

What you need to know: Airline operations: Europe

October 27, 2020

As demand declined and governments around the world restricted travel, airlines adjusted their operations and, in some cases, suspended all services. As restrictions ease, airlines are rebuilding their operations. This report summarizes what airlines in Europe are doing and planning.

Major airline groups

| Airline | Action and plans |
|-----------------|--|
| Air France-KLM | Restoring services, with 40% of normal capacity across 80% of its pre-COVID-19 network operating by August |
| British Airways | Gatwick operations grounded; London City resumed in July. Parent IAG resumed 50% of capacity in July. Flights resumed from London to more than 20 short-haul destinations during October |
| Iberia | Gradually growing Madrid schedule |
| KLM | Daily flights to eight European destinations resumed on May 4. By August, plans to operate 95% of European network and 80% of intercontinental destinations |
| Lufthansa Group | Capacity across member airlines cut by 95% until May 31. Ramping up domestic and international schedule during June. Service restored to 90% of short-haul and 70% of long-haul destinations by September. |

Air France

From March 16, Air France and KLM began implementing capacity cuts of between 70% and 90%, which the two airlines scheduled to last for two months. Air France scaled back its scheduled operations, offering flights from Paris at reduced frequencies to the following destinations:¹

- Domestic – Marseille, Nice, Toulouse
- Overseas Départements – Cayenne, Fort-de-France, Pointe-à-Pitre, Saint-Denis de la Réunion
- Europe – Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Dublin, Edinburgh, Frankfurt, Geneva, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Munich, Stockholm, Zurich
- Africa – Abidjan, Cotonou, Dakar
- Asia – Tokyo
- North America – Los Angeles, Mexico City, Montreal, New York
- South America – Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo

During June, Air France operated 20% of its normal schedule, gradually ramping up its flying program. By August, it aims to be operating 40% of its normal capacity across 80% of its network. The airline is prioritizing its domestic network, before resuming a large part of its long-haul services.

In July and August, Air France resumed domestic flights from Paris to 18 destinations. It also restarted 10 routes to French overseas territories, including Reunion and French Polynesia, as well as to Caribbean destinations, such as Cuba and Santo Domingo.

¹ [Air France](#), April 30, 2020

After resuming operations at Paris Orly at the end of June, Air France had grown its network from the airport to more than 20 destinations by the end of August. The airline is now operating domestic services to Ajaccio, Aurillac, Bastia, Biarritz, Brest, Brive, Calvi, Castres, Figari, Montpellier, Pau, Perpignan, Tarbes-Lourdes and Toulon, as well as La Navette flights to Marseille, Nice and Toulouse. The airline is also linking Orly with four destinations among France's overseas territories: Cayenne, Fort-de-France, Pointe-a-Pitre and Saint Denis de la Reunion. Together with its Hop division, Air France operated 34 daily flights from Orly on September 1, up from 19 on August 20.

Air France flights also returned to more than 60 European cities during July and August. It also restarted flights to three Middle Eastern destinations, including Dubai, six in Africa, five in North America, five in Central and South America, and nine cities in Asia, including Bangkok, Delhi, Singapore and Tokyo

British Airways

Since the start of the pandemic, British Airways (BA) has worked with the U.K. government's Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) to continue flying where travel restrictions allow.²

With the closure of London City Airport from March 26, BA's remaining services from the facility were grounded.³ Its subsidiary BA CityFlyer had been the airport's largest operator, operating 25 routes and accounting for 53% of all departures.

From the end of March, British Airways also suspended all remaining scheduled flights from London Gatwick airport, from where it had previously flown to 75 destinations. It continued to operate a limited schedule from London Heathrow.⁴

With the re-opening of London City on June 21, BA Cityflyer resumed flights from the airport with a Loganair-operated service to the Isle of Man.⁵ BA Cityflyer-operated flights resumed on July 10, with services to Ibiza (Daily), Florence, Palma de Mallorca and Malaga (all three per week). From July 20, flights will resume to Dublin, Edinburgh and Glasgow. On August 1, BA will add flights to Bergerac, Faro, Mahon and Nice.⁶

During July, British Airways resumed mainline services to more destinations across its network, albeit with lower than pre-COVID-19 frequencies due to reduced demand and travel restrictions.⁷

- Domestic – flights to resume from London to Belfast, Inverness, Jersey, Manchester, Newcastle and Newquay, while frequency on existing services to Edinburgh and Glasgow will increase.
- Short-haul – services to resume to destinations in Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Morocco, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.
- Long-haul – existing North American destinations Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York JFK, San Francisco (restarted June) and Washington DC will be joined by Bermuda, Dallas, Miami, Seattle and Toronto. In the Caribbean, BA will return to Barbados and Kingston. Resumed service to Tokyo Haneda will join existing Asian destinations Hong Kong and Singapore.

² [British Airways](#), March 25, 2020

³ [International Flight Network](#), March 26, 2020

⁴ [The Guardian](#), March 31, 2020

⁵ [Simple Flying](#), June 22, 2020

⁶ [Breaking Travel News](#), July 10, 2020

⁷ [Breaking Travel News](#), July 3, 2020

Throughout August, BA resumed service to more destinations, albeit with low frequencies.⁸

- Short-haul – Bari, Bastia, Bodrum, Bordeaux, Catania, Figari, Frankfurt, Genoa, Kefalonia, Lyon, Luxembourg, Malta, Paphos and Pula
- Long-haul – Antigua, Islamabad and Nairobi

During October 2020, BA resumed long-haul services from London to Bahrain, Cape Town and Johannesburg, and to winter sun destinations including Barbados, Grenada, Male (Maldives) and the Seychelles. The airline also expanded its European network, resuming services during the month to Arecife, Basel, Bilbao, Billund, Bordeaux, Brindisi, Brussels, Cologne, Dublin, Düsseldorf, Gothenburg, Gran Canaria, Kefalonia, Luxembourg, Malta, Milan Linate, Salzburg, Seville, Stuttgart, Valencia, Vienna and Zagreb.

