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Virgin Australia announces partnership with Qatar Airways ^[2]



- New partnership includes an expansive codeshare agreement and loyalty benefits offering Virgin Australia and Qatar Airways passengers unique rewards and seamless travel across both carriers' networks.
- Increased travel options and benefits across 35 destinations in Australia for Qatar Airways passengers and to more than 140 destinations worldwide for Virgin Australia passengers.

Qatar Airways, voted the 'World's Best Airline' at the 2021 Skytrax industry awards, and Australia's most loved carrier, Virgin Australia, have today unveiled a new strategic partnership that will significantly expand both airlines' networks, lounges and loyalty programmes.

The partnership, to commence later this year, will give travellers greater access, unparalleled customer experience and unique benefits when travelling between Australia and Qatar Airways' global network, with convenient transit options across Qatar Airways' Australian gateways and key Virgin Australia hubs, including Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. The strategic alliance will provide a critical trade and tourism boost for Australia, while opening a world of new travel opportunities for both airline's customers.

The partnership agreement was announced at the start of the Arabian Travel Market in Dubai, where Qatar Airways has a significant presence.

Qatar Airways currently operates daily flights into Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, and Perth as well as three weekly flights into Adelaide continuing into Auckland, New Zealand. Thanks to the new codeshare agreement, Qatar Airways' passengers will be able to travel seamlessly to 35 destinations on Virgin Australia's extensive domestic network, including key popular Australian tourist destinations, such as Cairns, Gold Coast, Alice Springs and Broome, on a single booking.

Qatar Airways' passengers will also have access to Virgin Australia's recently relaunched short-haul international markets, including Fiji and Queenstown, New Zealand. Similarly, Virgin Australia customers and members of the airline's award-winning Velocity Frequent Flyer loyalty program, will be able to directly access Qatar Airways' route network of over 140 worldwide destinations, including the Middle East, Europe and Africa, via the airline's hub and Skytrax-rated 'World's Best Airport', Hamad International in Doha.

For Virgin Australia guests, access to Qatar Airways' extensive network provides one-stop connectivity to a wide range of destinations and the ability to book Qatar Airways flights through the Virgin Australia website. Qatar Airways serves 54 cities in Europe with over 600 flights per week, offering a huge range of new choices for Virgin Australia customers. Likewise, Qatar Airways passengers can book flights on the Virgin Australia network through www.qatarairways.com [3].

The strategic partnership will also include reciprocal loyalty benefits allowing Qatar Airways Privilege Club members to earn and redeem Avios when flying on Virgin Australia, with similar benefits for Velocity members when travelling on Qatar Airways' services. Privilege Club and Velocity members will also enjoy a wide range of other unique benefits, depending on status tier, which may include complimentary lounge access, complimentary extra baggage allowance, priority check-in, priority boarding and priority baggage delivery when flying respectively on Virgin Australia and Qatar Airways. Qatar Airways Privilege Club recently enhanced its programme through its partnership with Avios, significantly expanding accrual and redemption opportunities for its members.

The partnership with Virgin Australia builds on Qatar Airways' long-term commitment to connecting Australia to the world. During the COVID pandemic, Qatar Airways was the only airline consistently operating international services to Australia, providing critical links for Australians to return home.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker said: "We have a strong, long-standing relationship with Australia and this agreement with Virgin Australia comes at a time when it is needed the most. This partnership will give Australian passengers access to the world that they have so acutely missed these past two years, to be able to reconnect with family and friends, and keep the wheels of trade moving. We hope many of them will stopover in Doha to enjoy the wonderful tourism industry that Qatar has to offer. For those travelling farther afield, they will benefit from the award-winning facilities of our hub, Hamad International Airport, enabling their onward journey. It also opens up the beautiful, cosmopolitan nation of Australia to our passengers flying in on Qatar Airways flights, after such a long, difficult time."

Virgin Australia Group Chief Executive Officer Jayne Hrdlicka said: "Today is more great news for Virgin Australia and Velocity Frequent Flyer members who are hungry to travel internationally. We are incredibly focused on creating great travel experiences and our new partnership with Qatar Airways will significantly expand Virgin Australia's footprint into the Middle East, Europe and Africa, offering hundreds more ways our guests can seamlessly see the world. Virgin Australia and Qatar Airways are both known for their award-winning service and joining forces means that together we can provide an incredible experience when travelling between Australia, the Middle East, Europe, Africa and beyond. Qatar Airways has been a very important partner to Australia during the pandemic, maintaining vital connectivity to the world in difficult circumstances. We are proud to have Qatar Airways join the Virgin Australia family and we look forward to welcoming their guests onboard Virgin Australia services later this year."

