

Domestic Tourism Trends in NYC and LA

This white paper explores how visitation patterns to the two most popular tourist destinations in the country – New York City and Los Angeles – have shifted over the past few years.

1. **The New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA metro area was America's top domestic tourist destination between May 2023 and April 2024 – drawing 2.7% of overall domestic tourists to CBSAs nationwide.** Meanwhile, **Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA** and **Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL** tied for second place, with 2.5% of domestic tourists visiting each of these metro areas.
2. **Visitors taking medium-length trips to New York City (three to seven days) are increasingly likely to come from nearby CBSAs.** The number of such tourists coming from East Coast metro areas like Philadelphia and Boston rose between 2018-2019 and 2023-2024. Meanwhile, the number of visitors from further-away CBSAs declined.
3. **New York City domestic tourists are younger than they were pre-pandemic.** And visitors to major Big Apple landmarks like the Statue of Liberty and the Metropolitan Museum of Art are more likely to be "Educated Urbanites" than they were in 2018-2019.
4. **The median household incomes of areas feeding domestic tourism to Los Angeles dropped over the past several years.** Visitors to major Los Angeles attractions like **Universal Studios** were also more likely to come from middle-income "Family Union" households in 2023-2024 than they were in 2018-2019.
5. **Los Angeles tourist destinations are drawing more in-state locals than they did before the pandemic.** Between 2018-2019 and 2023-2024, the share of visitors to Los Angeles landmarks originating from within California rose substantially.

