

# 2024 Takes Flight at RDU

RDU Named Fastest-Growing Airport

## Fast Facts



**15 Million+ Projected Passengers in 2024**  
**Busiest Year Ever**



**5 New Airlines**  
**Expanding International Service**



**19 Airlines**  
**70+ Nonstop Destinations**



**15 International and U.S. Territory Destinations**  
**8 New International Routes**



**Most Frequently Flown Route**  
**New York City**



**Farthest Nonstop Destination** (4,278 miles, 8h 25m)  
**Frankfurt, Germany**

## Record-Setting Growth

RDU was named the **fastest-growing Top 50 airport in the country** in 2024. The airport grew at a rate of 22% over the previous year based on how many passengers boarded flights at large airports.

# Air Service



Aeromexico opened direct access to the capital of Mexico for the first time with a new nonstop route to Mexico City. The Mexico City service connects the Raleigh-Durham market with one of the largest metropolitan areas in the world and provides easy access to Central and South America. Aeromexico operates the flights as part of its partnership with Delta Air Lines.



Canada's largest airline expanded its route map at RDU by announcing it will launch nonstop service between the Research Triangle region and Vancouver in summer 2025. The seasonal route will connect travelers with one of RDU's top unserved international destinations and offer convenient connections to Asia and Western Canada.



Avelo announced it will launch international service from RDU for the first time in 2025. The growing airline will begin flying to Punta Cana, Dominican Republic and Montego Bay, Jamaica in February, providing Triangle-area travelers with two new destinations in the Caribbean islands.



# BERMUDAIR

RDU announced that BermudAir will begin nonstop flights to Bermuda in 2025, connecting the Research Triangle to the Bermuda Triangle in just over two hours. The new BermudAir service will offer North Carolina travelers a new option for an island getaway and allow Bermudians to explore the incredible experiences that make the Raleigh-Durham region a top destination.



# Copa Airlines

The first nonstop flight from Panama to RDU touched down amid fanfare from travelers who now have direct access to Latin America for the first time. The new nonstop Panama City route on Copa Airlines provides the region's first gateway to Latin America and opens new possibilities for business and leisure travel from the Research Triangle area.



# Lufthansa

RDU added a third European destination when Lufthansa launched nonstop service to Frankfurt, giving Triangle-area travelers convenient access to Germany and beyond. Frankfurt is a vibrant business and tourist destination and the airline's main hub.





## WESTJET

Canadian airline WestJet announced it will begin nonstop service from RDU to Calgary next summer. The seasonal route will provide travelers with an opportunity to visit the Rocky Mountains in Western Canada and easily connect to WestJet's vast network of destinations Canada, Europe and Asia.

**Airline Relocations:** As RDU continued to add new airlines, flights and destinations, the Airport Authority relocated Alaska, Breeze and Sun Country to Terminal 1. The moves were made to maximize gate space in both terminals, accommodate airline needs and prepare for continued growth in air travel.

## Infrastructure

- **Runway Replacement:** RDU's signature capital project – construction of a replacement for Runway 5L-23R – is underway. The runway will be the most important two miles of pavement in the Research Triangle when it is complete, serving as the region's gateway to the West Coast and transatlantic destinations. The existing 5L-23R is due for replacement after four decades of use.
- **Runway Preservation:** A multi-year effort to preserve Runway 5L-23R continued in 2024 so aircraft departing for long-haul destinations can keep using it. Crews worked overnight to demolish slabs of concrete, pour new ones and let them cure before reopening the runway to air traffic in the morning. The preservation project will continue in phases until the new 5L-23R opens.
- **Park Economy 3:** Construction continued on the expansion of the Park Economy 3 lot on National Guard Drive. The existing lot is being expanded to create approximately 7,000 additional spaces and add a customer amenity building for airport guests who are shuttled to and from the terminals.



# Sustainability

- **Electric Buses:** The airport more than doubled its electric bus fleet by purchasing six additional zero-emission vehicles to shuttle passengers from economy lots to the terminals. RDU became the first public entity in the Research Triangle region to deploy electric buses in 2019.



- **Sustainability Annual Report:** RDU published its first [Sustainability Program Annual Report](#), highlighting its commitment to integrating sustainable practices into every aspect of airport operations. The Authority's sustainability efforts include completing an environmental compliance review of the Park Economy 3 expansion project and reusing construction materials to divert waste from landfills.

- **Stormwater Management System:** RDU started construction on a sustainable stormwater management system that will be the largest of its kind in North Carolina. The innovative submerged gravel wetland system will treat stormwater from the Park Economy 3 expansion project and is expected to be more effective than traditional systems in removing pollutants from stormwater runoff.



- **Energy Management:** RDU began reviewing energy consumption at airport facilities and identifying opportunities to reduce consumption and optimize energy usage. This effort will help pave the way toward reducing operating costs, providing resiliency to unexpected energy disruptions and adapting to extreme weather events.



- **Envision status:** The Airport Authority began pursuing [Envision](#) verification for two significant infrastructure projects – the replacement of Runway 5L-23R and the expansion of the Park Economy 3 lot. Envision is a framework that provides direction in the planning, design construction, operations and maintenance of sustainable and resilient civil infrastructure.

## Community

- **Plane Pull:** Special Olympics North Carolina held the 25th annual Plane Pull at RDU in 2024 to raise funds to support Special Olympics athletes across the state. The Plane Pull features teams competing to pull a regional jet 25 feet the fastest. More than 60 teams competed and raised \$130,000 to help Special Olympics athletes in our communities.



- **Hurricane Relief:** Members of Team RDU traveled to Western North Carolina to help Asheville Regional Airport (AVL) and its employees recover from the devastating impact of Hurricane Helene. RDU staff from operations, law enforcement, fire-rescue and fields and facilities maintenance took supplies to Asheville and backfilled various airport roles so their counterparts at AVL could focus on their families and their own recovery.
- **Prime Minister Visit:** RDU rolled out the red carpet for a rare visit from a foreign head of state when it welcomed Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to the Research Triangle region. The prime minister made the first nonstop journey between Tokyo and RDU on a Boeing 777-300ER known as Japanese Air Force One. An identical backup aircraft also made the trip, marking the first time RDU has hosted two 777-300ERs at the same time.

## Reimagine RDU

- **New Concessions:** RDU welcomed three new restaurants in 2024, the first of more than a dozen new dining concepts slated to open in Terminals 1 and 2. Even more concepts from celebrated chefs and local and national favorites are [planned for 2025](#) as RDU reimagines the airport dining experience.



## Technology

- **Parking Guidance System:** A parking guidance system that makes it easier for airport guests to find an open parking space was installed in the deck. The system uses overhead lights to show the number of available spaces. Airport guests can also download the Park Assist mobile app and search for “Raleigh-Durham Airport” to receive real time occupancy information.
- **Biometric Exit:** Facial recognition technology was installed at some gates that serve international destinations for travelers who choose to be vetted using biometrics. The kiosks, which passengers can opt out of, use touch-free technology to provide a more efficient and secure screening process.

