

Ryanair sees passenger numbers recover to three-quarters of pre-pandemic level

Ryanair said it flew 11.1 million passengers in August – 75% of the number it carried in the same month in 2019 before the pandemic.

It was an increase of 59% from August last year – when Europe’s largest airline flew 7 million people – and the highest monthly traffic number since December 2019.

In July this year, Ryanair flew 9.3 million passengers, 63% of pre-pandemic levels.

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The latest figures come days after chief executive Michael O'Leary forecast a "very strong recovery" for European short-haul flights, bumped up its passenger targets for the autumn, and [revealed](#) 14 new routes from London airports.

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Airline traffic has been crushed during the pandemic with tough restrictions wiping out much of the holiday market.

But many travellers are now returning as rules have been eased gradually – though some in the industry want governments to act more quickly.

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Ryanair's latest figures also saw its load factor – a measure of how full its aeroplanes are – pick up to 82%, the highest level since March 2020.

Mr O'Leary told the Reuters news agency earlier this week that capacity should return to pre-pandemic levels in October, though the airline was likely to fly with 15-20% of seats empty compared with 7-8% before the coronavirus crisis.

Separately, data published by the Office for National Statistics on Thursday showed that last week's seven-day average of UK daily flights rose by 5% from the previous week to 3,405 – the highest level since March 2020.



Image:

Jet2 said it is seeing “slower momentum” for the winter. Elsewhere a trading update from low-cost airline Jet2 said it was still seeing customers booking “significantly closer to departure” this summer due to uncertainty over travel restrictions.

It also said it was [continuing to see](#) “slower momentum” for the winter meaning it will need to offer “consistently enticing” deals.

However, the airline said bookings ahead of next summer were encouraging.