



Transit Time Trends Report (Q3 2026)

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REPORT



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1 Q3 2026: The Quarter The Delay Moved To Asia's Ports

Q2 was the quarter the network learned to live with a closed Strait of Hormuz. In Q3, that backdrop stayed, but for most lanes in this report, delays came from elsewhere: Asia's own ports.

Severe storms hit North Asia in quick succession. Typhoons closed or slowed terminals at Shanghai and Ningbo, and by early September ships were waiting about 10 days to berth.¹ Several of the region's busiest ports saw fewer vessels arrive on time.² In July, schedule reliability at Shanghai fell to 21%, the lowest in 14 years of data.³

The problem then spread across the network. Globally, on-time arrivals fell below 50% in August, the lowest since September 2022.⁴ By late September, port delays were tying up about 3 million TEU of vessel capacity, around 8.5% of the global fleet.⁵

Three developments shaped the quarter:

1 Hormuz still disrupted

The Strait of Hormuz stayed disrupted. A temporary route was announced in August, but it did not mean the strait had reopened.⁶

2 Typhoons hit North Asia

Storms in quick succession closed or slowed terminals at Shanghai and Ningbo, with berth waits reaching around 10 days.^{1 2}

3 Ports strained at both ends

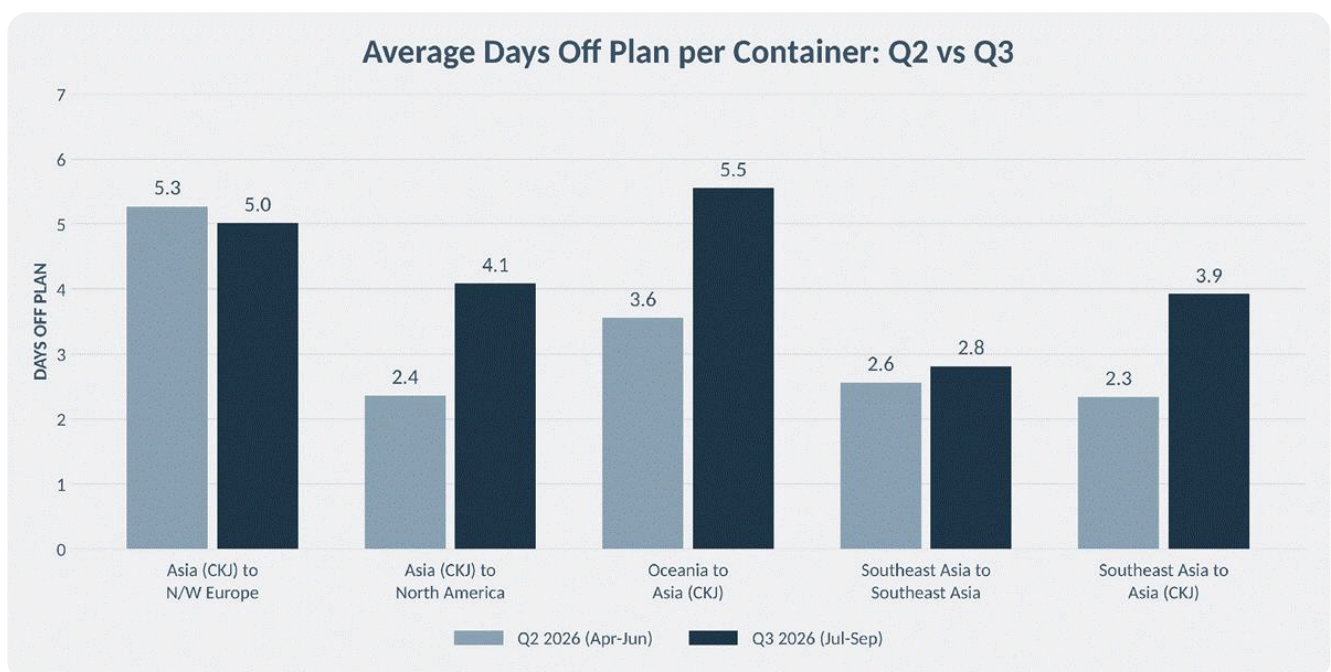
German port workers held warning strikes in August and early September, Rotterdam dockworkers stopped work for eight hours on 4 September, and a cyber attack paused operations at Tanjung Pelepas on 9 September.^{7 8 9 10}



