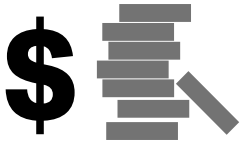
THE VALUE OF AVIATION SAUDI ARABIA

The economic impact of aviation in Saudi Arabia

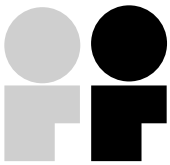
The aviation sector and its quantifiable economic effects made up 7.5% of Saudi Arabia's GDP and 4.1% of the country's employment in 2025. This covers the sector itself, its supply chain, employee spending, and international air transport-enabled tourism to Saudi Arabia.

GDP and employment created by aviation in Saudi Arabia in 2025



95.4
USD billion

7.5%
of GDP



752.8
thousand jobs

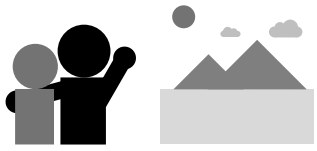
4.1%
of employment

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 17.7 billion	USD 19.6 billion	USD 58 billion
94.9 thousand jobs	183.3 thousand jobs	474.7 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 = SAR 3.75

Air transport brings millions of people safely to global destinations

Around 63 million air passengers departed from Saudi Arabia in 2025, based on Origin-Destination(O-D) traffic, making Saudi Arabia the 19th largest air passenger market globally.

Air travel from Saudi Arabia in 2025, Origin-Destination (O-D)

63
million
passenger departures

GROWTH

51.7%
10-year growth

4.2%
year-on-year growth

RANK

19th
Global
No change since 2015

1st
in Middle East
No change since 2015

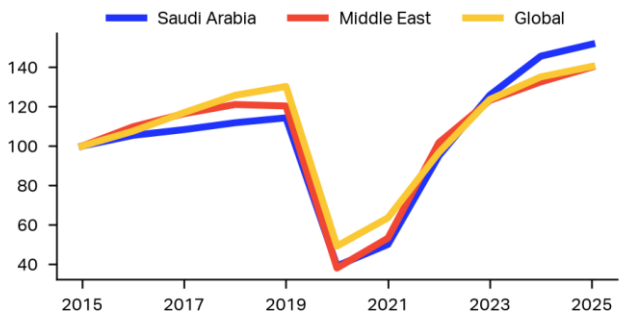
SHARE

1.5%
of global departures

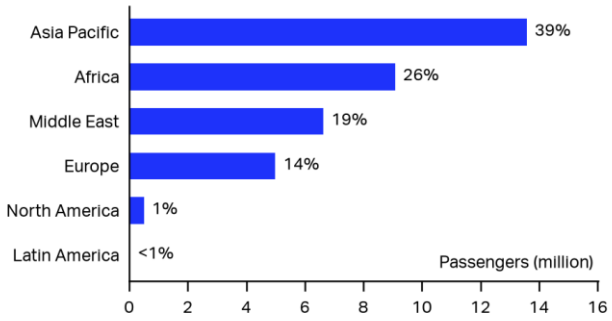
39.8%
of Middle Eastern departures

International: 34.8 million passenger departures, 65.5% 10Y growth, 6.8% YoY growth
Domestic: 28.2 million passenger departures, 37.5% 10Y growth, 1.1% YoY growth, % share of total market: 44.7%

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. Egypt	1. Cairo	1. Cairo
2. Pakistan	2. Dubai	2. Dubai
3. United Arab Emirates	3. Jakarta	3. Dhaka
4. India	4. Kuwait	4. Istanbul
5. Türkiye	5. Lahore	5. London

Source: IATA Sustainability & Economics using IATA DDS data.
Note: O-D (origin-destination) departures measures passengers beginning their journey in Saudi Arabia, to their final destination, excluding transfer and transit passengers.
Top air travel markets based on total O-D passenger traffic between Saudi Arabia 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 Saudi Arabia to 78 different countries

In 2025, there were 26 airports and 100 operating airlines in Saudi Arabia, providing a total of 627 regularly scheduled commercial passenger routes for Saudi Arabia, connecting to 78 countries with about 528 daily international departures.

