



B **INDUSTRY PROFILES 2025:** **CULTURE, SPORTS, AND TOURISM IN BOSTON**

City of Boston Planning Department Research Division

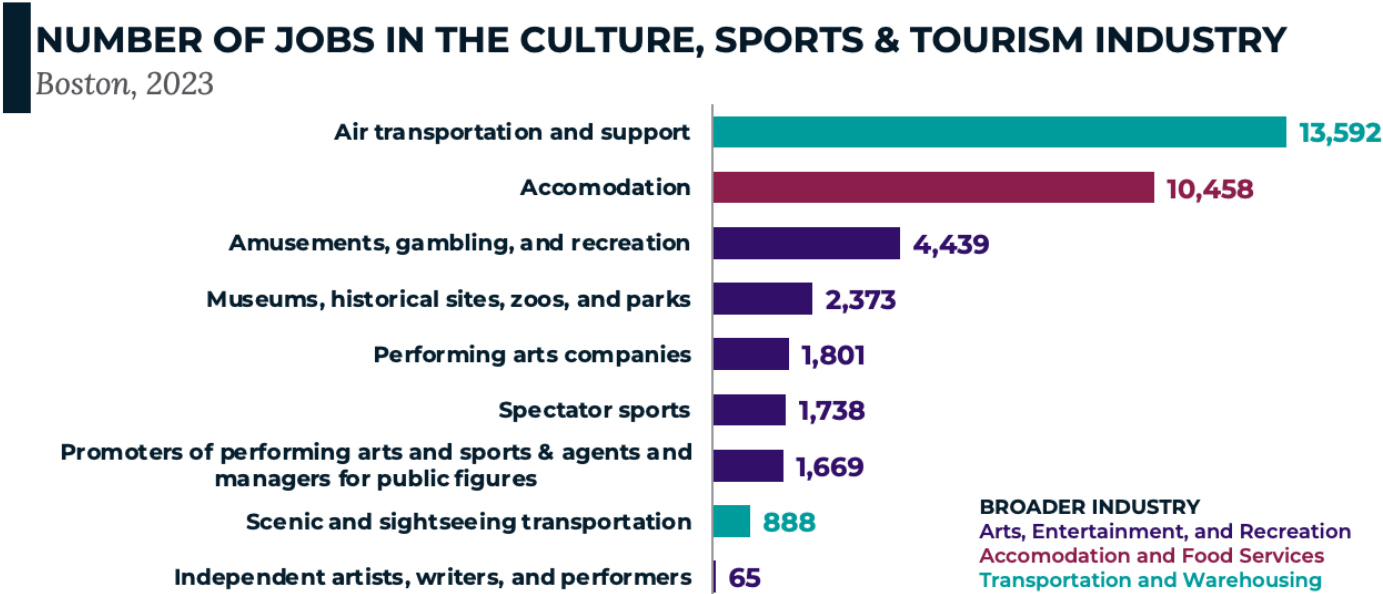
CULTURE, SPORTS, AND TOURISM

The culture, sports, and tourism sector in Boston employs approximately 26,565 workers across 633 establishments and accounts for 2% of all establishments and 3.9% of total employment. The culture, sports, and tourism sector includes activities and services such as museums, historical sites, spectator sports, performing arts, and accommodation. Boston's tourism industry relies upon its culture and sports; tourists come to Boston to watch and visit its historic sites, music scene, and successful sports teams.



CULTURE, SPORTS, AND TOURISM EMPLOYMENT

Air transportation and support is by far the largest industry within culture, sports, and tourism, employing 13,592 people in 2023 and accounting for 51.2% of total employment in the sector. The largest employer within this industry is Massport/Logan Airport, which saw 3,624,997 passengers in 2024. Amusements, gambling, and recreation follow, with 194 establishments employing 4,439 people, 16.7% of the total workforce.



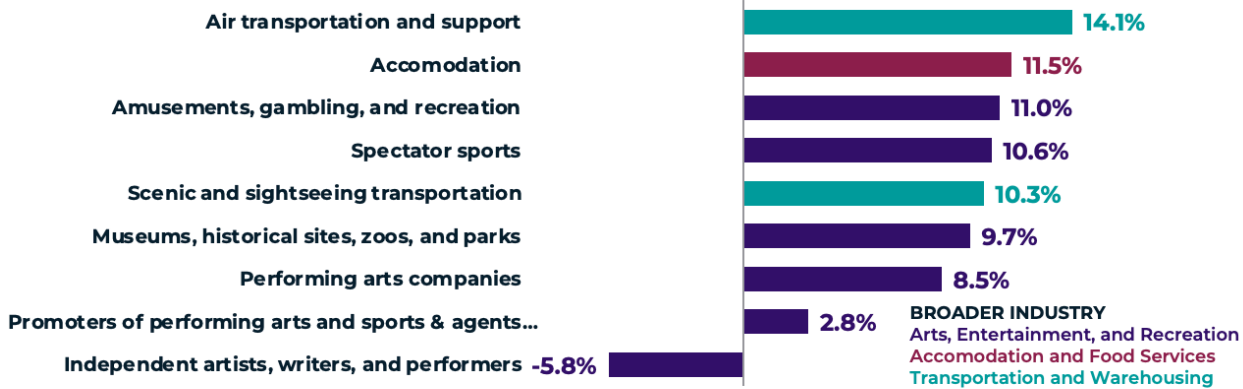
Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

