

# Alaska Airlines adds new country to map as part of 3-route expansion

(Courtesy of Ben Mutzabaugh, The Points Guy)



[Alaska Airlines](#) is growing its international presence, adding a new country to its route map as part of a broader three-route expansion.

The airline's newest destination: Guatemala.

Daily year-round service from Alaska's hub in Los Angeles will launch Dec. 14.

Alaska also will add two new seasonal routes to Zihuatanejo along Mexico's Pacific coast. Beginning Dec. 23, the carrier will offer one weekly flight from both San Diego and Chicago through April 6.

The latest additions come as Alaska has been building its international profile.

Guatemala will become Alaska's sixth country served outside the U.S. The carrier also flies to destinations in Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, Mexico and, [announced just last month](#), the Bahamas.

Alaska touted its growing international ambitions in its latest expansion.

"As the fifth largest carrier in the U.S., we're a growing airline that's expanding to more international destinations," Kirsten Amrine, Alaska's network planning chief, [said in a statement](#). "Our new service will allow families, friends and businesses to better connect between the West Coast and Central America."

Aside from the addition of a new country, Alaska's decision to fly nonstop between Zihuatanejo and Chicago is an interesting one. Alaska already flies to Zihuatanejo from its hubs in San Francisco and Los Angeles. San Diego is a focus city for the carrier.

Unlike those other cities, Chicago is neither a hub nor a focus city for Alaska. That means its Zihuatanejo route — Alaska's first and only international route from the Windy City — will have to succeed without getting a boost from connecting passengers.

Also unlike Alaska's California bases, Alaska's presence in Chicago is small, meaning the airline might not be top of mind for customers looking for flights to the city along Mexico's central Pacific coast.

Still, Alaska will get some help on its Chicago-Zihuatanejo service. The airline notes it's being offered "in partnership with ALG Vacations," a travel company that will fill seats on Alaska's service as it sells vacation packages between Chicago and the Mexican beach destination.

"Our new Saturday nonstops to Zihuatanejo from San Diego and Chicago add to our current Los Angeles and San Francisco service and provide guests with more choices as they plan their winter getaways," Amrine added in Alaska's statement.