SOUTHWEST TO LAUNCH LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT

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Southwest Airlines will launch its first international flights in and out of Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) to Liberia/Guanacaste, Costa Rica in April 2016, subject to government approval. It is also fun to note that this new flight would be the longest flight in Southwest's route network.

Alaska operates year-round flights to Liberia from LAX while Delta operates seasonal flights only.

Southwest-737-800-New-Livery-Ian-Petchenik
Photo Credits: Ian Petchenik

"This new link for our Customers in the LA Basin to Costa Rica's growing resort and ecotourism region will bring to the market a value only Southwest can offer with bags fly free, no change fees, and low fares, all alongside our famously friendly Customer Service," said Andrew Watterson, Southwest Airlines Senior Vice President of Network & Revenue Management. "We proudly carry

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more passengers to and from California airports than any other airline and continue to invest in the Golden State by adding new short, medium, and long-haul service this year from all nine of our California airports."

"I'm pleased to welcome Southwest Airlines' first new international route out of LAX," said Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti. "This new international flight will contribute to the expanding relationship between Southern California and Latin America while bringing over $600 millionannually to our local economy and supporting thousands of jobs for Angelenos."

Meanwhile, Southwest and the airport are working on a $508 million dollar renovation over the next two years that includes a new ticketing lobby and baggage claim facility in Terminal 1 which are both set to open early next year. New entrances and additional capacity in the security checkpoint will also be worked on, and they are expected to be ready in 2017.

Since it is an international flight, the flights will operate out of terminal 2.

"We are just getting started with a service footprint outside the U.S. mainland designed to offer the more than 100 million people who fly with us every year international opportunities to connect with what's important to them," Watterson said. "Our list of opportunities is long and Liberia, Costa Rica is just the beginning of the international destinations we plan to offer from LAX."

On Facebook, Southwest hinted that more new international destinations out of Los Angeles are expected to be announced.

California has been an important state for Southwest when it started service in 1982; today, it flies to nine airports in California, and it offers the most daily departures than any other airline in California. Orange County/Santa Ana already has international Southwest flights.

As long as the new route is approved, customers will be able to begin purchasing tickets early next year.

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