



# MONTHLY TOURIST ARRIVALS REPORT:

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

## SEPTEMBER 2024

Sri Lanka

YOU'LL COME BACK FOR MORE

Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority

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## Introduction

The following document provides a synthesis of the most recent September, 2024 international visitor arrivals data sourced from the Department of Immigration & Emigration. The data is current as of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024, 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

In September, Sri Lanka recorded 122,140 tourist arrivals, a 25.8% drop from August but a 9.1% increase compared to September 2023. This month marked the slowest growth rate of 2024. By the end of September, total arrivals reached 1,484,808, reflecting a steady recovery in the tourism sector. The decline from August can be attributed to seasonal factors, as travel typically decreases in September with the conclusion of summer vacations in major source markets. Additionally, the visa issuance crisis may have further impacted the arrival numbers, leading to lower-than-expected figures.

However, the 9.1% year-on-year increase compared to September 2023 highlights a positive recovery trend. This improvement may reflect Sri Lanka's ongoing efforts to boost tourism following challenges posed by the

pandemic and other economic difficulties in previous years.

In September, Sri Lanka's primary source markets were India, China, the United Kingdom, Germany and Australia with notable increases in visitors from these countries driving the growth of the tourism sector.

The latest UNWTO Barometer presents a mostly optimistic outlook for international tourism between May and September 2024, with a strong recovery expected. However, several factors are constraining this rebound, including economic issues like inflation and high fuel prices, geopolitical instability, travel restrictions and visa requirements, low consumer confidence, and lingering concerns about COVID-19. These challenges continue to impact the speed of tourism's recovery

Table 1. Monthly tourist arrivals, September 2024

Month	2023	2024	% Change 2024/23
January	102,545	208,253	103.08
February	107,639	218,350	102.08
March	125,495	209,181	66.7
April	105,498	148,867	41.1
May	83,309	112,128	34.6
June	100,388	113,470	13.0
July	143,039	187,810	31.30
August	136,405	164,609	20.7
September	111,938	122,140	9.11
October	109,199		
November	151,496		
December	210,352		
TOTAL	1,487,303	1,484,808	



