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Airport Activity: Air Carrier Traffic at Canadian Airports, 2023

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Cette publication est aussi disponible en français.

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:

1. the regional and local scheduled carriers do not file cargo data on the airport activity survey and,
2. 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.

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Highlights

In 2023, air passenger traffic in Canada soared to nearly 93% of the 2019 pre-COVID-19 pandemic level, with the number of passengers enplaned and deplaned at Canadian airports growing almost 27% year-over-year to 150.7 million.

Canada’s four largest airports saw consistent gains in passenger traffic in 2023. Toronto/Lester B Pearson International, Vancouver International, Montréal/Pierre Elliott Trudeau International and Calgary International each reported at least a 24% increase in passenger traffic from 2022.

Please consult the new [Aviation Data Visualization Hub](#) to further explore airport activity statistics in an interactive format.

Passenger confidence up

Passenger confidence was strengthened in 2023, the first full year without any pandemic-related government travel restrictions in place. An easing of pandemic-induced labour and supply challenges along with the industry’s ability to deliver more consistent levels of service, contributed to the growing demand for travel.

Demand increased over the year with the number of domestic passengers increasing by 18.8%, up 13.6 million from 2022. Transborder traffic (Canada-United States) and other international traffic both saw significant gains as well. Transborder traffic increased by 37.4% (+7.8 million passengers) and overseas traffic was up 40.7% (+10.4 million passengers) from 2022.

Table 1
Passenger and cargo data

	2022	2023	Change 2022 to 2023
	number		percent
Enplaned and Deplaned Passengers			
Domestic Segments	72,437,349	86,047,292	18.8
Transborder Segments	20,857,772	28,651,629	37.4
Other International Segments	25,587,776	36,006,662	40.7
Total	118,882,897	150,705,583	26.8
Loaded/Unloaded Cargo (tonnes)	1,473,150	1,434,184	-2.6

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

Canada’s busiest airports

In 2023, the four busiest airports accounted for over two-thirds (70.6%) of all passenger traffic in Canada including over half (54.7%) of all domestic traffic and much larger shares of transborder (89.4%) and other international traffic (93.5%).

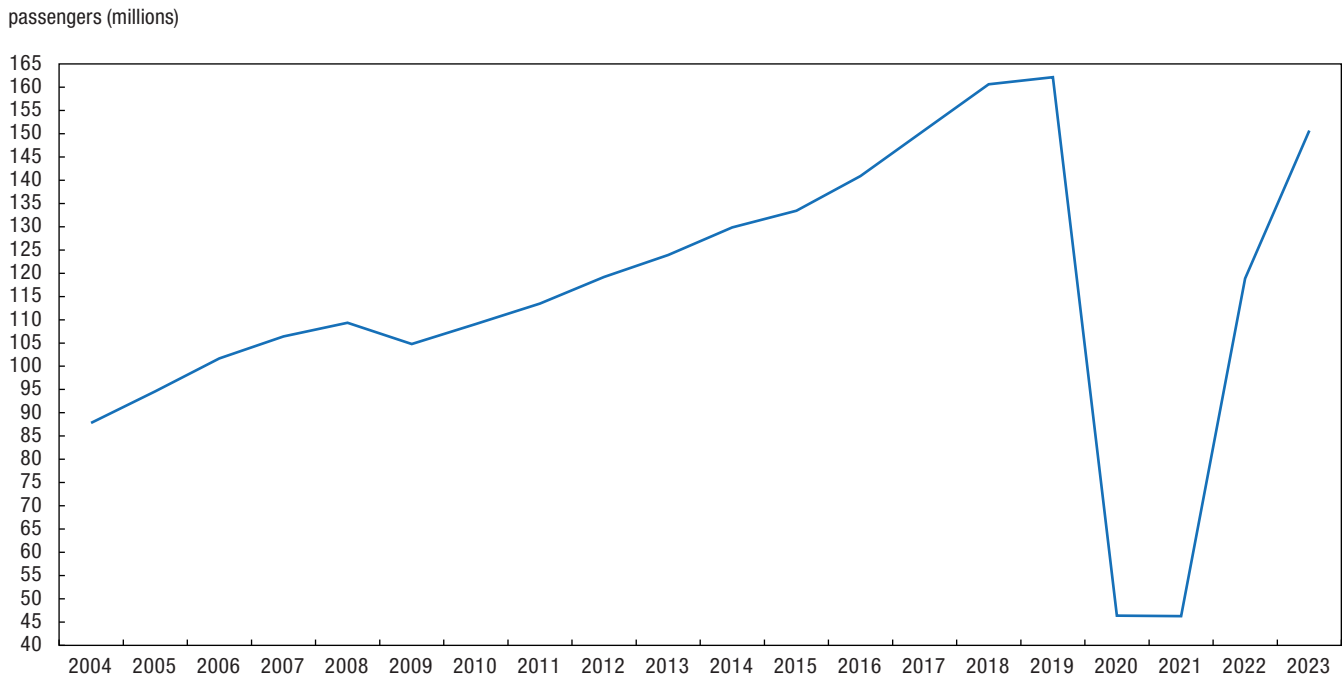
As the world was eager to reconnect using air travel, Toronto’s Lester B Pearson International continued to maintain its position as Canada’s busiest airport. Passenger traffic increased 24.8% going from 35.0 million passengers in 2022 to 43.7 million passengers in 2023. Growth in passenger traffic was strong for all sectors with domestic traffic increasing 15.2%, transborder traffic increasing 30.6% and international traffic increasing 31.6%.

