

ForwardKeys Flight Searches Monthly Update Data up to April 2026

VisitBritain/VisitEngland Research
(Published May 2026)

If you would like the data in a different format, please contact research@visitbritain.org

Key takeouts

The story: Overall flight searches to the UK in April 2026 were similar to 2025, after a strong March driven by the impact of the Middle East conflict. In April, growth was seen from short haul in aggregate whilst declines were seen from long haul in aggregate.

- The demand for the UK, measured by flight searches x the number of passengers searched for, was around on par with the previous year in April (up 1%), following a boost in March.
- Long haul markets in aggregate saw a YoY decline of 10% in April, with China the only market to see YoY growth. Demand from Australia and Canada saw a dip in April with larger declines from Saudi Arabia and the UAE likely driven by the conflict in the Middle East.
- Short haul markets saw 16% growth in aggregate with double digit growth from Germany, Spain, France and Italy.
- For a competitor view, the Irish Republic saw stronger YoY growth in demand vs the UK in April 2026 (+4% vs +1%).
- April 2026 growth was led by searches to Scotland.

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 11th May 2026**.

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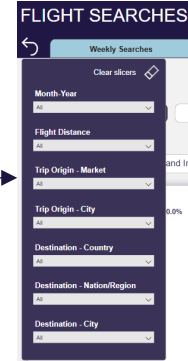
Additional data available on vb.org

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

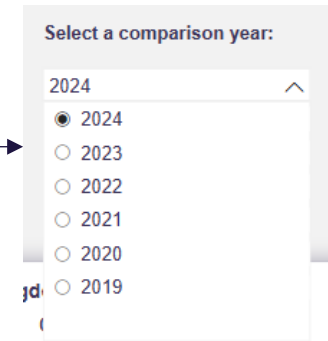
Click on the slicer icon in the top left of the dashboard. Select a 'Trip Origin' or 'Destination' filter to select the geography of your choice.



Multiple years of data

2019
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025
2026

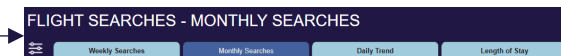
At the top of each tab you can select the year you want to show and the year you want to compare to.



View granular insights

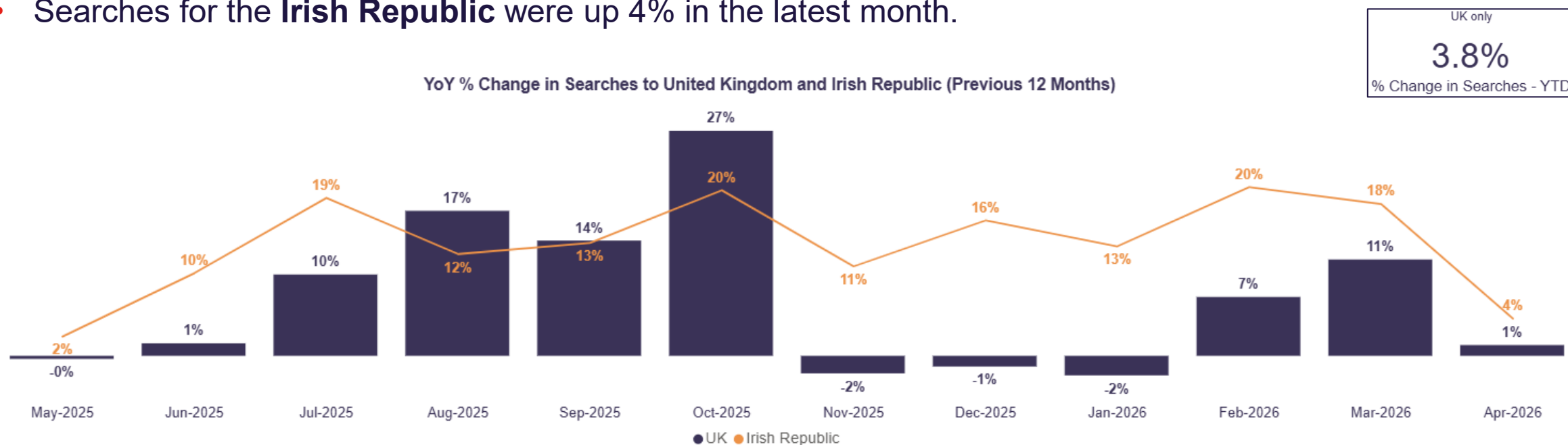
Daily Search Trends (*currently under review*)
Weekly Search Trends
Monthly Search trends
Length of stay Trends

