

Hotels in the Heart of the City

Dive into the data to examine hotel visit trends across four major downtown cores: Miami, Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles.

- 1. In 2024, Miami and Chicago outpaced New York and Los Angeles for YoY visit growth at downtown hotels.** Miami led with an 8.9% YoY increase, followed by Chicago at 7.4%, New York at 2.0%, and Los Angeles at -1.7%. Miami and Chicago also boasted more visitors from more than 250 miles away.
- 2. Visits to downtown hotel visits peak at different times throughout the year across major cities.** In 2024, downtown Miami hotels saw visits surge in March, likely driven by spring break revelers and snowbirds. Chicago hotels saw visits peak in August, as tourists flocked to the city for summer festivals. Hotels in midtown Manhattan got their highest uptick in December, and downtown Los Angeles hotels enjoyed a July boost.
- 3. Miami is becoming increasingly popular for short getaways.** The share of city-wide domestic tourists staying one or two nights in Miami grew from 71.7% in March 2022 to 78.3% in March 2024. Over the same period, Miami's March hotel visit boost also intensified – suggesting that more travelers are opting for quick springtime escapes.
- 4. Chicago's summer festival season drives a major surge in downtown hotel visits.** Lollapalooza had the biggest impact last year, boosting daily hotel visits by 51.1% to 63.8% compared to a 2024 same-day visit average. The city's Air and Water Show, Triathlon, and Jazz Festival also drove hotel visit increases.
- 5. Rural and suburban visitors head to Manhattan for the holidays.** New York City's holiday season peak attracted a distinct visitor mix, with midtown hotels drawing a higher proportion of tourists from suburban, small-town, and rural areas last December than the rest of the year.
- 6. Wealthy families with children choose Los Angeles for summer culture and fun.** Los Angeles got its biggest tourism surge last year in the summer – with a significant increase in the share of affluent, middle-aged families with children flocking to the city's downtown hotels in July 2024.

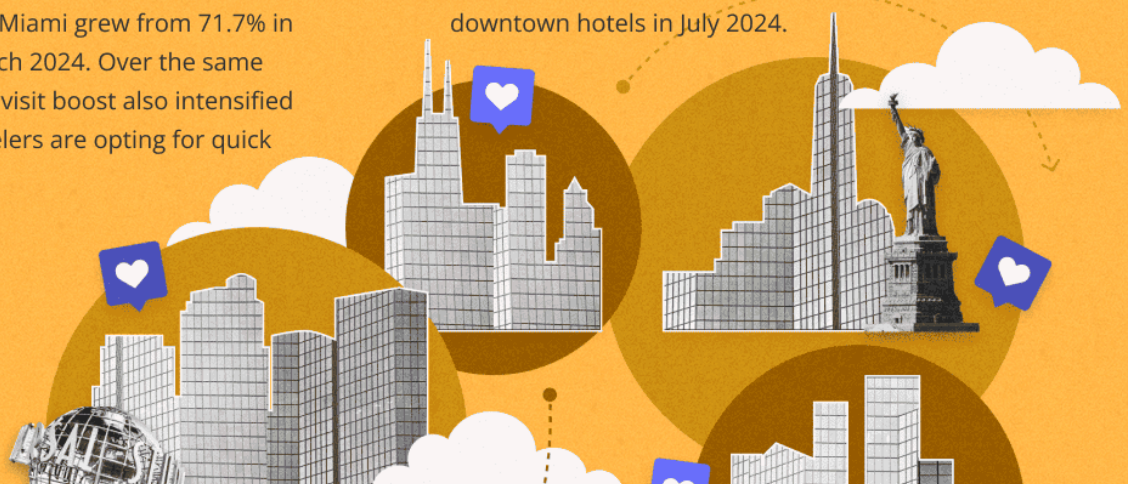


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Placer.ai observes a panel of mobile devices in order to extrapolate and generate visitation insights for a variety of locations across the U.S. This panel covers only visitors from within the United States and does not represent or take into account international visitors.

Downtown Occupancy On The Rise

Downtown districts in the nation's major cities attract domestic travelers all year long with their iconic sights, lively entertainment, and diverse dining offerings. But each hub follows its own rhythm, shaped by distinct seasonal peaks and dips in visitor flow.

