

Mexicana to Join oneworld Alliance

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Mexicana is to join oneworld(R). Mexico and Central America's leading airline today accepted a formal invitation to become part of the world's leading quality airline alliance after being unanimously elected on board by the grouping's existing ten member airlines, which include some of the biggest and best names in the industry.

Its subsidiary Click Mexicana will join at the same time, as an affiliate member of oneworld.

Their joining process is expected to take 12 to 18 months to complete, with Iberia supporting Mexicana through these tasks, as its prime oneworld sponsor, assisted by American Airlines.

So Mexicana and Click Mexicana will be flying as part of oneworld in 2009, when they will start offering the alliance's full range of services and benefits to their own customers and those from their new oneworld partners.

For Mexicana, joining oneworld will strengthen its competitive offering and its financial position. For oneworld, adding Mexicana will expand the alliance's network in Mexico and Central America, and enable it to build further on its positions as the leading airline grouping serving Latin America and the leading Spanish-speaking alliance.

oneworld is already the only global alliance with any airline members based in South America -- through LAN Airlines and its sisters LAN Argentina, LAN Ecuador and LAN Peru. American Airlines is the leading airline serving the region internationally, and Iberia is the leading carrier between Latin America and Europe.

Mexicana's addition to oneworld comes after a year which has seen the alliance complete its biggest yet expansion drive, with 11 airlines joining in 2007 -- Japan Airlines, Malev Hungarian Airlines and Royal Jordanian as full members and, as affiliates, LAN Argentina, LAN Ecuador, Dragonair and five other carriers in the Japan Airlines group.

Mexicana's invitation to join oneworld was sealed at a ceremony today attended by its Chief Executive Officer Manuel Borja with his counterparts from all ten of oneworld's established member airlines and oneworld Managing Partner John McCulloch during a meeting of the group's Governing Board in key alliance hub Los Angeles.

Mexicana is the biggest non-US airline operating at Los Angeles, which is its biggest hub outside Mexico.

Mexicana with the Click Mexicana network will add 26 destinations to the oneworld map -- 24 in Mexico plus Bakersfield (California, USA) and Edmonton (Canada).

With the alliance's existing members serving 11 points in Mexico, its addition will expand to 35 points the alliance's network in Mexico, which is the world's 11th most populous country, the 12th biggest economy and the seventh most popular tourist destination, attracting more than 20 million foreign visitors a year.

oneworld's existing members already serve almost 110 airports throughout Latin America. Mexicana's addition will extend that to more than 130.

Globally, its addition will expand the alliance's network to approaching 700 destinations in nearly 150 countries, with a combined fleet of 2,350 aircraft operating almost 9,500 flights a day, carrying 333 million passengers, with annual revenues of US\$100 billion.

In the months ahead, Mexicana will adapt key internal process to conform with oneworld requirements, link its IT systems to those of its oneworld partners and carry out an extensive employee training and communications programmes, to ensure that their staff worldwide are ready to provide oneworld's customer services and benefits from day one.

Once all its pre-joining requirements are sufficiently progressed, an exact date in 2009 will be confirmed for it to join.

Fernando Conte, Chairman and Chief Executive of Iberia, Mexicana's oneworld sponsor, said: "oneworld is very selective about who we invited on board to join us as a new member. We only consider airlines with brands that match the quality of our established partners, who share our priorities of safety, customer service and profitability and who can expand our existing combined network, rather than simply replicating what we already offer. Mexicana more than ticked all these boxes".

"In the three years that Iberia and Mexicana have been working closely together as bilateral partners, we have come to know that in Mexicana we have colleagues with whom we can really do business -- partners who can add real value to one another. All of us at Iberia are delighted to be developing our relationship further by acting as Mexicana's sponsors into oneworld."

oneworld Managing Partner John McCulloch added: "oneworld is delighted to be welcoming another quality airline on board. As the leading carrier in Mexico and Central America, Mexicana will considerably strengthen oneworld's established position of leadership in Latin America, building on last year's record expansion for the alliance and make it easier for customers to reach more places more easily and for better value with some of the world's best airlines."

Mexicana Chief Executive Officer Manuel Borja said: "Mexicana is now moving into the next phase of our development strategy. Joining the world's leading quality airline alliance will enable Mexicana to build on our excellent relationships with our established partners American Airlines and Iberia".

"As a member of oneworld, we will be able to offer our customers more choice and convenience, a much more extensive global network, more opportunities to earn and redeem frequent flyer rewards, more lounges, more customer service support and better value -- services and benefits beyond the reach of any individual airline or bilateral partnership. For Mexicana and our employees, this will strengthen our position in an increasingly competitive marketplace."

Besides Mexicana Chief Executive Officer Manuel Borja, Iberia Chairman and Chief Executive Fernando Conte and oneworld Managing Partner John McCulloch, scheduled to attend today's ceremony were:

Qantas Chief Executive Officer Geoff Dixon (current chairman of oneworld's Governing Board)

American Airlines Chairman and Chief Executive Gerard Arpey

British Airways Chief Executive Willie Walsh

Cathay Pacific Airways Chief Executive Tony Tyler

Finnair Chief Executive Jukka Hienonen

Japan Airlines Group Chief Executive Haruka Nishimatsu

LAN Group Chief Executive Enrique Cueto

Malev Chief Executive Peter Leonov

Royal Jordanian Chief Executive and Deputy Chairman Samer Majali.

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