

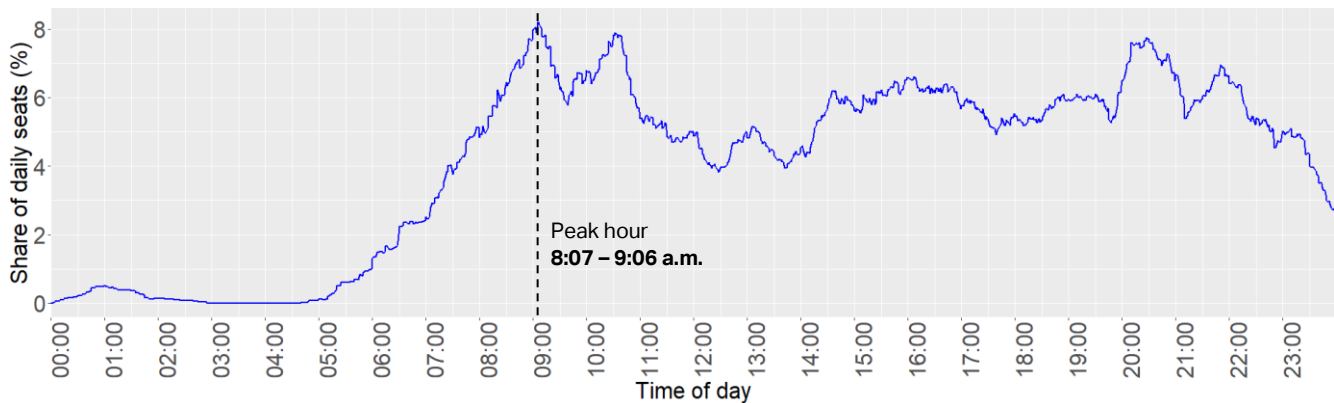


Chart of the Week

21 July 2023

The busiest hour at the busiest airport in the world

Share of daily airline scheduled seats by rolling hour at Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson Int'l (ATL), July 2023



Source: IATA Sustainability and Economics, using data from OAG Schedules Analyzer (schedules published 17 July 2023).

Note: The estimated peak hour factor is 0.86, indicating a relatively consistent flow of seats throughout the peak hour.

- The Airports Council International (ACI) World recently released its annual airport ranking, highlighting the remarkable resurgence of international air travel across various hubs in 2022. Notably, US airports secured the top four positions in terms of total passenger traffic, with Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International (ATL) maintaining its first-place position by a substantial margin. Airlines transported 93.7 million passengers through this global gateway in 2022, up 24% from the previous year.
- Looking ahead to 2023, scheduled capacity by airlines indicate that ATL will continue to lead the rankings, closely followed by Dubai International (DXB) and Tokyo International (HND) airports in second and third place, respectively. For the peak travel month of July, airlines have planned over 11 million departing and arriving seats at ATL, connecting a vast network of over 200 domestic and international destinations.
- The chart above shows ATL's airline seat capacity profile for an average day in July 2023. Departures and arrivals are distributed differently throughout the day, with the peak hour for total airline seat capacity being from **8:07 to 9:06 a.m.**, accounting for **8.2 percent of daily total seats**. During this peak hour, passenger airlines plan to fly over 29,000 seats with 185 outbound and inbound operations.
- To meet the growing passenger demand, airlines have made substantial workforce and technology investments. The US air travel industry, however, is currently grappling with significant labor challenges, particularly in air traffic control (ATC) staffing. These issues have led to considerable delays and disruptions for travelers, with 77% of critical ATC facilities being understaffed and falling below the required industry threshold. Controller shortages have impacted performance and forced airlines to reduce schedules at airports, including for large hubs in the New York area.
- Although the strong recovery of international air travel continues to showcase the industry's resilience, addressing the ATC staffing constraints in the near term is vital for ensuring smoother and more efficient experiences for US travelers. By resolving these workforce issues, the air travel industry can better accommodate the increasing demand and provide improved services to passengers.

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IATA Sustainability & Economics
economics@iata.org