IAG

IAG, the parent company of British Airways, Iberia, Aer Lingus, Level and Vueling, initially planned to cut capacity by at least 75% during April and May.⁹ IAG chairman Willie Walsh believed underlying demand would probably justify a less significant reduction in capacity, but government travel restrictions mean the cuts must be this severe. It is grounding surplus aircraft and is considering accelerating older aircraft retirements, including Boeing 747-400s and Airbus A340-600s. Both aircraft sub-fleets have been fully depreciated.

With British Airways (BA) scaling back its operations, IAG raised its capacity cuts for April and May from 75% to 90%. From April 8, these cuts included BA's services to from London to Japan. The airline suspended until the end of April double-daily services to Tokyo Haneda and four-times-weekly services to Osaka, after the Japanese government banned U.K. and most European passport holders from entering the country.

IAG planned a "meaningful" return to service in July, with passenger capacity at 50% of 2019 levels. This plan contained high uncertainty and depended on the easing of lockdowns and travel restrictions.

In September, IAG observed a delayed recovery, which meant capacity across the group would be 60% below 2019 levels during the final quarter of 2020. It had previously forecast a 46% reduction in flights for this period.

Capacity during the third quarter of 2020 was 78.6% lower year-over-year. IAG plans for fourth quarter capacity to be no more than 30% of the 2019 level.¹⁰

Iberia

By the start of August, Iberia Group airlines were offering regular scheduled flights to 55 destinations across Spain and Europe, with Berlin and Prague among its recently reinstated destinations.¹¹ The airline also resumed long-haul flights in July from Madrid to Costa Rica, Ecuador, the U.S. and Uruguay. During August it will operate 27% of its pre-COVID-19 schedule, up from 18% in July.

⁸ [BA](#), August 3, 2020

⁹ [IAG](#), March 16, 2020

¹⁰ [Breaking Travel News](#), October 22, 2020

¹¹ [Breaking Travel News](#), August 7, 2020

KLM

From March 29 until May 3, KLM had planned to fly to 25 intercontinental and 32 European destinations, although at much reduced frequencies. It expected to operate around 10% of the normal number of flights during this period.

As travel restrictions evolved, KLM continued to scale down its European network. By May 3, KLM was also operating passenger flights to just 13 intercontinental destinations:¹²

- Asia: Bangkok, Osaka, Seoul, Singapore, Tokyo Narita
- Latin America: Curaçao and São Paulo
- Americas: Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, Mexico City, New York JFK, Toronto

From May 4, KLM resumed regional jet-operated daily services from Amsterdam to eight European destinations: Barcelona, Budapest, Helsinki, Madrid, Milan, Prague, Rome and Warsaw.¹³ The airline plans to gradually reopen more routes, subject to measures being taken by authorities at the destinations, to eventually rebuild its schedule to 15% of its pre-COVID-19 level.

In July, KLM planned to operate 80% of its European network and 75% of its intercontinental destinations. By August, these figures had retreated to 60% in both cases.

On September 23, 2020, KLM announced that it had put the planned upscaling of its European network on hold. Its winter schedule in November 2020 will be 55% of the same month in 2019.

Lufthansa Group

On March 19, Lufthansa Group announced a 95% reduction in capacity across member airlines. Air Dolomiti, Austrian Airlines and Brussels Airlines all entirely suspended their operations.

Lufthansa discontinued long-haul flying from Munich, while maintaining limited long-haul services from Frankfurt. Its basic long-haul service until May 3 comprised: three weekly services to Newark, Chicago, Montreal, Sao Paulo, Bangkok and Tokyo.¹⁴ It also continued to offer approximately 50 daily connections from its Frankfurt and Munich hubs to key cities in Germany and Europe.

While Lufthansa extended its reduced schedule by two weeks to May 31, it restored service to more destinations. From May 18, Lufthansa doubled domestic flights from Munich. It also added Athens, Gothenburg and Porto to the list of international destinations served from Frankfurt.

Lufthansa ramped up its schedule during June.¹⁵ Together with Eurowings and SWISS, Lufthansa aimed to operate 1,800 weekly frequencies to 106 German and European destinations and over 20 long-haul destinations. In the first half of June Lufthansa resumed service to 19 short haul destinations:

- Frankfurt: Hannover, Mallorca, Sofia, Prague, Billund, Nice, Manchester, Budapest, Dublin, Riga, Krakow, Bucharest and Kiev
- Munich: Münster/Osnabrück, Sylt, Rostock, Vienna, Zurich, Brussels and Mallorca

More long-haul routes will join existing flights to Bangkok, Chicago, Newark, Sao Paulo and Tokyo:

¹² [KLM](#), April 28, 2020

¹³ [KLM](#), May 4, 2020

¹⁴ [Breaking Travel News](#), April 3, 2020

¹⁵ [Lufthansa](#), May 14, 2020

- Frankfurt: Abuja, Bahrain, Dubai, Johannesburg, Mexico City, Mumbai, Port Harcourt, Riyadh, Tel Aviv, Toronto
- Munich: Chicago, Los Angeles, Tel Aviv

On July 27, Lufthansa resumed flights from Frankfurt to New York JFK after a four-month break. Initially operated five-times weekly, Lufthansa will ramp the service up to daily by the end of August until the end of the summer schedule (October 24). The airline has started offering on-site COVID-19 testing at Frankfurt airport for arrivals from at-risk countries like the U.S.

By September, Lufthansa planned to offer 90% of its originally planned short- and medium-haul destinations and 70% of its long-haul destinations.¹⁶ This included 102 destinations from Frankfurt and 88 from Munich.

During September 2020, Lufthansa resumed short-haul services from Munich to Gothenburg, Kiev, Marseille and Sibiu, with flights to Graz resuming early in October. By the end of October, Lufthansa will be operating flights to 86 European destinations and 13 long-haul from Munich.