This white paper examines downtown hotel visitation patterns in four of the nation's most popular destinations for domestic tourists: Miami, Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. Focusing on 20 downtown hotels in each city, the analysis explores seasonal variations in domestic travel, city-specific dynamics, and differentiating factors.

Miami and Chicago Take the Visit Growth Lead

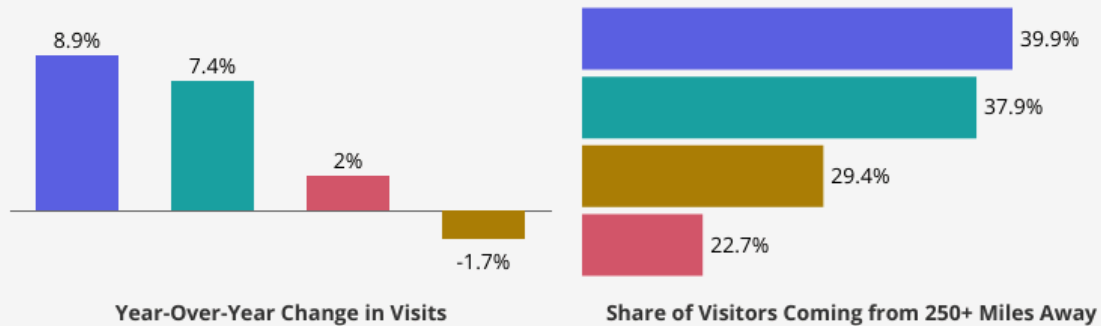
Domestic tourism has [rebounded strongly](#) in recent years, and hotels in Miami and Chicago have been the biggest beneficiaries. In 2024, visits to analyzed hotels in each of these cities' downtown areas grew by 8.9% and 7.4%, respectively, compared to 2023. Meanwhile, hotels in downtown and midtown Manhattan saw a more modest 2.0% increase, while Los Angeles experienced a slight year-over-year (YoY) decline in downtown hotel visits.

One factor that may be driving Miami and Chicago's stronger performance is their higher proportion of long-distance visitors, defined as those visiting from over 250 miles away. Miami remains a top destination for snowbirds and spring breakers, while Chicago serves as a cultural and entertainment hub for the sprawling Midwest. These long-distance leisure travelers may be more likely to splurge on downtown hotel stays during their trips, helping drive hotel visit growth in the two cities.

By contrast, hotels in the Los Angeles and Manhattan city centers drew lower shares of domestic travelers coming from less than 250 miles away. These shorter-haul domestic tourists may be less likely to splurge on downtown hotels than those taking longer vacations. Both cities are also surrounded by numerous regional getaway options that can draw long-haul leisure travelers away from their downtown cores.

Long-Distance Travelers Fuel the Success of Downtown Hotels in Major Cities

2024



Download data

Download data

Miami Chicago New York City Los Angeles

Based on a selection of 20 hotels in each city center.



