

Air Passenger Fares Price Indexes in the International Price Program

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' International Price Program calculates and publishes Import and Export Air Passenger Fares price indexes that adhere to the Balance of Payments definitions and are used by the Bureau of Economic Analysis to deflate the Gross Domestic Product and adjust the Balance of Payment Accounts. The Import and Export Air Passenger Fares Indexes can also be used for analysis and contract escalation. Air passenger fares price indexes are available on a quarterly basis from September 1986 and on a monthly basis from January 2001.

Definitions

Import and Export Air Passenger Fares price indexes measure price changes for international passenger transportation in accordance with the Balance of Payments concept of payments and receipts between U.S. and foreign residents. U.S. and foreign residents are identified by a flight's point of origin, based on the assumption that most passengers purchase their tickets and begin travel in their country of residence. The Import Air Passenger Fares Index measures changes in fares paid by U.S. residents to foreign carriers for flights between the United States and foreign countries. For example, a fare paid by a U.S. resident flying from New York to London on a British carrier would be included in the Import Air Passenger Fares Index. The Export Air Passenger Fares Index measures changes in fares paid by foreign residents to U.S. carriers for flights between foreign countries and the United States and between foreign countries. An example of an export air passenger fares service is a fare paid by a foreign resident flying from London to New York on a U.S. carrier or from London to Rome on a U.S. carrier.

Data Sources, Pricing, and Index Calculation

The International Price Program uses all U.S. and foreign carriers and country market import and export data available from an airline consulting company rather than directly sampling to select flights for pricing. This data is used for monthly pricing and includes tickets sold by travel agencies, travel websites, and the airlines for scheduled departure dates during the reference month. Import and export air passenger fares data represent fares to and from the United States and U.S. territories and to and from approximately 230 foreign country markets flown on more than 200 U.S. and foreign carriers. The Export Air Passenger Fares Index also includes foreign-to-foreign fares flown by foreign residents on U.S. carriers. The airline consulting company aggregates flight data into country groupings that are sent to the International Price Program for calculation.

The air passenger fares indexes are calculated using a modified Laspeyres formula. The revenue weights that are used for index calculation are derived from the passenger count data of the Transportation Department's DB1B and the U.S. International Air Travel Statistics Report I-92 survey data compiled by the Department of Commerce. The trade dollar value weights are updated annually with a two year lag.

Regional groupings of the data follow the definitions set by the U.S. Department of Transportation's World Area Codes. Taxes and government fees are included in the Air Passenger Fares Index.

Access the Data

The most recent data for this industry can be found on Table 8 of the U.S. Import and Export Price Indexes News Release (<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ximpim.pdf>). Historical news releases can be found at <https://www.bls.gov/bls/news-release/ximpim.htm>. The data are available in a variety of other formats on the BLS website (<http://www.bls.gov/mxp>).

Additional Information

Additional information on the U.S. International Price Program can be found at mxpinfo@bls.gov or by telephone at (202) 691-7101.

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