Medium airlines

| Airline | Action and plans |
|---------------------|--|
| Aegean Airlines | Rebuilding domestic services from May 18 and international from May 31 |
| Aer Lingus | Recommenced European flights in July |
| Aeroflot | Most international services suspended until April 23 or 30 |
| Air Europa | Resumed serving many routes to Europe and the Americas during July and August |
| Air Malta | Resumed services from July 1 |
| Air Serbia | Domestic flights resumed from May |
| Alitalia | Planning to serve 20 domestic and 32 international destinations during August |
| Austrian Airlines | Mainly short-haul services resumed from June 15. Four long-haul routes restored from July 1. From mid-July, 14 routes re-suspended |
| AZAL | Airline grounded until May 31 |
| Brussels Airlines | Resuming reduced schedule from June 15, with 59 routes operated by August |
| Finnair | Restarted European and Asian flights from July 1. Scaled back capacity plans for September from 50% to 30% of 2019 level |
| Icelandair | In June/July, expanding current network of ten short-haul and a single long-haul route |
| LOT Polish Airlines | Restarted European and some long-haul flights in July |
| SAS | Resumed international routes from June |
| Swiss | Operating minimized schedule. Resuming short- and long-haul services during June |
| TAP Air Portugal | Rebuilt international network to 58 destinations by October 2020 |
| Virgin Atlantic | Resumed services in July, with more routes restored during September and October |

¹⁶ [Lufthansa](#), June 4, 2020

Aegean Airlines

To comply with travel restrictions imposed by its home country, the European Union and other states, Greek carrier Aegean Airlines suspended all international flights from March 26 initially until April 30, except for a small number of weekly services linking Athens with Brussels. During the suspension period Aegean continued to operate a limited service on its domestic network.

From May 18, Aegean will gradually expand domestic services, increasing capacity to Heraklion, Chania, Thessaloniki and Alexandroupolis.¹⁷ From May 25, it will add flights to Rhodes, Corfu, Mytilene, Chios, Samos and other domestic destinations.

By the end of May, Aegean aims to restore international operations to some European destinations. Initial destinations served from Athens will include Star Alliance hubs Frankfurt, Munich, Zurich and Geneva, joining existing services to Brussels.

From June 15, Aegean restarted operations from Thessaloniki, initially resuming flights to Munich, Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, Stuttgart, Larnaca and Tel Aviv.¹⁸ During the month, Aegean also grew its domestic network to include Heraklion, Chania, Rhodes, Mytilini, Kos, Samos, Chios, Limnos and Kalamata.

During July, Aegean operated around 40% of its 2019 capacity. As it rebuilds its schedule, this should rise to 50% in August.

Aer Lingus

Aer Lingus is operating a reduced European and North American schedule. From July 1, it recommenced some flights within Europe to destinations including Malaga, Alicante, Arecife, Faro, Palma de Mallorca and Rome.¹⁹ Aer Lingus has continued to operate a reduced service to North America, maintaining flights from Dublin to New York JFK, Boston and Chicago.

Aeroflot

Starting March 17, Aeroflot began temporarily suspending flights from Moscow to 29 destinations.²⁰ All suspensions were in place by March 24, with most remaining until April 23. Flights to Antalya, Baku, Bucharest, Budapest, Dubai, Hanoi, Havana, Helsinki, Ho Chi Minh City, Lisbon, Los Angeles, Miami, Phuket, Tallinn, Vilnius and Washington DC are not due to resume until April 30.

Aeroflot continues to operate from Moscow to the following European destinations: Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels, Dublin, Geneva, London, Madrid, Paris and Rome.

On August 1, Aeroflot resumed services from Moscow to both London and Istanbul after receiving clearance from the U.K. and Turkish authorities. Its low-cost carrier, Pobeda, resumed its own services from Moscow to Istanbul on the same date. From August 10, Aeroflot will expand its Turkish services with flights to Antalya.

During September 2020, Aeroflot resumed international services from Moscow to Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), Minsk (Belarus) and Nur-Sultan (Kazakhstan).²¹ Flights to Seoul will resume on October 1.

¹⁷ [Breaking Travel News](#), May 15, 2020

¹⁸ [Aegean Airlines](#), May 27, 2020

¹⁹ [Aer Lingus](#), Flight Disruption Information

²⁰ Aeroflot, March 25, 2020

²¹ [Business Travel News](#), September 22, 2020

Air Europa

Between the end of March and June 21, Spanish airline Air Europa maintained only a single route to the mainland, flying between Palma de Mallorca and Madrid.²² It also maintained limited service within the Balearic Islands, linking Palma, Ibiza and Mahon. On June 22, it restored domestic service from Palma to Alicante, Barcelona and Madrid, as well as from Madrid to Gran Canaria and Tenerife Norte in the Canary Islands.

European flights to Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Switzerland and the U.K. resumed during July. Flights to Copenhagen will not restart until October 24.

At the end of July, Air Europa returned to Ecuador, offering a twice-weekly service from Madrid linking both Guayaquil and Quito.²³ Suspension of service to Peru and Uruguay should also now have ended. Flights to Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia and Paraguay remain cancelled until the end of August. Air Europa was scheduled to return to Sao Paulo in mid-July, but its flights to other Brazilian destinations – Fortaleza, Recife and Salvador de Bahia remain grounded until the end of October.

In the Caribbean and Central America, Air Europa returned to Cuba and the Dominican Republic in mid-July. Services to Honduras, Mexico and Panama are due to resume during August.

Air Europa resumed flights to the U.S. from the beginning of August, operating twice-weekly services from Madrid to New York and building to twice-weekly services from Madrid to Miami.

Air Malta

With Malta International Airport reopening to commercial operations after a three-month closure, Air Malta resumed flights in July 1.²⁴ It's initially flying to the following destinations: Berlin, Catania, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Geneva, Lyon, Marseille, Munich, Prague, Rome, Vienna and Zurich. On July 15, it resumed operations to Amsterdam, Brussels, London Heathrow, Milan, Lisbon, Madrid, Palermo and Paris Charles de Gaulle and Orly airports. Air Malta will also start a brand-new service to Madrid.

Air Serbia

Air Serbia initially suspended all flights from March 19 until the end of April. The airline restarted flights on May 21 offering services from Belgrade to Frankfurt, London, Vienna and Zurich. It has since launched services to Amsterdam, Banja Luka, Ljubljana, New York, Paris, Podgorica, Sarajevo, Skopje and Tivat.

On June 16, Air Serbia resumed operations from Nis, with flights to Frankfurt Hahn, Hannover, Nürnberg, Salzburg, Tivat, Vienna. Service from Kraljevo will resume on June with flights to Vienna.

