QATAR CONFIRMS DECEMBER LAUNCH FOR AUCKLAND-DOHA SERVICE

News / Airports / Routes



Qatar Airways has confirmed a December launch for nonstop Doha-Auckland flights, with New Zealand's most populous city one of 14 new destinations to join the airline's fast growing network announced overnight.

The route, at 7,848nm, will be the world's longest nonstop passenger flight when the inaugural flight takes off on December 3 with Boeing 777-200LR equipment, eclipsing Emirates' current Dubai-Auckland flight which clocks in at 7,668nm and began earlier in March.

The service was first mooted in January, although no firm announcement was made at the time.

Instead, Qatar chief executive Akbar Al Bakar launched Auckland, along with the 13 other destinations across Asia, Europe and Africa at the ITB travel fair in Berlin on Wednesday (European time).

"These new destinations are where our customers want to go, and where we see the most opportunity to provide a best-in-class experience at great value. We look forward to growing our network and welcoming new passengers to Qatar Airways," Al Baker said in a statement.

Speaking at the launch of Qatar's Sydney service earlier in March, Al Baker said the original plan was for flights to Auckland begin in June. However, it was decided to push back the launch after

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Emirates began its own Dubai-Auckland flights at the start of March.

“We are not going to chicken out, we will definitely fly to Auckland but as a respect to Emirates as they have already launched a direct flight we will wait until the end of the year before we will operate,” Al Baker said on March 3.

Among the other new destinations unveiled at the trade fair, Qatar said it was growing its presence in Thailand, with new flights to Chiang Mai in Northern Thailand and popular tourist destination Krabi in the south to start in December. Currently, the airline serves Bangkok and Phuket.

Elsewhere, Qatar will be the first of the so-called big three Gulf carriers alongside Emirates and Etihad to offer flights to Helsinki from October. The service, to be operated with A320-family aircraft, will connect Doha to the hub of fellow oneworld alliance member Finnair.

And the oneworld member also plans new African flights to the likes of Marrakech in Morocco, Windhoek in Namibia, Libreville in Gabon.

The 14 new destinations come on top of recently commenced service to Los Angeles, Ras Al Khaimah and Sydney, with Boston, Birmingham to come online later in March. Flights to Adelaide with Airbus A350-900s and Yerevan start in May, while Qatar will fly to Atlanta from June 1.

Current longest nonstop passenger flights by distance (nautical miles)

1. Dubai-Auckland (7,668nm) – operated by Emirates with Boeing 777-200LR (Airbus A380 used for inaugural service)

2. Sydney-Dallas/Fort Worth (7,454nm) – operated by Qantas with Airbus A380

3. Atlanta-Johannesburg (7,333nm) – operated by Delta with Boeing 777-200LR

4. Abu Dhabi-Los Angeles (7,291nm) – operated by Etihad with Boeing 777-200LR

5. Dubai-Los Angeles (7,246nm) – operated by Emirates with Airbus A380

6. Jeddah-Los Angeles (7,240nm) – operated by Saudia with Boeing 777-300ER

Confirmed future routes

1. Singapore-New York (Newark*) (8,285nm)– to be operated by Singapore Airlines with Airbus A350-900ULR. From 2018. (*Airport choice not confirmed)

2. Doha-Auckland (7,848nm) – to be operated by Qatar Airways with Boeing 777-200LR. Starts December 3

3. Singapore-Los Angeles (7,621nm) – to be operated by Singapore Airlines with Airbus A350-900ULR. From 2018

4. San Francisco-Singapore (7,339nm) – to be operated by United with Boeing 787-9. Starts June 1

Speculated future routes

1. Sydney-New York (JFK) (8,646nm) – Qantas

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2. Sydney-Chicago (ORD) (8,022nm) – Qantas

3. Perth-London Heathrow (7,829nm) – Qantas

4. Melbourne-Dallas/Fort Worth (7,814nm) – Qantas

5. Doha-Santiago (7,791nm) – Qatar Airways

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