



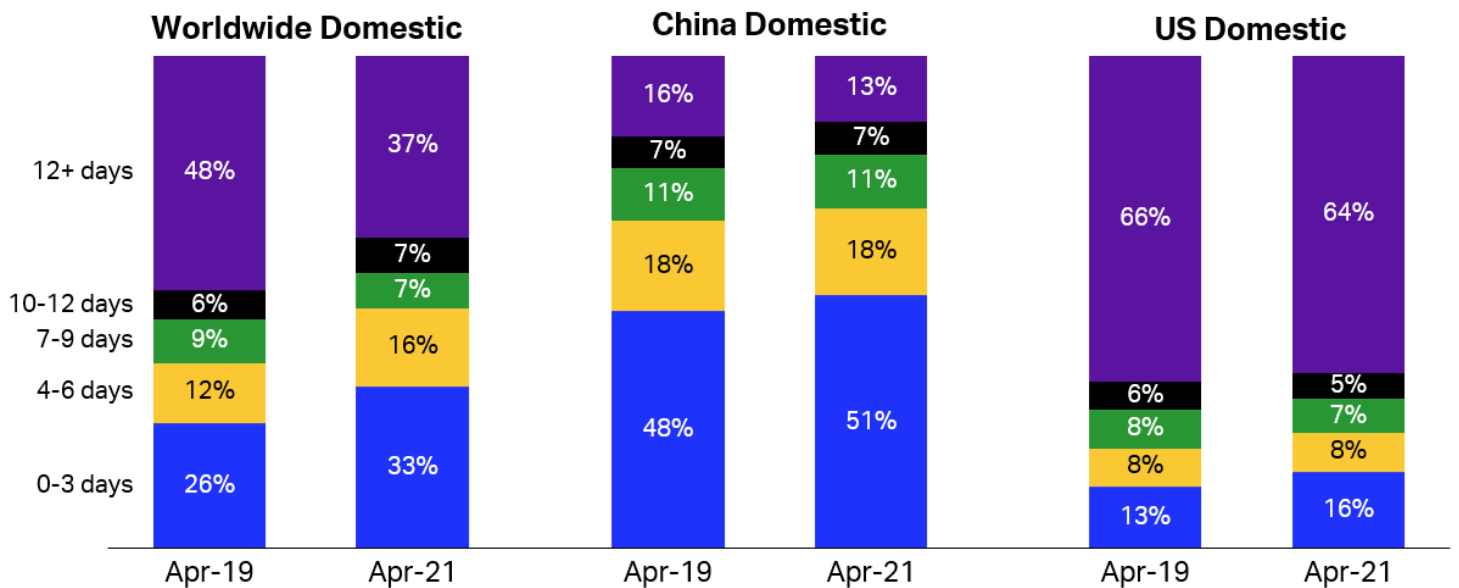
IATA Economics' Chart of the Week

30 April 2021

Late booking behavior is still widespread in domestic travel

Domestic Travel Booking Behavior in April

Number of days between booking and travel time



Source: IATA Economics using DDS

- Last year at this time the airline industry had been preparing for a summer restart and we pointed out a shift to late booking pattern in [China domestic market](#). After almost a year, this week's chart explores a similar issue in worldwide domestic travel and in two large domestic markets - the U.S. and China. The chart above shows the booking patterns for travel in April 2021 in these three areas and compares with the pre-crisis pattern (travel in April 2019).
- Although we saw some improvement compared to the post-lockdown period last year (April-May 2020), passengers globally continue to book late despite the recovery in domestic travel. Almost half of worldwide domestic passengers are booking their travel within a week of the travel date (49% of passengers in April 2021 vs 38% in April 2019). Moreover, the share of passengers booking 12 days or more in advance is 11 percentage points lower than in the pre-crisis period (48% vs 37% in April 2019).
- On the other hand, in both China and US domestic markets, booking behaviors have almost reverted back to the pre-crisis times. However, there are distinctions between these two markets. China domestic passengers even before the crisis had been booking late. For instance, in April 2019, only 16% of China domestic passengers had been purchasing their flight tickets in 12 days or more in advance. Hence, returning to pre-crisis booking pattern does not provide much visibility for planning for the carriers in this region. On the other hand, the U.S. domestic market has distinctive advantage since 64% of the passengers are booking in advance. We expect this comparative advantage together with the success in controlling pandemic in the region to be reflected in the financial performance of carriers this year. As we pointed out in our [latest forecast](#), North American in particular US carriers are expected to be the best performer and losses in this region are anticipated to be reduced most.

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IATA Economics
economics@iata.org