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Airport Activity: Air Carrier Traffic at Canadian Airports, 2022

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Airport Activity: Air Carrier Traffic at Canadian Airports, 2022

Highlights

Two years after the COVID-19 pandemic brought worldwide air travel to its knees, the Canadian aviation industry continued to recover in 2022. While the number of passengers (117.3 million) enplaned and deplaned at Canadian airports in 2022 was roughly two and a half times greater than the number in 2021, it remained less than three-quarters (72.0%) of the 2019 pre-pandemic level (162.9 million).

In 2022, passenger traffic increased significantly at Canada's four largest airports. Toronto/Lester B Pearson International, Vancouver International, Montréal/Pierre Elliott Trudeau International and Calgary International each reported roughly twice the passenger traffic from 2021.

Pent-up travel demand takes to the skies

Following measures taken in early 2022 to combat the Omicron COVID-19 variant, travel restrictions were eased in March and completely lifted by October. The unexpected surge in passenger volume during the busy summer travel season left some major airports grappling with challenges largely stemming from staffing.

Volumes increased throughout the year with the number of domestic passengers doubling, up 36.9 million from 2021. Transborder traffic (Canada-United States) and other international traffic both saw large gains as well. The former increased by more than four times (or 16.1 million passengers) and overseas traffic by three and a half times (or 18.0 million passengers) from 2021.

Table 1
Passenger and cargo data

Enplaned and Deplaned Passengers	2021	2022	Change 2021 to 2022
	number		percent
Domestic Segments	34,452,193	71,387,568	107.2
Transborder Segments	4,816,769	20,880,296	333.5
Other International Segments	7,011,949	25,031,067	257.0
Total	46,280,911	117,298,931	153.4
Loaded/Unloaded Cargo (tonnes)	1,299,220	1,441,394	10.9

Source: Tables 23-10-0253-01 and 23-10-0254-01.

Canada's busiest airports

In 2022, the four busiest airports accounted for over two-thirds (70.3%) of all passenger traffic in Canada, bolstered by much larger shares of transborder (90.9%) and other international traffic (96.0%).

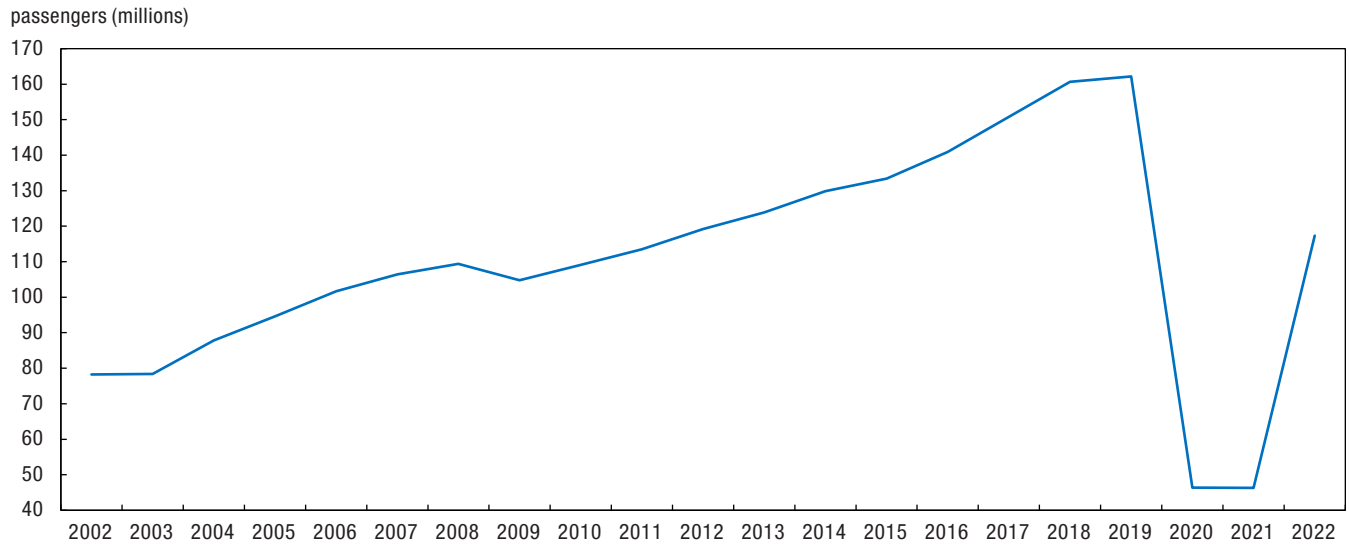
In another challenging year for the aviation industry, Toronto's Lester B Pearson International maintained its position as Canada's busiest airport. Passenger traffic increased 180.8% going from 12.4 million passengers in 2021 to 34.7 million passengers in 2022. Passenger volume growth was strong for all sectors with domestic traffic increasing 113.5%, transborder traffic increasing 293.9% and international traffic increasing 230.3%.

