EUROCONTROL Data Snapshot

Did you know… which were the busiest worldwide city pairs in 2024?

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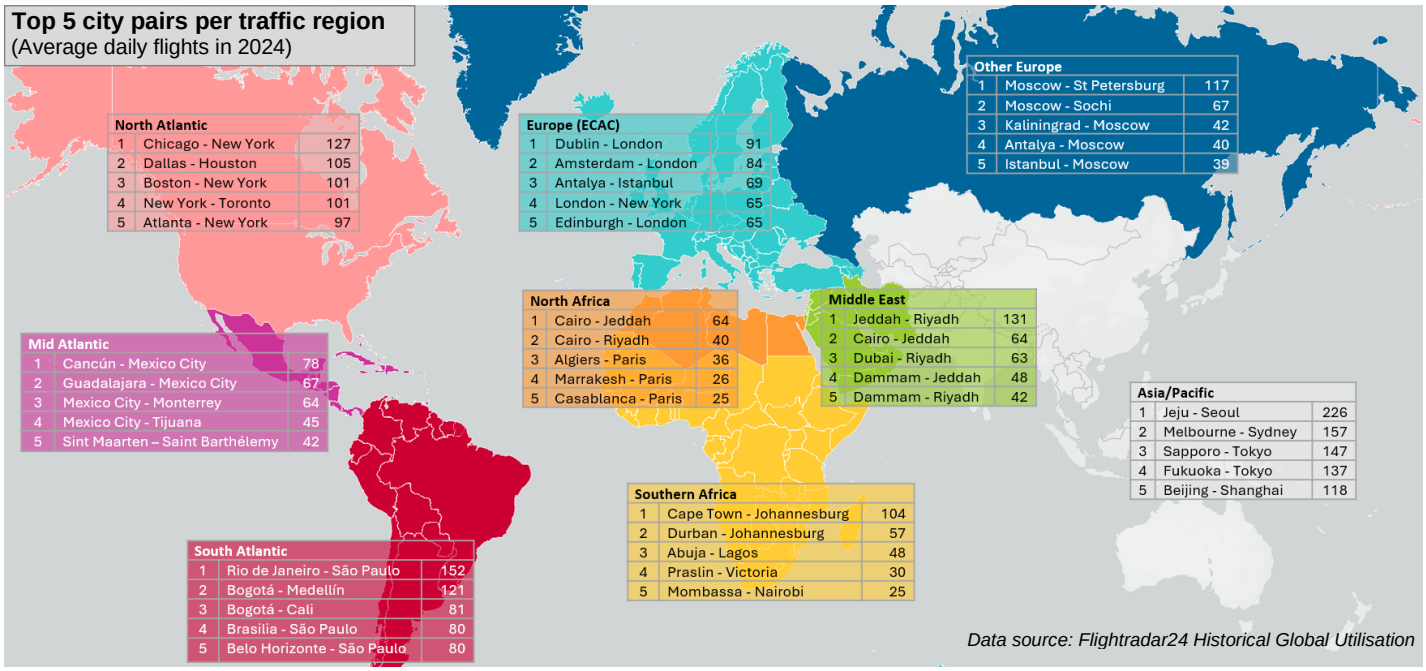

An interactive map displaying additional information on the top five city pairs per region is available here.

This Data Snapshot examines the busiest city pairs worldwide, based on daily connections.

The top five global city pairs in 2024 were all domestic. Jeju - Seoul in South Korea was the busiest, linking the capital to a popular island destination, with an average of 226 daily flights. Melbourne - Sydney (157) in Australia ranked second, followed by Rio de Janeiro - São Paulo (152) in Brazil, and Sapporo - Tokyo (147) plus Fukuoka - Tokyo (137) in Japan. This is the same top five list as in 2023. Compared with 2019, Chicago - New York has dropped from 3rd to 7th position and Hanoi - Ho Chi Minh, which was 5th in 2019, is now 13th.

The Asia/Pacific region dominated the list, accounting for 45 of the 100 busiest city pairs in 2024, followed by North Atlantic (26), Europe (12), South Atlantic (8), Mid-Atlantic (3), Middle East (3), Other Europe (2), Southern Africa (2) and North Africa (1).

New York featured in the highest number of top 100 city pairs (13), followed by Tokyo (8) and London (7). The London - New York connection was one of the two interregional routes in the top 100 (together with Cairo - Jeddah), and was also the city pair with the longest flight time, averaging 6.8 hours. By contrast, the shortest flight time was between the Canadian cities of Vancouver and Victoria, averaging only 23 minutes.

Zooming in on Europe (ECAC), the busiest city pair for the third year running, and ranked 27th globally, was Dublin - London with an average of 91 daily flights in 2024. The second busiest (37th globally) was Amsterdam - London, with 84 daily flights, down from 105 in 2019, when it was the busiest European route. Part of the decrease can be attributed to the improved direct train service connecting the two cities. The third busiest European city pair in 2024 was the domestic Turkish route between Antalya and Istanbul, with 69 daily flights. In joint fourth place were the transatlantic London - New York route and the domestic UK route between Edinburgh and London, both averaging 65 daily flights.

The war in Ukraine has also had a significant impact on the busiest city pairs in the European region. The third busiest route from/to the "Other Europe" region in 2019, between Moscow and Simferopol, no longer makes the list. Meanwhile, the number of flights connecting Moscow to Kaliningrad and Istanbul has increased by 39% and 58% respectively, with the Istanbul route now occupying fifth spot in the regional list.

Technical bits: The data source is Flightradar24 Historical Global Utilisation. General aviation is excluded from the analysis. All airports serving these cities are grouped together. Only direct flights in both directions are counted.
Traffic regions are as per the “Region definition” annex to the EUROCONTROL Seven-Year forecast.

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