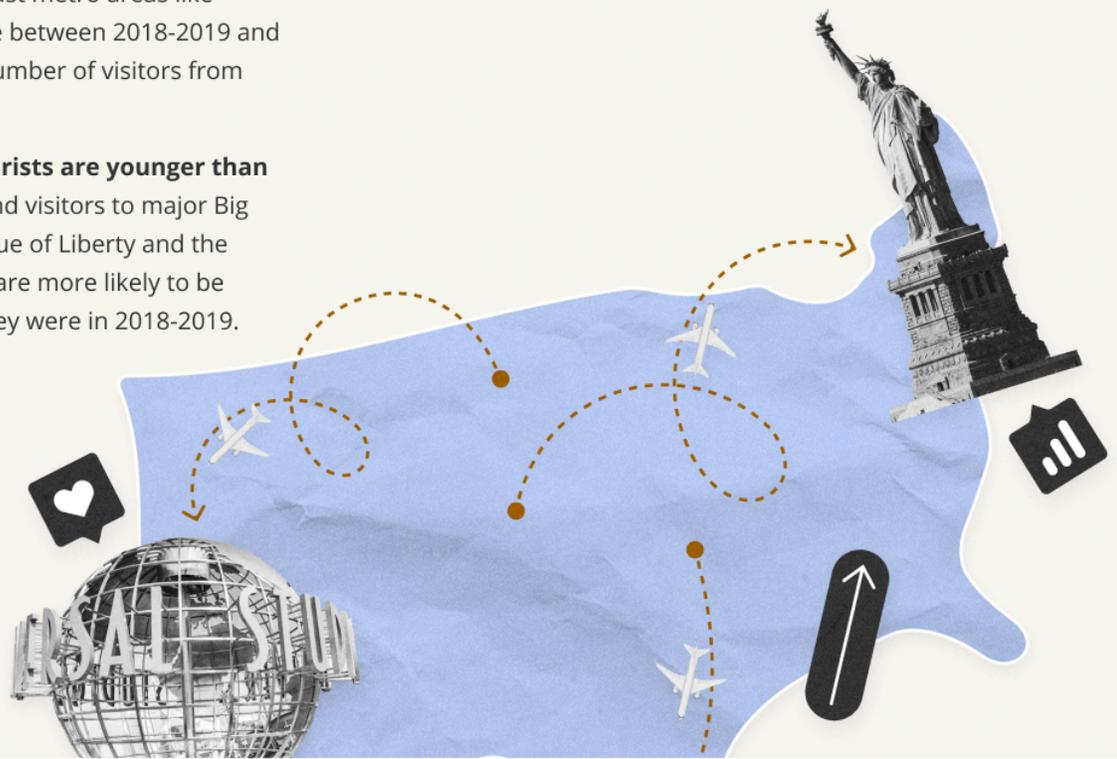


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Shifting Tourism Patterns

The past few years have provided the tourism sector with a multitude of headwinds, from pandemic-induced lockdowns to persistent inflation and a [rise](#) in extreme weather events. But despite these challenges, people are more excited than ever to travel – more than half of respondents to a recent [survey](#) are planning on increasing their travel budgets in the coming months.

And while [revenge travel](#) to overseas destinations is still very much alive and well, the often [high costs](#) associated with traveling abroad are shaping the way people choose to travel. Domestic travel and tourism are seeing significant growth as more affordable alternatives.

This white paper takes a closer look at two of the most popular domestic tourism destinations in the country – New York City and Los Angeles. Over the past year, both cities have continued to be leading tourism hotspots, offering a wealth of attractions for visitors. What does tourism to these two cities look like in 2024, and what has changed since before the pandemic? How have inflation and rising airfare prices affected the demographics and psychographics of visitors to these major hubs?

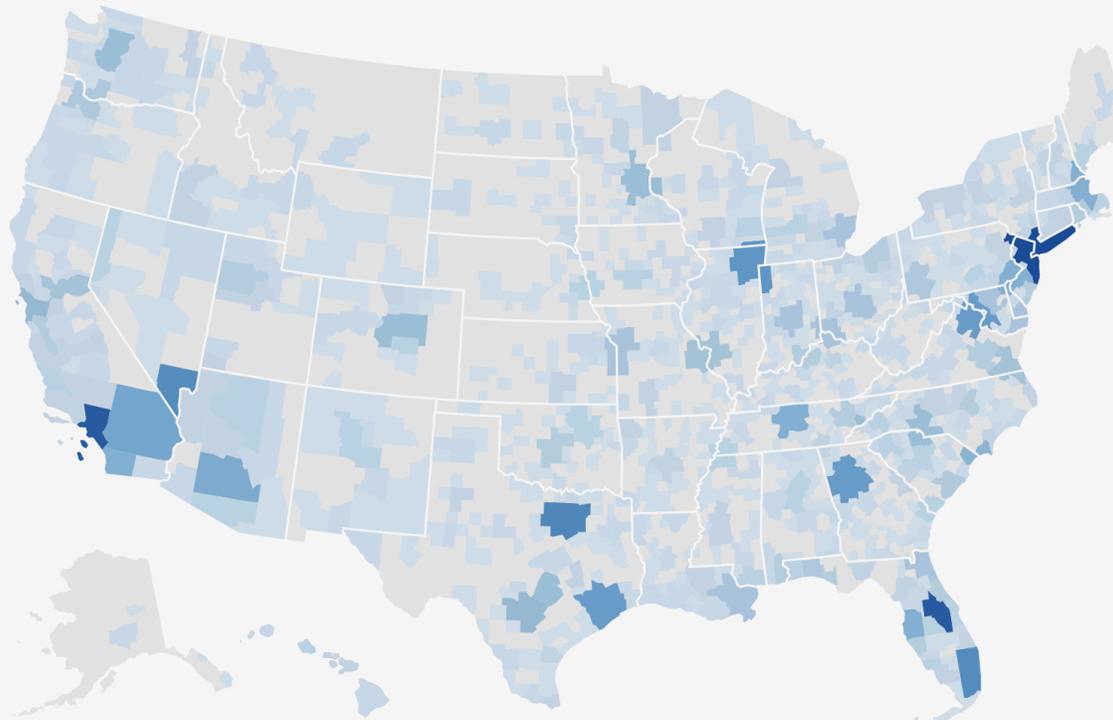
Major Metropolitan Magnets For Domestic Tourism

Analyzing the distribution of domestic tourists across [CBSAs](#) nationwide from May 2023 to April 2024 reveals New York and Los Angeles to be two of the nation's most popular destinations. (Tourists include overnight visitors staying in a given CBSA for up to 31 days).

