

# Pre-event outlook: Attendance, spending & connectivity ahead of **FIFA World Cup 2026™**

Analysis by *Data Appeal* and *Mabrian*

Projected event-related visitor spending across U.S. host cities

**\$556M**

## Key takeaways

**~12%** captured by **East Rutherford** alone

**Attendance volume** is the primary driver of economic impact

**50%** of spending attributed to **food & beverage**

Total **seat capacity** is up **+3.3%** year over year in the U.S. alone

Total spending is ~ **60%** of the impact of the 2024 Olympic Games

## Where spending is likely to be concentrated

### Top projected U.S. host markets



Spending is expected to concentrate in major metropolitan areas where stadium capacity, match density, and urban infrastructure intersect. **East Rutherford** is projected to be the top beneficiary, with stadium size, event volume, and potential spillover into the greater New York metro area driving its lead.

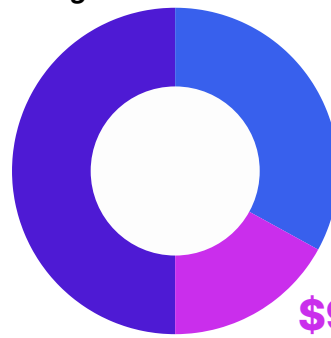
## How visitors are expected to spend

### Spending distribution

The spending mix is consistent with patterns observed across other large-scale international sporting events, with in-destination consumption representing the largest share of economic impact.

**\$280M (50%)**  
Food & Beverage

**\$181M (33%)**  
Accommodation

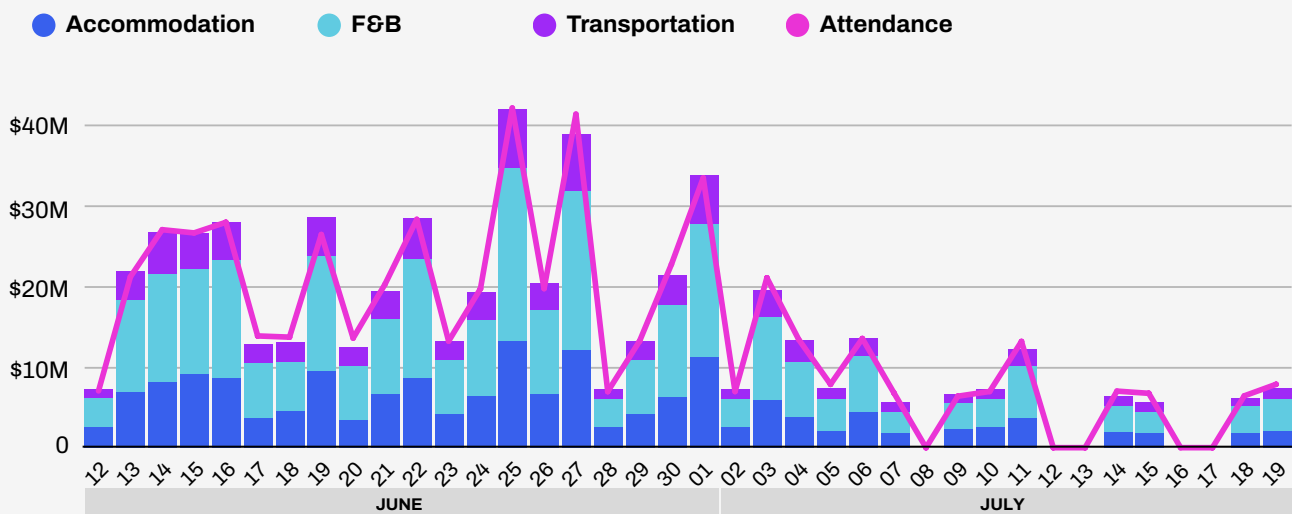


**\$95M (17%)**  
Transportation

## Attendance and spending dynamics

### Why attendance matters

Differences reflect match volume and scheduling rather than individual match profile. All fixtures generate broadly comparable spending dynamics at the destination level, although predictability remains limited where teams are not yet confirmed.



*“These results show how sharply economic impact scales with visitor volume—especially in the largest, best-connected host cities—while also confirming that half of total value is generated through food and beverage alone.”*

**Mirko Lalli**  
CEO and Founder of The Data Appeal Company



## How host countries are connected to qualified markets

### Air capacity snapshot

- Based on current air scheduling between the 34 countries qualified for the FIFA World Cup and the host markets, the **United States remains the only host country with direct connectivity** from all qualified markets, increasing its seat capacity by **+3.3%** year over year.
- Mexico** has direct air connections with 15 of them, followed by **Canada** with 12 (up **+3.4%** year over year).
- Looking at overall capacity trends from competing countries for January 2026, Mabrian data shows that **Mexico leads seat capacity growth** among the three host countries, reaching **+4.3%** year over year.

*“Air scheduling for 2026 is still at a very early stage and will continue to evolve. Frequencies and capacity will be adjusted as the tournament approaches, while the playoff matches determining the final two qualified teams—scheduled for late March in Guadalajara and Monterrey—will further influence air connectivity patterns.”*

**Carlos Cendra**

*Director of Marketing and Communications at Mabrian*

### Methodological notes

PredictHQ Predicted Event Spend (PES) is an estimate of the direct tourism spending generated by people physically attending an event within the destination during the event period. It excludes public or private infrastructure investments, ticket revenues, venue costs, staff wages, sponsorships, and any multiplier effects on the local economy, as well as indirect or induced economic impacts

**This is just a preview of our analysis. Subscribe to our newsletter to receive the full report in the coming weeks**

[Subscribe now](#)