

IATA: Strong passenger demand drives global air travel recovery



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The [International Air Transport Association](#) (IATA) has revealed that the global air travel industry experienced continued strong demand in April 2023, signaling a significant recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the IATA, total air traffic in April 2023, measured in revenue passenger kilometers (RPKs), increased by an impressive 45.8 percent compared to the same period in 2022. This growth brings global air traffic to over 90 percent of the levels seen before the pandemic.

The recovery was not limited to domestic travel, as international traffic recorded a substantial surge of 48 percent compared to April 2022. All global markets witnessed healthy growth, with carriers in the Asia-Pacific region leading the way. Notably, international RPKs reached 83.6 percent of the levels seen in April 2019, indicating a remarkable rebound in global air travel.

Willie Walsh, the Director General of IATA, expressed optimism about the industry's future. "April continued the strong traffic trend we saw in the 2023 first quarter," he said in a June 1 press release. "The easing of inflation and rising consumer confidence in most OECD countries combined with declining jet fuel prices suggests sustained strong air travel demand and moderating cost pressures."

Analyzing the performance of specific regions, Asia-Pacific airlines experienced a staggering 192.7 percent increase in traffic in April 2023 compared to the same month in 2022. European carriers recorded a 22.6 percent rise, while Middle Eastern airlines saw a 38 percent surge. North American airlines' traffic climbed by 34.8 percent and Latin American carriers experienced a 25.8 percent increase. African airlines led the regional growth with a remarkable 53.5 percent rise in April 2023.

On the domestic front, China's air travel demand soared by an astonishing 536.2 percent in April 2023, surpassing pre-pandemic levels by six percent. Meanwhile, domestic demand in the United States grew by more than five percent and exceeded the April 2019 levels by 3.3 percent.

The report further emphasizes that the global aviation industry is on a steady path toward recovery, with international traffic reaching 48 percent of April 2019 levels. Domestic air travel also exhibited resilience, accounting for 42.6 percent of the recovery and nearing pre-pandemic figures.

The IATA's latest data provides a positive outlook for the aviation sector, highlighting the significant progress made in rebounding from the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. As air travel demand continues to strengthen and costs stabilize, the industry is poised for a robust recovery in the coming months.

"Airlines are working hard to accommodate them with a smooth travel experience despite continuing supply chain shortages and other operational challenges," said Walsh. "Sadly, some governments appear more keen on punitive regulation than on doing their part to enable hassle-free travel. The Dutch Government's high-handed effort to slash capacity at Schiphol airport is a prime example. And then we have a focus on EU-style passenger rights regulation that is spreading like a contagion."

"EU 261 has not led to a reduction in delays. That's because penalizing airlines raises airline costs but does not address delays caused by factors over which airlines have no control, such as inefficient air traffic management or staffing shortages at air navigation service providers. The single best thing that Europe could do to improve the travel experience is deliver the Single European Sky. As for other governments contemplating passenger rights regulations, avoiding a repeat of Europe's mistake would be a helpful starting point."