



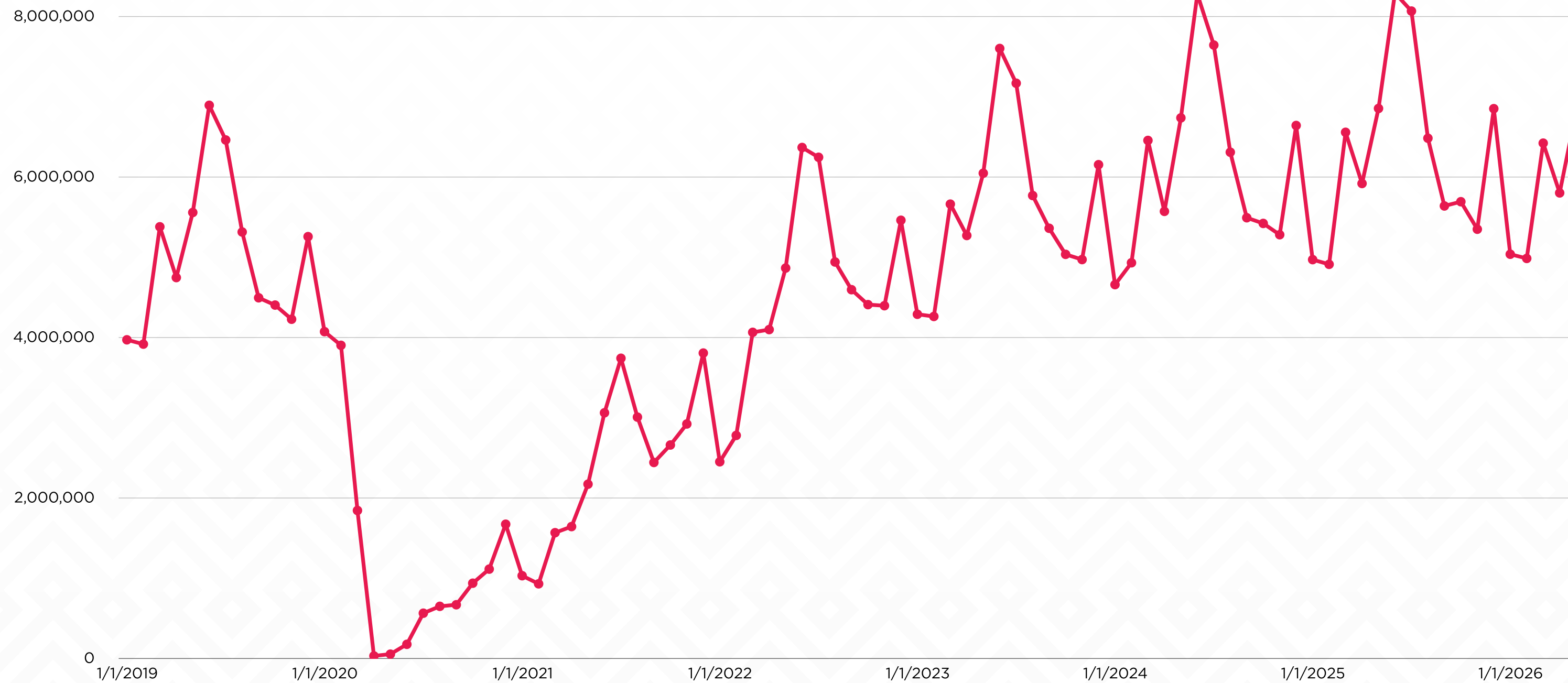
U.S. OUTBOUND TRAVEL MARKET INTELLIGENCE

A Deepdive of the U.S. Outbound Market —■

Americans aren't just back to traveling, they're traveling more than ever. In the first five months of 2026 alone, they took 29.1 million trips internationally, nearly one-quarter higher than in the same period of 2019. We look at what the data tells us about where they're going, how much they're spending and which destinations are leading the growth.

