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Has U.S. Airline Traffic Started To Rebound?



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Aerospace & Defense



A passenger waits for his baggage at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport on April 23. ... [+] AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Are U.S. airline passengers slowly starting to return to flying?

The Transportation Security Administration's count of travelers has now been over 100,000 for four consecutive days, the first time that has happened since April 3 through April 6.

The count for Sunday April 26 was 128,875, TSA said Monday. That is the highest number since April 3, when the count was 129,764.

The count on Thursday April 23 was 111,627. It has been higher each day since then.

On Sunday, airline travel writer Joe Brancatelli posted on twitter that the numbers had started to improve. "I do believe we have bottomed out," Brancatelli wrote. "100K, give or take, seems to be the literal minimum of flying in America."

A headline Monday morning in trade publication Air Insight asked, "A Green Shoot Appears In U.S. Airline Traffic?"

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The TSA count is widely considered a reliable indicator of air travel, but it does include airline crew and airport employees, as well as passengers, who pass through security.

TSA also provides a daily comparison with the number of security clearances a year

earlier. That number was 2.5 million on April 26, 2019. Throughout April 2019, the number ranged between 1.9 million and 2.6 million, rarely dipping below two million.

A Phoenix-based American Airlines flight attendant, who asked not to be named, said in an interview that she has been seeing nearly-full flights on flight attendant scheduling sites.

For instance, American flight 2625 from Dallas to Los Angeles on Sunday was booked to 178 seats, out of 181 available seats. A flight this coming Tuesday from Phoenix to Dallas, which has 192 seats, is currently 88% booked, she noted.

“There needs to be some sort of rule on the total number of passengers allowed on a plane,” said the flight attendant, a member of the Association of Professional Flight Attendants

Flight attendants in APFA and in the Association of Flight Attendants are saying publicly that airlines must resist the impulse to fill aircraft, given the coronavirus crisis. AFA has said that leisure passengers should not be flying.



Ted Reed

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I began covering airlines in 1989. I was a reporter for six newspapers -- Miami Herald, Charlotte Observer, Sacramento Bee, Fresno Bee, Toledo Blade and Aberdeen (Wash.)... **Read More**

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