Employment in Boston’s culture, sports, and tourism industry experienced a significant increase from 2022 to 2023, growing by 11.6%. 2023 was the first year that employment in this sector was higher than it was pre-pandemic. Air transportation and support saw the largest increase, with employment growing 14.1%. Amusements, gambling & recreation expanded by 11%. Promoters of performing arts and sports and agents and managers for public figures had a significantly slower level of increase, growing only 2.8%. Independent artists, writers, and performers are the only category to decline, dropping 5.8%.

CHANGE IN NUMBER OF JOBS IN THE CULTURE, TOURISM & SPORTS INDUSTRY

Boston, 2022-2023



Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

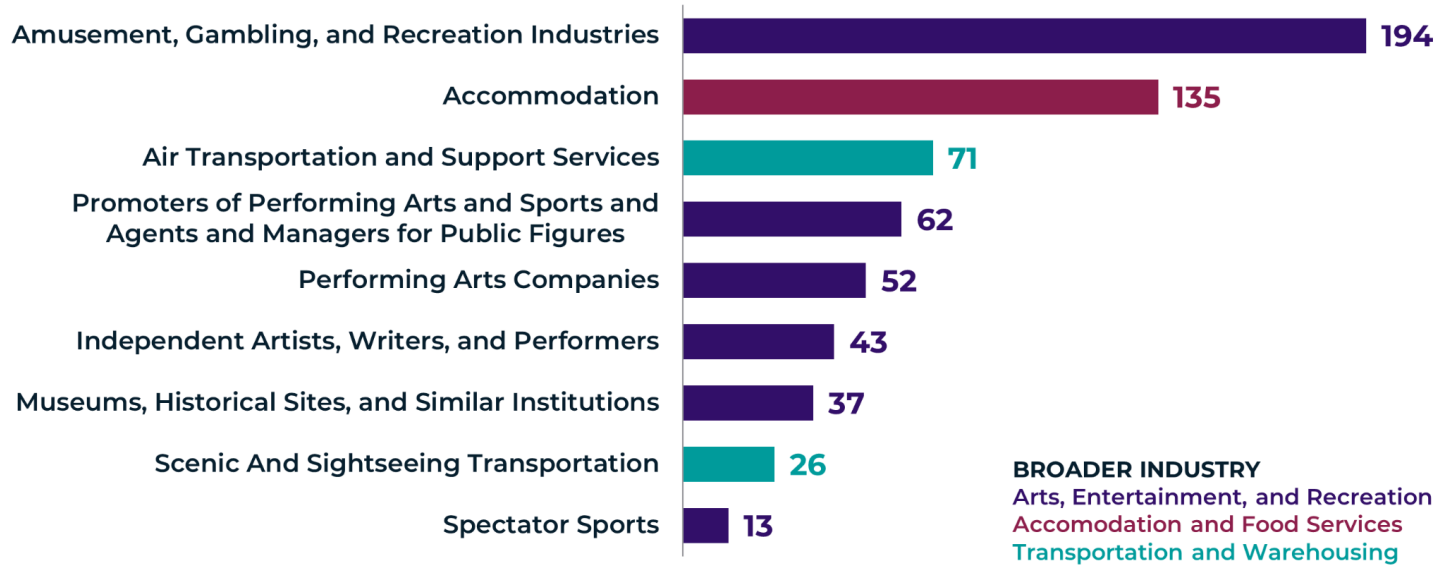
CULTURE, SPORTS, AND TOURISM ESTABLISHMENTS

As of September 2024, the culture, sports, and tourism sector has 633 establishments in Boston. Amusement, gambling, and recreation industries have nearly 200 of those establishments, almost a third of the entire sector. While there are only 13 establishments in the spectator sports industry, these establishments comprise large venues such as TD Garden and Fenway Park, which both heavily contribute to the success of the culture, sports, and tourism sector. Of the industries outside of the arts, entertainment, and recreation industry, accommodation has the largest number of establishments with 135.



NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS BY INDUSTRY

Boston, September 2024



Source: MA Department of Economic Research 2025, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

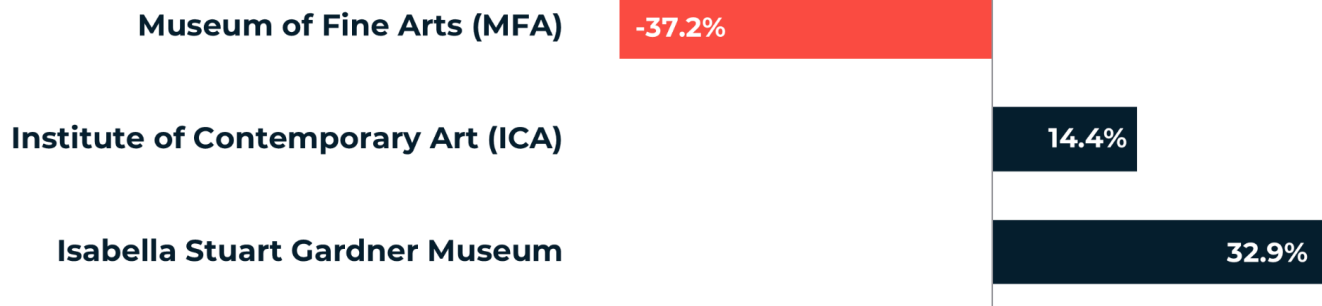
CULTURE AND SPORTS VISITORS

Some of Boston's top museums saw a continued pandemic recovery in 2023, with the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) and Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum seeing recent attendance levels higher than prepandemic levels, while the Museum of Fine Arts' visitation remained 37% lower than in 2019. The Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) reported 311,000 visitors in FY2023, up 14.4% from FY2019. The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum saw 446,699 visitors in CY2024, 32.9% more visitors than in 2019.



CHANGE IN TOP BOSTON MUSEUM ATTENDANCE

Percentage Change in Attendance Between FY2019 and FY2023



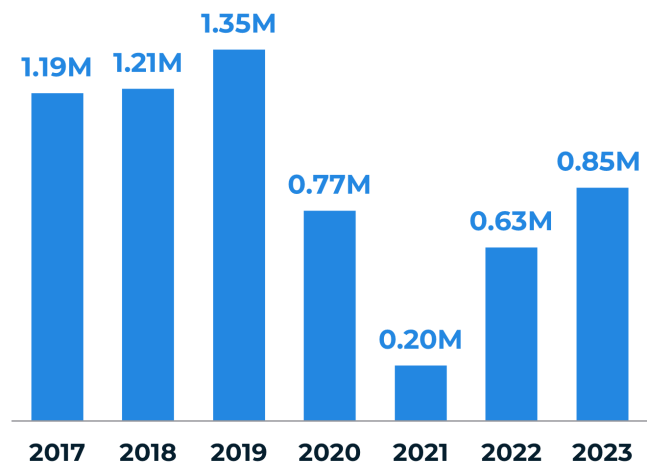
Source: MFA Annual Reports FY2019-23, ICA Annual Reports FY2019-23, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum 2019-2024 Strategic Plan Final Report, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

While the MFA's attendance has not returned to its historic high in 2019, reporting 37.2% lower attendance in 2023, its attendance has been steadily increasing following pandemic and closure-related¹ lows in 2020 and 2021.

The museum's FY23 attendance was 34% higher than the previous year and 322% higher than its lowest level in FY21.

MFA ATTENDANCE

FY2017 - FY2023



Source: MFA Annual Reports 2017-2023, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

¹ The MFA was closed due to the pandemic in March 2020 and reopened in late September 2020 and was closed again in December to reopen on February 3, 2021.



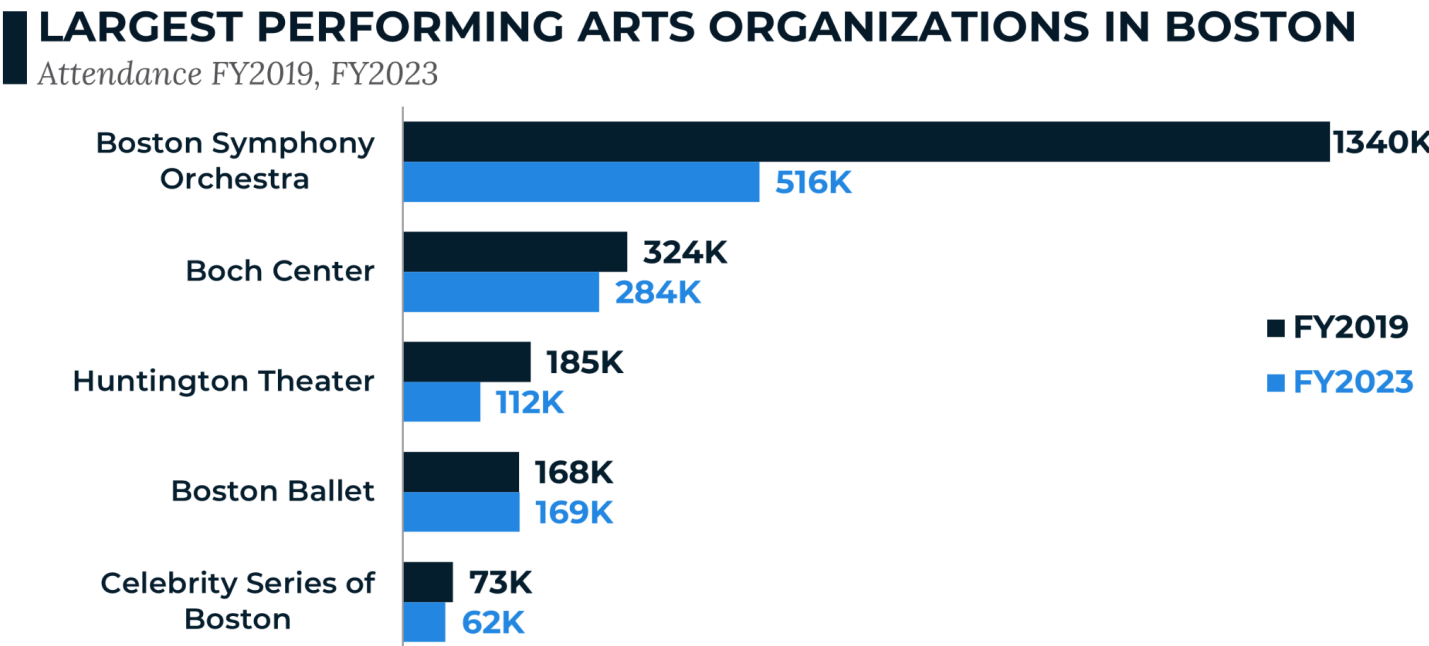
Boston’s performing arts sector saw an uneven pandemic recovery, with the concert market continuing to grow while large performing arts organizations struggled to recover pre-pandemic ticket sales. Boston continued its rise in national concert market rankings, climbing from No.22 in 2022 to No.5 in 2024.²