With global aviation beginning to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, Vancouver International also experienced a significant increase in passenger traffic in 2022, up 165% to 18.6 million enplaned and deplaned passengers from 7.1 million in 2021. As with Toronto, Vancouver International saw large year-over-year increases in all sectors with domestic, transborder and international traffic up 108.3%, 357.4% and 257.8% respectively.

Regaining its position as Canada's third busiest airport, Montréal/Pierre Elliot Trudeau International also saw significant increases in passenger traffic. As passengers returned, Montréal Trudeau saw 15.3 million passengers enplaned and deplaned in 2022, up from 5.0 million passengers in 2021. With international travel restrictions lifted, transborder and international traffic was up 304.6% and 267.6% respectively. Of the top four airports, domestic traffic at Montréal increased the most, up 121.4%.

Rounding out the top four, Calgary International saw traffic up 135.6% in 2022, with 13.9 million passengers enplaning and deplaning at the airport. Growth in international traffic among the top four airports was the fastest at Calgary International, with an increase of 297%. Domestic and transborder traffic also saw large year-over-year increases, up 103.2% and 313.7% respectively.

Chart 1
Total enplaned/deplaned passengers



Source: Table 23-10-0253-01; publication 51-203-X.

Cargo operators turn to a new ‘business as usual’

Early in the pandemic, some airlines made aircraft modifications and began to operate cargo-only flights. Although many of these temporarily converted aircraft gradually returned to passenger operations, the largest cargo movers expanded both freighter networks and cargo-only fleets while adding new all-cargo services.

Although air cargo business continued to grow in Canada, it was dampened by softening global demand because of a variety of factors: COVID-19’s Omicron variant in Asia, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, rising oil prices, inflation, interest rate increases and supply chain disruptions.

Overall, the amount of cargo loaded and unloaded at Canadian airports increased by 10.9% in 2022. Domestic cargo transported by air increased 4.5% from 2021 to 691 000 tonnes in 2022. Transborder cargo fell by 3.5% (to 252 000 tonnes) while other international cargo grew by 32.4% (to 498 000 tonnes).

Despite this continued growth, the annualized increase in [quarterly goods revenue](#) earned by the Canadian airline industry slowed to 2.5% in 2022, down from the 30.9% reported in 2021.

Looking ahead

With a surge in travel demand into the busy summer travel season of 2022, passenger traffic levels at Canada’s airports approached full recovery. The higher volume of passengers coupled with ongoing industry labour shortages resulted in long delays and cancellations at some airports. Airlines modified flight schedules to help improve operations.

With a turbulent transition to business as usual in 2022, major airports in Canada are now projecting a full return to pre-pandemic traffic levels in 2023. While airports still face challenges such as managing financial pressures, keeping fees in check and improving passenger experience, the future is promising as [tourism spending](#) in Canada continues to rise in early 2023, with air passenger transportation making the largest contribution.

Note to Users

Cargo data

It is important to note that the air cargo data presented does not represent the total cargo loaded and unloaded in Canada. Comprehensive cargo data are not collected for the following reasons:

- i. the regional and local scheduled carriers do not file cargo data on the airport activity survey and,
- ii. the major charter survey does not collect data on domestic courier cargo or domestic entity cargo flights.

Passenger flights which carry cargo on them are classified as passenger flights. The cargo carried on these passenger flights is defined as belly-hold cargo. The belly-hold cargo data are included with the pure cargo data in the cargo table, Table 23-10-0254-01.

