

Activities and events lined up as Kenya Airways turns 36

National carrier Kenya Airways is now 36, having launched its first flight in February 1977 following the breakup of the East African Community and disbanding of East African Airways.



With only six aircraft when it was launched by the Kenyan government - four inherited from the collapsed regional airline and two leased ones - the airline has since been privatised and grown its fleet and route network significantly. Today, Kenya Airways flies to over 50 destinations across the world and operates a fleet of 41 aircraft.

"Our 36th anniversary is an opportunity for us to celebrate the achievements that we have had so far, learn from our experiences, and re-energise for the future," said Dr Titus Naikuni, Kenya Airways' CEO. For its 36th anniversary, the airline has lined up a series of activities and events including rewarding loyal customers with various prizes that include a state-of-the-art Range Rover Sport. The anniversary coincides with Kenya marking 50 years of independence.

During its 36 years of existence, Kenya Airways has achieved several key milestones, which include striking a strategic partnership with KLM in 1995; issuing an Initial Public Offering in 1996; and the Rights Issue in 2012. This has seen the airline create jobs and contribute towards developing the Kenyan economy. Today, Kenya Airways' expansion has resulted in the airline not only continuing to play an integral role in connecting many African countries to the world, but the carrier's growth is also seen as a symbol of Africa's emergence as an economic force on the world stage. It has won several major global travel industry awards and accolades over the years.

Ten-year growth plan

In terms of passenger safety, Kenya Airways has consistently maintained high standards during the course of its history, achieving the IATA (International Air Transport Association) Operational Safety Audit certification in 2005, making it the first airline in sub-Saharan Africa to attain these quality standards. The 36th anniversary comes as the airline implements its 10-year growth plan, Project Mawingu, which aims at operating a fleet of 119 aircraft from 35, besides increasing its destinations from 58 to 115 routes by the end of 2021.

Kenya Airways is also part of the Sky Team, a global network of 19 international carriers, having joined in 2007. Through the network, the airlines co-operate in providing service, easing connections amongst them, thus making flights smoother and more simplified with seamless travel for passengers. Through Sky Team, KQ is able to offer its passengers service from 1000 airports in 187 countries. Other value-added services introduced by the airline in recent days include the introduction of the Msafiri Gold Card, which allows cardholders to accumulate frequent flyer points for any purchases made at Visa points of sale worldwide.

And to cement its position in the East African region, the airline owns a 34% stake in Tanzania's Precision Air - a regional carrier flying to key destinations in southern Africa.

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