Tourist Arrivals | September 2024

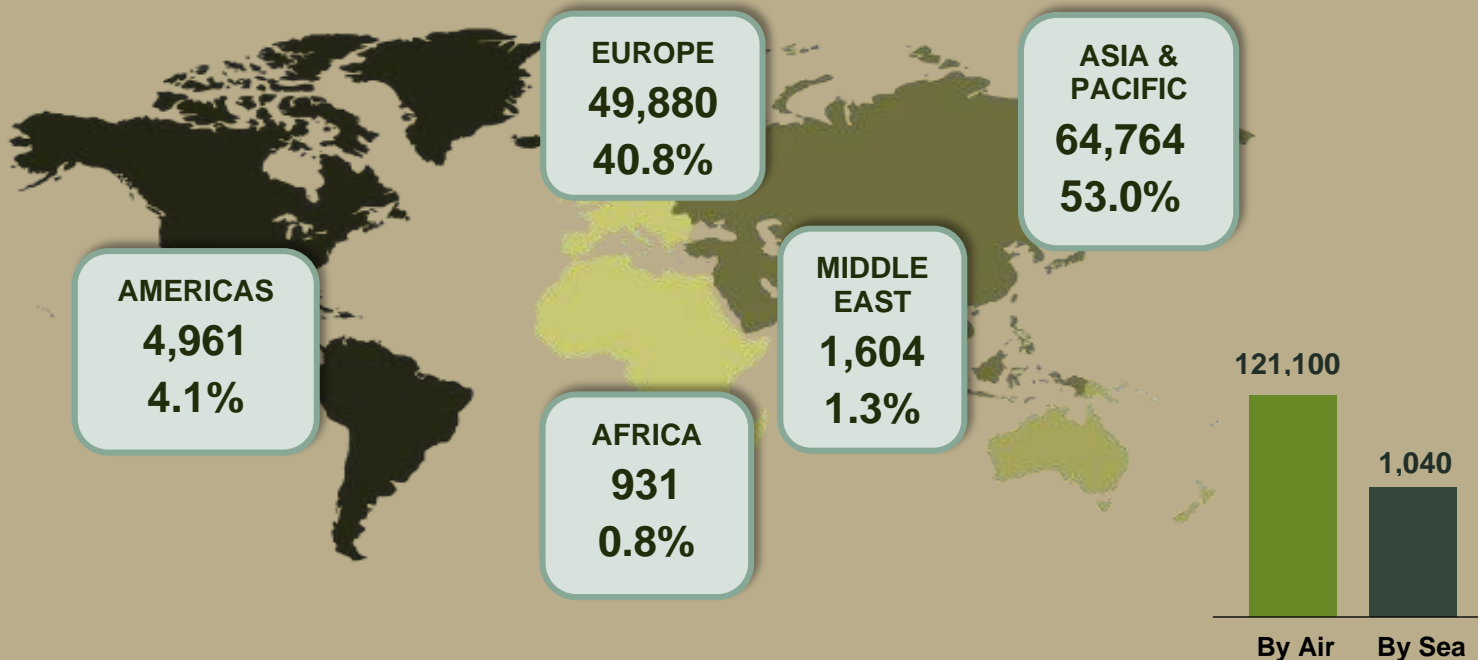
122.140



## Tourist arrivals by region and percentage share

### September 2024

Map 1. Tourist arrivals by region and percentage share

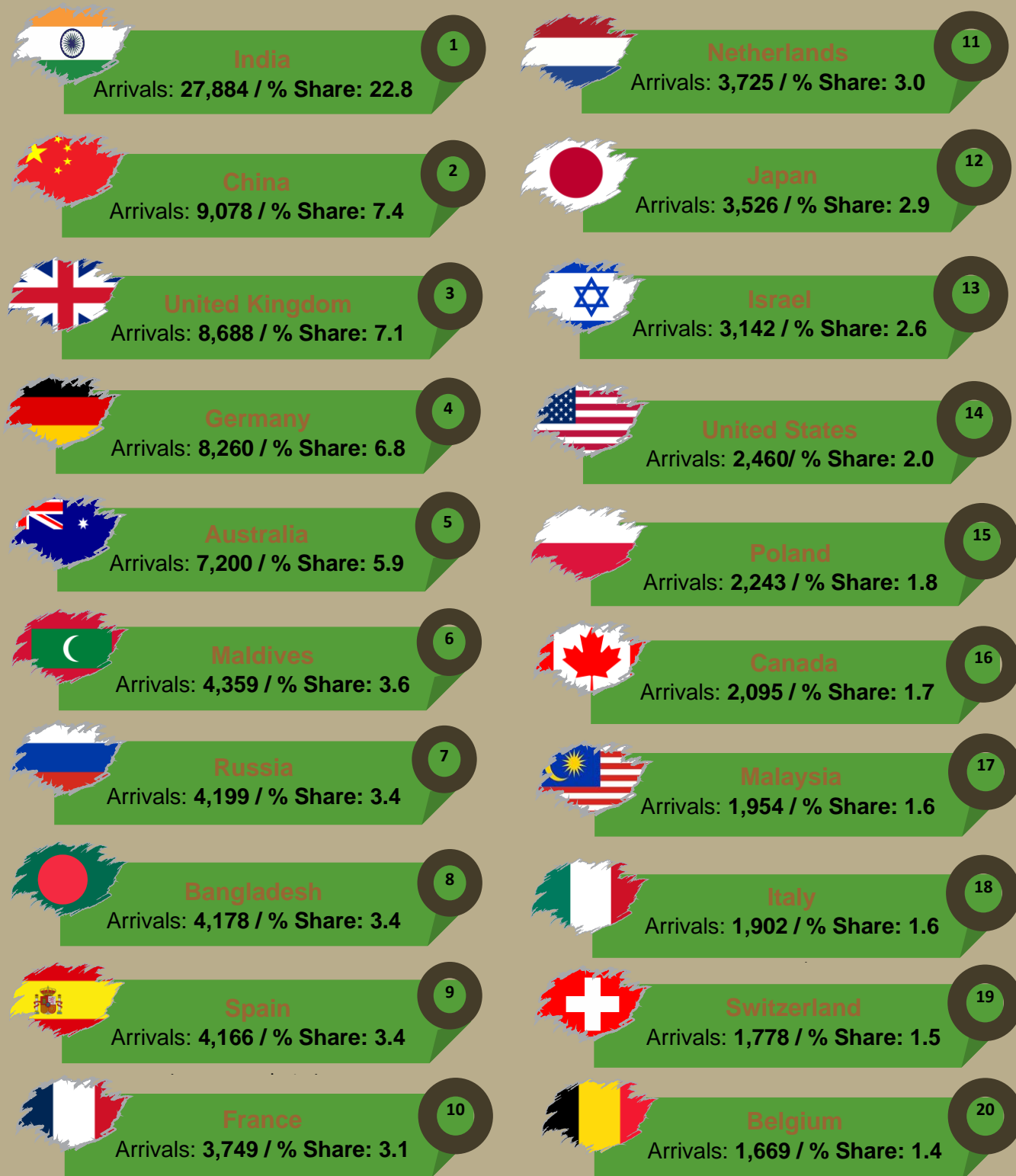


Asia and the Pacific have become a dominant force in Sri Lankan tourism, making up 53.0% of visitors, while Europe follows closely, contributing 40.8% of total arrivals. This shift illustrates the evolving dynamics of the industry, with both regions playing key roles in its growth. The increase in demand from key markets such as India, China, Australia, the UK, and Germany has greatly strengthened Sri Lanka's tourism sector, thanks to strong travel links and favorable conditions. The Americas account for 4.1% of arrivals, with the Middle East and Africa contributing 1.3% and 0.8%, respectively, adding diversity to Sri Lanka's tourism profile. The strong presence of visitors from Europe and the Asia-Pacific region underscores their established demand, while the smaller shares from the Americas, Middle East, and Africa present opportunities for targeted strategies to diversify and expand market reach, further boosting the sector's recovery and growth.



## Top primary markets and top potential markets

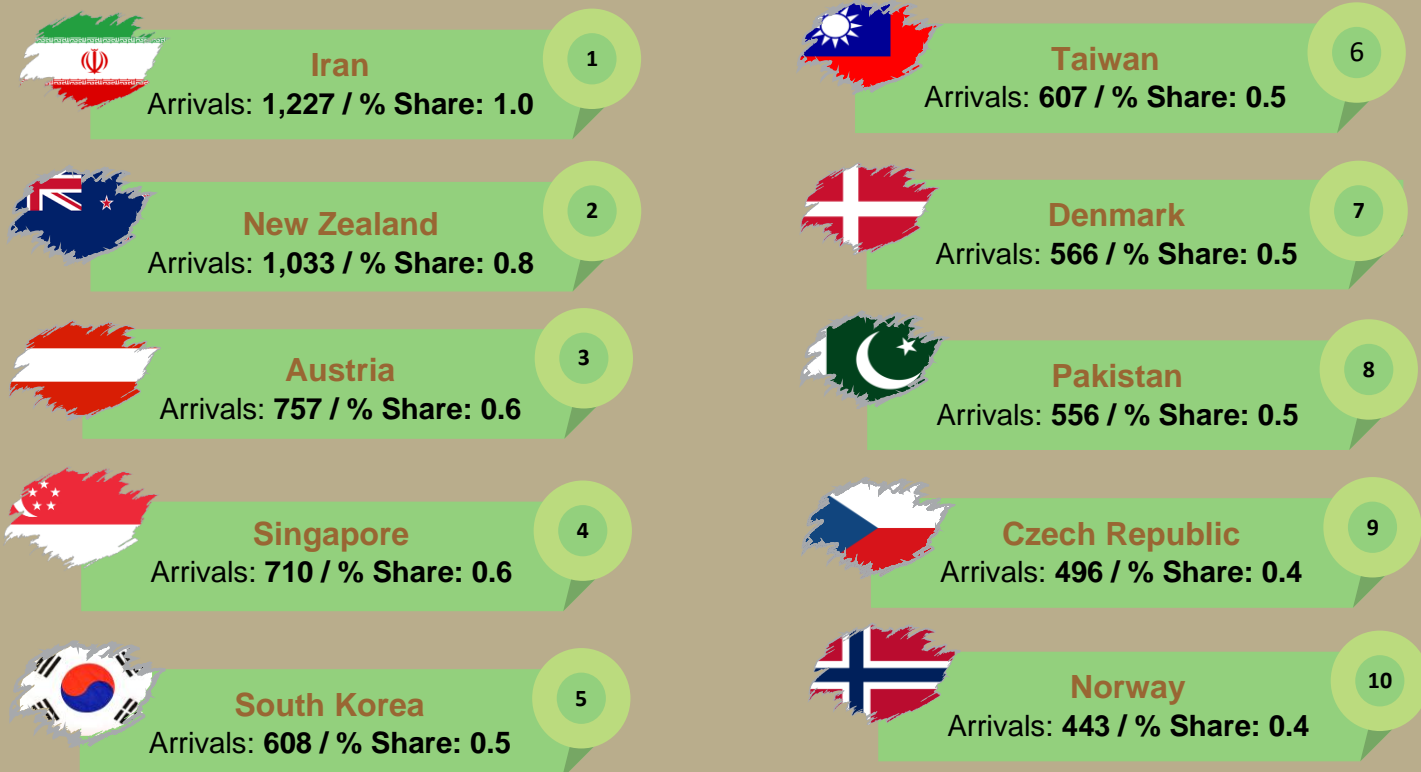
### Top primary markets, September 2024



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, September 2024



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

## September 2024

In September, India led as the top source of tourists to Sri Lanka, accounting for 22.8% of total arrivals, followed by China at 7.4%, the United Kingdom at 7.1%, Germany at 6.8%, and Australia at 5.9%. These numbers highlight changing travel preferences. There was a notable increase in visitors from emerging markets such as the Maldives, Bangladesh, and Spain compared to the previous year, showing a growing interest in Sri Lanka. Meanwhile, the drop in arrivals from Russia and India could be attributed to evolving travel motivations or external factors influencing these markets during this period. The growing importance of markets such as the Maldives and Bangladesh underscores changing trends in tourist source countries, presenting fresh opportunities for Sri Lanka's tourism industry to broaden its visitor base.

