

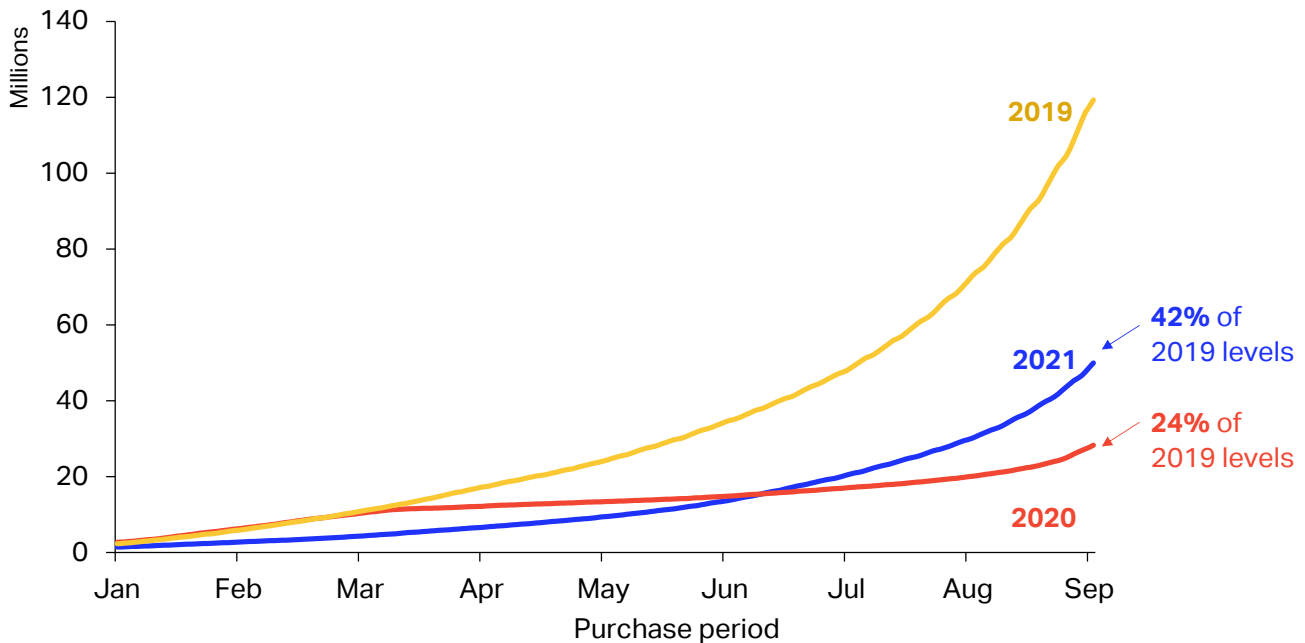


IATA Economics' Chart of the Week

17 September 2021

Q4 travel bookings better than 2020 but well below pre-crisis levels

Global cumulative passenger bookings for Q4 travel



Source: IATA Economics using data from DDS ticketing database

- Days have been getting shorter and colder in the northern hemisphere – an unmistakable sign that the Q3 is slowly coming to an end. Unfortunately, this traditionally busy travel period of the year did not bring as much passenger traffic improvement as was originally expected. Although the vaccine rollout enabled reopening of some international routes (e.g. in Europe & Latin America), international travel recovery has remained slow due to still elevated travel restrictions in most parts of the world. Moreover, the global rise in COVID cases since late-June negatively impacted progress, even in domestic markets that had been performing robustly, such as domestic China and domestic Australia.
- This week's chart illustrates the willingness to travel for the final quarter of the year. It shows cumulative global net ticket sales for Q4 2021 made until mid-September and compares them with ticket sales made at the same time of the year for travel in Q4 2020 and Q4 2019. For now, the bookings do not show any significant traffic improvement compared with 2019 in the near-term. Although travel demand is clearly stronger than last year when COVID vaccines were not available, sales remain at 42% of pre-crisis 2019 levels (blue vs. red line in the chart). Although the outlook might still improve since the current ticket sales represent only a small part of the overall Q4 bookings (about 15%), the evidence so far indicates that the next couple of months will be challenging for the airline industry.

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