

## What you need to know: Airline operations: Africa

October 23, 2020

As demand declines and governments around the world restrict travel, airlines are adjusting their operations, and, in some cases, suspending all services.

This report summarizes what airlines in Africa are doing and planning.

### North Africa

Airline	Action and plans
EgyptAir	Operating domestic services and international flights to 32 destinations from August
Royal Air Maroc	Domestic flights resumed on June 25, with special international flights launched from July 15.
Tunisair	Maintaining limited international service to Europe and Egypt until April 4

#### EgyptAir

EgyptAir operated its last international flight on March 19 as Egypt implemented a ban on international air services until March 31.<sup>1</sup> The ban was subsequently extended until April 15.

From June 12, EgyptAir resumed limited international services, rolling out new flights to six European destinations: Amsterdam, Frankfurt, London, Munich, Paris and Vienna.<sup>2</sup> On some flights, including those to London, only Egyptian residents could book seats.

As countries gradually reopen their borders, Egyptair aimed to operate 35 weekly departures to international destinations from August 1, 2020:<sup>3</sup>

- Africa: Addis Ababa, Dar es Salaam, Juba, Khartoum, N'Djamena (Chad), Nairobi and Tunis
- Europe: Amsterdam, Athens, Brussels, Budapest, Copenhagen, Frankfurt, Geneva, Larnaca, London, Madrid, Milan, Munich, Paris, Rome and Vienna.
- Middle East: Abu Dhabi, Baghdad, Bahrain, Beirut, Dubai, Erbil and Sharjah
- North America: New York, Toronto and Washington DC

#### Royal Air Maroc

With Morocco in a state of emergency, national airline Royal Air Maroc (RAM) suspended all domestic flights from March 21 until further notice.<sup>4</sup> It had already suspended international flights from March 19.

As at June 1, all RAM flights remained suspended until further notice.<sup>5</sup> The airline resumed domestic services on June 25, initially flying from Casablanca to Laayoune, Dakhla, Oujda and Agadir. It has promised to gradually increase flight frequency and destinations.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Ahrum Online](#), March 19, 2020

<sup>2</sup> [Business Traveller](#), June 7, 2020

<sup>3</sup> [Egypt Today](#), July 21, 2020

<sup>4</sup> [Reuters](#), March 21, 2020

<sup>5</sup> [Royal Air Maroc](#), June 1, 2020

<sup>6</sup> [Royal Air Maroc](#), June 24, 2020

On July 15, 2020, RAM launched a new program of special international flights operated under certain conditions. Passengers are only eligible to fly if meeting conditions required by Moroccan authorities. They must also present a negative COVID-19 PCR test of less than 48 hours. RAM currently offers the following services from Casablanca:

- Africa – Abidjan, Algiers, Dakar, Nouakchott, Tunis
- Europe – Amsterdam, Barcelona, Bologna, Bordeaux, Brussels, London, Lyon, Madrid, Malaga, Marseille, Milan, Moscow, Paris, Rome
- Middle East – Dubai, Istanbul, Jeddah
- North America – Montreal, New York

It also operates flights to Paris from Fez, Marrakech, Oujda and Rabat

### Tunisair

From March 14 until April 4, 2020, Tunisair cancelled all flights to Italy.<sup>7</sup> It also scaled back its services to a single weekly operation to Germany (Frankfurt) and the U.K. (London), while Egypt (Cairo) and Spain (Madrid) are served once every 15 days. Tunisair is maintaining three weekly flights to France (Paris).

On June 12, with the relaxation of travel restrictions, Tunisair Express resumed flights from Tunis to Naples.<sup>8</sup>

### Sub-Saharan Africa

Airline	Action and plans
Air Mauritius	Most flights suspended and airline in voluntary administration
Comair	All British Airways and Kulula services suspended until December 1. Airline in business rescue
Ethiopian Airlines	Steadily restarting international routes, with 18 domestic and 81 international destinations served by October 1, 2020
Kenya Airways	International services resumed from August 1
RwandAir	Resumed operations in August
South African Airways	International flights halted until the end of July

### Air Mauritius

Already financially-troubled before the onset of COVID-19, the decision to suspend all flights from the start of April proved to be too much for Air Mauritius. The airline entered voluntary administration on April 22. With demand not expected to return until late 2020, Air Mauritius concluded that it would be unable to meet its financial obligations for the foreseeable future.