Alitalia

From 9 March, Alitalia responded to government measures to contain COVID-19 with a reorganization of its flight schedule. From March 16, following the temporary closure of Milan Linate Airport, Alitalia's domestic flights to and from Milan have operated solely from the city's Malpensa Airport. As the Italian government also closed Malpensa's Terminal 1, Alitalia passengers must check in for flights at the airport's Terminal 2. Alitalia also suspended all international flights from Malpensa and retained Rome as the only destination served from Venice Marco Polo airport.

²² [Air Europa](#), Changes in flight operations, July 22, 2020

²³ [Travel Daily News](#), July 27, 2020

²⁴ [Breaking Travel News](#), June 17, 2020

Alitalia started to rebuild its schedule during June, operating 36% more flights than in May.²⁵ Its schedule changes included:

- Milan Malpensa – in addition to its existing schedule of eight daily flights to Rome, Alitalia resumed service to six domestic destinations: two daily flights to Bari, Catania and Palermo and four daily flights to Alghero, Cagliari and Olbia.
- Rome Fiumicino – Alitalia had already raised frequency to Cagliari from four to six flights per day. From May 21, service to Catania and Palermo increased from six to eight flights per day. During June, Alitalia expanded its domestic network further, adding flights to Alghero, Bologna, Bari, Genoa, Lamezia Terme, Milan, Naples, Olbia, Pisa, Turin and Venice. From June 2, it also resumed international services to Barcelona, Brussels, Frankfurt, Geneva, London, Madrid, Munich, Paris and Zurich.

All passenger flights are operated at half seat capacity to comply with Italian regulations on social distancing. Any further expansion of the airline's schedule will depend on demand and the relaxation of international travel restrictions.

On July 24, Alitalia will resume operations from Milan Linate airport, which has been temporarily closed. It will start with public service obligation (PSO) routes to Sardinia, but from August 1, it will transfer back some routes from Milan Malpensa.

During August, Alitalia plans to operate 1,600 flights per week on 75 routes, a 24% increase on its July schedule, and double the number of flights it operated in June. Alitalia's network will comprise 20 domestic and 32 international destinations. The airline will resume flights from Milan to New York on August 15, and from Rome to Tokyo on August 17. A number of destinations in France, Spain, the Middle East and North Africa will also rejoin its network.

Austrian Airlines

At the start of March, Austrian cancelled one-fifth of its flying schedule, with further adjustments announced on March 11. As the situation deteriorated, it terminated all regular scheduled flights until further notice from March 19. The airline then announced a series of extensions to its grounding.

Austrian Airlines resumed scheduled services to 27 mostly European cities from June 15.²⁶ By the end June it was serving a network of almost 40 destinations. Passengers must wear their own face masks onboard and will be required to social distance in the cabin where possible. The airline will not leave seats free on full flights.

From June 15, Austrian started flying from Vienna to 25 cities: Amsterdam, Athens, Basel, Berlin, Brussels, Bucharest, Copenhagen, Dubrovnik, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Geneva, Hamburg, Larnaca, Munich, Paris, Pristina, Sarajevo, Skopje, Sofia, Stuttgart, Thessaloniki, Tel Aviv, Tirana, Varna and Zurich. It added nine more cities from June 22: Belgrade, Graz, Innsbruck, Kosice, Nice, Prague, Split and Warsaw.

From July 1, Austrian restored flights to 13 more destinations in Europe and the Middle East: Bologna, Cairo, Florence, Kiev, London, Milan, Moscow, Podgorica, Rome, Sibiu, Stockholm, Venice and Zagreb. Long-haul services also resumed to Bangkok, Chicago, Newark and Washington DC.

From July 16, a government ban on flights arriving from Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Egypt, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania and Serbia meant Austrian had to re-suspend restored

²⁵ [Alitalia](#), May 20, 2020

²⁶ [Austrian Airlines](#)

services to Belgrade, Bucharest, Cairo, Podgorica, Pristina, Sarajevo, Sibiu, Skopje, Sofia, Tirana and Varna.²⁷ An extension of a ban applying to flights from Sweden, the U.K. and Ukraine until July 31 also forced Austrian suspend recently-resumed services to Kiev, London and Stockholm.

From August 1, 2020, Austrian resumed services to Shanghai, initially with only a weekly service.²⁸ During September it will restart more European services to destinations including Chisinau, Dnipro, Isai, Klagenfurt, Leipzig, Lviv, Lyon, Nürnberg, Odessa and Yerevan. At the same time, it increased frequencies on services already resumed. There will be more flights and larger aircraft to Amsterdam, Athens, Brussels, Bucharest, Copenhagen, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt and Paris.

For the winter season running from October 2020 to March 2021, Austrian plans to operate 30% of 2019 levels, down from the 50% it had previously announced. It will serve 60 destinations – 20 fewer than last year – and routes will be operated with substantially fewer frequencies. It will, however, expand its long-haul network with the start of flights to Cape Town, the Maldives and Mauritius during December.

AZAL

AZAL (Azerbaijan Airlines) and low-cost subsidiary Buta Airways initially responded to COVID-19 with a program of intense cleaning and disinfection of aircraft and passenger screening. By March 26, AZAL had scaled back its international operation to flights from Baku to London Heathrow and Moscow.²⁹

Other than operating repatriation flights, AZAL has been grounded since April 5. The resumption of domestic and international flights will depend on when destination countries reopen their borders to travel.³⁰ Azerbaijan is currently under a lockdown due to last until May 31.³¹

Brussels Airlines

Brussels Airlines shut down all services on March 21. It resumed a reduced schedule on June 15 and will build up operations in a phased approach according to market demand and travel restrictions.³² From June 15, the airline launched 20 routes, with a further 40 to be added by August:³³

