

Economy

On the ball: World Cup 2026 final score

06 August 2026

Key takeaways

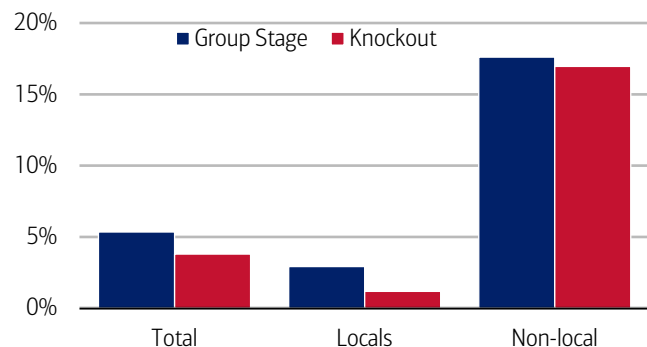
- The FIFA World Cup 2026™ boosted local spending, led by traveling fans, according to Bank of America credit and debit card data. Over the tournament, card spending in host cities rose around 5% year-over-year (YoY), with the strongest gains coming from non-locals, whose spending was up more than 17% YoY. Restaurants and bars were the clearest beneficiaries as fans splashed out on hospitality.
- Kansas City got the golden boot, recording a 7% rise in card spending. But gains were broadly shared across host cities, with Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Miami and New York/New Jersey also enjoying substantial boosts. Host cities generally experienced stronger growth in restaurant and bar spending than non-host cities, particularly during the knockout stages.
- For small businesses in these host cities, we find that local hotels as well as restaurants and bars in Los Angeles, Kansas City, Boston, New York/New Jersey and San Francisco all saw relatively stronger sales in June. And while the World Cup clearly gave a lift to local economies, the effect on overall US consumer spending and GDP appears to have been more modest. This reflects the sheer size of the US and a likely reallocation of spending from non-host to host cities.

Host cities got an economic assist from the World Cup

When the final whistle blew on the FIFA World Cup 2026™, the tournament had already secured a place in the record books. The expanded tournament across the US, Mexico and Canada lasted 39 days and took place across 16 host cities. Across the 104 games, FIFA stated that 6.8 million fans saw a live match in one of the host venues, while 9 million visited the official Fan Festivals. The tournament also reached billions through social media. And the final between Spain and Argentina was the most watched soccer match in US history.

Exhibit 1: The FIFA World Cup 2026™ gave large spending boosts to host cities, particularly due to visiting fans

Aggregated point-of-sale (PoS) credit and debit card spending in World Cup host cities for locals and non-locals (group stage data from June 10 - June 28, 2026, knockout stage data from June 28 - July 20, % year-over-year (YoY))



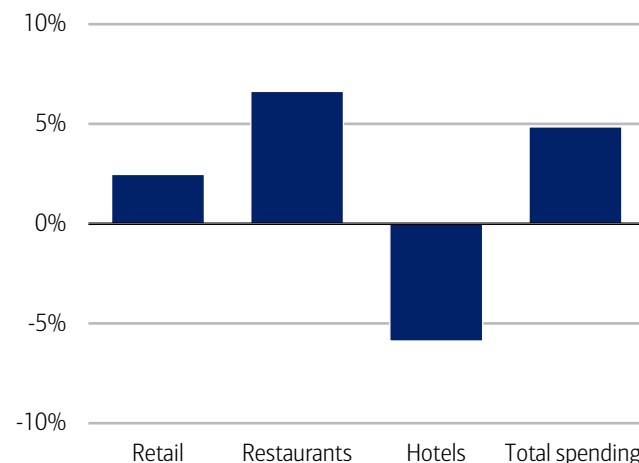
Source: Bank of America internal data

Note: Non-local refers to customers spending outside their home CBSA (core based statistical area).