On July 1, 2020, Air Mauritius resumed domestic services, flying daily from Mauritius to Rodrigues. By September 1, Air Mauritius had increased frequency to thrice-daily.<sup>9</sup> International passenger flights

<sup>7</sup> [Tunisair](#), March 13, 2020

<sup>8</sup> [Arab Air Carrier's Organization](#), June 15, 2020

<sup>9</sup> [Air Mauritius](#), September 2, 2020

stayed suspended until the beginning of October, when Air Mauritius was able to resume weekly services to Paris and Reunion.

### Comair

South African carrier Comair suspended all British Airways franchise flights and Kulula low-cost services from March 26, 2020. It initially planned to resume services on April 19,<sup>10</sup> but then pushed back the resumption of services until May 3.

At the end of April, Comair announced to shareholders that it did not now expect to restart flights until October or November.<sup>11</sup> As a result of an extended period without revenue, Comair entered a business rescue on May 5 to give it time to restructure its business.

In need of a substantial cash injection, Comair does not now expect to resume operations before November, even though South African authorities allowed domestic services to restart in June.

At the beginning of September, Comair's business plan envisaged a group of private investors relaunching the airline on December 1, 2020. A statement on the Kulula website confirms this intention.

### Ethiopian Airlines

Ethiopian Airlines suspended many of its international routes, continuing service to just 11 destinations. It started to rebuild its international network during June, and by October 1, it was operating flights to the following destinations:<sup>12</sup>

- Domestic – Araba Minch (5), Asossa (5), Awassa (7), Axum (7), Bahir Dar (28), Bale Robe (3), Combolcha (5), Dire Dawa (28), Gambella (7), Gode (2), Gondar (21), Jijiga (28), Jimma (7), Jinka (5), Lalibela (3), Mekelle (21), Semera (3), Shire (5)
- Africa – Abidjan (4), Abuja (7), Accra (7), Bamako (3), Beira (2), Brazzaville (3), Cairo (7), Cape Town (3), Conakry (3), Cotonou (3), Dakar (3), Dar Es Salaam (7), Djibouti (9), Douala (3), Garowe (3), Goma (3), Harare (7), Hargeisa (7), Johannesburg (7), Juba (7), Khartoum (14), Kigalai (5), Kilimanjaro (5), Kinshasa (7), Lagos (5), Libreville (2), Lilongwe (1), Lome (7), Luanda (4), Lubumbashi (7), Lusaka (7), Mahe (4), Malabo (1), Maputo (3), Mogadishu (11), Mombassa (7), Moroni (3), Nairobi (9), Ndola (1), N'Jamena (5), Niamey (3), Ouagadougou (3), Pointe Noire (3), Windhoek (4), Yaounde (3), Zanzibar (5)
- Americas – Chicago (4), Newark (4), Sao Paulo (5), Toronto (4), Washington DC (7)
- Asia – Bangkok (1), Chengdu (1), Guangzhou (1), Hong Kong (5), Jakarta (4), Kuala Lumpur (1), Manila (2), Seoul (4), Shanghai (1), Tokyo Narita (4)
- Europe – Athens (1), Brussels (7), Frankfurt (7), Geneva (2), London (7), Manchester (3), Marseille (2), Milan (5), Paris (7), Rome (5), Stockholm (4), Vienna (4)
- Middle East – Beirut (7), Doha (3), Dubai (12), Istanbul (4), Jeddah (3), Kuwait (1), Riyadh (3), Tel Aviv (3)

### Kenya Airways

Following a government directive banning all international passenger traffic for 30 days, from midnight on March 25, Kenya Airlines temporarily ended all international services until further notice.<sup>13</sup> The airline had previously reduced its network by 70% in response to falling demand.

