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BTS Data

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Summary 2009 Traffic Data for U.S and Foreign Airlines: Total Passengers Down 5.3 Percent from 2008

The number of scheduled domestic and international passengers on U.S. airlines and on flights to and from the United States on foreign airlines declined in 2009 by 5.3 percent from 2008, dropping to 769.6 million, the Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) today reported (Table 1).

BTS, a part of DOT's Research and Innovative Technology Administration, in a release of preliminary data, reported that U.S. airlines carried 5.3 percent fewer total system passengers in 2009 than in 2008. U.S. airlines carried 5.2 percent fewer domestic passengers in 2009 and 6.3 percent fewer international passengers than in 2008. Passengers to and from the United States on foreign carriers decreased 4.8 percent from 2008 (Table 1A).

This release includes data on U.S. carrier scheduled domestic and international service and foreign carrier scheduled international service to and from the United States. BTS regular monthly air traffic releases include data on U.S. carrier scheduled service only. For U.S. domestic service data for 2009, see the [BTS December Air Traffic](#) press release.

Total passengers on U.S. airlines and on foreign airlines to and from the United States declined from the same month in 2008 in 10 of the 12 months. The largest decline of 12.4 percent took place in February. During the first six months of 2009, the number of passengers declined 9.0 percent from the same period in 2008. During the last six months, the decline was 1.4 percent (Table 2).

Top Airlines in 2009

Southwest Airlines carried more total system passengers in 2009 than any other U.S. airline for the third consecutive year (Table 3). American Airlines carried more international passengers to and from the United States in 2009 than any other U.S. or foreign carrier for the 20th consecutive year (Table 7).

Top Airports in 2009

More total system passengers boarded planes in 2009 at Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International than at any other U.S. airport (Table 4); and more international passengers boarded planes at New York John F. Kennedy than at any other U.S. airport (Table 8).

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For more information on U.S. carrier domestic operations, see the [BTS December Air Traffic](#) press release.

Flights Operated

U.S. carriers and foreign carriers serving the United States operated 10.0 million domestic and international flights in 2009, 6.6 percent fewer than operated in 2008 (Table 1).

System (Domestic + International) Comparisons (Tables 1-4)

In other total system comparisons from 2008 to 2009 (Table 1):

Revenue passenger-miles (RPMs), a measure of the number of passengers and the distance flown, were down 4.8 percent in 2009.

Available seat-miles (ASMs), a measure of airline capacity using the number of seats and the distance flown, were down 5.4 percent in 2009.

Passenger load factor, passenger miles as a proportion of available seat-miles, was up 0.5 load factor points at 79.1 percent in 2009.

Flight stage length, the average non-stop distance flown per departure, was unchanged in 2009.

Passenger trip length, the average distance flown per passenger, was up 0.5 percent in 2009.

Among airlines, Southwest carried 101.3 million passengers on its system in 2009, the most of any airline (Table 3).

Among airports, Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson was the busiest U.S. airport in 2009, with 42.1 million domestic and international passenger boardings (Table 4).

International Air Travel (Tables 5-8)

U.S. airlines and foreign airlines carried 151.5 million scheduled international passengers in 2009, down 5.6 percent from 2008. The passengers were carried on 1.27 million flights, down 6.5 percent from the 1.36 million flights operated in 2008 (Table 5). U.S. and foreign airlines operated 623,640 flights into the United States from foreign airports and 624,771 flights from U.S. airports to foreign destinations. U.S. airlines operated an additional 23,489 foreign-to-foreign flights.

U.S. airlines carried 56.6 percent of the international passengers in 2009, down from 57.1 percent in 2008 (Table 5).

International passengers on U.S. airlines and on foreign airlines to and from the United States declined in all months of 2009 from the same month in 2008 except in December. The largest decline of 13.4 percent took place in the month of May (Table 6).

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ADD TWO

In other international comparisons from 2008 to 2009 (Table 5):

International revenue passenger-miles (RPMs), a measure of the number of passengers and the distance flown, were down 4.4 percent in 2009.

International available seat-miles (ASMs), a measure of airline capacity using the number of seats and the distance flown, were down 4.0 percent in 2009.

International passenger load factor, passenger miles as a proportion of available seat-miles, was down 0.3 load factor points to 77.1 percent in 2009.