Vancouver International also saw strong growth in passenger traffic in 2023, up 30.3% to 24.3 million enplaned and deplaned passengers from 18.6 million in 2022. As with Toronto, Vancouver International saw large year-over-year increases in all sectors with domestic, transborder and international traffic up 20.2%, 37.1% and 49.8% respectively.

Maintaining its position as Canada’s third busiest airport, Montréal/Pierre Elliot Trudeau International also saw significant increases in passenger traffic. As passengers continued to return to the skies, Montréal Trudeau saw 20.4 million passengers enplaned and deplaned in 2023, up 31.4% from 15.5 million passengers in 2022. With international travel restrictions completely lifted, transborder and international traffic was up 36.1% and 37.5% respectively. Domestic traffic at Montréal increased 20.1%.

Rounding out the top four, Calgary International saw traffic up 28.2% in 2023, with 18.0 million passengers enplaning and deplaning at the airport. Of the top four airports, Calgary International had the fastest growth in all sectors. Domestic traffic increased 20.5% from 2022, with transborder and other international traffic growing even more quickly at 46.4% and 53.2% respectively.

Chart 1
Total enplaned/deplaned passengers



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

Consumer confidence down

As with the decline in global air cargo tonnage reported by [Airports Council International](#), Canadian air cargo shipments were also dampened in 2023 by declining consumer confidence and softening demand due to a variety of economic and geopolitical factors such as inflation, high interest rates and conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East which led to subsequent supply chain disruptions.

Some Canadian carriers had to adapt to lower cargo volumes following the expected decrease in air cargo activity when some of the transitory pandemic-influenced growth in cargo demand eased. However, despite this decline, the total tonnages loaded and unloaded in Canada in 2023 remained above the pre-pandemic level.

Overall, the amount of cargo loaded and unloaded at Canadian airports decreased by 2.6% in 2023. Domestic cargo decreased 4.0% from 2022 to 690 000 tonnes in 2023. Transborder cargo fell 1.2% (to 251 000 tonnes) while other international cargo fell by 1.5% (to 494 000 tonnes).

The decrease in cargo volume that was transported through Canadian airports was echoed by a 15.8% decrease in annualized [quarterly goods revenue](#) earned by the Canadian airline industry in 2023.

Looking ahead

While demand for air travel was strong in 2023 and continued to propel the Canadian airline industry towards recovery of its 2019 passenger traffic volume, it stopped short of reaching a full return to pre-pandemic levels. As airport activity continues into 2024, there is hope that passenger traffic could make a full recovery. Data from [screened passenger traffic](#) at Canada’s eight largest airports support this as passenger counts continued to rise into 2024.