June 2026

Monthly U.S. Citizen Departures



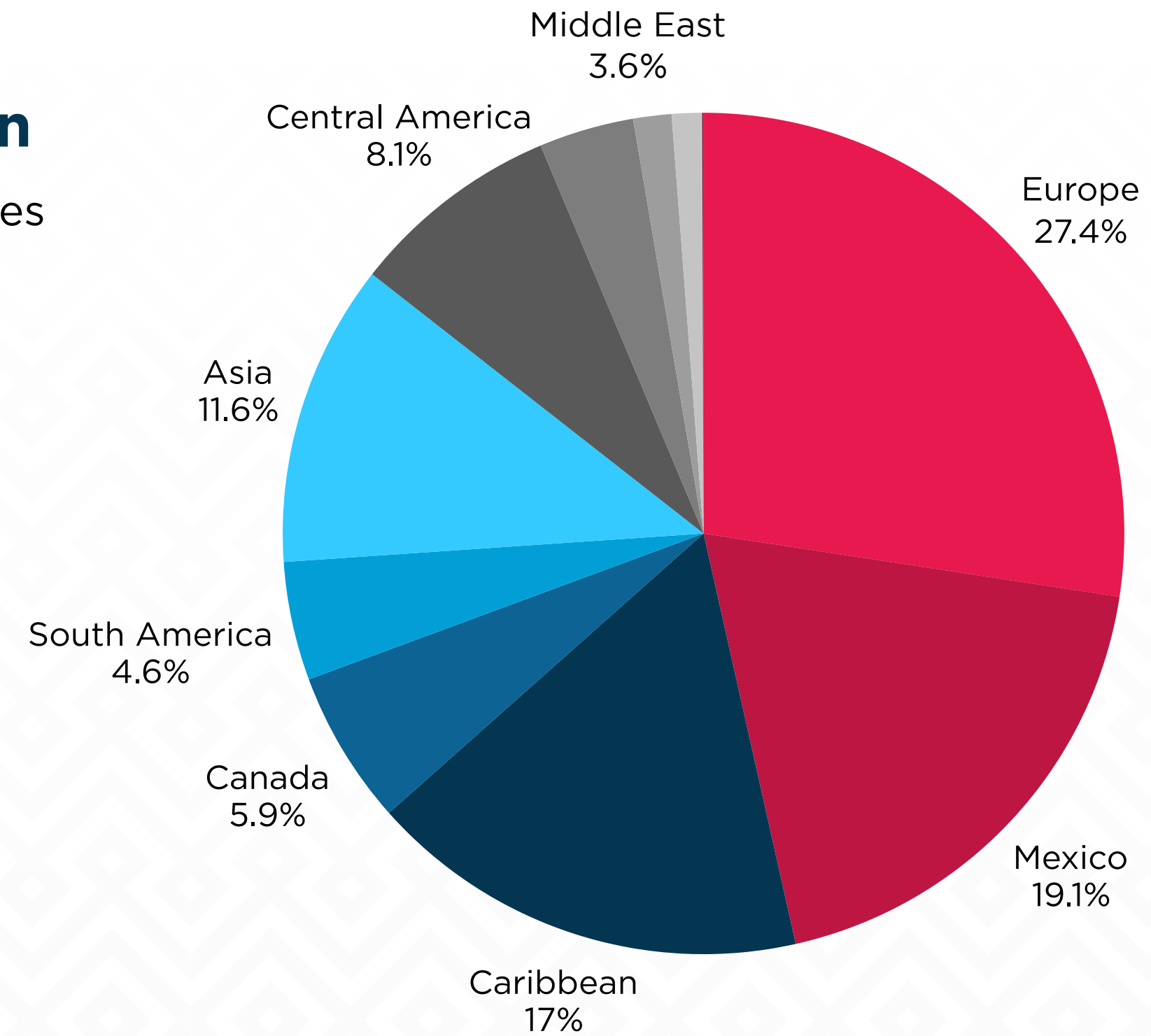
FIRST, THE BIG PICTURE

Americans took **29.1 million international trips** between January and May 2026. That's up **23%** on the same months in 2019, the last "normal" year before COVID.

U.S. Outbound Air Departures by Region

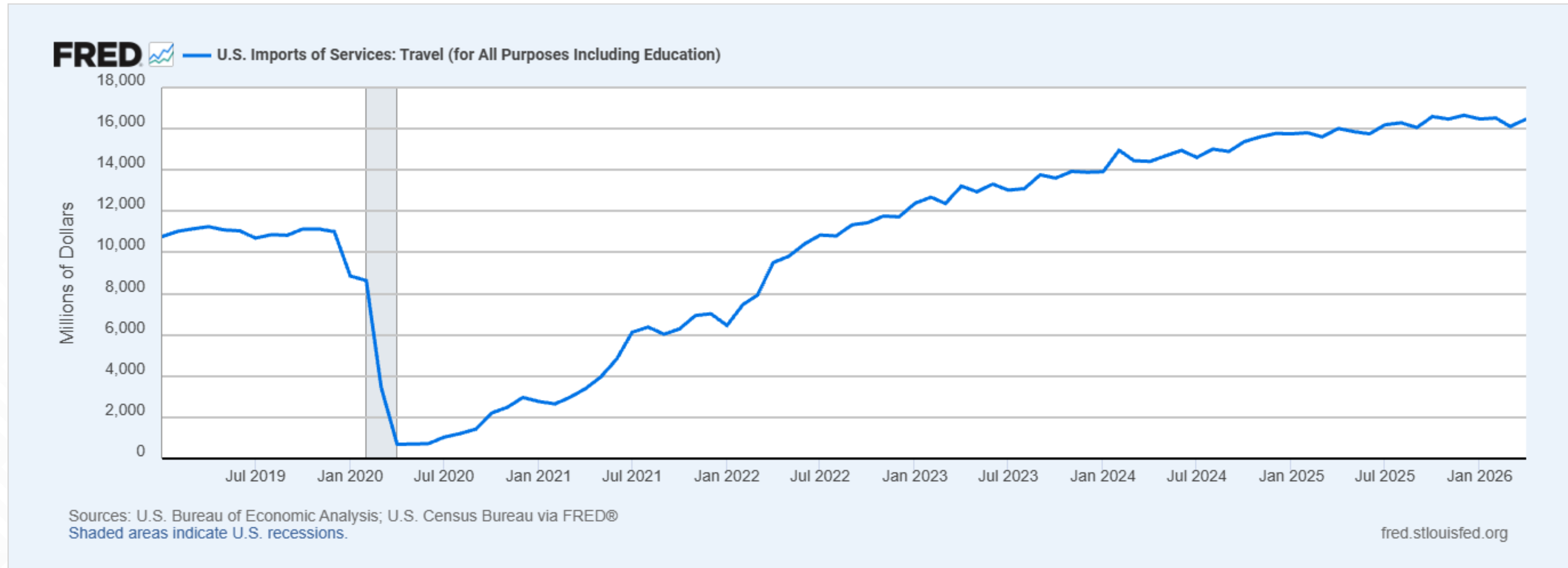
January-May 2026 share of total U.S. outbound departures

- Europe ● Mexico ● Caribbean ● Canada
- South America ● Asia ● Central America
- Middle East ● Oceania ● Africa
- Other / unclassified



THE LAY OF THE LAND WHO GETS THE TRIPS?