Select the different tabs to view data at different date levels



Flight search trends | UK flight searches were up slightly YoY in April 2026

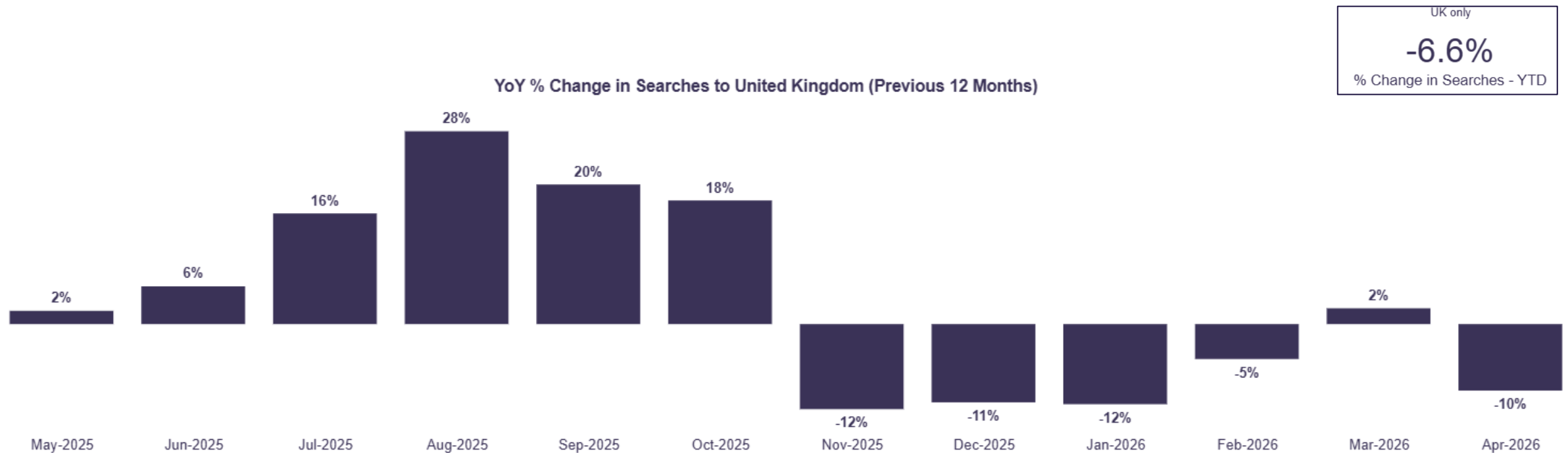
- Overall flight searches to the **UK** were up 1% in April 2026, lower growth than the previous two months. March saw larger YoY growth likely due to the Middle East conflict. Year-to-date searches to the UK were up 4%.
- Searches for the **Irish Republic** were up 4% in the latest month.