In 2024, five Boston clubs charted in the top 50 clubs worldwide. With nearly 470,000 tickets sold and 28.5M in gross, Boston’s MGM Music Hall was ranked #1 in the top 200 worldwide clubs. Citizens House of Blues and Big Night Live also charted in the top 10, selling 191k and 161.7k tickets respectively.

	World Ranking	Tickets Sold	Gross
MGM Music Hall	1	469K	28.5M
Citizens House of Blues Boston	7	191K	7.8M
Big Night Live	10	161.7K	5.5M
The Wilbur	14	156K	9M
Paradise Rock Club	33	86.9K	2.6M

Source: Pollstar Year End Worldwide Top 200 Club Ticket Rankings, 2024.

Boston performing arts organizations’ attendance in FY2023 remained for the most part lower than in FY2019. While the Boston Ballet’s attendance has recovered to prepandemic levels, the Boston Symphony Orchestra reported FY23 attendance* 60% lower than in FY19. The Boch

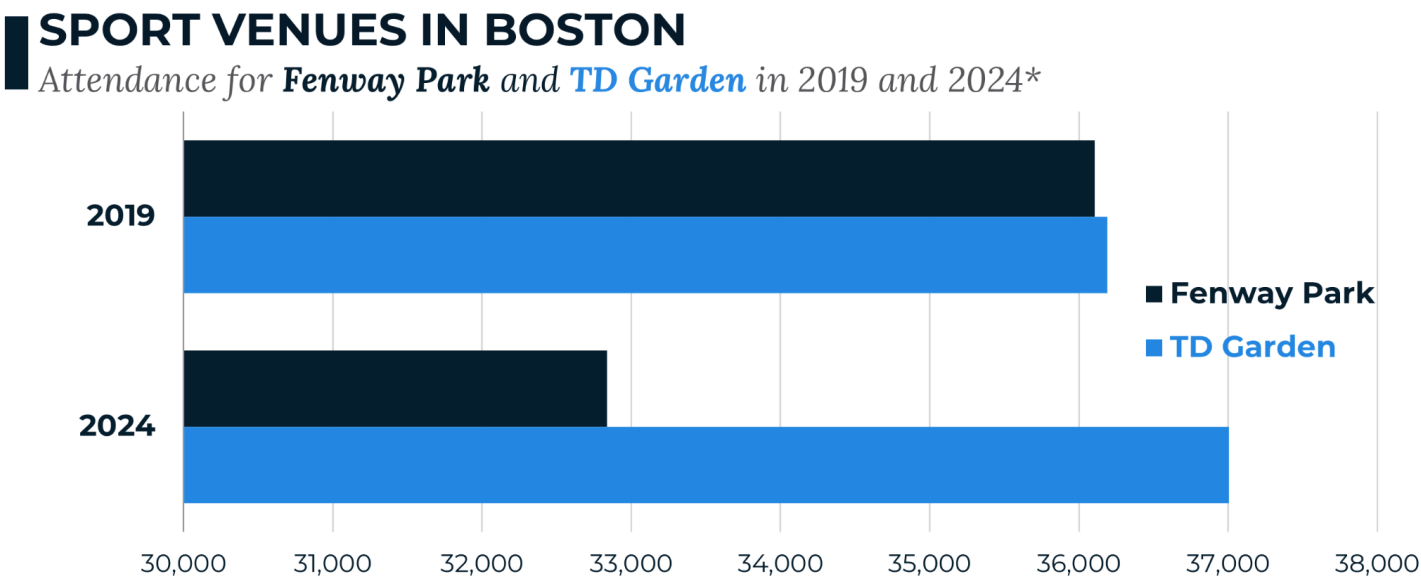


Source: Boston Business Journal, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

² Source: Pollstar National Year End Market Rankings 2022, 2024; Pollstar 2024 Year End Analysis.