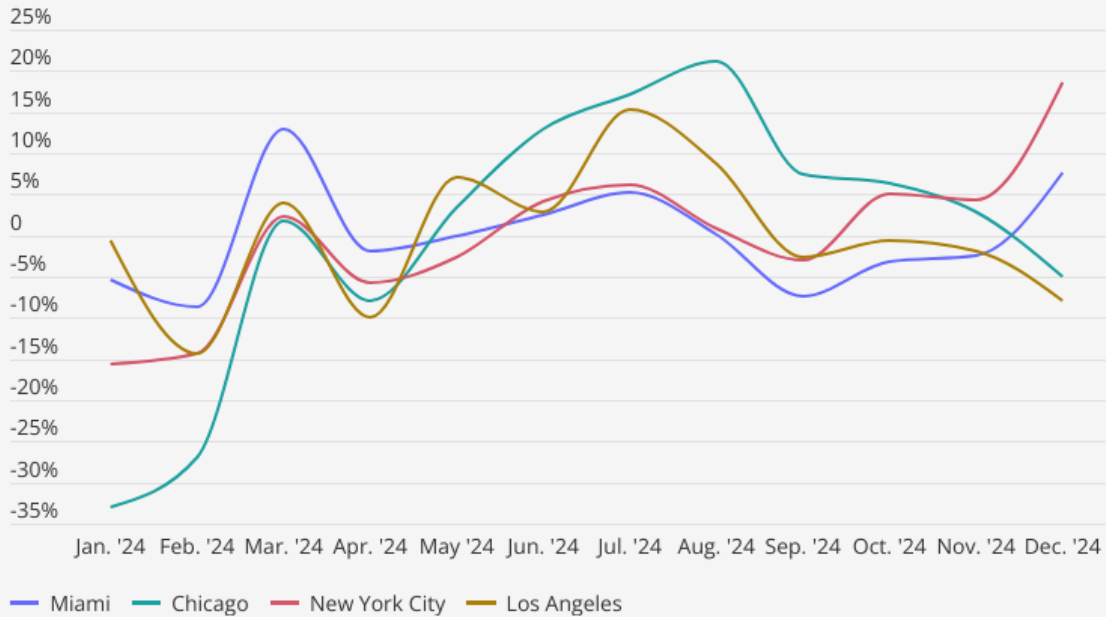
Visits Peak At Different Points

Each of the four analyzed cities has its own unique ebbs and flows – and city center hotel visits reflect these patterns. Miami, with its warm, sunny climate, experiences influxes of tourists during the winter and spring, with March seeing the biggest jump in downtown hotel visits last year (13.0% above the monthly visit average). Chicago, which thrives in the summer with its many festivals and events, saw its biggest downtown hotel visit bump in August. Meanwhile, Manhattan experienced a major uptick in December, likely fueled by [holiday tourism](#) and New Year celebrations, and Los Angeles visits were highest in the summertime.



Visit Peaks Vary Across Downtown Hotels in Major Cities

Monthly Visits to Downtown Hotels Compared to a Yearly Monthly Average



 Download data

Based on a selection of 20 hotels in each city center.