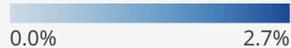
The New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA metro area drew the largest share of domestic tourists of any CBSA during the analyzed period (2.7%), followed closely by the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA CBSA (2.5%). Other domestic tourism hotspots included Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL (tied for second place with 2.5% of visitors), Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX (1.9%), [Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV](#) (1.8%), [Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL](#) (1.8%), and Chicago-Naperville, Elgin, IL-IN-WI (1.6%).

Large Metro Areas See Highest Share of Domestic Tourists

May 2023 to April 2024



Share of Visitors (%)



Based on Placer.ai Travel & Tourism Dashboard Data



New York City - An East Coast Destination

The Big Apple. The City That Never Sleeps. Empire City. Whatever it's called, New York City remains one of the most well-known [tourist destinations](#) in the world. And for many Americans, New York is the perfect place for an extended weekend getaway – or for a multi-day excursion to see the sights.



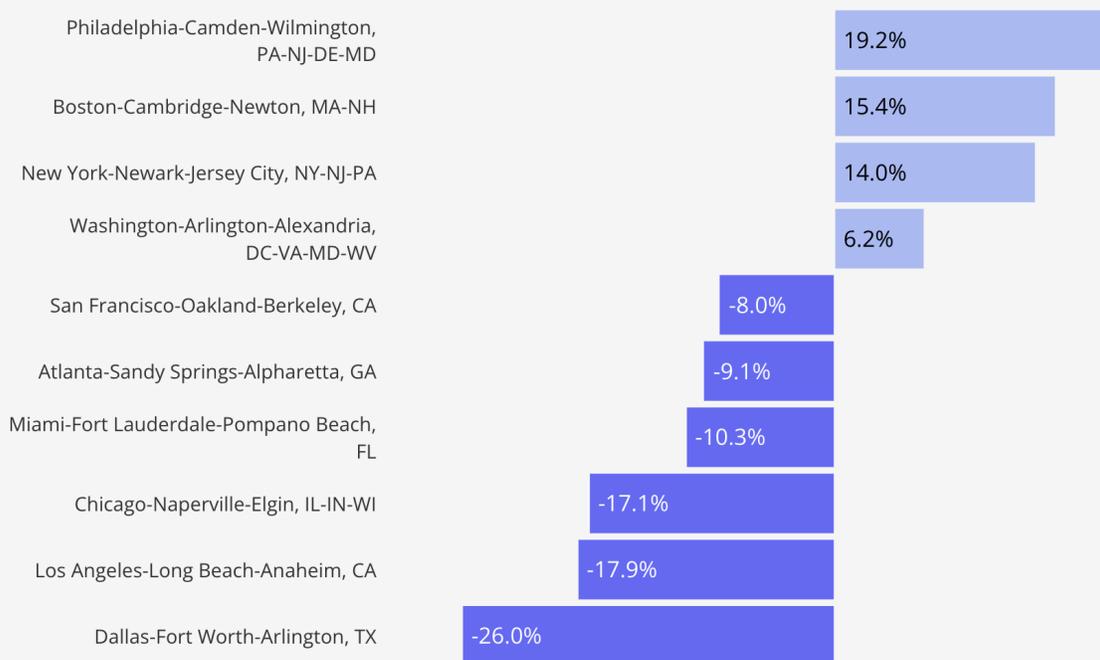
Flocking to the Big Apple From Nearby Metro Areas

But where do these NYC-bound vacationers come from? Diving into the data on the origin of visitors making medium-length trips to New York City (three to seven nights) reveals that increasingly, these domestic tourists are coming from nearby metro areas.

Between 2018-2019 and 2023-2024, for example, the number of tourists visiting New York City from the Philadelphia metro area increased by 19.2%.

