

# Why The Asia-Pacific Region Is Home To So Many Of The World's Busiest Domestic Routes

Nine out of the top 10 busiest domestic routes operate within Asia-Pacific

BY NICOLE KYLIE PUBLISHED OCT 21, 2022



Aviation industry specialists OAG recently released the latest rankings of the world's Top 10 Busiest Domestic Routes based on the number of scheduled seats between October 2021 and September 2022. Nine of these routes are in the [Asia-Pacific](#) region, apart from [Jeddah – Riyadh](#) (JED – RUH) in Saudi Arabia.

## Changes due to COVID-19

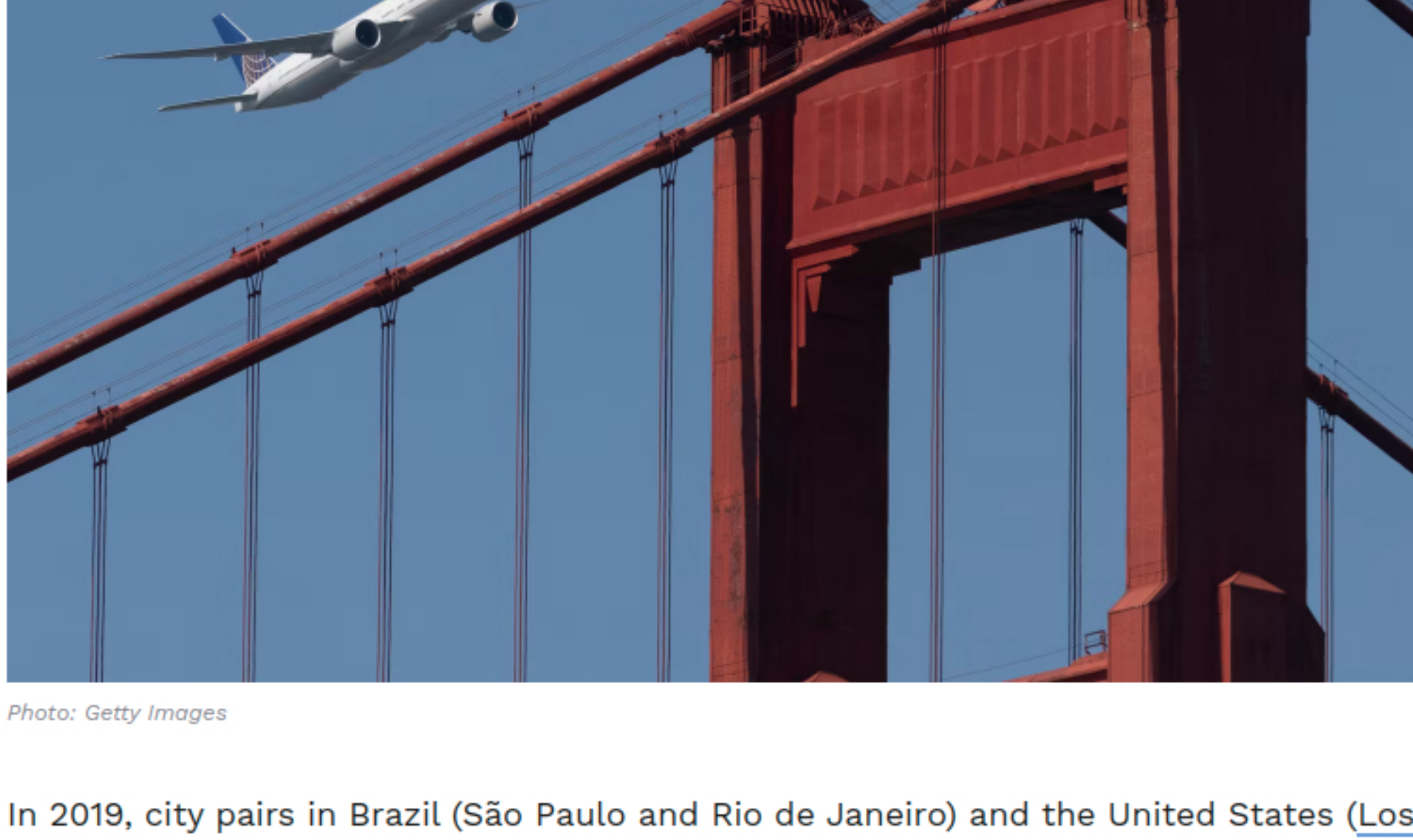


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In 2019, city pairs in Brazil (São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro) and the United States ([Los Angeles – San Francisco](#)) were included in the Top 10 Busiest Domestic Routes. A year later, they fell outside the list and were replaced by Asia-Pacific flights.

