

# **ForwardKeys Flight Searches Monthly Update Data up to February 2026**

VisitBritain/VisitEngland Research  
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*If you would like the data in a different format, please contact [research@visitbritain.org](mailto:research@visitbritain.org)*

# Key takeouts

**The story: Overall flight searches to the UK saw an uptick in February 2026, boosted by 21% YoY growth from short haul markets in aggregate but long haul was down 5% YoY.**

- The demand for the UK, measured by flight searches x the number of passengers searched for, saw an uptick in February 2026 (+7%).
- Long haul markets in aggregate saw a YoY decline of 5% in February with Canada the only market to see YoY growth. Demand from India and Saudi Arabia saw the largest declines.
- Short haul markets saw 21% growth in aggregate with demand almost double from Italy, followed by double digit growth from Spain, Germany and France.
- For a competitor view, the Irish Republic saw stronger YoY growth in demand vs the UK in February 2026 (+20% vs +7%).
- February 2026 growth was led by searches to Scotland and Wales.

# About the data

These slides show data from ForwardKeys *Flight Searches* module on the volume of flight searches to the UK, and the growth rate compared to comparison years. Data shown is for searches to the UK and to the Irish Republic, where stated.

## Some notes on this data:

- The ForwardKeys database aggregates searches for the largest travel agencies and metasearch engines; kiwi.com, kiwi's partners (Edreams, eSky) and other metasearch engines (Google Flight, Kayak, Skyscanner, Momondo and wego) and Kiwi's airline partners (around 800). This amounts to 40 billion searches a day of the global market and please note that repeated searches across different platforms are present in the data.
- Data is available from 2019 to present day with a 2 week lag.
- The measure of 'searches' within the report and dashboard is based on a calculation of the number of searches which took place x the number of passengers included within each search (i.e. travel party size), giving us an estimation of the total potential demand for the destinations.
- The origin and destination refers to the location of the airport being searched for rather than where the search is being made from.
- Data can be analysed by **destination** at the UK/Irish Republic level as well as by UK nation and city level.
- Data can be analysed by origin market and city for which we have access to **15 markets** – Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, USA and the UAE. The **total** in the report and dashboard **refers to a sum/average of these 15 markets**.
- This analysis only includes searches which include a stay in the UK or Irish Republic and therefore excludes day trips, one-way trips or those returning home to the UK.
- When comparing to other inbound searches also bear in mind that this data does not capture any passengers/bookings made via train/ferry.
- Penetration of flight searches is higher in Europe and North America, and low in Asian markets.
- This report uses data that was most recently **updated on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026**.

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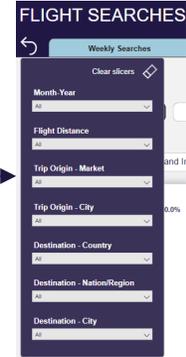
# Additional data available on vb.org

See more data on the [ForwardKeys Flight Searches Dashboard](#) on visitbritain.org.

## Different geographies

Destination – Country (UK vs Irish Republic)  
Destination – Nation (Eng, Scot, Wales)  
Destination - City  
Trip Origin - Market  
Trip Origin - City

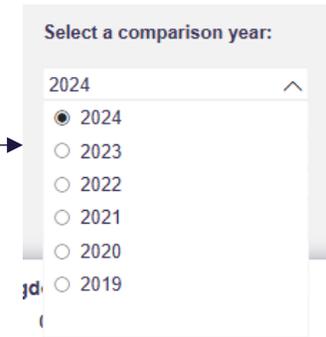
Click on the slicer icon in the top left of the dashboard. Select a 'Trip Origin' or 'Destination' filter to select the geography of your choice.



## Multiple years of data

2019  
2021  
2022  
2023  
2024  
2025  
2026

At the top of each tab you can select the year you want to show and the year you want to compare to.



