

Emirates Receives its First A380

2008-07-30

The Dubai-based Emirates airline receives its first Airbus A380 super jumbo jet on Tuesday as pilots for the company are in Germany to fly the new aircraft from the Airbus factory in Hamburg to the main hub of Emirates in Dubai.

Emirates will thus become the second airline in the world after Singapore Airlines to operate the A380. The inaugural flight will be from Dubai to New York's JFK on August the first - the first time that the A380 will land in the United States. The new flight time is expected to be 12.5 hours compared to the current 14 on board a Boeing 777.

Emirates is by far the largest purchaser of the A380 with its order of 58 planes, and, according to a company official, the spacious and luxurious plane will set a new standard in the skies. Among the features are 14 first-class suites whose passengers will be able to shower at 43,000 feet. The upper deck will also contain two lounges and bars for the first and business-class passengers.

The aircraft will also become the world's first paperless plane as no magazines will be provided for passengers in an effort to save weight as means of dealing with the high price of oil. This will save the company an average of 4.5 pounds (2 kilos) per passenger.

Emirates is one of the youngest and fastest growing airlines in the world. It was established by the ruler of Dubai Muhammad Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum in an effort to diversify the economy of the small Gulf kingdom and to facilitate transportation for the countries growing tourism industry.

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