

Finnair becomes 1st airline in Europe, third in the world to fly Airbus' A350

TODAY IN THE SKY Jeremy Dwyer-Lindgren, Special for USA TODAY 2:49 p.m. EDT October 11, 2015



Finnair became the first airline in Europe and the third in the world to begin flying Airbus' new-age A350 jet. The carrier made its first regular passenger flight on the jet Friday on a route between Helsinki and Amsterdam. Finnair's first A350 flight came just two days after the airline took delivery of the jet at a ceremony at Airbus headquarters in Toulouse, France.

The A350 is the first of 19 ordered by the Finnish flag carrier. The jet initially will fly on intra-European routes before shifting to long-haul service on Nov. 21, when Finnair begins using the A350 for its service between Helsinki and Shanghai.

The airline plans to launch A350 flights to the USA by the end of the year, using the aircraft on the New York JFK-Helsinki route.



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"Finnair has enjoyed a long and prosperous working relationship with Airbus and the A350 takes our cooperation to another level. This aircraft is the future of flying and will give our passengers a completely new and enhanced travel experience," Finnair CEO Pekka Vauramo says in a statement.

The A350 is a mid-sized widebody geared to long-haul routes. Its passenger-friendly enhancements include larger windows, lower cabin humidity and more comfortable pressurization levels. Finnair is outfitting its initial A350s in a three-class configuration, seating 46 in business class, 43 in economy comfort and 208 in economy a total of 297 passengers.

Finnair's A350s will add to the carrier's all-Airbus fleet. The other aircraft in Finnair's line-up include 15 A330 and A340 long-haul wide-body jets and 30 A320-family narrowbody aircraft.

Wednesday's (Oct. 7) delivery made Finnair the first European airline to take the A350. Globally, Finnair is the third airline to take Airbus' most modern jet. [Qatar Airways](#) became the first in the world to fly it, taking delivery of its A350 in December of 2014 and [putting it into scheduled passenger service a month later](#).

Vietnam Airlines [became the world's second airline to get an A350 in June](#).

