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Enhanced Data Accuracy Through Immigration System Upgrade.

The Department of Statistics collaborates with various stakeholders to compile and present official statistics for the country. Stayover arrival data, in particular, is provided by the Immigration and Border Protection Services (hereafter referred to as “IBPS”) Department. November 2024, St. Maarten IBPS introduced an upgraded immigration data processing system, representing a major step forward in the country’s modernization and data reliability. This enhancement with the partnership of the Immigration & Border Protection Services, the Princess Juliana International Airport (PJIAE), and the Department of Statistics has significantly improved the accuracy of stayover arrival records. This upgrade in the new system significantly reduces manual data entry and human error. The updated approach ensures that traveler classifications are automatically and consistently generated.

This approach aligns with international best practices, such as those adopted by the United States, where Automated Passport Control (APC) kiosks were introduced at airports to streamline entry procedures and enhance data accuracy. As with the U.S. experience, the transition to a more precise system may temporarily affect year-over-year comparisons but ultimately enhances the reliability and international consistency of arrival statistics. Accordingly, the year 2025 will serve as the new baseline or “base year” for future comparisons of visitor arrivals by air.

Due to the change in methodology, direct comparisons with data from previous years are not methodologically sound. However, to maintain some level of consistency during this transition period, and as advised by PJIAE, the Department of Statistics used the January–December 2024 airport arrival figures adjusted by removing 10% to account for resident travelers as a baseline for comparison with the more accurate 2025 immigration data, which already excludes residents. This 10% deduction is consistent with historical data provided by the Immigration Office dating back to the last decade.

It is important to note that PJIAE has not historically been used as the Department’s primary source for visitor arrival data, as their system does not differentiate between resident and non-resident travelers, instead providing a more aggregated count of all passengers. Nevertheless, given the current transition and the limitations of the former immigration system, PJIAE’s adjusted figures offered a practical proxy for estimating 2024 visitor arrivals.

While the methodologies differ, the adjusted 2024 estimate provides a reasonable basis for an approximate comparison. Without applying such assumptions, it would not be possible to report growth figures or year-over-year percentage changes, only the total number of visitor arrivals for 2025 could be presented, with no contextual benchmark to assess change.

Stayover arrivals

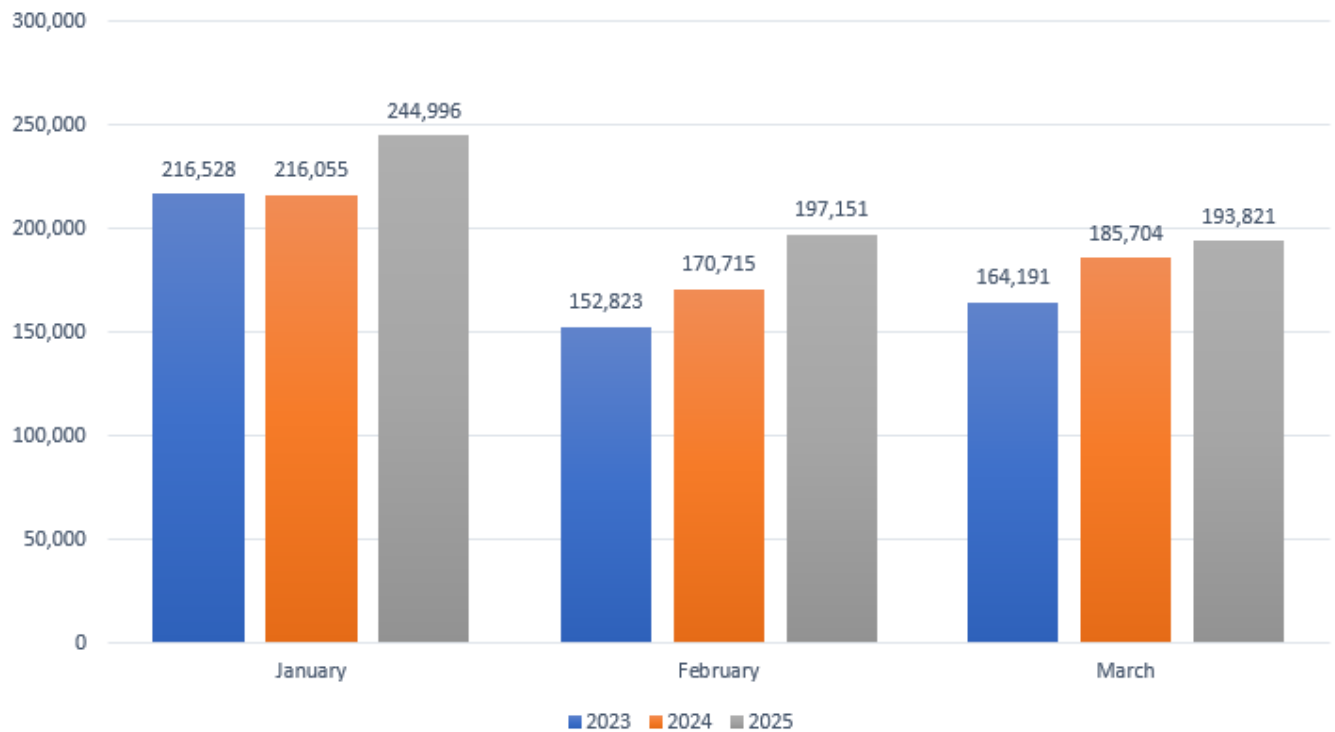
According to the new electronic figures from IBPS, St. Maarten has recorded a total of 256,923 stayover guests for the first quarter (Q1) of 2025. This marks a 10.8% increase over Q1 of 2024, which registered 231,852 visitors. (Q1 2024 Adjusted Airport Arrivals) This increase represents an additional 25,070 stayover guests compared to the same period last year.

Airport Arrival Data					Q1	Immigration Arrival Data			Q1
Year	Month	Pax	10% subtraction	Estimated Pax# minus Resident		Year	Month	Pax without Residents	
2024	1	86,226	8,623	77,603	231,853	2025	1	85,125	256,923
	2	84,278	8,428	75,850			2	81,364	
	3	87,110	8,711	78,399			3	90,434	
	4	74,396	7,440	66,956					
	5	65,264	6,526	58,738					
	6	59,842	5,984	53,858					
	7	65,540	6,554	58,986					
	8	58,769	5,877	52,892					
	9	33,165	3,317	29,849					
	10	46,585	4,659	41,927					
	11	70,241	7,024	63,217					
	12	88,862	8,886	79,976					

Cruise

The cruise industry continues to demonstrate growth and expansion, with Q1 2025 delivering the highest first-quarter passenger arrivals in three years. According to preliminary data, 635,968 cruise passengers arrived between January and March 2025, an 11.1% increase over the same period in 2024, which recorded 572,474 passengers, marking an absolute increase of 63,494 passengers.

Quarter 1-Cruise passengers



The Department of Statistics extends its heartfelt appreciation to all stakeholders and members of the public for their continued support, cooperation, and patience as the country transitions toward improved statistical reporting through upgraded methodologies. These enhancements are aimed at providing more accurate, timely, and internationally aligned data for the benefit of all.

All related information and updates will be made available on our official website:

<http://stats.sintmaartengov.org>. We look forward to continued collaboration as we work together for the betterment of our nation.