

Ryanair launches flights for summer 2021

Ryanair will operate 245 weekly flights to 78 destinations, 58 of them from Edinburgh Airport, in its bid to recover after the Covid-19 pandemic. The routes include three new destinations this summer and another three next winter, with the airline aiming to sell flights to 4.7 million passengers each year.

As the vaccination programme expands throughout Europe, the airline is very keen to restore the connections to Scotland.

The fares are low (and there is a zero change fee until the end of December 2021) with flights launched until midnight on 22 July on sale now at £19.99. This price is for travel up to October this year.

Jason McGuinness from [@Ryanair](#) was in Edinburgh today to launch new routes from Edinburgh saying fares will remain low but that the UK's traffic light system is not fit for purpose pic.twitter.com/WB005xbPJE

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [July 20, 2021](#)

Jason McGuinness, Ryanair's Director of Commercial, had just arrived from Dublin when we met him. He was bullish about the

government's approach to air travel. He said: "In terms of the traffic light system at the moment in the UK, it is clearly not working, it is not fit for purpose. We have an extraordinary position where colours keep getting added. We had amber plus last Friday is it Amber minus this Friday? Who knows?

"What we have said from the outset is that vaccinated people should be allowed to travel inter Europe. The digital Covid search which is Europe's inter-Europe travel search is working exceptionally well since 1 July. Traffic is recovering well across Europe and in terms of the traffic light system it is clearly not working in the UK.

"Our UK schedules are behind Europe at the moment and that is because of the uncertainty the scheme has created. The UK and Ireland are recovering at a slower pace. We are confident the demand is still there when passengers get this certainty they are very happy to board. What we have to understand is that travellers are more than just people taking holidays. There are small businesses reconnecting with their suppliers on the Continent, and it is also about friends and families reuniting after a very difficult year to eighteen months.

"At the moment you can still travel but it is the rules around testing, PCR requirements and self-isolation. Those rules are very unclear depending on the country and what is also unclear is how quickly they change. So that is clearly denting consumer confidence and damaging connectivity to the UK. This pandemic means there will be less capacity. There will be far fewer airlines after the pandemic. Ryanair is the only airline which is set to grow. We have our aircraft order for 210 new A-200 aircrafts, the first 15 are flying already. There will be less connectivity except for Ryanair."

Mr McGuinness is also adamant that fares will be lower after the pandemic, even when more people start booking flights. He said: "even in the medium term. There has been 30 billion

euros granted to the likes of Lufthansa, Alitalia and TAP, so unfortunately those carriers will be able to sell at below cost for a number of years due to the illegal funding they have received.

Ryanair does not have a large home country and has not had any state aid. Jason said: "We are the strongest airline in Europe, and if anything we are going to come out of this pandemic much much stronger. We have already launched 250 new routes this summer and we plan to launch another 250 into the winter, and what I hope is that a portion of those will be in the UK and particularly Scotland. We are working hard with Gordon and his team at Edinburgh Airport and we will be back soon with lots of new routes for the people of Edinburgh."

Air Passenger Duty (APD) makes UK airports incredibly expensive in comparison with their European counterparts. Jason explained: "It is a £13 tax which is very very regressive. What we have called for is a suspension of APD for at least two years as we all come out of the pandemic and recover traffic. Traffic will recover but we do need also the government to put its shoulder to the wheel and abolish this tax for the next two to three years."