Three regions still dominate. Europe, Mexico, and the Caribbean together capture nearly two out of every three trips abroad.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), U.S. Imports of Services: Travel (for All Purposes Including Education), accessed via FRED.

THE WORLD'S MOST VALUABLE TRAVELER

And they're spending freely while they're out there. In April 2026 alone, U.S. travelers spent roughly \$16.5 billion internationally, a figure that's been climbing steadily for years.



WHICH REGIONS ARE WINNING?

Not all regions are benefiting equally from the growth in U.S. international travel.
Some are capturing share faster than the market.



Nearly **8 million** Americans flew to Europe in early 2026 — more than a quarter of all trips abroad. It's up about **25%** on pre-pandemic numbers and still growing year over year.



Key Numbers

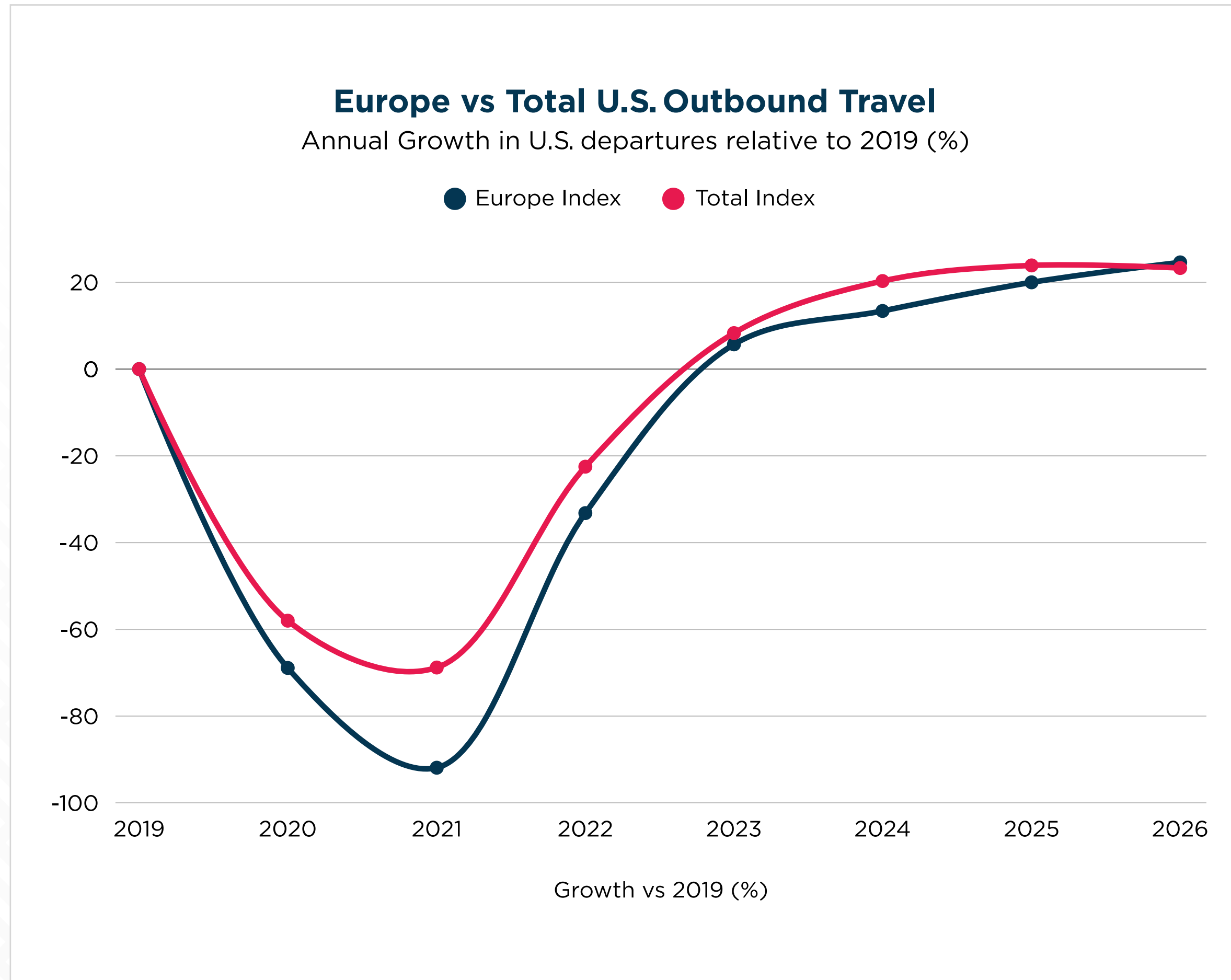
7.97M U.S. departures to Europe

+24.6% vs 2019

+3.9% vs 2025

~27% share of total U.S. outbound departures

EUROPE



No other country pulls more American travelers than Mexico — nearly one in five trips, about 5.5 million of them in early 2026. It did cool off a little from last year’s red-hot pace (down roughly 9%), but it’s still well above where it was before the pandemic.



