



**TRANSPORT
SCOTLAND**
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

Scottish Transport Statistics 2024

Air Transport

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Introduction

This chapter provides information on air transport, such as passenger numbers by origin, destination and type of service, flight punctuality, amount of freight carried and air transport movements.

Transport and travel habits in Scotland were profoundly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, with restrictions on travel and daily activity in place for large parts of 2020 and 2021.

Key Points

- There were 26 million air passengers at Scottish airports in 2023, 21% more than in the previous year.
- 55% travelled to or from Edinburgh and 28% to or from Glasgow.
- 47 thousand tonnes of freight were carried by air in 2023.

Main Points

Passengers and Airports

There were 26 million air terminal passengers in 2023, 4 million (21%) more than in 2022. Passenger numbers increased by 39% between 2010 and 2018 reaching a peak of 29.4 million before falling 318% to 7 million in 2021 due to the pandemic and associated travel restrictions. (*Table 8.1*)

Edinburgh airport had 14.4 million terminal passengers in 2023 (28% increase) and Glasgow airport had 7.5 million, 13% more than the previous year. Aberdeen had 2.2 million, (up 14%) and Inverness had 801,000 (14% more). Together these four airports accounted for 96% of the total. Prior to the pandemic, over the past ten years trends for these airports were similar to the national picture with increases in most years. (*Table 8.1*)

In 2023, London Heathrow accounted for 43% of passengers on selected domestic routes to and from Aberdeen, 25% for Edinburgh and 27% for Glasgow. London Gatwick had 31% of the domestic passengers to/from Inverness. Other domestic routes with large passenger numbers included those between Edinburgh and Gatwick, Stansted, Luton, London City, Belfast and Bristol, and between Glasgow and Gatwick, Luton, Belfast, Bristol and Stansted. It should be noted that the figures will include passengers who are going for connecting flights to the rest of the world, particularly London Heathrow. (*Table 8.2*)

Origin/destinations

The most popular country of origin/destination for passengers flying directly to and from Scottish airports was Spain (excluding the Canary Islands) with 2.4 million passenger journeys in 2023, 16% of all passengers on direct flights abroad. Other popular origins/destinations were the Irish Republic (1.5 million passengers), Spain(Canary Islands) (1.4 million passengers), the Netherlands (1.3 million passengers) and France (1.1 million passengers). The trends for many destinations are increasing numbers of passengers, either as a result of more people travelling or more routes becoming available. (*Table 8.3a and Table 8.3b*)

Some countries e.g. Jamaica and Tunisia are only served by charter flights, whereas all those who travelled to/from Qatar and Romania used scheduled flights. (*Table 8.4*)

The most popular international airports (those with the largest numbers of passenger journeys for flights directly to and from Scotland's main airports in 2023) were Dublin and Amsterdam, both with just over 1.2 million passengers. However, it should be noted that Amsterdam and Dublin are global hubs with extensive connections to the rest of the world. (*Table 8.5*)

In 2023, 4% of all terminal passenger traffic was within Scotland, 35% was to/from other parts of the UK, and 54% was between Scotland and mainland Europe. (*Table 8.6*)

Delays and Movements

In 2023, the overall average delay was 21 minutes for flights to or from Edinburgh airport and 16 minutes from Glasgow (the user guide section describes the basis for these figures). Around 23% of flights to or from Edinburgh 16% of flights to or from Glasgow airports were delayed by more than 30 minutes. (*Table 8.8*)

The total number of aircraft movements in 2023 was 367,000. Edinburgh had the highest number of aircraft movements with 115,000, (97% of which were commercial movements), followed by Glasgow (75,000) and Aberdeen (73,000). (*Table 8.9*)

Air freight

Air freight carried in 2023 decreased by 3,091 tonnes (6%) over the previous year to 47,015 tonnes. (*Table 8.13*)

Other statistics

The Civil Aviation Authority's 2018 passenger survey found large differences between the 4 main airports. Business passengers ranged from 22% at Glasgow and Edinburgh to 47% at Aberdeen. 53% of passengers at Aberdeen airport were for leisure, compared with 79% at Glasgow. (*Table 8.14*)

While around 30-49% of departing passengers at each airport arrived by private car, there were marked differences in the use of other modes of transport: taxi/minicab use ranged from 5% at Inverness to 29% at Glasgow; bus/coach travellers varied from 7% at Edinburgh to 12% at Aberdeen and hire car users from 3% at Glasgow to 25% at Inverness. (*Table 8.15*)



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