

UNITED TO RETURN TO NZ FROM JULY 2016

News / Airports / Routes



United is **returning** to **New Zealand** for the first time in 13 years with a new San Francisco-Auckland service due to start on July 3 2016.

The flights will initially operate three times a week with Boeing 787-8s before increasing to daily from October 30 2016 with the larger 787-9 Dreamliner.

United said its flights would be operated in coordination with fellow Star Alliance member Air New Zealand, which currently flies daily between San Francisco and Auckland.

The pair already work together and codeshare on each other's services for New Zealand-US travel as part of a long-standing partnership and earlier in 2015 signed a Statement of Intent to "deepen and further define" their alliance.

"We're very excited about adding Auckland to our industry-leading global route network and offering our New Zealand customers nonstop service to the US," United vice chairman and chief revenue officer Jim Compton said in a statement on Friday.

“We have a long history of working together with our partners at Air New Zealand to provide customers with expansive travel options across and between the United States, New Zealand, and beyond. With the launch of United’s new San Francisco service and Air New Zealand’s new Houston service, we are expanding our partnership, and bringing the benefit of even more service options to the traveling public.”

Currently, Air NZ is the only airline offering nonstop flights between NZ and the US mainland, with daily service to San Francisco, 18 flights a week to Los Angeles and four flights a week to Vancouver from its Auckland hub, with [five times weekly flights to Houston due to begin in December](#). The NZ flag carrier also competes with Hawaiian Airlines on the Auckland-Honolulu route.

Meanwhile, United flies daily from Sydney to Los Angeles and San Francisco, and daily from Melbourne to Los Angeles.

Air NZ chief executive Christopher Luxon welcomed United’s return to Auckland as part of an expanded partnership between the two carriers.

“To have a partner carrier with a network like United Airlines promoting destination New Zealand and attracting visitors through its immense sales and distribution channels will provide a significant boost to inbound tourism,” Luxon said in a statement.

“We look forward to working together with United to continue to build the links between New Zealand and the US.”

United’s entry comes as Qantas and alliance partner American forge [a new revenue-sharing alliance on trans-Pacific routes](#) that market watchers believe is likely to lead to American operating nonstop flights from the US to NZ.

The third significant player on trans-Pacific routes is the combined [Virgin Australia-Delta Air Lines alliance](#), which operates twice daily from Sydney and daily from Brisbane to Los Angeles.

United’s last flight to New Zealand was on March 29 2003.



United's last flight to Auckland. (Mike Millet)



The last time United was seen at Auckland Airport. (Mile Millett)

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