



U.S Department of Transportation
Office of Public Affairs
1200 New Jersey Ave., S.E.
Washington, DC 20590
www.dot.gov/affairs/briefing.htm

BTS Data

BTS 52-12

Wednesday, November 14, 2012

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North American Transportation Statistics: Almost 93 Million Personal Vehicles Entered the United States in 2011

Almost 93 million personal vehicles entered the United States in 2011, 31.6 million from Canada, and 61.2 million from Mexico, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics' (BTS). Additionally, 10.4 million trucks, 322 thousand buses, and 35 thousand trains entered the United States last year (Table 1).

BTS, a part of the Research and Innovative Technology Administration, released the data as part of the eighth annual update of the North American Transportation Statistics (NATS) online database. A product of the North American Transportation Statistics Interchange established in 1991, the NATS online database contains the most comparable transportation-related data available from the United States, Canada, and Mexico in a one-stop online resource.

The database covers the following subject areas: demographics, transportation, the economy, transportation safety, transportation's impact on energy and the environment, domestic and international freight activity, domestic and international passenger travel, transportation infrastructure, and vehicles. The NATS online database is co-sponsored by BTS and the U.S. Census Bureau with the federal-level transportation and statistical agencies of Canada and Mexico.

The NATS online database includes data on U.S. trade and transportation with Canada and Mexico. In 2011, goods valued at more than \$1.06 trillion crossed the U.S. border in trade with Canada and Mexico, 15 percent higher than in 2010, and 44 percent higher than 2009 (Table 2).

The economic recovery from the recent global economic downturn has shown different effects on freight shipment between the United States, Canada and Mexico. The total trade between the United States and Mexico experienced a 17 percent decrease in 2009 over 2008, but recovered quickly, and in 2011 and reached its highest level (\$461 billion) since 2006. After experiencing a 40 percent decrease in 2009, the total trade between the United States and Canada also recovered and had an 12 percent increase in 2011 from 2010 (Table 2).

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Data in the NATS online database show the importance of the various modes of transportation involved in the movement of goods between Canada, Mexico and the United States. Road carried 62 percent of the total freight valued at \$625 billion in 2011. Rail carried 15 percent of total freight by value, followed by maritime with 11 percent, pipeline with 8 percent, and air with 4 percent. Among all modes, road had the largest increase in shipment value, \$69 billion, from 2010 to 2011. The value of freight shipment for air, water, road, and rail modes reached their highest level since 2006 ([NATS online database, Table 6-1c](#)).

Data in the NATS online database also show America's top gateways for trade with Canada and Mexico. In 2011, Laredo, Texas was the top road gateway with \$117.3 billion in international road shipments passing through that gateway (Table 3).

Three new maritime indicators on the number of water ports and facilities and top handling ports by tonnage and TEUs (20-foot equivalent units) for each country were added to the NATS online database this year. These new indicators were developed in response to the need for harmonized data to support maritime transportation decision-making at national and trilateral levels.

With text available in English, French, and Spanish, the NATS online database can be found at <http://aplicaciones3.sct.gob.mx/nats/jsp/publico/index.html>. Additionally, the NATS incorporates technical and methodological footnotes to provide users with interpretation and analysis.

Table 1. 2011 Vehicle Crossings into the United States
(thousands of crossings)

	From Canada	From Mexico	Total
Personal Vehicle	31,596	61,180	92,776
Truck	5,490	4,868	10,358
Bus	114	208	322
Train	27	8	35

SOURCE: North American Transportation Statistics Online Database, available at <http://aplicaciones3.sct.gob.mx/nats/jsp/publico/index.html>, as of October 25, 2012.

NOTES: Truck crossings: Number of arriving trucks; does not include privately owned pick-up trucks.
Train crossings: Rail data for U.S.-Mexico border are for rail (loaded and unloaded) containers and U.S.-Canada numbers are for number of trains, not containers. Privately owned vehicle crossings: Number of privately owned vehicles (POVs) arriving at a particular port. Includes pick-up trucks, motorcycles, recreational vehicles, taxis, snow-mobiles, ambulances, hearses, and other motorized private ground vehicles. Bus crossings: Number of arriving buses at a particular port, whether or not they are carrying passengers.

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Table 2. U.S. Merchandise Trade with Canada and Mexico by Freight Transportation Mode
(billions of current dollars)

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Percent change, 2006 - 2011	Average Annual growth rate (%) 2006 - 2011
Total trade with Canada and Mexico	866,099	908,888	963,923	735,174	917,647	1,057,924	22.1	4.1
Air	35,901	37,595	40,805	39,240	45,083	45,539	26.8	4.9
Water transport	70,071	73,990	93,244	59,238	81,235	108,253	54.5	9.1
Road	533,657	554,831	554,434	454,827	556,884	625,857	17.3	3.2
Rail	128,871	137,859	140,424	95,624	131,228	151,852	17.8	3.3
Pipeline	56,807	59,306	87,776	49,205	62,933	80,727	42.1	7.3
Total trade with Canada	533,673	561,548	596,470	429,639	524,672	597,275	11.9	2.3
Air	24,416	26,087	27,823	24,352	26,728	27,985	14.6	2.8
Water transport	21,085	24,630	31,838	19,545	26,883	32,259	53.0	8.9
Road	314,202	324,747	319,946	247,623	296,826	330,655	5.2	1.0
Rail	85,736	91,459	93,194	61,031	83,112	94,688	10.4	2.0
Pipeline	56,045	58,350	86,332	48,262	60,713	76,953	37.3	6.5
Total trade with Mexico	332,426	347,340	367,453	305,535	392,975	460,649	38.6	6.7
Air	11,485	11,508	12,982	14,888	18,355	17,554	52.8	8.9
Water transport	48,986	49,360	61,406	39,693	54,352	75,995	55.1	9.2
Road	219,455	230,084	234,488	207,204	260,058	295,203	34.5	6.1
Rail	43,135	46,400	47,230	34,593	48,116	57,165	32.5	5.8
Pipeline	762	956	1,444	943	2,220	3,774	395.2	37.7

SOURCE: North American Transportation Statistics Online Database, available at <http://aplicaciones3.sct.gob.mx/nats/jsp/publico/index.html>, as of October 25, 2012.

NOTES: Individual modes do not sum to total trade figures because the total includes freight moved by "other modes" such as aircraft from manufacturer to customers, pedestrians carrying freight, and miscellaneous. Due to the rounding of certain numbers tabulated, sum totals of U.S.-Canada and U.S.-Mexico trade vary slightly.

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Table 3. Top 10 U.S. Gateways Trading with Canada and Mexico by Truck
Ranked by 2011 Road Trade Value
(millions of dollars)

Rank	Gateway	2011 Trade
1	Laredo, TX	117,322
2	Detroit, MI	98,679
3	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	62,150
4	El Paso, TX	50,971
5	Port Huron, MI	47,749
6	Otay Mesa, CA	32,810
7	Hidalgo, TX	23,538
8	Champlain-Rouses Point, NY	21,052
9	Santa Teresa, NM	17,725
10	Pembina, ND	16,901

SOURCE: North American Transportation Statistics Online Database, available at <http://aplicaciones3.sct.gob.mx/nats/jsp/publico/index.html>, as of October 25, 2012.

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