403**	**2,222**	**168,625**	**165,193**	**2.1**	**1,862,304**	**1,890,687**	**(1.5)**

Main last departure airports and airlines to Sri Lanka, October 2026

An analysis of tourist arrivals by last port of departure in October 2026 highlights the importance of regional air connectivity and major international transit hubs in facilitating travel to Sri Lanka. Chennai recorded the highest number of arrivals, with 16,584 visitors, accounting for 9.83% of total arrivals. Bangalore followed with 13,301 visitors (7.89%), while Doha ranked third with 11,957 visitors (7.09%). Mumbai also contributed a significant number of arrivals, recording 11,846 visitors (7.03%). The prominence of these Indian departure points reflects the importance of India's geographical proximity, strong air connectivity and its position as one of Sri Lanka's principal source markets.

Major Middle Eastern aviation hubs also played a significant role in connecting international travellers to Sri Lanka. Doha, Dubai and Abu Dhabi collectively accounted for 34,509 arrivals, representing approximately 20.46% of the total. Istanbul contributed a further 6,961 visitors (4.13%), while Sharjah recorded 2,902 arrivals (1.72%). These figures underline the importance of Middle Eastern airports as key transit gateways, particularly for travellers originating from Europe and other international markets.

Other important departure points included Delhi (10,870; 6.45%), Hyderabad (6,692; 3.97%), London (6,151; 3.65%), Kuala Lumpur (5,980; 3.55%) and Singapore (5,340; 3.17%). The contribution from these cities reflects Sri Lanka's connectivity with key markets across South Asia, Europe and Southeast Asia. Arrivals from Male (4,062; 2.41%), Hong Kong (3,506; 2.08%), Melbourne (3,358; 1.99%) and Moscow (3,358; 1.99%) further demonstrate the geographical diversity of international air connections serving the destination.

Overall, the arrival pattern demonstrates the strategic importance of India's major cities and Middle Eastern transit hubs in supporting Sri Lanka's international air connectivity. The strong contribution from Chennai, Bangalore, Mumbai and Delhi highlights the importance of maintaining and further strengthening direct air links with India. At the same time, the significant role played by Doha, Dubai and Abu Dhabi reinforces the importance of maintaining strong connectivity through Gulf aviation hubs, particularly for long-haul markets. Continued engagement with international airlines, expansion of direct flight connections and strengthening of regional air links will therefore remain important in improving accessibility and supporting the sustained growth of Sri Lanka's tourism industry.