- June 15: Alicante, Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Budapest, Catania, Copenhagen, Faro, Lisbon, Madrid, Malaga, Marseille, Naples, Nice, Porto, Prague, Rome, Tel Aviv, Venice, Vienna
- June 22: Dubrovnik, Geneva, Heraklion, Hurghada, Ibiza, Kos, Las Palmas, London, Lyon, Milan, Palma de Mallorca, Paris, Rhodes, Tenerife
- July: Bilbao, Florence, Hamburg, Ljubljana, Manchester, Oslo, Palermo, Stockholm, Toulouse, Vilnius, Warsaw
- August: Abidjan, Accra, Banjul, Bujumbura, Cotonou, Dakar, Douala, Entebbe, Freetown, Kigali, Kinshasa, Lomé, Monrovia, New York, Yaoundé
- September/October: Basel, Birmingham, Bologna, Edinburgh, Gothenburg, Milan Linate, Warsaw

²⁷ [Breaking Travel News](#), July 15, 2020

²⁸ [Breaking Travel News](#), July 9, 2020

²⁹ [Azernews](#), March 27, 2020

³⁰ [AZAL](#)

³¹ [Reuters](#), May 1, 2020

³² [Brussels Airlines](#), May 14, 2020

³³ [Brussels Airlines](#), May 25, 2020

Because of the extension of travel restrictions outside Europe, the resumption of long-haul services planned for June and July was delayed until August.³⁴

From October 25, 2020, Brussels Airlines will start to rebuild its African operations, initially increasing capacity by 12% and targeting a 40% increase by the end of December 2020.³⁵ It will increase frequencies from Brussels to Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire; Banjul, The Gambia; Bujumbura, Burundi; Dakar, Senegal; Douala and Yaounde, Cameroon; Entebbe; Uganda; Freetown, Sierra Leone; Kigali, Rwanda; and Kinshasa, DR Congo. From February 2021, Brussels Airlines will resume service to Luanda, Angola, and transatlantic services to New York JFK.

Finnair

Between April 1 and June 30, 2020, Finnair maintained a limited domestic schedule, operating flights from Helsinki to Oulu, Rovaniemi, Kuopio and Mariehamn.³⁶ It also continued European services to Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels, Frankfurt, London, Munich, Paris, Stockholm, Tallinn and Zurich. It suspended flights to all other European and long-haul destinations.

During July, Finnair planned to operate 30% of its normal schedule, adding back frequencies and routes. In Europe, it focused on key cities, reconvening services on July 1 to Budapest, Copenhagen, Dublin, Düsseldorf, Edinburgh, Gothenburg, Geneva, Hamburg, Malaga, Manchester, Oslo, Prague, Riga, St Petersburg, Vilnius and Vienna.³⁷ It also restarted domestic services from Helsinki to Turku and Vaasa. Flights to Ivalo and Kittila follow in August, and to Kuusamo and Tampere in September.

Long-haul services also resumed in July to key Asian destinations Bangkok, Beijing, Nagoya, Osaka, Seoul, Singapore and Tokyo. Subject to government approval, Finnair also intends to restore service to Hong Kong and Shanghai.

During August, Finnair restarted flights to Barcelona, Madrid, Milan, Rome and Warsaw, as well as long-haul services to Delhi and New York.

By September, Finnair had planned to be operating 50% of its pre-pandemic schedule, up from the 25% it operated in July. However, as the introduction of COVID-19-related restrictions resulted in lower-than-expected demand, particularly passengers connecting from long-haul to short-haul flights, the airline scaled back its plans for September operations. On its domestic network it suspended services to Turku, postponed the launch of services to Tampere, and reduced frequencies to Vaasa and Mariehamn. It did, however, increase service to Ivalo, Kittila and Kuusamo. On its European network, it suspended service to Nice, and while maintaining all other destinations, many saw frequencies cut. As a result of these changes, capacity will be 30% of its September 2019 level, instead of the planned 50%.³⁸

With the resurgence of COVID-19 cases continuing, Finnair scaled back its planned schedule for October from around 200 daily flights to 70-80. It will reduce frequencies of flights to most of the 42 destinations in its network. Planned restarts to Bergen, Barcelona, Madrid, St Petersburg, Stuttgart, Tampere and Turku have been postponed. It will, however, continue with plans to resume service to Nanjing.

³⁴ [Brussels Airlines](#), June 29, 2020

³⁵ [Business Travel News](#), September 30, 2020

³⁶ [Finnair](#)

³⁷ [Finnair](#), May 18, 2020

³⁸ [Finnair](#), August 12, 2020

Icelandair

By March 23, 2020, Icelandair was operating just 14% of its planned flight schedule. Until November 8, 2020, Icelandair is now operating flights from Reykjavik to 10 European destinations and a single point in North America.

- Europe: Amsterdam (7), Berlin (7), Copenhagen (15), Frankfurt (7), London (14), Munich (3), Oslo (8), Paris (7), Stockholm (8), Zurich (2)
- North America: Boston (2),

Icelandair did not proceed with previously announced plans to add further European destinations over the summer, including Billund, Brussels, Dublin, Düsseldorf, Glasgow, Hamburg, Helsinki and Madrid. It also failed to expand as planned its long-haul operation to include Chicago, Denver, New York, Seattle, Toronto and Washington DC.

Icelandair expects to operate a summer 2021 schedule with 25-30% less capacity than in 2019. It plans to serve 32 destinations – 22 in Europe, seven in the U.S. and three in Canada.

LOT Polish Airlines

LOT gradually restored domestic operations from June 1, offering services from Warsaw to Krakow, Gdansk, Poznan, Rzeszow Szczecin, Wroclaw and Zielona Gora, and from Krakow to Gdansk. These were followed later in the month by Krakow-Olsztyn-Mazury and Rzeszow-Gdansk.³⁹

From the beginning of July, the airline resumed international flights for the first time since mid-March.⁴⁰ It initially added back flights from Warsaw to Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Brussels, Budapest, Chania, Corfu, Dubrovnik, Düsseldorf, Kiev, Oslo, Podgorica, Prague, Split, Tbilisi, Tirana, Tivat, Varna, Vienna, Vilnius and Zadar. It also restarted long-haul services to Seoul, Tokyo Narita and Toronto.

By mid-July, LOT will have also resumed services to Copenhagen, Frankfurt, Geneva, Hamburg, Ljubljana, London Heathrow, Madrid, Milan, Odessa, Paris, Riga, Tallinn, Zagreb and Zurich. The airline is also resuming flights from Budapest to Dubrovnik and Varna, and from Poznan to Podgorica.

