



Omni Logistics Market Insights

January 2026

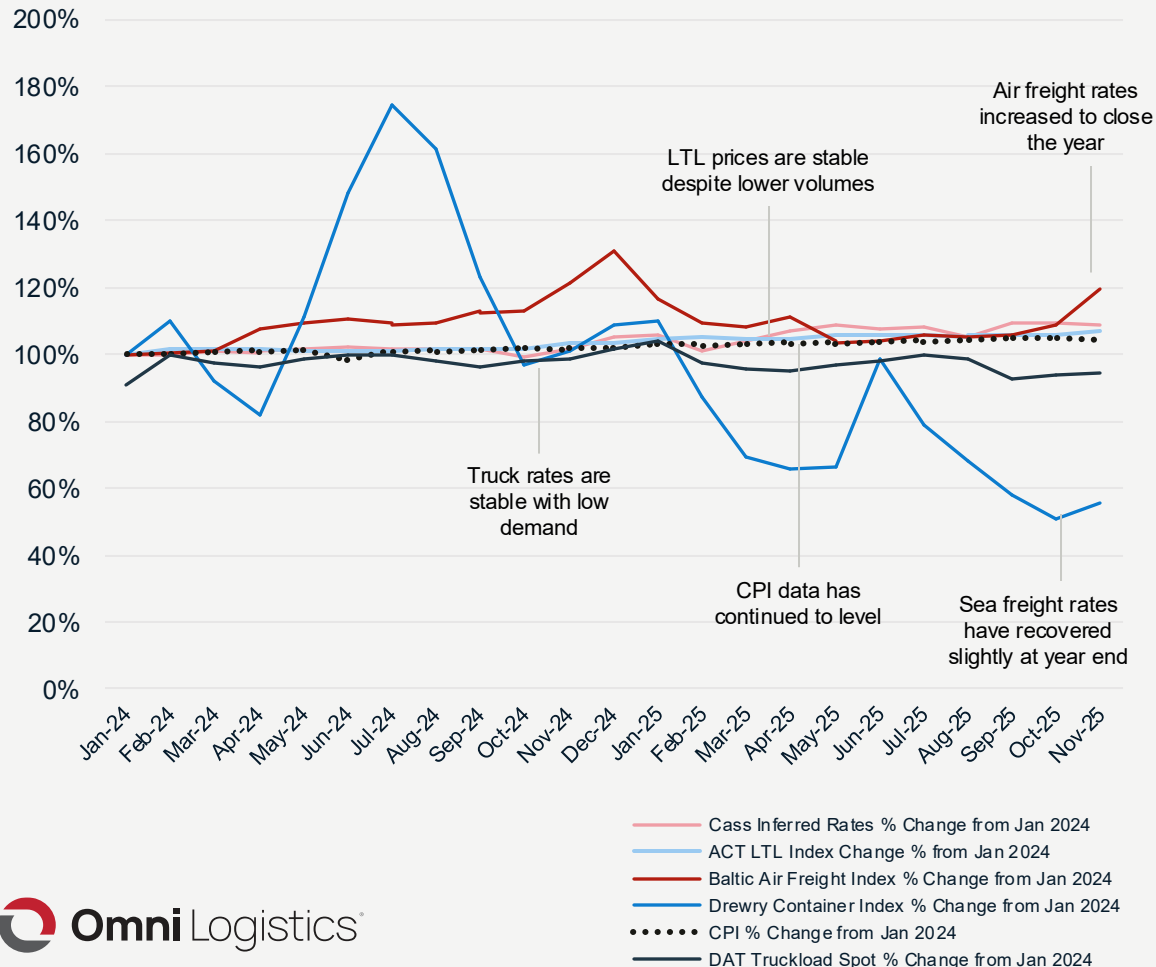


Happy New Year!

Thank you for reading our Market Insights throughout the past year. We look forward to keeping you informed with fresh trends and analysis in 2026!

Major Macro-Economic Indicators

Last Two Years Major Freight Rates vs. CPI Increase



Economic Sentiment

- U-Mich consumer sentiment improved slightly to 53.3 in December, driven by improved expectations for the future.
- The conference boards consumer sentiment declined for the fifth month in a row.
- The Logistics Manager's Index declined to 54.2 in December, driven by continued downward pressures in warehouses and inventory.

Labor Force

- The U.S. unemployment rate in November hit a four year high of 4.6%.
- 105,000 jobs were lost in October while 64,000 were gained in November. A heavy portion of the reported losses came from the Federal government.

