

IATA sees passenger traffic recovery in 2024



Desire by people to travel remains strong says IATA Director General Willie Walsh

The [International Air Transport Association](#) (IATA) said today it expects overall traveler numbers to reach 4.0 billion in 2024 (counting multi-sector connecting trips as one passenger), exceeding pre-COVID-19 levels by three percentage points from 2019.

Expectations for the shape of the near-term recovery have shifted slightly said the group, reflecting the evolution of government-imposed travel restrictions in some markets. The overall picture presented in the latest update to IATA's long-term forecast, however, is unchanged from what was expected in November, before the Omicron variant.

"The trajectory for the recovery in passenger numbers from COVID-19 was not changed by the Omicron variant. People want to travel. And when travel restrictions are lifted, they return to the skies. There is still a long way to go to reach a normal state-of-affairs, but the forecast for the evolution in passenger numbers gives good reason to be optimistic," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General, in today's announcement.

In its February update, IATA made several forecasts and observations based on current trends:

- In 2021, overall traveler numbers were 47 percent of 2019 levels. This is expected to improve to 83 percent in 2022, 94 percent in 2023, 103 percent in 2024 and 111 percent in 2025.
- In 2021, international traveler numbers were 27 percent of 2019 levels. This is expected to improve to 69 percent in 2022, 82 percent in 2023, 92 percent in 2024 and 101 percent in 2025.

2025.

IATA saw a slightly more optimistic near-term international recovery scenario compared to November 2021, based on the progressive relaxation or elimination of travel restrictions in many markets. This has seen improvements in the major North Atlantic and intra-European markets, strengthening the baseline for recovery. Asia-Pacific is expected to continue to lag the recovery with the region's largest market, China, not showing any signs of relaxing its severe border measures in the near future.

- In 2021, domestic traveler numbers were 61 percent of 2019 levels. This is expected to improve to 93 percent in 2022, 103 percent in 2023, 111 percent in 2024 and 118 percent in 2025.

The outlook for the evolution of domestic traveler numbers is slightly more pessimistic than in November. While the US and Russian domestic markets have recovered, IATA said the same is not true for the other major domestic markets of China, Canada, Japan and Australia.

“The biggest and most immediate drivers of passenger numbers are the restrictions that governments place on travel. Fortunately, more governments have understood that travel restrictions have little to no long-term impact on the spread of a virus. And the economic and social hardship caused for very limited benefit is simply no longer acceptable in a growing number of markets. As a result, the progressive removal of restrictions is giving a much-needed boost to the prospects for travel,” said Walsh.

In today's release, IATA reiterated its call for:

- The removal of all travel barriers (including quarantine and testing) for those fully vaccinated with a WHO-approved vaccine.
- Pre-departure antigen testing to enable quarantine-free travel for non-vaccinated travelers.
- Removing all travel bans, and
- Accelerating the easing of travel restrictions in recognition that travelers pose no greater risk for COVID-19 spread than already exists in the general population.

A regional breakdown can be found on the [IATA website](#).