Source: ForwardKeys Flight Searches refreshed 11/05/26. % 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 | YoY declines from long haul in aggregate

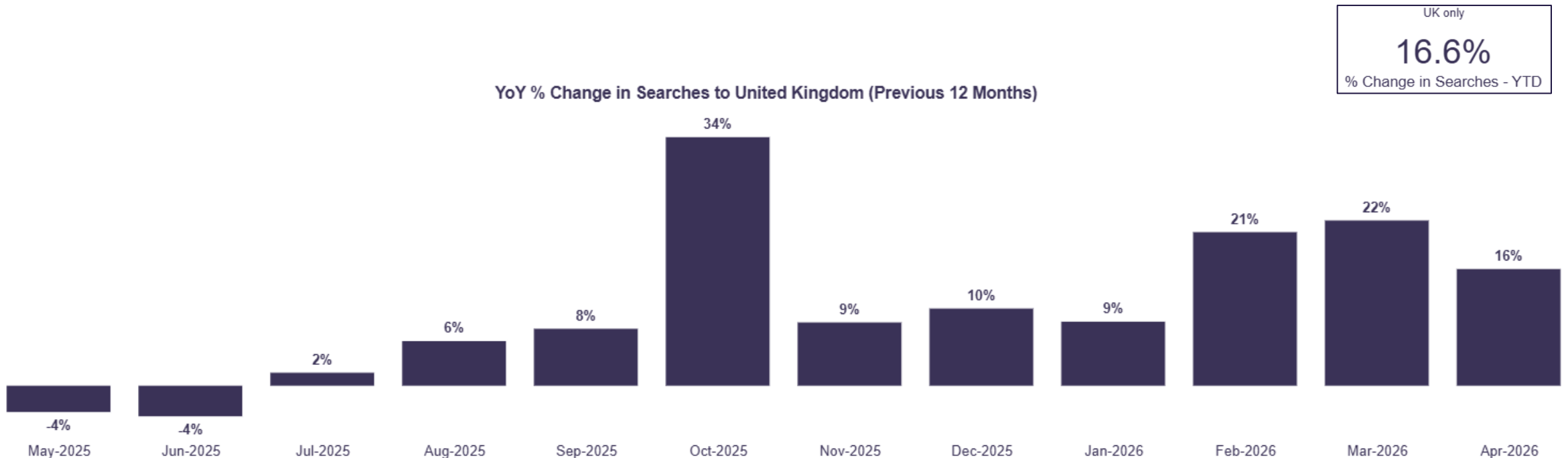
- Searches from **long haul markets** in aggregate (USA, Australia, Canada, India, UAE, Saudi Arabia and China), showed a YoY decline of 10% in April 2026.
- Year-to-date searches from long haul markets were down 7%.



Source: ForwardKeys Flight Searches refreshed 11/05/26. % 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 | YoY growth from short haul markets in aggregate

- Searches from **short haul markets** (Spain, Germany, Italy, France, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, and Norway) saw continued YoY growth into April 2026, with searches up 16%.
- Year-to-date searches were up 17%.



Source: ForwardKeys Flight Searches refreshed 11/05/26. % 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 | Softened demand across markets in April vs March

Market	Nov-2025	Dec-2025	Jan-2026	Feb-2026	Mar-2026	Apr-2026
Australia	-7.14%	3.16%	-10.30%	-9.06%	25.85%	-12.48%
Canada	18.96%	7.17%	-0.63%	6.87%	-0.91%	-14.81%
China	14.51%	-3.21%	4.33%	-6.61%	26.77%	7.69%
France	6.04%	15.62%	0.76%	10.27%	13.03%	18.81%
Germany	3.67%	-9.60%	7.13%	20.26%	31.27%	23.00%
India	-9.89%	-9.10%	-11.46%	-14.48%	35.14%	-3.98%
Italy	24.34%	44.02%	26.55%	45.59%	36.62%	18.79%
Netherlands	-8.85%	-7.14%	-2.12%	0.85%	19.34%	4.59%
Norway	-7.13%	9.91%	8.05%	1.72%	21.47%	-2.94%
Saudi Arabia	-23.72%	-26.98%	-9.77%	-13.67%	0.55%	-32.25%
Spain	9.35%	11.71%	9.67%	25.27%	18.76%	20.88%
Sweden	-1.01%	-3.33%	-7.50%	-1.58%	14.91%	-8.62%
Switzerland	4.83%	-1.60%	-2.76%	-1.29%	3.11%	-2.64%
U.S.A.	-19.04%	-16.32%	-14.96%	-5.47%	-3.62%	-3.93%
United Arab Emirates	0.70%	-4.37%	-1.85%	-3.87%	-30.99%	-50.32%

