



FIJI AIRWAYS TO UPGRADE NARROW-BODY FLEET WITH BOEING 737 MAX 8S FROM 2018

News / Airlines



Fiji Airways, Fiji's National Airline, announced its selection of the Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft to replace its existing narrow-body fleet.

The airline currently operates five Boeing 737s (one 700 series/ four 800 series) on its short and medium haul network to destinations including Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. The first two of the five brand new B737 MAX 8 aircraft will arrive in 2018, and the remaining three will arrive in 2019.

The announcement was made jointly in the Fijian capital, Suva, today by Fiji Airways and the Fijian Government – the airline's majority shareholder.

Mr. Andre Viljoen, Fiji Airways Managing Director and CEO said: "We're very pleased to confirm the future of our narrow-body fleet, following the conclusion of an extremely exhaustive procurement and selection process. The improved operating economics and product enhancements were compelling reasons to consider renewing the current Boeing 737 aircraft."

Mr. Viljoen added: "This is a major capital decision that had to be done correctly so we followed a rigorous, thorough and transparent process to find the right solution. As a consequence of the

fierce competition between the rival bidders and the extensive process followed by Fiji Airways, we have achieved a ground-breaking package deal that represents excellent value for our shareholders, customers and stakeholders.”

Mr. Viljoen stated that the package deal secured with Boeing, leasing company GE Capital Aviation Services (GECAS) and engine manufacturers CFM International included a 12-year Sale and Leaseback financing arrangement.

“We are satisfied that the B737 MAX 8 aircraft meets our requirements for efficient performance, more engine power, greater economics and a product that will assist us to achieve 4-Star Airline SKYTRAX Rating. Our team will now work on the cabin designs and fit-outs to Fiji Airways specifications. With 170 seats, we will continue with our existing two-class configuration (Business and Economy) and be able to offer an extremely competitive short and medium haul product.”

“We are committed to growing and providing value to our key markets, and this investment in the Boeing 737 MAX 8 will give our customers less cabin noise, enhanced interiors, better lighting and more overhead cabin space. We are confident that this announcement will be very well received by our travel partners and our customers across our global network.”

On behalf of the Fijian Government, the Attorney General and Minister for Civil Aviation, the Hon Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, warmly welcomed the airline’s announcement.

“The addition of these new state-of-the-art aircraft from 2018 will continue the modernisation of the Fiji Airways fleet that we began three years ago with the delivery of the first wide-bodied A330-200. Now that we are adding new and very efficient Boeing 737 MAX 8s, Fiji Airways will have one of the youngest fleets in the Asia Pacific. Which means not only lower operating costs and a smaller carbon footprint but a level of comfort and service for the travelling public that represents yet another leap forward for our national airline”.

The AG added: “ This relationship with Boeing will also mean that Fiji Airways will be able to set up a flight simulator school and related aircraft training and specialisation here in Fiji. This will not only save us considerable expense in the training of our pilots but establish Fiji as a regional aviation training hub”, he said.

Since 2013, Fiji Airways has upgraded its fleet with three new, modern A330-200s and one A330-300 aircraft.

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