Chart 6. Main last departure airports to Sri Lanka, October 2026

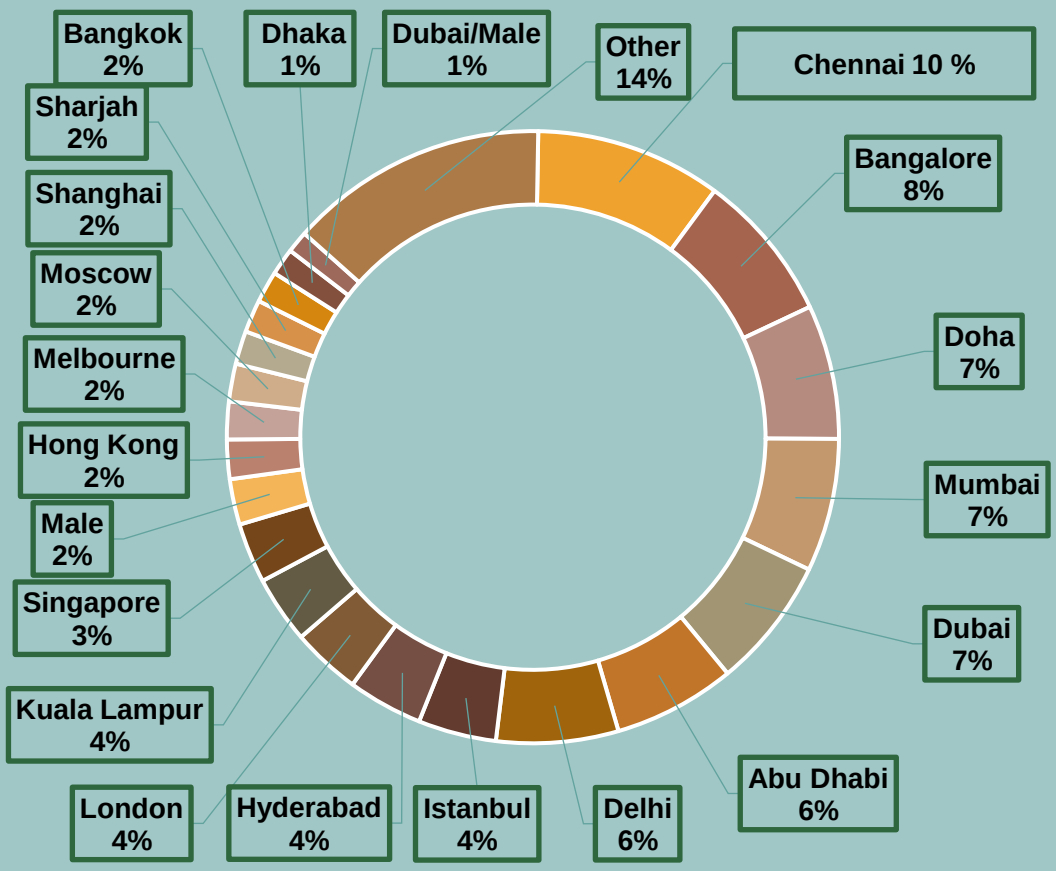
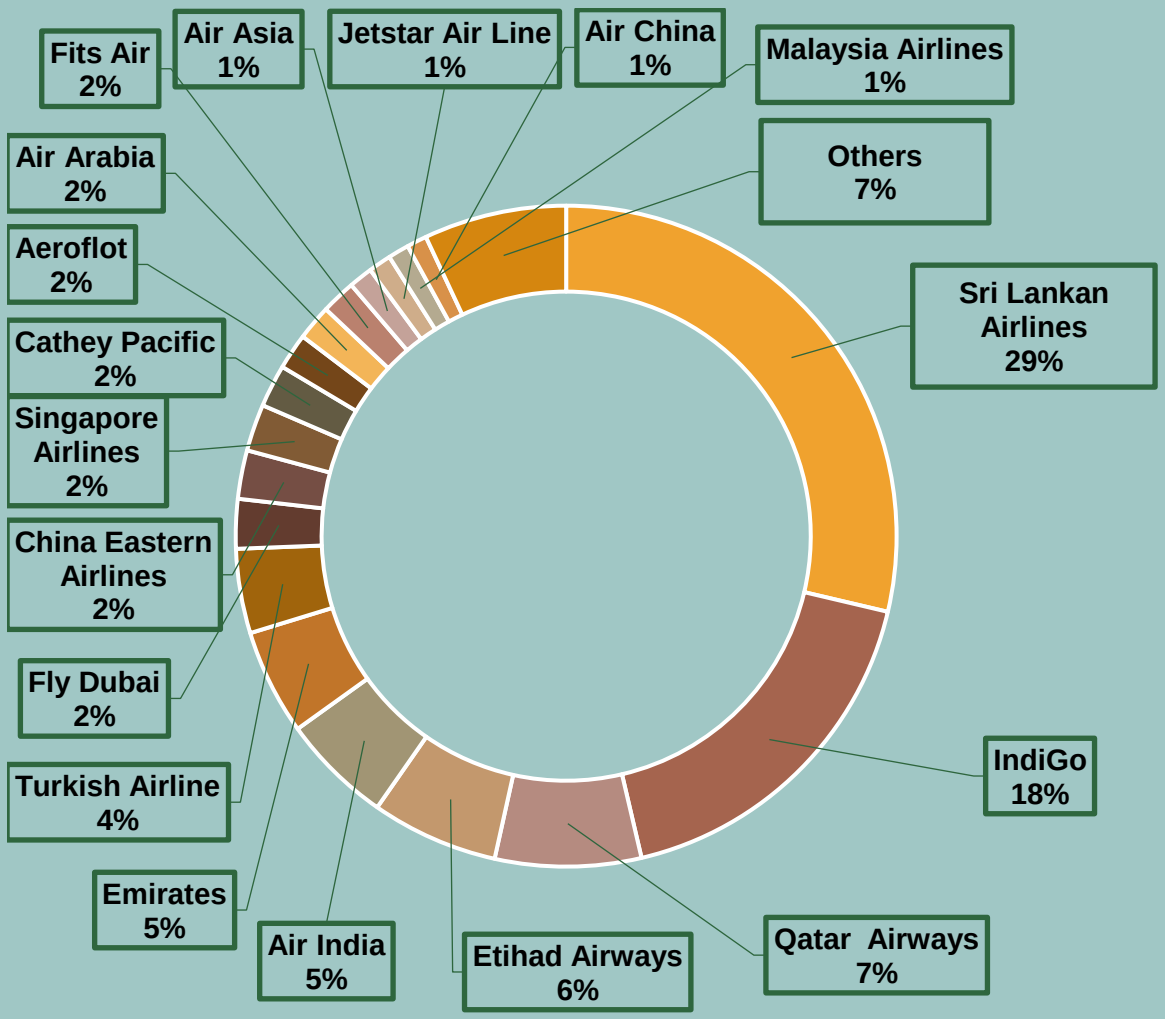


