

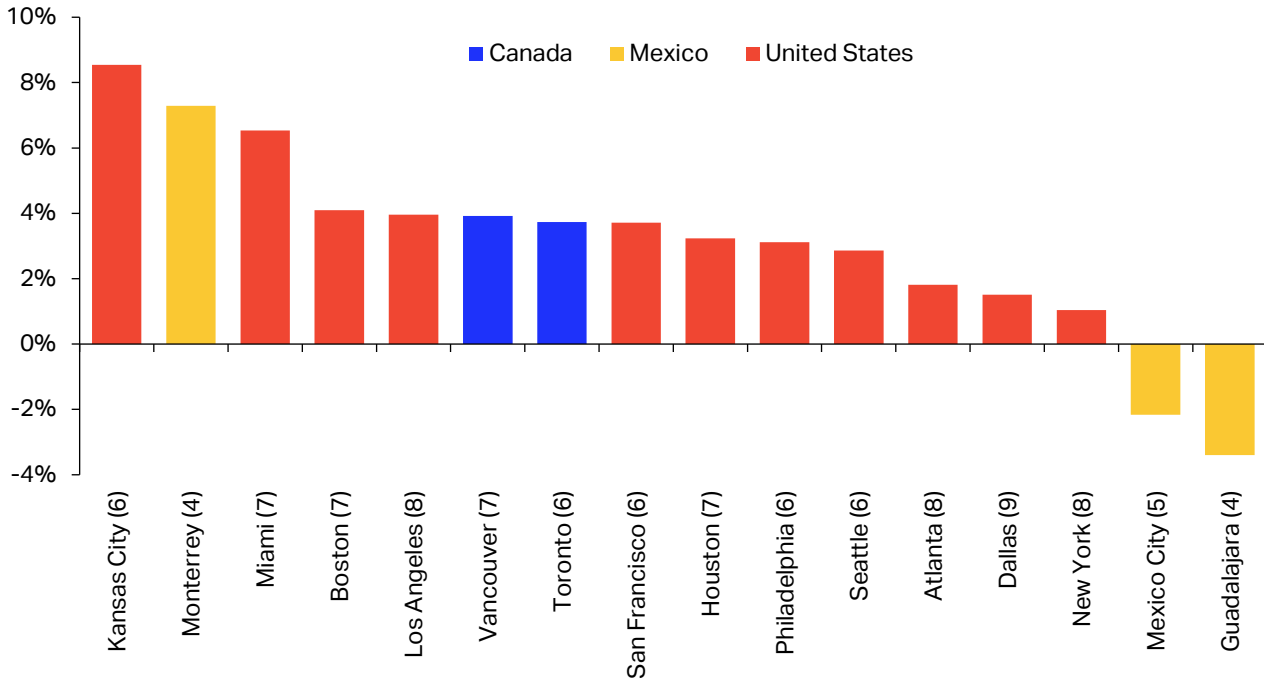


# Chart of the Week

5 June 2026

## Global Football Fans Move Early, But Not Evenly

Flight bookings to FIFA World Cup host cities, growth between Jun-Jul 2025 and 2026, %



Source: IATA Sustainability and Economics, using data from DDS, booking until May 14<sup>th</sup>, numbers by city refer to the number of matches hosted.

- This summer, the world's most-watched sporting event comes to North America. The 2026 FIFA World Cup will be jointly hosted across sixteen cities - eleven in the United States, three in Mexico, and two in Canada, marking the first edition ever staged across three nations and the first to feature an expanded format of 48 teams, up from 32. This means that 104 matches will be played over 39 days, with the opening match in Mexico City and the final at MetLife Stadium in the New York area, making this the largest World Cup in history by almost every measure.
- The multi-city, multi-country format introduces a distinct dynamic for air travel. Unlike a single-nation tournament, fans following their teams across venues will generate inter-regional domestic and cross-border flying. An enabler for smooth travel will be the FIFA PASS (FIFA Priority Appointment Scheduling System). The system gives ticket holders the opportunity to obtain a prioritized US visa interview appointment. To support the surge in applications, the US is also deploying 500 additional consular officers to process visa requests ahead of the tournament.
- Football (or soccer) fans locking in plans for the tournament are evident in-flight bookings to FIFA World Cup 2026 host cities, which are up compared to June–July 2025. Nearly every city concerned is seeing an increase, but the pattern, however, is uneven: stronger gains are concentrated in globally connected hubs where international demand is scaling up early and broadly mirrors the host-city hierarchy. More mature tourism markets show more modest increases. There, the World Cup represents an incremental uplift rather than a step change, in part thanks to a higher baseline of demand. The decline in bookings in some Mexican host cities may reflect a later booking curve, their greater reliance on regional and short-haul travelers, and the stage hosted. Mexico hosts the group stage and early knockout rounds (Round of 32 and one Round of 16).

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