2 Q3 Transit Times At A Glance

This report focuses on five trade lanes. Asia to Europe and Asia to North America are the two main east-west trades. The other three, Oceania to Asia and two Southeast Asia lanes, run through Asia's busiest ports, where most of Q3's delays built up.

Every lane covered here ran later than planned in every month of Q3. What changed is how far off plan containers were. The chart shows the average number of days each container arrived off the carrier's plan, early or late. Each lane's net gap (actual minus planned) is shown with its lane in Section 4.



Data Source: Portcast

- **Most lanes got less predictable.** The biggest jumps were on lanes arriving into North Asia and on the transpacific.
- **Europe was the exception.** The Asia to Europe lane stayed close to its Q2 level.
- **Delays grew through the quarter.** Asia to North America and both Southeast Asia lanes were furthest off plan in September.
- **Short lanes feel it most.** On intra-Southeast Asia voyages, being off plan is more than a third of the planned journey. On Asia to Europe, it is about a tenth.



3 Our Methodology

Data Source: This report is based on shipment data processed (actual containers tracked) through the Portcast platform across major global trade corridors. The analysis reflects aggregated transit performance and does not disclose customer-specific information. All numbers are averages unless mentioned otherwise.

Analysis Window: Q2 2026 (April–June) vs. Q3 2026 (July–September). Q3 figures cover containers that arrived at the Port of Discharge between July and September 2026 (inclusive). Impacts from any ongoing disruptions may not be fully reflected, as affected containers could still have been mid-journey at the time of the data cutoff.

Metric Definitions

Average Planned Transit Time: The number of days between a container's scheduled departure from the Port of Loading and its scheduled arrival at the Port of Discharge, as planned by the carrier before the journey. This is the carrier's committed service timeline.

Average Actual Transit Time: The number of days between a container's actual departure from the Port of Loading and its actual arrival at the Port of Discharge.

Deviation (Average Days Off Plan): The average number of days by which each container's actual transit time differed from the carrier's planned transit time, whether the container arrived late or early. Because it is measured container by container, it can be larger than the difference between a lane's average actual and average planned transit time.

Net Gap: Average actual transit time minus average planned transit time. Early and late containers do offset each other here, so the net gap is never larger than the average days off plan. Example: one container arrives 3 days early and another 7 days late. The net gap is +2 days, but the average days off plan is 5.

Note:

1. Planned and actual transit values shown in the charts are monthly averages rounded to whole days. Quarterly figures in the text are calculated on unrounded data.
2. This report provides directional insight into global ocean transit trends. These insights should not be read as forecasts or guarantees of future shipment performance.