International flight stage length, the average non-stop distance flown per departure, was up 1.2 percent in 2009.

International passenger trip length, the average distance flown per passenger, was up 1.3 percent in 2009.

American carried 19.6 million international passengers in 2009, the most of any airline serving the United States (Table 7).

New York JFK was the busiest U.S. airport for international travel in 2009, with 10.7 million international passenger boardings (Table 8).

Reporting Notes

Data are compiled from monthly reports filed with BTS by commercial U.S. and foreign air carriers detailing operations, passenger traffic and freight traffic. This release includes data received by BTS from 198 carriers as of March 18 for U.S. and foreign carrier **scheduled** civilian operations. Go to <http://www.transtats.bts.gov/releaseinfo.asp> for the complete list of reporting and non-reporting carriers. TranStats results for foreign carriers may differ from the press release until the next database update scheduled for April 15.

For additional passenger, flight, RPM, ASM, load factor and freight numbers, go to the [BTS home page](#) and use the links in the Airline Industry box. International totals and results for foreign carriers may differ from the press release until the next database update scheduled for April 15. These tables do not include U.S. carrier foreign point-to-point operations. For 2009, U.S. carriers reported 2,736,096 foreign point-to-point passengers.

To create a customized table for U.S. carrier passengers, flights, RPMs, ASMs and other data, including non-scheduled service, go to [BTS Air Carrier Traffic Statistics](#).

Additional traffic numbers are available on the BTS website at TranStats, the Intermodal Transportation Database, at <http://transtats.bts.gov>. Click on "Aviation." For U.S. carrier system passengers, RPMs and ASMs by carrier through December, click on "Air Carrier Summary Data (Form 41 and 298C Summary Data)," and then click on "Schedule T-1." Use crosstabs to find scheduled service.

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ADD THREE

For domestic numbers through December and international numbers through September by origin as well as by carrier, after clicking on “Aviation,” click on “Air Carrier Statistics (Form 41 Traffic).” Click on “T-100 Market” for system passenger numbers, “T-100 Domestic Market” for domestic or “T-100 International Market” for international. For flights, stage length and trip length, use the appropriate T-100 Segment database. Use crosstabs to find scheduled service. Complete international data will be released on July 15.

TranStats system and international totals do not include U.S. carriers’ foreign point-to-point flights.

Table 1: Scheduled Domestic and International Airline Travel on U.S. and Foreign Airlines*

	2008	Annual 2009	Change %
Passengers (in millions)	812.3	769.6	-5.3
Flights (in thousands)	10,737.0	10,027.4	-6.6
Revenue Passenger Miles (in billions)	1,078.4	1,026.8	-4.8
Available Seat-Miles (in billions)	1,371.6	1,297.6	-5.4
Load Factor**	78.6	79.1	0.5
Flight Stage Length***	811.8	811.8	0.0
Passenger Trip Length****	1,327.6	1,334.2	0.5

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market and Segment

* Includes U.S. carrier scheduled domestic and international service and foreign carrier scheduled international service to and from the United States. For U.S. carrier domestic and international service data for 2009, see the [BTS December air traffic press release](#)

** Change in load factor points

***The average non-stop distance flown per departure in miles

**** The average distance flown per passenger in miles

Note: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 1A. Passengers on U.S. Carriers and on Foreign Carriers' U.S. Flights 2008-2009
Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

		2008	2009	Change %
U.S. Carrier	Domestic	651.7	618.1	-5.2
	International	91.6	85.8	-6.3
	System	743.3	703.9	-5.3
Foreign Carrier	To and From U.S.	69.0	65.7	-4.8
Total		812.3	769.6	-5.3

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market

-more-

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ADD FOUR**

Table 2. Scheduled Domestic and International Enplanements by Month on U.S. and Foreign Airlines*

Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

	2007	2008	2007-2008 Pct. Change	2009	2008-2009 Pct. Change
January	62.4	63.3	1.5	57.1	-9.7
February	58.6	62.0	5.8	54.3	-12.4
March	72.8	73.7	1.2	66.2	-10.1
April	70.4	68.8	-2.4	64.9	-5.7
May	72.5	71.9	-0.9	64.9	-9.7
June	75.9	74.2	-2.2	69.3	-6.6
July	79.2	77.1	-2.6	74.4	-3.4
August	78.0	74.5	-4.5	71.5	-4.1
September	64.9	59.6	-8.1	60.1	0.7
October	69.8	65.1	-6.7	64.4	-1.2
November	67.3	59.1	-12.1	59.9	1.2
December	66.6	63.0	-5.5	62.7	-0.4
Yr. Total	838.4	812.3	-3.1	769.6	-5.3

