

ITA Airways cancels Milan-New York flight

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Rome: ITA Airways, Italy's state-owned flag carrier, will drop its route connecting Milan/Malpensa and New York/JFK.

The news was confirmed by the Italian press.

According to Corriere della Sera, the last rotation between the two cities will be operated on January 7th, with the arrival back to Milan the following day.

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The newspaper reports that about 7,000 passengers were affected with cancelled flights after that date. With the move, ITA officially leaves Milan's Malpensa Airport, while JFK will retain its twice-daily operation from the airline's hub in Rome/Fiumicino.

ITA Airways' operations in Milan will continue through corporate-

favorite, short-haul Linate Airport, closer to downtown than Malpensa and slot-constrained.

Italian newspaper reports, citing sources from the airline, that Milan-New York was the company's single loss-making long-haul route. It was so even during the Alitalia years, although ITA and Alitalia are technically and legally not the same company: in 2018, Corriere reports, the late airline had a negative EBIT of EUR1.8 million in the segment.

Connecting two major financial centers, Milan-New York is an attractive route for airlines. According to Cirium's Diio Mi application, no less than seven serve the two cities nonstop: American Airlines, Delta, Emirates, ITA, La Compagnie (a business class-only airline, via Newark) Neos and United (via Newark). In 2023, ITA held about 12.6% of the offer of seats in the route. In 2019, this figure stood around 13.9pc.

This shrinking figure is added the fact that, by having no connectivity from Milan/Malpensa and a focus on Rome/Fiumicino not only for its business model but also on its codeshare/interlining partnerships, the route from Malpensa to JFK relied mostly on demand between the two cities.

Thereby, if not insufficient, demand had to be at least stimulated through lower fares, resulting in worse financial results in the route. In other words, ITA believes it has more to gain by deploying the Airbus A330-200 it bases in Milan in routes from its hub in Rome/Fiumicino, where in many times it may have traffic fed in both ends.

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