**Chart 1. Top ten source markets to Sri Lanka, September 2024**

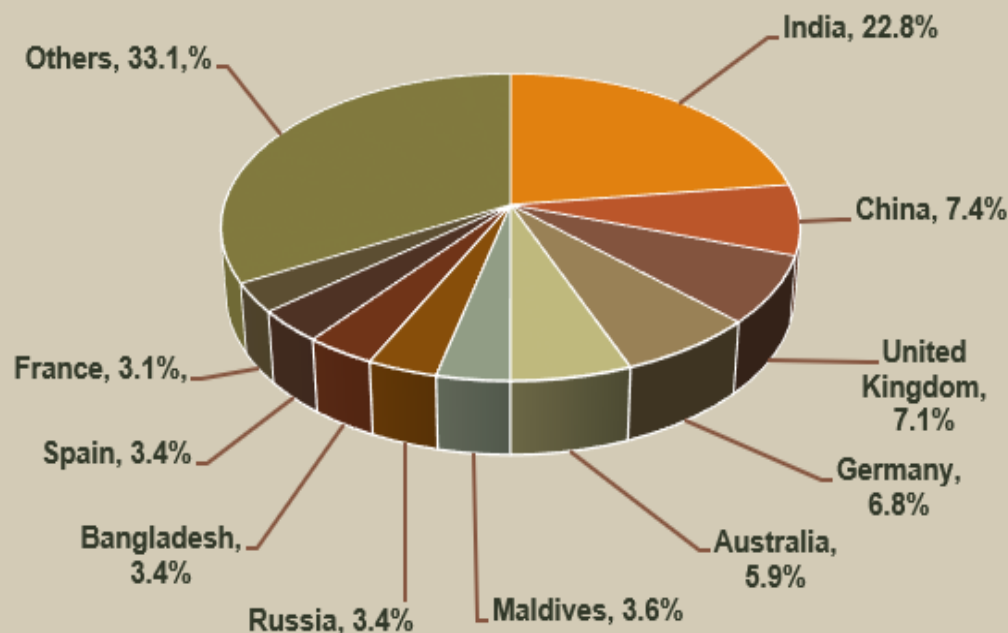
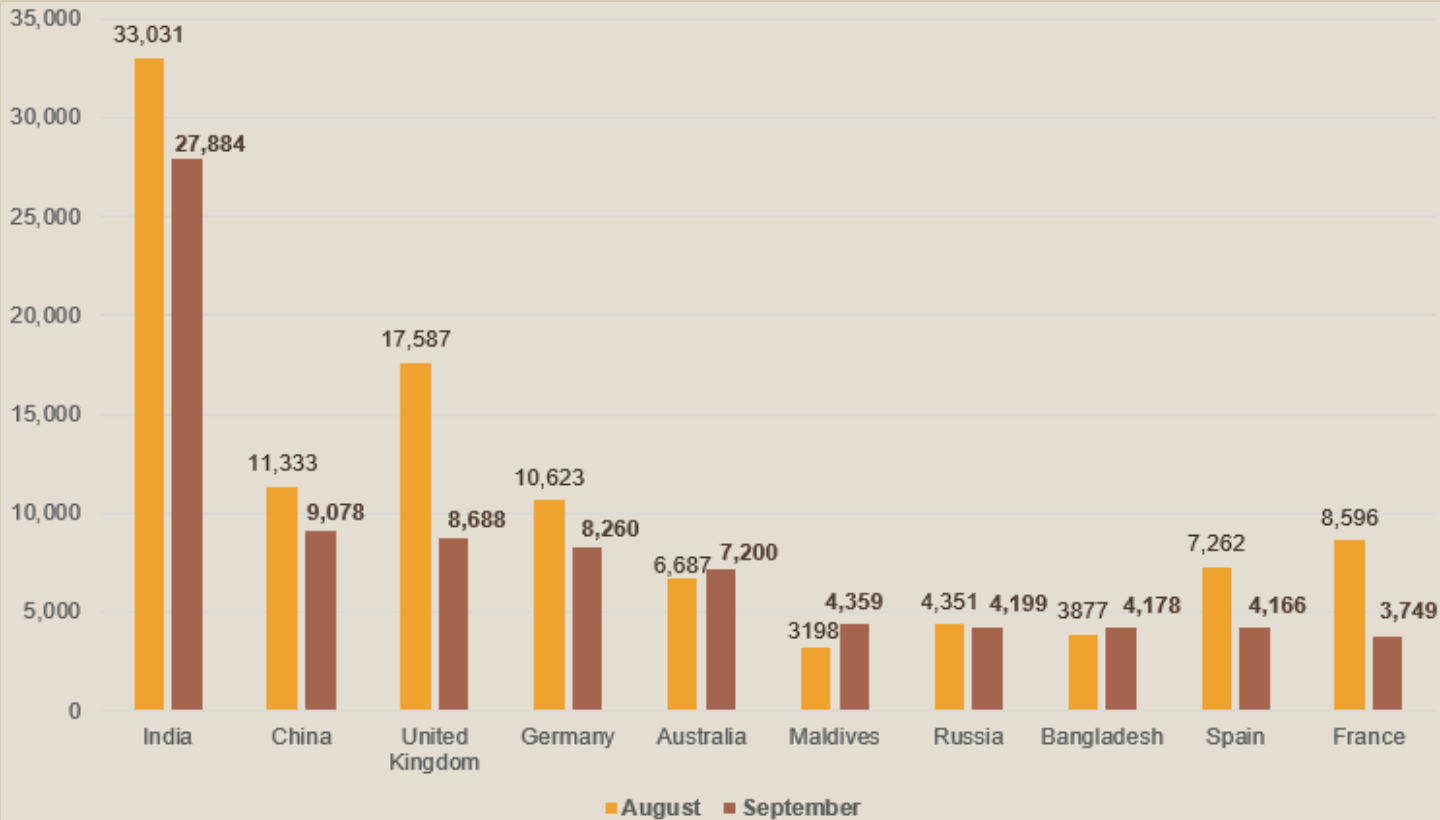




Table 2. Top ten source markets to Sri Lanka, September

Rank	Country of Residence	Tourist Arrivals (September 2024)			Tourist Arrivals
		By Air	By Sea	Total	(September 2023)
1	India	26,861	1,023	27,884	27,884
2	China	9,078	0	9,078	8,445
3	United Kingdom	8,682	06	8,688	7,504
4	Germany	8,260	0	8,260	7,231
5	Australia	7,199	01	7,200	5,969
6	Maldives	4,359	0	4,359	2,287
7	Russia	4,199	0	4,199	7,163
8	Bangladesh	4,178	0	4,178	1,441
9	Spain	4,166	0	4,166	2,414
10	France	3,749	0	3,749	2,661

Chart 2: Comparison of arrivals from top ten markets to Sri Lanka, August / September 2024





