



Travel Industry Update

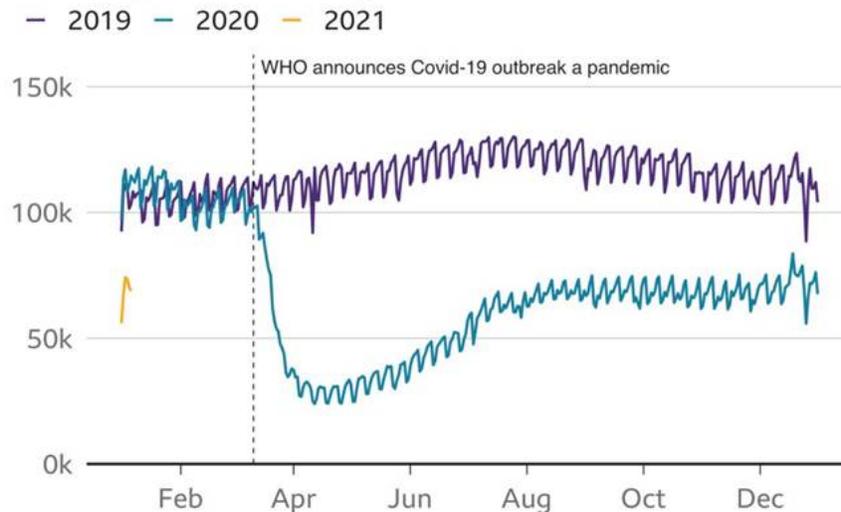
January 8, 2021

Ryanair scraps most UK and Irish lockdown flights

- Ryanair is making big cuts to its flight schedule from 21 January in response to the latest Covid lockdowns.
- It warned that few, if any, flights would operate to or from Ireland or the UK from the end of January until "draconian" restrictions were removed.
- Customers hit by the cancellations will be advised by email of entitlements to free moves or refunds, it said.
- Ryanair also cut its full year traffic forecast from currently "below 35 million" to 26-30 million passengers.
- The airline said that new Covid restrictions could reduce traffic in February and March to as little as 500,000 passengers each month. It expects January traffic to fall below 1.25 million.

Commercial flights remain well below normal levels

Total daily commercial flights



Source: Flightradar24, 07 January 2021, 12:00 BST



Airlines urge White House to require testing for travelers instead of travel bans

- Airlines for America (A4A), which represents the major U.S. airlines, called on the Trump administration to implement a global program to require testing for travelers into the United States in order to control the spread of COVID-19.
- The group wrote a letter to Vice President Pence on Monday, supporting a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention proposal to adopt a global testing program. They also supported rescinding current entry restrictions on travelers from Europe, the United Kingdom and Brazil.
- Since March, travelers from Europe and other countries are not allowed to enter the United States, but the ban does not apply to returning U.S. citizens.
- All travelers arriving to the U.S. from the United Kingdom are required to test negative for COVID-19 before departure.
- A4A also called for an implementation timeline of at least 14 days so that airlines can communicate new requirements to their customers and train their staff globally.
- “Given the scope of this requirement, we would appreciate the government’s consideration of making rapid testing available for this effort. Special consideration for unique circumstances such as connecting passengers and U.S. citizens on short round trip journeys need to be factored into the plan as well so as not to discourage travel and the benefits of increased testing,” Calio wrote.

Airport Screening While Wearing Masks? Facial Recognition Tech Shows up to 96% Accuracy in Recent Test

- A controlled scenario test by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) shows promising results for facial recognition technologies to accurately identify individuals wearing protective face masks. The tests were conducted as part of S&T’s 2020 Biometric Technology Rally, held this fall at the Maryland Test Facility, and could reduce the need for people to remove masks at airports or ports of entry.
- The third annual rally evaluated the ability of biometric acquisition systems and matching algorithms to reliably collect and match images of individuals wearing a diverse array of face masks. Previous rallies show biometric systems can excel at rapidly processing high volumes of travelers using face recognition. This year’s focused on using such systems to detect and recognize travelers without asking them to remove their masks, thereby protecting both the public and frontline workers during the COVID-19 era.
- The in-person event included 10 days of human testing with 60 facial recognition configurations (using six face and/or iris acquisition systems and 10 matching algorithms) and 582 diverse test volunteers representing 60 countries. Acquisition systems were evaluated based on their ability to reliably take images of each volunteer with and without masks, volunteer processing time, and overall volunteer satisfaction.
- Early results, released on the Biometric Rally website, indicate:
 - Without masks, median system performance demonstrated a ~93% identification rate, with the best-performing system correctly identifying individuals ~100% of the time.
 - With masks, median system performance demonstrated a ~77% identification rate, with the best-performing system correctly identifying individuals ~96% of the time.
 - Performance can vary greatly between systems.

- Based on these results, organizations that need to perform photo ID checks could potentially allow individuals to keep their masks on, thereby reducing the risk of COVID-19 infection.
- “This isn’t a perfect 100% solution,” said Arun Vemury, director of S&T’s Biometric and Identity Technology Center, “but it may reduce risks for many travelers, as well as the frontline staff working in airports, who no longer have to ask all travelers to remove masks.”
- Final test results from the 2020 Biometric Technology Rally are anticipated in the coming weeks.

U.S. Hotel Industry Unemployment Rate Dips Below 20 Percent for First Time Since March

- The U.S. hotel industry unemployment rate continues to fall — but not for any reason worth celebrating.
- The hotel sector’s 18.9 percent December unemployment rate was a decline from the 21.5 percent seen in November, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported Friday. But the sector still lost 24,000 jobs — a sign more workers are giving up their search for a hotel job and no longer counted in the industry’s labor pool.
- The hotel industry unemployment rate continues to be significantly higher than the national average, which stayed flat at 6.7 percent for the month.

Cruise giant Carnival to extend cancellations into April

- It now will be at least April before you can get on a Carnival Cruise Line ship.
- The Miami-based cruise giant on Wednesday said it would extend its 10-month-long halt to cruise operations through at least March 31 for all vessels.
- In addition, the 24-ship line canceled sailings on its Galveston, Texas-based Carnival Freedom through April 10 and the West Coast-based Carnival Miracle through Sept. 16.