

International Arrivals & Departures

Release date: 27 April 2016

January 2016

	Jan 16	Dec 15	Nov 15	Oct 15
Total Arrivals	8,150	11,374	6,706	10,237
Total Departures	9,441	9,949	7,250	11,040

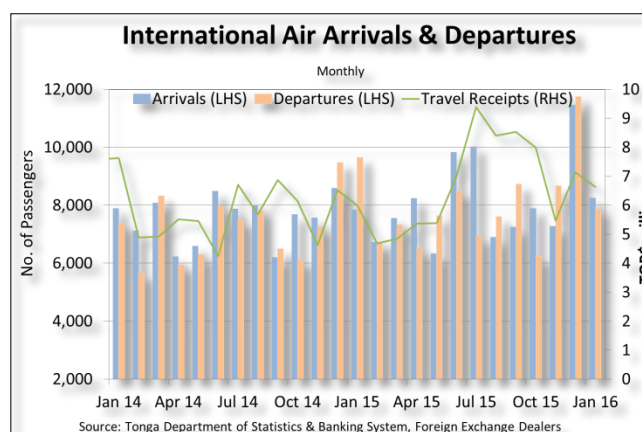
Note: Total Arrivals & Departures including air, cruise ship and yacht arrivals & departures

Source: Tonga Department of Statistics

Decline in visitors driving the fall in International Arrivals in January 2016

Tourism activity for January 2016 slowed over the month as both international arrivals and departures fell by 28.3% and 5.1% respectively. However, the annual festivities and the King's Coronation which occurred in 2015 contributed to the rise over the year.

Over the month of January, total international arrivals¹ in the Kingdom declined by 28.3% to 8,150 passengers. The majority of the international arrivals were returning residents (Tongan) and visitors from New Zealand, Australia and the U.S. The decline over the month was mainly due to a 57.6% drop in the number of visitors. Arrivals by air declined by 27.7%. There were no ship & yacht arrivals recorded during the month. The highest number of visitors during the month came on holiday and also to visit friends and families. The age group of 15 – 19 years old has the highest number of arrivals for returning residents, reflecting local students returning home for the start of the academic year. The decrease in the number of international arrivals is in line with a decline in travel receipts over the month of January of \$0.5 million to \$6.6 million compared to previous month. The transportation sector, hotel and restaurants and other sectors in the economy may have been impacted from the decline in visitors' arrivals to Tonga during the month.



¹ Visitors plus Returning Residents

The total number of international departures decreased by 5.1% to 9,441 passengers due to a 65.0% fall in the number of departing Tongan residents which partly offset a 78.0% rise in the total number of departures for Non-Tongans. The highest number of international arrivals were female whilst the highest number of departures were male due to fruit pickers leaving for the Seasonal Workers Program (SWP) in Australia.

In year-ended terms, total number of international arrivals experienced a growth of 8.1% which resulted from increases in the number of returning residents by 19.3% and also an increase in air arrivals by 11.2%. In addition, the number of visitors rose by 6.9% driven by a 7.7% increase in number of visitors on holiday. The highest number of visitors were from New Zealand, Australia and the U.S. at the age group of 25 – 29 years old. International departures also rose by 7.0% over the year mainly driven by an increase in departures of Non-Tongan travellers by 6.3% with the highest number at the age group of 20 – 24 years of age. The higher number of visitors is consistent with the \$13.3 million increase in the total travel receipts during the year to January 2016, compared to the previous year reflecting the special occasion of the King's Coronation and other events that took place during the year which supported the tourism and transportation sectors.

Outlook

Air arrivals are expected to fall in the coming months and to increase in the normal peak period around June-July 2016. However, with the committed Fiji Airways direct route from Fiji to Vava'u to commence in April 2016, it is anticipated that this will attract more visitors to the Kingdom. In addition, an increase in air arrivals is expected due to the upcoming events scheduled for this year such as the LDS 100th and Toloa 150th anniversaries and annual church conferences. The setting up of the Chinese Group Tours² would also attract more tourists from China. The NRBT will continue to closely monitor these developments and the country's economic developments and financial conditions to maintain internal and external monetary stability, promote financial stability and a sound and efficient financial system to support macroeconomic stability and economic growth.

² Based on NRBT liaison program with businesses.

Total Number of International Arrivals & Departures

	Arrivals						Departures					
	Monthly				Year Ended		Monthly				Year Ended	
	Jan 16	Dec-15	Nov-15	Jan-15	Jan 16	Jan-15	Jan-16	Dec-15	Nov-15	Jan-15	Jan-16	Jan-15
Total	8,150	11,374	6,706	10,018	102,202	94,517	9,441	9,949	7,250	11,743	103,077	97,744
Air	8,150	11,274	6,319	7,063	86,356	77,646	9,441	9,844	6,817	8,779	87,236	79,355
Visitors	3,581	8,444	3,550	3,343	53,990	50,520	7,462	4,192	3,332	6,771	54,187	45,327
Tongan residents	4,569	2,830	2,769	3,720	32,366	27,126	1,979	5,652	3,485	2,008	33,049	34,028
Cruise Ship*	-	100	291	2,935	14,440	15,222	-	100	291	2,935	14,448	16,598
Yacht*	-	-	96	20	1,406	1,649	-	5	142	29	1,393	1,791
Total	8,150	11,374	6,706	10,018	102,202	94,517	9,441	9,949	7,250	11,743	103,077	97,744
Visitors	3,581	8,544	3,937	6,298	69,836	67,391	7,462	4,297	3,765	9,735	70,028	63,716
Tongan residents	4,569	2,830	2,769	3,720	32,366	27,126	1,979	5,652	3,485	2,008	33,049	34,028

* All sea arrivals are assumed to be visitors
Source: Tonga Department of Statistics