



EMIRATES PUTS MEXICO AND BERLIN AT TOP OF ROUTE WISH LIST

News / Airports / Routes



Emirates, the world's biggest long-haul airline, has identified **Mexico City** and **Berlin** as the most attractive new destinations that would become available with longer-range jets and expanded air-service treaties.

Flights from Dubai to the Mexican capital would be possible with Boeing Co.'s new 777X plane, for which Emirates is due to be the first customer in 2020, while a Berlin service would require Germany to ease its opposition to more flights from Persian Gulf carriers.

Emirates already serves almost 150 destinations in about 80 countries using the industry's biggest wide-body fleet, so that most of the world's major population centers are already part of the network. It will begin operations to Panama in February with what will be the longest flight at any carrier and could add Dubai-Atlanta as Delta Air Lines Inc. quits the route in February.

"Our route planners are now closely studying the opportunity for Emirates to fill in the gap when Delta exits," an Emirates spokeswoman said in an e-mail.

Delta said last month it was canceling the Dubai route amid overcapacity from Gulf rivals. It has combined with United Continental Holdings Inc. and American Airlines Group Inc. to urge the U.S. to freeze further access for Mideast operators until a dispute over state subsidies has been resolved.

German Hurdle

Emirates faces similar resistance in Europe, and is battling to expand beyond the four German cities it's currently able to serve. Under an existing bilateral treaty, adding Berlin would mean dropping operations to Frankfurt, Munich, Hamburg or Dusseldorf. The carrier says on its own website that "most travelers" to Germany want to go to Berlin.

Emirates will open up a second Istanbul gateway next month with daily flights to Sabiha Gokcen Airport on the Asian side of the city, adding to its 11 weekly trips to the main Ataturk Airport. Among other plans, the carrier is seeking to boost access to Manila.

Mexico City, while on the cusp of viability with existing aircraft, is likely to have to wait for the upgraded 777 because of its altitude of almost 7,400 feet (2,250 meters), which would impose heavy take-off weight penalties for return flights to Dubai.

Boeing has 306 orders for the 777X, which was introduced in late 2013 at the Dubai Air Show, where Emirates purchased 150 worth \$56 billion in the largest single jetliner deal in aviation history. The ultra-long-range 777-8, is designed to haul more than 350 travelers 8,700 nautical miles (16,110 kilometers).

While Mexico City is 300 miles beyond Panama when flying from Dubai, Singapore Airlines Ltd. plans to go even further as early as 2018, operating from Singapore to New York using the Airbus Group SE's A350-900ULR. Emirates canceled an order for 70 A350s in 2014 and is currently reevaluating its requirement for the model.

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