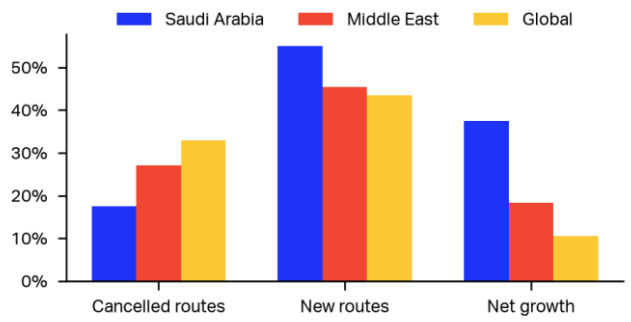
Air Connectivity in Saudi Arabia

26
Airports in 2025
26 in 2015

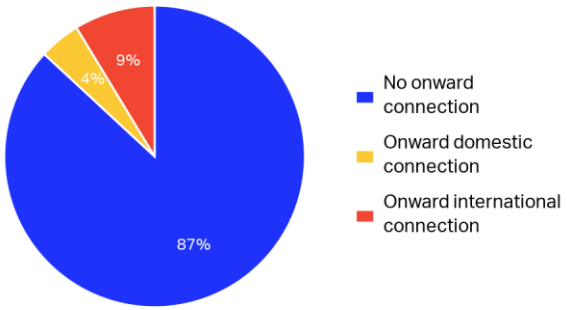
100
Airlines in 2025
75 in 2015

		Total		
		Available routes	Connected countries	Daily int. departures
2025	Total	627	78	528
	Global rank	20th	14th	18th
	Middle East rank	2nd	3rd	2nd
2015	Total	456	50	353
	Global rank	21st	25th	22nd
	Middle East rank	2nd	3rd	2nd

Route network change, 2015 to 2025, % of 2015



Onward connections of international arrivals, 2025

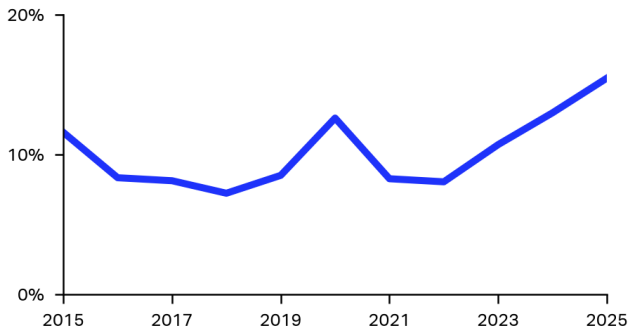


Source: IATA Sustainability & Economics using OAG & IATA DDS data.
Note: Airport, airline, and route counts include only those with regularly scheduled passenger services from Saudi Arabia. Airports with fewer than 1,000 regularly scheduled seats in 2025 are excluded.

Air Cargo provides Saudi Arabia timely and safe access to global markets

Although air transport accounted for an estimated 0.2% of Saudi Arabia's traded goods by weight, it carried 15.1% of their total value.
Saudi Arabia's airports handled around 1 million tonnes of air cargo in 2025, ranking Saudi Arabia as the world's 28th largest air cargo handler market and the 3rd largest in the Middle East.

Saudi Arabian air cargo, value, % of total, 2015-2025



Saudi Arabian air cargo, share of trade, 2025

0.2%
of trade by weight

15.1%
of trade by value

Air cargo handled in Saudi Arabia, 2025

1
million tonnes
air cargo handled

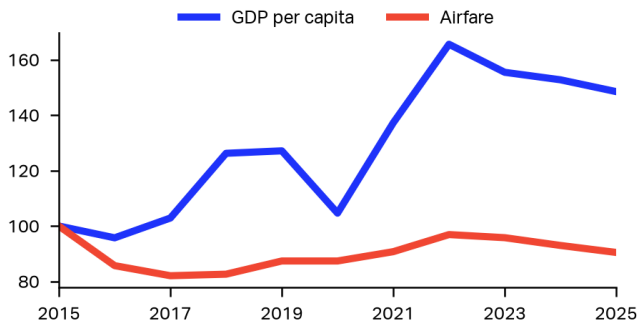
28th
Globally
3rd in Middle East

Source: Airports Council International (ACI) for air cargo handled, Global Trade Tracker (GTT) for imports and exports by air.
Note: Saudi Arabia's trade by air includes imports and exports. It is based on a sample of 50 countries that report their trade by means of transport in 2025, which represents around 40% of the total global goods trade.

International air travel from Saudi Arabia has become more affordable over the past decade

Saudi Arabia's nominal GDP per capita increased by 48.5%, while the average nominal air fare for an international ticket from Saudi Arabia decreased by 9.5%, 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, Saudi Arabia, 2015-2025, index 2015=100



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