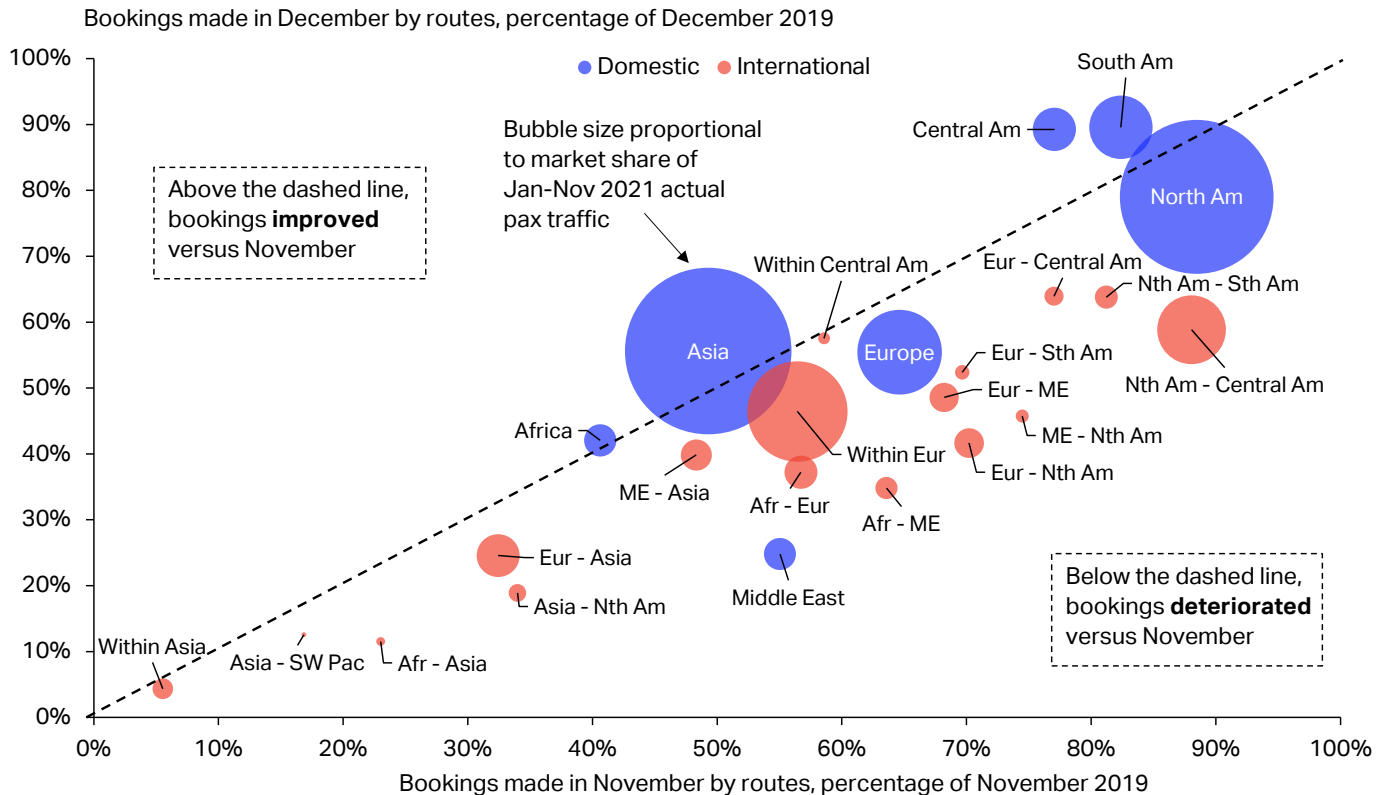




# IATA Economics' Chart of the Week

21 January 2022

## Bookings point to falling traffic in the near-term



- We recently argued that [air travel in December](#) was likely to have been resilient despite the spread of Omicron as tickets sold for travel in December pointed to a continuation of the recovery in RPKs – partly driven by resilient trips to visit friends and relatives.
- This week we look at bookings made in December compared to those made in November, for travel at any point in time in the future. In total, tickets sold in December 2021 stood at 50% of the December 2019 level, down from 56% in November on the same basis. The deterioration was more pronounced for international travel (from 43% of 2019 levels in November to 30% in December) than for domestic trips (from 68% of 2019 levels in November to 65% in December), mainly due to tighter travel restrictions. As travellers tend to book on relatively short notice, this decline is likely to be reflected in actual traffic volumes in January and February 2022.
- There was also some disparity among the main regions and route areas. Domestic China improved somewhat, despite strict local lockdowns and a rise in cases at the end of December, but domestic Europe and North America deteriorated. Internationally, North-Central America, which had performed strongly for most of the year, saw a roughly 30 percentage points decline, and the North Atlantic market, which reopened to European travellers in November, regressed by a similar magnitude. Bookings for travel Within Asia, once one of the largest markets globally, remain insignificant amid risk-averse behavior by governments.
- Looking ahead, tickets sold in the first half of January show a continuation of the decline. Globally, they were at 44% of the same period in 2019. Nevertheless, we expect rapid improvements once the Omicron waves recede and control measures are eased.

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