Center and Huntington Theater saw a 12% and 39% drop respectively in attendance FY19-23. The Celebrity Series of Boston saw a 15% drop FY19-23.³

Boston’s two major sporting venues, Fenway Park and TD Garden, have seen varying levels of success in terms of recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, Fenway Park did not have any attendance due to the restrictions related to the pandemic. In 2021, its average attendance per game jumped to 21,300, and then to 32,408 the following season. However, from the pre-pandemic season in 2019 to the latest MLB season (2024), Fenway has seen a drop of 9.1% in average attendance per game. On the other hand, TD Garden has seen a growth of 2.3% in average attendance per game within the same time frame. TD Garden recovered its attendance in the 2021-22 NBA and NHL seasons following the pandemic: the Boston Celtics had an average attendance of approximately 19,000 per game, while the Boston Bruins had approximately 18,000 in attendance per game. Average attendance per game in TD Garden has remained around the same since then.



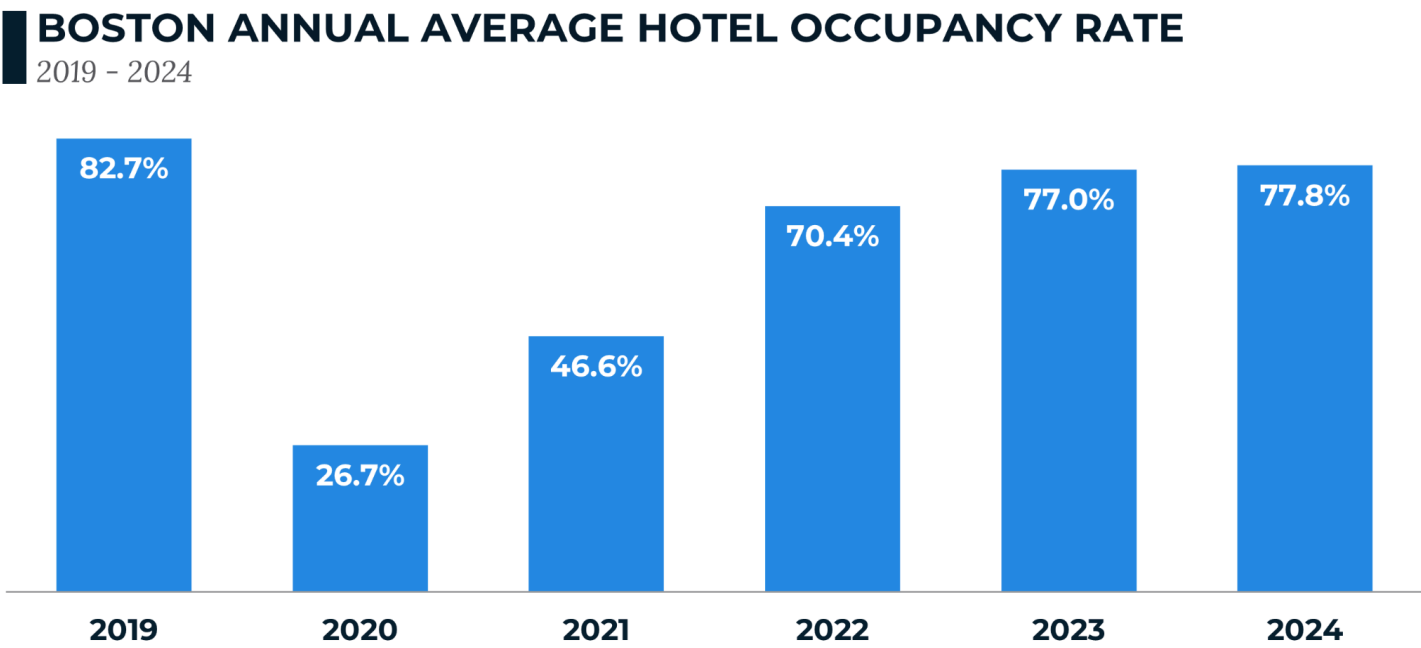
**Note: The teams that play in TD Garden operate on a fall to spring season, while the Red Sox (Fenway) operate on a spring to fall season. The attendance numbers for TD Garden reflect the attendance for the games within the 2018-19 and 2023-24 seasons respectively. Source: ESPN, MLB & NBA 2019-2024 Attendance Reports, HockeyDB Boston Bruins Yearly Attendance Graph, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.*

Boston’s TD Garden has also seen success as a concert venue. For year-end 2024, the venue generated \$140.1 million in total gross revenue from 1.2 million in attendance across 101 shows.⁴

³ Note, a methodological change in BSO attendance counting between FY19 and FY23 reduces attendance types taken into account
⁴ Billboard Boxscore, Top Venues (15,001+ Capacity) table.