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market

* Includes U.S. carrier scheduled domestic and international service and foreign carrier scheduled international service to and from the United States. For U.S. carrier domestic and international service data for 2009, see the [BTS December air traffic press release](#)

Note: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 3. Top 10 Airlines, ranked by January-December 2009 Scheduled Domestic and International Enplanements*

Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

2009 Rank	Airline	2009 Enplaned Passengers	2008 Rank	2008 Enplaned Passengers	Pct. Change 2008- 2009
1	Southwest	101.338	1	101.921	-0.6
2	American	85.720	2	92.772	-7.6
3	Delta	67.745	3	71.615	-5.4
4	United	56.025	4	63.071	-11.2
5	US Airways	50.975	5	54.776	-6.9
6	Continental	43.946	7	46.919	-6.3
7	Northwest	40.865	6	48.772	-16.2
8	AirTran	23.968	8	24.574	-2.5
9	JetBlue	22.378	9	21.824	2.5
10	SkyWest	21.246	10	20.668	2.8

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market

* Includes U.S. carrier scheduled domestic and international service and foreign carrier scheduled international service to and from the United States. For U.S. carrier domestic and international service data for 2009, see the [BTS December air traffic press release](#)

Note: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

AIRLINE TRAFFIC PRESS RELEASE
ADD FIVE

Table 4. Top 10 Airports ranked by January-December 2009 Scheduled Domestic and International Enplanements on U.S. and Foreign Airlines*
 Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

2009 Rank	Airport	2009 Enplaned Passengers	2008 Rank	2008 Enplaned Passengers	Pct. Change 2008-2009
1	Atlanta	42.144	1	43.606	-3.4
2	Chicago O'Hare	31.092	2	33.625	-7.5
3	Los Angeles	27.372	3	28.823	-5.0
4	Dallas/Ft. Worth	26.580	4	27.092	-1.9
5	Denver	23.986	5	24.250	-1.1
6	New York JFK	22.672	6	23.553	-3.7
7	Houston Bush	19.251	8	20.013	-3.8
8	Las Vegas	19.189	7	20.750	-7.5
9	Phoenix	18.532	9	19.426	-4.6
10	San Francisco	18.445	10	18.115	1.8

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Market

* Includes U.S. carrier scheduled domestic and international service and foreign carrier scheduled international service to and from the United States. For U.S. carrier domestic and international service data for 2009, see the [BTS December air traffic press release](#)

Note: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

- more -

AIRLINE TRAFFIC PRESS RELEASE
ADD SIX

Table 5. International Scheduled Airline Travel on U.S. and Foreign Airlines*

	Annual				2008- 2009 Change %
	2008	2008 % of Total	2009	2009 % of Total	
Passengers (in millions)	160.5	100.0	151.5	100.0	-5.6
U.S. Carriers	91.6	57.1	85.8	56.6	-6.3
Foreign Carriers	68.9	42.9	65.7	43.4	-4.6
Flights (in thousands)	1,360.8	100.0	1,271.9	100.0	-6.5
U.S. Carriers	850.3	62.5	799.4	62.9	-6.0
Foreign Carriers	510.5	37.5	472.5	37.1	-7.4
Revenue Passenger Miles (in billions)	508.3	100.0	486.1	100.0	-4.4
U.S. Carriers	244.1	48.0	230.4	47.4	-5.6
Foreign Carriers	264.2	52.0	255.7	52.6	-3.2
Available Seat-Miles (in billions)	656.5	100.0	630.6	100.0	-4.0
U.S. Carriers	309.0	47.1	292.5	46.4	-5.4
Foreign Carriers	347.5	52.9	338.1	53.6	-2.7
Load Factor**	77.4	N/A	77.1	N/A	-0.3
U.S. Carriers	79.0	N/A	78.8	N/A	-0.2
Foreign Carriers	76.0	N/A	75.6	N/A	-0.4
Flight Stage Length***	2,113.1	N/A	2,138.3	N/A	1.2
Passenger Trip Length****	3,166.0	N/A	3,208.7	N/A	1.3

