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Virgin Australia to introduce non-stop Christchurch-Rarotonga service ^[2]



Virgin Australia today announced the introduction of non-stop flights between Christchurch and the Cook Islands next year, with fares now on sale.

The airline will operate a weekly return service using its Boeing 737-800 aircraft between Christchurch and Rarotonga from 25 June 2016 to 8 October 2016.

Virgin Australia Chief Commercial Officer Judith Crompton said the new service makes it easy for holidaymakers from Christchurch and the South Island to visit the Cook Islands.

“The Cook Islands is a wonderful holiday destination and we are delighted to introduce the only non-stop service from Christchurch,” Ms Crompton said.

“With up to five flights each week already operating between Auckland and Rarotonga, this new service from Christchurch ensures more New Zealanders can conveniently explore this beautiful part of the world.

“Our flights between Christchurch and Rarotonga will feature our award-winning Business Class, with luxury leather seating and menus designed by our resident head chef Luke Mangan.”

Virgin Australia will offer the following services between 25 June and 8 October 2016:

- Christchurch – Rarotonga 1400/2035 each Saturday

(Arrives in Rarotonga the day prior)

- Rarotonga – Christchurch 2310/0225 each Friday

(Arrives in Christchurch on Sunday)

Fares are now on sale, with a celebratory launch one way fare of NZD\$299 available for purchase from today, 26 November until 28 November 2015.

Virgin Australia has worked closely with Christchurch Airport and Cook Islands Tourism Corporation to establish the service.

Christchurch Airport’s Chief Commercial officer – Aeronautical, Justin Watson said the reinstated flights are a big win for the South Island and the Cook Islands.

“Virgin Australia is offering convenient services to a destination which is much-requested and much-missed by South Islanders,” Mr Watson said.

“A Saturday afternoon departure allows South Islanders to drive to Christchurch and fly direct to a Cook Islands vacation. In recent years, we’ve seen strong growth in numbers of New Zealanders heading to the sun in the winter months, so this service adds another option for South Islanders.”

Cook Islands Tourism Corporation General Manager, Graeme West welcomed the announcement.

“This is fantastic news for people in the South Island looking for their winter getaway,” Mr West said.

“There hasn’t been a non-stop service from Christchurch to Rarotonga for many years and we have travellers and travel agents constantly asking when there will be one. We are delighted that Virgin Australia has seized the opportunity.

“It’s a short non-stop flight to paradise,” Mr West said.

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