

Ryanair expansion at Cardiff Airport including new route to Belfast

Europe's biggest low-cost carrier Ryanair is ramping up its presence at Cardiff Airport. For the new summer season, commencing at the end of March, the Dublin-based airline will provide 26 inbound and outbound flights a week – a growth of 63% on last summer – including a new route to Belfast with four flights a week.

As well as its new scheduled route from Cardiff to Belfast International Airport, the airline will continue to offer flights to Dublin (14 a week for the new season, Faro (4) and for just the summer Malaga (4). Ryanair will have 140,000 seats on sale on its routes out of Cardiff for the summer. It is expected, in line with its Europe-wide operations, to have a load factor of around 85% to 90%.

Ryanair's head of communications, Jade Kirwan, said: "Ryanair is pleased to announce our biggest Cardiff schedule for summer 2023 with over 25 weekly flights across four routes, including our exciting new Belfast route, offering our Welsh customers even more choice for their summer holidays at the lowest fares in Europe. With the perfect balance of cool city break destinations, like Belfast and Dublin, and sunny hotspots, like Faro and Malaga, Ryanair really does have a destination to suit everyone this summer."

Cardiff Airport's chief executive, Spencer Birns, said: "We are grateful for Ryanair's commitment to working with us to grow more flight choice from Cardiff and we look forward to developing further options for our customers with the airline. Ryanair continues to recognise that people living in Wales want to fly to and from their local airport and this increase

in choice is a good step for building on future opportunities with the airline in Wales.”

The airport, which is wholly-owned by the Welsh Government, was dealt a major blow last month with Wizz Air confirming the pulling of its dedicated base, having mothballed it for the current winter season. It carried 103,000 passengers on its inaugural summer season last year .Latest figures from the Civil Aviation Authority show that the Rhoose-based airport carried 835,000 passengers in the year to the end of November, 2022 – compared with just 108,000 in the Covid restrictions impacted pervious year.

Rival Bristol Airport, which has secured the go-ahead for a major expansion after the rejection of a legal challenge by objectors, handled 7.7 million over the same period. The airport, which attracts around 811,000 passengers a year from Wales, said its expansion will allow it to attract up to 12 millions passenger annually.

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