

# Cities & Trends Asia Pacific

2025 EDITION



# About the report

Business travel has re-emerged with a vengeance. Changes in remote work policies, the increased use of AI and digital transformative technology, geo-political conflicts, environmental change, and the intertwining of travel and meetings are all contributing factors to an increase in business travel.

Not surprisingly, APAC continues to expand as one of the world's most dynamic and competitive markets for global trade and travel. According to the Global Business Travel Association's (GBTA) [first Business Travel Outlook Poll of 2025](#), APAC led global business travel spend growth last year, with more than three in four (78%) buyers from that region reporting a higher volume of trips compared to 2023 – including 30% who saw a significant increase.

BCD's *Cities & Trends 2025 Asia Pacific edition* shows the top destinations for APAC business travelers with insights into how they travel. The findings are based on BCD clients' flight and rail data from 2024 in a range of APAC markets.



**Top 10 APAC cities**



**Top 10 intercontinental cities**



**Top 5 countries**



**Top 10 routes**



**Top 5 connecting segments, direct flights and layover cities**



**Cabin class and flight type**



**Top 10 rail routes in China and Japan**



# Top 10 APAC cities

Singapore's strategic location and vibrant economy plays no small part in the city-state's popularity among business travelers. It remains unchallenged in the top spot in our top 10 APAC cities, with a 20% increase over 2023. [Attractive reforms such as low corporate taxes](#), visa free policies, superior connectivity and an overall pro-business infrastructure are a win-win for both business travelers and those attending meetings and events in Singapore.

Tokyo moved up to take the second spot in 2024 with a 38% increase, followed by Hong Kong and Bangkok.

Kuala Lumpur, Shanghai, Seoul, Taipei and Jakarta remained unchanged in their positions in 2024, but welcomed the addition of Sydney into the No. 10 spot.



1 Singapore



6 Shanghai



2 Tokyo



7 Seoul



3 Hong Kong



8 Taipei



4 Bangkok



9 Jakarta



5 Kuala Lumpur



10 Sydney



- 6 Seattle-Tacoma
- 3 San Francisco
- 9 Los Angeles
- 10 Chicago
- 5 New York City

- 4 Amsterdam
- 1 Frankfurt
- 7 Munich
- 2 London
- 8 Paris

## Top 10 intercontinental cities

The list of intercontinental cities is split between five cities in Europe and five in North America, and led by Frankfurt, London and San Francisco.

San Francisco and New York City are both in the top five in 2024.

# Tips for APAC business travel

## Your Cultural IQ matters!

Business travelers who demonstrate cultural awareness may inspire greater confidence and rapport with the people they encounter on [business trips](#).

Here are some tips to help business travelers navigate their trips to the APAC region:



Using public transportation? Don't speak loudly, eat or drink – many Southeast Asian countries maintain a deep respect for personal space.



Don't smoke while walking; you may be hit with a fine.



In a taxi? Tipping is not always customary and may be refused.



Throughout the APAC region, timeliness is key. Buses, trains etc. will leave on time! Plus, queuing is important, so don't skip in line.



On trains and public transportation, it's not necessary to give up your seat for the elderly, disabled, or pregnant individuals (public transport already provides designated reserved seating for these groups).



# Top 5 countries

According to BCD flight transactions, Singapore once again was the most visited APAC country. Reciprocal visa free policies with other countries in Southeast Asia, an increase in flight seat capacity throughout the region, and an overall reduction in flight fares has contributed to [Singapore's steady growth](#).

China and Japan closely follow Singapore's lead. Hong Kong notably dropped off, but Malaysia entered into the top five. Overall, APAC has already outpaced its 2019 total seat capacity by 0.5% in 2024, [signaling strong recovery](#) in the post Covid-era across both domestic and international routes, and flourishing as the world's second-largest market for international travel.

The top five intercontinental countries remained the same from 2023 to 2024, with the U.S. leading the way.

## APAC

- 1 Singapore
- 2 China
- 3 Japan
- 4 Malaysia
- 5 Thailand

## Intercontinental

- 1 United States
- 2 Germany
- 3 United Kingdom
- 4 Netherlands
- 5 France

# Top 10 routes

According to BCD flight data, the most frequently traveled routes\* for APAC flights primarily depart from Singapore, which accounts for five positions in the top 10 city pairs.

Singapore Airlines and Cathay Pacific are among the leaders in international seat capacity across the region. Notably, Singapore Airlines has surpassed its 2019 capacity by 14.1%, placing itself in the top 10 Asia-Pacific carriers achieving [significant growth beyond pre-pandemic levels](#).

