

African airlines see 124% increase in passenger traffic growth

Air travel demand is continuing in 2023, based on January traffic results. This according to the International Air Transport Association (Iata).



Source: Omar Prestwich via [Unsplash](#)

Total traffic in January 2023 (measured in revenue passenger kilometres or RPKs) rose 67.0% compared to January 2022. Globally, traffic is now at 84.2% of January 2019 levels. Domestic traffic for January 2023 rose 32.7% compared to the year-ago period, helped by the lifting of the zero-Covid policy in China. Total January 2023 domestic traffic was at 97.4% of the January 2019 level.

International traffic climbed 104.0% versus January 2022 with all markets recording strong growth, led by carriers in the Asia-Pacific region. International RPKs reached 77.0% of January 2019 levels.

"Air travel demand is off to a very healthy start in 2023. The rapid removal of Covid-19 restrictions for Chinese domestic and international travel bodes well for the continued strong industry recovery from the pandemic throughout the year. And, importantly, we have not seen the many economic and geopolitical uncertainties of the day dampening demand for travel," says Willie Walsh, Iata's director general.

International passenger markets

African airlines' traffic rose 124.8% in January 2023 versus a year ago. January capacity was up 82.5% and the load factor climbed 13.9 percentage points to 73.7%, the lowest among regions.

Asia-Pacific airlines posted a 376.3% increase in January traffic compared to January 2022, by far the strongest year-over-year rate among the regions, but off of a very low base when much of the region was still closed to travel. Capacity rose 167.1% and the load factor increased 36.6 percentage points to 83.3%, the highest among the regions.

European carriers saw a 60.6% traffic rise versus January 2022. Capacity increased by 30.1%, and the load factor rose by 14.2 percentage points to 75.0%.

Middle Eastern airlines' January traffic rose 97.7% compared to January a year ago. Capacity increased by 45.9% and load factor climbed 20.8 percentage points to 79.2%.

North American carriers reported an 82.4% traffic increase in January versus the 2022 period. Capacity rose 37.3%, and load factor climbed 19.7 percentage points to 79.6%.

Latin American airlines had a 46.8% traffic increase compared to the same month in 2022. January capacity climbed 34.3% and load factor rose 7.1 percentage points to 82.7%, the second highest among the regions.

Domestic passenger markets

Australia's domestic traffic rose 107.3% in January compared to a year ago and now stands at 88.8% of pre-pandemic levels. China's domestic RPKs rose 37.2% in January, the first month-over-month annual increase since August 2022 and are now at 86.3% of January 2019 levels.

"With strong travel demand continuing through the traditionally slower winter season in the Northern Hemisphere, the stage is set for an even busier spring and summer. At a time when many are just beginning to enjoy their newly restored travel freedoms, it is especially disappointing to see the Dutch government making plans to limit their movements by unilaterally and unjustly reducing operations at Schiphol Airport," concludes Walsh.

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