



Routes: Delta, Aeromexico, Finnair, Qatar, Alitalia, Norwegian, United + more

June 1, 2017



Flight from HEL: Finnair rolled out VWs and surfboards at HEL to launch its new Helsinki-San Francisco flights today (Image: Finnair / Twitter)

In international route developments, Delta starts up Europe routes and teams with Aeromexico to add transborder markets; Finnair comes to San Francisco; Qatar delays the addition of a new U.S. gateway; Alitalia extends its Los Angeles schedule; Norwegian alters some U.S. schedules and boosts London frequencies; Southwest expands Mexico service this winter; United adds an Asian code-share; and Air Canada starts a new U.S. route.

Delta has started service on several seasonal routes to Europe. One new seasonal route this summer is **Portland, Oregon to London Heathrow, now operating four days a week with a 767-300.** Other new Delta seasonal routes to Europe include daily service from Boston to Dublin and from New York JFK to Glasgow (in addition to its JFK-Edinburgh service). Delta has also resumed seasonal daily flights from JFK to Berlin and to Lisbon. In other Europe news, Delta plans to scale back its **Salt Lake City-London Heathrow** route to seasonal status, **discontinuing the flights from October 29 to March 23.**

Meanwhile, **Delta also announced plans to start selling its Comfort+ extra-legroom economy seating** as a separate fare category **on more international routes.** The seats are now on sale for travel beginning September 20 on routes from North America to Brazil, Argentina, Peru and Chile; and to China and Hong Kong.

That new joint venture between Delta and Aeromexico has announced plans to start service on **five new transborder routes** sometime this fall, after they get government approval. The five routes, all to be operated by Aeromexico, include **Atlanta-Merida, Atlanta-Queretaro, Los Angeles-Leon, Seattle-Mexico City and Portland-Mexico City.** The joint venture will also add a second daily flight between LAX and Los Cabos, and a third between New York JFK and Cancun, both operated by Delta; and a second daily flight from Atlanta to both Leon and Guadalajara, both operated by Aeromexico. With the two airlines now operating as one in terms of scheduling and pricing, **these changes could mean higher fares for travelers to Mexico – but the extra flights could also mean fewer connecting hassles at Mexico City’s congested airport.**

Finally, **Delta is adding more service to Southeast Asia** – not on its own, but through **new code-shares** with transatlantic joint venture partner Air France. According to Routesonline.com, Delta’s code has gone onto Air France’s Paris CDG-Bangkok service, and **will do the same October 3 on Air France’s Paris-Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam flight.**



Finnair is using an A330 on its seasonal San Francisco route. (Image: Finnair)

San Francisco International's newest transatlantic route is to Helsinki, Finland. Finnair this week **introduced seasonal service** from SFO to the Finnish capital, using an Airbus A330-300 to fly the route three times a week, departing SFO on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. **The Helsinki flights will continue through September.**

We reported a while ago that **Qatar Airways was planning to add another U.S. gateway** in early January with the addition of service between Doha, Qatar and Las Vegas. But the carrier's latest schedule filings now show **that launch date has been pushed back** to June 1, 2018. **Qatar still expects to fly the route four days a week with a 777-200LR.**

It looks like Alitalia will turn its seasonal Los Angeles-Rome service into a year-round operation — almost. Alitalia, a member of Delta's Skyteam alliance, **filed a new schedule** showing its LAX-Rome service **will not end October 29 as previously planned**, but will continue after that three times a week – at least until January 15, when it goes on hiatus until March 6.

We've reported previously on the **big plans by Norwegian Air International to begin new low-fare service in June from the northeastern U.S. to various points in Europe** using its brand-new, longer-range 737MAX 8 aircraft. But Boeing has warned the carrier of delays in delivering the new planes, so Norwegian has been **scrambling to adjust its fleet plans**. Instead of the new 737MAX 8s, the company now plans to substitute Norwegian Air Shuttle 737-800s for much of the summer on new service from Providence to Bergen, Norway; Belfast, Northern Ireland; and Shannon, Cork and Dublin, Ireland, as well as service from Stewart Airport in Newburgh, N.Y. to Shannon, Dublin, Edinburgh and Bergen.



Norwegian will increase 787 frequencies on U.S.-London Gatwick routes this winter. (Image: Norwegian)

Meanwhile, Norwegian is also planning to increase frequencies on several **U.S. routes to London Gatwick** when its winter schedule kicks in on October 29. All the affected routes use 787-9s. **Norwegian will boost Oakland-London service from three flights a week to four**, while Los Angeles-LGW increases from five flights a week to daily service; Orlando-LGW goes from one a week to two; Ft. Lauderdale-LGW increases from three a week to four; and Boston-Gatwick from four a week to five.

Although Delta and Aeromexico are tightening their grip on the transborder market, other competitors are stepping up their game as well. **Southwest Airlines' winter schedule**, effective November 5, shows **an increase of its Houston Hobby-Mexico City schedule from three flights a day to four**, while its weekly flights from Denver to Puerto Vallarta and Los Cabos both go to daily frequencies. On November 11, Southwest will kick off new weekly flights to Cancun from both Nashville and St. Louis. Interjet, the low-cost Mexican carrier, plans to boost its service between **New York JFK and Mexico City** from 18 flights a week to 25 starting June 15. And United on December 17 **will introduce seasonal weekly flights (on Saturdays)** between **its Denver hub and Cozumel**.

Speaking of United, here are a couple of new developments to Asia: United has put its code onto Star Alliance partner ANA's daily 787 service between **Tokyo Narita and Phnom Penh**, Cambodia; and **United's aircraft switch on its San Francisco-Seoul flight** effective October 29 from a 747-400 to a 777-200ER has changed; the carrier **now plans to use a 787-9** instead of a 777. And today we shared the news about **what's missing on United's new Los Angeles-Singapore nonstops in another post**.

Air Canada has added a new destination from Denver. The carrier recently started Air Canada Express service twice a day from **Denver to Vancouver**, using a 75-passenger CRJ705. The schedule will drop back to once a day September 10.