Since then, the list has been dominated by the same few routes: while some standings have been reshuffled, Jeju International – Seoul Gimpo in South Korea remains at the top of the list.

Source: [OAG](#)

### Top 10 Global Domestic Routes

Route	Departing Airport	Arriving Airport	Seats
CJU-GMP	Jeju International	Seoul Gimpo International Airport	16,068,863
CTS-HND	Sapporo New Chitose Apt	Tokyo Intl (Haneda)	10,216,765
FUK-HND	Fukuoka	Tokyo Intl (Haneda)	9,894,296
HAN-SGN	Hanoi	Ho Chi Minh City	8,562,009
JED-RUH	Jeddah	Riyadh King Khalid Intl	7,371,119
MEL-SYD	Melbourne Airport	Sydney Kingsford Smith Apt	6,996,156
BOM-DEL	Mumbai	Delhi	6,941,947
HND-OKA	Tokyo Intl (Haneda)	Okinawa Naha Apt	6,910,809
CGK-DPS	Jakarta Soekarno-Hatta Apt	Denpasar-Bali	6,741,923
PEK-SHA	Beijing Capital Intl Apt	Shanghai Hongqiao International Apt	6,321,194

Photo: OAG

## Driven by local holidays

One thing in common among some routes featured on the list is that they involve some of the world's top tourist spots. Not only is domestic tourism popular here, but these routes also link holiday destinations and capital cities, resulting in highly in-demand connecting flights for international travelers.

### Jeju International – Seoul Gimpo International Airport (CJU-GMP)

This route has been the world's busiest domestic route for several years now. CJU-GMP remained at the top throughout the pandemic, with an average of 224 flights per day. Known as the "Hawaii of South Korea," Jeju is a popular tourist destination among locals and international travelers alike. Most international visitors fly to Jeju via Seoul Gimpo International Airport, which is located South Korea's capital city, Seoul. Air Seoul, [Asiana](#), [Jin Air](#), [Jeju Air](#), and [Korean Air](#) fly this route.

### Sapporo New Chitose Airport – Tokyo International (Haneda) (CTS-HND)

Japan takes the biggest share on this list, with three of the busiest domestic routes in the world. Sapporo is the capital and largest city of Hokkaido, Japan, famous for beer, skiing, and scenic mountains. The city welcomes an average of 15 million visitors a year from within Japan and abroad, with many travelers flying in via the Japanese capital city of Tokyo on airlines such as Spring Japan, Jetstar Japan, [ANA](#), and [Japan Airlines](#).

