VIETNAM AIRLINES TO TAKE TEN MORE AIRBUS A350-900 AIRCRAFT

It was announced from Hanoi on 6 September that Vietnam Airlines has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Airbus for ten more A350-900 aircraft.

The MOU was signed in Hanoi that day by Duong Tri Thanh, President and CEO of Vietnam Airlines, and Fabrice Brégier, Airbus President & CEO. The signing took place during the state visit to Vietnam of François Hollande, President of France, and was witnessed by the President and HE Tran Dai Quang, President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Said Duong Tri Thanh, President and CEO of Vietnam Airlines: ‘The intention to acquire these additional aircraft reflects our excellent experience with the A350 since it entered service with Vietnam Airlines last year (2015). With its very long range capability, economic fuel consumption and spacious cabin, the A350 is the ideal aircraft for our proposed intercontinental routes to Europe and the US. The start of non-stop transpacific services with the A350 is yet another example of the commitment we have at Vietnam Airlines to strengthen our position as one of the world’s leading international carriers.’

In response Fabrice Brégier, Airbus President and CEO said: ‘Today’s agreement further consolidates the A350’s position as the new long haul leader in the mid-size widebody category. The A350 XWB has quite simply set new standards in its class, combining unbeatable operating economics with the highest levels of passenger comfort. We look forward to working closely with Vietnam Airlines as it continues to develop its long haul network and strengthens its position in the premium market.’

In 2015 Vietnam Airlines became the first airline in East Asia and the second in the world to operate the A350-900 XWB. The carrier already has four aircraft in service, with another ten on firm order for future delivery. If the aircraft of this MOU become reality, the additional ten aircraft will enable Vietnam Airlines to operate non-stop to the US, carrying 305 passengers in a three class premium layout. The acquisition is also good news for British manufacturing as A350 engines are exclusively supplied by Rolls-Royce and its wings are also produced in the UK.

Vietnam Airlines operates the A350-900 XWB on international routes to Paris (France), Incheon (Korea), Shanghai (China) and on domestic routes between Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. The new generation aircraft was one of the key factors in helping confirm Vietnam Airlines’ four-star status, and it will play a
crucial role in the airline’s planned five-star service upgrade programme in the near future.

In addition, the low-cost carrier Jetstar Pacific, a joint venture between Vietnam Airlines and Qantas Airways (Australia), officially signed a contract with Airbus to buy ten new-generation Airbus A320ceo* aircraft. These will be delivered in 2017 to help Jetstar Pacific to expand its domestic and international flight network. The airline plans to increase its fleet to 30 Airbus A320 between 2016 and 2020.

As the national flag carrier of Vietnam, headquartered in Hanoi, Vietnam Airlines operates 94 routes to 21 domestic and 29 international destinations with more than 360 flights daily. Operating a young fleet, mainly comprising Boeing 777s, Airbus A330s and Airbus A321s, the airline is expanding its fleet with next-generation aircraft such as Boeing 787 Dreamliners and Airbus A350-900 XWBs. It become the first airline to operate the new B787-9 nonstop between Southeast Asia and Europe, and the first Asian airline to operate both Boeing and Airbus’ modern next-generation aircraft at the same time.

2015 also saw the launch of Vietnam Airlines’ fresh new livery, corporate identity and branding, and the switching of its UK operations from Gatwick to Heathrow in what was a transformative year of development for the airline.

A member of the SkyTeam Alliance since 10 June 2010, Vietnam Airlines was also the first representative of the alliance in South East Asia.

Vietnam Airlines currently offers the UK’s only nonstop flights to Vietnam, with daily services from Heathrow Terminal 4 to Hanoi or Saigon. Vietnam Airlines’ nonstop services from the UK are carefully scheduled to offer convenient overnight flights in both directions, and excellent onward connections via its comprehensive network of over 40 destinations in Asia, including 23 within Vietnam and Indochina as well as China, Japan and Taiwan.

*current engine option

Picture captions
Vietnam 1
(Left to right): HE François Hollande, President of France, Fabrice Brégier, Airbus President & CEO, HE Tran Dai Quang, President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and Duong Tri Thanh, President and CEO of Vietnam Airlines, at the Memorandum of Understanding signing.
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*An Airbus A350-900.*