SAS

With demand for international air travel “essentially non-existent,” SAS suspended most of its operations and temporarily reduced its workforce by 90%. From March 16, the airline virtually grounded itself. It was able to maintain its domestic network in Norway.

As countries begin to ease their travel restrictions, SAS resumed some suspended flights in June.⁴¹ From June 15, it restarted flights from Copenhagen to ten destinations and to four from Stockholm Arlanda airport. During June, SAS served the following routes:

- Copenhagen: Athens, Brussels, Düsseldorf, Faroe Islands, Frankfurt, Gdansk, Malaga, Milan, Munich, Nice, Palanga, Reykjavik, Split, Stuttgart, Trondheim, Vilnius
- Oslo-Split
- Stockholm: Athens, Palma de Mallorca, Nice, Ostersund, Thessaloniki, Visby

During July 2020, SAS resumed service on the following routes:

³⁹ [LOT](#), Resumption of flight connections

⁴⁰ [Business Travel News](#), July 2, 2020

⁴¹ [SAS](#), May 27, 2020

- Copenhagen: Chania, Manchester, Olbia, Pisa, Pula, Thessaloniki, Venice, Warsaw
- Oslo: Dublin, Düsseldorf, Edinburgh, Frankfurt, London, Manchester, Zurich
- Stockholm: Dublin, Zurich

SAS's domestic networks in Denmark, Norway and Sweden will soon be almost fully restored, as the airline resumes flights from Stavanger to Trondheim and from Stockholm to Ronneby and Sundsvall.⁴² SAS is also increasing European flights and adding 18 routes, including Copenhagen-Paris, Stockholm-Frankfurt and Oslo-Brussels.

At the end of September, SAS plans to restart intercontinental flights to Asia with a weekly Copenhagen-Shanghai service. It will also increase Copenhagen-New York to a daily operation, while maintaining services from Copenhagen to Chicago and San Francisco. SAS will expand its transatlantic operation with the restart of Copenhagen-Washington DC service.

Swiss

Following the lead of other Lufthansa Group carriers, Swiss scaled back its operations to a "minimized" schedule. It continued to fly to selected European cities and a total of just three weekly long-haul flights to Newark from Zurich and Geneva.

Swiss resumed services in June 2020 to the Mediterranean and major European cities, including Paris, Brussels and Moscow. The airline also reintroduced long-haul services from Zurich to Bangkok, Chicago, Hong Kong, Johannesburg, Miami, Montreal, Mumbai, New York JFK and Tokyo. In September, it resumed services to San Francisco. The airline currently serves the following destinations:

- Africa – Dar Es Salaam, Mauritius, Nairobi
- Europe – Alicante, Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Belgrade, Berlin, Biarritz, Brindisi, Brussels, Bucharest, Budapest, Copenhagen, Dublin, Düsseldorf, Faro, Figari, Florence, Frankfurt, Geneva, Gothenburg, Hamburg, Heraklion, Kiev, Krakow, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Malaga, Manchester, Menorca, Milan, Moscow, Naples, Nice, Oslo, Palma de Mallorca, Paris, Palermo, Porto, Prague, Pristina, Rome, Stockholm, Sylt, Thessaloniki, Valencia, Vienna, Warsaw, Zurich
- Middle East – Tel Aviv
- North America – Chicago, Las Vegas, Miami, Montreal, New York, Newark, San Francisco, Sao Paulo
- North Asia – Hong Kong, Shanghai
- South Asia - Mumbai
- Southeast Asia – Singapore

For the winter 2020/2021 season, Swiss aims to operate 85% of its pre-pandemic network, albeit only at 30-40% of prior year capacity.⁴³ Its winter schedule will include the restoration of a number of routes including Zurich to Birmingham, Boston and Delhi, and from Geneva to Dublin, London City, Prague and Stockholm.

TAP Air Portugal

As Portugal eased its lockdown, national airline TAP Air Portugal (TAP) resumed services.⁴⁴ On June 4, it returned to North America, restarting twice-weekly flights from Lisbon to Newark. In July, it added twice-weekly service to Boston, Miami and Toronto. The airline also added three new North American routes:

⁴² [SAS](#), August 27, 2020

⁴³ [Business Travel News Europe](#), September 30, 2020

⁴⁴ [Business Travel News](#), May 28, 2020

Ponta Delgada-Boston (July 1), Ponta-Delgada-Toronto (July 2) and Lisbon-Montreal (July 30). By July, across its entire network TAP was operating about 20% of its pre-COVID-19 schedule, as it resumed domestic and European services and expanded long-haul services to African destinations.

The airline's schedule for October 2020 comprises the following routes:⁴⁵

- Domestic – Lisbon: Porto (28 per week), Funchal (28), Ponta Delgada (14), Terceira (7), Porto Santo (3), Faro (21); Porto: Funchal (7), Ponta Delgada (4)
- Africa – Lisbon: Accra (2), Bissau (1), Dakar (7), Luanda (3), Maputo (2), Praia (7), São Tome (2)
- Europe – Lisbon: Amsterdam (7), Barcelona (12), Berlin (14), Bilbao (3), Brussels (7), Copenhagen (5), Dublin (7), Düsseldorf (7), Florence (3), Frankfurt (21), Geneva (14), Gran Canaria (3), Hamburg (14), London (21), Luxembourg (5), Lyon (7), Malaga (7), Madrid (28), Manchester (5), Marseille (7), Milan (14), Munich (14), Nice (7), Paris (21), Prague (3), Rome (14), Seville (5), Stockholm (4), Tenerife (3), Toulouse (7), Valencia (7), Venice (4), Vienna (4), Warsaw (3), Zurich (14); Porto: Amsterdam (4), London (7), Luxembourg (3), Milan (3), Paris (14), Zurich (4)
- North America – Lisbon: Boston (3), Chicago (1), Miami (3), Montreal (3), Newark (7), San Francisco (2), Toronto (5), Washington (3); Ponta Delgada: Boston (3); Porto: Newark (2)
- South America – Lisbon: Belo Horizonte (2), Brasilia (2), Fortaleza (3), Maceio (2), Recife (3), Rio de Janeiro (4), Salvador (2), São Paulo (7); Porto: Rio de Janeiro (1)

