

Free Facebook and Twitter on Mango during August

Mango Airlines has welcomed its sixth new generation Boeing 737-800 to its fleet, launched an optimised schedule with increased frequencies on its routes, while the first week of August signals the final stretch of the G-Connect In-Flight Wi-Fi beta period. Five of the airline's six aircraft are now enabled with the service with the sixth scheduled to come online at the end of September.



Marking the final home stretch of the beta phase, Mango and partner G-Connect will discount all on-board Wi-Fi access by 50% during August between Johannesburg and Cape Town while all social media functionality on Facebook and Twitter will be at no cost to travellers, bar video uploads.

"Approximately 8% of all guests on enabled aircraft are online during flight at this time," says Mango CEO Nico Bezuidenhout. "This is in line with global usage benchmarks. Discounting usage as we approach the end of the beta phase as well as opening up social media at no cost should drive increased adoption of the service." He says that Mango aims to achieve at least 30% usage per flight by November.

Innovation remains a cornerstone

Mango's market share on routes that it operates on has increased from 15% in early 2011 to just below 20% by June 2012. "Accessibility, innovation and on-time performance remain some of the cornerstones of our business," says Bezuidenhout, who adds that since its launch a little over a year ago, Mango's Lanseria Cape Town route has experienced phenomenal growth up to 40% on certain flights.

While encouraged by the growth, Bezuidenhout notes that domestic capacity still exceeds demand and competition remains fierce. "The industry has not turned a corner yet and while our volumes are up, revenue remains under pressure." He adds that some operational costs have near doubled over the past two years with fare levels not keeping up. "Average fare levels have remained relatively consistent over the past three years ensuring air-travel continues to be a buyers' market with some exceptional deals available. The time to fly," he says, "is now."

Mango will also make flights available between Johannesburg and Cape Town from R699 and will offer free Facebook and Twitter on board all its aircraft enabled with G-Connect In-Flight Wi-Fi between 1 and 31 August.