Key Numbers

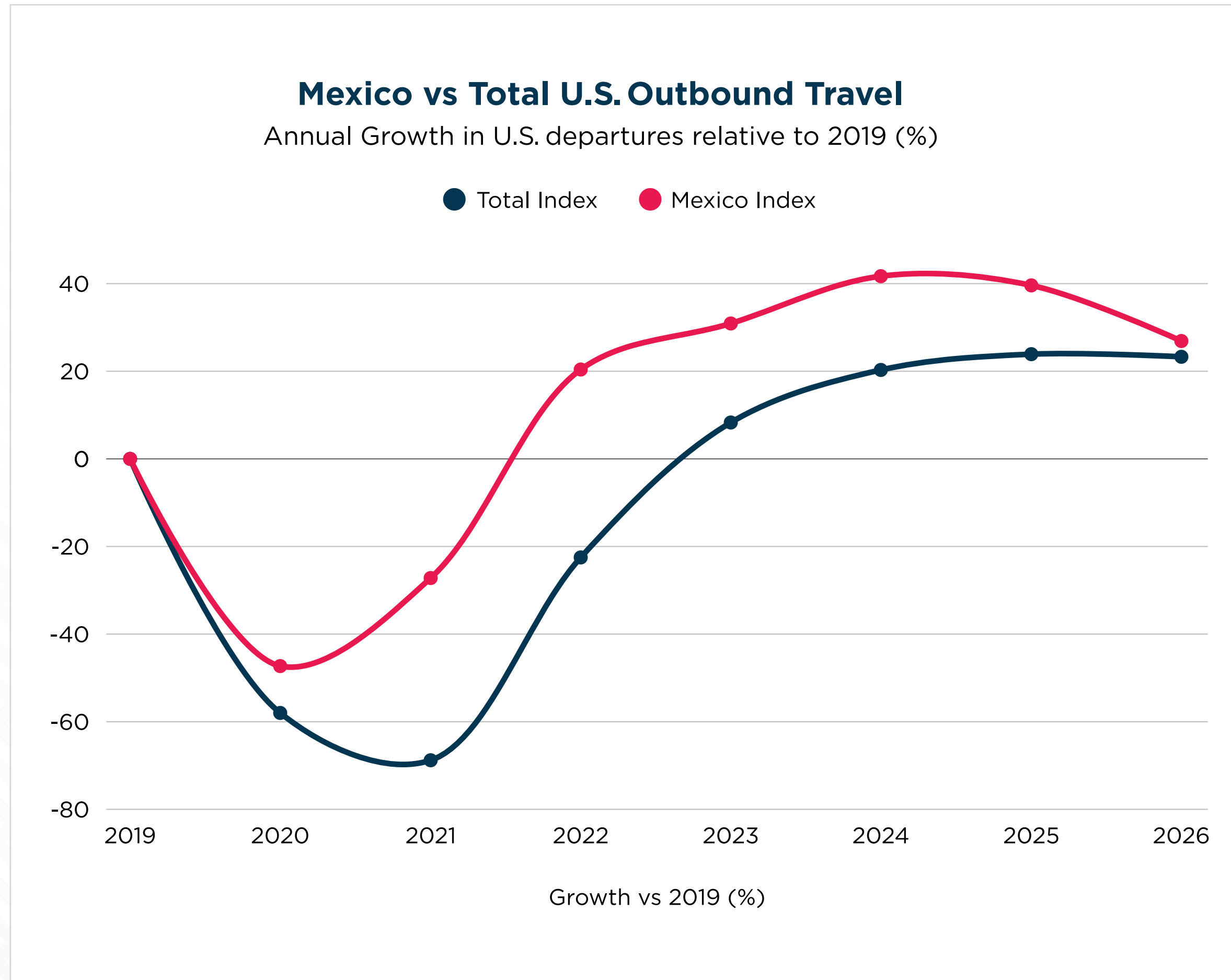
5.54M U.S. departures to Mexico

-9.1% YoY

+26.9% vs 2019

~19% share of total U.S. outbound departures

MEXICO



Just under 5 million trips, comfortably above 2019 and holding steady against last year, making it the third-largest destination region after Europe and Mexico.