## View granular insights

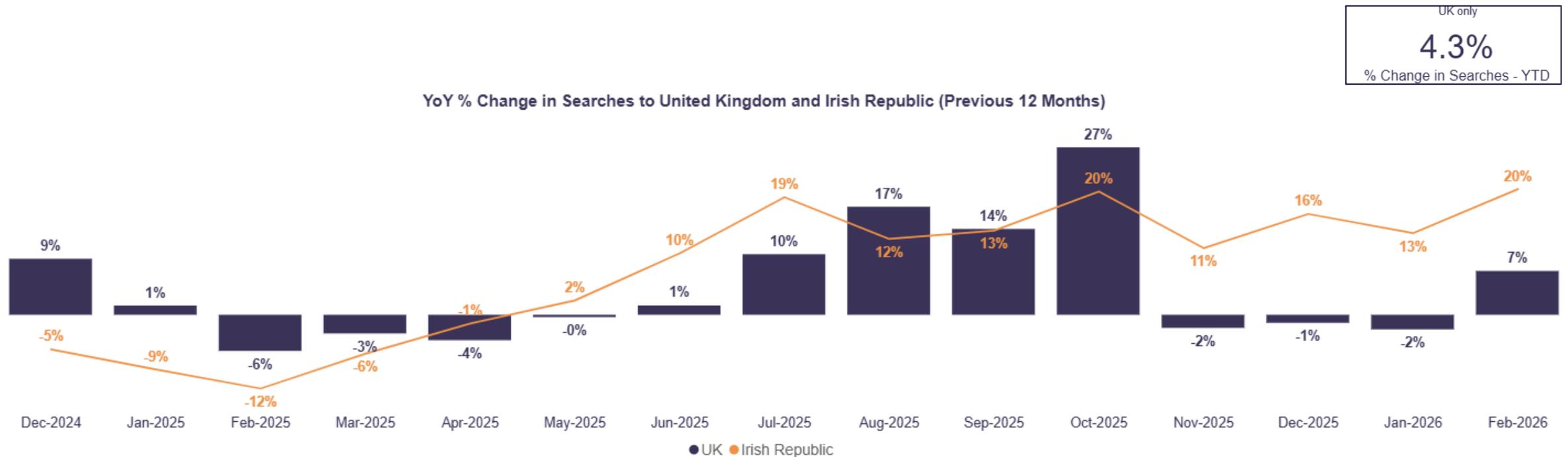
Daily Search Trends  
Weekly Search Trends  
Monthly Search trends  
Length of stay Trends

Select the different tabs to view data at different date levels



# Flight search trends | UK flight searches were up YoY in February 2026

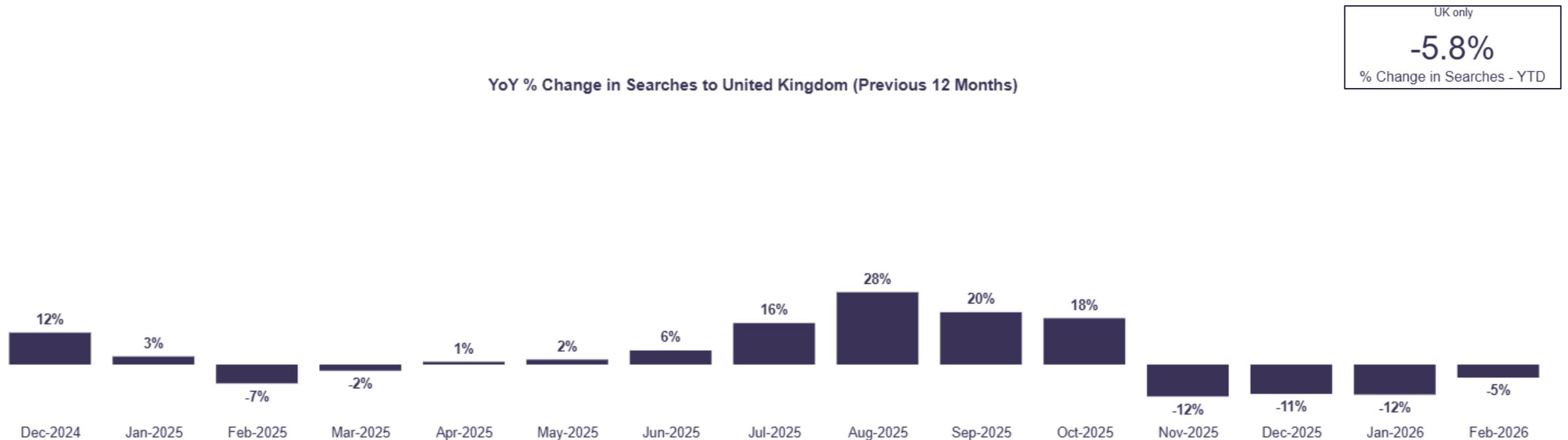
- Overall flight searches to the **UK** were up 7% in February 2026. Searches for the **Irish Republic** were higher in the same month, up 20% year-on-year.
- Year-to-date searches to the UK were up 4%.