HOTELS

Boston’s hotel occupancy rate saw a significant pandemic recovery between 2020 and 2022, growing from 26.7% to 70.4%. Since then, the hotel occupancy rate saw a 7%age point increase between 2022 and 2023 and a more modest 0.8%age point increase between 2023 and 2024. The hotel occupancy rate in 2024 remains approximately 5%age points lower than in 2019.

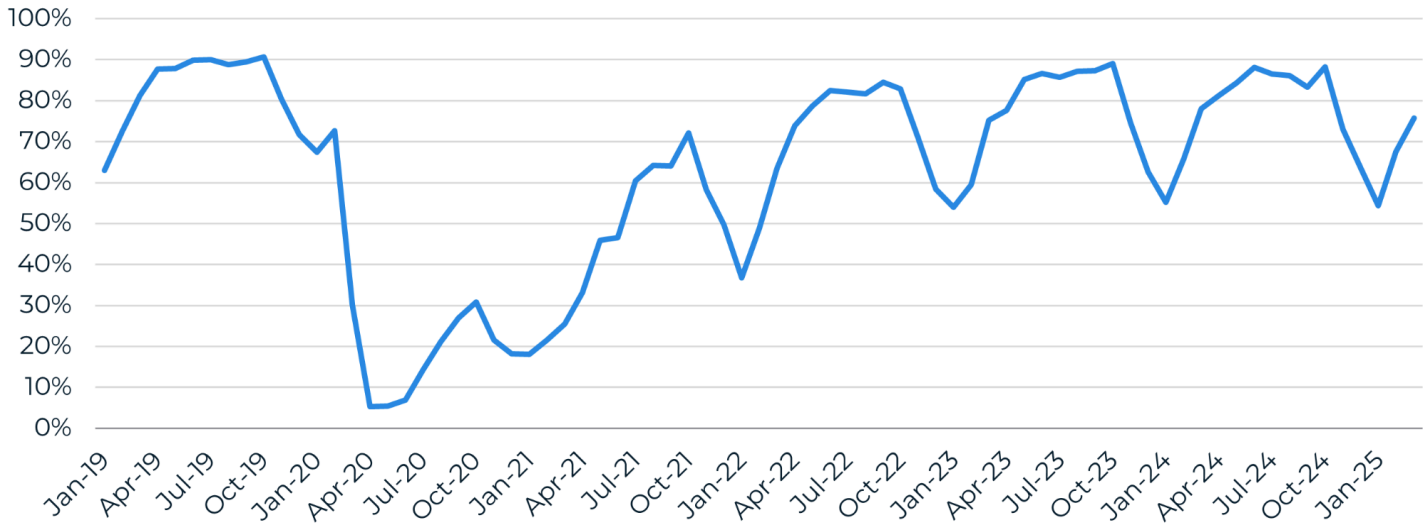


Source: The Pinnacle Perspective Boston Monthly Report, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

Following the pandemic, Boston’s hotel occupancy rate returned to trends of higher occupancy in the fall and summer months, with the highest rates seen in October 2019 (90.7%), October 2023 (89.1%) and October 2024 (88.3%). Boston’s lowest hotel occupancy rate was in spring of 2020, dropping from 72.3% in February to 5.3% in April. Following 2020 and 2021, the lows were consistently in the later winter months, with lows in January 2022 (36.7%), January 2023 (54%), January 2024 (55.2%), and January 2025 (54.3%). Boston’s March 2025 hotel occupancy rate was 75.7%, 2.3%age points lower than March 2024 and 5.5%age points lower than March 2025.

BOSTON HOTEL OCCUPANCY RATE

January 2019 - March 2025



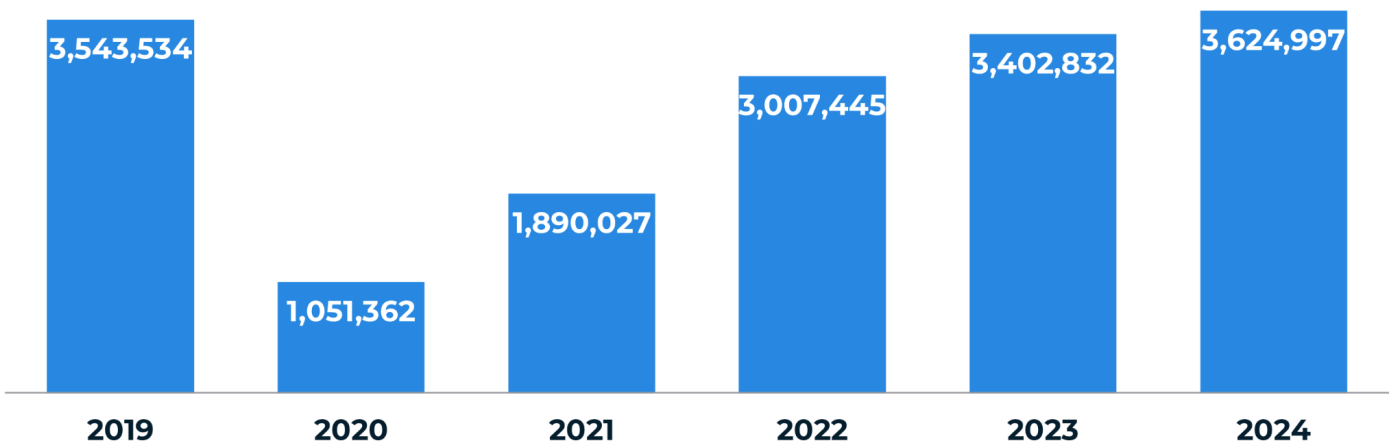
Source: The Pinnacle Perspective Boston Monthly Report, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis

AIR TRAVEL

Boston's air travel in 2024 has fully recovered from pandemic lows, exceeding pre-pandemic passenger totals. Following a 29.7% drop to 1 million passengers in 2020, Boston's Logan Airport saw a remarkable return to 84.9% of pre-pandemic passengers in 2022. By 2023, Logan's total passengers were 96% of 2019 levels. By 2024, the total number of passengers surpassed prepandemic levels, with Logan reporting 2.3% more passengers in 2024 than in 2019.

BOSTON LOGAN TOTAL PASSENGERS BY YEAR

2019 - 2024



Source: Massachusetts Port Authority, Aviation General Management (Massport), City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.



Similar to hotel occupancy rates, Logan's busiest months for domestic flights are in the summer and fall, with its post-pandemic highs in October 2022 (2.9M passengers), October 2023 (3.1M passengers), and October 2024 (3.2M passengers). The months with the fewest domestic passengers were the winter months, with January 2022 (1.5M passengers), February 2023 (2.1M), and January 2024 (2.1M), and February 2025 (2.2M) having the fewest passengers in their respective years.

Logan's International flight passenger totals vary more from month to month than domestic flight passenger totals. During the busiest month in 2023 and 2024, the total number of international flight passengers was 50% higher than during the least busy month. International flight passenger numbers were highest in August in 2022, 2023, and 2024, at around 760k, 917k, and 1.1M passengers respectively. Similar to domestic flight passenger trends, International flight passenger totals were lowest in February for 2022, 2023, and 2024, at around 243k, 438k, 516k respectively.

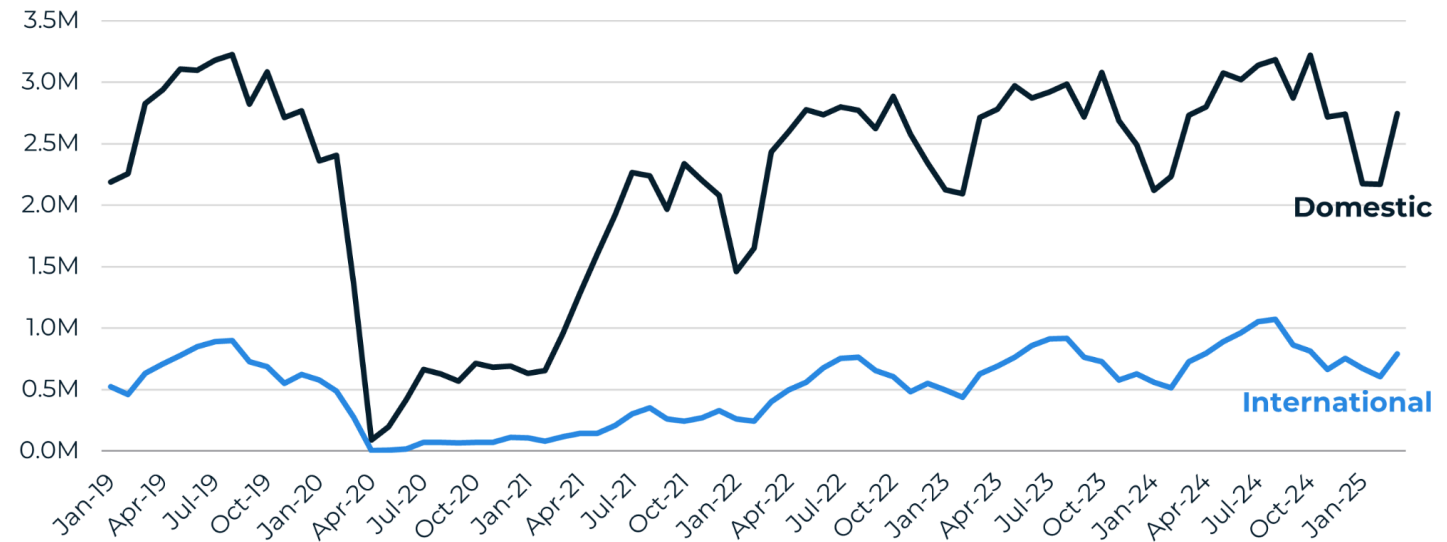
Boston Logan's March 2025 passengers totalled 3,534,828, a 2.2% increase from March 2019 and a 2.3% increase from March 2024. While Logan saw more domestic passengers in March 2025 than in March 2024, the total number remains 2.8% lower than in March 2019. The total number of Boston Logan international passengers in March 2025 was 8.8% higher than in March 2024 and 25% higher than in March 2019. This growth in international passengers can be explained by the increase in international flights. In March 2019, there were 4,523 international flights through Logan. In March 2024, this number grew to 4,564, and increased once again to 5,170 in March 2025.⁵

⁵ Massachusetts Port Authority, Aviation General Management (Massport).