Inflation vs Rates

- Inflation was reported at a 2.7% rate for November, but data is widely viewed as skewed from the U.S. government shutdown.
- Core inflation came in at 2.6% for November with electric power costs being the largest cost growth category.
- Q3 GDP reading was a 4.3% annual rate from July-September, the strongest growth in two years.

Inventories vs Sales

- In spite of survey indices, multiple retail groups are reporting strong holiday season actual sales.
- The LMI indicates inventory costs across the board are still high, even as warehouse utilization drew down.
- Thanksgiving sales were up 5.3% YoY and Black Friday sales were up 9.4%.

International Trade & Freight Overview

Quick Digest

U.S. Supply Chains Regaining Balance

- **Outlook:** Blank sailings have eased from peak levels and carrier schedule reliability is improving, signaling more predictable service even as demand remains soft.

Red Sea Shipping 2026 Return Looms

- **Outlook:** The expected reopening of the Red Sea route in early 2026 is anticipated to restore capacity and reduce transit times, causing potential short-term port congestion and rate volatility.

Shipping Volatility Across Major Lanes

- **Outlook:** Asia–Northern Europe lane volatility jumped 138% YoY in December, signaling schedule disruptions and rate instability likely to persist into January.

U.S. Tariff Revenue Declines for First Time Since April Rollout

- **Outlook:** December marked the first monthly drop in tariff collections since the April increase, signaling softer import volumes and potential easing of cost pressures into January.

Geography Spotlights

Americas	Europe	Asia	Middle-East Africa
• Canada has implemented new steel import tariff-rate quotas and a 50% surtax on excess volumes.	• The European Union will introduce new fees on low-value parcels from Shein and Temu to curb tax avoidance.	• China began full customs control on Hainan Island in mid-December. • Chinese New Year in 2026 will start on Tuesday, February 17, and will last until the Lantern Festival on March 3.	• China has extended duty-free access to imports from 53 African countries.

Notable Themes

 Trade Policy Tightening Across Regions New import restrictions (e.g., Canada's steel measures) and EU e-commerce fees signal a trend toward protectionism and compliance complexity.	 Shifting Trade Flows U.S.-bound exports from India and growing Africa trade lanes highlight diversification away from China and emerging regional opportunities.	 Tariff Volatility Declines December's first decline in U.S. tariff revenue suggests import flows are stabilizing, pointing to reduced volatility and a more predictable cost environment for shippers in early 2026.	 Persistent Supply Chain Uncertainty in 2026 Geopolitical tensions, climate risks, and regulatory shifts are expected to keep global supply chains volatile, requiring importers to prioritize resilience and flexibility.
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Interesting Reads

- [Trucking M&A projected to Increase in 2026 Due to Fed Rate Cuts](#)
- [Carriers boost capacity to meet growing demand on Africa trades](#)

North America LTL Freight Overview

Quick Digest

Small Business Optimism Rises Slightly

- **Outlook:** The National Federation of Independent Business index edged up to 99.0 in November, signaling that small businesses are cautiously optimistic about purchasing and growth.

Manufacturing Activity Continues to Decline

- **Outlook:** U.S. manufacturing contracted for a ninth straight month in November, and this slowdown is expected to weigh heavily on LTL demand.

Holiday Returns Expected to Surge

- **Outlook:** The National Retail Federation projects that 17% of holiday gifts will be returned, making reverse logistics a growing share of parcel and LTL volumes.

Key Figures

-12.7%

YoY change in container imports estimated for December, a leading indicator of LTL volumes.

3,000

Number of truck driving schools for which the USDOT is threatening to revoke licenses.

3.7%

YoY wage gains for warehousing and transportation workers, outpacing the rest of the market.

Notable Themes



Import Volumes Decline

Lower import activity is reshaping domestic freight flows, shifting power lanes inland and increasing LTL demand for repositioning goods away from major ports.



Parcel Revenue Growth

USPS projects nearly 10% YoY growth in package delivery revenue, driving higher LTL volumes for last-mile and regional distribution.



Durable Goods Orders Lag

A 2.2% drop in durable goods orders signals weaker manufacturing output, reducing TL demand and pushing more freight into LTL networks for smaller, consolidated shipments.



Diesel Prices Drop

Fuel prices fell \$0.35 per gallon since Thanksgiving, lowering operating costs and supporting competitive LTL pricing as carriers maintain abundant capacity.