Virgin Atlantic

Virgin Atlantic had planned to resume some services in July 2020. However, it then indicated it would not restart flights until at least August due to the U.K. government's imposition of a 14-day quarantine on international arrivals from June 8.⁴⁶ It then reverted to its previous plan, aiming to restore some services from July 20, with more routes added over the following months:

- July – Hong Kong, New York JFK, Los Angeles
- August – Barbados, Miami, Orlando, San Francisco, Shanghai
- September – Atlanta, Boston, Delhi, Lagos, Las Vegas, Mumbai, Seattle, Tel Aviv, Washington DC
- October – Antigua, Grenada, Montego Bay
- November – Boston
- December – Cape Town, Islamabad, Lahore

By the start of September, Virgin was operating daily flights to New York JFK and Los Angeles. However, it had delayed the resumption of service to Atlanta, Lagos, Tel Aviv from August until September.

Subject to approval from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Virgin aimed to resume Manchester-Orlando flights on August 24, with Manchester-Barbados services resuming in October.

Even before it returns to a fully operational schedule, Virgin Atlantic is planning to expand its network, announcing plans to fly in December to Pakistan for the first time. Subject to regulatory approval, it will operate from London Heathrow to Lahore and Islamabad and from Manchester to Islamabad.

⁴⁵ [TAP Portugal](#), October 23, 2020

⁴⁶ [Business Travel News](#), May 27, 2020

Low-cost carriers

| Airline | Action and plans |
|-----------|--|
| easyJet | Restoring 50% of network in July and 75% in August, but at 30% of normal capacity. Resumed some flying in June |
| Eurowings | Rebuilding Mediterranean flights from May |
| Level | Resuming long-haul services in September |
| Norwegian | Resuming some short-haul routes from July 1 |
| Pobeda | All flights suspended until the end of May |
| Ryanair | Most of network reopened on July 1. Operating 60% of normal schedule in August |
| Volotea | Entire fleet grounded |
| Wizz Air | Operating at 60% of 2019 capacity, but may delay plans to increase this to 80% in the final quarter of 2020 |

easyJet

Because of country lockdowns, travel restrictions and changes to travel advice across its network, easyJet grounded the majority of its fleet from March 24.⁴⁷ The airline had planned to operate a minimal schedule of essential services on some U.K. routes, operated at a maximum of 10% of usual capacity. By March 30, easyJet had grounded all remaining aircraft in response to the implementation of national lockdowns and travel restrictions.⁴⁸

On May 21, easyJet announced plans to resume flying from June 15 primarily with domestic flights within France and the U.K, where it believes there is sufficient demand to support profitable flying.⁴⁹ As demand increases, it will announce more routes.

EasyJet resumed flights on June 15, operating domestic and international flights from France, Italy, Portugal, Switzerland and the U.K.⁵⁰ Most flights operated during June will be domestic. The airline planned to restore 50% of its 1,022 routes in July, rising to 75% in August. Capacity will be limited to around 30% of its normal schedule.⁵¹

With demand negatively hit by increased travel restrictions, easyJet scaled back its capacity plans for the June-September period, expecting to fly slightly less than 40% of its normal schedule for this period.

Eurowings

Eurowings is expanding its operations from Düsseldorf, Cologne/Bonn, Hamburg and Stuttgart, gradually adding 15 destinations from May onwards. It's focusing on the Mediterranean region with flights to Spain, Greece, Portugal and Croatia.

⁴⁷ [easyJet](#), March 20, 2020

⁴⁸ [Breaking Travel News](#), March 30, 2020

⁴⁹ [easyJet](#), May 21, 2020

⁵⁰ [Breaking Travel News](#), June 15, 2020

⁵¹ [Business Travel News Europe](#), June 3, 2020

Level

IAG's long-haul low-cost unit, Level, will resume flights from Barcelona to New York on September 11, ending a grounding lasting almost six months. The Vienna-based short-haul division, Level Europe, filed for insolvency in July, with its aircraft redeployed to Vueling.

Norwegian

Norwegian initially cancelled 15% of its schedule from mid-March until mid-June. By March 16, it had announced more significant cuts effective March 21. Most of its fleet was grounded.⁵²

Norwegian expected this hibernation phase – 95% of its aircraft were grounded, with just eight used to operate 13 state-supported domestic services – to continue until summer 2021.⁵³ During 2021, it would gradually ramp up its core short-haul routes and only resume its most profitable long-haul routes once there is sufficient demand.

On June 17, Norwegian announced an earlier-than-expected resumption of service scheduled for July 1, 2020.⁵⁴ During July, it plans to operate 76 routes across Europe from its Scandinavian hubs. New services will include Oslo-London (seven per week), Oslo-Edinburgh (two), Copenhagen-London (six) and Copenhagen-Edinburgh (two). Norwegian will also serve destinations in Greece, Spain and key European cities, as it returns 12 aircraft to service.⁵⁵ During July and August, Norwegian will serve 49 destinations from Oslo.

Pobeda

Aeroflot low-cost unit Pobeda has suspended all flights from April 1 until the end of May. The carrier has been affected by a halt to international air travel from March 27 and the temporary suspension of mass recreational events.

Ryanair

Ryanair grounded most flights from March 24, 2020, not expecting to operate any regular services until June at the earliest.

On May 12, Ryanair announced plans to reinstate flights across 90% of its network from the beginning of July, operating just 40% of its normal flying schedule.

During August 2020, Ryanair planned to operate more than 60% of its normal schedule. However, the airline reduced capacity by 20% for both September and October, following a noticeable weakening in forward bookings during August after a resurgence of COVID-19 in a number of European countries. The airline is cut frequencies rather than routes.

In October, Ryanair announced that winter capacity would now be 40% of last year's level, instead of the previously planned 60%, as bookings weakened in response to heightened travel restrictions. It still plans to maintain 65% of its winter routes.

