



VIRGIN AMERICA MAKES ITS HAWAIIISCAPE: NEW HAWAI'I FLIGHTS LAUNCH TODAY

News / Airports / Routes



Virgin America, the low-fare, upscale airline, **today** celebrates the **launch** of new daily nonstop flights from San Francisco International Airport (SFO) to Honolulu International Airport (HNL) with a series of festive events in San Francisco and Honolulu – including the opportunity for workaholics to score the ultimate “Hawaiiscape” with Virgin Group Founder Richard Branson. To help celebrate its **new Hawai’i flights**, Virgin America teamed up with the world’s leading community-driven hospitality company, Airbnb, to encourage travelers to “Work Hard, Hawai’i Hard” by experiencing all that the Aloha state has to offer – including the option to stay at a range of unique properties from waterfront estates to beach bungalows. The two brands will co-host a festive send-off for the first Hawai’i flight today and an oceanfront sunset event this evening at an Airbnb estate on O’ahu. On Dec. 3, the airline’s Hawai’i schedule grows again with daily nonstop flights from SFO to Maui’s Kahului Airport (OGG). Virgin America is also marking the launch of these new flights by offering SFO-Honolulu and SFO-Maui fares from \$199* (taxes and fees included, restrictions applying) or 8558 Elevate® frequent flyer points (plus fees).

“Our loyal Bay Area travelers, and especially our Elevate frequent flyers, have been asking for an island escape for some time, and as of today they have a fresh option for their Hawai’i travels,” said Virgin America President and Chief Executive Officer David Cush. “We are thrilled to be bringing our unique service to Honolulu and next month Maui, and we look forward to building lasting community ties with the state and people of Hawai’i.”

As the only San Francisco-based airline, Virgin America offers an upscale new option to Hawai’i –

with a product uniquely suited to longer-haul flights. Hawai'i is the number one tourism destination from the West Coast, with over 3.3 million visitors in 2014 and the 'most wanted' destination by members of the airline's Elevate loyalty program. Known for its innovative and comfortable service, Virgin America has been named the best domestic airline in both Condé Nast Traveler's Readers' Choice Awards and in Travel + Leisure's World's Best Awards for the past eight years in a row.

"We are thrilled to welcome Virgin America to the Hawaiian Islands," said Hawai'i Governor David Ige. "We are pleased to see Virgin America giving our guests the broadest service options possible between the West Coast and Hawai'i, boosting airline competition, adding seats, increasing accessibility to the islands and adding new jobs to our tourism industry. The Hawai'i Tourism Authority estimates Virgin America's new flights will generate \$138.6 million in visitor spending and \$14.8 million in tax revenue for the Aloha State each year."

Today, Virgin America and Airbnb announce an expanded partnership program – the first partnership program of its kind for Airbnb. The airline's Elevate program now offers travelers the opportunity to earn Elevate points for every Airbnb reservation they make. Members of the airline's no-black-out date Elevate program can earn 1,500 Elevate points for their first Airbnb stay, and Elevate members who book through www.virginamerica.com will also get 1 point per \$1 spent on completed Airbnb trips. Additionally, Elevate members who become Airbnb hosts will earn 20,000 Elevate points. For more, visit: virginamerica.com/airbnb.

"To live aloha means to share, to love, to smile – a word that embodies a way of belonging amongst the Hawaiian community," said Jonathan Mildenhall, Chief Marketing Officer at Airbnb. "Whether you're staying in a treehouse or a fabulous beachside bungalow, today, we celebrate the Hawaiian travel experience – the rich, genuine culture that manifests the Aloha spirit – no matter where you are on the island."

Earlier this summer, Virgin America and Airbnb teamed up to offer the ultimate "Work Hard, Hawai'i Hard" escape – with Branson kicking off the campaign with a video and LinkedIn post on making time to recharge. More than 65,000 entered the #Hawaiiscape promotion and winners scored a seat on the first flight, the chance to party with Branson at an Airbnb residence on O'ahu tonight, and some "play hard" lessons with professional athletes captured with GoPros.