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Exhibit 2: Spending rose sharply at restaurants and bars during the World Cup

Aggregated PoS credit and debit card spending in World Cup host cities by category (June 10 - July 20, % YoY)



Source: Bank of America internal data

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Beyond the goals, trophies and sold-out stadiums, the World Cup also provided a useful test of how major sporting events translate into local spending gains. To answer this question, we utilize Bank of America aggregated credit and debit card in-person (“point-of-sale”) spending data, which gives insight into how the spending of US households changed over the tournament.

Exhibit 1 shows that during the group stage of the World Cup, total card spending in host cities rose a solid 5% YoY. The boost then eased during the knockout stage, likely due to fewer games being played. Additionally, in our view, it was probably harder for a fan to plan where to be for those games, as they could not be sure their favorite teams would progress or where they’d be playing.

The boost to spending in host cities came primarily from “non-locals” (i.e., visitors spending outside their home city), with out-of-town spending rising more than 17% YoY. Our data captures spending by US consumer rather than overseas visitors, so it appears that the tournament did indeed encourage many Americans to travel to games, bringing their spending power to the host cities. This is consistent with the Bank of America 2026 Summer Travel Outlook survey, which found that around 40% of respondents were planning on experiencing soccer over the summer (for more read our report: [Summer Travel 2026: Resilient, but uneven](#)).

Which sectors topped the scoring charts? Exhibit 2 shows that the biggest beneficiaries appeared to be restaurants and bars – perhaps not surprising given drinks, burgers and hotdogs often accompany spectator sports. Indeed, FIFA states that 675,000 hot dogs were consumed over the tournament, along with 5.5 million beers. Perhaps more surprising in our data is that we did not observe a boost to hotel spending over the whole tournament. In our view, this may be because people had booked and paid well ahead of their visits.

