

# Monthly civil aviation statistics, December 2023

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## Highlights

Major Canadian airlines carried 6.8 million passengers on scheduled and charter services in December, up 10.7% from the same month in 2022 and 5.8% below the December 2019 level, before the COVID-19 pandemic.

With traffic at 18.1 billion passenger-kilometres and capacity at 21.8 billion available seat-kilometres, the passenger load factor (the ratio of passenger-kilometres to available seat-kilometres) was 82.8% in December 2023.

Overall, Canadian Level I air carriers transported 79.6 million passengers in 2023, which was 27.0% more passengers than in 2022, but 6.8% less than in 2019.

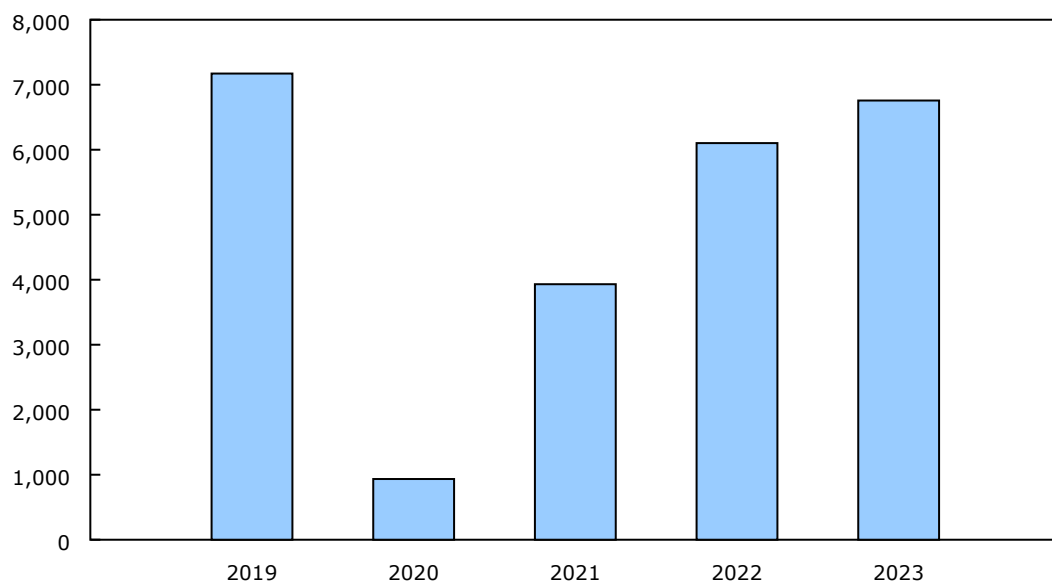
## December at a glance

Canadian Level I air carriers flew 6.8 million passengers on scheduled and charter services in December 2023, which was 5.8% below the pre-pandemic level reported in December 2019—the largest decline from pre-pandemic levels for passenger numbers since August 2023.

### Chart 1

#### Passengers carried by Canadian Level I air carriers, December, 2019 to 2023

thousands



Source(s): Table 23-10-0079-01.

After two months of exceeding pre-pandemic levels, the number of passenger-kilometres in December, at 18.1 billion, was 1.9% lower than in December 2019. With capacity at 21.8 billion available seat-kilometres, the passenger load factor was 82.8% in December 2023. This was the only month in 2023 when the load factor was below that for the same month in 2019.



Each passenger travelled an average of 2 673 kilometres in December 2023, up 4.2% from the pre-pandemic level.

At 180,000, the number of flying hours in December was 6.3% below the pre-pandemic level.

Operating revenue earned by Canadian Level I air carriers totalled \$2.5 billion in December, 14.3% higher than in December 2019.

## **2023 year in review**

In 2023, Canadian airlines continued their recovery from the pandemic. The pace of recovery slowed from 2022, as levels in 2023 approached pre-pandemic levels.

Throughout the year, Canadian Level I air carriers flew 79.6 million passengers, a 27.0% increase over 2022 and 6.8% below the 2019 level. Year-over-year increases in passenger numbers exceeded 100% at the start of 2023, the result of low volumes in early 2022 when air travel was affected by the Omicron variant.

Year-over-year increases then moderated, with the smallest gain recorded in November 2023 (+7.9%). Passenger numbers were closest to pre-pandemic levels in October (-1.3% compared with October 2019).

