

AIR

Association of International Retail

**The Importance of Retail to the UK's
International Tourism Sector**

“The Tourism Recovery Plan is our blueprint for how the sector can build back better from the pandemic, even faster than forecasts predict.”

Nigel Huddleston MP, Tourism Minister, June 2021

“Specifically, the aim is to recoverto 2019 levelsinbound visitor numbers and spend by the end of 2023 –a year faster than independent forecasts predict.”

*The Tourism Recovery Plan, June 2021
Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport*

“41 million visitors came to the UK for business or leisure in 2019. They spent over £28 billion.”

DCMS

“25% of all expenditure by overseas visitors is on the UK’s high streets and in the country’s impressive range of department stores.”

VisitBritain

The international visitor sector is vital for UK jobs and growth.

Visitor numbers grew by 32% to 40.9 million between 2009 and 2019.

Spending grew by 61% to £28.43 billion.

The sector employs 450,000 people.

Source: VisitBritain

Shopping is a key draw for international visitors.

70% of international tourist visits include shopping.

Shopping accounts for 25% of all spending by international visitors throughout the UK.

In London, 46% of all international visitor spending is on shopping.

Source: VisitBritain

Airside shopping is a vital part of airports' revenue.

Shopping is a major income generator for Britain's airports.

2019 shopping accounted for up to 40% of the total revenue for some regional airports.

2019 airside tax-free totalled over £1 bn.

Source: UK Travel Retail Forum

International retail makes a major contribution to the UK economy.

£6 billion spent on shopping by international visitors (2019).

UK's 12th largest export sector.

120,000 direct retail employees.

Source: Association of International Retail

Shopping is a key attraction for high spending visitors

Visitors from the GCC states account for 4% of all non-EU visitors to the UK (who were entitled to tax free shopping).

Source: VisitBritain

The average GCC visitor spends £2664 each compared with £696 of the average international visitor.

Source: International Passenger Survey

In 2019 GCC visitors accounted for 26% of all tax-free shopping.

Source: Global Blue



GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL STATES

Visitors from GCC member states spent a total of £1.97 billion in the UK in 2019.

Source: International Passenger Survey

51% of visitors from Saudi Arabia and 41% of visitors from the UAE cite shopping as their reason for visiting Britain.

Source: International Passenger Survey

Globally, Chinese travellers are the world's top spending with massive potential for growth.

Source: UN World Tourism Organisation



CHINA

Chinese visitor numbers to the UK have grown 400% (200,000 to 800,00) since 2012.

Source: International Passenger Survey

In 2019 Chinese shoppers account for 32% of all UK tax free shopping event though only 4% on non-EU visitors.

Source: Global Blue

International retail benefits the whole of the UK



Major cities with international airports are international shopping destinations. In 2019, tax-free shopping alone was worth £92 million in Edinburgh, £60 million in Manchester £60 million and £32 million in Liverpool.

Source: Global Blue and Planet

"It's claimed only Buckingham Palace receives more visits from Chinese citizens than Bicester Village."

Source: BBC News

"London, as the main gateway for international visitors coming to the UK, and as a huge draw for many high-spending long-haul markets, is vitally important to the whole of the UK's competitiveness as a tourism destination."

"55% of inbound spend in 2019 was in London."

Source: Tourism Recovery Plan

UNITED KINGDOM

2019 top spenders on tax-free shopping (non-EU visitors)

REST OF ASIA
12% OF SPEND

**REST OF
THE WORLD**
30% OF SPEND

GCC STATES
26% OF SPEND

CHINA
32% OF SPEND



**£3 billion
value**

2019 top 5 goods categories (tax-free shopping)

1

Fashion and Clothing

2

Watches and jewellery

3

Consumer electrics
and household appliances

4

Sports equipment
and clothing

5

Perfume
and cosmetics

AIR

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Paul Barnes
Chief Executive

paul@internationalretail.co.uk

www.internationalretail.co.uk

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