# Top ten source markets

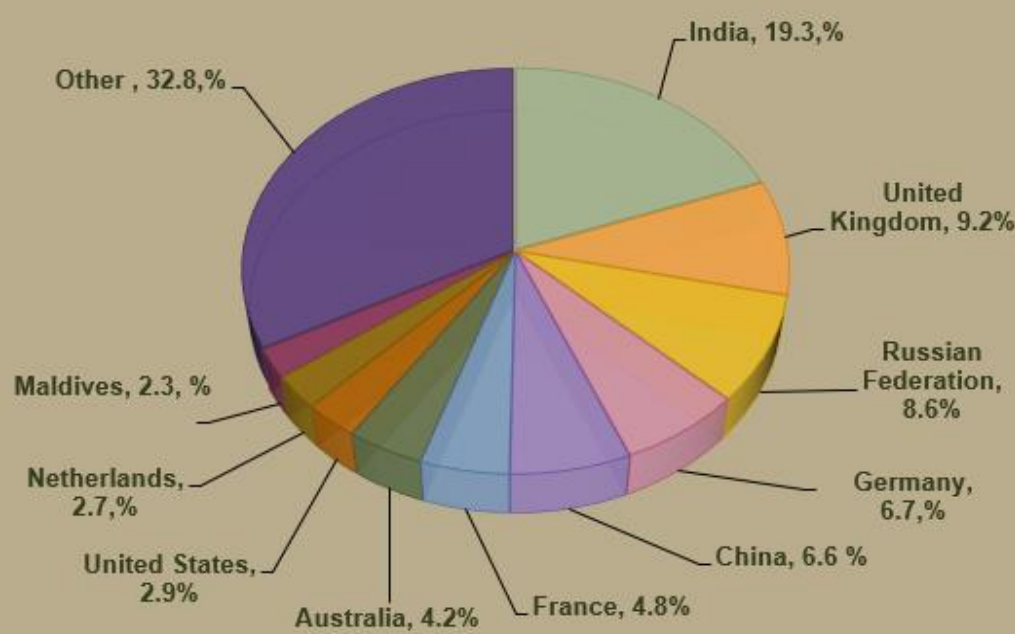
## January to September 2024

From January to September this year, Sri Lanka saw a notable increase in tourist arrivals from India, the UK, Russia, Germany, and China, making these countries the top five international visitor sources. There was a significant rise in visitors from China, the Netherlands, France, and the UK, highlighting Sri Lanka's growing appeal in these markets. However, a decline in arrivals from Russia compared to other leading countries suggests changes in travel behavior among Russian tourists. This mixed trend emphasizes the need for Sri Lanka to diversify its tourism markets to strengthen resilience and sustain growth in an evolving global landscape.

Table 3. Top ten markets to Sri Lanka, January to September 2024

Rank	Country of Residence	Tourist Arrivals (Jan ~September 2024)	Tourist Arrivals (Jan ~ September 2023)
1	India	286,556	200,310
2	United Kingdom	136,464	90,843
3	Russian Federation	127,232	132,300
4	Germany	99,571	68,913
5	China	97,267	47,631
6	France	71,090	43,904
7	Australia	62,004	43,712
8	United States	43,678	31,350
9	Netherlands	39,977	21,897
10	Maldives	34,457	25,078
11	Other	486,512	310,318
Total		1,484,808	1,016,256

Chart 3. Top ten source markets to Sri Lanka, January to September 2024





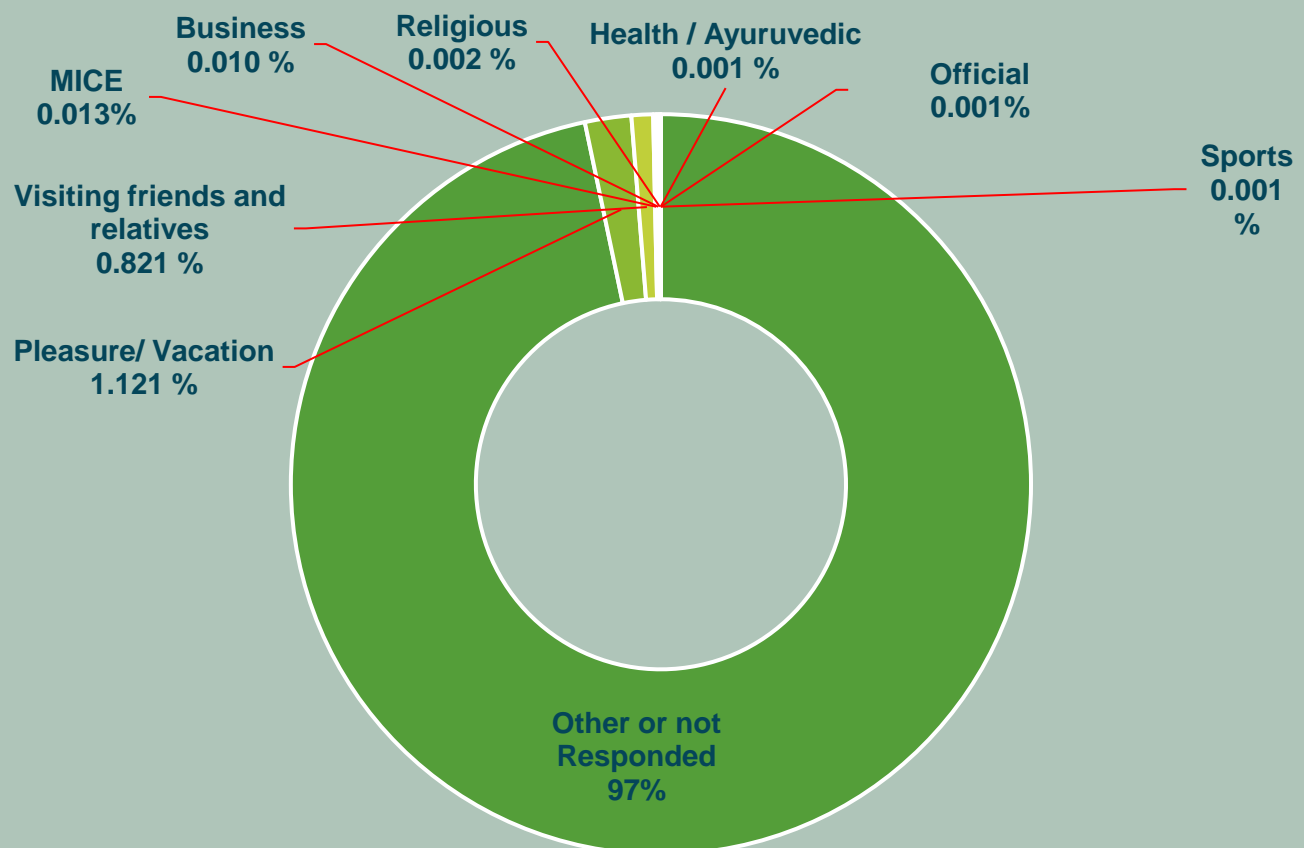
# Tourist arrivals by purpose of visit

## September 2024

A comprehensive analysis of tourist motivations for visiting Sri Lanka highlights several key drivers. The majority, 1.12%, travel for leisure and vacations, emphasizing the country's strong appeal as a recreational destination. Additionally, 0.82% visit to reconnect with friends and family, underscoring its popularity for personal and social gatherings.

In contrast, only 0.01% of tourists come for business, reflecting a smaller focus on professional purposes. Meanwhile, 0.013% visit for MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions), showcasing Sri Lanka's emerging status as a corporate event destination. Niche interests are also present, with 0.001% of visitors seeking Ayurvedic or health-related experiences, and another 0.001% arriving for sports or educational activities.