Source: ForwardKeys Flight Searches refreshed 16/03/26. % growth vs previous year shown. YTD may be different to the dashboard as the dashboard is updated weekly. Overall flight searches refer to the average of 15 inbound markets within our subscription. Flight searches is a calculation of the number of searches which took place x the number of passengers included within each search (i.e. travel party size).

# Long haul search trends | Gentle declines in demand from long haul markets

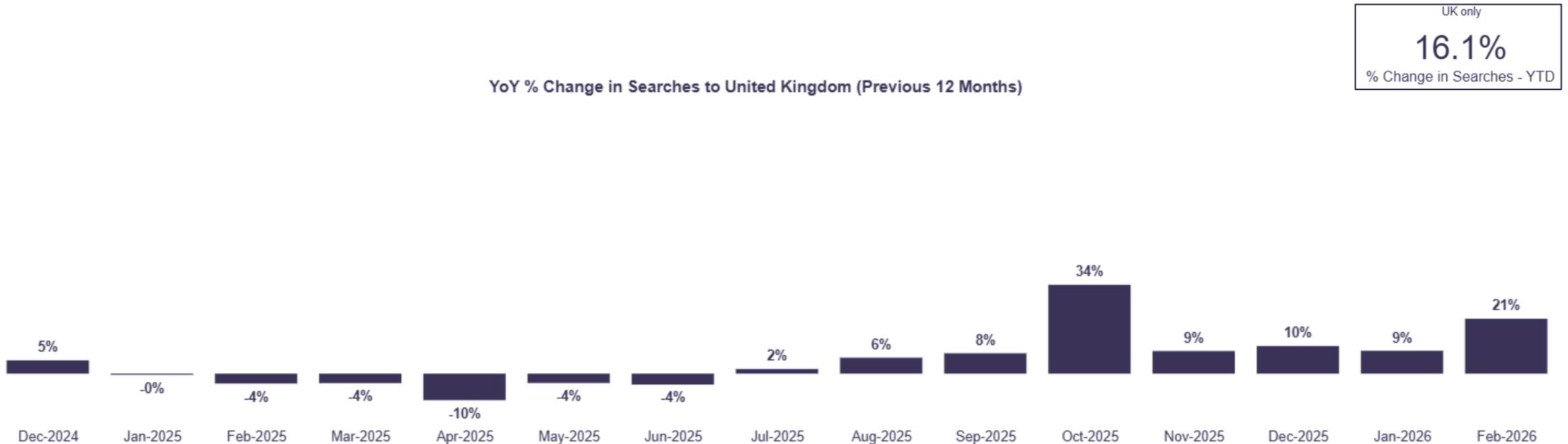
- Searches from **long haul markets** in aggregate (USA, Australia, Canada, India, UAE, Saudi Arabia and China), showed a YoY decline of 5% in February 2026, an improvement from January.
- Year-to-date searches from long haul markets were down 6%.



Source: ForwardKeys Flight Searches refreshed 16/03/26. % growth vs previous year shown. YTD may be different to the dashboard as the dashboard is updated weekly. Overall flight searches refer to the average of 15 inbound markets within our subscription. Flight searches is a calculation of the number of searches which took place x the number of passengers included within each search (i.e. travel party size).

# Short haul search trends | Boost in demand from short haul in February 2026

- Searches from **short haul markets** (Spain, Germany, Italy, France, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, and Norway) saw continued YoY growth into February 2026, with searches up 21%.
- Year-to-date searches were up 16%.



Source: ForwardKeys Flight Searches refreshed 16/03/26. % growth vs previous year shown. YTD may be different to the dashboard as the dashboard is updated weekly. Overall flight searches refer to the average of 15 inbound markets within our subscription. Flight searches is a calculation of the number of searches which took place x the number of passengers included within each search (i.e. travel party size).

## Origin market trends | European markets led flight search growth in February 2026

Market	Sep-2025	Oct-2025	Nov-2025	Dec-2025	Jan-2026	Feb-2026
Australia	-4%	-12%	-7%	3%	-10%	-9%
Canada	51%	66%	19%	7%	-1%	7%
China	35%	28%	15%	-3%	4%	-7%
France	-9%	5%	6%	16%	1%	10%
Germany	7%	7%	4%	-10%	7%	20%
India	-6%	-15%	-10%	-9%	-11%	-14%
Italy	24%	95%	24%	44%	27%	46%
Netherlands	-12%	-2%	-9%	-7%	-2%	1%
Norway	-13%	-5%	-7%	10%	8%	2%
Saudi Arabia	62%	40%	-24%	-27%	-10%	-14%
Spain	18%	58%	9%	12%	10%	25%
Sweden	6%	-5%	-1%	-3%	-7%	-2%
Switzerland	8%	8%	5%	-2%	-3%	-1%
U.S.A.	21%	18%	-19%	-16%	-15%	-5%
United Arab Emirates	37%	35%	1%	-4%	-2%	-4%