New York City Seeing Increase in Domestic Tourists From Nearby CBSAs Staying Between 3 - 7 Nights

Change in Visitors to New York City by Top 10 Origin CBSAs | May '23 to Apr. '24 Compared to May '18 - Apr. '19



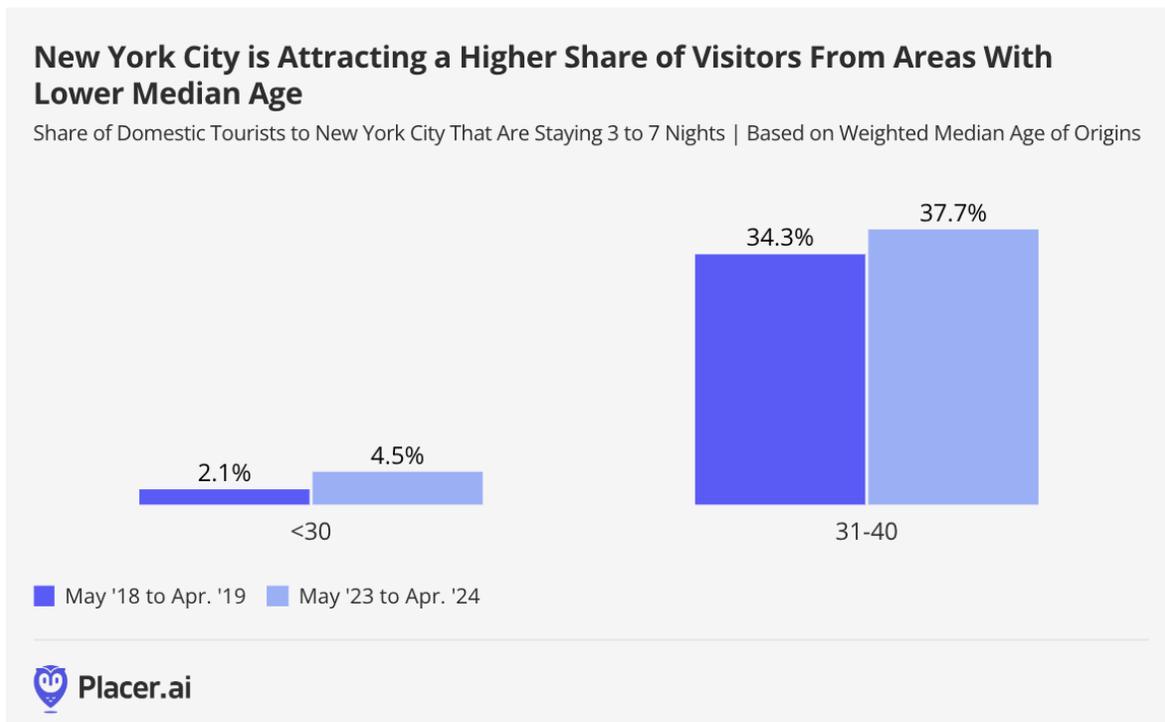
i "Top 10 Origin CBSAs" reflects the CBSAs with the highest total number of visitors to New York City from May 2023 to April 2024.

The number of tourists coming from the Boston and Washington, D.C metro areas, and from the New York CBSA itself (New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA) also increased over the same period.

Meanwhile, further-away CBSAs like San Francisco-Oakland-Berkeley, CA, Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Alpharetta, GA, and Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL fed fewer tourists to NYC in 2023-2024 than they did pre-pandemic. It seems that residents of these more distant metro areas are opting for vacation destinations closer to home to avoid the [high costs](#) of air travel.

Younger Travelers Visit NYC

Diving even deeper into the characteristics of visitors taking medium-length trips to New York City reveals another demographic shift: Tourists staying between three and seven nights in the Big Apple are skewing younger.