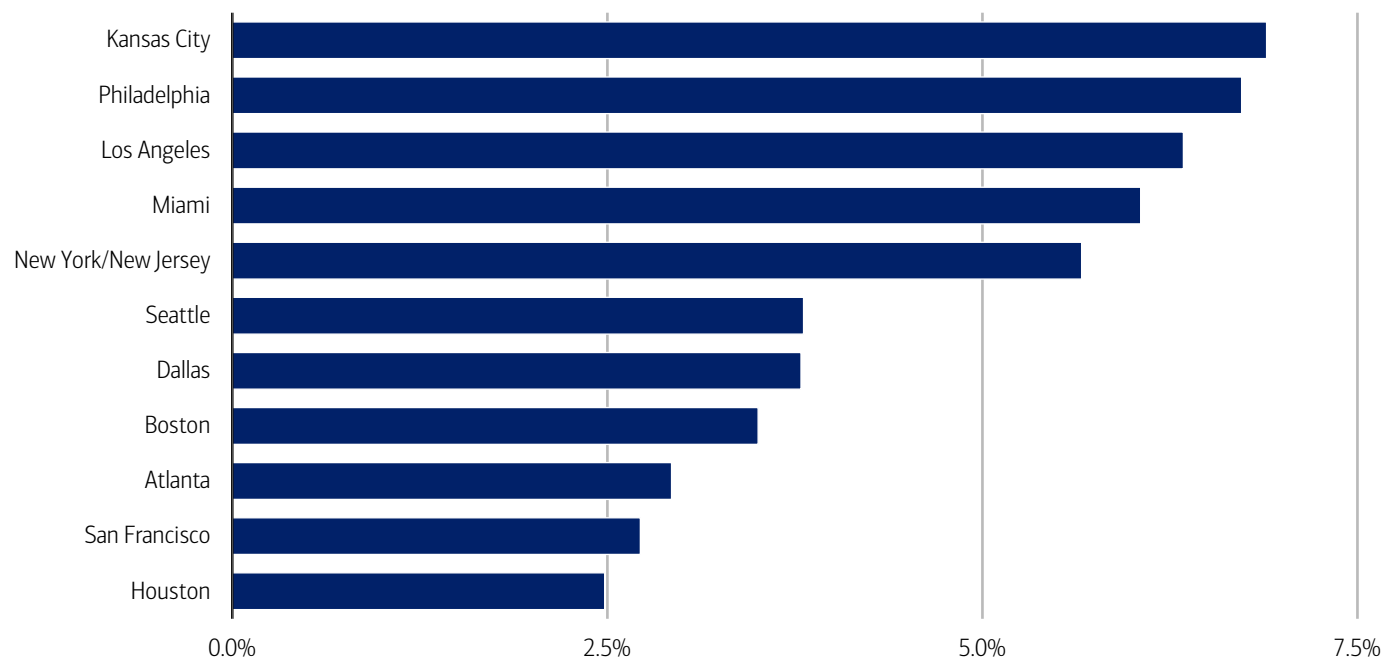
The biggest winner? Kansas City

Every tournament has a surprise player. In spending terms, Kansas City may have been this World Cup’s standout performer, seeing around a 7% YoY increase in card spending. To some extent this probably reflects that Kansas City is a smaller city, with a population of 2.4 million in the metro area, so the influx of visiting fans had an outsized boost. Kansas City also had four teams based there – one of the few host cities with four major teams – including two that made the semis (Argentina and England). Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Miami and New York/New Jersey (NY/NJ) also all received large boosts over the tournament.

It’s worth noting that some cities, for example Dallas, Atlanta, Miami and New York/New Jersey (NY/NJ), had longer tournaments, as they were hosts in the semis, final and bronze final, which may have supported spending in these areas for longer.

Exhibit 3: Kansas City saw the largest boost to spending over the tournament

Aggregated PoS credit and debit card spending in US World Cup host cities (June 10 - July 20, % YoY)



Source: Bank of America internal data

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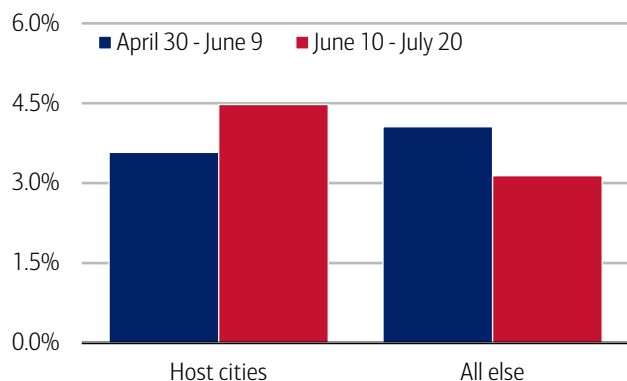
Winning on home turf

To get a real sense of the incremental boost to spending that local host cities enjoyed over the tournament it's important to compare them to cities that did not host games. Exhibit 4 looks specifically at brick and mortar (B&M) restaurant and bar spending over the tournament compared to the period before. It confirms that host cities saw spending growth in this area strengthen relative to the period before the tournament, while this trend was not generally seen elsewhere.

And if spending growth had a player-of-the-match award, younger consumers would be strong contenders. Exhibit 5 shows that the increases in spending in host cities over the tournament skewed towards Gen Z and Millennials. Similarly, we previously found that the boosts to spending were particularly pronounced among lower-income households (for more read: [Consumer Checkpoint: Consumers hit the back of the net](#)).

Exhibit 4: Host cities saw a clear boost to spending on food and drink compared to other cities....

B&M credit and debit card spending growth on restaurants and bars (YoY) in World Cup host cities* and other cities over April 30 - June 9 compared to June 10 - July 20 (% YoY)



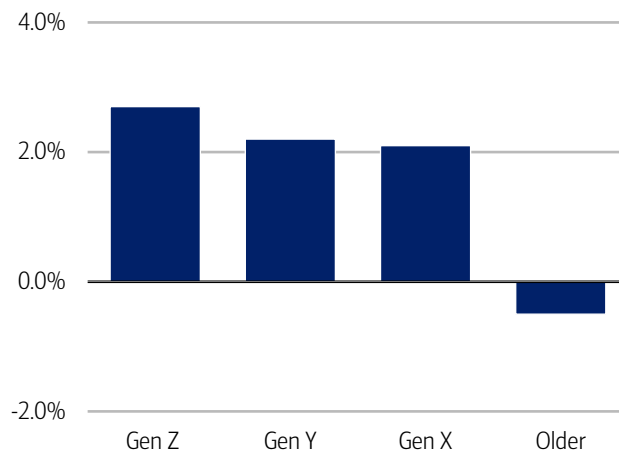
Source: Bank of America internal data

Note: Spending includes only B&M transactions. We have excluded transactions from the analysis that do not have a valid ZIP code. *Host cities in this analysis were limited to those in the US.

