

## **Qatar chooses Airbus, dumps Boeing 737 fleet**

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 14 December, 2024



Doha: Qatar Airways is considering removing the Boeing 737-10 model from its order book, as the aircraft no longer aligns with its fleet needs, according to sources familiar with the matter.

The airline, which had an order for 25 737-10s, is looking into the possibility of switching to the smaller 737-8 model. These planes would likely be allocated to partners such as RwandAir and Virgin Australia Holdings Ltd., who already operate the 737-8, the sources said, speaking on condition of anonymity due to the private nature of the discussions.

The deal for the 737s was finalized in mid-2022, amid a contentious dispute with Airbus SE that resulted in the cancellation of an agreement for 50 A321 narrowbody jets.

The spat, which originated with the larger A350 model, was later settled

out of court and Airbus reinstated the order, leaving Qatar on the hook for the Boeing narrowbody planes that it now doesn't need anymore.

Qatar Airways declined to comment, and a Boeing official said the manufacturer would defer to the customer.

In July, the airline's Chief Executive Officer Badr Al Meer said that relationships had improved with Airbus, and that the planemaker is delivering aircraft earlier than planned. Al Meer took over from Akbar Al Baker, who had clashed with Airbus over flaking paint on the larger A350 planes.

Qatar predominantly flies long-haul models like the Airbus A350 as well as Boeing's 787 and 777 planes. As part of the switch into smaller 737 Max planes, the company may also take more 787 aircraft from Boeing, the people said. The airline could also choose to opt for the 777 freighter, another person said.

The 737 Max 10 is the largest variant of Boeing's popular single-aisle family. Qatar Airways would join carriers including United Airlines Holdings Inc. and Virgin Australia that have switched out of some orders for the long-delayed Max 10.

The commercial debut of the model isn't expected before later in 2025 at best. Certification is years behind schedule as the US manufacturer grapples with tougher regulatory scrutiny and redesign of the jet engines anti-ice system.

Qatar Airways is separately working on a large order for new aircraft, which may come early next year.

-B