Key Numbers

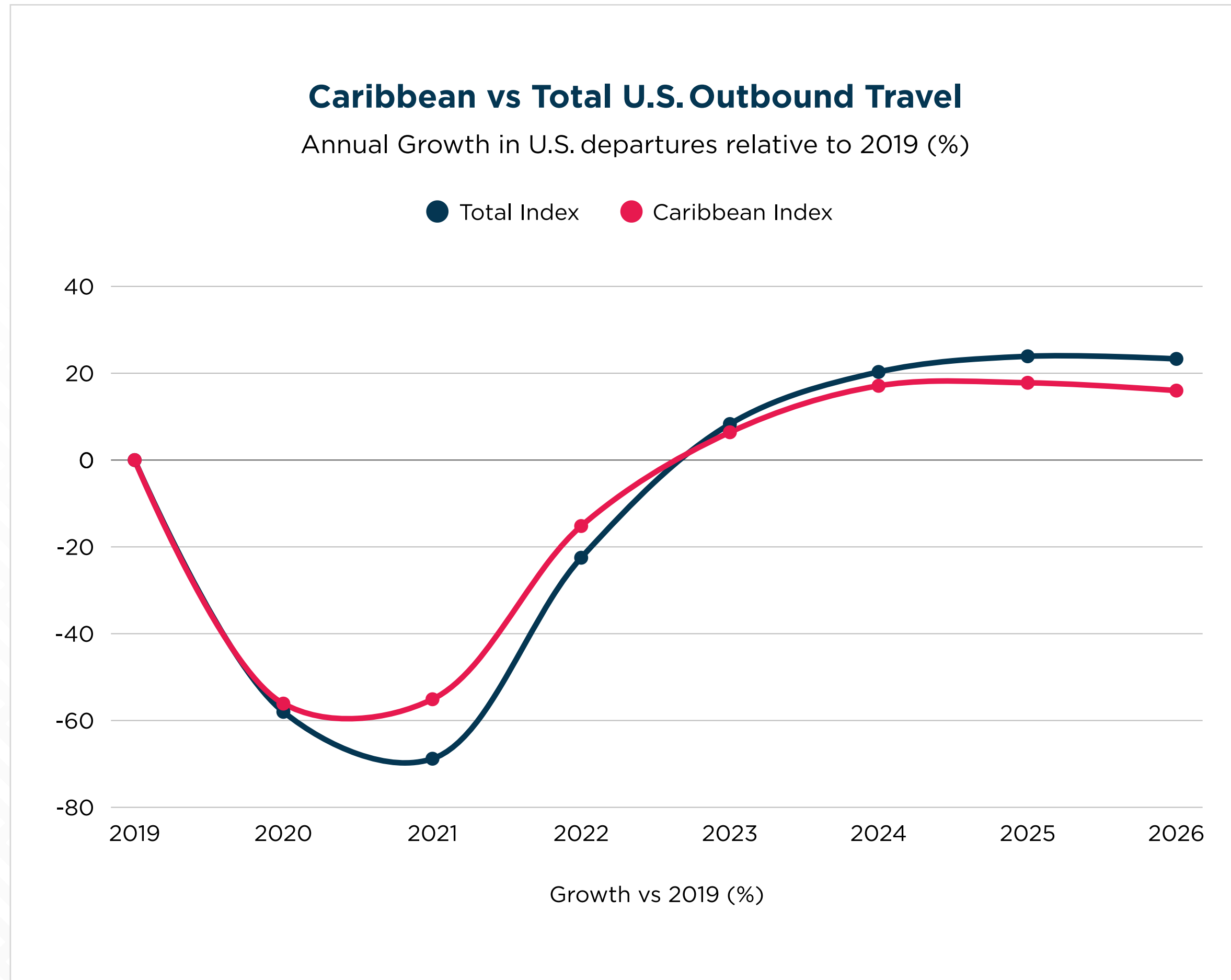
4.93M U.S. departures to the Caribbean

+16.0% vs 2019

-1.5% vs 2025

~17% share of total U.S. outbound departures

CARIBBEAN



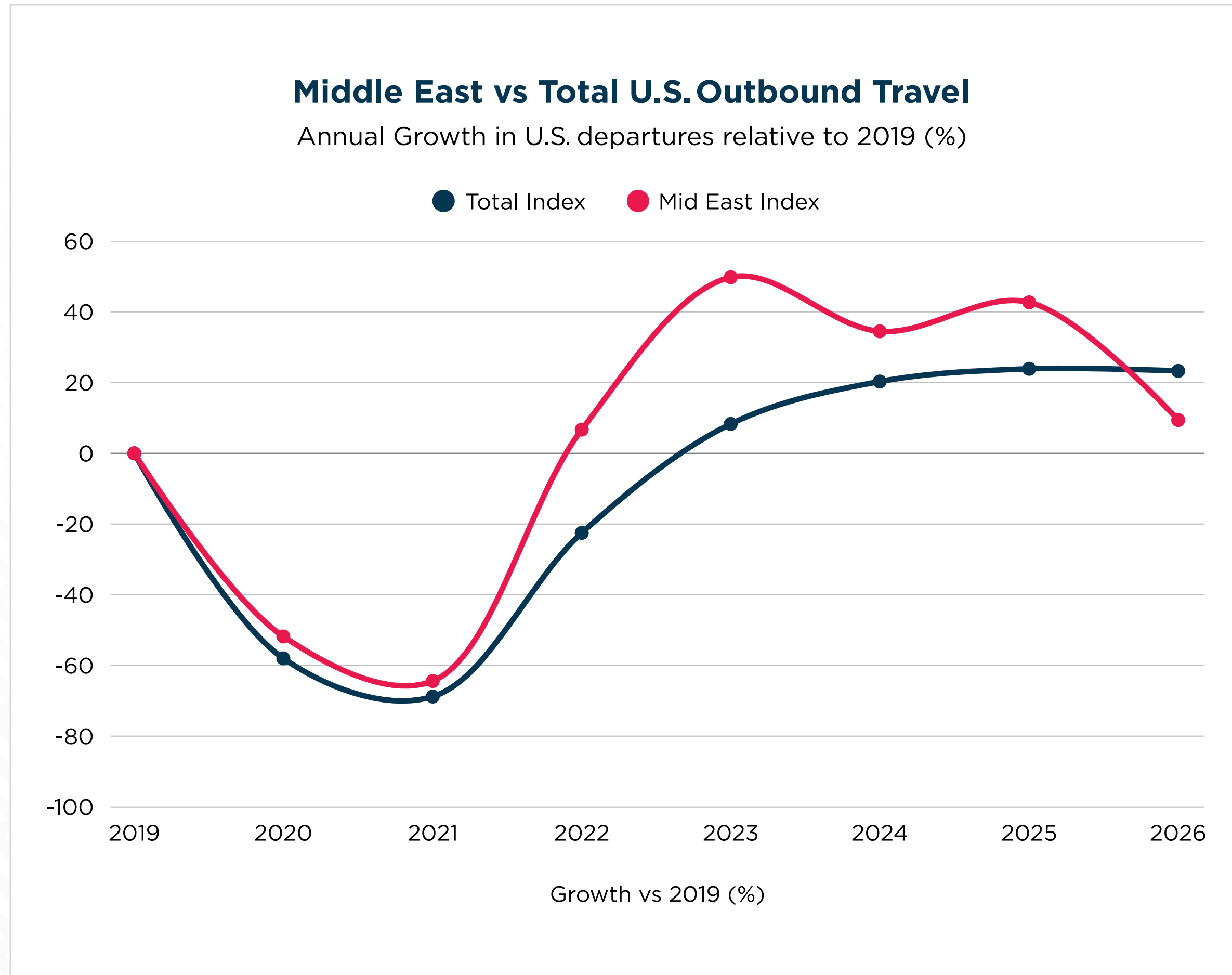
Just over **1 million trips**, a touch above pre-pandemic levels. Recent regional tensions have slowed growth, but Americans are still going.



