

# CROSS-BORDER AIR TRAVEL TO REACH JUST 23 % OF PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS



Last year has been a tough one for the tourism industry worldwide. Naturally, this is also the case of the airline industry, which had to reduce its operation greatly, which has led to enormous losses in the sector.

What should air travel expect in the upcoming months? ForwardKeys' analysis of flight booking data reveals that the prospects are still very gloomy, at least in most regions.

**According to data, air transport will reach 23 % of its pre-pandemic numbers during the summer months.**

With regards to regions, the only one that stands out is the Caribbean where the booking volume has reached 81 % of the 2019 numbers. Otherwise, the numbers in Africa and the Middle East (31 %), Europe (22 %) and especially the Asia Pacific (7 %) are still very much underwhelming.

Generally, the problem is still based on travel restrictions imposed by governments and not so much about Covid-19 itself.

## **Surprising Volumes in the Caribbean and Some Parts of Africa**

The one region that really stands out is the Caribbean. **The principal reason for this is the desire of American citizens to travel to Mexico, Costa Rica or Puerto Rico.**

Mexico, for example, has reached 86 % of its 2019 air travel levels. The Dominican Republic (83 %) and the Bahamas (81 %) and Costa Rica (80 %) are also doing well.

Meanwhile, Puerto Rico did even better than two years ago with volumes at 140 %. The reason for this is also the fact that fully vaccinated travelers can visit the country without any restrictions.

A similar trend is also observed in some African countries, especially in the west of the continent. Senegal, Ghana and Nigeria have all reached numbers that correspond to more than 70 % of 2019 levels. This, however, is reportedly mainly due to increased visits between friends and relatives.

## **Difficult Summer for Europe and the Asia Pacific**

The Old Continent, on the other hand, cannot boast similar numbers as the above-mentioned countries. Continent-wide, as noted, Europe is at 22 % of its 2019 volumes.

Some countries are above the average, with Albania standing out with 73 %. Others 'overperformers' include Greece with 49 %, Serbia with 38 % or Malta at 35 %.

Mostly, however, **European countries are below the average.** Some of the countries with volumes under 20 % of the 2019 numbers are, for example, Germany, Great Britain, France, but even Italy, which is one of the most popular destinations worldwide.

The Asia Pacific is going through an even tougher situation and presumably, it will take much longer for the industry here to recover.

The worrying numbers in the region are mainly attributed to the fact that most countries in the region are essentially closed to foreigners. This is the case of, for example, China, Japan or Australia.

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