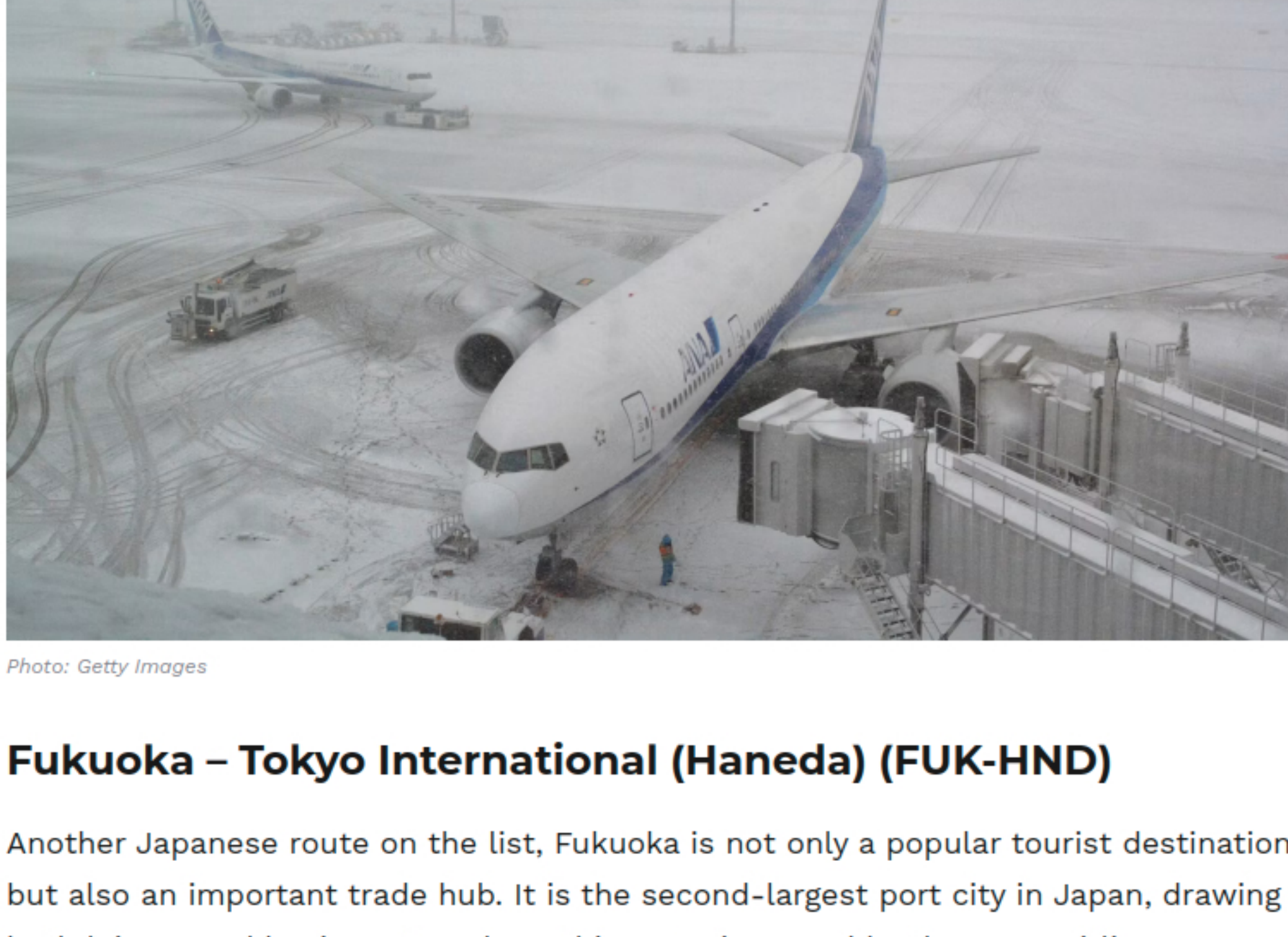


Photo: Getty Images

### Fukuoka – Tokyo International (Haneda) (FUK-HND)

Another Japanese route on the list, Fukuoka is not only a popular tourist destination but also an important trade hub. It is the second-largest port city in Japan, drawing both leisure and business travelers. This route is served by the same airlines as CTS-HND, with the addition of [StarFlyer](#), a local airline that flies to seven domestic destinations and one international destination (Taipei, Taiwan).

### Tokyo International (Haneda) – Okinawa Naha Airport (HND-OKA)

Okinawa is a holiday hotspot that is famous for its contrast to snowy Sapporo. Comprising over 160 islands between Taiwan and Japan's mainland, Okinawa attracts visitors with its tropical climate, beaches, and coral reefs. Jetstar Japan, [Peach Aviation](#), Japan Airlines, ANA, [Skymark Airlines](#), and regional airline, [Solaseed Air](#), operate flights on this route.