Services offered by carriers

Scheduled Services

ABX Air Inc.
Aer Lingus
Aeromexico
Air Algerie
Air Canada
Air Canada Rouge
Air China
Air Creebec Inc.
Air France
Air India
Air Inuit Ltd.
Air New Zealand
Air North Charter Training Ltd.
Air St Pierre
Air Tindi Ltd.
Air Transat A.T. Inc.
Air Wisconsin
Aklak Air
All Nippon Airways
American Airlines
Amik Aviation Ltd.
Austrian Airlines
Avianca
Avianca Costa Rica
Bearskin Airlines
Bradley Air Services Limited
British Airways
Calm Air International Ltd.
Canadian North Inc.
Cargojet Airways Ltd.
Cargolux Airlines International
Caribbean Airlines
Carson Air Ltd.
Castle Aviation

Cathay Pacific Airways
Central Mountain Air Ltd.
Champlain Enterprises
China Airlines
China Eastern Airlines
China Southern Airlines
Condor Flugdienst
COPA
Corilair Charters Limited
Corsair International
Delta Air Lines
EgyptAir
El Al Israel Airlines
Emirates Airlines
Endeavor Air
Envoy Air Inc.
Ethiopian Airlines
Etihad Airways
EVA Airways Corporation
FedEx
Flair Airlines Ltd.
GoJet Airlines LLC
Gulf Island Seaplanes
Hainan Airlines
Harbour Air Ltd.
Horizon Air Industries Inc.
Icelandair
Iskwew Air Inc.
JAL-Japan Airlines International Co. Ltd.
Jazz Air Inc.
JDR Pacific Ventures
Kenmore Air Harbor Inc.
KF Aerospace
KLM Royal Dutch Airlines
Korean Air
Lift

LOT-Polish Airlines
Lufthansa German Airlines
Lynx Air
McMurray Aviation
Mesa Airlines
Montmagny Air Service Inc.
Morningstar Air Express Inc.
Nolinor Aviation
North Star Air
Northway Aviation Ltd.
Northwestern Air Lease
Northwright Air
Omni Air International
Pacific Coastal Airlines Limited
Pakistan International
Pascan Aviation Inc.
Perimeter Aviation Ltd.
Philippine Airlines Inc.
Piedmont Airlines
Porter Airlines Inc.
Provincial Airlines
PSA Airlines
Qantas Airways
Qatar Airways
Republic Airways
Royal Air Maroc
Royal Jordanian
SATA Internacional
Seair Seaplanes
Sharp-Tail Air Ltd.
Sichuan Airlines Co. Ltd.
Singapore Airlines
Sky Jet M G Inc.
Sky West Airlines
Skylink Express Inc.
Sunwing Airlines Inc.

Swiss International Air Lines Ltd.

Swoop

TAP Air Portugal

Thunder Airlines Limited

Tofino Air

Transwest Air

TUI

Tunisair

Turkish Airlines

United Airlines

United Parcel Service

Wasaya Airways Limited Partnership

WestJet

WestJet Encore

Wilderness Seaplanes

Xiamen Airlines

Major Charter Services

Acass

ACM Aviation

Air Alsie

Air Canada

Air Creebec

Air Foyle

Air Hamburg

Air Inuit Ltée / Air Inuit Ltd.

Air St Pierre

Air Transat A.T. Inc.

AirNet II

Alaska Airlines

American Air Services Inc.

Ameristar Air Cargo Inc.

Anderson Air

Atlas Air Inc.

Aurora Jet Partners

Aviation Consultants Inc.

Bearskin Airlines

Borajet Airlines
Buffalo Airways
Calm Air International Ltd.
Canadian North Inc.
Chartright Air Inc.
Chrono Aviation Inc.
Chrono Jet Inc.
Clay Lacy Aviation
Comlux Aviation
DC Aviation
Delta Air Lines
East Coast Flight Services
Elite Jets
Execaire
Executive Flight Services
Fast Air Ltd.
Flexjet
Flightexec
Gestair
Global Aviation
Gulf & Caribbean Cargo Inc.
Hainan Airlines
Image Air Charter
Independent Flight Leasing Inc.
Jazz Air Inc.
Jet Access Aviation
Jet Concierge Club
Jetport Inc.
Kalitta Air LLC
Kenn Borek Air Ltd.
Korean Air
London Air Services Limited
Lufthansa German Airlines
Lynden Air Cargo LLC
McNeely Charter Service Inc.
Mira Vista Aviation

Nolinor Aviation
Omni Air International
Pacific Coastal Airlines
Pal Aerospace Ltd.
Partner Jet Inc.
Pentastar Aviation
Priester Aviation
Saturn Aviation
Sharp-Tail Aviation Ltd.
Skycharter
Sunwest Aviation Ltd.
Sunwing Airlines Inc.
United Airlines
USA Jet Airlines Inc.
VIH Execujet Ltd.
VistaJet (Malta)
Volga-Dnepr Airlines
Vulkan Air
WestJet
WestJet Encore
XO

Factors which may have influenced the data

For additional contextual information on events affecting air travel, including summaries of selected Canadian economic events, as well as international and financial market developments by calendar month, check out the [Canadian Economic News](#).