BOSTON LOGAN TOTAL PASSENGERS

For **Domestic** and **International** Flights, January 2019 - March 2025



Source: Massachusetts Port Authority, Aviation General Management (Massport), City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis

The above statistics include all passengers on international flights, but international visitors⁶ (who are not U.S. residents) can be disaggregated. As a port of entry (through air travel) to the United States, Boston had over 1 million total international visitors in 2024, up 18% from 2023.⁷ The top ten countries of origin for international visitors arriving in Boston are listed below, excluding Canada due to data availability.⁸ In 2024, approximately 160,000 visitors from the United Kingdom came to the U.S. through Boston's port of entry, which is more than double the number of the second highest country of origin, India.

⁶ The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines a visitor as any traveler taking a trip to a main destination outside their residence, for at least one night - but less than one year, and for any main purpose other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited.

<https://www.unwto.org/glossary-tourism-terms>

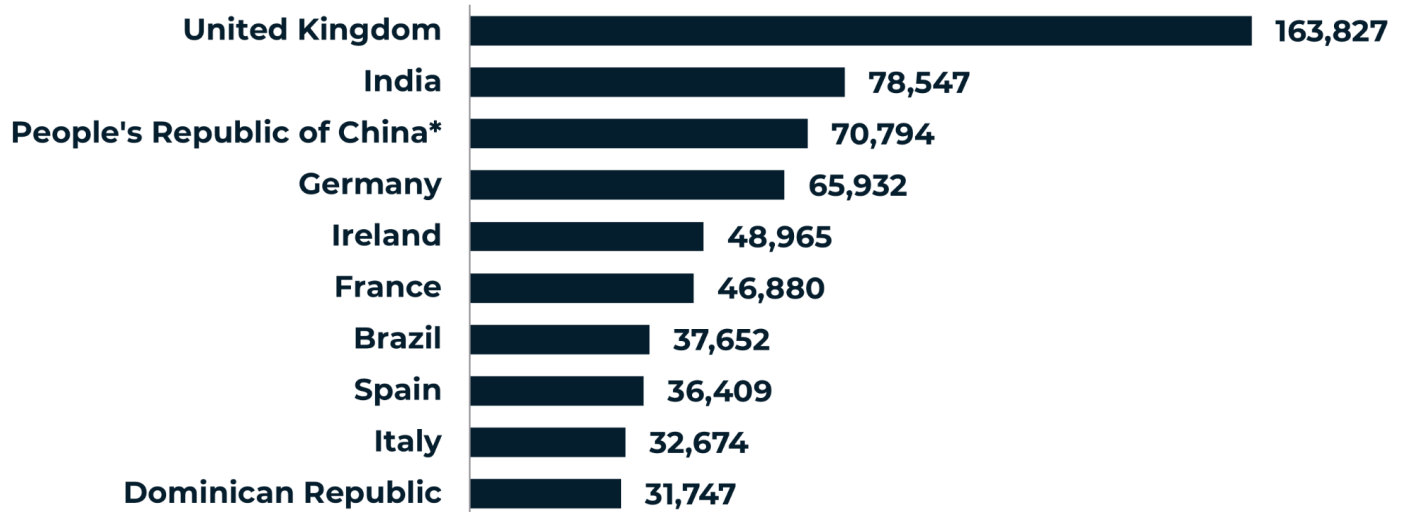
⁷ International Trade Administration, National Travel and Tourism Office - ADIS/I-94 Visitor Arrivals Monitor (COR).

⁸ Port of entry data for Canada is not available for the ADIS/I-94 Visitor Arrivals Monitor.



INTERNATIONAL VISITORS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

International visitors to the U.S. using Boston as a port of entry (air travel), 2024



* Excluding Hong Kong.

Source: International Trade Administration, December 2024 COR Summary & Analysis, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis.

In 2024, nearly 230,000 foreign citizens arrived in Boston on a flight originating in Canada. Unlike the international visitor numbers in the graph above, this statistic of foreign citizens arriving from Canada may also include non-citizen U.S. residents arriving on a flight from Canada. The peak months of travel from Canada were August (~26,800 travelers), July (~25,300 travelers), and October (~23,400 travelers).⁹

⁹ International Trade Administration, I-92.APIS U.S. - International Air Passenger Monitor.



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