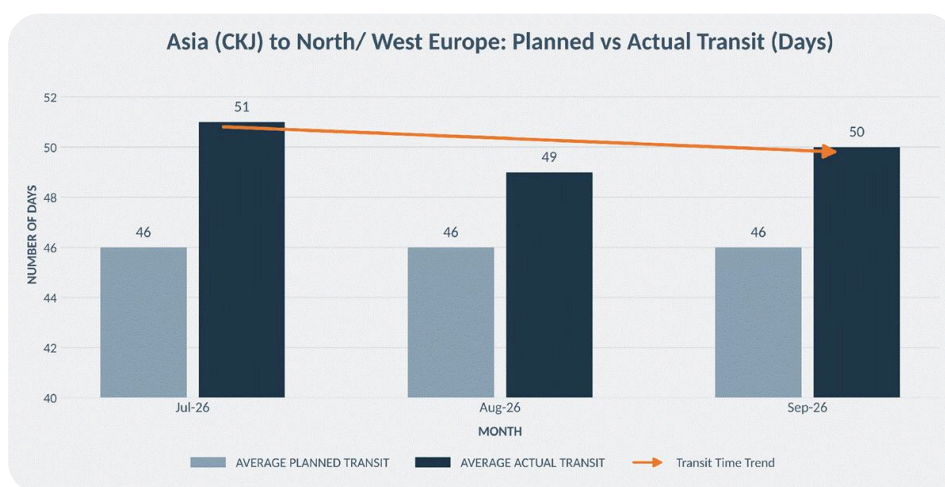
4 Trade Lane Performance: Q3 2026

The five lanes below span the major east-west arteries and the major regional corridors tracked on the Portcast platform. Together, they show how the network performed against planned transit times in Q3.

A Asia (China-Korea-Japan) → North/West Europe

Q3 average: 49.9 days actual vs. 45.9 days planned (net gap +4.0 days) | Avg. days off plan: **5.0 days**

Europe was the steady lane in an unsteady quarter. Containers kept arriving about five days off the carrier's plan, close to Q2's 5.3. Each month looked much the same: carriers planned about 46 days, and containers took 49 to 51.



Data Source: Portcast (Planned and actual transit values shown in the chart are monthly averages rounded to whole days)

Industry Perspective:

Disruption was heavy at both ends of this lane, but it did not widen the gap. In North Asia, typhoons slowed Shanghai and Ningbo, where ships were waiting around 10 days to berth by early September.¹ In Northern Europe, German port workers held warning strikes in August and early September, and Rotterdam dockworkers stopped work for eight hours on 4 September, adding pressure on arrival.^{7 8 9}

Some carriers also announced in September that they would move Asia–Europe services back to the Suez Canal, though this depends on stability in the Red Sea.^{11 12} Any such sailings would reach Europe after this quarter, so they are not in Q3 data.

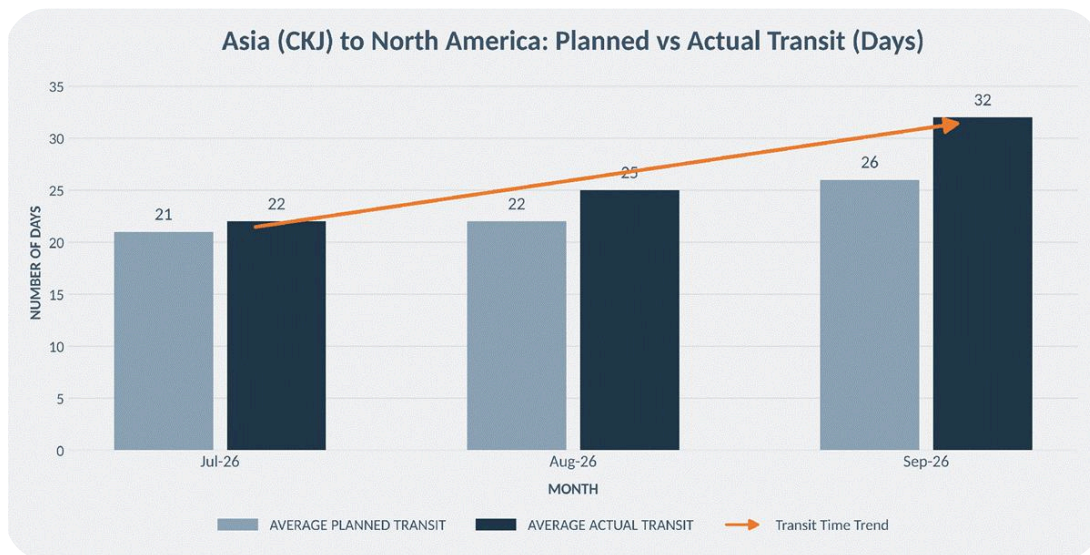
Operational takeaway: The carrier schedule on this lane is about four days too short on average, and containers land about five days off plan. Q3 did not change that.