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 International Market and Segment

* Includes U.S. carrier scheduled international service and foreign carrier scheduled international service to and from the United States. For U.S. carrier scheduled international service data for 2009, see the [BTS December air traffic press release](#)

** Change in load factor points

*** The average non-stop distance flown per departure in miles

**** The average distance flown per passenger in miles

Note: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

- more -

AIRLINE TRAFFIC PRESS RELEASE
ADD SEVEN

Table 6. International Scheduled Enplanements by Month on U.S. and Foreign Airlines*

Passenger numbers in millions (000,000)

	2007	2008	2007- 2008 Pct. Change	2009	2008- 2009 Pct. Change
January	12.3	13.0	5.5	12.3	-5.3
February	10.8	11.9	9.7	10.6	-10.5
March	13.5	14.4	6.8	12.7	-12.0
April	13.0	13.2	0.9	12.6	-4.1
May	13.2	13.8	4.6	12.0	-13.4
June	14.4	14.6	1.6	13.4	-8.5
July	15.7	15.7	-0.2	15.0	-4.5
August	15.4	15.6	1.2	14.9	-4.2
September	12.6	12.0	-4.8	11.8	-1.1
October	12.6	12.2	-3.6	12.1	-0.8
November	12.3	11.5	-6.3	11.3	-1.9
December	13.3	12.7	-4.8	12.8	0.7
Yr. Total	159.2	160.5	0.8	151.5	-5.6

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 International Market

* Includes U.S. carrier scheduled international service and foreign carrier scheduled international service to and from the United States. For U.S. carrier scheduled international service data for 2009, see the [BTS December air traffic press release](#)

Note: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 7. Top 10 Airlines, ranked by January-December 2009 International Scheduled Enplanements*

Passenger numbers in thousands (000)

2009 Rank	Airline	2009 Enplaned Passengers	2008 Rank	2008 Enplaned Passengers	Pct. Change 2008- 2009
1	American	19,578.0	1	21,233.2	-7.8
2	Delta	12,117.8	3	12,339.1	-1.8
3	Continental	12,030.5	2	12,417.8	-3.1
4	United	10,454.1	4	11,409.4	-8.4
5	Northwest	8,333.1	5	10,322.9	-19.3
6	US Airways	6,460.0	6	6,271.7	3.0
7	British Airways	5,622.1	7	5,579.8	0.8
8	Lufthansa	4,787.1	9	5,002.4	-4.3
9	Air Canada	4,763.2	8	5,311.2	-10.3
10	Air France	3,559.2	10	3,636.9	-2.1

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 International Market

* Includes U.S. carrier scheduled international service and foreign carrier scheduled international service to and from the United States. For U.S. carrier scheduled international service data for 2009, see the [BTS December air traffic press release](#)

Note: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

**AIRLINE TRAFFIC PRESS RELEASE
ADD EIGHT**

Table 8. Top 10 Airports ranked by January-December 2009 International Scheduled Enplanements on U.S. and Foreign Airlines*
Passenger numbers in thousands (000)

2009 Rank	Airport	2009 Enplaned Passengers	2008 Rank	2008 Enplaned Passengers	Pct. Change 2008-2009
1	New York JFK	10,686.0	1	10,964.6	-2.5
2	Miami	7,688.6	3	7,869.5	-2.3
3	Los Angeles	7,245.1	2	8,048.5	-10.0
4	Newark	5,288.5	4	5,462.0	-3.2
5	Chicago	5,046.2	5	5,456.3	-7.5
6	Atlanta	4,321.2	6	4,584.7	-5.7
7	San Francisco	3,939.8	7	4,155.4	-5.2
8	Houston Bush	3,804.0	8	3,850.5	-1.2
9	Washington Dulles	2,930.6	9	2,961.3	-1.0
10	Dallas/Ft. Worth	2,310.3	10	2,402.7	-3.8

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 International Market

* Includes U.S. carrier scheduled international service and foreign carrier scheduled international service to and from the United States. For U.S. carrier scheduled international service data for 2009, see the [BTS December air traffic press release](#)

Note: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

- end -