



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday April 3, 2025

United Airlines welcomed for South Australia's first ever direct flights to USA

United Airlines will commence direct flights between Adelaide and San Francisco from December 2025 in what will be the first ever direct route between South Australia and the United States of America.

In an historic announcement for South Australia, the new connection between the two countries will deliver a huge boost to the economy through tourism and trade, including for business events and conferences.

It also means South Australians will no longer have to endure travelling to Melbourne, Brisbane or Sydney, often catching a bus to an international terminal just to connect to a US flight.

Commencing as a seasonal service departing San Francisco on 11 December 2025 and subject to government approvals, the 15-hour flight will operate three times per week until March – with a possibility to increase in the future as demand grows. The first flight will depart Adelaide for San Francisco on 13 December 2025.

The flight will operate on a Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner, with 257 seats, including 48 in United PolarisSM Business Class and 21 in United Premium PlusSM.

Flights will arrive into Adelaide at 9:30am on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays and departing the same day for San Francisco at 2:55pm. Tickets are on sale today.

United Airlines is the world's largest airline as measured by available seat miles and operates the most comprehensive global route network among North American carriers.

When the new flight launches, United will become the only airline with nonstop service to four Australian cities — Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and Adelaide — offering more routes between the two countries than any other carrier.

San Francisco is a major hub for United Airlines in the US, acting as the airline's primary West Coast and transpacific gateway, and as a major maintenance facility. Travellers from Adelaide can take advantage of one-stop connections to more than 75 US destinations previously only reachable with two connections from the airline's San Francisco hub, including New York City, Orlando, Las Vegas, Denver, Chicago, Seattle and Washington, D.C. The flight also serves as a one-stop connection for travellers from Perth, who are currently not served by a US direct route.

United has partnered with Virgin Australia since 2022, establishing codeshare co-operation, reciprocal loyalty benefits for Velocity Frequent Flyer members and United MileagePlus members.

The United States is a key strategic partner for South Australia, most notably through the AUKUS agreement – however South Australia’s trade links to the US are well established with key exports including wine, meat (especially beef), fruit and vegetables, and nuts.

This deal with United Airlines will see direct flights from the 3rd largest international visitor market for Australia.

For the year ending December 2024, there were 669,000 trips from the U.S. to Australia with visitors spending \$2.0 billion.

Quotes attributable to Peter Malinauskas

Today is an historic occasion for South Australians who have long wanted to fly direct to the United States.

For many years, the ambition of a direct route between South Australia and the US has been out of reach.

With our State’s economy outperforming the nation, and the historic AUKUS agreement set to drive unprecedented investment into South Australia – now is the right time for direct flights to the US.

I encourage any South Australians who are heading to the US to take advantage of this magnificent service into San Francisco each year.

Quotes attributable to Zoe Bettison

The United States is a key tourism market for South Australia, with more than 44,000 visitors experiencing our State last year – contributing \$77 million to our State’s economy.

Our guests from America love to explore and know that South Australia is a great place to experience unique settings and wildlife – to get up close with kangaroos and koalas or swim with dolphins and sea lions.

They love the rugged outback of the Flinders Ranges, and the pristine nature of Kangaroo Island, our premium produce, delicious dining – and of course our wine. It’s a nice coincidence that the Napa Valley is one hour north of San Francisco – just as the Barossa is one hour north of Adelaide.

This is a historic collaboration between United Airlines and our state which was recently named one of the most welcoming regions on the planet by booking.com. I would like to extend a warm South Australian welcome to all Americans who are looking for the perfect Australian holiday.

Lastly, I’d like to congratulate the team at the South Australian Tourism Commission and Adelaide Airport Ltd for their hard work in attracting United Airlines to our State – it’s a tremendous result for our tourism industry.

Quotes attributable to Adelaide Airport Ltd Managing Director, Brenton Cox

This is a significant moment for Adelaide Airport, our community and our State. Adelaide will now be connected directly to an entirely new continent – this is a core connection in our aviation network vision that has been decades in the making.



United Airlines has seized this opportunity, and they will benefit greatly from this commitment to Adelaide and South Australia.

This is also an opportunity that would not be possible without the vision and commitment of our South Australian government to furthering our State's interests through aviation connectivity.

This service will directly benefit business, investment and our broader tourism economy.

We will now have even greater business connectivity and export and supply chain opportunities with North America – improving links with what is already our State's second biggest export market.

Thank you to United Airlines for their confidence in our market and to the State Government and the South Australian Tourism Commission for their support in achieving this great outcome for our State. We intend to make this service a great success and build this towards a year-round service in years to come.

Quotes attributable to United Airlines Managing Director for APAC Airport Operations, Sam Shinohara

At United, we're changing the way people think about where they travel – by offering the greatest access to see and explore the world, whether it's for relaxation, adventure or business.

We know that direct flights are a big factor in people deciding where to travel. This game-changing new flight will add almost 25,000 more seats between the US and Australia each year and makes United the only airline to offer nonstop service between the US and four major cities in Australia.

Our strong partnership with Virgin Australia and our comprehensive US domestic network provide unparalleled connectivity, making United the clear choice for customers' travel between the two countries.

We look forward to launching this new service in December and thank the South Australian Government and South Australian Tourism Commission for their support.