

# AIR TRAFFIC: USA REMAINS TOP TRAVEL DESTINATION



The busiest time of the year has ended, and unfortunately, it was accompanied by many flight delays and cancellations. The summer of 2023 was plagued by staff shortages, forest fires, and unpredictable weather, particularly in European air traffic.

According to the aviation portal AeroTelegraph, there is good and bad news. The bad news is that **worldwide flight bookings are still almost 23% below pre-pandemic levels**. However, the good news is that flight bookings have increased 31% compared to the previous year. Things are improving, albeit slowly.

## USA Is on Top

According to recent data, the United States was the most popular travel destination this summer, followed by Spain, Great Britain, Italy, and Japan. USA was also the top source market for international travel in the summer of 2023. Other major source markets include Germany, Great Britain, Canada, and France. While USA has almost reached its pre-pandemic level with only a 1 percent decrease, other countries are still recovering.

The three most important European markets, Germany, Great Britain, and France, are still almost a fifth below their 2019 levels. Specifically, these markets have declined by 21%, 20%, and 17%, respectively. Meanwhile, the recovery in Asia has been much slower. China's air traffic is down by a significant 67%, and every second flight from Japan is still missing compared to the summer of 2019.

## Classic Beach Destinations Are the Most Resilient

It is interesting to see which travel destinations performed well compared to 2019. Air travel has made a strong comeback, especially in countries popular for beach holidays.

Costa Rica has shown the most growth, with the number of flight bookings for summer trips being 19% higher than in 2019. Following closely behind are the Dominican Republic (18% increase), Colombia, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico (all with a 14% increase).

Notably, Europe is barely represented in the ranking of countries that have gained the most compared to pre-Corona times. Only Greece (with a 6% increase) has reached the top 10 in Europe.

**While Greece and Portugal faced an unprecedented rise in temperature and forest fires, it had a limited impact on the tourism industry.** It was observed that most tourists had already made their bookings, which helped keep the industry afloat. Rhodes was the only place that suffered many cancellations, but it recovered quickly as flight bookings returned to normal within a few weeks.

Tourist bookings for Northern Europe and the Nordic region declined 16 and 17 percent compared to 2019. However, they performed better in the last-minute market, likely due to the heatwave.

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