



Finnair to Launch Helsinki-Chongqing Service in May 2012

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Finnair will introduce non-stop service between Helsinki and Chongqing, the largest and fastest-growing city in China, in May 2012.

The airline will fly to Chongqing Jiangbei International Airport (IATA code CKG) four times a week with an Airbus A340-300.

According to [Finnair](#), the flight time from Helsinki to Chongqing will be eight and a half hours. Finnair says it will be the first airline to open a direct route from Europe to Chongqing.



This is how Finnair's A340-300s look in the airline's new livery, adopted in late 2010

Finnair says the new route is a logical step in the implementation of its Asian strategy. The airline's goal is to benefit from the market growth in Asia and open new routes to markets where growth is strongest. In addition to [Chongqing](#), Finnair flies to 10 other Asian destinations.

Situated on the edge of the Tibetan plateau, Greater Chongqing has a population of 32 million. In addition, Chongqing's urban population is expected to double over the next five years.

"China is a key part of our Europe-Asia strategy. Western China is an important growth area, and the new route will strengthen our market share in the growing Asian markets," says Mika Vehviläinen, president and CEO of Finnair. "In addition to Chongqing, Finnair flies to Beijing, Shanghai and to Hong Kong, with a total of 26 weekly flights."

Finnair notes that in addition to Chinese companies, many Western companies – especially in the electronics, automotive and chemical industries – are expanding their operations in Chongqing, so business travel is booming. Also cargo growth prospects are promising due to industrial growth.



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"Our co-operation with the Chongqing authorities and the local airport has been very good when planning this new route, and we are very grateful for the assistance that we have received during our preparations. The smooth co-operation has accelerated the route planning process, which is very important in this rapidly changing business," adds Vehviläinen.

Chongqing Jiangbei International Airport's growth potential is huge, according to Finnair. The airport has already opened 140 routes to more than 80 cities in China and Asia, and the airport is undergoing expansion. When the expansion is complete in 2015, the airport will be capable of receiving 45 million passengers a year.

Although Finnair says it will focus particularly on business travellers in the early stages of marketing the new route, the airline notes Chongqing also offers much to see for tourists interested in China's history and nature.

Visitors can see Chongqing's historical buildings, temples and natural beauty, as well as the Dazu Rock Carvings, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Chongqing also has hot springs. The city also provides convenient access to river cruises on the Jialing and Yangtze rivers and is well connected to Lhasa, Xian and Kunming.

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