

Madagascar added to Air Seychelles' growing network

Air Seychelles, the national airline of the Republic of Seychelles, recently announced the launch of direct flights to Antananarivo, Madagascar, commencing 3 December 2014 - subject to government approvals.



The twice-weekly flights to the capital's Ivato International Airport (TNR) will be operated using a two-class Airbus A320 aircraft with 16 Business Class and 120 Economy Class seats.

Madagascar is renowned for its extraordinary botanical and zoological attractions, in particular three UNESCO World Heritage Sites -the rainforests of the Atsinanana, the Tsingy de Bemaraha Strict Nature Reserve, and the Royal Hill of Ambohimanga, the spiritual centre of the Merina people.

The new services will be Air Seychelles' fourth destination in a rapidly expanding regional network that includes Dar es Salaam, Johannesburg and Mauritius.

Manoj Papa, Air Seychelles' Chief Executive Officer, said: "We are thrilled to add Antananarivo to our global network, further cementing our position as the airline of choice in the Indian Ocean region.

Boosting trade and tourism

"Madagascar is enjoying strong economic growth from renewed foreign investment and surging eco-tourism. Our flights will cater to the growing demand for business and leisure travel to what is the world's fourth largest island.

"The route will boost trade and tourism in both directions, and in particular, be welcomed by the large number of Malagasy nationals living in the Seychelles, who now have an easier way of visiting friends and family at home.

"Via our Mahé hub, we will offer guests coming from Madagascar great onward connections to many of the islands in the Seychelles, in addition to destinations served by our fleet in the Middle East, Europe and Asia, as well as with our codeshare partners."

The A320 aircraft will also offer over seven tonnes of weekly bellyhold freight capacity to and from Madagascar, which has a strong inbound and outbound cargo market. The airline expects to carry a mixture of perishables, mechanical spare parts and pharmaceuticals on the route.

Joël Morgan, Seychelles Minister for Home Affairs and Transport and Air Seychelles Board Chairman, said the new flights were indicative of Air Seychelles' successful turnaround, as well as the Seychelles' importance as a new regional hub.

"The Indian Ocean is at the heart of our route network development, and we are delighted Antananarivo is now a part of the Air Seychelles network. It marks an important milestone in our regional expansion strategy.

"Earlier this year, the Seychelles and Madagascar signed a new Air Services Agreement, where enhanced provisions have directly facilitated the announcement of flights.

"The direct links to Antananarivo will create new opportunities for government, trade, tourism and cultural exchanges within the Indian Ocean, and through our global network, connect the region to the world.

"We also offer significant new schedule options for travellers, providing more choice and flexibility within the region, and making Madagascar's splendid treasury of culture, fauna, and flora more accessible than ever to holidaymakers, whether as a standalone destination or in combination with visits to other islands of the region, such as Comores, Mayotte, Mauritius, or Réunion."

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