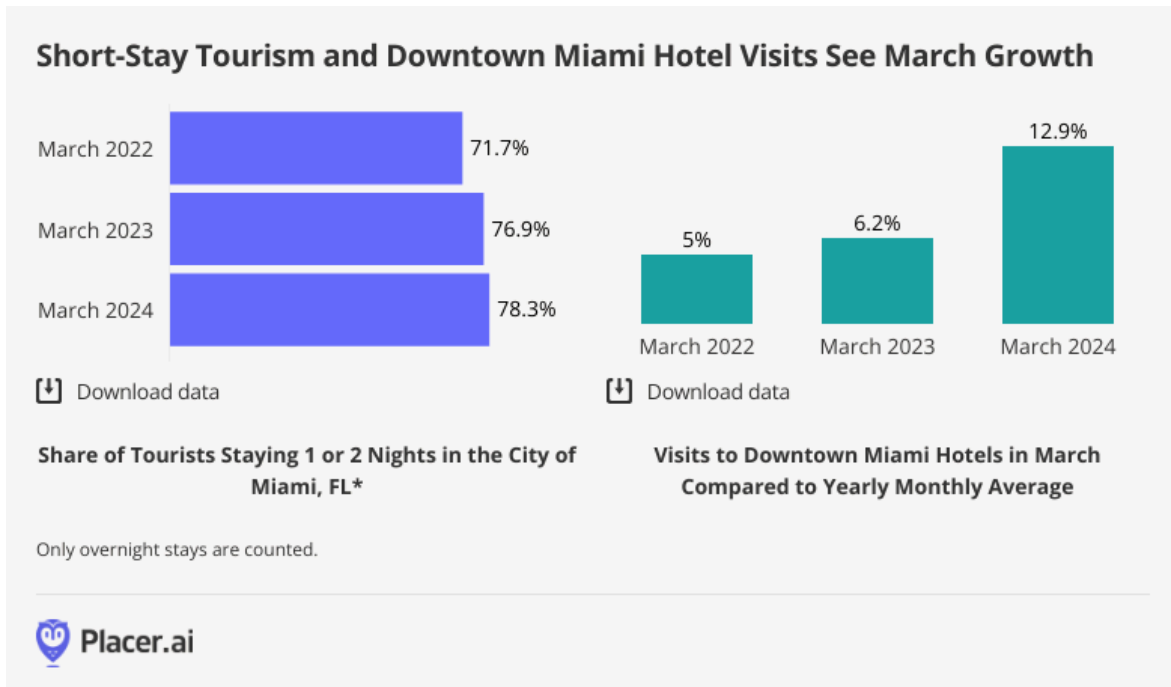
Feeling The Miami Heat

What drives these seasonal visit peaks? Miami has long been a top tourism destination, especially in early spring, when snowbirds and spring breakers flock to the city for sun and relaxation. In recent years, the city has seen a rise in short-term domestic tourism, suggesting that the city is becoming increasingly popular for weekend getaways. According to the Placer.ai Tourism Dashboard, the share of domestic tourists staying just one or two nights grew from 71.7% in March 2022 to 78.3% in March 2024.



This shift aligns with an impressive increase in the magnitude of downtown Miami’s springtime hotel visit peak: In March 2022, visits to downtown hotels were 5.0% above the monthly average for the year, a share that more than doubled by 2024 to 12.9%.

These numbers may mean that more people are choosing to head to Miami for a quick break from the cold – and staying in downtown hotels to make the most of their short getaway.

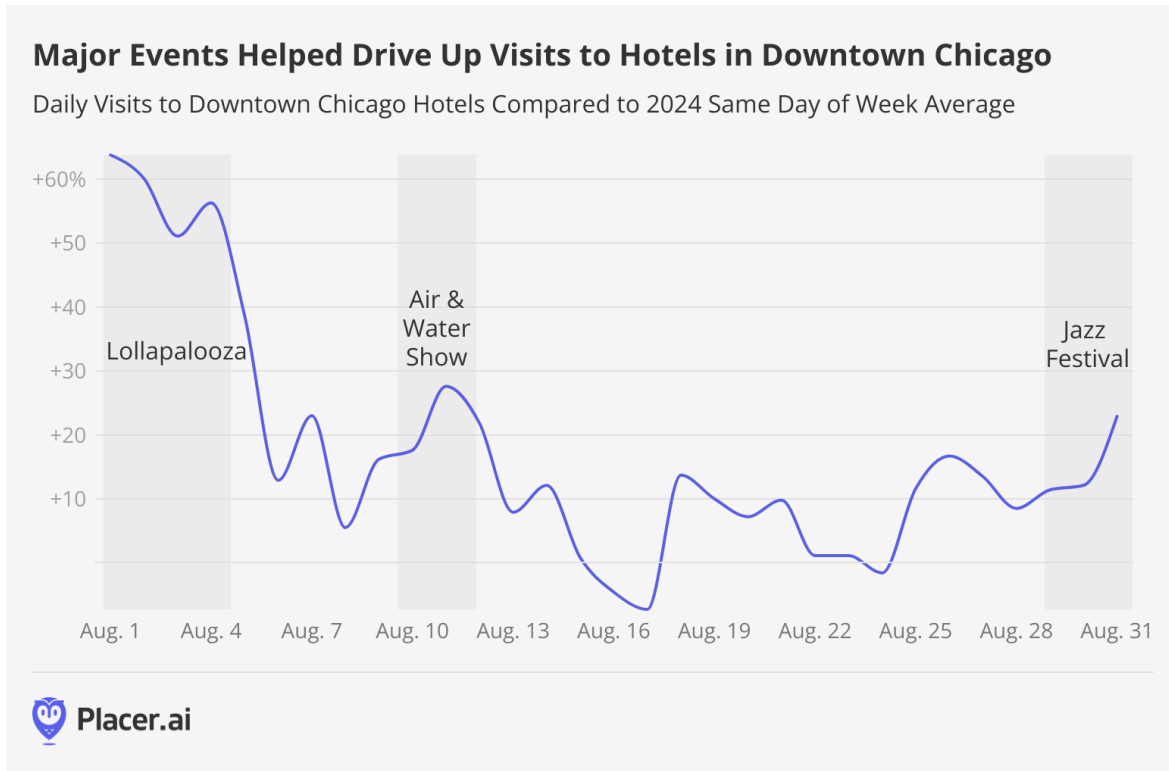


A Taste of Chicago in the Summer

Chicago’s major August visit spike was likely driven by the Windy City’s impressive lineup of major summer festivals, from Lollapalooza to the Chicago Air and Water Show, which draw thousands of attendees from across the country.

