

Gulf Air signs agreement to lease four Boeing 777 aircraft

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Gulf Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain, has signed an agreement to lease four new Boeing 777 ER aircraft as part of the airline's re-fleeting and product-enhancement strategy. Three of the new aircraft will join the airline during March 09 while the fourth one will join in May.

The aircraft, leased from Jet Airways, will be used on a number of routes including flights to London (<http://www.gulfair.com/destinations/London.asp>), flights to Kuala Lumpur (<http://www.gulfair.com/destinations/KualaLumpur.asp>), flights to Bangkok (<http://www.gulfair.com/destinations/Bangkok.asp>) and intra Gulf Routes, gradually replacing the Airbus 340s.

"The introduction of these four aircraft is another important step in our strategic direction towards re-fleeting, enhancing our product and strengthening our presence as the carrier of choice in the Middle East and beyond," said Gulf Air (<http://www.gulfair.com/>) Chief Executive Officer Mr. Björn Näf.

He continued, "In addition it will further strengthen our successful hub-and-spoke network and our operational efficiency while offering enhanced passenger comfort and flying experience".

"The addition of the Boeing 777's to our fleet is a major coup for us; the product they offer is one of, if not, the best in the world. I am confident that this will once again make Gulf Air the airline of choice and leave our passengers with an easy decision when deciding which airline to fly," he concluded.

The wide body Boeing 777-300ER is the largest long-range twin-engine commercial airplane in the world. It extends the 777 family's span of capabilities, bringing twin-engine efficiency and reliability to the long-range market. The aircraft come with a luxurious interior and a host of amenities providing the most comfortable travel experience to both premium and economy class passengers in a three-class configuration, i.e., First, Business and Economy with a capacity of 312 seats.

First class passengers on these aircraft can enjoy the luxury of a private suite with bespoke furnishing and a fully flat bed complete with a personal wardrobe. The herring-bone design business class offers a lie-flat bed with 180 degree recline, a privacy wall for personal space and world-class linens. Economy class passengers will not be disappointed as the seats come with more leg space to stretch out, a 130-degree recline and a hammock headrest to support head and neck.

Gulf Air Deputy CEO, Ismail Karimi, commented, "As the national carrier of the Kingdom, we are constantly looking at opportunities, where we can offer enhanced products and services for our customers. Ultimately, we want Gulf Air to be the airline of choice."

These almost-new aircraft with state-of-the-art cabin features will, I am sure, give our customers a luxurious and relaxing travel experience, concluded Mr Karimi

Gulf Air already has two A330 aircraft on short-term wet-lease from Jet Airways.

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About Gulf Air

Gulf Air was founded in 1950. Today, it is owned by the Kingdom of Bahrain (<http://www.gulfair.com/destinations/Bahrain.asp>), and is the only truly pan Gulf carrier in the region. The airline's network stretches from Europe to Asia and covers 42 cities in 27 countries. The current fleet of Gulf Air consists of 29 aircraft.

The new network, based on a "wave" model, offers as many as 588 flights every week in the Middle East with more non-stop flights than any other airline.

The airline is also planning to re-fleet itself over the next five years to further strengthen its presence. It recently signed a deal worth nearly US \$ 6 billion with Boeing Co. to purchase up to 24 Boeing 787 aircraft and another deal with Airbus for 35 aircraft, including A320s and A330s.

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