Q4 2026 planning implication: Plan from the actual transit time, about 50 days, and keep a buffer of four to six days. If Suez-routed sailings do return, watch how they perform before changing it.

B Asia (China-Korea-Japan) → North America

Q3 average: 26.8 days actual vs. 23.4 days planned (net gap +3.4 days) | Avg. days off plan: **4.1 days**

The transpacific started the quarter close to plan and ended it far off. In July, containers arrived about a day and a half off schedule. By September, that had grown to nearly seven days. Carriers raised their plans from about 21 to 26 days, but containers still arrived later than that.



Data Source: Portcast (Planned and actual transit values shown in the chart are monthly averages rounded to whole days)

Industry Perspective:

The timing matches the pressure at both ends. By early September, typhoons had left ships waiting around 10 days to berth at Shanghai and Ningbo.¹ At the same time, US imports were heading for their busiest month of the year.¹³ Falling water levels also led the Panama Canal to tighten limits on ship draft, which affects cargo routed to the US East Coast.¹⁴

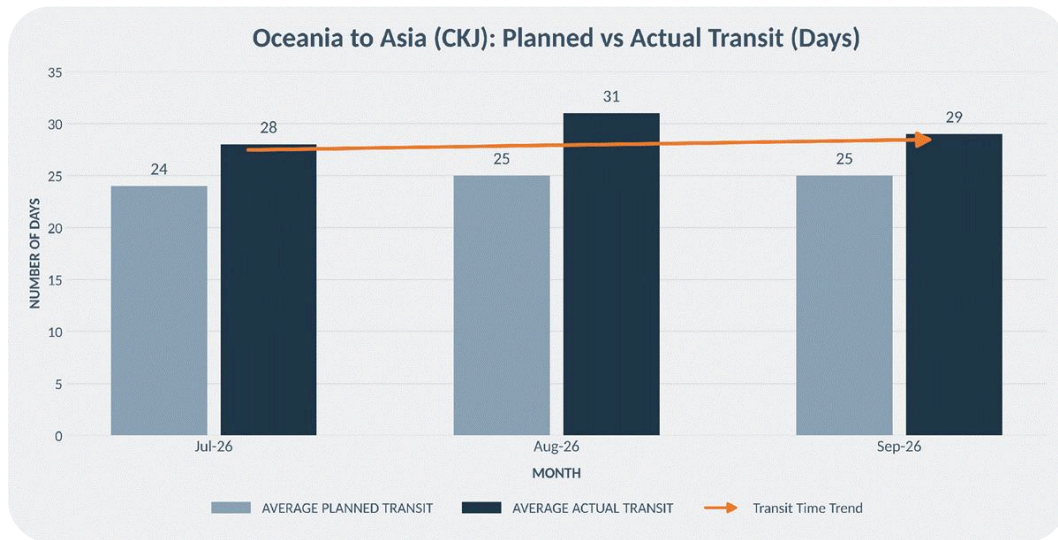
Operational takeaway: Port delays in Asia and peak US demand arrived together, and the gap grew with them. The lane was calm in July and under real strain by September.

Q4 2026 planning implication: Plan from September's experience, close to a week off schedule, until waits at North Asian ports come down. Port congestion in Asia is expected to take months to clear.¹⁵

C Oceania → Asia (China-Korea-Japan)

Q3 average: 29.1 days actual vs. 24.6 days planned (net gap +4.5 days) | Avg. days off plan: **5.5 days**

Oceania cargo took the biggest hit from congestion at Asian ports. Carrier plans barely moved, at 24 to 25 days, but containers took 28 to 31 days. Containers were off plan by 7.0 days in August, the most of any lane in any month. The quarter's average was 5.5 days, up from 3.6 in Q2.