⁵² [Norwegian](#), March 24, 2020

⁵³ [Anna.aero](#), April 28, 2020

⁵⁴ [Breaking Travel News](#), June 17, 2020

⁵⁵ [Norwegian](#), June 17, 2020

Volotea

Spain's fourth-largest airline Volotea has grounded its entire 33-aircraft fleet until at least April 8. This is in response to the collapse in demand and national curfews and regulations limiting air traffic, such as the virtual prohibition of passenger flights to the Balearic Islands except for repatriation purposes.

Wizz Air

With around 85% of its capacity suspended, Wizz Air warned in April 2020 that the grounding of its entire fleet remained a real possibility. At the time, it was only operational in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania.

After introducing additional hygiene measures to ensure the health and safety of customers and crew, Wizz Air reopened its London Luton base from May 1.⁵⁶ It initially offered departures to eight points in Romania: Cluj-Napoca, Constanta, Craiova, Isai, Suceava, Targu Mures, Satu Mare and Timisoara. Customers can also fly to Budapest, Belgrade, Bratislava, Kosice, Lisbon, Tenerife and Tel Aviv.

Wizz Air began rebuilding its schedule from July, resuming service on existing routes and launching some new routes:⁵⁷⁵⁸

- London Luton – Corfu, Faro, Heraklion, Rhodes, Zakynthos, Marrakech (October)
- Vienna – Bourgas, Charleroi, Constanta, Heraklion, Rhodes, Tallinn, Zakynthos, Marrakech (October)
- Lviv – Billund, Hamburg, Lisbon, Szczecin, Tallinn
- Kharkiv-Berlin, Tallinn

Since July, Wizz Air has been one of the most aggressive carriers in its resumption of services, including the opening of new bases. Between July and September, it expected to operate 60% of 2019 capacity. During the final quarter of 2020, Wizz Air had planned to lift this to 80%, but the airline has been forced to perform a U-turn. On September 23, it announced plans to operate just 50% of its 2019 capacity in October 2020. If travel restrictions remain unchanged, Wizz Air will maintain capacity at this level throughout the winter season.

Regional carriers

| Airline | Action and plans |
|--------------------|--|
| airBaltic | Flights slowly resuming from May 18. 40 destinations served from Riga during winter 2020/2021 season |
| Air Dolomiti | All services from Italy to Germany, except one daily flight, suspended |
| Braathens Regional | All services suspended from April 6 until May 31. Company in administration |
| Luxair | Flights resumed to 19 destinations |

⁵⁶ [Breaking Travel News](#), April 27, 2020

⁵⁷ [AnnaAero](#), May 1, 2020

⁵⁸ [AnnaAero](#), May 6, 2020

airBaltic

With the Latvian government suspending international travel from March 17, 2020, to all but Latvian nationals and returning residents, airBaltic suspended flights from both Estonia and Latvia until April 14, subsequently delaying its relaunch until May 12.⁵⁹

AirBaltic resumed scheduled operations on May 18 from Riga to Tallinn and Vilnius, with flights from Riga to Amsterdam restarted on May 25.⁶⁰ During June, it restarted services to Hamburg, Vienna and Düsseldorf, with Helsinki, Munich and Berlin in its relaunch pipeline.

From July 1, airBaltic resumed flights from Riga to London and launched a new Vilnius-London service, with Tallinn-London services resuming on July 4.

At the beginning of September, airBaltic restored service from Riga to nine more locations, bringing its network to 35 destinations. It has now added back service to Amsterdam, Brussels, Dublin, Gothenburg, Lisbon, Prague, Reykjavik, Vienna and Zurich.

Expecting demand to remain depressed for some time, airBaltic is rebuilding its operations gradually, and will only operate 50% of its original schedule until the end of October.⁶¹ During October, airBaltic operated to 51 airports, down from 64 in October 2019. For the 2020/2021 winter season, the airline will link Riga with 40 destinations. AirBaltic will offer flights to major European business hubs and a small selection of leisure and skiing destinations.

Air Dolomiti

Lufthansa's Italian regional subsidiary Air Dolomiti has suspended almost all flights, initially until April 19. The Verona-based carrier operates feeder flights to Lufthansa's hubs at Frankfurt and Munich from a number of Italian airports, including Bari, Bologna, Florence, Milan, Pisa, Turin, Venice and Verona.

Air Dolomiti intended to operate a single daily return flight from Milan Malpensa airport to Frankfurt in order to maintain an air bridge between northern Italy and Germany.

Braathens Regional

Swedish airline Braathens Regional suspended all services from April 6 until the end of May. Following the Swedish government's call for people not to travel inland, it saw domestic demand dwindle. Having previously suspended nine domestic routes, Braathens grounded its remaining ten domestic and eight international routes.

As a result of the grounding, Braathens applied to enter reorganization proceedings, under which a court-appointed administrator would determine the company's viability.

Luxair

On March 23, 2020, Luxair suspended all flights from Luxembourg, as many of its destination markets implemented flight bans to varying degrees. Luxair had planned to restart flights on April 20, but it subsequently delayed the resumption of services until May 30.⁶²

⁵⁹ [airBaltic](#), April 30, 2020

⁶⁰ [Business Travel News Europe](#), May 22, 2020

⁶¹ [Breaking Travel News](#), April 6, 2020

⁶² Cirium, April 21, 2020

Luxair began the gradual resumption of flights on May 29, 2020, and it has since restarted service to 21 European destinations: Barcelona, Berlin, Bordeaux, Dublin, Florence, Geneva, Hamburg, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Marseille, Milan, Montpellier, Munich, Nice, Paris, Porto, Rome, Stockholm, Venice and Vienna. Service to Bologna will resume by the end of October, with service to Bucharest and Copenhagen following early in November. Luxair's services to Manchester and Prague are not scheduled to start until the end of March 2021.⁶³

Note

The COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving, and the situation is changing on almost an hourly basis. The information presented in this report represents the latest view as at October 27, 2020. We have carefully researched and checked the information contained. However, we do not guarantee or warrant the correctness, completeness or topicality of this article and do not accept any liability for any damage or loss as a result of the use of the information contained within this article.

Do you have questions or comments regarding this report? Please email mike.eggleton@bcdtravel.co.uk to share your thoughts.

⁶³ [Luxair](#), October 23, 2020