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- The S&P 500 posted seven all-time highs in July, the most in a month since December 2014.
- The Bloomberg Commodity Index fell 5.11% in July. Oil futures retreated over 15%, the largest monthly decline in a year as global supply disruptions faded, lifting inventory levels back to their highest levels in decades. In precious metals, silver (+9.45%) outpaced gold (+2.18%) during the month.
- REITs, soon to become the 11th sector within the S&P 500 Index, rose 4.15% in July.

The S&P 500 posted solid gains in July, ending the month at its second highest level in history, and capped its fifth straight monthly advance – its longest stretch of gains since 2014. Most of July's gains came during the first half of the month, after investors drew comfort from stimulus pledges made by global central banks immediately after the U.K. voted to leave the European Union. A surge of hiring in June also calmed "Brexit" fears and helped ease concerns about an economic downturn. Labor officials reported on July 8th that 287,000 jobs were added in June, the most since last October and reflected the ninth best payrolls gain since 2011. Yet momentum slowed during the final two weeks of July, when second quarter earnings came into focus. Despite the S&P 500 ending the month within two points of its all-time high, its last 11 trading days finished without a move of more than 0.5%, the longest such period ever recorded. Stocks proved their resiliency on the last session of the month, ending higher despite a disappointing preliminary reading of second quarter growth. The U.S. economy grew by 1.2% last quarter, well below economists' projections; the news dampened prospects for a 2016 Federal Reserve rate hike. U.S. equities, as measured by the S&P 500, rose 13.44% over the past five months, and returned 20% since February's mid-month low.

Seven of the ten major sector groups posted gains in July, led by Technology (+7.89%), Materials (+5.10%), and Healthcare (+4.94%). Energy (-1.93%) and Consumer Staples (-0.71%) lagged the most. Telecom (+26.11%) and Utilities (+22.56%) are the highest year-to-date (YTD) performers. Consumer Discretionary (+5.26%) and Financials (+0.39%) have gained the least this year.

Small-cap domestic stocks, as measured by the Russell 2000 Index, rose 5.97% in July, outperforming its large and mid-cap counterparts. Mid-cap stocks, as measured by the Russell Mid-Cap Index, gained 4.57%. Mid-cap stocks are still up the most on a YTD basis, gaining 10.31%. Growth stocks outperformed value in in July, with the Russell 1000 Growth Index returning 4.72%, while the Russell 1000 Value Index gained 2.90%.

Regionally, the post-Brexit recovery was strongest in foreign markets. The MSCI EAFE Index, a broad measure of global developed markets outside of the U.S. and Canada, outperformed domestic equities, advancing 5.07% last month. The MSCI EAFE Index erased an earlier 2016 loss, ending July with a 0.42% YTD gain. The MSCI Emerging Markets Index similarly returned 5.03% in July, extending its YTD rally to 11.77%.

Treasuries, as measured by the Barclays U.S. Government Bond Index, rose only fractionally higher last month, up 0.39%. Despite intra-month volatility, benchmark 10-year U.S. Treasuries prices ended near where they began, sending its yield down just 1.7 basis points to end at 1.454%. The Barclays U.S. Municipal Bond Index crept 0.06% higher in July. U.S. investment grade corporate, government and agency-backed bonds, as measured by the Barclays U.S. Aggregate Bond Index, rose 0.63% last month. At the other end of the credit spectrum, the Barclays U.S. Corporate High Yield Index, a proxy for below-investment grade corporate bonds, gained 2.70% in July, extending its YTD rally to 12.01%.

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