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Travel Resources **INDUSTRY INSIDER**

Air Canada Introduces Self-Service Rebooking Tool



Air Canada has introduced a new web-based Self-Service Rebooking Tool designed to make it easier for agents and passengers to get information about flights affected by events such as storms and then rearrange their travel to suit their needs using their computer or mobile device.

The new tool enables Air Canada to automatically: send an SMS or e-mail message to customers notifying them of itinerary changes due to weather or other operational disruptions (where no electronic address is available, passenger information will be routed to call centres); provide customers with details on their rebooked flight when applicable; offer customers the ability to select another flight if the new flight proposed by Air Canada is not acceptable; post a link with Travel Advisories on www.aircanada.com to let customers easily link with the Rebooking Tool when bad weather is expected to disrupt the airline's schedule.

Preferred Seats from Air Canada



Air Canada is now offering its customers a Preferred Seat option that gives them the opportunity to reserve specific exit row and bulkhead seats with extra seat pitch in the economy cabin on all of its flights.

The Preferred Seat option can be purchased when booking an economy class fare at <http://www.aircanada.com> or through Air Canada Reservations and complements Air Canada's free seat selection offered with Tango Plus and Latitude fares. Customers will be able to select a Preferred Seat on any Air Canada or Jazz flight, at the time of booking or anytime prior to check-in, subject to availability. The number and location of Preferred Seats available on a flight varies with each aircraft type. Preferred Seat prices start from \$14 per one-way trip and are based on length of flight, fare purchased and Top Tier status of the customer.

Air Canada Adding Calgary / Tokyo Non-Stop



Air Canada will be adding non-stop service between Calgary and Tokyo beginning March 27, 2010. AC will operate three weekly flights to Tokyo's Narita International Airport, that will provide connections to flights throughout Asia with its Star Alliance partner carriers. To promote its new Calgary-Tokyo flights, **Air Canada is offering introductory fares starting from \$598** round-trip before taxes and other charges. **Tickets are now available for purchase.**

With the announcement of the new Calgary-Tokyo flights, Air Canada has introduced seven new routes serving Calgary over the past 10 months, including daily non-stop flights to San Diego CA, Portland OR and London ON, summer seasonal service to Whitehorse YT and also seasonal non-stop flights to Maui and Honolulu which will start in early December.

In addition to offering efficient connections at Narita to points throughout Asia with Air Canada's Star Alliance partners, ANA, Asiana, THAI and United Airlines, Air Canada's Calgary-Japan flights are timed to offer convenient connections to and from communities across Alberta and Western Canada served by Air Canada.

WestJet to Offer Frequent Flier Program



WestJet Airlines Ltd. plans to unveil its frequent-flier program at the end of November, introducing a "travel bank" in which consumers can save points toward reward trips. "Passengers will be able to collect "WestJet dollars" by catching flights or using the airline's new RBC MasterCard, while rewards will be easily attainable", said Gregg Saretsky, WestJet's executive vice-president of operations.

Air Canada customers seeking to obtain Aeroplan flights face paying a premium if extra miles are needed to qualify for a reward. But Mr. Saretsky said yesterday that his airline's new loyalty program will allow travelers to earmark their WestJet credits toward a flight, and even if there aren't enough credits accumulated, consumers can simply pay the difference in cash to qualify for a flight reward.

United to Offer Service to Africa in 2010



United has announced the airline will inaugurate its first-ever service to Africa in 2010, with one daily, same-plane service from Washington to Accra, Ghana and Lagos, Nigeria.

The airline also will extend its existing daily Washington-Kuwait flight to include Bahrain, and will offer a new non-stop flight between Chicago and Brussels, Belgium. Introduction of all of the new services is subject to government approval.

Avis and Budget Go Smoke-Free



Avis Rent A Car and Budget Rent A Car vehicles in Canada and the United States are now smoke-free under a new policy that prohibits smoking in the rental vehicles.

To ensure compliance with the new smoke-free policy, Avis and Budget have established new inspection processes and will assess customers a cleaning fee if the vehicle is returned with tobacco odor or residue. In addition, the company has instituted a smoke-free policy for all employees and contractors who drive its vehicles.

United & Continental Upgrade Loyalty Services



United Airlines and Continental Airlines have announced that members of each carrier's frequent flyer program who have earned elite status will receive unlimited, complimentary domestic upgrades on flights operated by both airlines when space is available.

As well, Continental's elite-level frequent flyers will have complimentary access to United's Economy Plus seating, while United's elite-level frequent flyers will have complimentary access to Continental's Premium Seating. The new benefits will begin to roll out in mid-2010.

Unlimited domestic upgrades and preferred economy class seating for elite-level frequent flyer members are the latest additions to the suite of benefits available to United and Continental customers since the two carriers announced a wide-ranging global partnership in June 2008 and since Continental joined the Star Alliance Oct. 27.

Air Ticket Prices Could Rise Next Year in Key U.S. Markets



Average ticket prices are projected to annually increase in nearly all top North American business travel markets in 2010, with some cities even expected to experience double-digit percentage-point hikes.

According to a 2010 Corporate Travel Forecast and Hotel Negotiability Index, released by a prominent online travel management company, North American airfares for the top North American business travel destinations could rise on average 5 percent to 10 percent from 2009 levels. The largest increases are predicted for Seattle at 10 percent, Philadelphia at 11 percent, Phoenix at 12 percent and San Diego at 16 percent.

Expected price increases are attributed to a predicted rise in corporate travel demand, airline capacity reductions, carrier consolidation and continued price inflation.

Meanwhile, their Hotel Negotiability Index, which factors in local convention and other one-off event demand effects, forecasts for at least the first half of 2010 the continuation of strong buyer's markets across North America, except for Boston and Washington, D.C., which is benefiting from the new "administration bubble," .

Average daily hotel rates in the top North American business travel destinations are expected on average to be flat or drop by as much as 5 percent from 2009 levels.

Driving the continuation of the buyer's market and subsequent average daily rate decline projections is reduced demand, new supply coming into the markets and rising air prices having an adverse effect on hotel pricing.

In the U.S. car rental sector, the travel management company projects a 5 percent decrease in daily rates.



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