Interesting Reads

- [UPS will invest \\$120M to utilize 400 robots to offload trucks](#)
- [The USDOT has awarded over \\$100M in grants towards highway safety and CDL compliance](#)

North America Truckload Freight Overview

Quick Digest

Heavy Truck Orders Show Volatility

- **Outlook:** Class 8 truck orders fell 47% year-over-year in November but rebounded with a 21% gain in December, as overcapacity and LTL carriers absorbing TL demand keep fleets from expanding.

Freight Theft Costs Surge

- **Outlook:** CargoNet reports freight theft losses reached \$325M in 2025, with financial impacts climbing at double-digit rates year-over-year.

Shipment Demand Remains Depressed

- **Outlook:** The Cass Shipments Index rose 2.7% in November from October but remains down 7.6% from 2025, signaling continued weakness in overall demand.

Key Figures

\$2.26

DAT average per mile rate for dry van truckload rate in mid-December, up 13% over November.

1.4B

Barrels of oil in transit, an “on the water” glut driving down fuel prices.

21%

YoY increase in Class 8 heavy-duty truck sales in December, almost a 100% MoM increase.

Notable Themes



CASS Linehaul Rates up 1.7% for 2025

A modest growth in truck activity for the year signals a modest turnaround to declined activity in 2023 and 2024.



New Electric Truck and Tractor Models

Released by both Kenworth and Peterbilt, indicating some major OEMs still see growth in electric trucks.



Railroad mega-merger

The NS and UP railroads claim 75% of projected merger growth will come from displacing 2 million truckloads.

Interesting Reads

- [Around 75,000 North American rail-owned intermodal containers now have GPS devices installed](#)
- [President Trump ordered an investigation of the food supply chain industry for price fixing](#)
- [Autonomous truck startup Kodiak set to go public after \\$2.5B deal](#)
- [Senators Introduce Bill to Curb Rising Cargo Theft](#)

Air & Ocean Freight Overview

Quick Digest

Air Cargo Capacity Pressure Continues, Demand Eases

- **Outlook:** While capacity remains constrained, demand general cargo and e-commerce have begun to decline post-peak rush.

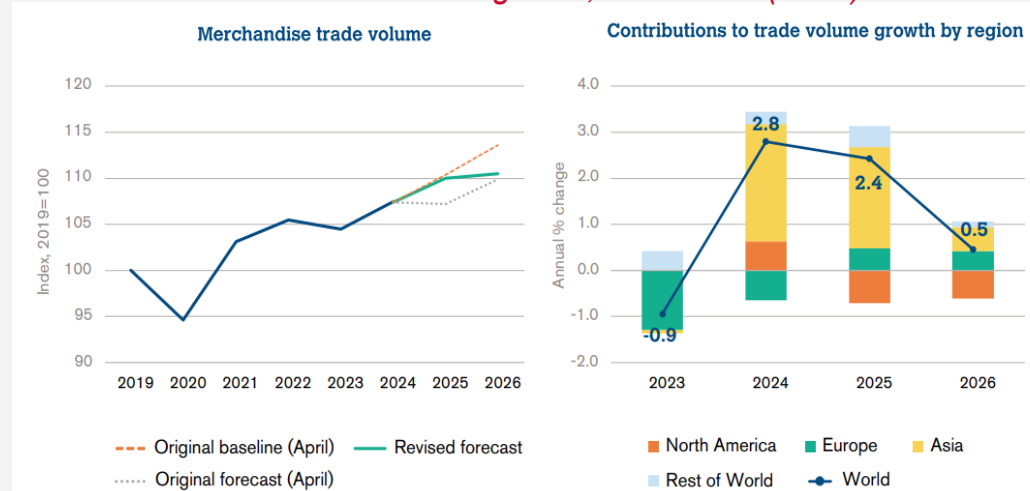
Red Sea Test Sparks Gradual Normalization

- **Outlook:** Container ship completed a test transit through the Red Sea under enhanced security measures, signaling a potential gradual normalization of the corridor after years of disruption.

UN Approves Negotiable Air Cargo Documents

- **Outlook:** The UN adopted a convention allowing negotiable cargo documents for air, road, and rail transport, enabling goods-in-transit to be traded or used as collateral. For shippers, this means greater flexibility, faster financing, and streamlined digital documentation.

World merchandise trade volume growth, 2019-2026 (WTO)



Notable Themes



Impact Expected for Chinese New Year

Chinese New Year (Year of the Fire Horse) falls on Tuesday, February 17, 2026. Demand push will last through mid-February and then slow for 2-3 weeks before rebounding strong in March.



IATA 2026 Outlook

IATA projects 2.6% growth in airfreight in 2026. E-Commerce, AI-Driven investment and high-value, time-sensitive goods are expected to drive growth. Pax capacity is forecasted to grow 4.9%.



