

IATA records solid passenger demand for April

The International Air Transport Association's (IATA) global passenger traffic results for April 2019 show that demand (revenue passenger kilometres or RPKs) rose by 4.3% compared to April 2018. April's capacity (available seat kilometres or ASKs) increased by 3.6%, with the load factor climbing by 0.6 percentage points to 82.8% - a record for the month of April, surpassing last year's record of 82.2%.



ty_yang via Pxabay

Regionally, Africa, Europe and Latin America posted record load factors.

"We experienced solid but not exceptional rising demand for air connectivity in April. This is partly owing to the timing of Easter, but also reflects the slowing global economy. Driven by tariffs and trade disputes, global trade is falling, and as a result, we are not seeing traffic growing at the same levels as a year ago. However, airlines are doing a very good job of managing aircraft utilisation, leading to record load factors," said Alexandre de Juniac, IATA's director general and CEO.

April 2019 (% year-on-year)	World share ¹	RPK	ASK	PLF (%-pt) ²	PLF (level) ³
Total Market	100.0%	4.3%	3.6%	0.6%	82.8%
Africa	2.1%	1.6%	0.6%	0.7%	73.3%
Asia Pacific	34.4%	2.1%	3.2%	-0.9%	81.7%
Europe	26.7%	7.6%	6.3%	1.0%	85.1%
Latin America	5.1%	5.7%	4.7%	0.8%	82.2%
Middle East	9.2%	2.6%	-1.6%	3.3%	80.3%
North America	22.5%	4.4%	3.4%	0.8%	83.9%

¹% of industry RPKs in 2018 ²Year-on-year change in load factor ³Load Factor Level

International passenger markets

April international passenger demand rose by 5.1% compared to April 2018. All regions recorded year-over-year traffic increases, led by airlines in Europe. The total capacity climbed by 3.8%, with the load factor climbing by 1.1 percentage points to 82.5%.

- **European airlines'** April traffic increased by 8.0% compared to the year-ago period, up from 4.9% annual growth in March.

While this represented the strongest monthly growth since December, on a seasonally-adjusted basis, RPKs have only risen by 1% since November 2018, suggesting the global economic and trade backdrop – along with the uncertainty surrounding Brexit – is impacting demand.

Capacity rose by 6.6%, with the load factor surging up by 1.1 percentage points to 85.7% - the highest among the regions.

- **Asia-Pacific carriers** posted a 2.9% traffic rise in April, up from 2% growth in March but well below the long-term average.

Capacity climbed by 3.7%, with the load factor dropping by 0.6 percentage points to 80.8%.

Asia-Pacific was the only region to experience a decline in its load factor compared to the same month a year ago. Results largely reflect the slowdown in global trade, including the impact from the China-US trade tensions on the broader region, which continue to weigh on passenger demand.

- **Middle East carriers** saw a demand rise of 2.9% in April, which was a recovery from a 3.0% decline in traffic in March. Notwithstanding the monthly turnaround, in seasonally-adjusted terms the downward trend in traffic growth continues, reflecting broader structural changes affecting the industry in the region.

Capacity fell by 1.6%, with the load factor soaring by 3.5 percentage points to 80.5%.

- **North American airlines** posted a 5.5% demand increase compared to April 2018, which was up from 3.2% year-over-year growth in March. A strong domestic economy, low unemployment and a strong dollar are offsetting any impacts from current trade tensions.

Capacity climbed by 3.2%, with the load factor rising by 1.8 percentage points to 82.2%.

- **Latin American airlines** experienced a 5.2% rise in April demand compared to the same month last year, slightly up on 4.9% growth in March.

Capacity increased by 4.0%, with the load factor edging up by 0.9 percentage points to 82.8%.

The strong results are occurring against a backdrop of economic and political uncertainty in some key regional economies. Strong South-North traffic flows may be supporting demand growth.

- **African airlines** had a 1.1% traffic increase in April, which was down from 1.6% growth in March and was the slowest regional growth since early 2015.

Like Latin America, Africa is seeing some economic and political uncertainty in the largest markets.

Capacity climbed by 0.1%, with the load factor edging up by 0.7 percentage points to 72.6%.

Domestic passenger markets

Demand for domestic travel climbed by 2.8% in April compared to April 2018, down from 4.1% growth in March year-over-year. The slowing trend is being driven primarily by developments in China and India.

Capacity increased by 3.2%, with the load factor slid by 0.3 percentage points to 83.2%.

April 2019 (% year-on-year)	World share ¹	RPK	ASK	PLF (%-pt) ²	PLF (level) ³
Domestic	36.0%	2.8%	3.2%	-0.3%	83.2%
Australia	0.9%	-0.7%	0.4%	-0.9%	79.5%
Brazil	1.1%	0.6%	-1.1%	1.4%	81.9%
China P.R	9.5%	3.4%	5.4%	-1.6%	84.3%
India	1.6%	-0.5%	0.5%	-0.9%	88.6%
Japan	1.0%	3.4%	2.6%	0.5%	67.3%
Russian Fed	1.4%	10.4%	10.4%	0.0%	81.0%
US	14.1%	4.1%	3.8%	0.2%	84.7%

¹% of industry RPKs in 2018 ²Year-on-year change in load factor ³Load Factor Level

- **China's domestic traffic** increased by 3.4% in April, up from 2.8% in March, but still well below the 2016-2018 period when growth averaged around 12%, reflecting the impact of the US-China trade dispute and softening in a number of economic indicators.

- **India's airlines' traffic** fell by 0.5% year-over-year, reflecting the impact of the shut-down of Jet Airways. This marked the first time in six years that monthly domestic traffic declined compared to the year-ago period.

[View the April Passenger Traffic Analysis.](#)

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