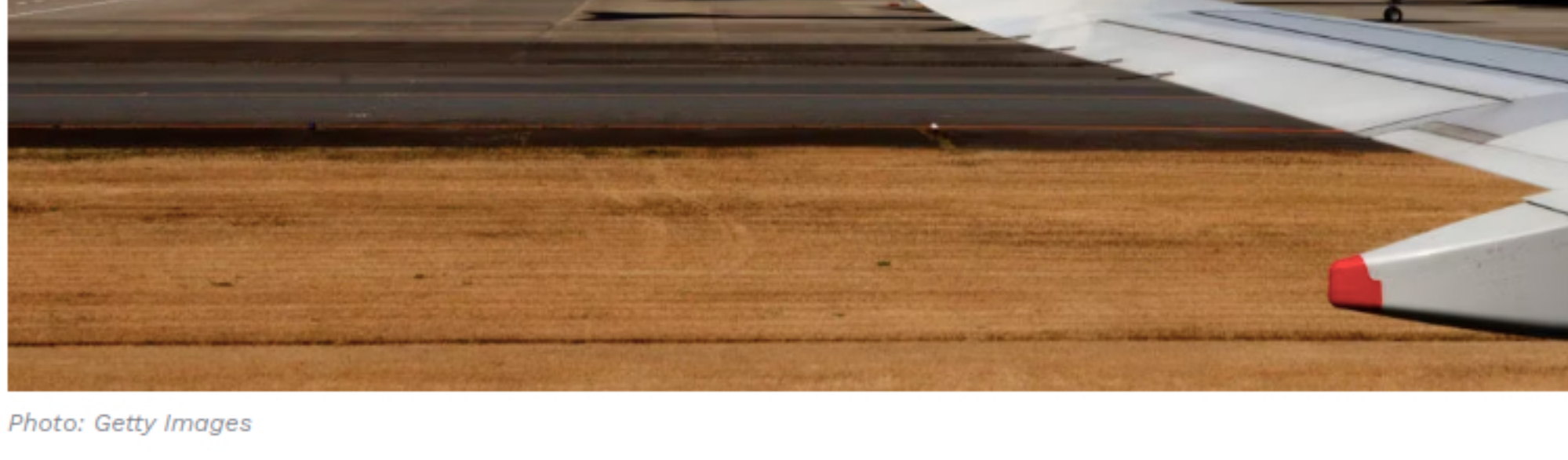


Photo: Getty Images

### Jakarta Soekarno-Hatta Airport – Denpasar Bali (CGK-DPS)

The Indonesian domestic market is [predicted to be the world's fourth largest by 2030](#), so it's no wonder that one of its routes has made it to the list. While Bali is among the most visited tourist destinations in the world, almost three-quarters of its visitors are domestic travelers from other parts of Indonesia. This route is served by the country's many airlines, including its flag carrier, [Garuda Indonesia](#), [Lion Air](#), Indonesia AirAsia, [Batik Air](#), and [Citilink Indonesia](#).