Data Source: Portcast (Planned and actual transit values shown in the chart are monthly averages rounded to whole days)

Industry Perspective:

This lane discharges in North Asia, the region hit hardest by Q3's storms. Typhoons struck Shanghai and Ningbo one after another, and ships were waiting around 10 days to berth by 1 September.¹ Ports in the region were already struggling by July, when on-time arrivals were just 34.6% at Ningbo and 40.9% at Busan.³

At the Australian end, bad weather at Fremantle and missed sailings made schedules harder to maintain.¹⁶

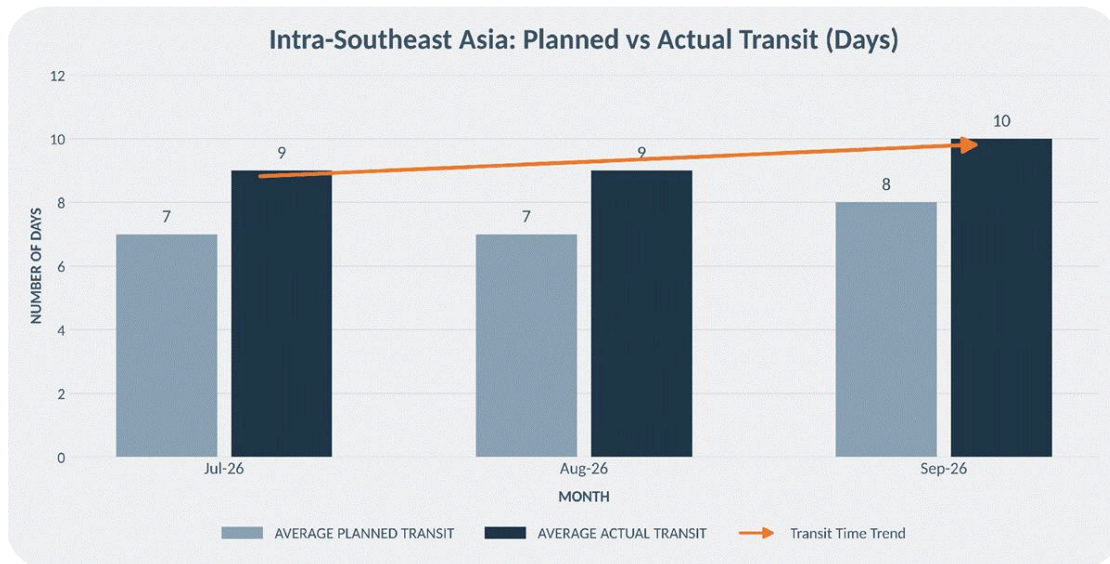
Operational takeaway: In Q1 this lane's delay was seasonal. In Q2 it came from congestion. In Q3 it grew into the biggest gap in the report. The August peak lines up with the worst of the port congestion in North Asia.

Q4 2026 planning implication: Add about five days to quoted schedules, and more in a bad month. Watch waiting times at Shanghai, Ningbo and Busan. Congestion is unlikely to clear before the pre-Chinese New Year rush, so this lane is unlikely to return to its Q2 level soon.¹⁵

D Southeast Asia → Southeast Asia

Q3 average: 9.2 days actual vs. 7.5 days planned (net gap +1.7 days) | Avg. days off plan: **2.8 days**

Short regional voyages ran about 3 days off plan. That sounds small, but carriers plan only seven to eight days here, and containers took nine to ten, about two days longer on average. The gap eased in August, then widened again in September.



