

## Air India to operate San Francisco flights from Dec

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Air India on Friday (September 30) announced the launch of thrice weekly non-stop flights from Mumbai to San Francisco (SFO) from December 2 and the return of its thrice weekly from Bengalur to SFO from December 15.

The service expansion at SFO was part of the carrier's announcement that it's adding five Boeing 777 aircraft to its fleet from December. Air India is tight-lipped on when it will start flying the nonstop routes from SFO to Bangalore and Mumbai.

United Airlines, the dominant carrier at SFO, has temporarily suspended its SFO to New Delhi flight in response to the situation in Ukraine and continued closure of Russia air space, a United spokesperson said in August. United also has postponed several times its new SFO-to-Bangalore nonstop service, which is now scheduled to start March 25, 2023.

United's SFO-to-New Delhi nonstop is also appearing in United's schedule, starting March 25, according to the airline's website.

The carrier is selling tickets on the SFO-to-Bangalore nonstop for seats in economy, premium economy and business classes. On the SFO to New Delhi nonstop

on March 25, the airline is listing fares for premium economy and business class tickets but economy class is “not available” despite a seat map that looks wide open, according to United’s website. United declined to comment Friday about its service from SFO to India.

Air India plans to offer premium economy service for the first time on the five 777 planes being added to its fleet.

"After a long time without significant growth, Air India is delighted to resume expanding its fleet and global footprint," Campbell Wilson, CEO and managing director at Air India, said of the carrier's plan to expand its fleet by a total of 30 planes. "Air India has exciting expansion and renewal plans, of which these new aircraft are just the beginning."

Separately, Emirates recently said it will debut premium economy service on nonstops between SFO and Dubai, starting Feb. 15. Premium economy is popular with travelers who are seeking more space and services than economy class offers but aren’t willing to pay for pricier business or first class.

This week, United and Emirates unveiled a partnership agreement that allows Emirates customers flying into three of United’s biggest hubs — San Francisco, Chicago and Houston — to have easier access to nearly 200 U.S. cities in United’s network — most of them with a one-stop connection.

United also is launching a new nonstop flight between Newark, New Jersey and Dubai, starting in March, which will allow United customers to connect onto Emirates or its sister airline Flydubai to more than 100 different cities. From its huge hub in Dubai, Emirates serves many cities globally, including destinations in India.

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