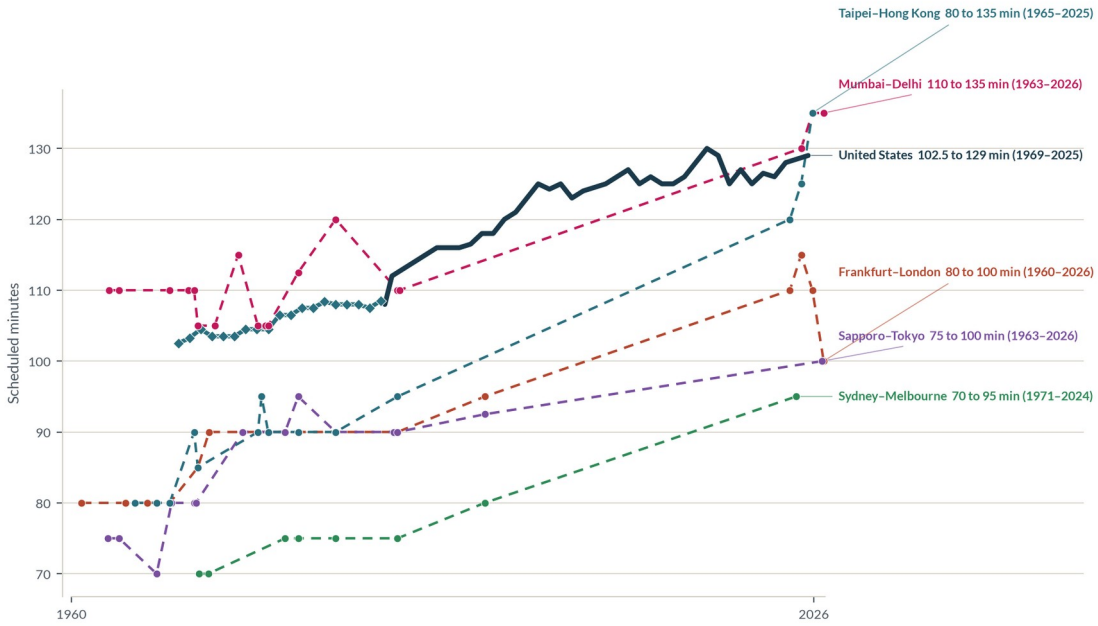
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Same flights now take longer: 60-year study of scheduled airline time

US scheduled times rose from 102.5 minutes in 1969 to 129 in 2025 on 1,286 city pairs, while time in the air barely moved



Median scheduled time on the same routes, 1960s to 2026. Source: blocktime.wheeltug.com

BALTIMORE, Nov. 24, 2026 -- A new public study of published airline schedules finds that the same flights take longer to schedule now than they did in the early jet era, while the time aircraft spend in the air has barely changed.

Blocktime, a WheelTug report also branded on the accompanying site as a GoScore / WheelTug study, is online at https://blocktime.wheeltug.com/.

On a constant set of 1,286 US city pairs, median scheduled time rose from 102.5 minutes in 1969 to 129 minutes in 2025, a gain of 26.5 minutes. Median air time on those pairs moved only from 96 to 97 minutes between 1995 and 2025. Adding 17 minutes of scheduled time since 1988 has not made those flights more punctual: 80.5% arrived on time in 1988, and 77.6% did in 2025. In 2025 alone, the added scheduled time amounts to about 143 million passenger-hours on that set, compared with 1995 schedules.

The same pattern shows up outside the United States. On matched jet routes in Europe, Japan, Australia and India, scheduled times rose 23% to 36%. Frankfurt to London went from 80

minutes in 1960 to 100 in 2026. Sapporo to Tokyo went from 75 minutes in 1963 to 100 in 2026. Sydney to Melbourne went from 70 minutes in 1971 to 95 in 2024. Mumbai (Bombay) to Delhi went from 110 minutes in 1963 to 135 in 2026. Taipei to Hong Kong went from 80 minutes in 1965 to 135 in 2025.

Jets still cruise at about Mach 0.76 to 0.80, as they did in 1967.

"Congestion in the air has not made flight times any longer. But total schedule times have increased dramatically over the past decades, which means airplanes are spending more time than ever not flying, remaining on the ground," said Isaiah Cox, founder and CEO of WheelTug.

"Once you put the same routes side by side, the pattern is hard to miss. This is a global story."

A public US route lookup is at https://blocktime.wheeltug.com/#route. Sources are listed at https://blocktime.wheeltug.com/#sources. Some non-US figures rest on readings of scanned guides and on small modern samples.

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