

IATA: Air travel growth continues in March



All markets for international traffic are showing strong growth led by Asia-Pacific carriers

The [International Air Transport Association](#) (IATA) has reported a strong growth in air travel demand for March 2023.

Total traffic (measured in revenue passenger kilometers) rose by 52.4 percent in March 2023 compared to March 2022, according to the IATA. Globally, traffic has reached 88 percent of March 2019 levels.

Domestic traffic for March 2023 rose by 34 percent compared to the previous year, and total domestic traffic was at 98.9 percent of the March 2019 level. International traffic recorded a 68.9 percent rise versus March 2022, with all markets showing strong growth led by Asia-Pacific carriers. International RPKs reached 81.6 percent of March 2019 levels.

“The calendar year first quarter ended on a strong note for air travel demand. Domestic markets have been near their pre-pandemic levels for months. And for international travel two key waypoints were topped. First, demand increased by 3.5 percentage points compared to the previous month’s growth, to reach 81.6 percent of pre-COVID levels. This was led by a near-tripling of demand for Asia-Pacific carriers as China’s re-opening took hold. And efficiency is improving as international load factors reached 81.3 percent. Even more importantly, ticket sales for both domestic and international travel give every indication that strong growth will continue into the peak Northern Hemisphere summer travel season,” said Willie Walsh, IATA’s Director General, in a May 4 press release.

In international passenger markets, the Asia-Pacific region saw a 283 percent increase in March 2023 traffic compared to March 2022, with the lifting of travel restrictions in the region continuing the robust momentum. European carriers recorded a 38.5 percent rise in traffic, while Middle Eastern and North American carriers’ traffic climbed 43 percent and 51.6 percent respectively. Latin American airlines had a 36.5 percent traffic increase, and African airlines recorded a 71.7 percent increase in

traffic in March 2023 compared to a year ago.

In the domestic passenger markets, India, Japan, and Australia recorded the highest percentage of RPK growth, while Brazil's domestic traffic rose by eight percent compared to a year ago and is now just fractionally below pre-pandemic levels.