



News Release



Olivier Ponti, VP Insights, ForwardKeys

Consumer air travel grew 5.9% in 2018

8th January 2019

Global air travel grew by a very healthy 5.9% in 2018, according to data just published by ForwardKeys, which predicts future travel patterns by analysing 17 million booking transactions a day and other aviation data.

Olivier Ponti, VP Insights, ForwardKeys, said: "The Travel & Tourism industry continues to grow strongly, outstripping the growth in global GDP, enhancing prosperity and creating jobs." Highlighting the need to improve the travel experience for passengers and to better manage capacity, he continued: "Yet another year of strong growth in air travel will put pressure on governments worldwide to invest in infrastructure to better manage the consumer's growing appetite to travel."

Whilst air travel grew in nearly every part of the world, there were substantial regional variations. Growth in Asia Pacific, at 9.6%, was more than three times stronger than the weakest performer, the Middle East, where flight departures grew by 2.8%. The second-best performing region was Europe, where air travel grew by 5.8%. Flight departures from Africa grew by 5.2% and from the Americas by 4.4%.

Global aviation growth in 2018

Air departures 2018



The growth in Asia Pacific was driven primarily by increasing travel within the region. Domestic travel was up 14.0% and departures between Asia Pacific countries were up 9.6%; whereas intercontinental departures were up 4.5%. In the words of Olivier Ponti, ForwardKeys, VP Insights: "The growth in international air traffic within Asia Pacific is a direct consequence of increasing disposable incomes, urbanization and more dynamic lifestyles. As the middle classes of large urban centres – especially in China – have more money in their pockets and a growing appetite for travel, they fly more often, initially within their own continent, and then further afield. They have become a major driver of leisure and business travel worldwide."

European air travel grew at virtually the same rate as the global average, but international travel within Europe, which was up 7.0%, grew faster than trips to other regions of the world, which was up 2.8% - a sign of the good shape of the European economy. The Middle-East registered the highest growth of intercontinental departures from Europe, at 5.8%, helped by the easing of security concerns regarding Egypt.

By contrast, the trend in the Americas was in the opposite direction. There, the growth in travel to other continents, at 7.1%, outstripped the growth in domestic air travel, which grew by 4.0%, and the growth in travel between countries, which grew by 3.2%. Assisted by several new routes such as New York to Nairobi, Africa was the fastest growing destination for travellers departing from the Americas, up 8.5%.

In Africa, growth in domestic air travel was negative, down by 0.9%, but growth in international air travel to other African countries was strong, up 6.6%, and growth in travel to other continents, where Africa's main trading partners are located, was stronger still, up 7.8%. Highlights included departures from Africa to Europe, up +9.3%, Asia Pacific, up +7.7%, and the Middle East up 6.9%.

Despite the ongoing blockade of Qatar, which started in June 2017 and which continues to hamper regional international travel, the Middle East registered a 2.8% increase in air traffic. The decline of intra-regional travel was compensated by double-digit growth in domestic travel, up 10.9%, and a 2.5% increase in departures to other regions, with Europe benefitting the most from this trend, up 8.3%.

Ends

About ForwardKeys

ForwardKeys analyses more than 17m flight booking transactions a day, drawing data from all the major global air reservation systems and selected airlines and tour operators. This information is enhanced with further independent data sets, including flight search and official government statistics, plus data science to paint a picture of who is travelling where and when. ForwardKeys' analytics are used by travel marketers, retailers, hotels, destination marketing organisations (DMOs), financial institutions, car rental companies, tour operators, online travel agents (OTAs) and other traveller-focussed businesses worldwide to monitor and anticipate traveller arrivals from a particular origin market at a specific time. This analysis enables parties to anticipate the impact of events, better manage their staffing levels, fine tune supply requirements, adjust and measure the effectiveness of their marketing efforts and anticipate future market trends.

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