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Exhibit 5: ...with younger gens carrying the ball

The change in B&M credit and debit card spending growth in World Cup host cities* relative to other cities between April 30 - June 9 and June 10 - July 20 (percentage points)



Source: Bank of America internal data

Note: *Host cities in this analysis were limited to those in the US.

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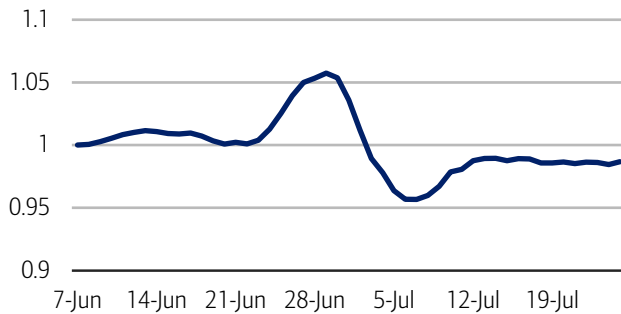
The impact of domestic spending on the US economy likely peaked in late June

Did these local boosts to spending over the World Cup have a strong impact on the US economy?

The answer here is less clear. The relative strength of card spending in host cities compared to other places peaked by the end of June and began to wane as we entered July (Exhibit 6), consistent with most of the boost coming over the group stages. So, any boost to the US economy likely peaked around this time and lessened thereafter.

Exhibit 6: The spending lift in host cities had run its course by early July

Credit and debit card B&M spending on retail (excluding gasoline) and restaurants in host cities* relative to everywhere else (seven-day moving average, index June 7 = 1)



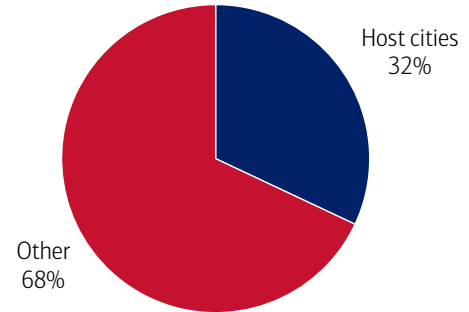
Source: Bank of America internal data

Note: *Host cities in this analysis were limited to those in the US.

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Exhibit 7: Host cities account for around a third of US GDP

Share of host cities in overall US nominal GDP (2023 %)



Source: Haver Analytics

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The US is also a huge economy and the share of GDP covered by the cities hosting games, while significant, was not overwhelming – around a third as of 2023 (Exhibit 7), so it's hard for local spending boosts in these cities to “move the needle” on the overall economy. Some of the increase in spending in host cities from visitors elsewhere in the US may also have reflected reallocations of spending away from non-host areas, rather than an overall boost to aggregate domestic spending.

Still, in Bank of America card data we did see a 0.6% month-over-month (MoM) rise in seasonally-adjusted total card spending in June, with an increase of 0.7% MoM in restaurant and bar spending. Both of these increases were larger than the respective average MoM increases over the previous three months, suggesting some modest upward impact from domestic spending.

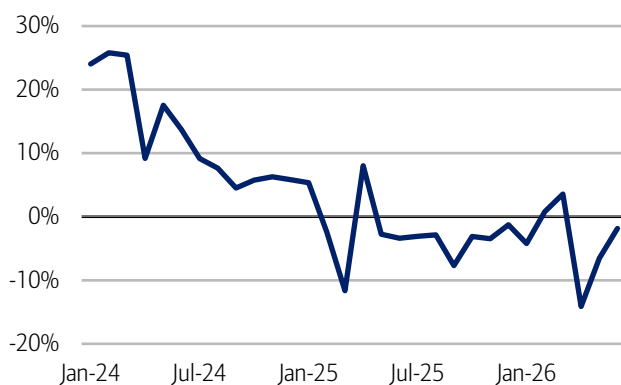
Overseas visitor numbers likely skewed towards the action

Another piece of the puzzle is whether overseas visitors provided a boost to the economy alongside that of US consumers.

