



**TRANSPORT  
SCOTLAND**  
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

# Scottish Transport Statistics 2023

## 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 21 million air passengers at Scottish airports in 2022, 206% more than in the previous year.
- 52% travelled to or from Edinburgh and 30% to or from Glasgow.
- 50 thousand tonnes of freight were carried by air in 2022.

## Main Points

### Passengers and Airports

There were 21 million air terminal passengers in 2022, 14 million less than in the previous year. 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. They have now increased by 207% to 21 million in 2022. (Table 8.1)

Edinburgh airport had 11 million terminal passengers in 2022 (272% increase) and Glasgow airport had 6.5 million, 215% more than the previous year. Aberdeen had 2.0 million, (up 82%) and Inverness had 700,000 (96% more). Together these four airports accounted for 92% 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 2022, London Heathrow accounted for 39% of passengers on selected domestic routes to and from Aberdeen, 25% for Edinburgh and 24% for Glasgow. London Gatwick had 34% of the domestic passengers to/from Inverness. Other domestic routes with large passenger numbers included those between Edinburgh and Gatwick, Belfast, London City and Bristol, and between Glasgow and Gatwick, 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 2.2 million passenger journeys in 2022, 16% of all passengers on direct flights abroad. Other popular origins/destinations were Spain(Canary Islands) and the Irish Republic (both 1.2 million passengers), the Netherlands (1.1 million passengers) and France (0.8 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 the republic of Serbia are only served by charter flights, whereas all those who travelled to/from Qatar and Malta 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 2022) were Amsterdam and Dublin, both with just over 1 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 2022, 4% of all terminal passenger traffic was within Scotland, 34% was to/from other parts of the UK, and 49% was between Scotland and mainland Europe. *(Table 8.6)*

## Delays and Movements

In 2022, the overall average delay was 23 minutes for flights to or from Edinburgh airport and 18 minutes from Glasgow (the user guide section describes the basis for these figures). Around 24% of flights to or from Edinburgh 18% of flights to or from Glasgow airports were delayed by more than 30 minutes. *(Table 8.8)*

The total number of aircraft movements in 2022 was 350,000. Edinburgh had the highest number of aircraft movements with 98,000, (96% of which were commercial movements), followed by Aberdeen (74,000) and Glasgow (70,000). *(Table 8.9)*

## Air freight

Air freight carried in 2022 decreased by 5,238 tonnes (9%) over the previous year to 50,106 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. Fifty three per cent of passengers at Aberdeen airport were for leisure, compared with 79 per cent 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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