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February 12, 2013

WestJet expands T.O. options, FinnAir cheap flights to Europe, Whistler news

A lot of the focus from WestJet on Monday was, understandably, the naming of Nanaimo and Fort St. John B.C. as cities to be served by their new, regional carrier, called Encore.

From a Toronto standpoint, and we all know the world revolves around this fair city, there's plenty of news from regular WestJet. At the same time it was slipping into new destinations in B.C., they also announced twice-weekly service from The Big Smoke to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina and upped the Orlando service from seven times a week to 11.

What I hadn't noticed in the flurry of announcements was an increase of WestJet [flights from](#) Toronto to Miami (see photo at right) from seven a week to eight, plus new flights (three times a week) from Toronto to Fort McMurray, Alberta. They also significantly bumped up flights from here to Saskatchewan, adding three more per week to both Regina and Saskatoon for 10 flights a week to each city in total.



As well, they added two more flights a day from Toronto to Vancouver (now 11 per day), Calgary (also now 11 in total) and Edmonton (8 per day). They'll fly to Winnipeg from Toronto five times a week.

One of the company's press releases on Monday also said they'll extend service to Aruba, Liberia, Costa Rica, and Trinidad and Tobago on a year-round basis and add one extra flight each week between Toronto and Kingston and Montego Bay, Jamaica, Varadero, Cuba, St. Martin, Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic and Cancun.

There are rumours WestJet may soon take aim at Air Canada's international network, and wouldn't that be fun to watch?

SKI WITH AN OLYMPIAN - AND GO WATCH SOME AT THE GAMES

FINNAIR BARGAINS TO EUROPE

Finnair is offering a series of round-trip economy deals for spring. Prices start at just \$679 Canadian [for flights](#) from Toronto to Helsinki, Saint Petersburg, Stockholm, Warsaw and even Prague (with a stop in Helsinki). I went online this morning and found a roundtrip flight from Toronto to Prague for just \$778; which is about the same as a round-trip flight on Air Canada to San Francisco in April.

The deal is valid for a host of other cities, including Riga, Oslo, Norway and Krakow. Travel must be taken from May 23 to June 20 and from Aug. 21 to Sept. 5.

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Travel Blog by Jim Byers



Jim Byers is the Star's Travel Editor. He has been writing travel stories for more than a decade, covered five Olympic Games and spent years covering the Blue Jays, the Toronto Raptors and the PGA Tour. He's been everywhere from Bonavista to Vancouver Island, as well as China, Hong Kong, Australia, the Caribbean, Thailand, Mexico, Tahiti, New Zealand, Vietnam, a dozen countries in Europe and just about every major city in the U.S. Okay, he was only in Liechtenstein for a couple hours in a rental car and his only visit to New Orleans was when he was 12, but you get the picture.

[Steve Lockwood on Trip Advisor awards: are B.C. hotels REALLY that much better than Ontario's?](#)

[Heroine Sy on Sneak peek at new Shangri-la Hotel Toronto and Bosk restaurant. Nice!](#)

[harris on New York City sets record for tourism, still aiming for giant Ferris Wheel...](#)

[ketut sugita on Chicago blog post delayed by storms - check back on Monday](#)