Exhibit 8 shows that preliminary data from the National Travel and Tourism Office suggests that overall overseas visitor numbers to the US were not particularly strong in May or June on a YoY basis. In fact, overseas visitor numbers into the US have been fairly flat for some time.

Exhibit 8: There was no notable rise in overseas visitors to the US in May or June

Overseas (excluding Mexico and Canada) visitor numbers to the United States (monthly, % YoY)

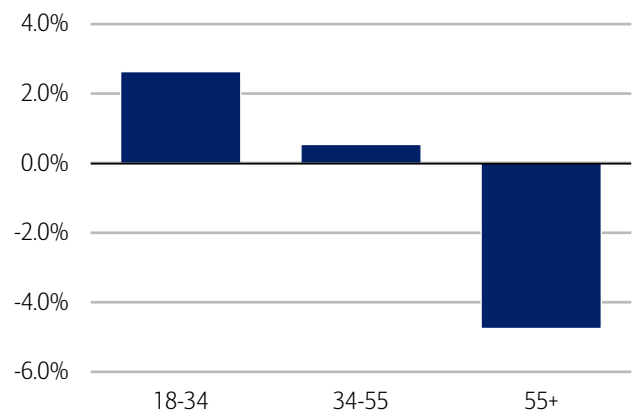


Source: National Travel and Tourism Office

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Exhibit 9: But visitors skewed younger

Overseas (excluding Mexico and Canada) visitor numbers to the United States by age (June 2026, % YoY)



Source: National Travel and Tourism Office

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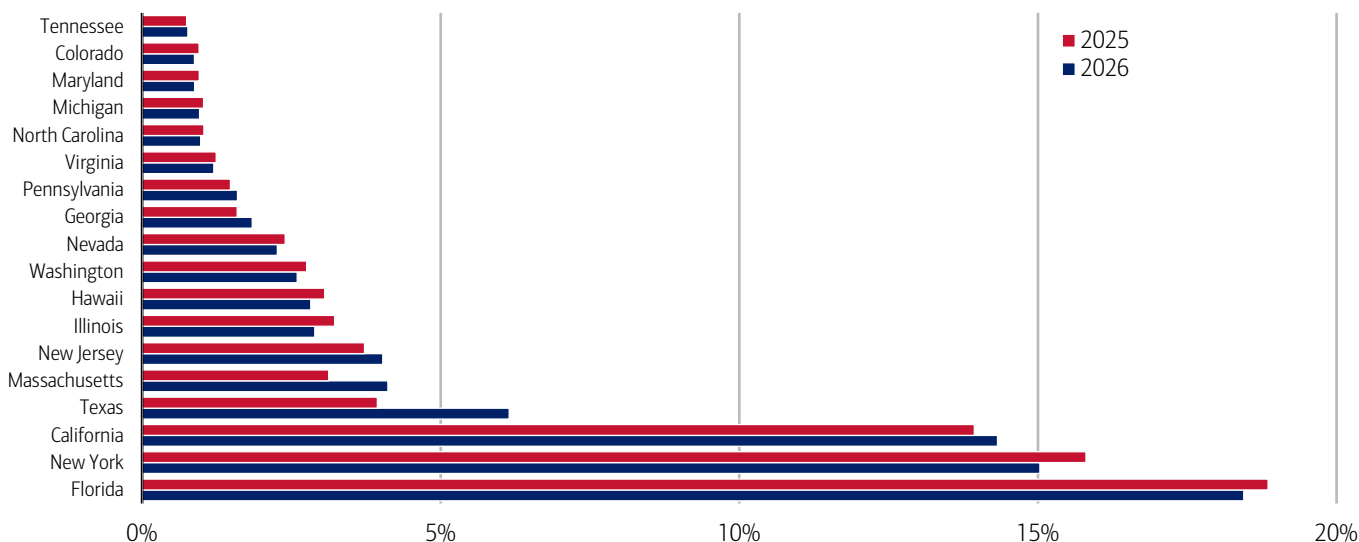
But the data does suggest that overseas visits in June were likely skewed by the World Cup and therefore still likely a boost to host cities.