Interestingly, in intercontinental routes Shanghai-San Francisco placed as No.10, moving up from its position as No.17 in 2023.

Notably, three of the top 10 intercontinental routes originate from Bengaluru (to Frankfurt, London and Seattle). In April 2024, India's international airline capacity reached 7.3 million seats, reportedly an increase of 17% from the 6.2 million seats [scheduled in April 2019](#). This, coupled with rising passenger demand, fleet upgrades and government initiatives to increase its influence as a major aviation hub, has catapulted India as a powerhouse market ([Skift](#), [OAG](#), [Entrepreneur](#)).

For intercontinental city pairs, Bengaluru to Frankfurt tops the chart.

## APAC

- 1 Kuala Lumpur to Singapore
- 2 Singapore to Kuala Lumpur
- 3 Bangkok to Singapore
- 4 Singapore to Bangkok
- 5 Singapore to Jakarta
- 6 Jakarta to Singapore
- 7 Singapore to Hong Kong
- 8 Hong Kong to Singapore
- 9 Tokyo to Singapore
- 10 Singapore to Tokyo

## Intercontinental

- 1 Bengaluru to Frankfurt
- 2 Shanghai to Frankfurt
- 3 Tokyo to New York City
- 4 Tokyo to San Francisco
- 5 Singapore to London
- 6 Tokyo to London
- 7 Bengaluru to London
- 8 Bengaluru to Seattle-Tacoma
- 9 Tokyo to Frankfurt
- 10 Shanghai to San Francisco

\*Top routes combine data of multiple airports for the following cities: London (**Heathrow, London Gatwick, Luton, Stansted and London City**); New York City (**John F. Kennedy, Newark and La Guardia**); Shanghai (**Pudong and Hongqiao**) and Tokyo (**Narita and Haneda**).

# Top 5 connecting segments, direct flights and layover cities

Direct routes are often the most sought-after due to convenience and comfort factors. Travelers increasingly demand value from in-flight service, and many seek premium travel options. Most APAC flights are direct (89%), largely due to the well-connected route networks within countries.

In contrast, only 25% of intercontinental travel from APAC is direct. This could be due to flight times, high costs or the lack of direct flights.

APAC saw a minimal increase in connecting flights in 2024 from 2023, whereas intercontinental routes saw roughly a 5% decrease in connecting segments in 2024 from 2023.

The top three layover cities in APAC are Singapore, Hong Kong and Bangkok. The top three intercontinental layovers are Dubai, Doha and Frankfurt. No doubt, all these bustling aviation hubs provide unparalleled airport facilities, shorter layovers, and convenient regional and international flight networks to business travelers worldwide.

\*When looking at data for this report, flights with one or multiple stopovers are considered.

## APAC

- 1 Singapore
- 2 Hong Kong
- 3 Bangkok
- 4 Kuala Lumpur
- 5 Sydney

## Intercontinental

- 1 Dubai
- 2 Doha
- 3 Frankfurt
- 4 Istanbul
- 5 San Francisco



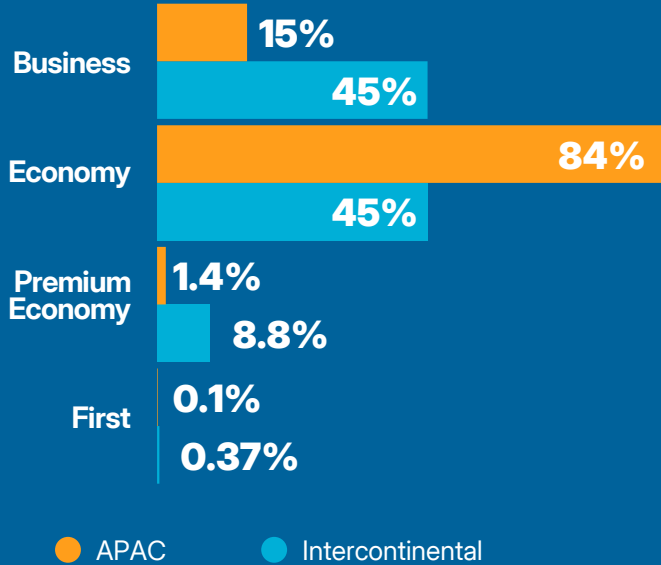
# Cabin class

For APAC flights, most travelers (84%) booked economy and roughly only 15% booked business class. For intercontinental flights, the figures are split down the middle, with 45% booking business class and 45% booking economy.

Premium economy seats in APAC remained steady at roughly 1.4% while first class increased slightly to 0.10%.

