

Air Transat resumes commercial flights after Canada re-opens

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Air Transat (TS, Montréal Trudeau) has resumed domestic and international commercial flights following a six-month hiatus due to COVID-19 travel restrictions imposed by the Canadian Federal Government.

Its first flights between Montréal Trudeau and Punta Cana (Dominican Republic), and Montreal-Vancouver Int'l took off on July 30, kicking off the airline's summer programme that will include, at the height of the season, 24 routes to 16 destinations in Canada, the US, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and Europe, the company announced in a statement.

"It is with great joy and excitement that we return to the skies after these long months of suspension," commented president and chief executive, Annick Guérard. As reported, the airline on January 29, 2021, had suspended its regular operations amid tough COVID-19 restrictions in Canada at the time. The country on August 9 re-opened for fully-vaccinated Americans and intends to extend this to any fully vaccinated travellers on September 7, 2021.

As part of an extensive domestic flight schedule this summer, the airline will, for the first time, also offer direct flights between Québec and Vancouver, on top of services to Calgary, and Toronto Pearson.

In addition, from Montreal and Toronto, Air Transat will phase in direct flights to Cuba (Holguin and Varadero), the Dominican Republic (Punta Cana), France (Paris CDG), Haiti (Port au Prince), Mexico (Cancún), Portugal (Lisbon) and the US (Fort Lauderdale Int'l and Orlando Int'l).

Travellers from Toronto will also be able to fly directly to the UK (London Heathrow), and Portugal (Porto). Direct flights will also be offered from Quebec City to the US (Fort Lauderdale). The airline said it may have to adjust its schedules, depending on changing travel restrictions, but reassures travellers affected would be eligible for a refund.

Meanwhile, Air Transat said it had added three more A321-200NX(LR)s to its fleet, bringing the total number of the type in its fleet to 10. Seven more were expected to be delivered progressively by 2023.

On April 29, 2021, Air Transat announced it had reached an agreement with Ottawa to borrow up to CAD700 million (USD578 million) in additional liquidity through the LEEFF, which would allow it to plan for the resumption of its operations and the implementation of its strategic plan subsequently announced on June 10, 2021. According to this, Air Transat intends to examine how to optimise its financing structure. This could

include issuing shares of its capital or bond financing on more favourable terms than those attached to a portion of the liquidity made available to Air Transat under LEEFF.

