



**TRANSPORT  
SCOTLAND**  
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

# Scottish Transport Statistics 2022

## Air Transport

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## I. Introduction

1.1 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 7 million air passengers at Scottish airports in 2021, slightly less than in the previous year.
- 43% travelled to or from Edinburgh and 30% to or from Glasgow.
- 55 thousand tonnes of freight were carried by air in 2021.

## 2. Main Points

### Passengers and Airports

2.1 There were 7 million air terminal passengers in 2021, 32,000 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. (*Table 8.1*)

2.2 Edinburgh airport had 3 million terminal passengers in 2021 (13% decrease) and Glasgow airport had 2.1 million, 6% more than the previous year. Aberdeen had 1.1 million, (up 8%) and Inverness had 357,000 (49% more). Together these four airports accounted for 93% 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*)

2.3 In 2021, London Heathrow accounted for 42% of passengers on selected domestic routes to and from Aberdeen, 26% for Edinburgh and 27% for Glasgow. London Gatwick had 32% of the domestic passengers to/from Inverness. Other domestic routes with large passenger numbers included those between Edinburgh and Gatwick, Stansted, Belfast and Bristol, and between Glasgow and Gatwick, Stansted, Belfast and Bristol. 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

2.4 The most popular country of origin/destination for passengers flying directly to and from Scottish airports was Spain (excluding the Canary Islands) with 402,000 passenger journeys in 2021, 17% of all passengers on direct flights abroad. Other popular origins/destinations were the Netherlands (323,000 passengers), the Irish Republic (273,000 passengers) and Spain(Canary Islands) (271,000). 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*)

2.5 Some countries e.g. Ukraine and Kuwait are only served by charter flights, whereas all those who travelled to/from the Switzerland or Qatar used scheduled flights. (*Table 8.4*)

2.6 The most popular international airports (those with the largest numbers of passenger journeys for flights directly to and from Scotland's main airports in 2021) were Amsterdam with 321,000 passengers and Dublin with 256,000 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*)

2.7 In 2021, 9% of all terminal passenger traffic was within Scotland, 51% was to/from other parts of the UK, and 29% was between Scotland and mainland Europe. (*Table 8.6*)

## Delays and Movements

2.8 In 2021, the overall average delay was 7 minutes for flights to or from Edinburgh airport and 8 minutes from Glasgow (the user guide section describes the basis for these figures). Around 7% of flights to or from both Edinburgh and Glasgow airports were delayed by more than 30 minutes. (*Table 8.8*)

2.9 The total number of aircraft movements in 2021 was 260,000. Aberdeen had the highest number of aircraft movements with 63,000, (87% of which were commercial movements), followed by Edinburgh (44,000) and Glasgow (40,000). (*Table 8.9*)

## Air freight

2.10 Air freight carried in 2020 increased by 6,330 tonnes (13%) over the previous year to 55,343 tonnes. (*Table 8.13*)

## Other statistics

2.11 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*)

2.12 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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Published by Transport Scotland, March 2023

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