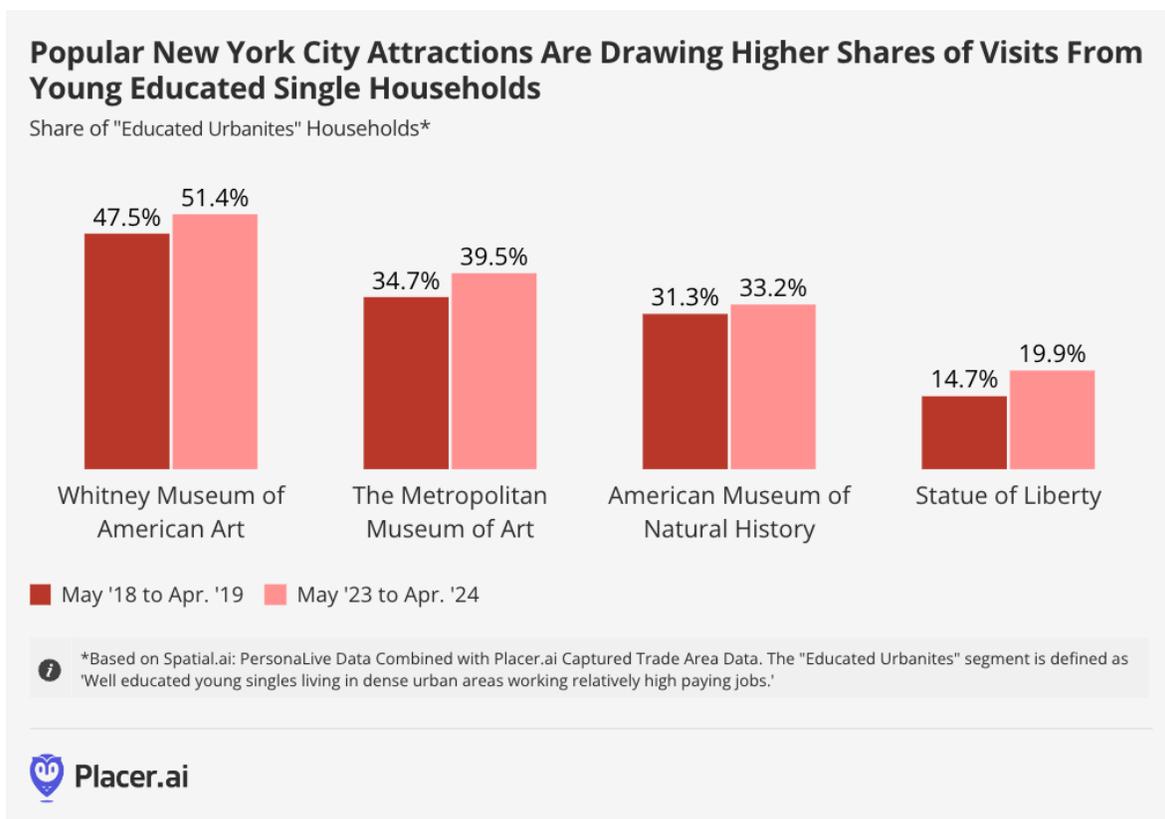


Between 2018-2019 and 2023-2024, the share of visitors to New York City from areas with median ages under 30 grew from 2.1% to 4.5%. Meanwhile, the share of visitors from areas with median ages between 31 and 40 increased from 34.3% to 37.7%.

The impact of this trend is already being felt in the Big Apple, with The Broadway League [reporting](#) that the average age of audiences to its shows during the 2022-2023 season was the youngest it had been in 20 seasons.

New York City Attractions Draw Younger Visitors

The shift towards younger tourists can also be seen when examining the psychographic makeup of visitors to popular attractions in New York City. Analyzing the [captured markets](#) of major NYC landmarks with data from [Spatial.ai's PersonaLive](#) dataset reveals an increase in households belonging to the "Educated Urbanites" segment between 2018-2019 and 2023-2024.



These well-educated, young singles are increasingly visiting iconic NYC venues such as the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The American Museum of Natural History, and the Statue of Liberty. This shift highlights the growing popularity of these attractions among young, educated singles, reflecting a broader trend of increased domestic tourism among this [demographic](#).

