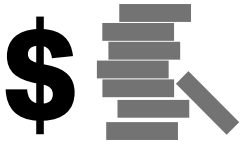
THE VALUE OF AVIATION TONGA

The economic impact of aviation in Tonga

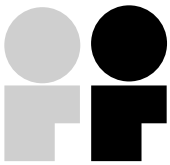
The aviation sector and its quantifiable economic effects made up 10.4% of Tonga's GDP and 16.2% of the country's employment in 2025. This covers the sector itself, its supply chain, employee spending, and international air transport-enabled tourism to Tonga.

GDP and employment created by aviation in Tonga in 2025



70.9
USD million

10.4%
of GDP



5.5
thousand jobs

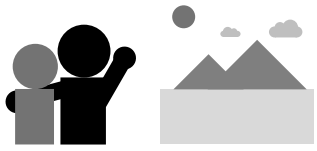
16.2%
of employment

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 4.8 million	USD 9.8 million	USD 56.3 million
174.2 jobs	383.3 jobs	4.9 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 = TOP 2.41

Air transport brings millions of people safely to global destinations

Around 173.3 thousand air passengers departed from Tonga in 2025, based on Origin-Destination(O-D) traffic, making Tonga the 196th largest air passenger market globally.

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

173.3
thousand
passenger departures

GROWTH

52.6%
10-year growth

9.2%
year-on-year growth

RANK

196th
Global
▲ 2 since 2015

12th
in Southwest Pacific
▲ 2 since 2015

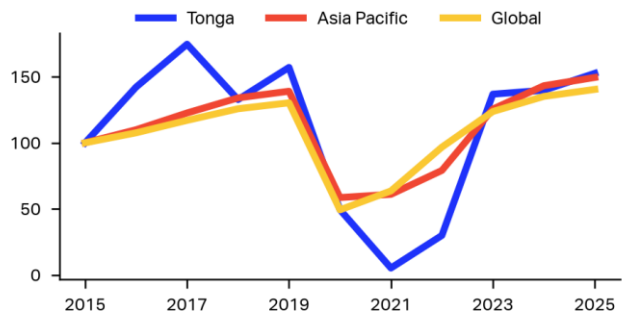
SHARE

0.004%
of global departures

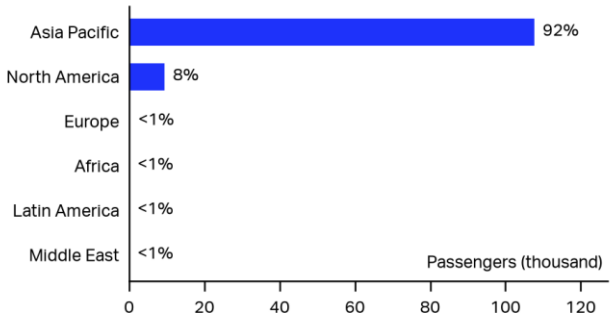
0.2%
of Southwest Pacific departures

International: 117.5 thousand passenger departures, 28.9% 10Y growth, 4.1% YoY growth
Domestic: 55.9 thousand passenger departures, 148.8% 10Y growth, 21.5% YoY growth, % share of total market: 32.2%

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. New Zealand	1. Auckland	1. Auckland
2. Australia	2. Sydney	2. Nadi
3. Fiji	3. Nadi	3. Sydney
4. United States	4. Los Angeles	4. Suva
5. Samoa	5. Brisbane	5. Nelson

Source: IATA Sustainability & Economics using IATA DDS data.
Note: O-D (origin-destination) departures measures passengers beginning their journey in Tonga, to their final destination, excluding transfer and transit passengers.
Top air travel markets based on total O-D passenger traffic between Tonga 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 Tonga to 4 different countries

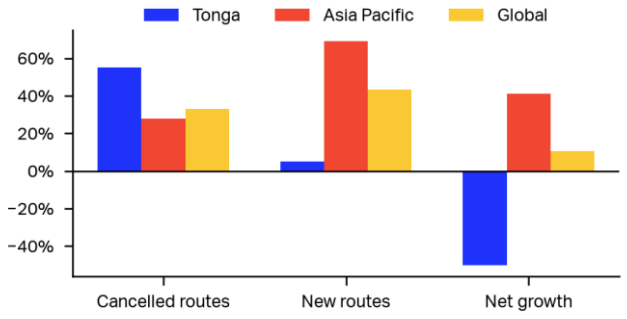
In 2025, there were 4 airports and 4 operating airlines in Tonga, providing a total of 10 regularly scheduled commercial passenger routes for Tonga, connecting to 4 countries with about 2 daily international departures.

