

# A350-1000ULR TAKES FLIGHT: AIRBUS ADVANCES ULTRA-LONG-HAUL ROUTES



Only now taking off, the A350-1000ULR left Toulouse after years held back by manufacturing hurdles. This first journey signals progress - Airbus moves closer to linking distant continents without refueling stops. Though delayed, the aircraft's debut reshapes what is possible in extended air travel.

Midway through its journey, the plane marked AIB01LR ascended past 12,496 meters (41,000 feet), beginning a scheduled 3-hour-43-minute trial. **Instead of routine operations, the team onboard - made up solely of specialized testers - turned attention toward overall functionality checks alongside assessment of the updated fuel setup.** While data collection continues, confirmation arrives that the entire series of trials should span close to eight weeks.

## Extended Range for Epic Routes

With a range reaching 18,520 kilometers - around 10,000 nautical miles - the A350-1000ULR can stay aloft nearly 22 hours nonstop. Capable of linking far-flung destinations such as Sydney and London, it ranks among the most extended-range passenger aircraft globally. Though built for endurance, its main role centers on ultra-long-haul routes where refueling stops aren't needed.

A boost in performance stems largely from fitting a Rear Center Fuel Tank within the airframe. Airbus states this change extends reach by 1,000 nautical miles - equal to 1,852 kilometers - over the base A350-1000 model, without sacrificing fuel economy or cabin quality. Though heavier now, the jet still delivers smooth operation and familiar ease for travelers.

## Tailored for Qantas Project Sunrise

Following extensive collaboration with Qantas, the A350-1000ULR took shape as part of Project Sunrise - a push toward nonstop long-distance travel. After test flights wrap up, interior work begins according to Qantas' layout needs, including four distinct cabin sections built around endurance and passenger ease. Though still in final phases, the design prioritizes sustained comfort over extreme duration.

Starting in 2027, Qantas will begin using these aircraft on direct flights from Sydney to London - cutting down flight duration while removing stopovers. Scheduled arrival of the initial jet falls in April, followed by launch into regular operations before year-end. Currently, the second A350-1000ULR sits in late-stage production, soon to leave painting facilities.

A dozen of these unique planes are on order by Qantas, tied directly to its Project Sunrise initiative.

## A Slow-Building Revolution

Though delays shifted the schedule, the first flight marks clear advancement. Seen by analysts as a shift in ultra-long-haul routes travel, the A350-1000ULR may ease passenger strain on extended journeys - offering carriers fresh options where infrastructure is limited.

Now undergoing strict trials, the partnership between Airbus and Qantas moves nearer to an ambition held for decades - **flights lasting 22 hours without landing, pushing global distances**

**into sharper compression.** Though once seen as distant, such journeys take shape through steady progress behind closed doors. Because of updated aircraft design, what seemed extreme becomes plausible. While skepticism remains, each test brings subtle gains. Not defined by speed alone, these routes redefine how far one can go without stopping. After years of planning, momentum builds quietly.

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