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<sup>10</sup> [Comair](#), March 24, 2020

<sup>11</sup> [Cirium](#), April 30, 2020

<sup>12</sup> [Ethiopian Airlines](#), July 24, 2020

<sup>13</sup> [Kenya Airways](#), March 22, 2020

Between July 6 and July 10, 2020, Kenya Airways had planned to resume service on almost all of its network, however, all international services remain suspended until August 1, with the exception of Malindi which was suspended until further notice.<sup>14</sup> Kenya Airways resumed domestic operations on July 15, flying daily from Nairobi to Kisumu and twice daily to Mombasa.

Kenya Airways resumed international operations on August 1, initially flying from Nairobi to Addis Ababa, Dubai, Kigali, London and Lusaka. During the month, the airline also resumed services to Accra, Dzaoudzi (Mayotte), Freetown, Harare, Kilimanjaro, Lagos, Monrovia, Moroni (Comoros), Nampula (Mozambique) and Zanzibar. Demand will determine the resumption of service to other destinations. Kenya Airways plans to restart flights to China, Thailand and the U.S. from October 2020.<sup>15</sup>

All Kenya Airways passengers must reconfirm their booking at least 72 hours before domestic departure and seven days before international departure.

### RwandAir

Following instructions from the country's ministry of health, RwandAir began a 30-day complete grounding from March 20.<sup>16</sup> On June 17, with Rwanda's borders remaining closed to commercial flights, RwandAir extended its grounding until restrictions are lifted.

The airline resumed commercial passenger services on August 1, 2020.<sup>17</sup> RwandAir planned to start on select African routes, where travel restrictions have been eased and borders have reopened. It presently flies to the following destinations: Abuja, Accra, Brazzaville, Cotonou, Dar es Salaam, Douala, Entebbe, Harare, Johannesburg, Kamembe, Kigali, Kilimanjaro, Kinshasa, Lagos, Libreville, Lusaka and Nairobi.<sup>18</sup>

Rwandair also resumed long-haul operations with a thrice-weekly service to Dubai from August 1. It will add more countries to its network as countries lift restrictions. Flights to London and Brussels resumed from October 3, 2020.

### South African Airways

On March 20, 2020, South African Airways (SAA) immediately cancelled all international services until the end of May.<sup>19</sup> It ended long-haul services to New York JFK, Washington DC, London, Frankfurt, Munich, Perth and Sao Paulo. SAA also suspended regional services to Accra (Ghana), Lusaka and Livingstone (Zambia), Harare and Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe), Windhoek (Namibia), Lagos (Nigeria), Entebbe (Uganda), Blantyre and Lilongwe (Malawi), Nairobi (Kenya), Kinshasa (DR Congo), Dar Es Salaam (Tanzania) and Maputo (Mozambique).

SAA has suspended all regional and long-haul flights until the end of October 2020. Although the domestic market has reopened, SAA has not resumed operations within South Africa, choosing instead to maintain a presence by marketing on flights operated by low-cost carrier Mango.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> [Kenya Airways](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Kenya Airways](#), August 1, 2020

<sup>16</sup> [Breaking Travel News](#), March 20, 2020

<sup>17</sup> [Breaking Travel News](#), July 23

<sup>18</sup> [RwandAir](#), July 22, 2020

<sup>19</sup> [SAA](#), March 20, 2020

<sup>20</sup> [SAA](#)

#### Note

The COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving, and the situation is changing on almost an hourly basis. The information presented in this report represents the latest view as at October 23, 2020. We have carefully researched and checked the information contained. However, we do not guarantee or warrant the correctness, completeness or topicality of this article and do not accept any liability for any damage or loss as a result of the use of the information contained within this article.

Do you have questions or comments regarding this report? Please email [mike.eggleton@bcdtravel.co.uk](mailto:mike.eggleton@bcdtravel.co.uk) to share your thoughts.