

International Arrivals & Departures

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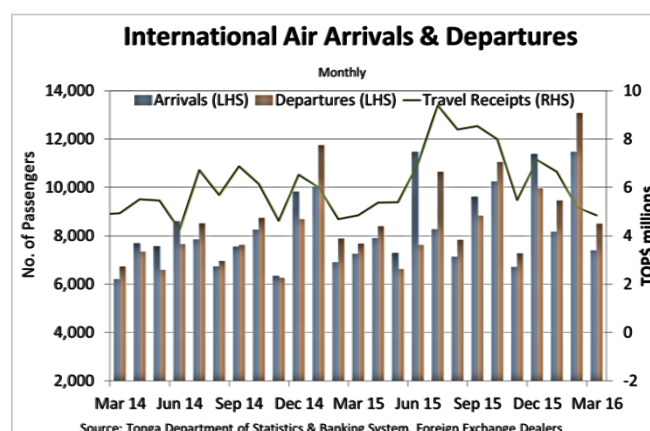
	Mar 16	Feb 16	Jan 16	Dec 15
Total Arrivals	7,383	11,453	8,150	11,374
Total Departures	8,488	13,059	9,441	9,949

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

Source: Tonga Department of Statistics

Arrivals & departures fell after a strong month

The total number of international arrivals¹ fell by 4,070 passengers (35.5%) over the month due to a significant fall in arrivals by ship. There was only 1 cruise ship arrived in March which travelled via Vava'u, which resulted in the decline in cruise ship arrivals by 4,063 passengers (74.2%). In addition, air arrivals decreased by 11 passengers (0.2%) compared to the number of arrivals in February. One yacht arrived in March bringing 4 visitors. The majority of the air arrivals recorded in March were visitors from New Zealand (NZ), Australia and the United States (US), with the purpose to visit friends and families and also for holiday. The travel receipts continued to fall by \$0.3 million to \$4.8 million in March, which coincides with the decrease in the number of international arrivals. The transportation and tourism sector, and other sectors in the economy may have been affected by the decrease in visitors arriving during the month.



The total number of international departures also decreased by 4,571 passengers (35.0%) over the month due to a fall in both ship and air departures with the number of departing visitors travelling by cruise ships decreasing the most. The majority of the departures during the month were to NZ, Australia and the US.

Over the year, the total number of international arrivals rose by 12,447 passengers (13.2%) driven by an increase in both air and ship arrivals. The air arrivals increased by 9,881 passengers (12.6%),

¹ Includes Tongan residents and visitors

as arriving Tongan residents rose by 5,562 passengers (20.0%) and the visitors arrivals increased by 4,319 (8.5%). The higher arrivals by ship reflected more cruise ships that arrived during the year compared to the previous year. The increase in the number of Tongan resident's arrivals coincides with the highest number of passengers visiting relatives and friends whilst the majority of visitors during the year were here on holiday. Additionally, the rise in air arrivals is supported by events that occurred during the year such as the King's coronation, villages and various family re-unions, school anniversaries and annual church conferences. The higher number of visitors is consistent with a \$14.0 million (20.8%) increase in the total travel receipts during the year to March 2016, compared to the previous year. This reflects the special occasion of the King's coronation and other events that took place during the year which supported the tourism, transportation, trade and other sectors of the economy.

The total international departures also increased by 13,562 passengers (14.2%) over the year due mainly to a 11,123 passengers rise in departures by air.

Outlook

International arrivals are expected to fall in the coming months and to increase in the normal peak period around May-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 Latter Day Saints 100th, the Tupou College Toloa 150th anniversaries and annual church conferences. The setting up of the Chinese group tours would also attract more tourists from China. The National Reserve Bank of Tonga 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.

Total Number of International Arrivals & Departures

	Arrivals						Departures					
	Monthly				Year Ended		Monthly				Year Ended	
	Mar 16	Feb-16	Jan-16	Mar-15	Mar 16	Mar-15	Mar-16	Feb-16	Jan-16	Mar-15	Mar-16	Mar-15
Total	7,383	11,453	8,150	7,238	106,904	94,457	8,488	13,059	9,441	7,655	109,091	96,811
Air	5,968	5,979	8,150	5,221	88,582	78,701	7,073	7,592	9,441	5,635	90,768	79,645
Visitors	3,315	3,259	3,581	2,944	55,239	50,920	3,534	4,164	7,462	2,795	56,223	46,389
Tongan residents	2,653	2,720	4,569	2,277	33,343	27,781	3,539	3,428	1,979	2,840	34,545	33,256
Cruise Ship*	1,411	5,474	-	2,011	16,941	14,112	1,411	5,467	-	2,011	16,942	15,395
Yacht*	4	-	-	6	1,381	1,644	4	-	-	9	1,381	1,771
Total	7,383	11,453	8,150	7,238	106,904	94,457	8,488	13,059	9,441	7,655	109,091	96,811
Visitors	4,730	8,733	3,581	4,961	73,561	66,676	4,949	9,631	7,462	4,815	74,546	63,555
Tongan residents	2,653	2,720	4,569	2,277	33,343	27,781	3,539	3,428	1,979	2,840	34,545	33,256

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