Air Connectivity in Tonga

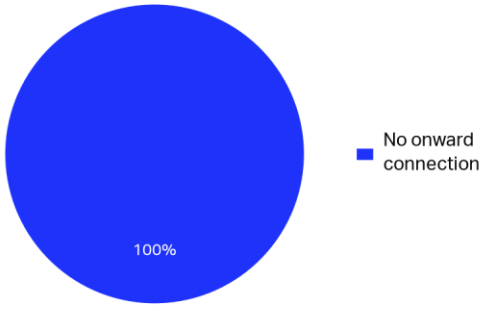


		Total		
		Available routes	Connected countries	Daily int. departures
2025	Total	10	4	2
	Global rank	194th	204th	205th
	SW Pacific rank	13th	15th	10th
2015	Total	20	4	2
	Global rank	165th	205th	207th
	SW Pacific rank	10th	16th	11th

Route network change, 2015 to 2025, % of 2015



Onward connections of international arrivals, 2025

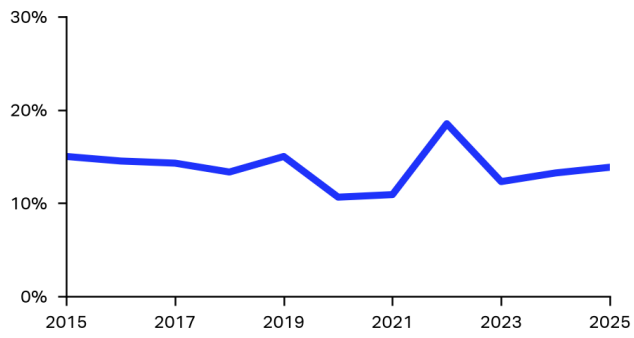


Source: IATA Sustainability & Economics using OAG & IATA DDS data.
Note: Airport, airline, and route counts include only those with regularly scheduled passenger services from Tonga. Airports with fewer than 1,000 regularly scheduled seats in 2025 are excluded.

Air Cargo provides Tonga timely and safe access to global markets

Although air transport accounted for an estimated 3.1% of Tonga's traded goods by weight, it carried 14.9% of their total value.
Tonga's airports handled around 905.2 tonnes of air cargo in 2025, ranking Tonga as the world's 164th largest air cargo handler market and the 8th largest in Southwest Pacific.

Tongan air cargo, value, % of total, 2015-2025



Tongan air cargo, share of trade, 2025

3.1%
of trade by weight

14.9%
of trade by value

Air cargo handled in Tonga, 2025

905.2
tonnes
air cargo handled

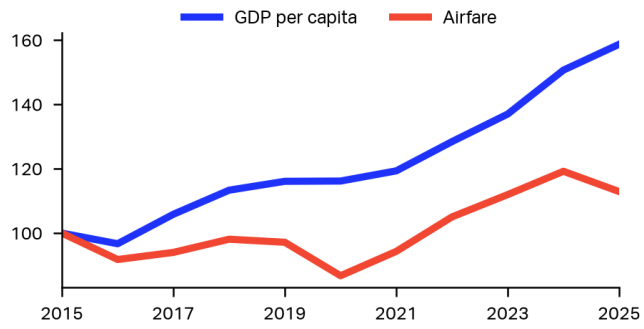
164th
Globally
8th in SW Pacific

Source: Airports Council International (ACI) for air cargo handled, Global Trade Tracker (GTT) for imports and exports by air.
Note: Tonga'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 Tonga has become more affordable over the past decade

Tonga's nominal GDP per capita increased by 58.8%, while the average nominal airfare for an international ticket from Tonga increased by 12.9%, 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, Tonga, 2015-2025, index 2015=100



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