

PASSENGERS WAITING: AIRLINES GRADUALLY RELAUNCH THE INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS



Despite being hit hard by the coronavirus crisis, some airlines are trying to organize themselves to deliver an adapted flight schedule in May and the following weeks. Tourism Review provides an update on the airlines relaunching their international flights schedules.

Air France

The French airline, 80% of whose fleet is still grounded to date, is gradually relaunching its domestic network and international flights operations. Since Monday 11 May, the first day of deconfinement in France, **Air France has been operating flights to Bordeaux, Brest, Marseille, Montpellier, Nice and Toulouse as well as to the French Overseas Territories** (Cayenne, Fort-de-France, Pointe-à-Pitre and Saint-Denis de La Réunion).

Several destinations are also served in Europe: Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Copenhagen, Dublin, Edinburgh, Frankfurt, Geneva, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Manchester, Munich, Rome, Stockholm and Zurich. A handful of international airports also receive flights from the French carrier: Cotonou, Dakar and Abidjan in Africa, Atlanta, New York, Los Angeles, Montreal and Mexico City in North America, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo in South America and Tokyo in Asia. Air France states on its website that "for the summer period, [the] flight schedule will be updated at the beginning of June".

British Airways

"We had planned to resume, quite significantly, our flights in July," declared Willie Walsh, head of the IAG Group, the parent company of British Airways, before the Transport Committee of the British Parliament. However, the continued two weeks of isolation for anyone arriving in the UK could interfere with this desire to take off again.

Emirates

The United Arab Emirates airline announced on 13 May that it would resume flights to Paris, London Heathrow, Frankfurt, Milan, Madrid, Chicago, Toronto, Sydney, and Melbourne at the end of May. As a result, Paris-CDG will be served three times a week by Emirates as of May 22. However, the carrier points out that "passengers will be accepted on these flights only if they meet the eligibility and entry criteria of their country of destination". Thermal checks will be carried out at Dubai International Airport and the wearing of a face mask and gloves is mandatory.

Lufthansa

Whilst negotiating a multi-billion euro aid package with the German state, the Lufthansa Group will increase the number of its European flights from June onwards. A total of 160 aircraft from Lufthansa, Eurowings and Swiss will be mobilized to serve more than 100 destinations, mainly in

Germany and Europe, according to a press release issued on 8 May. The Lufthansa Group launched a restructuring plan in April aimed at reducing the fleet by almost 100 aircraft and threatening 10,000 jobs.

The Swiss Air Lines, a subsidiary of the Lufthansa Group - is also planning to significantly expand its offer of international flights with the June schedule in accordance with the respective entry requirements. Around 140 weekly flights to around 30 European destinations are to be carried out from Zurich and around 40 flights to around 14 European destinations from Geneva since June. New York-Newark will continue to be served three times a week for the long haul.

Ryanair

The Irish low-cost airline announced on Tuesday 12 May the resumption of 40% of its flights from July. 1,000 flights will be operated every day to 90% of the destinations served before the health crisis. In addition, temperature checks will be carried out at the airport entrances, the wearing of masks before and during the flight will be required and online check-in, mobile boarding pass downloading and cabin baggage will be strongly recommended.

Onboard, passengers will be able to purchase drinks and snacks by credit card only. In terms of social distancing, it will simply be "encouraged whenever possible". As a reminder, air carriers will not be obliged to implement social distancing, unlike rail companies.

Qatar Airways

The Qatari Airways announced on May 6 the gradual resumption of its international flights. The objective? To expand the network to 52 destinations by the end of May and to 80 in June, including 23 in Europe, 4 in America, 20 in the Middle East/Africa zone and 33 in Asia-Pacific. Some destinations will benefit from a daily flight.

Caribbean Airlines

The resumption of transatlantic flights from/to other Caribbean destinations such as Saint-Martin, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, or Cuba is under consideration for 3 July. This decision is subject to the reopening of borders outside the Schengen area, scheduled for 15 June at the latest. Finally, Caribbean Airlines is gradually resuming its inter-island operations (Guadeloupe, Martinique, Saint-Barthélemy, Saint-Martin), just like Air Antilles.

U.S. Airlines

Southwest and American Airlines are some of the first airlines to offer again international flights. Southwest announced relaunching its services on June 7 to Cancun, Mexico (from Houston, Denver, and Baltimore/Washington); San Jose del Cabo/Los Cabos, Mexico (from Houston and Denver); Havana, Cuba (from Tampa); Montego Bay, Jamaica (from Baltimore/Washington and Orlando); and Nassau, Bahamas (from Baltimore/Washington). American Airlines already relaunched its Dallas-Fort Worth to Madrid flight on May 14, making it the first U.S. carrier to return to Spain. The carrier has been operating flights to Mexico City, London, and Tokyo even during the pandemic. Flights from Dallas to Amsterdam and Frankfurt are scheduled for June 4, and flights to Dublin, Tokyo-Haneda, Seoul, Lima and Sao Paulo are planned for July 7.

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