BIGGEST PLANE, SHORTEST FLIGHT: EMIRATES LAUNCHES A380 ROUTE FROM DUBAI TO DOHA

News / Airlines, Airports / Routes

Emirates has launched the world's shortest scheduled A380 service, from Dubai to Doha.

A first A380 flying the route touched down on Thursday and was welcomed with a water cannon salute – a traditional welcome for aircraft flying new routes.

The 379-kilometre flight lasted 80 minutes on the outbound leg and 70 minutes on the return flight to Dubai.

Emirates is the largest operator of the double-decker plane – the world's largest commercial aircraft in service.

Emirates currently has 87 in service and 55 pending delivery and currently operates the A380 to over 45 destinations around the world. But use of the super jumbo which seats around 550 passengers has proved patchy.

Despite large orders from Emirates and other Middle Eastern airlines, the aircraft has struggled to win over customers from North America and Europe. They fear that the large scale of the aircraft is

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too big to fill profitably.

S airlines have eschewed ordering the aircraft and some European operators have cut back orders.

"Emirates derives such massive economies of scale from its wide-body fleet, it is able to deploy any jet on any route and benefit from whatever yield and passenger classes it can," said Saj Ahmad, the chief analyst at StrategicAero Research.

"Given the size of Emirates' A380 fleet, then can easily fill the airplane because demand on this sector is so very robust.

"And even if they never fill first or business class, they carry more than enough economy passengers to build revenue via the greater numbers carried."

Emirates currently operates nine daily flights between Dubai and Doha, making the Qatari capital the most served destination in the Emirates network.

Emirates said that over the past five years it has carried more than 3.7 million passengers between the two cities.

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