For one, overseas visitor growth in June was up for younger people but down for older people (Exhibit 9), consistent with a more youthful audience for the soccer games. And, for another, it appears there was some shift in the share of places visited towards

World Cup-heavy states. Texas and California, two host states, saw a notable rise in their share of visits, while non-hosting states Illinois and Nevada saw declines (Exhibit 10).

Exhibit 10: Texas and California, each with two host cities, saw rises in visitor share

Share of overseas (excluding Mexico and Canada) visitor numbers to the United States by state (June 2026, %)



Source: National Travel and Tourism Office

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Small businesses see boost in sales in host cities

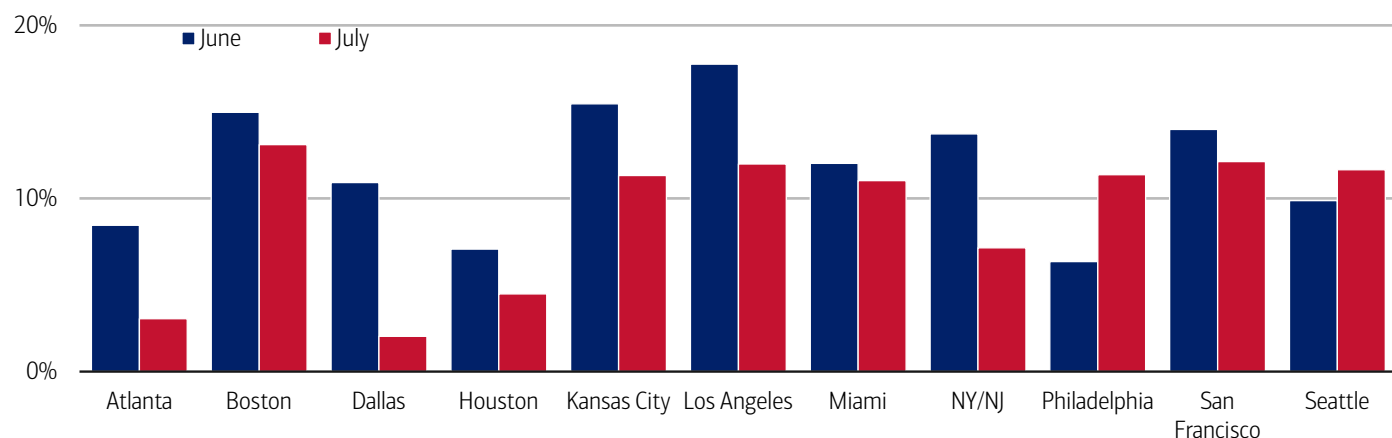
One way to look at the impact of *both* domestic and international visitors' spending in host cities over the World Cup is through Bank of America small business inflows data.

Looking at consumer-facing small businesses such as local hotels, bars and restaurants, we find a jump in sales growth in June and July across all host cities in the United States, though June saw greater growth than July in all cities except Philadelphia and Seattle (Exhibit 11). And reflective of the strong consumer spending growth seen there, Kansas City saw relatively strong growth compared to other host cities.

So, overall, in our view a successful tournament on the field likely had a big economic impact on the host cities, helping support local business in those areas, and a modestly positive one for the overall US economy.

Exhibit 11: In June, Los Angeles, Kansas City and Boston saw the greatest small lodging and restaurant/bars sales growth

Accommodation and food and drinking places in select host cities* sales income per small business client (monthly, YoY%)



Source: Bank of America internal data

Note: Sales income is measured by inflows from merchant channels. *Host cities in this analysis were limited to those in the US.

