

the
WAYFARER

Copenhagen and other popular European destinations are more accessible than ever to West Coasters.

COURTESY OF PIXABAY



Why Europe Is Closer Than Ever for West Coasters

If you live in California, Washington, Oregon, or other Western states, read this.

BY RAMSEY QUBEIN

6.6.2017



East Coasters are used to finding plenty of airfare deals when the urge strikes to hop the pond to Europe, while those living west of the Mississippi are usually forced to make a connection or pay a higher fare to fly nonstop. But game-changing airlines like Condor, Norwegian, and [WOW Air](#) are revolutionizing the way we all score bargain airfare to Europe.

When airlines launch new routes, [some are just seasonal](#) and others are here to stay. No matter what, airlines are keen on offering promotions or mileage deals when they begin flying somewhere to boost interest. Here's the latest roundup of new routes from the western half of the United States bound for Europe and beyond.

Los Angeles (LAX)

Flyers from La La Land have lots of choices this summer. Norwegian's new flights to Europe over the past year have helped reduce the cost of airfare for everyone. The airline is launching new service from LAX to Barcelona.

In November, Norwegian will also start a nonstop flight to Rome Fiumicino airport. This will compete with Alitalia's new winter nonstop to Rome from LAX (the route traditionally only flies seasonally).

Earlier this spring, Star Alliance members Austrian and LOT Polish began nonstop flights to their respective hubs of Vienna and Warsaw. In September, another Star Alliance member, Air India, is planning to launch new nonstop flights to Delhi.

As during most summers, Iberia brings back its nonstop route to Madrid, but this year, it will operate in tandem with its new low-fare sibling carrier named LEVEL. Based out of Barcelona, this is a new venture from IAG Group (the parent company of British Airways and Iberia), and it is planning nonstop flights from Europe to the Americas at bargain prices. The new LEVEL flight goes head to head with Norwegian's nonstop flight, but it comes with the added bonus of earning frequent flier miles with American, British Airways, or Iberia (albeit at lower levels depending on your fare class).

San Francisco (SFO)

United is launching Boeing 787 Dreamliner service with the in-flight service and amenities of its [new Polaris business class product](#) to Munich this summer.

Thomas Cook is flying twice a week between SFO and Manchester, England, which is a new route for both cities this year.

Oneworld member Finnair has launched a new flight to Helsinki, which provides convenient connections to all of Europe and all of Asia. While there is no shortage of convenient flights from SFO to Asia, Finnair is known for serving many cities from Helsinki that are not available nonstop from SFO (connection times can be as few as 40 minutes through this easy and compact hub). This new flight could provide faster links to places like Bangkok, Chongqing, Fukuoka, Ho Chi Minh City, and the holiday cities of Krabi and Phuket in Thailand. The flight will operate until September 30. Finnair is a new loyalty program partner with [Alaska Airlines](#), giving members of either airline's program the chance to earn and use miles on flights.

Another Oneworld member, Air Berlin, began flying nonstop between SFO and Berlin as of May 1. XL Airways France will also launch a new link to Paris Charles de Gaulle going head to head with the daily Airbus A380 flight on Air France.

Oakland (OAK)

Norwegian is opening up a new route from Oakland (just across the bay from SFO) to Barcelona. It will face competition with LEVEL on the route, which will also fly the skies between the two cities at discounted prices.

Another new route that Norwegian is launching from California is seasonal service between Oakland and Copenhagen, which will connect to many of the airline's intra-European flights easily (Copenhagen is an important hub for Norwegian Airlines). It also makes reaching Denmark and much of Scandinavia a far more affordable experience for Bay Area fliers.

Las Vegas (LAS)

Vegas isn't located on the coast, per se, but it is equally expensive for travelers to fly from Sin City to Europe as it is for those living on the coast. Germany's Condor Airlines is on a roll this year, launching new service from a half dozen U.S. cities to Europe. Condor already serves Vegas from Frankfurt, but this summer, it is launching a new route to Munich. Another reason Condor might be of interest to U.S. fliers is its new partnership with Alaska Airlines, allowing members of either carrier's loyalty program to earn and burn miles on flights.

Germany is a big market for Sin City, and Eurowings wants to be a part of it, too. The low-fare carrier added nonstop service from Vegas to Cologne/Bonn for the summer season.

Seattle/Tacoma (SEA)

Norwegian is also adding a flight from Sea-Tac to London Gatwick beginning in September. Condor, which has flown nonstop to Frankfurt for many years (one of its most popular U.S. routes), is launching a nonstop route to Munich. This will be Sea-Tac's only nonstop link to the city.

Lufthansa's low-fare unit will begin nonstop flights to Cologne/Bonn in Germany from Seattle on July 11.

San Diego (SAN)

San Diego has seen a marked increase in its long-haul service this year, with new flights on Edelweiss to Zurich and Condor to Frankfurt. These are new routes for the airport in 2017, and both carriers are known for significantly lower airfares than traditional legacy airlines.

Denver (DEN)

OK, Denver is not on the West Coast, but Norwegian surprised everyone when it announced a new September route from Colorado's biggest airport to London Gatwick. The flight will compete with British Airways' daily service to London Heathrow.

Portland, Oregon (PDX)

Condor will link Portland and Frankfurt this summer, and Delta launched a new flight from PDX to London Heathrow. The Delta flight will operate during the summer season four days a week.