

Dragonpass Data Shows GCC Travel Rebounded 66% in May as Regional Confidence Returns

UAE and Qatar lead regional rebound as travel demand accelerates across major GCC aviation hubs

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, June 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- New travel data from Dragonpass reveals a strong rebound in travel activity across the GCC, with regional travel volumes increasing 66.2% in May compared with April, signalling a rapid return of traveller confidence across key aviation markets.



Pearl Lounge

The findings indicate that while travel growth remained relatively modest between March and April, demand accelerated sharply in May, resulting in an overall 72.8% increase in travel activity across GCC hubs between March and May.

The rebound was led by the UAE and Qatar, alongside continued growth in Saudi Arabia, underscoring the resilience of the region's aviation sector and the strength of consumer demand for travel.

"The latest data suggests that traveller confidence across the GCC is returning faster than many anticipated," said Andrew Harrison-Chinn, Chief Marketing Officer at Dragonpass. "While travellers initially adopted a more cautious approach earlier this year, May's performance demonstrates the resilience of both consumers and the region's aviation infrastructure."

UAE strengthens position as the region's leading travel gateway

Among the region's major travel markets, the UAE recorded one of the strongest rebounds, with travel activity rising 75.6% between April and May. The country's share of total GCC travel also increased significantly, reaching 48.7% in May.

At the airport level, Dubai International Airport (DXB) recorded growth of 75.1%, while Abu Dhabi International Airport (AUH) increased 76.7% and Sharjah International Airport (SHJ) rose 72.9% over the same period.

The figures reinforce the UAE's role as the GCC's leading travel gateway, accounting for 48.7% of all travel activity across major regional hubs in May and representing the largest share of travel in the region.

Qatar emerges as a high-growth market

Qatar delivered the strongest momentum among the region's established travel markets, recording growth of 165.1% from April to May.

Doha's Hamad International Airport (DOH) posted the highest increase among major GCC hubs, while Qatar's share of regional travel rose from 5.9% in April to 9.5% in May.

The performance highlights Qatar's growing importance within the regional travel ecosystem as demand continues to recover.

Saudi Arabia remains a key driver of regional travel demand

Saudi Arabia remained one of the region's most significant travel markets, representing 41.2% of total travel across GCC hubs.

Travel volumes increased 34.9% between April and May, supported by strong performances from Riyadh and Dammam, highlighting the Kingdom's continued importance as a major source of regional travel demand and connectivity.

Travel confidence returns across the GCC

Dragonpass analysis suggests the May rebound was driven by the region's leading aviation hubs, particularly in the UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, highlighting the resilience of GCC travel demand and connectivity.

"Periods of uncertainty often reinforce the importance of reliability, connectivity and traveller confidence," added Andrew Harrison-Chinn. "The pace of recovery seen across the GCC demonstrates the strength of underlying demand for travel and the region's ability to rebound quickly. As we move into the peak summer travel season, travellers are increasingly prioritising seamless and stress-free airport experiences."

The latest data suggests that travel demand across the GCC is continuing to strengthen, supported by world-class aviation infrastructure, expanding connectivity and sustained appetite

for both business and leisure travel. With travel activity up 72.8% since March, the rebound is not only underway but accelerating across some of the region's most connected and strategically important aviation hubs.

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About Dragonpass:

Dragonpass is a global leader in digitally enabled airport and travel services, offering access to over 1,400 airport lounges, 200 Fast Track lanes, 508 dining benefits, and 1000+ fitness studios across Europe, North and South America, the Middle East, Asia, and other premium travel experiences. Supporting over 40 million users worldwide, Dragonpass partners with leading banks, card issuers, and travel providers to deliver seamless, customer-centric solutions. Headquartered in Manchester, UK, which serves as its global business hub, the company manages key partnerships and operations across a global network. Dragonpass also maintains regional offices in markets including UAE, Singapore, Brazil, Hong Kong, Japan, and China - reflecting its commitment to delivering locally relevant solutions at a global scale.

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