

# IATA announces its annual GPS survey results



Passenger with a carry-on bag checks flight status

The International Air Transport Association ([IATA](#)) shared the results of its Global Passenger Survey (GPS) for 2023 this week. In the October 25 press release, the company said the findings show travellers prioritize speed and convenience, while also increasingly embracing biometrics.

"Passengers have made it clear: they want to spend less time booking and move through the airport faster. And they are increasingly willing to use biometric data to complete more pre-departure tasks off airport to achieve this," said Nick Careen, IATA's Senior Vice President for Operations, Safety and Security.

## **Survey results for planning and booking**

The survey found that passengers prioritize convenience when planning their travel and choosing a departure point. They prefer to fly from an airport that is close to home, have all booking options and services in one place and pay with their preferred method, IATA said.

According to the GPS survey, proximity to the airport was the main priority for passengers when selecting a departure point (71 percent), ahead of the ticket price (31 percent).

Just over half of all passengers prefer to book directly with the airline (52 percent) and would like complete visibility into the fare offer. This included easy access to adding products and services, the press release said.

“Today’s travellers expect the same online experience as they get from major online retailers. The [Modern Airline Retailing](#) program responds to these needs,” said Muhammad Albakri, IATA’s Senior Vice President for Financial Settlement and Distribution Services. “Whichever shopping channel passengers choose, airlines want to present them with all the options for even quicker and more convenient booking. When Modern Airline Retailing is fully realized, travellers will be able to track their air travel purchases with a single order number—simple and fast. It will also greatly simplify re-accommodating travellers in the event of a change or a disruption,”

### **Survey results for payment preferences**

The GPS survey found that convenience was the main reason passengers chose a particular payment method (62 percent). When choices with seven different payment methods, the most popular option was credit/debit card (73 percent) followed by digital wallet (18 percent) and bank transfer (18 percent).

The press release stated that the survey results showed a regional variation in credit card usage. Credit/debit cards are most popular in Latin America (85 percent), Europe (81 percent) and North America (74 percent). The lowest credit/debit card usage, according to the survey, was in Africa (57 percent).

Digital wallet payment was most prevalent in the Asia Pacific region (41 percent) followed by Europe (15 percent) and the Middle East (14 percent). Further, the survey found that direct bank transfer was the preferred payment method in Africa (36 percent) followed by the Middle East (21 percent).

The press release stated that IATA has developed IATA Pay as an alternative method for travellers to pay for air tickets online while directly debiting their bank account.

According to the GPS survey, payment issues respondents had when purchasing tickets included the inability to use their preferred payment option or pay in instalments. Tedious processes and concerns over online payment security were also prevalent, the press release said. The results revealed that 25 percent of potential products and services sales during the passengers’ journey could not be completed due to some form of payment issues.

“Payment needs to be seen as part of the commercial offer and not just as a financial transaction at the end of the sale. Customers want to be able to use their preferred payment method with convenience and security,” said Albakri. “Each market is different and there is no one-size-fits-all answer. If a preferred payment method is not available or too complicated, the potential sale may be lost. Ensuring the customer can use their preferred payment method more often is a key part of the Modern Airline Retailing program.”

### **Survey results for travel facilitation**

The press release shared that IATA’s survey results showed complex visa requirements deter travellers who want a convenient, digital online visa process. In fact, many are willing to share their immigration information to benefit from faster airport processing.

The survey results found that 36 percent of travellers said they have been deterred from visiting a particular destination due to immigration requirements. Complex processes for immigration were the main deterrent for 49 percent of travellers while 19 percent said costs discouraged them from travelling to a destination. Just 8 percent cited privacy concerns as the main deterrent.

For destinations requiring a visa, the survey found that 66 percent of travellers want to obtain a visa online prior to arrival. 20 percent prefer to get their visa at a consulate or embassy while 14 percent will obtain their visa at the airport.

The survey also found that 87 percent of travellers would share their immigration information to speed up the airport arrival process; a reported increase (83 percent) from 2022.

"Time-consuming and complex visa requirements deter travellers and deprive destination economies of valuable tourist revenues," said Careen. "Time and again, we have seen that when countries remove visa requirements, economies prosper from rising visitor numbers. Beyond simplified visa procedures, travellers are prepared to share their immigration information if it results in faster and smoother airport processes. Taking advantage of traveler willingness to use online processes and share information in advance is always a win-win solution."

### **Survey results for airport processes**

The GPS survey results also indicated that passengers expected "streamlined processes and minimal wait times," the press release said. More passengers are comfortable using biometrics to speed up airport processing or complete processes online before arrival.

The survey found that 74 percent of passengers expect to spend 30 minutes or less in the airport from curb to boarding if they only have a carry-on bag. This was an increase from 54 percent in 2022.

The press release also said passengers want to complete more processing elements off-airport. Results indicated 45 percent of travellers chose immigration as their preference for off-airport processing, an increase from 32 percent the previous year. Off-airport processing was closely followed by check-in at 33 percent and baggage check-in at 19 percent.

GPS survey results show that 91 percent of passengers are interested in a special trusted travellers program that allows them to accelerate the security process.

Passengers also want more flexibility and control during the baggage process, IATA said in its press results. The survey results found that 67 percent would be interested in home pick-up and delivery services while 77 percent they would be likely to check in a bag if they could tag it and check it before arrival at the airport. 87 percent said they would be willing to check in a bag if they could track it. This finding comes as interest in self-tracking of baggage increased to 57 percent from 50 percent the previous year.

The GPS survey results found that passengers are becoming more accustomed and trusting of biometric identification. In the last year, 46 percent of passengers used biometrics at the airport, an increase from 34 percent in 2022. 75 percent of passengers prefer using biometric data to traditional passports and boarding passes. There were security concerns for almost half of all respondents in the survey, with 40 percent saying they would be more open to biometric screening at the airport if they felt their personal information was secure.

"Passengers want technology to work harder, so they spend less time 'being processed', standing in queues. And they are willing to use biometric data if it delivers this result. But we need cooperation across the value chain and with governments to make it happen with secure technology that is available today," said Careen.

The release said [IATA's One ID initiative](#) is accelerating airport processing for passengers through the use of biometrics. IATA's 'Digitalization of Admissibility' standards enable passengers to digitally obtain all necessary pre-travel authorizations directly from governments prior to departure. Travelers can then share their 'OK to Fly' status with the airline to bypass all on-airport document verifications.

"We have the standards and technology to radically improve the international travel experience. But we can only move at the pace that governments allow within their regulations. That's why a top priority in realizing seamless One ID enabled travel is working with governments to demonstrate that 3

border control can be more secure even while making passenger travel more convenient,” said Careen.