Services offered by carriers

Scheduled Services

ABX Air
 Aer Lingus
 Aeromexico
 Air Algerie
 Air Canada
 Air Canada Rouge
 Air China
 Air Creebec
 Air France
 Air India
 Air Inuit
 Air Montmagny
 Air New Zealand
 Air North
 Air St Pierre
 Air Tindi Ltd.
 Air Transat
 Air Wisconsin
 Aklak Air
 All Nippon Airways
 American Airlines
 Amik Aviation
 Arajet
 Austrian Airlines
 Avianca
 Avianca Costa Rica
 Bearskin Airlines
 Biman Bangladesh Airlines
 Bradley Air Services Limited
 British Airways
 Calm Air
 Canada Jetlines
 Canadian North
 Cargojet

Cargolux
Caribbean Airlines
Carson Air
Castle Aviation
Cathay Pacific Airways
Central Mountain Air
Champlain Enterprises
China Airlines
China Eastern Airlines
China Southern Airlines
Condor Flugdienst
Copa Airlines
CorilAir
Corsair International
Delta Air Lines
Discover Airlines
Edelweiss Air
EgyptAir
Emirates Airlines
Endeavor Air
Envoy Air
Ethiopian Airlines
Etihad Airways
EVA Air
FedEx
Fiji Airways
Flair Airlines
GoJet Airlines
Gulf Island Seaplanes
Hainan Airlines
Harbour Air
Horizon Air
Icelandair
Iskwew Air
Japan Airlines
Jazz Air Inc.

JDR Pacific Ventures
Kenmore Air
KF Aerospace
KLM Royal Dutch Airlines
Korean Air
LOT Polish Airlines
Lufthansa German Airlines
Lynx Air
McMurray Aviation
Mesa Airlines
Morningstar Air Express Inc.
Neos Air
North Star Air
Northway Aviation
Northwestern Air Lease
Northwright Air
Omni Air International
Pacific Coastal Airlines
Pakistan International
Pascan Aviation
Perimeter Aviation
Philippine Airlines
Piedmont Airlines
Play 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

Singapore Airlines
Sky West Airlines
Skyjet Aviation Canada
Skylink Express
Sunwing Airlines
Swiss International Air Lines
Swoop
TAP Air Portugal
Thunder Airlines
Tofino Air
Transwest Air
Tunisair
Turkish Airlines
United Airlines
United Parcel Service
VIH Execujet
Wasaya Airways
WestJet
WestJet Encore
Wilderness Seaplanes
Xiamen Airlines

Major Charter Services

Acass Canada
Air Alsie
Air Canada
Air Canada Rouge
Air Creebec
Air Foyle
Air Hamburg
Air Inuit
Air St Pierre
AirNet II
American Air Services
Ameristar Air Cargo
Anderson Air
Atlas Air

Aurora Jet Partners
Aviation Consultants
Bearskin Airlines
Borajet Airlines
Buffalo Airways
Canada Jetlines
Canadian North
Central Mountain Air
Chantilly Air
Chartright Air
Chrono Aviation
Chrono Jet
Cirrus Aviation Services
Clay Lacy Aviation
Delta Air Lines
Egyptair
Elite Jets
EVAS Air
Execaire
Executive Flight Services
Executive Fliteways
Fast Air Ltd.
Flexjet
Flightexec
Gestair
Global Aviation
Goodjet
Hamilton Jetport
Haute Aviation
Hop-a-jet
Houston JetDirect
IFL Group
Image Air Charter
Jazz Aviation
Jet Access Aviation
Jet Concierge Club

Jetstream Aviation
Kalitta Air
Kenn Borek Air
Korean Air
London Air Services
Lynden Air Cargo
McNeely Charter Service Inc.
Mira Vista Aviation
Nolinor Aviation
North Cariboo Air
Novajet
Oak Air Ltd.
Omni Air International
Pacific Coastal Airlines
Pal Aerospace
Pascan Aviation
Pentastar Aviation
Pivot Airlines
Porter Airlines
Priester Aviation
Prime Jet
Saturn Aviation
Sharp-Tail Aviation Ltd.
Skyservice Business Aviation
Solairus Aviation
Sunwest Aviation
Sunwing Airlines
TAG Aviation
United Airlines
USA Jet Airlines
VIH Execujet
VistaJet
WestJet
WestJet Encore

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](#).