Data Source: Portcast (Planned and actual transit values shown in the chart are monthly averages rounded to whole days)

Industry Perspective:

Southeast Asian hubs had their own problems. In July, on-time arrivals were just 43.2% at Singapore and 33.3% at Port Klang.³ On 9 September, a cyber attack paused operations at Tanjung Pelepas for several hours, and some vessels were warned of delays.¹⁰ Delays that began in North Asia are also expected to move towards Southeast Asia.¹⁵

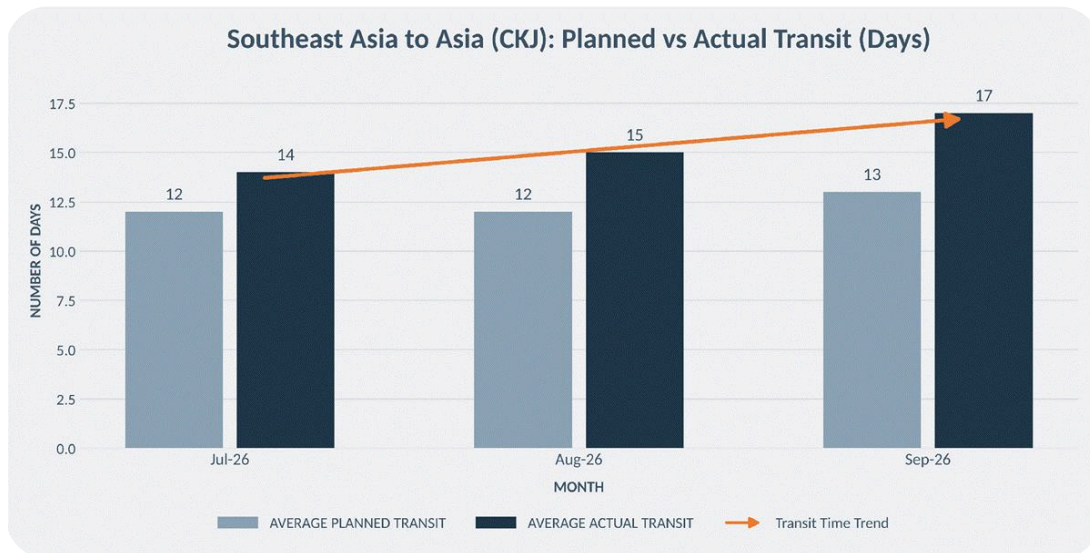
Operational takeaway: On a short voyage, being off plan by nearly three days is more than a third of a seven-day trip. A small delay in days is a big one in percentage terms.

Q4 2026 planning implication: Plan from nine to ten days, not the quoted seven to eight, and set buffers as a share of the voyage, not a fixed number of days. Delays moving in from North Asia could widen this gap in Q4.

E Southeast Asia → Asia (China-Korea-Japan)

Q3 average: 15.7 days actual vs. 12.5 days planned (net gap +3.2 days) | Avg. days off plan: **3.9 days**

This lane got worse every month. Containers took 14 days in July and 17 in September, while carrier plans moved only from 12 to 13. The days off plan grew from 3.2 to 4.5 days. In Q2, the gap grew mainly because carriers promised faster schedules. In Q3, containers also got slower.



Data Source: Portcast (Planned and actual transit values shown in the chart are monthly averages rounded to whole days)

Industry Perspective:

These containers arrive at the North Asian ports at the center of the congestion, where ships were waiting around 10 days to berth by early September.¹ On-time arrivals in July were just 48.3% at Yantian, 34.6% at Ningbo and 40.9% at Busan.³ At the Southeast Asian end, the cyber attack at Tanjung Pelepas in September added another disruption.¹⁰

Operational takeaway: Carriers still plan 12 to 13 days on a lane where containers take about 14 days or more. Congestion at the destination has pushed the real figure higher.

Q4 2026 planning implication: Plan for about 16 days, and 17 in a bad month, not the quoted 12 to 13. Keep a buffer of three to four days over quoted schedules while North Asian ports stay congested.