**Chart 4: Purpose of visit**

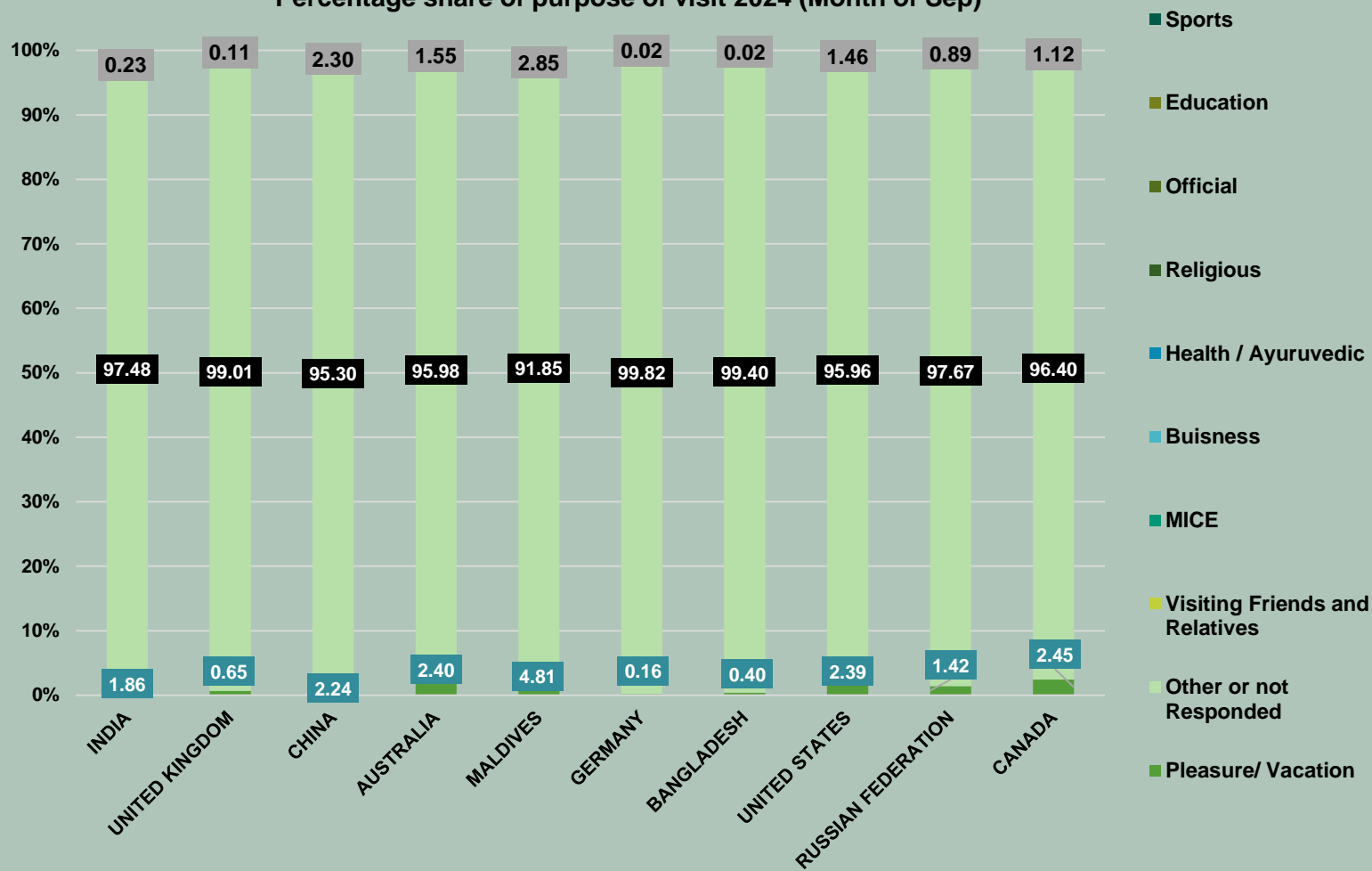


The significant number of tourists categorized as "other" or "not responded" is a result of the lack of classification for the purpose of visit in the recently introduced visa categories. This also include tourists who had visited for other purposes also.



Chart 5: Purpose of visit vs main source markets

## Percentage share of purpose of visit 2024 (Month of Sep)





## Sustainable tourism to regenerative tourism

For centuries, people have traveled for trade, exploration, and leisure. In recent decades, however, tourism has emerged as a dominant global economic sector, contributing significantly to many national economies. This growth has not come without costs tourism has led to environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and negative social impacts, including over tourism and the erosion of local cultures. The COVID-19 pandemic magnified these vulnerabilities, offering a critical moment to reconsider how tourism could evolve. While sustainable travel has become a common practice in the hospitality and tourism sectors, regenerative travel is rapidly gaining traction as both travelers and businesses recognize the importance of going beyond mere sustainability. This approach also appeals to travelers looking for deeper, more authentic experiences, particularly in remote and less-visited destinations (Forbes, n.d).

### The Rise of Regenerative Tourism

The concept of sustainable tourism has long focused on minimizing the negative impacts of travel—aiming for eco-friendly practices like reducing carbon footprints and conserving water. However, regenerative tourism takes this a step further by actively improving the environments and communities affected by tourism. Rather than just "sustaining," regenerative tourism seeks to leave destinations better than they were before (Forbes, n.d).

Regenerative tourism emphasizes the renewal of ecosystems, support for local economies, and the fostering of cultural exchanges that strengthen mutual understanding. It is particularly attractive to travelers seeking deeper, more authentic experiences in remote, lesser-known destinations. Regenerative tourism's core idea can be summed up as "the act of something growing or being grown again," with a goal to ensure that tourism acts as a positive force in restoring natural and social environments.

### A Framework for Regenerative Travel

Global initiatives have been introduced to guide this shift, the most notable being the *Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism*. Launched at COP 26 in 2021, this declaration outlines a global plan to halve tourism-related emissions by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. It calls on signatories to focus on five key areas: measuring impact, decarbonizing operations, regenerating environments, collaborating across sectors, and securing the necessary financing to ensure long-term change [UNWTO].

### Examples of Regenerative Tourism in Action

Countries like New Zealand have adopted regenerative principles through the *Tiaki Promise*. This initiative invites tourists to protect the land, culture, and environment of New Zealand, ensuring that their visits leave no harm behind.





The Philippines presents a remarkable example of regenerative tourism through its efforts on Boracay Island. To restore and preserve its natural beauty, the government temporarily closed the island for six months, focusing on environmental rehabilitation. This initiative transformed Boracay into a cleaner, more sustainable destination for both locals and tourists. As part of the process, visitors are invited to take the “Oath for a Better Boracay,” pledging to help maintain the island's rejuvenated state, ensuring it remains an enjoyable place to live and visit. (WTTC Travel Hub))

### **How Sri Lanka can adopt regenerative tourism**

Sri Lanka, renowned for its rich biodiversity, cultural heritage, and stunning landscapes, stands in an ideal position to embrace regenerative tourism. This approach would not only protect its natural and cultural assets but also allow them to thrive and improve.

#### **Restoration of Key Natural Sites**

**Restoring Ecosystems:** Like the Philippines' Boracay Island rehabilitation, Sri Lanka could focus on regenerating its heavily visited areas, such as Sigiriya and Yala National Park. Limiting access during off-seasons could allow time for nature to heal while educating tourists on conservation efforts.

**Reforestation Programs:** Partnering with local communities and international organizations, Sri Lanka can initiate reforestation projects in its forests and coastal areas, restoring ecosystems while engaging visitors in active regeneration efforts.

#### **Cultural Preservation and Community Engagement**

**Supporting Local Economies:** Emphasizing locally owned businesses and traditional crafts, Sri Lanka can empower communities by providing them direct benefits from tourism. Tourists can be encouraged to stay in eco-friendly, community-run accommodations.

**Cultural Immersion:** Incorporating local culture through initiatives like homestays and community-based tourism will strengthen cultural heritage. Sri Lanka could encourage tourists to partake in traditional activities, contributing to the preservation of cultural practices.

#### **Adopting the Tiaki Promise Model**

Sri Lanka could introduce a similar initiative to New Zealand's Tiaki Promise, where tourists commit to respecting and protecting the environment and culture. Visitors could take a pledge, promising to leave the destination in a better state than they found it.

#### **Decarbonizing Tourism Operations**

**Sustainable Transportation:** Sri Lanka can adopt low-carbon transport solutions for tourists, such as electric buses in national parks and urban centers. Incentivizing eco-friendly transport and minimizing air travel within the island can significantly reduce tourism's carbon footprint.



**Renewable Energy in Tourism:** Tourism-related businesses can invest in renewable energy sources such as solar panels, reducing their reliance on fossil fuels and moving toward carbon neutrality.

#### Collaboration with Global Initiatives

By aligning with global initiatives like the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism, Sri Lanka can set clear targets to halve emissions by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. This will position the country as a leader in regenerative travel, drawing eco-conscious travelers.

