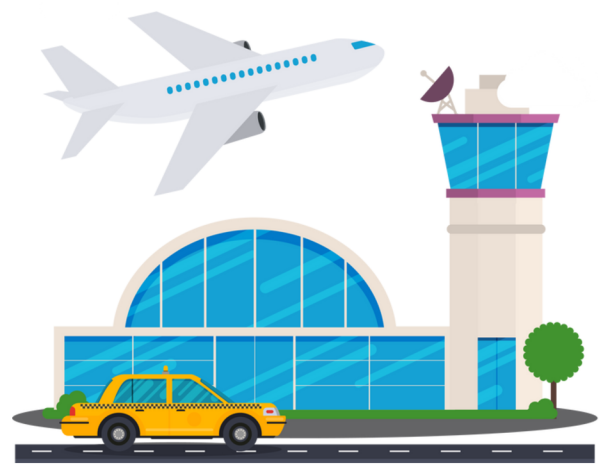


Airports

What Is It?

Airports are centralized ports of entry for domestic and international air travelers. Most significant population centers have immediate access to airports.



What is the Impact?

Airports facilitate the most popular method of long-distance travel between major cities. Additionally, they are important economic centers for local communities, usually featuring food, hotel, and numerous other amenities.

What Does It Cost?

Annual airport investment totals over \$100 billion each year in the United States. In total, air travel represents around 5 percent of domestic GDP, and is critical to the global economy.



How Does It Work?

After entering an airport, passengers check in and deposit larger luggage before passing through security checkpoints. Once through security, passengers enter the terminal, where they can make their way to the numbered 'gate' for their flight. Terminals often contain dining options, lounges, and shops. Larger airports may have multiple terminals, often with different modes of transportation linking them for passengers. For arriving passengers, large airports typically offer ground transportation options and rental cars.

Once a flight is ready, passengers board the airplane and prepare to take off. Coordination of airplanes both on the ground and in the air is managed by the Air Traffic Control tower. Once an aircraft receives an affirmation from the tower, it will carefully taxi onto the designated runway and take flight.

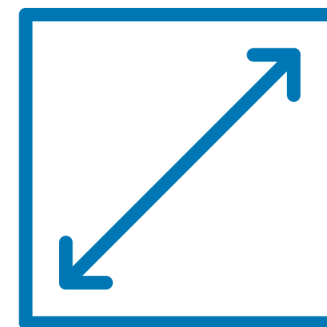
Airports utilize large hangars for repairing and storing aircraft, as well as employ hundreds of people for luggage handling, refueling, catering, and maintenance. Large airports may also contain a cargo terminal, where air-freight is loaded and unloaded.

With hundreds of employees and dozens of activities, airports often operate like small cities.



Space

Large airport facilities require a minimum of around 3,000 acres, however can greatly vary depending on land use requirements and airport capacity. Denver International Airport has the largest footprint of any US airport at over 34,000 acres, about half the size of Washington, D.C.



Point

- Large airports offer a wide range of destinations.
- Airports are essential for the modern economy to function.
- Airports have advanced security and safety.
- Airports can lead to economic development for surrounding communities.
- Air travel is far safer than long-distance driving or train transit.

Counterpoint

- Large airports are more crowded, which lengthens the overall traveling experience.
- Aviation is a major source of greenhouse-gas emissions.
- The enhanced security can lead to long wait times and increased stress for passengers.
- Communities with close proximity to airports can be subjected to increased noise and environmental pollution.
- During periods of bad weather, air travel can become chaotic and result in canceled flights.

Did You Know?

The world's busiest airport by passenger traffic is Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) in the United States. It has held this title for over two decades, handling more than 75 million passengers annually.

What's Next?

Airlines are investing heavily in Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), hybrid and fuel-efficient aircraft, and airport upgrades to handle more passengers. Airports are also introducing advanced technology to assist with Air Traffic Control and cybersecurity.