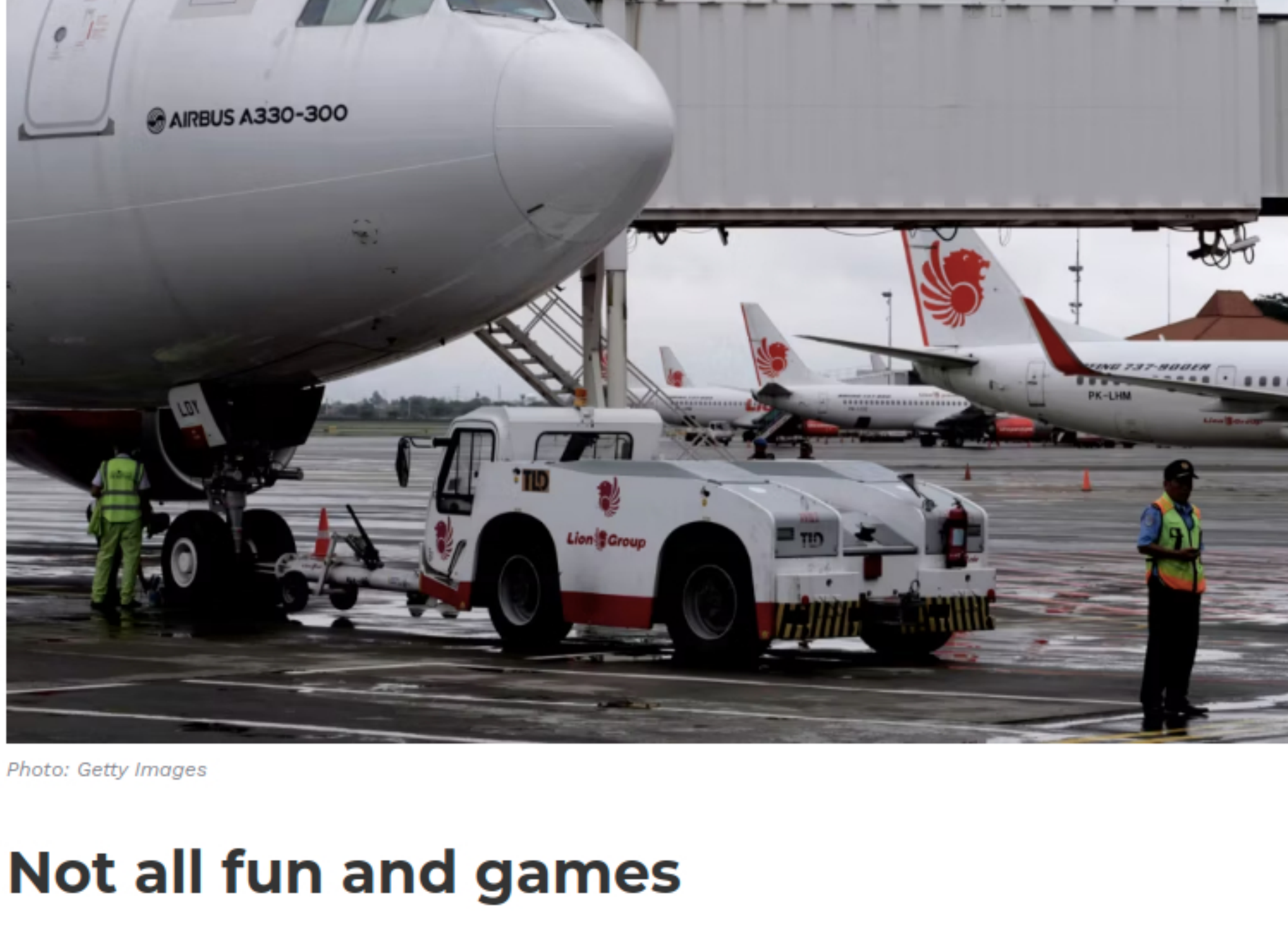


Photo: Getty Images

## Not all fun and games

Though tourism exists in all the destinations on the list, business travel is more significant between some city pairs. Asia-Pacific, often dubbed the "factory of the world," is home to many of the fastest-growing economies in the world.

### Hanoi – Ho Chi Minh City (HAN-SGN)

Hanoi is the capital of Vietnam, and the country's second-largest city, while Ho Chi Minh City is the largest city in Vietnam, and is the nation's economic hub. Direct flights, averaging two hours, between the two business centers are operated by [Bamboo Airways](#), [VietJet Air](#), and flag carrier, [Vietnam Airlines](#).



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### Jeddah – Riyadh King Khalid International (JED-RUH)

Jeddah, a port city, is Saudi Arabia's commercial center, and the capital city of Saudi Arabia. It is the largest city and main financial hub of the country. [Saudia](#), [flynas](#), and [fyadeal](#) operate nearly 100 daily flights on this route.

### Melbourne Airport – Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport (MEL-SYD)

For many years, the MEL-SYD route held the record for being among the busiest routes in the world. Connecting two of the most populated cities in Australia, this route is frequented by business travelers commuting between the two economic centers. Last year, regional airline, [Rex](#), joined [Qantas](#), [Virgin Australia](#), and [Jetstar](#) in serving this route.



Photo: Getty Images

### Mumbai – Delhi (BOM-DEL)

Mumbai is India's largest, most populous city. It is also a financial center and the heart of the Bollywood film industry. Delhi, India's capital territory, is a metropolis of equally massive proportions. It comes as no surprise that the route connecting these two metropolises is among the busiest in the world. Flights are operated by [Vistara](#), [Go First](#), [SpiceJet](#), [IndiGo](#), and flag carrier, [Air India](#).

### Beijing Capital International Airport – Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport (PEK-SHA)

China's ongoing zero-COVID strategy has resulted in reductions in airline capacity. Still, the largest Chinese domestic route, PEK-SHA, continues to thrive. Serving two of the world's leading cities for business and finance, this route recorded over 6 million seats over a 12-month period despite COVID measures. [Air China](#), [China Eastern](#), [China Southern](#), [Juneyao Airlines](#), and Shanghai Airlines are some of the airlines that fly this route.

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## On the world stage

While domestic air travel in Asia-Pacific seems to be holding strong, the region's international air travel recovery may not look as promising. In a forecast by Airports Council International (ACI) Asia-Pacific, [passenger traffic will only recover by about 55% by end-2022](#), compared to pre-pandemic levels.

This is a stark contrast in comparison to other regions where recovery is expected to be substantially higher, between 70% and 80%. China's strict border measures and Japan's careful approach towards the relaxation of international travel restrictions could affect Asia-Pacific's hold as the world's largest air passenger market this year.

Stefano Baronci, Director General of Airports Council International (ACI) Asia-Pacific stated:

*"The traffic in the region will not be able to fully recover to 2019 levels unless all countries keep their borders open to facilitate freedom of movement. China and Japan – one of the largest contributors to the region's overall traffic – have been slow in lifting travel and COVID restrictions."*

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