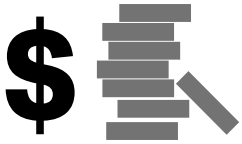
THE VALUE OF AVIATION COSTA RICA

The economic impact of aviation in Costa Rica

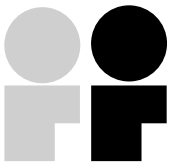
The aviation sector and its quantifiable economic effects made up 7.2% of Costa Rica's GDP and 7.9% of the country's employment in 2025. This covers the sector itself, its supply chain, employee spending, and international air transport-enabled tourism to Costa Rica.

GDP and employment created by aviation in Costa Rica in 2025



7.5
USD billion

7.2%
of GDP



191.6
thousand jobs

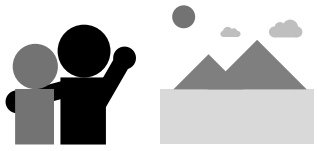
7.9%
of employment

Included economic impacts:
***Direct** – within aviation sector, **Indirect** – aviation supply chain,*
Induced** – employee spending, **International tourists arriving by air

Breakdown of GDP and employment created







Airlines	Airports, ANSPs, civil manufacturing	International tourists arriving by air
USD 528 million	USD 1.1 billion	USD 5.9 billion
10.7 thousand jobs	34.8 thousand jobs	146 thousand jobs

Source: Air Transport Action Group, 2026. Aviation Benefits Beyond Borders report based on data from Oxford Economics.
Note: Economic impacts are calculated using Oxford Economics' Aviation: Benefits Beyond Borders methodology with inputs sourced from publicly available statistics and recognized industry datasets wherever possible, with modelling-based estimates applied where direct data are not available. Estimates do not include domestic tourism spending, nor the wider catalytic benefits of aviation on trade, investment, productivity gains, and enhanced connectivity, among others.
Note: Average 2025 exchange rate: USD 1 = CRC 500.58

Air transport brings millions of people safely to global destinations

Around 4.6 million air passengers departed from Costa Rica in 2025, based on Origin-Destination(O-D) traffic, making Costa Rica the 74th largest air passenger market globally.

Air travel from Costa Rica in 2025, Origin-Destination (O-D)

4.6
million
passenger departures

GROWTH

71.9%
10-year growth

6.1%
year-on-year growth

RANK

74th
Global
No change since 2015

2nd
in Central America
No change since 2015

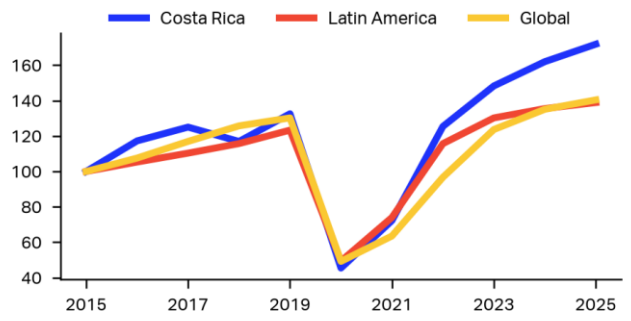
SHARE

0.1%
of global departures

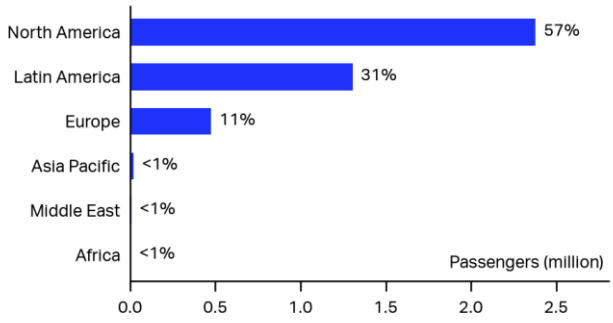
4.6%
of Central American departures

International: 4.2 million passenger departures, 83.1% 10Y growth, 4.6% YoY growth
Domestic: 424.1 thousand passenger departures, 7.0% 10Y growth, 23.0% YoY growth, % share of total market: 9.2%

Total passenger departures, O-D, 2015-2025, index 2015=100



International passenger departures by destination region, O-D, 2025



Top air travel markets Inbound & outbound	Top origin cities Inbound	Top destination cities Outbound
1. United States	1. New York	1. Guatemala City
2. Mexico	2. Toronto	2. Mexico City
3. Canada	3. Los Angeles	3. Panama City
4. Colombia	4. Houston	4. Medellin
5. Guatemala	5. Montreal	5. Madrid

Source: IATA Sustainability & Economics using IATA DDS data.
Note: O-D (origin-destination) departures measures passengers beginning their journey in Costa Rica, to their final destination, excluding transfer and transit passengers.
Top air travel markets based on total O-D passenger traffic between Costa Rica and other markets in 2025. Top outbound and inbound cities are based on round-trip passenger journeys.
IATA DDS data are derived from ticketing and sales transactions using IATA methodologies and estimates; therefore, results may not exactly match officially reported traffic statistics.