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Methodology

Selected Bank of America transaction data is used to inform the macroeconomic views expressed in this report and should be considered in the context of other economic indicators and publicly available information. In certain instances, the data may provide directional and/or predictive value. The data used is not comprehensive; it is based on **aggregated and anonymized** selections of Bank of America data and may reflect a degree of selection bias and limitations on the data available.

Any payments data represents aggregated spend from US Retail, Preferred, Small Business and Wealth Management clients with a deposit account or credit card. Aggregated spend include total credit card, debit card, ACH, wires, bill pay, business/peer-to-peer, cash, and checks.

Any **Small Business** payments data represents aggregate spend from Small Business clients with a deposit account or a Small Business credit card. Payroll payments data include channels such as ACH (automated clearing house), bill pay, checks and wire. Bank of America per Small Business client data represents activity spending from active Small Business clients with a deposit account or a Small Business credit card and at least one transaction in each month. Small businesses in this report include business clients within Bank of America and generally defined as under \$5mm in annual sales revenue.

Unless otherwise stated, data is not adjusted for seasonality, processing days or portfolio changes, and may be subject to periodic revisions.

The differences between the total and per household card spending growth rate (if discussed) can be explained by the following reasons:

1. Overall total card spending growth is partially boosted by the growth in the number of active cardholders in our sample. This could be due to an increasing customer base or inactive customers using their cards more frequently.
2. Per household card spending growth only looks at households that complete at least five transactions with Bank of America cards in the month. Per household spending growth isolates impacts from a changing sample size, which could be unrelated to underlying economic momentum, and potential spending volatility from less active users.
3. Overall total card spending includes small business card spending while per household card spending does not.
4. Differences due to using processing dates (total card spending) versus transaction date (per household card spending).
5. Other differences including household formations due to young adults moving in and out of their parent's houses during COVID.

Any household consumer deposit data based on Bank of America internal data is derived by anonymizing and aggregating data from Bank of America consumer deposit accounts in the US and analyzing that data at a highly aggregated level. Whenever median household savings and checking balances are quoted, the data is based on a fixed cohort of households that had a consumer deposit account (checking and/or savings account) for all months from January 2019 through the most current month of data shown.

Bank of America aggregated credit/debit card spending per household includes spending from active US households only. Only consumer card holders making a minimum of five transactions a month are included in the dataset. Spending from corporate cards are excluded. Data regarding merchants who receive payments are identified and classified by the Merchant Categorization Code (MCC) defined by financial services companies. The data are mapped using proprietary methods from the MCCs to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), which is also used by the Census Bureau, in order to classify spending data by subsector. Spending data may also be classified by other proprietary methods not using MCCs.

Transactions and spending associated with the FIFA World Cup 2026™ are based on data aggregated point-of-sale credit and debit card spending in CBSA's (core based statistical areas) associated with tournament stadiums.

Lower, middle and higher household income cuts in Bank of America credit and debit card spending per household, and consumer deposit account data are based on quantitative estimates of each households' income. These quantitative estimates are bucketed according to terciles, with a third of households placed in each tercile periodically. The lowest tercile represents 'lower income', the middle tercile represents 'middle income' and the highest tercile 'higher income'. The income thresholds between these terciles will move over time, reflecting any number of factors that impact income, including general wage inflation, changes in social security payments and individual households' income. The income and tercile in which a household is categorised are periodically re-assessed.

Generations, if discussed, are defined as follows: Gen Z, born after 1995; Younger Millennials: born between 1989-1995; Older Millennials: born between 1978-1988; Gen Xers: born between 1965-1977; Baby Boomer: 1946-1964; Traditionalists: pre-1946.

Any reference to card spending per household on gasoline includes all purchases at gasoline stations and might include purchases of non-gas items.

Transactions and spending associated with the FIFA World Cup 2026™ are based on data aggregated point-of-sale credit and debit card spending in CBSA's (core based statistical areas) associated with tournament stadiums.

Additional information about the methodology used to aggregate the data is available upon request.

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