Chart 7. Main airlines to Sri Lanka, October 2026



The distribution of tourist arrivals by airline in October 2026 highlights the important role played by both national and international carriers in facilitating visitor movements to Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan Airlines remained the leading carrier, bringing in 48,356 visitors and accounting for 28.68% of total arrivals. This reinforces the airline's position as the principal air transport provider serving the country's international tourism market and highlights its importance in maintaining Sri Lanka's connectivity with key source markets.

IndiGo ranked second, recording 29,778 arrivals (17.66%), reflecting the strong air travel links between Sri Lanka and India. Together, Sri Lankan Airlines and IndiGo accounted for 46.34% of total arrivals, indicating that nearly half of all visitors entered the country through these two carriers. This also demonstrates the importance of the Indian market and the extensive air connectivity between the two neighbouring countries.

Middle Eastern airlines also accounted for a considerable share of arrivals. Qatar Airways recorded 12,040 visitors (7.14%), followed by Etihad Airways with 10,473 (6.21%) and Emirates with 8,715 (5.17%). Flydubai and Air Arabia contributed a further 4,079 (2.42%) and 2,908 (1.72%) arrivals, respectively. Collectively, these five carriers accounted for approximately 22.66% of total arrivals. Their contribution highlights the importance of Gulf aviation hubs, particularly Doha, Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah, in connecting Sri Lanka with major international markets, including Europe and other long-haul destinations.

Among other international carriers, Air India recorded 9,117 arrivals (5.41%), while Turkish Airlines contributed 6,961 (4.13%). China Eastern Airlines and Singapore Airlines accounted for 4,007 (2.38%) and 3,871 (2.30%) arrivals, respectively. Cathay Pacific (2.08%) and Aeroflot (1.76%) also made notable contributions. The presence of these carriers reflects the diversity of Sri Lanka's international air connectivity across South Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

Other airlines collectively accounted for 11,765 arrivals, representing 6.98% of the total. This indicates that, in addition to the major carriers, a wider network of international airlines also contributes to bringing visitors to Sri Lanka.