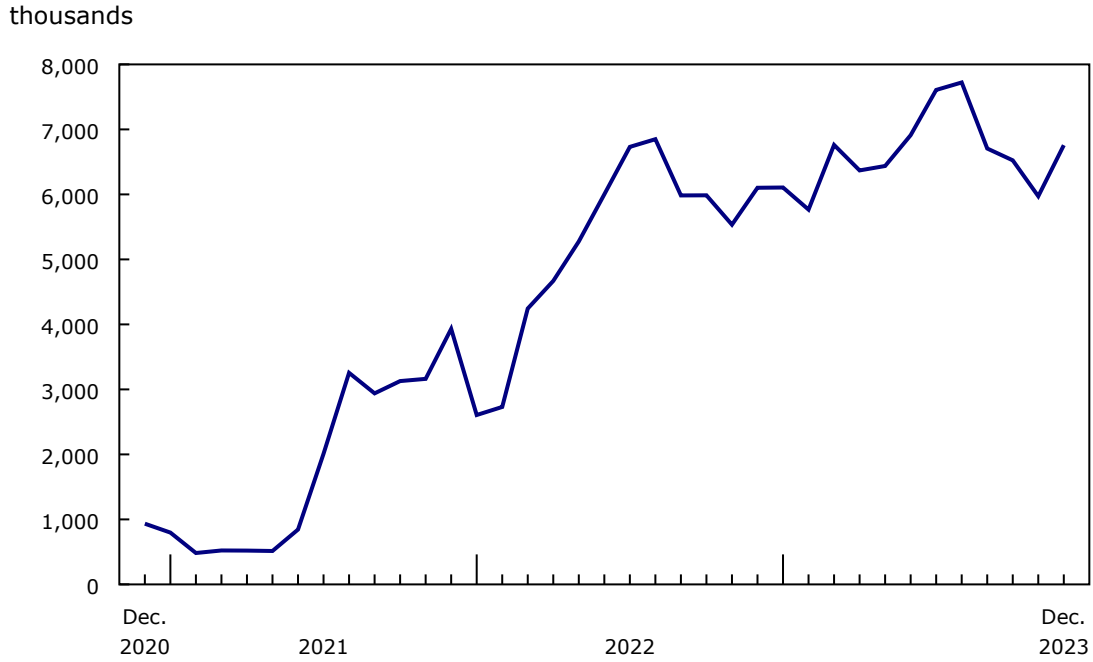
The number of passenger-kilometres reached pre-pandemic levels in October and November 2023, before dipping below the 2019 level again in December. Capacity, measured by available seat-kilometres, was closest to 2019 levels in November (-0.5%) and December (-0.9%).

In 2023, the passenger load factor was above pre-pandemic levels every month except December. The overall load factor for 2023 was 86.0%, higher than the 84.3% recorded in 2019.

The average distance travelled per passenger in 2023 was 2 722 kilometres, up 1.9% from 2019.

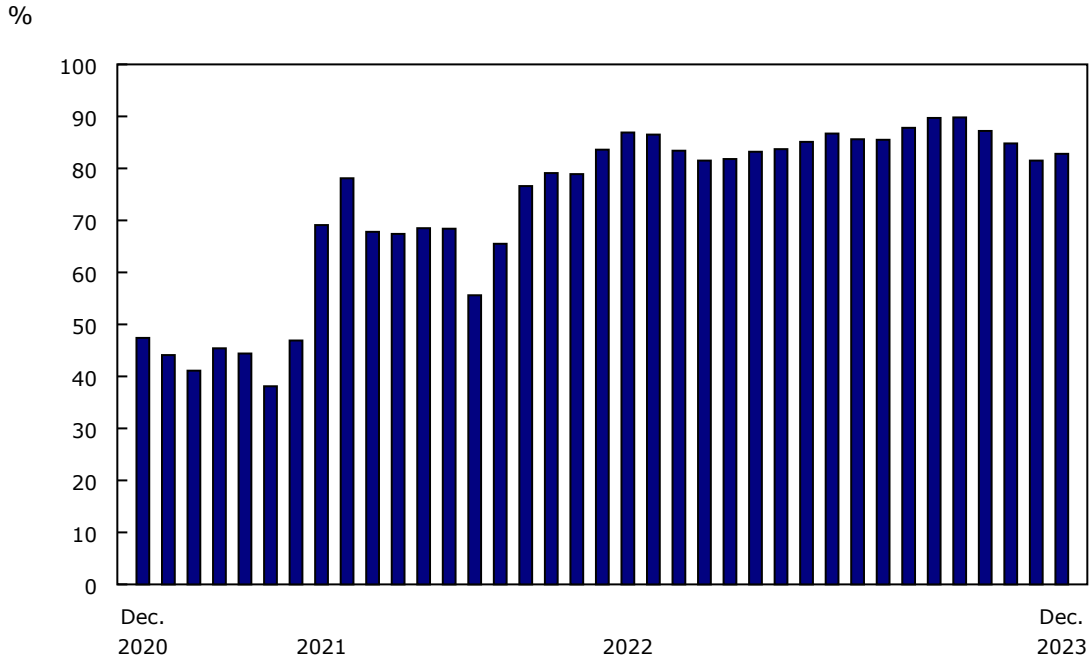
In 2023, operating revenue exceeded pre-pandemic levels in every month and totalled \$28.3 billion, 11.8% higher than in 2019.

