How Busy Is Edinburgh Airport?

Since its majority takeover by Vinci SA last year, Edinburgh Airport is forecast to move from strength to strength in the coming years with a stack of exciting developments scheduled. But if you're flying to and from Scotland's busiest airport, these changes won't affect you any time soon, and you might instead be more concerned about just how busy the airport is. What is the airport doing to ensure smoother transit for passengers, and how does it compare to some of the busiest airports in the UK?

We show you just how busy Edinburgh Airport really is and what passengers can expect in 2025 and beyond.

Photo by Adam Wilson on Unsplash

Passenger Traffic and Growth

In 2024, Edinburgh Airport [welcomed over 15 million passengers](#), underpinning its significance in Scotland's transportation network. This is the first time a Scottish airport has reached this volume, demonstrating the industry's powerful recovery post-COVID and pointing towards an exciting growth trajectory.

The data doesn't lie when charting this impressive rise in passenger numbers. In 2021, the airport processed a lowly 3 million passengers due to intense global restrictions. A year later, this figure climbed to 11.3 million and again increased to 14.4 million in 2023. The record-breaking numbers in 2024 are down to a series of airport improvements and innovative route-building, with American carrier JetBlue launching a seasonal route from New York's JFK Airport this year and also announcing a route to Boston in 2025.

JetBlue joins 34 other airlines jetting passengers to over 150 destinations across the planet, highlighting the airport's key position for international travel in Scotland.

More Security and Less Waiting

Improvements to security procedures have ensured that no matter how busy the airport gets, there is always capacity to remain functional and operational. In April 2024, the airport introduced the first of several new 3D security scanners. These scanners are game-changers in that they eliminate the need for passengers to remove electronic items and liquids from hand luggage. This also means passengers can take 1–2 litres onto the plane, a huge increase from the 100ml restrictions we're used to in the UK.

Gordon Dewar, the airport's chief executive, has also been reported to celebrate improved protocols associated with lost luggage. Although the number of lost luggage is the same as

last year, these bags are returned to their owners [within 24 hours every time.](#) As these massive changes to security begin to settle, passengers can expect more efficiency and reliability at Edinburgh Airport in 2025.

Infrastructure and Tech

The airports' new owners have wasted no time implementing plans to enhance the passengers' experience. While their 3D security scanners enhance the security experience, a [£5.8 million plan](#) to improve the airport's check-in hall will result in more efficient passenger processing. Airport chiefs have also announced new self-service technology and digital wayfinding will be introduced, along with a layout redesign to improve passenger flow.

In addition to the main terminal renovations and new fixtures, the airport is also home to a fixed base operator (FBO) that caters to high-net-worth individuals and businesses using [charter jet](#) services in Edinburgh. This reduces congestion in the main terminal whilst also giving jet flyers a personalised, exclusive experience to keep returning to.

Edinburgh vs. the Rest of the UK

Edinburgh's 15 million passengers in 2024 solidified its position as Scotland's busiest airport, but how does it stack up against the UK's other key air transit hubs? Compared to other major UK airports, Edinburgh Airport's passenger traffic places it among the top airports in the country.

Heathrow Airport remains the UK's busiest, operating at nearly full capacity with 99% utilisation and catering to a massive 83.8 million passengers in 2024. Gatwick Airport is the second busiest, with Manchester Airport rounding out the top three with just over 30 million passengers.
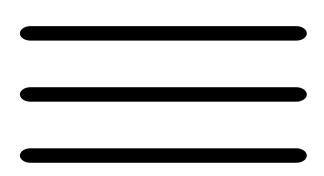
Despite being some way behind the busiest airports in the UK,

Edinburgh's performance reflects a strong demand for air travel in and out of Scotland's capital, contributing significantly to the city's growing presence as an international hub.

Takeover and Influence

In April 2024, a majority stake in the airport was agreed for an eye-watering £1.27 billion, as Global Infrastructure Partners (GIP) sold their 50.01% share in the airport to VINCI Airports.

VINCI Airports is one of the world's largest private airport operators, managing over 70 airports in 13 countries, including London Gatwick and Belfast International. The president of VINCI Airports [said of the deal](), "Together with GIP, VINCI Airports will continue the strategy of growing connectivity and developing commercial activities whilst also leveraging VINCI Airport's international expertise to accelerate decarbonisation and continually improving customer experience."

Edinburgh Airport Is on the Up

So, while not quite being one of the busiest airports in the UK, it's clear that Edinburgh Airport has a vision and the infrastructure to continue growing from strength to strength. The airport's record-breaking year in 2024 and its significant takeover highlight its ambition and desire to maintain its position as Scotland's key transport hub.