About Qatar Airways

A multiple award-winning airline, Qatar Airways was announced as the 'Airline of the Year' at the 2021 World Airline Awards, managed by the international air transport rating organisation, Skytrax. It was also named 'World's Best Business Class', 'World's Best Business Class Airline Lounge', 'World's Best Business Class Airline Seat', 'World's Best Business Class Onboard Catering' and 'Best Airline in the Middle East'. The airline continues to stand alone at the top of the industry having won the main prize for an unprecedented sixth time (2011, 2012, 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2021).

Qatar Airways has also become the first global airline in the world to achieve the prestigious 5-Star COVID-19 Airline Safety Rating by Skytrax. This follows the success of Hamad International Airport as the first airport in the Middle East and Asia to be awarded a Skytrax 5-Star COVID-19 Airport Safety Rating. These awards provide assurance to passengers across the world that the airline's health and safety measures are subject to the highest possible standards of professional, independent scrutiny and assessment. For full details of all the measures that have been implemented on board and at HIA, please visit qatarairways.com/safety.

About Virgin Australia

Founded in the Year 2000 by Sir Richard Branson, Virgin Australia is now one of the largest Australian airlines operating an extensive domestic network as well as short-haul international flights, charter and cargo services, and the award-winning loyalty program, Velocity Frequent Flyer. The Group employs more than 6,000 people and has been a competitor in the Australian aviation landscape for 22 years.

Virgin Australia boasts more than 10 million Velocity members who can use their Points to redeem flights to over 500 destinations around the world (increasing to more than 550 destinations later in 2022) through Virgin Australia and the airline's extensive list of international partner carriers.

Virgin Australia is incredibly focused on providing great travel experiences, optionality to fly the way you want to, and value through unrivalled airfare pricing. Virgin Australia currently offers travellers a choice to book three seating options; Business Class, Economy X and Economy on services all throughout Australia as well as to Fiji, Bali and Queenstown, New Zealand. Since November 2020, Virgin Australia has announced it will increase its Boeing 737 fleet more than 50 per cent, from 58 to 88 aircraft.

Virgin Australia has won several awards over the years including Best Cabin Crew in 2021 in the AirlineRatings.com Excellence Awards. In the same awards in 2019, Virgin Australia again won Best Cabin Crew as well as Best Economy Class. The same year saw Virgin Australia win Best Domestic Airline at the Australian Federation of Travel Agents National Travel Industry Awards and Velocity Frequent Flyer scooped a wealth of prestigious gongs at the Freddie Awards including Best Program of the Year, Best Customer Service and Best Redemption Ability for the Asia/Middle East and Oceania Airline category.

DOWNLOAD IMAGES [4]

MORE INFORMATION

With the continued expansion of the Virgin Australia Group global network, the airline will offer Points earn and redemption opportunities and tier benefits for Velocity members to the following new destinations upon commencement of the partnership with Qatar Airways:

- Abuja, Nigeria
- Adana, Turkey
- Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Al Najaf, Iraq

- Almaty, Kazakhstan
- Amristar, India
- Ankara, Turkey
- Antalya, Turkey
- Baghdad, Iraq
- Baku, Azerbaijan
- Belgrade, Serbia
- Bodrum, Turkey
- Borg El Arab, Egypt
- Bucharest, Romania
- Budapest, Hungary
- Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania
- Djibouti, Djibouti
- Entebbe, Uganda
- Erbil, Iraq
- Goa, India
- Helsinki, Finland
- Isfahn, Iran
- Izmir, Turkey
- Khartoum, Sudan
- Kiliminjaro, Tanzania
- Kozhilkode, India
- Lanarca, Cyprus
- Luanda, Angola
- Luxor, Egypt
- Luzon Island, Philippines
- Maputo, Mozambique
- Mashad, Iran
- Mikonos, Greece
- Mogadishu, Somalia
- Multan, Pakistan
- Nagpur, India
- Nairobi, Kenya
- Oslo, Norway
- Ostend, Belgium
- Pendik (Istanbul), Turkey
- Peshawar, India
- Prague, Czech Republic
- Salalah, Oman
- Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Sharjah, UAE
- Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt
- Sialkot, Pakistan
- Sofia, Bulgaria
- Sulaimaniyah, Iraq
- Tbilisi, Georgia
- Tehran, Iran
- Thira, Greece
- Tunis, Tunisia
- Warsaw, Poland
- Windhoek, Namibia
- Yerevan, Armenia
- Zagreb, Croatia

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