**Chart 2**  
**Passengers carried, Canadian air carriers, Level I**



Source(s): Table [23-10-0079-01](#).

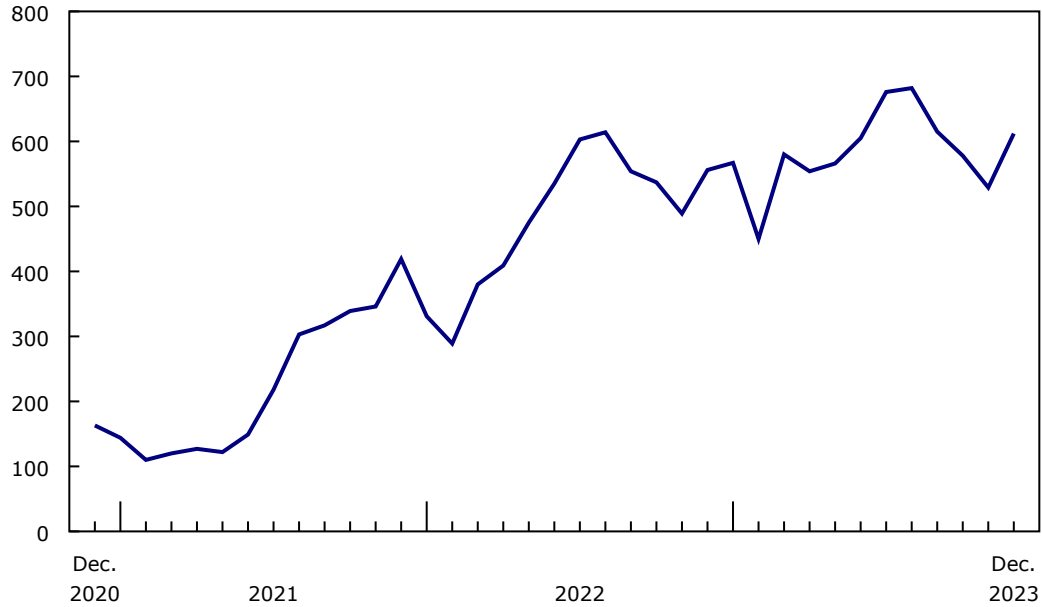
**Chart 3**  
**Passenger load factor, Canadian air carriers, Level I**



Source(s): Table [23-10-0079-01](#).

### Chart 4 Turbo fuel consumed, Canadian air carriers, Level I

millions of litres



Source(s): Table 23-10-0079-01.

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#### Note to readers

The Monthly Civil Aviation Survey covers all Canadian Level I air carriers: Air Canada (including Air Canada Rouge), Air Transat, Jazz, Porter, Sunwing and WestJet (including Swoop, WestJet Encore and WestJet Link).

The average passenger trip length is calculated by dividing the number of passenger-kilometres by the number of passengers. Trips across Canada and around the world are included in this calculation.

The data in this monthly release are not seasonally adjusted.

Data for November 2023 have been revised.

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**Available tables:** table [23-10-0079-01](#).

**Definitions, data sources and methods:** survey number [5026](#).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [infostats@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:infostats@statcan.gc.ca)) or Media Relations ([statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca)).