Intercontinental premium economy seats rose slightly to roughly 8.8% while first class decreased to 0.37%.

## APAC & intercontinental cabin classes



# Top 10 rail routes

## China

- 1 Changsha to Shenzhen
- 2 Shenzhen to Changsha
- 3 Shanghai to Beijing
- 4 Shanghai to Suzhou
- 5 Shanghai to Yancheng
- 6 Yancheng to Shanghai
- 7 Shanghai to Hangzhou
- 8 Beijing to Shanghai
- 9 Suzhou to Shanghai
- 10 Hangzhou to Shanghai

## Japan

- 1 Tokyo to Osaka
- 2 Osaka to Tokyo
- 3 Tokyo to Nagoya
- 4 Nagoya to Tokyo
- 5 Kyoto to Tokyo
- 6 Tokyo to Kyoto
- 7 Osaka to Nagoya
- 8 Nagoya to Osaka
- 9 Yokohama to Osaka
- 10 Osaka to Yokohama

## Your trip to Changsha

### Rail

Scheduled

3H43M

06:08

Shenzhen

09:51

Changsha

CONFIRMATION  
2672893

LOYALTY#  
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EST. TOTAL  
702 RMB

### Hotel

508 Fuyuan Xi Lu, Kaifu District, Changsha

🌙 1 Night, Avg. Rate: 340 RMB

CONFIRMATION  
560323028

LOYALTY#  
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**2,600km**  
of new railway  
lines in China in  
2025

**50%**  
of Japan's  
domestic travel  
is on rail

# China and Japan rail insights

Business travelers from any part of the world are sure to marvel at China and Japan's extensive rail networks.

In Japan, the reliability and punctuality of trains are well known; rarely are trains ever late. Efficiency and speed are hallmarks of the Shinkansen bullet trains which allow for fast travel between major cities, saving valuable time.

Rail environments are clean, and easily accessible as they are often stationed in major business districts; while seats are known to be comfortable, with high connectivity. Additionally, private luggage shipping services make business travel easier. These services pick up a traveler's luggage from a hotel or even a convenience store and deliver at various different drop-off points.

Rail fares are often more affordable than airplane tickets; according to BCD data, the average train ticket ranges about \$200 from Tokyo-Osaka and Osaka-Tokyo. Half of all of Japan's domestic travel is conducted via rail high frequency, lower fares and ease of travel.

Business travel on the Chinese railway high-speed system is similar in quality, with extensive routes and economical fares, especially for medium-to-long distance journeys. With speeds of up to 350km, the train provides all the luxuries of business class travel without the hassle of crowded airports and parking fees. The most popular routes are Changsha-Shenzhen, Shenzhen-Changsha, and Shanghai-Beijing.

In 2025, infrastructure investments in China's railway system include 2,600 kilometers of [new railway lines](#) that will total 590 billion yuan (approximately US\$80 billion). China has established itself as having the world's [largest railway network](#).



Sustainability imperatives are a significant driver in business travel-related decisions. Rail enables business travelers to maximize productivity while reducing their environmental impact. As businesses prioritize sustainability, encouraging rail-based business travel aligns with corporate environmental, social, and governance goals without sacrificing speed or convenience.



**Providing employees with resources or the latest trends in sustainability practices is the first step. Leveraging this information in an internal, online booking tool can allow them to find the details they need at their command, when they want. Externally, it is key to engage travelers by communicating through your various company's channels.**



**Olivia Ruggles-Brise**  
VP, Sustainability  
BCD Travel

# Conclusion

Business travel to the APAC region will continue to intensify. [According to the GBTA](#), APAC travel buyers reflect the most optimism with 63% indicating they are planning to spend “more” or “a lot more” in 2025, followed by NORAM travel buyers at 57%.

Demand is further fuelled by leisure + business travel, the re-opening of China, the return of large-scale events such as conferences and face-to-face meetings and increasing airline and hotel capacity.

## Payment options



It should be noted that payment choices in South Asian and Southeast Asian countries can sometimes be complex and confusing. For example, virtual payment options are far and few. Travelers should be equipped in advance with both cash and credit card options.







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## About BCD Travel

BCD Travel helps companies travel smart and achieve more. We drive program adoption, cost savings and talent retention through digital experiences that simplify business travel. Our 15,000+ dedicated team members service clients in 170+ countries as we shape a sustainable future for business travel. BCD's leading meetings and events management and global consultancy services complete our comprehensive suite of solutions for all aspects of corporate travel. In 2023, BCD achieved US\$20.3 billion in sales. For more information, visit [www.bcdtravel.com](http://www.bcdtravel.com).