Reduced U.S. Cargo Volumes to Persist

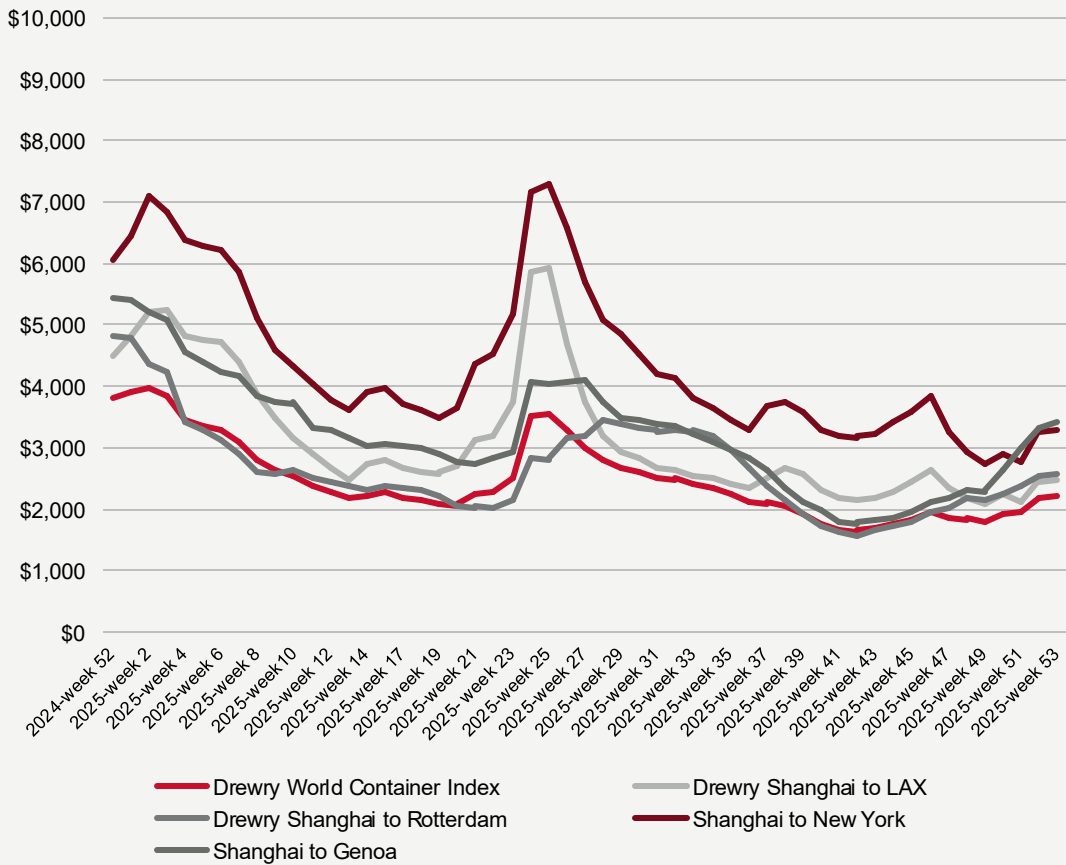
Ocean import volumes are expected to remain below pre-pandemic norms due to weak demand and inventory normalization; carriers are managing overcapacity with selective blank sailings and rate discipline.