#### Promotion of Lesser-Known Destinations

To combat over tourism, Sri Lanka can focus on promoting lesser-known regions like the Knuckles Mountain Range or the Eastern Coast. This not only spreads the economic benefits of tourism but also relieves pressure on overburdened destinations, allowing for their regeneration.

#### Public and Private Sector Partnerships

Sri Lanka should encourage collaboration between government, businesses, and NGOs to develop regenerative tourism projects. This could include launching pilot programs that demonstrate the viability of regenerative tourism in specific regions, creating a blueprint for the rest of the country.

#### Visitor Education and Participation

Creating platforms that educate visitors on regenerative practices and involve them in local conservation activities, like beach cleanups or wildlife monitoring, would deepen their engagement and contribute to the well-being of the environment.

#### Conclusion

Regenerative tourism represents an evolution in the way we think about travel and its impacts. Unlike sustainable tourism, which focuses on reducing harm, regenerative tourism seeks to improve the places travelers visit, actively restoring ecosystems, enhancing local economies, and nurturing cultural heritage. As global tourism recovers from the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the shift toward regenerative practices offers a vital opportunity to address environmental degradation and social inequities while fostering authentic, meaningful travel experiences. Embracing regenerative tourism not only preserves these locations for future generations but also ensures that tourism becomes a positive, restorative force for our planet and its people.

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## International tourist arrivals by country of residence

	September 2024 Tourist Arrivals			Tourist Arrivals September 2023	% Change September (24/23) 2024	Total Tourist Arrivals Up to September 2024	Total Tourist Arrivals Up to September 2023	% Change Up to September (24/23) 2024
	By Air	By Sea	Total					
<b>AMERICAS</b>	<b>4,951</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4,961</b>	<b>5,187</b>	<b>(4.4)</b>	<b>81,718</b>	<b>70,102</b>	<b>16.6</b>
<b>North America</b>	<b>4,645</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4,655</b>	<b>4,902</b>	<b>(5.0)</b>	<b>77,439</b>	<b>67,183</b>	<b>15.3</b>
Canada	2,091	04	2,095	2,426	(13.6)	33,007	35,324	(6.6)
Mexico	100	0	100	119	(16.0)	754	509	48.1
United States	2,454	06	2,460	2,357	4.4	43,678	31,350	39.3
<b>Caribbean &amp; Central America</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>51.1</b>
Costa Rica	02	0	02	5	(60.0)	73	38	92.1
Jamaica	12	0	12	3	300.0	77	35	120.0
Others	44	0	44	49	(10.2)	569	403	41.2
<b>South America</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>3,560</b>	<b>2,443</b>	<b>45.7</b>
Argentina	45	0	45	42	7.1	675	515	31.1
Brazil	100	0	100	82	22.0	1,426	890	60.2
Chile	32	0	32	19	68.4	431	292	47.6
Colombia	26	0	26	49	(46.9)	493	374	31.8
Others	45	0	45	36	25.0	535	372	43.8
<b>AFRICA</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>636</b>	<b>46.4</b>	<b>9,775</b>	<b>6,282</b>	<b>55.6</b>
<b>North Africa</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>30.4</b>	<b>2,348</b>	<b>1,837</b>	<b>27.8</b>
Morocco	78	0	78	49	59.2	747	546	36.8
Sudan	62	0	62	33	87.9	628	585	7.4
Others	70	0	70	79	(11.4)	973	706	37.8
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	<b>721</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>721</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>51.8</b>	<b>7,427</b>	<b>4,445</b>	<b>67.1</b>
Kenya	79	0	79	40	97.5	566	415	36.4
Mauritius	20	0	20	29	(31.0)	363	215	68.8
Nigeria	18	0	18	6	200.0	57	59	(3.4)
South Africa	299	0	299	185	61.6	3,204	2,037	57.3
Others	305	0	305	215	41.9	3,237	1,719	88.3



	September 2024			Tourist Arrivals September 2023	% Change September (24/23) 2024	Total Tourist Arrivals Up to September 2024	Total Tourist Arrivals Up to September 2023	% Change Up to September (24/23) 2024
	By Air	By Sea	Total					
<b>ASIA &amp; PACIFIC</b>	<b>63,740</b>	<b>1,024</b>	<b>64,764</b>	<b>58,391</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>615,151</b>	<b>397,013</b>	<b>54.9</b>
<b>North East Asia</b>	<b>13,839</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13,839</b>	<b>11,562</b>	<b>19.7</b>	<b>134,045</b>	<b>68,755</b>	<b>95.0</b>
China	9,078	0	9,078	8,445	7.5	97,267	47,631	104.2
Japan	3,526	0	3,526	1,830	92.7	22,260	12,859	73.1
South Korea	608	0	608	656	(7.3)	7,470	4,870	53.4
Taiwan	607	0	607	616	(1.5)	6,955	3,311	110.1
Others	20	0	20	15	33.3	93	84	10.7
<b>South East Asia</b>	<b>4,152</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,152</b>	<b>2,776</b>	<b>49.6</b>	<b>39,356</b>	<b>24,706</b>	<b>59.3</b>
Cambodia	55	0	55	26	111.5	1,012	379	167.0
Indonesia	431	0	431	184	134.2	2,536	1,602	58.3
Malaysia	1,954	0	1,954	924	111.5	14,053	7,284	92.9
Myanmar	33	0	33	47	(29.8)	1,286	826	55.7
Philippines	398	0	398	328	21.3	3,977	3,102	28.2
Singapore	710	0	710	759	(6.5)	8,666	6,210	39.5
Thailand	384	0	384	326	17.8	5,395	3,511	53.7
Vietnam	183	0	183	154	18.8	2,257	1,657	36.2
Others	04	0	04	28	(85.7)	174	135	28.9
<b>Oceania</b>	<b>8,284</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8,285</b>	<b>6,632</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>70,295</b>	<b>49,146</b>	<b>43.0</b>
Australia	7,199	01	7,200	5,969	20.6	62,004	43,712	41.8
New Zealand	1,033	0	1,033	648	59.4	8,025	5,260	52.6
Others	52	0	52	15	246.7	266	174	52.9
<b>South Asia</b>	<b>37,465</b>	<b>1,023</b>	<b>38,488</b>	<b>37,421</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>371,455</b>	<b>254,406</b>	<b>46.0</b>
Afghanistan	05	0	05	21	(76.2)	125	135	(7.4)
Bangladesh	4,178	0	4,178	1,441	189.9	28,294	9,531	196.9
Bhutan	45	0	45	32	40.6	504	293	72.0
India	26,861	1,023	27,884	30,063	(7.2)	286,556	200,310	43.1
Iran	1,227	0	1,227	1,593	(23.0)	8,669	8,109	6.9
Maldives	4,359	0	4,359	2,287	90.6	34,457	25,078	37.4
Nepal	234	0	234	593	(60.5)	3,076	3,239	(5.0)
Pakistan	556	0	556	1,391	(60.0)	9,774	7,711	26.8
<b>EUROPE</b>	<b>49,874</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>49,880</b>	<b>45,996</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>755,815</b>	<b>521,223</b>	<b>45.0</b>
<b>Northern Europe</b>	<b>10,647</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10,653</b>	<b>9,291</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>173,715</b>	<b>114,796</b>	<b>51.3</b>
Denmark	566	0	566	472	19.9	11,464	7,586	51.1
Finland	165	0	165	132	25.0	2,753	1,265	117.6
Norway	443	0	443	547	(19.0)	8,696	6,696	29.9
Sweden	345	0	345	327	5.5	7,889	4,960	59.1
United Kingdom	8,682	06	8,688	7,504	15.8	136,464	90,843	50.2
Others	446	0	446	309	44.3	6,449	3,446	87.1