Virgin America and Airbnb also announce today that the companies will pledge \$100,000 (in cash, flights and Airbnb accommodation credits) to Make-A-Wish Hawai'i® to help fulfill the wishes of children battling life-threatening illnesses. As part of its efforts to plant new roots in the Hawai'i community, Virgin America is also proud to announce a partnership with Pūnana Leo, a nonprofit that provides for and nurtures various Hawaiian language environments. Started by a group of Hawaiian language educators in 1982, the organization's advocacy has resulted in an education system in which students in Hawai'i may study from preschool all the way through doctoral-level studies in Hawaiian indigenous language. The airline is providing \$25,000 to support the organization's education programs.

The airline's inaugural festivities in San Francisco and Honolulu today include:

This morning, Branson surprises workaholics with the chance to join the Hawai'i flight – at a local office and at SFO.

Virgin America and Airbnb transform the airline's SFO T2 home into a colorful tropical oasis with a Iʻau hosted at the HNL departure gate – complete with traditional Hawaiian Hula and Polynesian drummers, Mai Tais, a "Live Aloha" Hawaiian Hale and more.

Upon touchdown of the first flight in Hawai'i, Virgin America's first guests will be feted with a red carpet Iʻau reception on the HNL tarmac – with a traditional Hawaiian welcome and blessing

hosted by Governor David Ige, George Szigeti, president and CEO of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, and HNLairport officials.

This evening, Branson and Airbnb's Jonathan Mildenhall will host an oceanfront sunset event at an Airbnb property, the notable Paul Mitchell Estate on O'ahu, with community partners, and special guests like professional surfer Alana Blanchard, kiteboarder and Zozi Guru Susi Mai, and actor Joe Manganiello.

Travelers can follow the festivities with the hashtags #NowBoarding, #AirbnbHawaii and on both brands' Snapchats.

"The U.S. West market is a significant source of inbound visitors to the Hawaiian Islands and we look forward to welcoming Virgin America passengers from the Bay Area and across the airline's U.S. network," said George D. Szigeti, president and CEO of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA).

Virgin America will fly to Hawai'i with its newest Airbus A320 aircraft, equipped with fuel-saving 'sharklet' wingtip devices. Earlier this year, the airline completed the Federal Aviation Administration's Extended Operation certification in order to operate longer range overwater flights. The first of Virgin America's aircraft to fly to Hawai'i was named "Pineapple Express" by the airline's teammates and features a surfer girl image created by street/tattoo artist Si Scott.

Virgin America offers mood-lit aircraft with three custom-designed classes of service, touch-screen personal entertainment and an on-demand food and cocktail menu on every flight – so travelers departing from SFO's convenient Terminal Two can kick-off their Hawai'i holiday as soon as they step onboard. In addition to a Main Cabin that offers custom leather seating with a deeper, more comfortable pitch, the airline's First Class cabin offers plush white leather seating with 55 inches of pitch, 165 degrees of recline and lumbar massagers. The carrier's Main Cabin Select service offers 38-inches of pitch, free food and cocktails, an all-access pass to media, dedicated overhead bins and priority check-in/boarding. The Red™ entertainment platform offers guests their own seatback touch-screen2, with +20 latest release films, TV, interactive maps, videogames, a 3,000 song library, surround sound technology and an on-demand menu, which allows flyers to order from their seatback any time during a flight. With a full service First Class menu and a unique on-demand menu in the Main Cabin, Virgin America was named Travel + Leisure Magazine's "Best U.S. Airline for Food" in 2014 and 2015. The Main Cabin menu en route to the islands includes Pacific-rim inspired options such as a Korean Chicken Sandwich and Ginger Soba Chicken Salad. In First Class, guests can choose from island-sourced fresh dishes including a grilled pineapple appetizer, Crispy Thai Chicken with a macadamia nut crust and Liliko'i Ice Cream. Island libations are available on Hawai'i-bound flights, including a POG Mimosa in First Class and a Makena rum cocktail.

Since its 2007 launch, Virgin America has created nearly 3,000 jobs (including 40 new jobs created in Hawai'i). The new Hawai'i markets represent the 22nd and 23rd destinations served by the California-based airline.

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