Overall, the findings demonstrate Sri Lanka's reliance on a combination of its national carrier, regional airlines and major international transit carriers to sustain international visitor arrivals. While Sri Lankan Airlines continues to play a leading role, the significant contribution of IndiGo highlights the importance of the Indian aviation market. Similarly, the strong presence of Middle Eastern carriers underlines the country's dependence on Gulf hubs for access to several long-haul markets. Maintaining strong partnerships with international airlines, expanding direct air services and improving connectivity with emerging source markets will therefore be important in supporting the continued growth and diversification of Sri Lanka's tourism industry.



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

October 2026

Table 5. Top ten markets vs. main last departure airports to Sri Lanka, October 2026

Country	Chennai	Bangalore	Doha Qatar	Mumbai	Dubai	Abu Dhabi	Delhi	Istanbul	Hyderabad	London	Kuala Lampur	Singapore	Male	Hong Kong	Melbourne	Moscow	Shanghai	Sharja	Bangkok	Dhaka	Dubai/Male	Others	
India	14,840	12,254	217	10,648	1,087	416	8,387	16	6,312	25	216	257	159	56	48	0	10	239	340	15	35	6,634	62,211
United Kingdom	256	181	2,106	178	1,587	1,232	245	216	45	4,772	196	184	81	103	63	0	11	234	96	31	76	509	12,402
China	9	18	29	12	172	83	34	14	7	12	989	177	422	2,260	11	0	2,626	21	387	66	74	3,767	11,190
Australia	103	52	93	74	165	82	251	43	52	109	931	2,106	83	186	2,934	0	17	37	102	10	15	1,064	8,509
Germany	49	70	1,605	175	1,170	1,309	138	1,350	10	144	83	44	70	20	6	3	11	153	79	10	50	1,478	8,027
Russian Federation	21	22	161	24	892	917	112	353	2	5	98	15	88	13	1	3,315	48	216	66	7	74	300	6,750
France	94	73	1,418	57	629	768	104	829	5	128	90	77	16	12	12	0	11	73	38	3	8	597	5,042
Bangladesh	457	0	78	64	37	13	81	3	0	7	99	52	1,351	0	4	0	0	21	22	2,120	3	116	4,528
United States	196	198	561	138	237	354	195	289	176	94	127	263	83	213	9	1	32	24	131	36	21	371	3,749
Maldives	6	8	1	1	696	2	9	1	5	1	65	9	1,151	1	2	0	1	1	33	5	1,385	109	3,492

The data on the last departure ports of international tourists travelling to Sri Lanka reveals distinct travel patterns across the major source markets. It highlights the importance of regional gateways, major international aviation hubs and direct air connectivity in facilitating tourist arrivals to the country.

India accounts for 62,211 arrivals, representing approximately 36.8% of the total arrivals. Chennai (14,840), Bangalore (12,254), Mumbai (10,648), Delhi (8,387) and Hyderabad (6,312) are the leading departure points for tourists from India. The concentration of arrivals across these Indian cities demonstrates the importance of direct and convenient air connectivity between the two countries.

For the United Kingdom, London (4,772), Doha (2,106), Dubai (1,587) and Abu Dhabi (1,232) are among the leading departure points. The substantial number of departures through Doha and the UAE reflects the importance of Middle Eastern aviation hubs in connecting the UK market with Sri Lanka.

A similar pattern can be observed among German and French tourists. Doha, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Istanbul feature prominently as departure points for these markets. In particular, Doha records 1,605 departures from the German market and 1,418 from the French market. This highlights the continuing importance of Gulf and other international transit hubs in maintaining connectivity between Europe and Sri Lanka.

China demonstrates a strong concentration of arrivals through Shanghai (2,626), Hong Kong (2,260) and Kuala Lumpur (989). The relatively high number recorded under 'Others' (3,767) indicates that Chinese tourists are also travelling through several other departure points.

For Australian tourists, Melbourne (2,934) and Singapore (2,106) are the two leading departure points, followed by Kuala Lumpur (931). This suggests that Singapore and Kuala Lumpur serve as important regional connecting hubs for Australian travellers visiting Sri Lanka.