Latest month: February 2026 vs February 2025:

- **Italy (+46%)** continued to lead growth in the second month of the year, followed by **Spain (+25%)**, **Germany (+20%)** and **France (+10%)**
- **Canada (+7%)**, **Norway (+2%)** and **Netherlands (+1%)** saw more moderate growth.
- Single digit declines were seen from **Switzerland (-1%)**, **Sweden (-2%)**, **the UAE (-4%)**, **the USA (-5%)**, **China (-7%)** and **Australia (-9%)**.
- Search demand from **India** and **Saudi Arabia** were both at -14% in the latest month.

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## Destination nation trends | Scotland and Wales led growth in February 2026

- Scotland and Wales led growth in searches in February 2026; up 21% and 20%, respectively.
- Searches to England saw moderate growth at +4%
- The Crown Dependencies (-6%) and Northern Ireland (-4%) saw continued declines in demand into the second month of the year, although to a smaller degree vs the previous month.

Nation/Region	Mar-2025	Apr-2025	May-2025	Jun-2025	Jul-2025	Aug-2025	Sep-2025	Oct-2025	Nov-2025	Dec-2025	Jan-2026	Feb-2026
England	-3%	-3%	-1%	1%	7%	16%	12%	28%	-4%	-4%	-5%	4%
Scotland	-2%	-9%	1%	6%	23%	24%	22%	22%	11%	16%	12%	21%
Wales	-19%	-8%	19%	-2%	-5%	-26%	-7%	22%	17%	3%	-1%	20%
Northern Ireland	15%	5%	23%	31%	36%	32%	44%	5%	-16%	-16%	-9%	-4%
UK Crown Dependencies	-23%	-19%	12%	10%	-0%	-9%	-6%	-7%	-9%	-10%	-12%	-6%

Source: ForwardKeys Flight Searches refreshed 16/03/26. % growth vs previous year shown. %s may be different to the dashboard as the dashboard is updated weekly. Overall flight searches refer to the average of 15 inbound markets within our subscription. Flight searches is a calculation of searches x number of passengers searched for.

## Destination city trends | Scottish and Southern England destinations led February growth

- Within the top 5 ranking UK cities by volume in February 2026 (London, Edinburgh, Manchester, Glasgow and Birmingham), Edinburgh (+27%) saw the largest YoY growth in searches followed by Manchester (+16%), Glasgow (+8%) and London (+4%). Searches for Birmingham saw YoY declines of 12% in February 2026.

Searches to United Kingdom Ranked by Destination City  
(Latest Month: Feb-2026)

City	Rank	Searches
London	1	21.8M
Edinburgh	2	4.6M
Manchester	3	2.4M
Glasgow	4	1.0M
Birmingham	5	774.2K
Bristol	6	476.8K
Liverpool	7	324.3K
Newcastle	8	234.4K
Belfast	9	225.8K
Leeds	10	169.1K
Inverness	11	148.5K
Cardiff	12	133.5K
Nottingham	13	111.4K
Aberdeen	14	93.2K
Southampton	15	75.1K

YoY % Change in Searches to United Kingdom Ranked  
by Destination City (Latest Month: Feb-2026)

City	Rank	YoY % Change in Searches
North Ronaldsay	1	291%
Papa Westray	2	43%
Shetland Islands	3	33%
Bournemouth	4	32%
Edinburgh	5	27%
Exeter	6	22%
Cardiff	7	20%
Islay	8	19%
Bristol	9	18%
Manchester	10	16%
Westray	11	16%
Newcastle	12	11%
Newquay	13	9%
Glasgow	14	8%
Leeds	15	7%

Source: ForwardKeys Flight Searches refreshed 16/03/26. % growth vs previous year shown. %s may be different to the dashboard as the dashboard is updated weekly. Overall flight searches refer to the average of 15 inbound markets within our subscription. Flight searches is a calculation of searches x number of passengers searched for.\*YoY searches based on a low volume of searches. Destinations are based on UK airports.

**For more information, please contact**

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