## Monthly Tourist Arrivals Report September 2024

	September 2024			Tourist Arrivals September 2023	% Change Sept: (24/23) 2024	Total Tourist Arrivals Up to Sept: 2024	Total Tourist Arrivals Up to September 2023	% Change Up to Sept: (24/2) 2024
	By Air	By Sea	Total					
<b>Western Europe</b>	<b>19,956</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>19,956</b>	<b>16,534</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>259,312</b>	<b>167,492</b>	<b>54.8</b>
Austria	757	0	757	726	4.3	12,080	6,721	79.7
Belgium	1,669	0	1,669	1,061	57.3	13,645	8,237	65.7
France	3,749	0	3,749	2,661	40.9	71,090	43,904	61.9
Germany	8,260	0	8,260	7,231	14.2	99,571	68,913	44.5
Netherlands	3,725	0	3,725	3,177	17.2	39,977	21,897	82.6
Switzerland	1,778	0	1,778	1,638	8.5	22,277	17,324	28.6
Others	18	0	18	40	(55.0)	672	496	35.5
<b>Central/ Eastern Europe</b>	<b>8,565</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8,565</b>	<b>11,364</b>	<b>(24.6)</b>	<b>226,382</b>	<b>177,869</b>	<b>27.2</b>
Belarus	177	0	177	778	(77.2)	7,592	7,071	7.4
Czech Republic	496	0	496	413	20.1	14,894	6,536	127.9
Estonia	45	0	45	47	(4.3)	2,859	774	269.4
Hungary	137	0	137	97	41.2	4,523	2,030	122.8
Kazakhstan	99	0	99	91	8.8	8,949	2,372	277.3
Lithuania	92	0	92	113	(18.6)	4,755	1,610	195.3
Poland	2,243	0	2,243	1,599	40.3	30,636	9,968	207.3
Romania	254	0	254	166	53.0	4,279	2,322	84.3
Russia	4,199	0	4,199	7,163	(41.4)	127,232	132,300	(3.8)
Slovakia	255	0	255	258	(1.2)	4,822	2,991	61.2
Ukraine	191	0	191	233	(18.0)	5,039	3,256	54.8
Others	377	0	377	406	(7.1)	10,802	6,639	62.7
<b>Southern/ Mediterranean Europe</b>	<b>10,706</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10,706</b>	<b>8,807</b>	<b>21.6</b>	<b>96,406</b>	<b>61,066</b>	<b>57.9</b>
Greece	106	0	106	51	107.8	1,918	1,150	66.8
Italy	1,902	0	1,902	1,257	51.3	29,346	16,224	80.9
Portugal	410	0	410	286	43.4	4,364	2,555	70.8
Spain	4,166	0	4,166	2,414	72.6	28,014	16,077	74.2
Turkey	361	0	361	256	41.0	4,841	2,309	109.7
Israel	3,142	0	3,142	4,162	(24.5)	20,515	18,449	11.2
Others	619	0	619	381	62.5	7,408	4,302	72.2
<b>MIDDLE EAST</b>	<b>1,604</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,604</b>	<b>1,728</b>	<b>(7.2)</b>	<b>22,349</b>	<b>21,636</b>	<b>3.3</b>
Bahrain	54	0	54	52	3.8	938	992	(5.4)
Egypt	232	0	232	189	22.8	2,840	2,006	41.6
Iraq	81	0	81	73	11.0	773	722	7.1
Jordan	151	0	151	242	(37.6)	1,926	2,930	(34.3)
Kuwait	119	0	119	147	(19.0)	1,569	1,654	(5.1)
Lebanon	163	0	163	292	(44.2)	2,575	2,424	6.2
Oman	185	0	185	74	150.0	2,309	1,731	33.4
Qatar	19	0	19	23	(17.4)	597	715	(16.5)
Saudi Arabia	319	0	319	331	(3.6)	4,639	5,342	(13.2)
United Arab Emirates	270	0	270	228	18.4	3,384	2,265	49.4
Others	11	0	11	77	(85.7)	799	855	(6.5)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>121,100</b>	<b>1,040</b>	<b>122,140</b>	<b>111,938</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>1,484,808</b>	<b>1,016,256</b>	<b>46.1</b>



# Main last departure airports and airlines to Sri Lanka, September 2024

An analysis of tourist travel patterns to Sri Lanka highlights the significant role air travel plays in the country’s tourism sector. Approximately 34% of visitors made their final layovers in Dubai, Doha, and Abu Dhabi before reaching Sri Lanka. Furthermore, Sri Lankan Airlines, Qatar Airways, and Indigo together accounted for 47% of all tourist arrivals. This dominance of specific airlines and transit hubs underscores the critical importance of well-connected airports and major carriers in facilitating and shaping tourism flows to the island.

Chart 6. Main last departure airports to Sri Lanka, September 2024

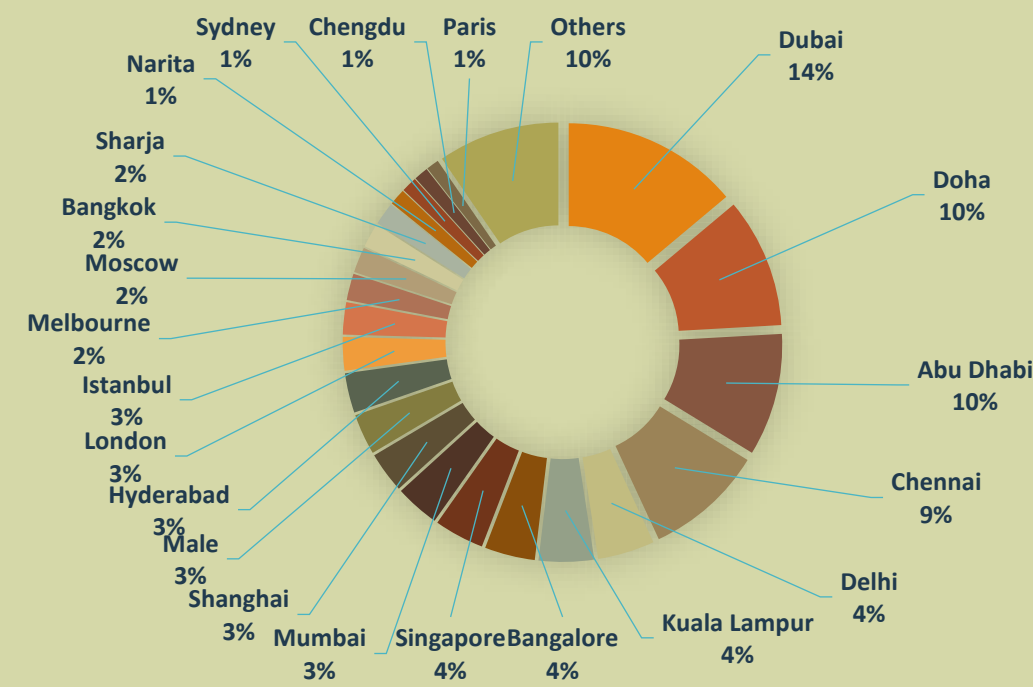
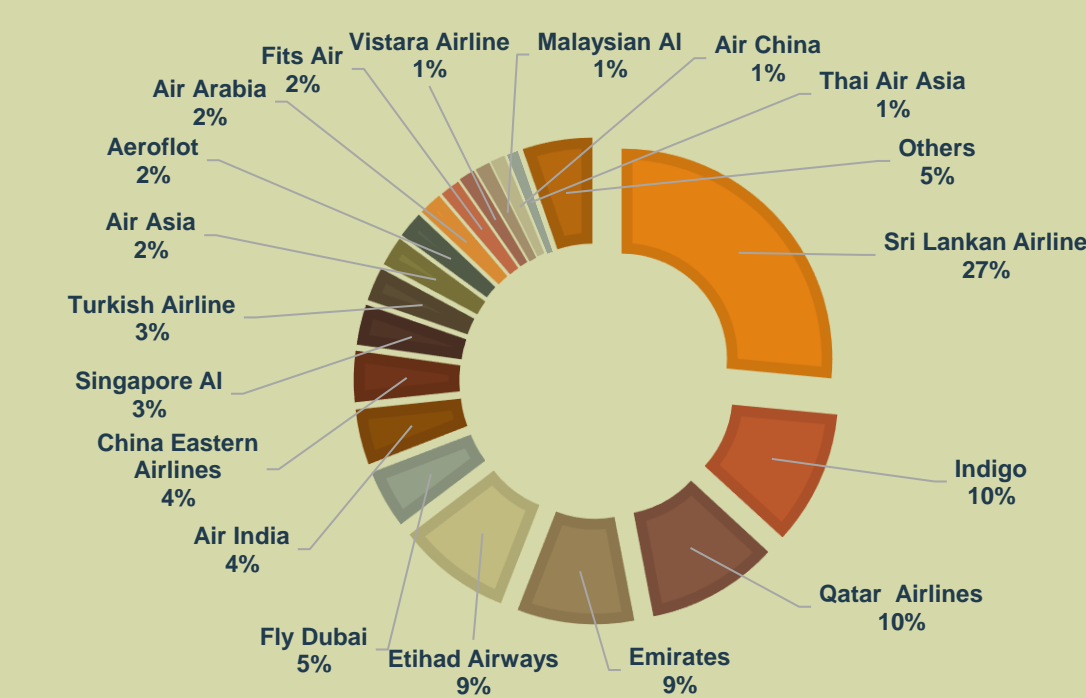