Lollapalooza fueled the largest visit spike to the city – between Thursday, August 1st and Sunday, August 4th, visits to downtown Chicago hotels surged between 51.1% and 63.8% above 2024 daily averages for those days of the week. The Air and Water

Show and the Chicago Jazz Festival also generated significant hotel visit increases – highlighting the boost these events bring to the city’s tourism and hospitality sector.



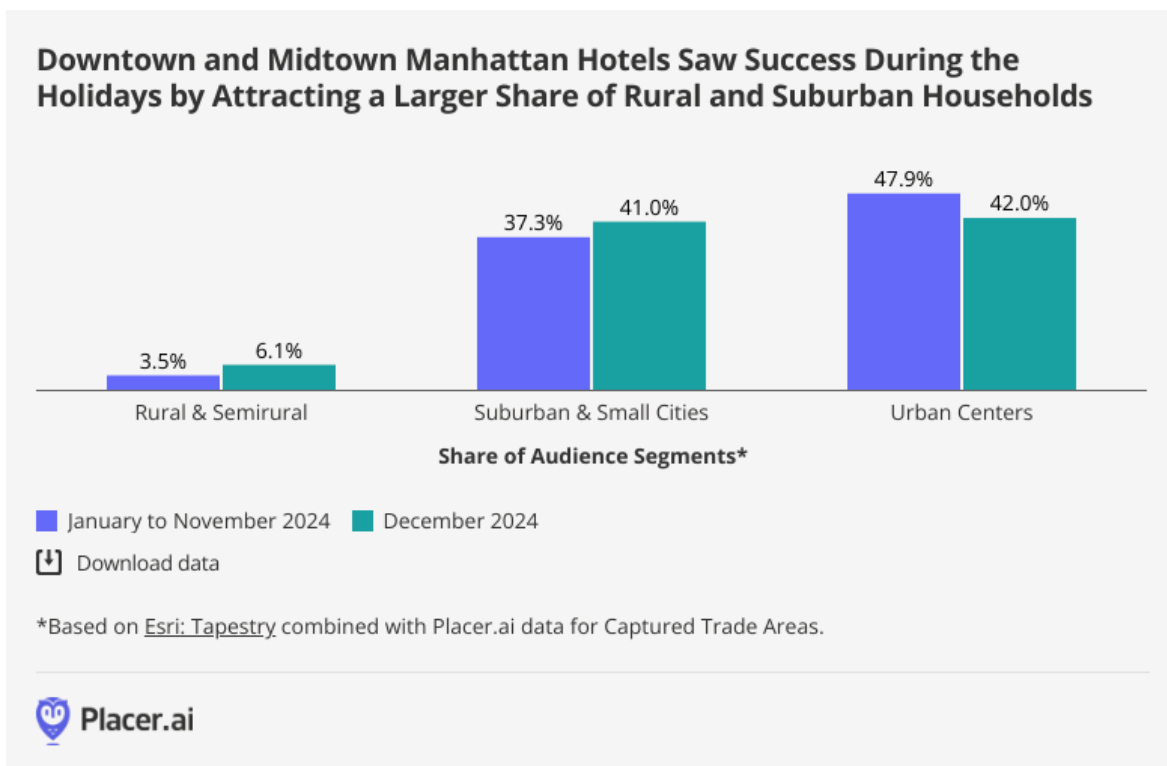
Staying in The City That Never Sleeps

The Big Apple draws a diverse mix of visitors throughout the year. But in December – the city’s peak tourist season – visitors pour in from all over the country to skate in Rockefeller Center, browse Fifth Avenue’s festive window displays and experience the city’s unique holiday magic.

And analyzing data from hotels in midtown and downtown Manhattan reveals a striking shift in the types of visitors who stay in the heart of NYC during the holiday season. While visitors from other urban centers dominated downtown hotel stays throughout most of the year – accounting for 47.9% of visits from January to November 2024 – their share dropped to 42.0% in December 2024. Meanwhile, the

share of guests from suburban areas and small towns rose from 37.3% to 41.0%, and the share of guests from rural and semi-rural areas nearly doubled, from 3.5% to 6.1%.