Key Numbers

1.06M U.S. departures to the Middle East
+9.4% vs 2019
109.4% of pre-pandemic levels

MIDDLE EAST



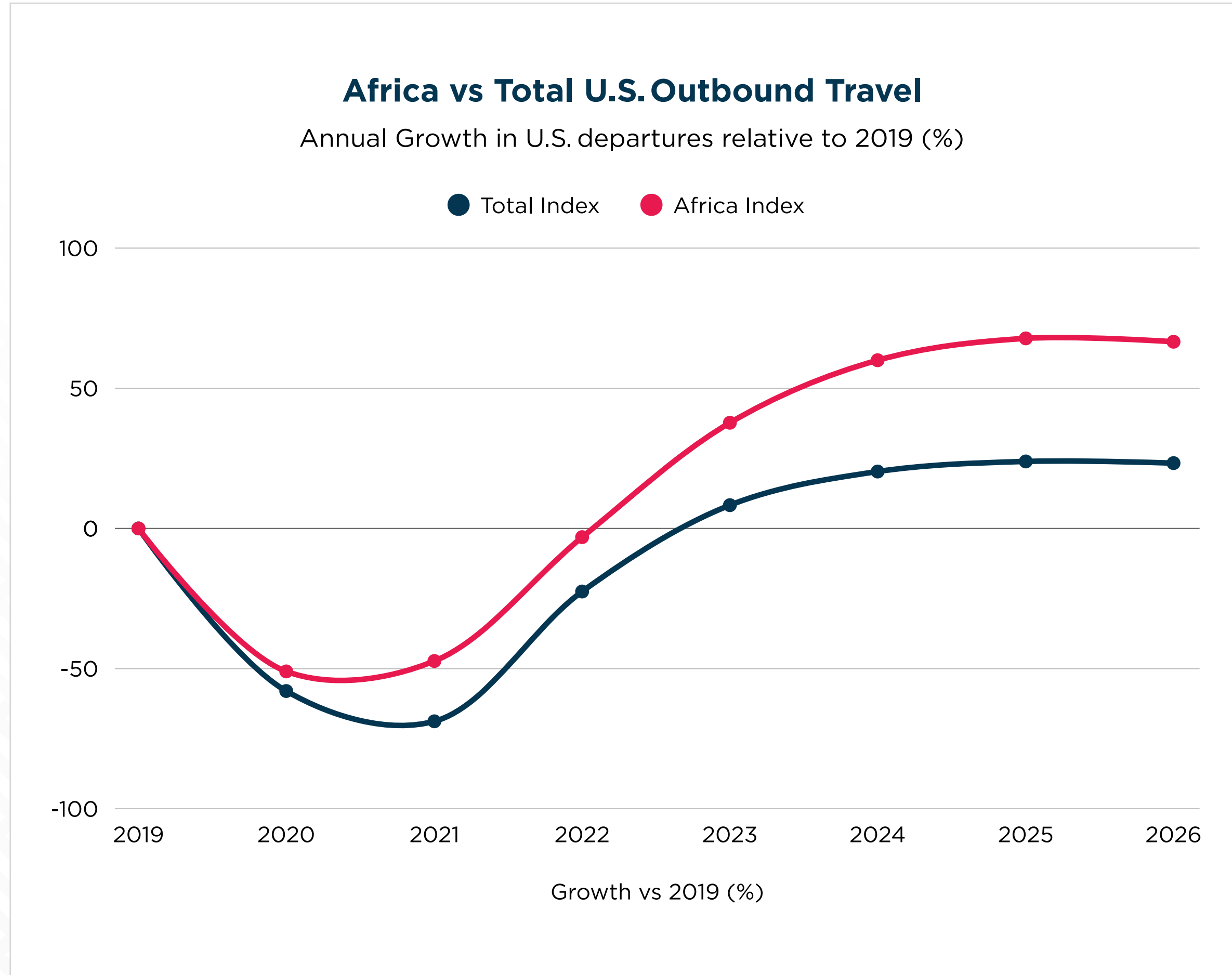
Travel to Africa is up an eye-catching 67% versus 2019 — far faster than the market as a whole. The raw numbers are still modest (about 338,000 trips), but the momentum is unmistakable.



Key Numbers

- 338K** U.S. departures to Africa
- +66.6%** vs 2019
- 166.6%** of pre-pandemic levels
- Outpaced total U.S. outbound recovery**