The Russian market records a particularly high concentration of departures through Moscow, with 3,315 arrivals, accounting for approximately 49% of the Russian total. Abu Dhabi (917), Dubai (892) and Istanbul (353) are other notable departure points. This pattern indicates the importance of Moscow as the principal gateway for Russian tourists, while Abu Dhabi and Dubai provide additional international connectivity.

For Bangladesh, Dhaka is the leading departure point, accounting for 2,120 arrivals, followed by Male (1,351). This is an interesting pattern that warrants further examination in relation to flight connections and travel itineraries.

Similarly, the Maldives market shows a concentration of departures through Dubai/Male (1,385), Male (1,151) and Dubai (696), indicating the role of regional and international connections in facilitating travel between the two destinations.

For tourists from the United States, Doha (561), Abu Dhabi (354),and Singapore (263), are among the leading departure points. Unlike some regional markets, the US market is distributed across several international gateways, reflecting the importance of connecting flights in facilitating long-haul travel to Sri Lanka.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that Sri Lanka's international tourism accessibility is supported by a combination of direct regional connections and major international transit hubs. Understanding these departure patterns is important for tourism market planning, airline route development and strengthening Sri Lanka's accessibility in key source markets.



Table 6. Top ten markets vs. main airlines to Sri Lanka, October 2026

Country	Sri Lankan Airline	IndiGo	Qatar Airlines	Etihad Airways	Air India	Emirates	Turkish Airline	Fly Dubai	China Eastern Airlines	Singapore Airline	Cathey Pacific	Aeroflot	Air Arabia	Fits Air	Air Asia	Jetstar Airline	Malaysian Airline	Air China	Others	Total
India	37.01	43.44	0.33	0.59	11.40	0.65	0.03	0.66	0.02	0.16	0.09	0.00	0.38	0.97	0.06	0.03	0.04	0.00	4.15	100.00
United Kingdom	38.87	3.23	17.48	9.45	1.85	9.84	1.74	2.60	0.12	0.77	0.83	0.00	1.89	0.15	0.62	0.40	0.27	0.04	9.88	100.00
China	12.68	0.29	0.25	0.55	0.27	0.88	0.13	1.10	32.53	0.70	20.20	0.00	0.19	0.48	3.56	0.06	1.97	13.92	10.25	100.00
Australia	38.44	1.56	1.03	0.95	1.43	1.43	0.51	0.47	0.26	20.47	2.19	0.00	0.43	0.07	1.18	19.03	8.54	0.05	1.95	100.00
Germany	20.71	1.52	20.14	16.25	2.09	13.29	16.82	1.46	0.15	0.27	0.25	0.04	1.93	0.12	0.50	0.05	0.06	0.07	4.27	100.00
Russian Federation	2.71	0.80	2.39	12.67	1.47	3.57	5.23	10.52	0.81	0.07	0.19	43.38	3.20	0.25	0.67	0.01	0.03	0.36	11.67	100.00
France	14.82	3.13	28.86	15.15	1.80	10.29	16.44	1.51	0.22	1.09	0.24	0.00	1.45	0.10	0.87	0.18	0.26	0.08	3.51	100.00
Bangladesh	46.20	10.07	1.70	0.29	2.80	0.18	0.07	0.46	0.02	0.75	0.00	0.00	0.46	35.07	0.40	0.02	0.22	0.07	1.21	100.00
United States	24.89	10.54	15.28	9.23	4.51	4.85	7.71	1.63	0.91	5.71	5.68	0.03	0.64	0.72	1.49	0.21	0.69	0.16	5.12	100.00
Maldives	26.09	0.26	0.03	0.06	0.06	46.71	0.03	12.77	0.03	0.20	0.03	0.00	0.03	11.74	0.26	0.00	0.00	0.09	1.63	100.00

The airline distribution data for October reveals interesting differences in passenger preferences across the various markets. The findings indicate that airline selection is strongly influenced by geographical location, availability of direct flights, connecting routes, competitive pricing and the presence of established international carriers.