These patterns suggest that, though Manhattan typically attracts a wide range of visitors, the holiday season is uniquely appealing to tourists from smaller towns and suburban areas. Understanding these trends can provide crucial context for hotels and civic stakeholders alike as they work to maximize the opportunities presented by the city's December visit surge.

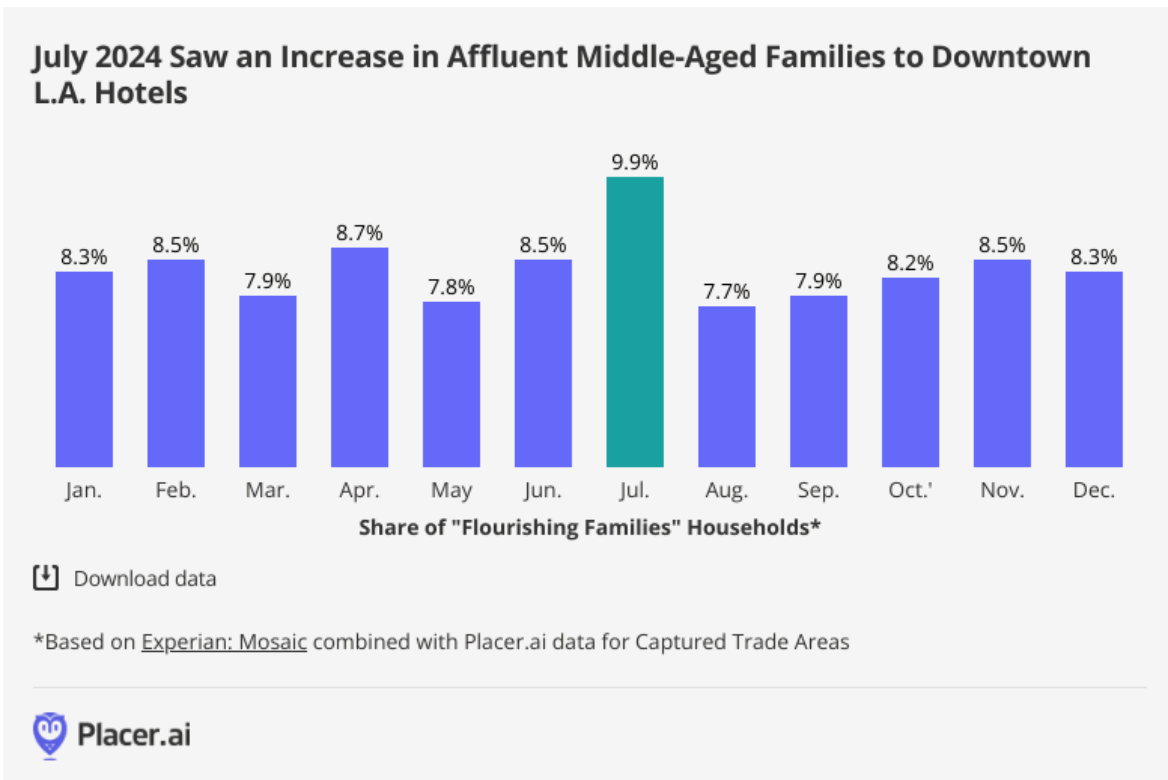


Tinseltown Tourism

Los Angeles hotels also experience significant demographic shifts during peak season. In July, visits to downtown LA hotels surged by 15.3% relative to the 2024 monthly visit average. And a closer look at audience segmentation data suggests a corresponding

surge in the share of "Flourishing Families" – an [Experian: Mosaic](#) segment consisting of affluent, middle-aged households with children. Throughout the year, "Flourishing Families" comprised between 7.7% and 8.7% of the census block groups (CBGs) driving visits to downtown LA hotels. But in July, this share jumped to 9.9%.

These families may be taking advantage of summer vacations to enjoy Los Angeles' cultural attractions and entertainment. Hotels and city stakeholders who understand the appeal the city holds for this demographic can better cater to them through family-friendly promotions and strategic marketing efforts to target these households.



Downtown Cores Continue to Drive Visits

Downtowns are making a comeback – and hotels in the heart of the nation’s major tourist hubs are reaping the benefits. By understanding who frequents these downtown hotels and when, local businesses and civic leaders can optimize their resource management and strategic planning to make the most of these opportunities.