AFRICA



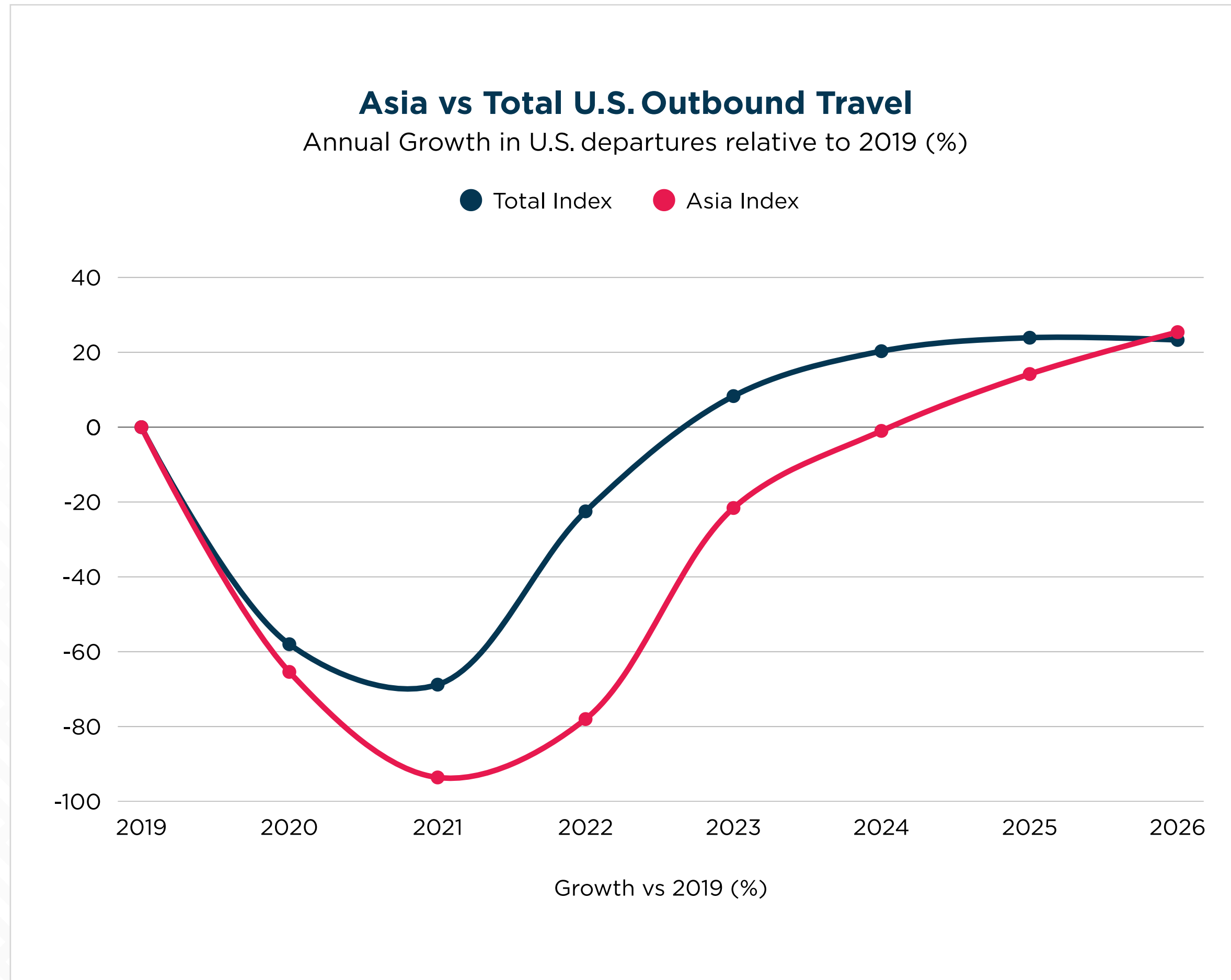
After a slower recovery, Asia has now overtaken the broader market, with U.S. departures rising nearly 10% year-on-year.



Key Numbers

3.39M U.S. departures to Asia
+25.4% vs 2019
125.4% of pre-pandemic levels
+9.8% vs 2025

ASIA





Look beyond the famous names and a clear pattern emerges — **Americans are getting more adventurous.**

Destinations across Asia, Africa, Central and South America, and the Pacific together pulled in **7.85 million trips** in early 2026, up 37% from 2019. As a group, these “off the beaten path” regions now account for roughly **27%** of all U.S. trips abroad — the same share as Europe, the single most popular region. Put another way: **for every American heading to Europe, another is now choosing somewhere off the traditional map.**