The Indian market is largely dominated by IndiGo and Sri Lankan Airlines, which account for 43.44% and 37.01% respectively. Air India holds a comparatively smaller share of 11.40%, while the remaining airlines collectively account for a relatively limited proportion.

This indicates that the Indian market is highly concentrated around two major airline choices. IndiGo's strong position reflects its established presence in the Indian aviation industry, while SriLankan Airlines maintains a competitive position, potentially benefiting from its connectivity between India and Sri Lanka.

Sri Lankan Airlines dominates the UK market with a share of 38.87%, considerably higher than Qatar Airways at 17.48%.Emirates (9.84%) and Etihad Airways (9.45%) also maintain notable positions, indicating that Middle Eastern carriers remain important alternatives for passengers travelling between the UK and Sri Lanka.

The Chinese market demonstrates a substantially different pattern compared with South Asian and European markets. China Eastern Airlines leads with 32.53%, followed by Cathay Pacific at 20.20% and Air China at 13.92%. SriLankan Airlines accounts for 12.68%.This distribution highlights the strong influence of Chinese and regional Asian carriers within this market.

Sri Lankan Airlines leads the Australian market with 38.44%. However, the market also shows considerable competition from Singapore Airlines (20.47%) and Jetstar (19.03%). Malaysia Airlines holds another notable share of 8.54%. The presence of these airlines indicates that Australian passengers have several established alternatives when travelling to Sri Lanka.

The German market is relatively competitive, with no single airline demonstrating an overwhelming level of dominance. SriLankan Airlines leads with 20.71%, closely followed by Qatar Airways at 20.14%. Etihad Airways (16.25%), Turkish Airlines (16.82%) and Emirates (13.29%) also hold considerable market shares. This distribution suggests that passengers travelling from Germany have a strong reliance on international connecting airlines, particularly those operating through major Middle Eastern and Turkish aviation hubs.

The Russian market demonstrates a particularly distinctive pattern, with Aeroflot accounting for 43.38% of the market. Etihad Airways follows with 12.67%, while Fly dubai accounts for 10.52%.

The relatively strong performance of Aeroflot indicates the importance of the national carrier in this market.At the same time, the presence of Etihad Airways, FlyDubai and Emirates suggests that Middle Eastern carriers also play an important role in connecting Russian passengers with international destinations.

Qatar Airways leads the French market with 28.86%, followed by Turkish Airlines at 16.44%, Etihad Airways at 15.15% and SriLankan Airlines at 14.82%.Emirates also maintains a notable share of 10.29%. Unlike the UK and Australian markets, SriLankan Airlines does not hold the leading position in France.

Bangladesh records the strongest market share for SriLankan Airlines at 46.20%. Interestingly, FitsAir also demonstrates a significant presence, accounting for 35.07%, while IndiGo holds 10.07%. Together, SriLankan Airlines and FitsAir account for more than 80% of the market. This is a particularly interesting finding because it indicates the strong presence of Sri Lankan carriers in the Bangladesh market.

The US market demonstrates a more diversified airline distribution. SriLankan Airlines leads with 24.89%, followed by Qatar Airways at 15.28% and IndiGo at 10.54%. Etihad Airways (9.23%) and Turkish Airlines (7.71%) also maintain meaningful shares. Singapore Airlines (5.71%) and Cathay Pacific (5.68%) demonstrate almost identical market shares.
The Maldives market is predominantly led by Emirates, which accounts for 46.71%. SriLankan Airlines holds the second-largest share at 26.09%, followed by FlyDubai (12.77%) and FitsAir (11.74%). The strong performance of Emirates indicates its significant position in this market.

The October airline distribution highlights that passenger airline preferences vary considerably across different geographical markets. While SriLankan Airlines maintains a strong position in several important markets, the competitive landscape differs depending on the destination. Understanding these country-specific differences is important when developing market strategies, identifying growth opportunities and improving the airline's competitive positioning.





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