Chart 7. Main airlines to Sri Lanka, September 2024





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

## September 2023

Travelers' experiences in Sri Lanka are shaped by their choice of airlines, often reflecting their home countries and airline preferences. Indian tourists frequently fly with Sri Lankan Airlines and IndiGo, benefiting from strong air links between India and Sri Lanka. Chinese visitors tend to choose China Eastern Airlines and Air China, favouring their national carriers. Tourists from the UK and Australia prefer Sri Lankan Airlines, highlighting its appeal in these markets, while Dutch travelers often opt for Emirates, attracted by its extensive network and high service quality. Qatar Airways is a favorite among travelers from Germany, France, and Spain, due to its hub in Doha and convenient connections to Sri Lanka.

Chennai is the main departure hub for Indian travelers, while Doha serves as the primary gateway for tourists from France and Spain. Australian, Russian, and Chinese visitors often depart from Melbourne, Moscow, and Shanghai airports, respectively, with Dubai being a key departure point for German travelers. This illustrates the crucial role of accessibility in strengthening Sri Lanka's tourism sector, as travelers' choices of airports and airlines are influenced by their home countries. Strong travel connections and well-placed departure points are essential in attracting international visitors, emphasizing the importance of maintaining links with these major transit hubs to support Sri Lanka's tourism industry.

**Table 4. Top ten markets vs. main airlines to Sri Lanka, September 2024**

Country	Sri Lankan Airline	Indigo	Qatar Airlines	Emirates	Etihad Airways	Fly Dubai	Air India	China Eastern Airlines	Singapore AI	Turkish Airline	Air Asia	Aeroflot	Air Arabia	Fits Air	Vistara Airline	Malaysian AI	Air China	Thai Air Asia	Others	Total
India	40.54	32.91	0.29	0.76	0.72	0.59	11.90	0.02	0.25	0.03	0.15	0.01	0.41	1.27	4.02	0.08	0.00	0.06	5.98	100.00
China	16.18	0.10	0.19	1.18	0.50	0.54	0.07	43.19	3.11	0.07	5.22	0.00	0.10	0.74	0.09	1.71	14.78	3.38	8.87	100.00
United Kingdom	35.69	2.56	21.09	14.25	12.26	2.43	1.82	0.25	0.74	2.24	1.62	0.01	0.18	0.24	0.83	0.21	0.00	0.63	2.95	100.00
Germany	13.16	0.98	22.63	22.15	19.56	6.74	2.52	0.25	0.28	5.73	1.34	0.04	0.40	0.17	0.87	0.15	0.02	0.62	2.38	100.00
Australia	59.38	1.42	0.85	1.33	0.97	0.54	4.11	0.15	19.46	0.17	3.33	0.00	0.24	0.01	0.38	4.67	0.01	0.46	2.53	100.00
Maldives	32.32	0.18	0.05	33.01	0.11	10.62	0.07	0.25	0.09	0.02	0.34	0.00	0.00	11.29	0.05	0.09	0.05	0.07	11.38	100.00
Russian Federation	1.69	0.93	1.74	1.71	8.76	4.86	0.36	0.74	0.12	0.29	1.88	56.66	17.36	0.55	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.69	1.62	100.00
Bangladesh	24.75	53.35	0.29	0.19	0.22	0.91	0.79	0.05	0.14	0.07	0.24	0.00	0.26	17.76	0.07	0.12	0.00	0.10	0.69	100.00
Spain	5.30	0.43	44.00	11.55	21.48	2.23	0.96	0.29	0.12	9.43	1.18	0.00	0.19	0.98	0.22	0.12	0.00	0.38	1.13	100.00
France	19.07	0.91	26.97	16.62	12.99	3.01	5.63	0.37	0.51	8.40	1.68	0.00	0.19	0.40	0.72	0.21	0.00	0.80	1.52	100.00

Table 5. Top ten markets vs. main last departure airports to Sri Lanka, September 2024

Country	Dubai	Doha	Abu Dhabi	Chennai	Delhi	Kuala Lumpur	Bangalore	Singapore	Mumbai	Shanghai	Male	Hyderabad	London	Istanbul	Melbourne	Moscow	Bangkok	Sharja	Narita	Others	Total
India	460	87	251	8,314	3,287	253	4,225	169	3,048	3	122	3,535	64	9	47	3	139	115	14	3,739	27,884
China	191	20	54	8	5	690	2	326	10	3,189	308	3	1	6	6	0	494	9	7	3,749	9,078
United Kingdom	1,462	1,832	1,094	308	166	183	87	117	111	21	93	26	2,486	184	44	1	81	16	8	368	8,688
Germany	2,400	1,876	1,654	119	227	135	49	37	121	20	49	6	73	469	6	3	59	33	7	917	8,260
Australia	141	62	81	99	408	637	37	1,662	47	11	68	57	54	12	2,276	0	155	17	8	1,368	7,200
Maldives	1,883	2	5	16	32	39	8	18	7	6	1,899	1	0	1	6	0	29	0	0	407	4,359
Russia	289	73	422	27	17	80	8	8	3	31	31	16	5	12	1	2,379	13	729	0	55	4,199
Bangladesh	58	12	10	1,682	25	26	95	8	473	2	821	19	2	3	0	0	5	11	0	926	4,178
Spain	578	1,853	931	25	64	65	8	9	15	8	82	4	56	390	1	0	13	8	3	53	4,166
France	746	1,011	509	79	200	80	31	37	71	14	33	4	52	314	1	0	30	7	1	529	3,749





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