New York City's tourism sector is adapting to meet the changing needs of travelers, fueled increasingly by younger visitors who may be unable to take a costly international vacation. How have travel patterns to Los Angeles changed in response to increasing travel costs?

Los Angeles - A West Coast Favorite

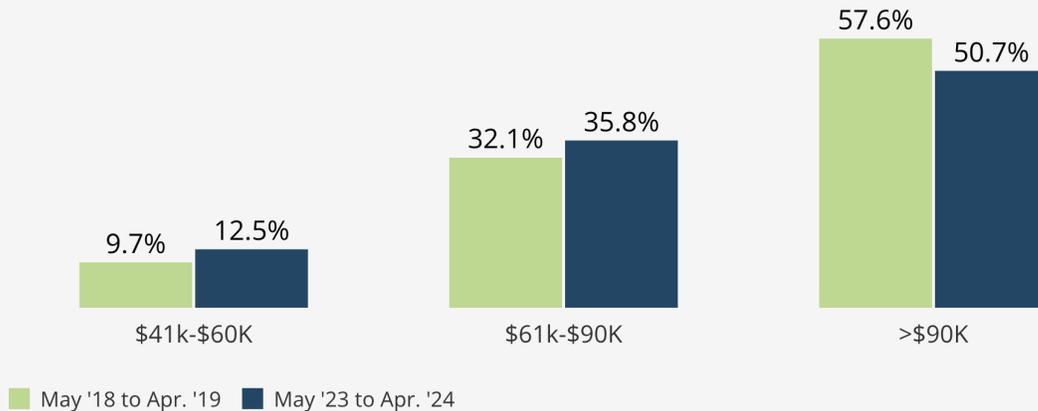
Tourism to Los Angeles Fed By Households of Modest Means

While New York City is the East Coast's tourism hotspot, Los Angeles takes center stage on the West Coast. And as overseas travel has become increasingly [out of reach](#) for Americans with less discretionary income, the share of domestic tourists originating from areas with lower HHIs has risen.

Before the pandemic, 57.6% of visitors to LA came from affluent areas with median household incomes (HHIs) of over \$90K/year. But by 2023-2024, this share decreased to 50.7%. Over the same period, the share of visitors from areas with median HHIs between \$41K and \$60K increased from 9.7% to 12.5%, while the share of visitors from areas with HHIs between \$61K and \$90K rose from 32.1% to 35.8%.

The City of Los Angeles Is Drawing a Higher Share of Visitors From Origin Markets With Lower Household Incomes

Share of Domestic Tourists to The City of Los Angeles Based on Weighted Median HHI of Origins



Higher Shares of Middle-Income Families Visit Los Angeles

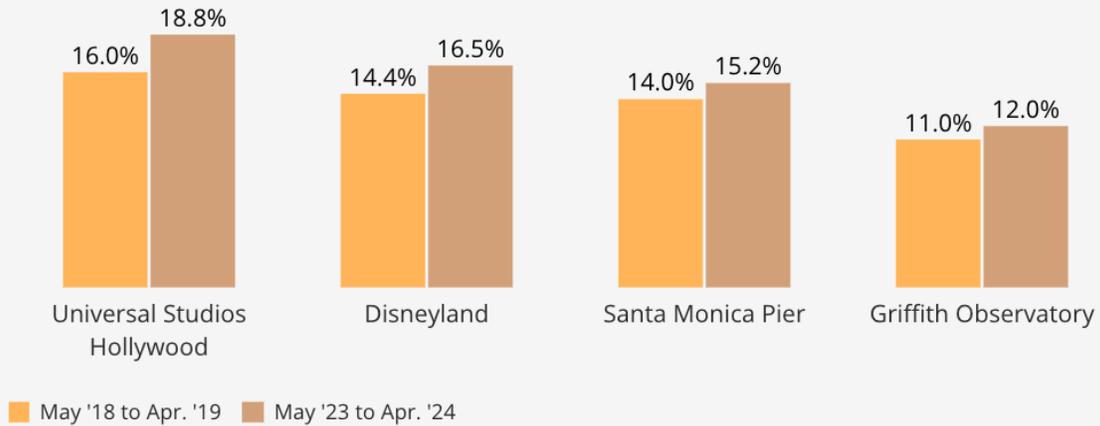
Diving into the psychographic makeup of visitors to popular Los Angeles attractions – Universal Studios Hollywood, Disneyland California, the Santa Monica Pier, and Griffith Observatory – also reflects the above-mentioned shift in HHI. The [captured markets](#) of these attractions had higher shares of middle-income households belonging to the “Family Union” psychographic segment in 2023-2024 than in 2018-2019.