5 What's Changed - Q2 Vs Q3 2026

Trade Lane	Avg. Days Off Plan (Apr-Jun 2026)	Avg. Days Off Plan (Jul-Sep 2026)	Change (Days)
Asia (CKJ) → North/ West Europe	5.3 days	5.0 days	-0.3 days
Asia (CKJ) → North America	2.4 days	4.1 days	+1.7 days
Oceania → China, Korea & Japan	3.6 days	5.5 days	+2.0 days
Southeast Asia → Southeast Asia	2.6 days	2.8 days	+0.3 days
Southeast Asia → Asia (China-Korea- Japan)	2.3 days	3.9 days	+1.6 days

Note: Changes show the difference in average days off plan between Jul-Sep 2026 and Apr-Jun 2026. Positive values mean containers were further off plan. Negative values mean they were closer to plan.





6 Launch Update: Marina, The Market Reliability Agent

Know which carrier to trust before you book.

Q3 showed how far plans and reality can drift. In every lane mentioned in this report, containers arrived later than planned every month, and the gap shifted from lane to lane and month to month. For every shipper and forwarder, one question matters: whose schedule can I actually trust?

Marina, Portcast's new Market Reliability Agent, answers it. It checks every carrier and service on a lane against what actually happened, then gives you one verdict and one clear recommendation.

Carrier Scorecards

Score every carrier against what it delivered, not what it promised. Negotiate rates and service levels with evidence.

Plan with confidence

Use market insights and actual transit times to set realistic lead times and give customers reliable delivery dates.

Know what you pay for

See whether a faster, higher-priced service really arrives faster.

Market data. Not just yours.

Marina draws on market-wide history, not only your own shipments. A service with a transshipment is never compared with a direct one, so every comparison is fair.

Marina
Portcast AI Market Reliability Agent

PORTCAST RECOMMENDATION Book ONE, the only carrier with enough measured options: 54.5% of 11 options on time, but plan 4.9 days of buffer. Maersk reaches 75.0% on early evidence (8 options), arriving close to plan.

Nhava Sheva (INNSA) → Savannah (USSAV) is Unreliable at 36.5% on schedule (52 measured options, 3.5 months of data).

- **Carriers:** Maersk's direct 600 service shows 75.0% on early evidence (8 options). Hapag-Lloyd records 75.0%, but on only 4 options — too few to rely on. ANL (ANNU) and CMA CGM tie at 12.5% (8 options each).
- **Timing:** Ships are typically scheduled to take 55 days port to port; on the 52 trips checked, they were scheduled at 42 days and took 43.5.
- **Options:** Direct services perform better at 51.5% (33 options), compared with 10.5% (19) for services transshipping once.

Marina in the Portcast platform: one verdict, the evidence behind it, and a clear recommendation.

[See Marina in action](#)



7 Closing The Gap Between Plan And Reality

Our Q1, Q2 and Q3 reports tell the same story: the gap between planned and actual transit does not disappear when the crisis does. Q1 ended mid-crisis, Q2 was unstable, and in Q3 the delay moved to Asia's ports. Every lane ran later than planned every month, including the quiet ones. Carrier schedules describe an intended network. Containers move through the real one.

Q4 starts with some carriers planning a return to Suez, which remains tentative, and with Asian ports still congested.^{11 12} The teams best placed are those that plan from measured, lane-level performance and watch the early signals, from berth waits at Shanghai and Ningbo to hub conditions in Southeast Asia.

Portcast publishes this report every quarter to help supply chain and logistics teams plan with data, not assumptions. Beyond predictive ETAs, Portcast enables global BCOs and forwarders to have both operational and financial visibility through an exception-first command center and automated freight audits that surface delays, risks, and billing discrepancies in real time.

If you manage lanes covered in this report, as well as others, and want to benchmark your current planning against predictive insights and improve cost control, we would be happy to walk through it with your team.

[Get in touch](#)

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Disclaimer: The transit time data for the five lanes highlighted in the report is based on containers tracked on Portcast's platform. All figures represent averages unless otherwise noted. The broader industry perspective is based on publicly available sources and does not represent Portcast's sole opinion. All sources are cited where applicable.



Freight Intelligence Platform

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