

Simferopol Airport Sees Passenger Boom as Russians Flock to Crimea

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Simferopol International Airport in Crimea

The number of passengers at Crimea's Simferopol airport increased by 340 percent in the first four months of this year compared to the same period in 2014 as the conflict in Ukraine choked off land routes to the peninsula, Russia's Federal Air Transportation Agency, Rosaviatsia, said Wednesday.

Over 695,837 passengers flowed through Simferopol, the peninsula's main airport, from January to April, up from 204,869 last year, Rosaviatsia said on its website.

The boom in air traffic follows Russia's annexation of the Black Sea peninsula from Ukraine in March last year. The land grab and subsequent conflict in eastern Ukraine caused flows of tourists traveling to Crimea via the Ukrainian mainland — previously the most popular route for vacationers — to dry up, leaving only ferry and air travel as reliable transport options for Russian tourists.

Crimean Tourism Minister Yelena Yurchenko said in March that the peninsula expects 4.3 million tourists this year, with over half coming by plane, news agency RIA Novosti reported.

So far this month passenger flows are continuing to beat last year's numbers. Arrivals for the Labor Day holiday from May 1 to May 4 hit 44,233 passengers, up from 16,511 last year, Rosaviatsia said.

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