[Experian: Mosaic](#) defines this segment as “middle income, middle-aged families living in homes supported by solid blue-collar occupations.” Pre-pandemic, 16.0% of visitors to Universal Studios Hollywood came from trade areas with high shares of “Family Union” households. This number jumped to 18.8% over the past year. A similar trend occurred at Disneyland, Santa Monica Pier, and Griffith Observatory.



Popular Los Angeles Area Attractions Are Drawing a Higher Share of Middle Income Family Households*

Share of "Family Union" Households



* Based on Experian Mosaic Data Combined with Placer.ai Captured Trade Area Data. The "Family Union" segment is defined as 'Middle income, middle-aged families living in homes supported by solid blue-collar occupations'.



Californians Love Los Angeles

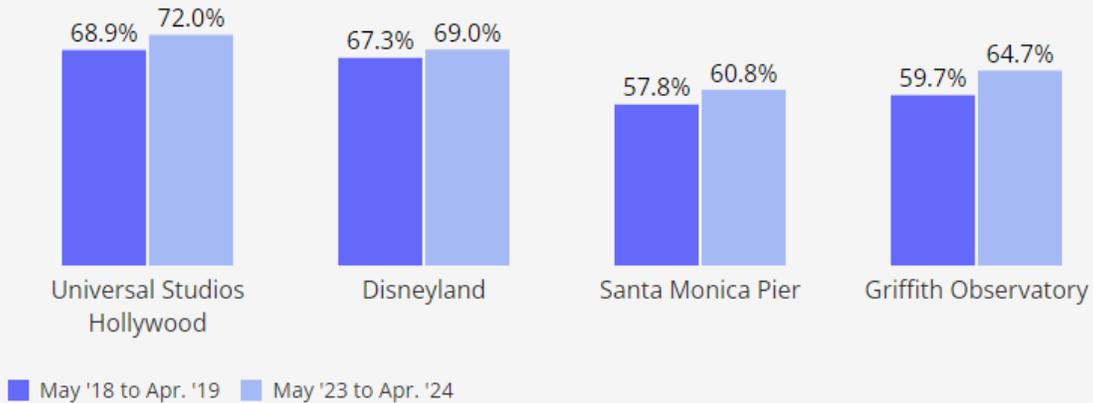
And like in New York City, growing numbers of visitors to Los Angeles appear to be coming from nearby areas. Between 2018-2019 and 2023-2024, the share of in-state visitors to major Los Angeles attractions increased substantially – as people likely sought to cut costs by keeping things local.

Pre-pandemic, for example, 68.9% of visitors to Universal Studios Hollywood came from within California – a share that increased to 72.0% over the past year. Similarly, 59.7% of Griffith Observatory visitors in 2018-2019 came from within the state – and by 2023-2024, that number grew to 64.7%.



Los Angeles Area Attractions Seeing Higher Share of Visitors From The State of California as Travelers Seek to Stay Nearby

Share of Domestic Visitors by State of Origin



Final Tourist Destination

Even when times are tight, people love to travel – and New York and Los Angeles are two of their favorite destinations. With prices for airfare, hotels, and dining out increasing across the board, younger and more price-conscious households are adapting, choosing to visit nearby cities and enjoy attractions closer to home. And as the tourism industry continues its recovery, understanding emerging visitation trends can help stakeholders meet travelers where they are.

