

What Is the Biggest Airport in the US? Find Out

AIRFLY
POLICY

WHAT IS THE
BIGGEST
AIRPORT IN THE US?

FIND OUT NOW!

TOP AIRPORTS RANKED | SIZE, TRAFFIC & STATS | TRAVEL SMART, FLY BETTER

CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION
+1-888-212-0809

DISCOVER THE **BIGGEST & BUSIEST** AIRPORTS IN THE USA!

When people ask about the [biggest airport in the US](#), they may mean two different things. They could mean the airport with the largest land area. Or, they could mean the airport serving the most passengers.

The answer changes depending on the measurement used.

Denver International Airport (DEN) is the biggest US airport by land area. It covers about 53 square miles. However, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) is the busiest US airport by passenger traffic.

This guide explains the difference between airport size and airport activity. You will also discover the second biggest airport in the US and other major US airports.

What Is the Biggest Airport in the US?

Denver International Airport is the biggest airport in the US by land area.

Located in Denver, Colorado, DEN covers approximately 53 square miles. The airport officially identifies itself as the largest airport in the United States by land size.

Its enormous footprint includes more than runways and passenger terminals. The airport property also contains open land, transportation infrastructure, and other airport facilities.

This makes DEN unique among major US airports.

Denver International Airport at a Glance

- Airport: Denver International Airport
- Airport code: DEN
- Location: Denver, Colorado
- Land area: About 53 square miles
- Size ranking: Largest US airport by land area
- 2025 passengers: About 82.4 million

DEN also ranks among America's busiest airports. ACI World recorded 82,427,962 passengers at Denver in 2025.

Why Is Denver Airport So Large?

Denver International Airport opened in 1995. Its location provides substantial room for airport expansion.

The airport sits northeast of downtown Denver. Its large property supports a significant runway system and aviation infrastructure.

DEN's size also gives it room for future development.

Its massive land area does not mean every part of the property contains passenger facilities. Much of the airport's footprint serves operational and supporting purposes.

What Is the Busiest Airport in the US?

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is the busiest airport in the US by passenger traffic.

It is also the world's busiest airport by total passenger traffic.

In 2025, ATL handled 106,302,208 passengers. ACI World ranked it first globally for total passenger traffic.

Atlanta's position differs from Denver's.

DEN wins by land area, while ATL leads by passenger volume.

Why Is Atlanta Airport So Busy?

Several factors contribute to ATL's enormous passenger numbers.

- Atlanta is a major US aviation hub.
- It has an extensive domestic flight network.
- Delta Air Lines has a major hub there.

- Its location supports connections across the United States.
- The airport handles a large number of connecting passengers.

This makes ATL one of the most important airports for domestic US travel.

What Is the Second Biggest Airport in the US?

The answer depends on how you measure "biggest."

If you mean land area, Denver International Airport is first. Other large US airports can have substantial footprints, but rankings can vary based on property definitions.

If you mean passenger traffic, Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) is currently the second-busiest US airport.

DFW handled 85,660,127 passengers in 2025. It ranked fourth worldwide and second among US airports.

DFW Airport vs. Denver Airport

Both airports are enormous aviation hubs.

However, they lead in different measurements:

- DEN: Largest US airport by land area
- ATL: Busiest US airport by passenger traffic
- DFW: Second-busiest US airport by passenger traffic
- ORD: Leading US airport for aircraft movements in 2025

These differences explain why airport rankings can appear confusing.

Top 5 Busiest Airports in the US

Passenger traffic provides another useful way to compare major airports.

Based on ACI World's final 2025 passenger data, the leading US airports were:

1. Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) — 106.3 million passengers
2. Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) — 85.7 million
3. Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD) — 84.9 million
4. Denver International Airport (DEN) — 82.4 million
5. Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) — 73.7 million

ACI World confirms these rankings using total passengers arriving and departing from each airport.

Which US Airport Has the Most Flights?

Passenger totals are not the only way to measure airport activity.

Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD) ranked first globally for aircraft movements in 2025. It recorded 857,392 aircraft movements.

Aircraft movements count takeoffs and landings.

Atlanta ranked second with 807,625 movements. Dallas/Fort Worth followed with 743,394 movements.

This creates another interesting distinction:

- Largest by land: Denver
- Busiest by passengers: Atlanta
- Most aircraft movements: Chicago O'Hare

Biggest vs. Busiest Airport: What's the Difference?

The terms "biggest" and "busiest" describe different measurements.

Airport size usually refers to the total land controlled by the airport.

Passenger traffic measures how many passengers travel through the airport.

Aircraft movements measure the number of takeoffs and landings.

For example, DEN is much larger geographically than many airports. Yet ATL handles more passengers annually.

This distinction is important when comparing airports.

Quick Comparison

Airport	Primary distinction	2025 passengers
Denver (DEN)	Largest US airport by land	82.4 million
Atlanta (ATL)	Busiest US airport	106.3 million
Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW)	Second-busiest US airport	85.7 million

Chicago O'Hare (ORD)	Most aircraft movements	84.9 million
----------------------	-------------------------	--------------

Los Angeles (LAX)	Major international gateway	73.7 million
-------------------	-----------------------------	--------------

Passenger figures are based on ACI World's 2025 airport traffic data.

How to Choose the Right US Airport for Your Trip

Airport size does not necessarily determine which airport is best for your journey.

Consider these factors before booking.

1. Compare Flight Options

Check which airport offers the most convenient nonstop flights.

A larger airport does not always provide the best route for every destination.

2. Check Airport Location

Look at the distance between the airport and your final destination.

A slightly smaller airport may save significant travel time.

3. Consider Connection Time

Large hubs can involve longer terminal transfers.

Allow enough time when connecting between flights.

4. Check Ground Transportation

Compare rental cars, trains, buses, taxis, and rideshare options.

This can make a major difference after landing.

5. Review Airport Services

Frequent travelers may want to compare lounges, dining, baggage services, and accessibility facilities.

These services can improve the overall airport experience.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the biggest airport in the US by land area?

Denver International Airport is the biggest airport in the US by land area, covering about 53 square miles.

Its huge property makes it the largest US airport geographically.

What is the busiest airport in the US?

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is the busiest US airport by passenger traffic.

It handled more than 106.3 million passengers in 2025, according to ACI World.

What is the second busiest airport in the US?

Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport is the second-busiest US airport by passenger traffic.

DFW handled approximately 85.7 million passengers in 2025.

Is Denver Airport bigger than Atlanta Airport?

Yes, Denver Airport is much larger by land area, while Atlanta Airport is busier by passenger traffic.

DEN covers about 53 square miles, while ATL leads the US in annual passenger volume.

Conclusion

The [biggest airport in the US](#) is Denver International Airport when measured by land area. It covers roughly 53 square miles and has one of the largest airport footprints worldwide.

However, Atlanta International Airport is the busiest US airport by passenger traffic. DFW ranks second among US airports for passenger volume, while Chicago O'Hare leads in aircraft movements.

Want more airport and airline travel information? Explore our other travel guides to compare airports, routes, baggage rules, and booking options before your next trip.