

American Airlines, JetBlue kick off Northeast alliance with 80 codeshares and 33 new routes

(Courtesy of The Point Guy, Zach Griff)

Despite the biting Northeast winter, the heat is on. That is for airlines operating in one of the most important markets in the country.

On Thursday, American Airlines and JetBlue unveiled a major network alignment to kick off the Northeast-focused tie-up, including nearly 80 codeshares, 33 new domestic and international routes, schedule coordination and more.

The first codeshare begins Feb. 25, roughly a month since receiving regulatory approval in mid-January and just days after the JetBlue pilots rejected the proposed agreement.

The first set of codeshares

Starting on Thursday, customers can purchase domestic flights operated by JetBlue through American's booking channels and vice versa for flights beginning on Feb. 25. AA is putting its code on 49 JetBlue routes, while JetBlue is putting its code on more than 25 American routes.

The airlines intend to grow the codeshare to include international flights soon, including the new routes below, subject to government approval.

At the outset, codesharing will be limited to point-to-point markets, like New York-JFK to Salt Lake City (SLC), but the new partners promise to add more Northeast markets, as well as connecting itineraries throughout the first half of 2021.

All eligible codeshare flights are bookable both on AA.com and JetBlue.com. For now, customers flying on codeshares will earn miles with the carrier through which they purchased the ticket.

Both airlines promise to introduce reciprocal mileage earning benefits this spring — meaning that you could purchase an AA flight and choose to credit it to JetBlue's TrueBlue program and vice versa.

There's no firm timeline yet for when customers can redeem points or miles on either carrier. Both airlines are also working through reciprocal elite benefits, with more details promised for later this year.

33 new domestic and international routes

The Northeast Alliance is fueling significant growth for both airlines with a slew of new routes from both the New York and Boston areas.

American is introducing 18 new connections, including six international flights to cities across the Caribbean and South America beginning on May 6, as follows.

- New York-JFK – Bogota (BOG), daily
- New York-JFK – Cali, Colombia (CLO), daily
- New York-JFK – Medellin (MDE), daily
- New York-JFK – Santiago (SCL), three times per week until November when it goes daily

The Colombia flights will be operated by a 128-seat Airbus A319, while the long-haul Santiago flight will be on a Boeing 777-200.

On June 5, American will begin flying sun-seeking travelers on two new once-weekly Saturday services with a 172-seat Boeing 737-800, as follows:

- New York-JFK – St. Lucia (UVF)
- New York-JFK – Turks and Caicos (PLS)

The 12 remaining new routes are all domestic, point-to-point connections with a focus on leisure-inspired destinations.

From Boston (BOS), AA will fly to:

- Asheville, North Carolina (AVL) from June 5 – Nov. 6
- Columbus, Ohio (CMH), year-round beginning on Aug. 17
- Jackson Hole, Wyoming (JAC) from June 5 – Sept. 4
- Traverse City, Michigan (TVC) from June 5 – Sept. 6

- Wilmington, North Carolina (ILM) from June 5 – Aug. 14

From New York/LaGuardia (LGA), AA will fly to:

- Kansas City, Missouri (MCI), year-round beginning on Sept. 8
- Key West, Florida (EYW) from June 5 – Sept. 4
- Myrtle Beach, South Carolina (MYR) from June 3 – Sept. 7
- Pensacola, Florida (PNS) from June 3 – Sept. 7
- Rapid City, South Dakota (RAP) from June 5 – Sept. 4
- Savannah, Georgia (SAV) from June 3 – Sept. 7

Finally, AA will add a year-round JFK route to Orange County, California (SNA) beginning on July 2.

All domestic routes will operate with 76-seat Embraer E175s, except for the JFK-SNA transcon, which will get AA's swankiest jet, the Airbus A321T. The 18 new routes will be available for purchase beginning Feb. 22.

JetBlue will launch the remaining 15 routes, including flights to two new destinations for the carrier: Boise (BOI) and Glacier National Park (FCA).

From New York-JFK, JetBlue will launch:

- Boise (BOI), from July 2 – Sept. 6
- Kalispell/Glacier Park, Montana (FCA), from July 1 – Sept. 7

This represents Boise's longest flight and the first time JetBlue will serve Idaho.

Other JetBlue additions coming to the New York area include a major Newark-focused expansion, including new flights beginning July 1 to:

- Antigua (AUA)
- Aguadilla, Puerto Rico (BQN)
- Cartagena, Colombia (CTG)
- Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts (MVY)
- Nantucket, Massachusetts (ACK)

- Port-au-Prince, Haiti (PAP)
- Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic (POP)
- Seattle (SEA)
- St. Lucia (UVF)
- St. Thomas (STT)

JetBlue will also add three routes from LaGuardia to:

- Charleston, South Carolina (CHS)
- Denver (DEN)
- Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts (MVY)

All routes will be flown by an Airbus A320, except for flights to Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, which will be operated by the 100-seat Embraer 190. Note that The Newark to St. Lucia service will be operated by a Mint-equipped Airbus A321 on select Saturdays.

As part of the news, JetBlue is also boosting its recently announced Key West flights from JFK and Boston to year-round thanks to strong demand.

All aforementioned JetBlue flights will be available for purchase beginning Feb. 23.

The route-map expansion is largely focused on bringing pandemic-weary travelers to outdoor-friendly destinations like the national parks near Jackson Hole or the Florida beaches in Pensacola and Key West. The move fits into the pandemic-era network strategy that AA, JetBlue and other competitors have recently employed — shift the focus from business routes to those filled with leisure travelers.

All the newly announced services join three other flagship long-haul routes that American has already promised for 2021, including New York-JFK to Athens (ATH), Rio de Janeiro (GIG) and Tel Aviv (TLV).