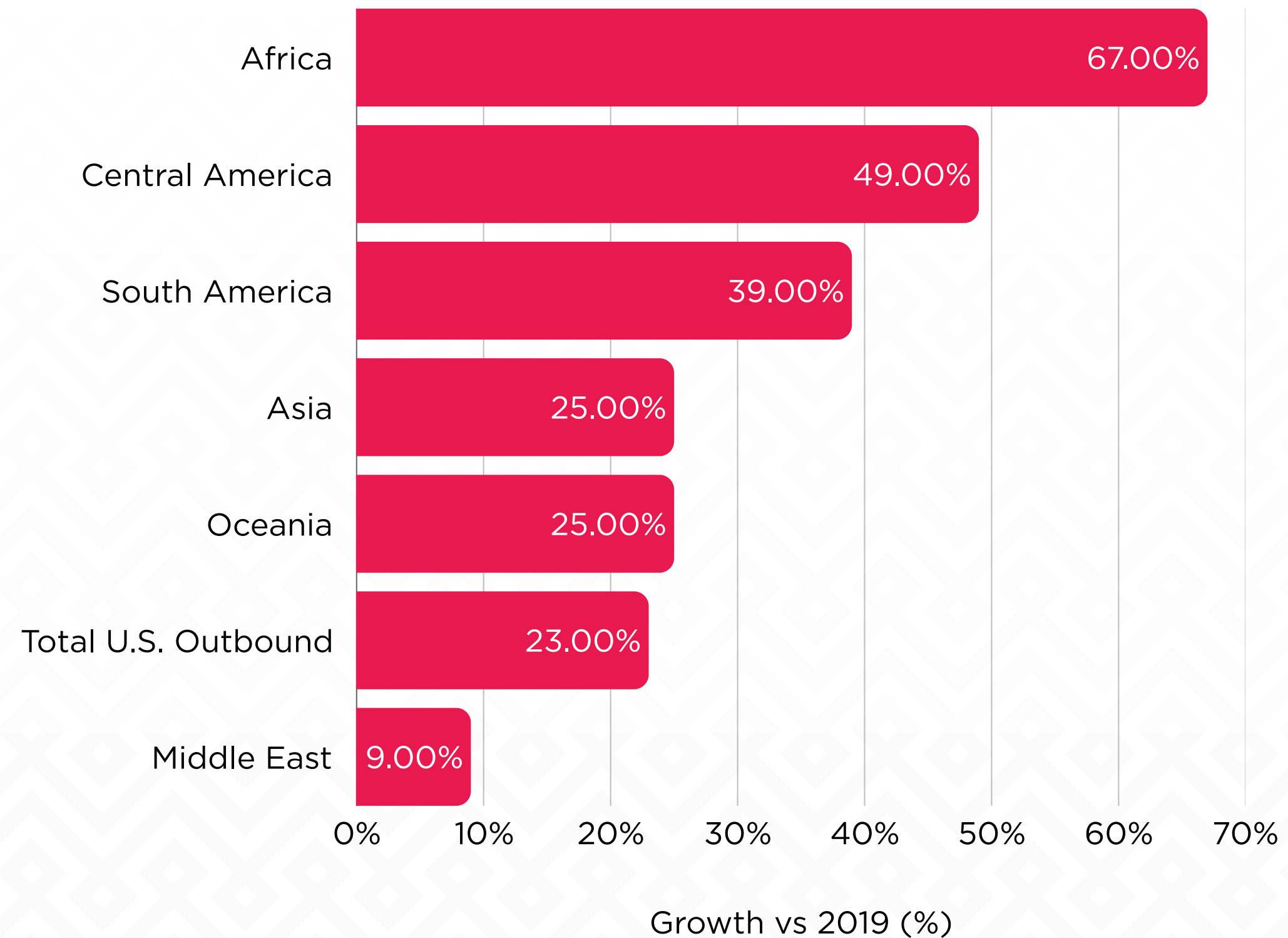
The fastest growth, in order, is coming from **Africa, Central America, and South America** — all outpacing the overall market by a wide margin.

THE TREND WORTH BETTING ON: **TRAVELERS ARE SPREADING OUT**



Emerging Regions Have Grown Faster Than The Overall U.S. Outbound Market

Growth in U.S. Departures, Jan-May 2026 vs Jan-May 2019



Key Numbers

7.85M U.S. departures

+37.2% vs 2019

~27% share of total U.S. outbound departures

+2.7 percentage point increase in market share since 2019

THE TREND WORTH BETTING ON:
TRAVELERS ARE SPREADING OUT



If you remember four things from this report, make it these:

1. Travel isn't just recovered — it's booming. Americans are taking more international trips than ever before.
2. The classics still anchor most trips. Europe, Mexico, and the Caribbean aren't going anywhere.
3. Emerging destinations are winning share. Newer destinations are growing fastest, so there's genuine upside for destinations that can capture this shift in travelers toward something different.
4. Travelers are adding trips, not swapping them. A bucket-list Africa adventure doesn't replace their annual Europe trip — it's on *top* of it.

Join us at WTE Miami for a deeper discussion on the trends shaping the future of international travel demand.

This analysis evaluates all destination regions available within the U.S. citizen international air-departure dataset. Detailed regional analysis is provided for Europe, Mexico, the Caribbean, Canada, the Middle East, Africa and Asia, while Central America, South America and Oceania are incorporated within the broader emerging-markets assessment.

THE BOTTOM LINE



Report Scope

This analysis examines U.S. citizen international air departures across all destination regions reported by the U.S. National Travel and Tourism Office (NTTO). Detailed analysis is provided for Europe, Mexico, the Caribbean, Canada, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, while other destination regions are incorporated into the broader emerging-markets assessment.

Methodology

- Source data comprises monthly U.S. citizen international air-departure volumes from January 2019 through May 2026.
- Year-to-date (YTD) 2026 performance is compared against the equivalent January–May periods in both 2019 and 2025.
- 2019 is used as the pre-pandemic benchmark for all recovery and growth comparisons.
- Growth rates, market shares, and recovery metrics are calculated using departure volumes.
- Regional performance is benchmarked against total U.S. outbound departures to assess relative market strength and shifts in destination demand.
- Departure volumes represent trips taken rather than unique travelers.

Data Source

This report is based on U.S. citizen international air-departure data published by the U.S. National Travel and Tourism Office (NTTO), covering the period January 2019 through May 2026.

Important to Consider:

- Departure volumes represent trips taken rather than unique travelers.
- The analysis is based on outbound air departures and should be interpreted as a measure of travel demand rather than total visitation.
- The dataset does not measure destination arrivals, visitor spending, tourism revenue, length of stay, or economic impact.
- Because the data captures air departures only, markets with significant land-border traffic may be understated. This is particularly relevant for Canada and, to a lesser extent, Mexico.
- Findings are historical and descriptive in nature and should not be interpreted as forecasts of future travel performance.

AI-Assisted Analysis Notice

This report was prepared using a combination of NTTO source data, analytical methodologies, and AI-assisted research and content generation tools. While reasonable efforts have been made to verify calculations and interpretations, readers should independently validate any figures or conclusions before relying on them for strategic, financial, or operational decisions.

DATA NOTES & DISCLAIMER