Interesting Reads

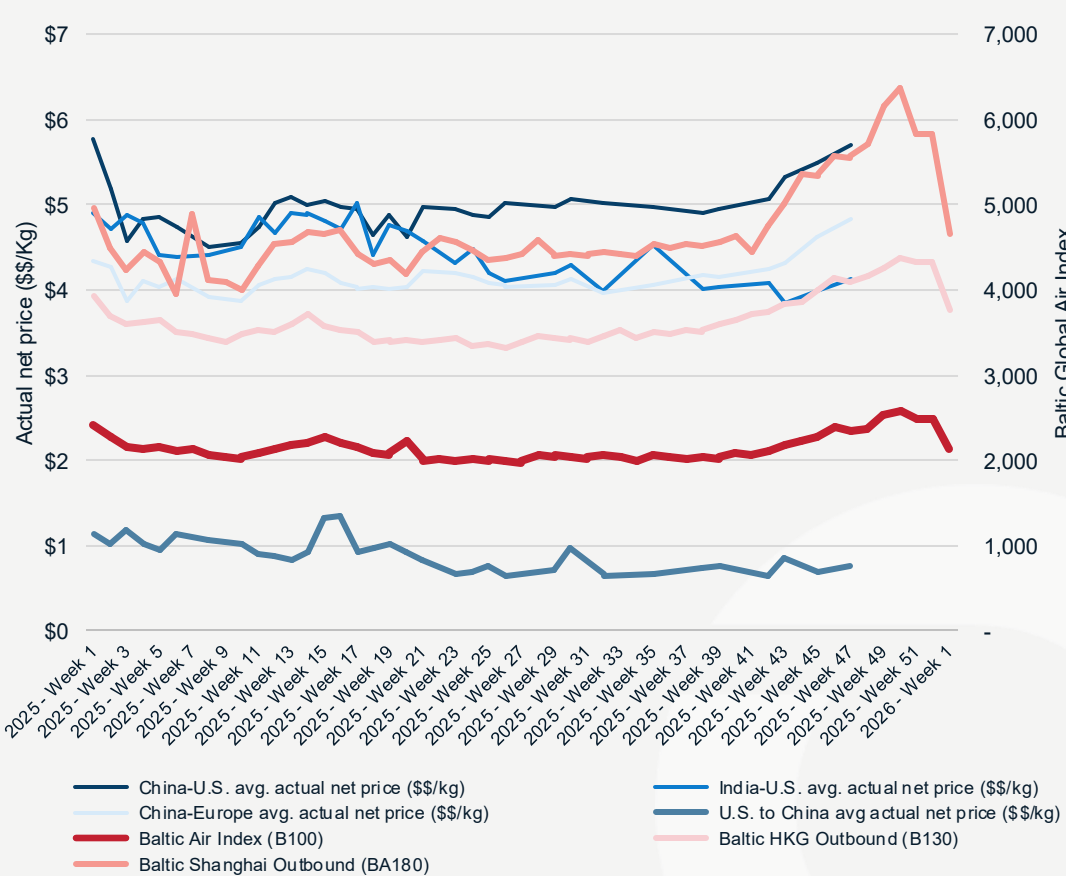
- [A New Era For Global Freight](#)
- [Tariff Threat Forces U.S. Ports to Rethink Upgrade Plans](#)
- [Weirdest cargo of 2025: When air freight moved the unexpected](#)
- [IATA Global Outlook for Air Cargo](#)

Market Rates: Ocean & Air

World Container Market Rates – Last 52 Weeks



Major Air Freight Market Rates – Last 52 Weeks



Customs & Trade Compliance Trends Overview

Quick Digest

IEEPA Tariff Refund Access Affirmed

- **Outlook:** The U.S. Court of International Trade (CIT) confirmed that importers may pursue refunds for tariffs imposed under IEEPA, reinforcing the need for accurate documentation and timely claims.

CIT Rules Customs Clearance Continues During Tariff Disputes

- **Outlook:** The Court of International Trade ruled that customs clearance will proceed during tariff disputes, requiring importers to pay duties upfront and seek refunds later if successful.

EU Customs Fee for Small Parcels

- **Outlook:** EU member states agreed to implement a temporary €3 flat customs fee on low-value imports, aiming to simplify processing and standardize costs for e-commerce shipments.

Regulatory & Tariff Updates

USA

- Mexico to raise import duties starting January 1, 2026.
- Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement review set for mid-January.
- U.S. expands enforcement under UFLPA.
- Tariffs on furniture and cabinets delayed; pasta duties reduced.

EU / UK

- Switzerland tariff adjustments retroactive to November 15.
- EU introduces €3 flat customs fee for small parcels.
- EUDR implementation delayed to December 2026; simplified rules announced.

Asia-Pacific

- China to impose up to 42.7% tariffs on EU dairy products.
- China launches steel export licensing for 300+ categories January 1.
- India and New Zealand finalize Free Trade Agreement.

Notable Themes



Tariff Actions Drive Complexity

Recent tariff changes are increasing compliance demands. Importers must update landed cost calculations, monitor refund eligibility, and adjust sourcing strategies to avoid unexpected duty exposure.



Tariff De-Escalation Gains Momentum

Recent actions, such as delayed tariffs on furniture and cabinets, reflect a broader trend of easing trade tensions and reducing tariff-related pressures across global markets.



Regional Trade Frameworks in Motion

India–New Zealand FTA and Canada–U.S. review talks highlight ongoing shifts in trade agreements that may impact customs procedures and duty structures.

Interesting Reads

- [Five Customs Trends for 2026](#)
- [Council signs off targeted revision to simplify and postpone the regulation](#)
- [For U.S. Importers, Cancellation of IEEPA Tariffs Won't Be the End of the Story](#)

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