Latest month- April 2026 vs April 2025:

- Most markets saw softened demand in April vs March following the surge in searches when the Middle East conflict began.
- **Germany (23%), Spain (21%), France (19%) and Italy (19%)** led YoY growth in April.
- **China (8%) and Netherlands (5%)** also saw moderate YoY growth.
- Single digit declines were seen from **Switzerland (-3%), Norway (-3%), India (-4%), USA (-4%) and Sweden (-9%). Australia (-12%) and Canada (-15%)** saw larger declines in April.
- Search demand from **Saudi Arabia** and the **UAE** saw large YoY declines in April likely due to the Middle East conflict.

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Destination nation trends | Scotland led YoY growth in April 2026

- Scotland led growth in searches in April 2026 (up 10%), a continuation of YoY growth it has seen in the past year.
- Searches to the UK Crown Dependencies saw 5% growth in the latest month whilst searches to England and Northern Ireland were around on par with 2025 in April.
- Searches to Wales saw a decline of 11%.

YoY % Change in Searches to United Kingdom by Destination Nation/Region (Previous 12 Months)

Nation/Region	May-2025	Jun-2025	Jul-2025	Aug-2025	Sep-2025	Oct-2025	Nov-2025	Dec-2025	Jan-2026	Feb-2026	Mar-2026	Apr-2026
England	-0.92%	0.54%	7.09%	16.04%	11.86%	27.69%	-4.13%	-4.08%	-5.11%	4.34%	10.75%	-0.18%
Scotland	1.21%	5.69%	22.99%	23.70%	22.35%	22.01%	10.70%	15.82%	12.11%	20.71%	15.13%	9.91%
Wales	19.02%	-2.01%	-4.72%	-26.05%	-7.17%	22.28%	16.76%	3.43%	-1.26%	19.89%	6.04%	-11.02%
Northern Ireland	22.74%	31.07%	35.58%	32.33%	43.54%	5.20%	-16.49%	-16.19%	-9.17%	-3.53%	-1.55%	-1.54%
UK Crown Dependencies	12.06%	9.75%	-0.48%	-9.10%	-5.71%	-6.78%	-8.78%	-10.21%	-12.04%	-6.08%	12.01%	4.55%

Source: ForwardKeys Flight Searches refreshed 11/05/26. % 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 April growth

- Within the top 5 ranking UK cities by volume in April 2026 (London, Edinburgh, Manchester, Glasgow and Birmingham), Edinburgh (+12%) saw the largest YoY growth in searches followed by Glasgow (+9%). Searches to London were on par with 2025 whilst searches were down to Birmingham and Manchester.

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

City	Rank	Searches
London	1	20.4M
Edinburgh	2	3.7M
Manchester	3	2.2M
Glasgow	4	832.9K
Birmingham	5	754.5K
Bristol	6	431.3K
Liverpool	7	270.8K
Newcastle	8	216.6K
Belfast	9	203.9K
Leeds	10	154.9K
Nottingham	11	116.3K
Inverness	12	104.4K
Cardiff	13	101.3K
Aberdeen	14	90.4K
Southampton	15	63.9K

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

City	Rank	YoY % Change in Searches
Guernsey	1	24%
Newquay	2	19%
Bristol	3	13%
Edinburgh	4	12%
Glasgow	5	9%
Newcastle	6	8%
Aberdeen	7	5%
Jersey	8	3%
Exeter	9	3%
Shetland Islands	10	2%
Durham Tees Valley	11	2%
Isle Of Man	12	1%
London	13	0%
Birmingham	14	-1%
Belfast	15	-1%

Source: ForwardKeys Flight Searches refreshed 11/05/26. % 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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