Air transport directly connects Costa Rica to 22 different countries

In 2025, there were 11 airports and 38 operating airlines in Costa Rica, providing a total of 112 regularly scheduled commercial passenger routes for Costa Rica, connecting to 22 countries with about 85 daily international departures.

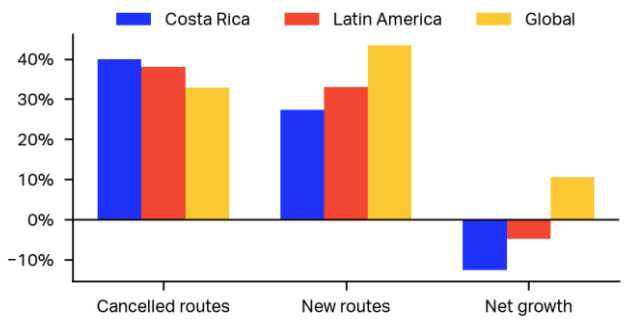
Air Connectivity in Costa Rica

11
Airports in 2025
15 in 2015

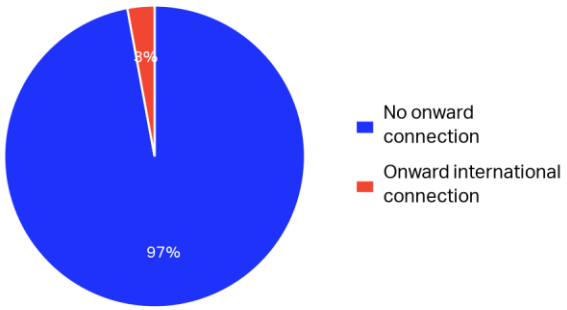
38
Airlines in 2025
26 in 2015

		Total		
		Available routes	Connected countries	Daily int. departures
2025	Total	112	22	85
	Global rank	79th	101st	70th
	C-America rank	3rd	3rd	3rd
2015	Total	128	16	65
	Global rank	70th	116th	76th
	C-America rank	3rd	3rd	3rd

Route network change, 2015 to 2025, % of 2015



Onward connections of international arrivals, 2025

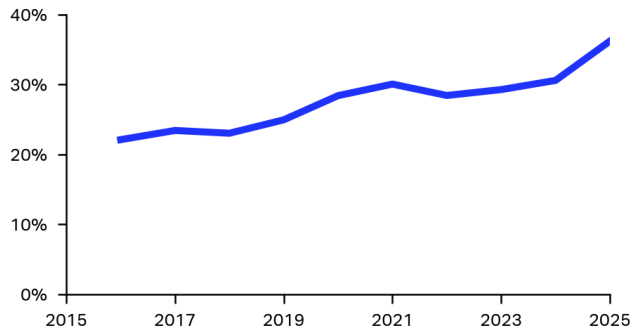


Source: IATA Sustainability & Economics using OAG & IATA DDS data.
Note: Airport, airline, and route counts include only those with regularly scheduled passenger services from Costa Rica. Airports with fewer than 1,000 regularly scheduled seats in 2025 are excluded.

Air Cargo provides Costa Rica timely and safe access to global markets

Although air transport accounted for an estimated 2.0% of Costa Rica's traded goods by weight, it carried 36.2% of their total value.
Costa Rica's airports handled around 109 thousand tonnes of air cargo in 2025, ranking Costa Rica as the world's 66th largest air cargo handler market and the 2nd largest in Central America.

Costa Rican air cargo, value, % of total, 2015-2025



Costa Rican air cargo, share of trade, 2025

2.0% of trade by weight

36.2% of trade by value

Air cargo handled in Costa Rica, 2025

109 thousand tonnes air cargo handled

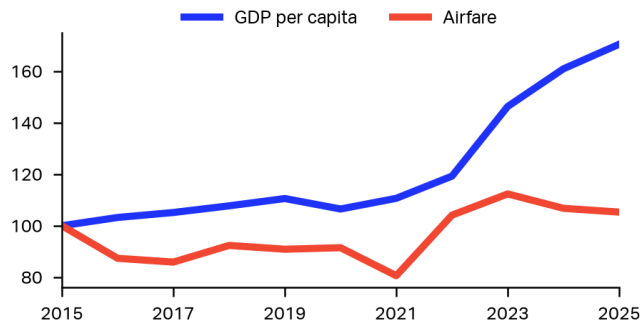
66th Globally 2nd in C-America

Source: Airports Council International (ACI) for air cargo handled, Global Trade Tracker (GTT) for imports and exports by air.
Note: Costa Rica's trade by air includes imports and exports. It is based on the country's self reported customs data.

International air travel from Costa Rica has become more affordable over the past decade

Costa Rica's nominal GDP per capita increased by 70.5%, while the average nominal airfare for an international ticket from Costa Rica increased by 5.3%, over the past decade. Therefore, international air travel has become more affordable for local residents over this time period.

Nominal GDP per capita & average international fare, Costa Rica, 2015-2025, index 2015=100



Source: IATA DDS, World Bank. Nominal GDP per capita and fare developments measured in USD terms.