

Air travel growth continues in February

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The International Air Transport Association (IATA) announced continued strong growth in air travel demand, based on February 2023 traffic results.

- **Total traffic** in February 2023 (measured in revenue passenger kilometers or RPKs) rose 55.5% compared to February 2022. Globally, traffic is now at 84.9% of February 2019 levels.
- **Domestic traffic** for February rose 25.2% compared to the year-ago period. Total February 2023 domestic traffic was at 97.2% of the February 2019 level.
- **International traffic** climbed 89.7% versus February 2022 with all markets recording strong growth, led once again by carriers in the Asia-Pacific region. International RPKs reached 77.5% of February 2019 levels.

“Despite the uncertain economic signals, demand for air travel continues to be strong across the globe and particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. The industry is now just about 15% below 2019 levels of demand and that gap is narrowing each month,” said Willie Walsh, IATA’s Director General.

International passenger markets

- **Asia-Pacific airlines** had a 378.7% increase in February 2023 traffic compared to February 2022, maintaining the very positive momentum of the past few months since the lifting of travel restrictions in the region. Capacity rose 176.4% and the load factor increased 34.9 percentage points to 82.5%, the second highest among the regions.
- **European carriers** posted a 47.9% traffic rise versus February 2022. Capacity climbed 29.7%, and load factor rose 9.1 percentage points to 73.7%, which was the lowest among the regions.
- **Middle Eastern airlines** saw a 75% traffic increase compared to February a year ago. Capacity climbed 40.5% and load factor pushed up 15.8 percentage points to 80%.
- **North American carriers’** traffic climbed 67.4% in February 2023 versus the 2022 period. Capacity increased 39.5%, and load factor rose 12.8 percentage points to 76.6%.
- **Latin American airlines** had a 44.1% traffic increase compared to the same

month in 2022. February capacity climbed 34% and load factor rose 5.8 percentage points to 82.7%, the highest among the regions.

- **African airlines'** traffic rose 90.7% in February 2023 versus a year ago. February capacity was up 61.7% and load factor climbed 11.4 percentage points to 75%.
- **Japan's** domestic traffic surged 161.4% in February compared to a year ago and now stands at 89.9% of pre-pandemic levels.
- **US** airlines' domestic demand rose 10.6% in February and was 0.7% ahead of February 2019 levels.

The bottom line

“People are flying in ever greater numbers. With the Easter and Passover holidays we are expecting large numbers of travelers to take to the skies in many parts of the world. They should do so with confidence that airlines have been rebuilding resiliency that suffered owing to the pandemic. Other participants in the air travel value chain, including airports, air navigation service providers, and airport security staff, need to have the same commitment to ensuring our customers can enjoy smooth holiday travel,” said Walsh.