



Alaska Airlines

Alaska Airlines traces its roots back to 1932 with the creation of McGee Airways. After several mergers and name changes, the name Alaska Airlines was adopted in 1944 and the company is now headquartered in Seattle, Washington. Alaska only flew within the state of Alaska and to Seattle until airline deregulation was enacted in 1978. Since that time the airline has been migrating into the lower 48 states as well as Hawaii, Canada, Mexico, and Russia primarily through its major hubs at Seattle and Anchorage as well as a secondary hub at Portland, Oregon. On September 18, 2014 Alaska inaugurated a single daily flight from Albuquerque to Seattle using a 163-seat Boeing 737-800 aircraft. Since the start of service Alaska has flown several other versions of the 737 to Albuquerque including the smaller -400 and -700 models and by 2016 was operating mostly the larger, 181-seat, 737-900ER aircraft. Many of its aircraft also have special paint schemes including a salmon fish, the Hawaiian Islands, several Disney themes, and a retro paint scheme from the 1940's. Alaska merged with Virgin America Airlines in 2018 and on March 10, 2019, Alaska began using former Virgin Airbus A320 aircraft on its Albuquerque flights. On April 30, 2019, a second mainline flight to Seattle was added with an Airbus A320 and occasionally an Airbus A319 and Airbus A321 were flown into Albuquerque.



Alaska Boeing 737-800 on its maiden arrival flight into Albuquerque on September 18, 2014.



Alaska Boeing 737-800 at Albuquerque featuring a retro livery from the 1940's.



Alaska Airlines route map from September 2014.



Alaska Boeing 737-900 at the Albuquerque Sunport in a new livery introduced in 2016.



Alaska Airbus A321neo arriving in Albuquerque in 2019.



Alaska Boeing 737-900 at Albuquerque in a special livery "Honoring Those Who Serve".

In the fall of 2017 Alaska's partner carrier, Horizon Air, began new service from Albuquerque to Portland, Oregon, Orange County, San Francisco, and San Diego, California. One daily flight to each airport was operated using new 76-seat Embraer-175 regional jets. Horizon also began one flight to Seattle complementing the Alaska mainline service but that flight was replaced with a second Alaska mainline jet in the spring of 2019. The flight to Orange County was discontinued in early 2019. In the spring of 2018, SkyWest Airlines, a second feeder carrier for Alaska, took over the flight to San Francisco that Horizon had started eight months prior and by March 10, 2019, SkyWest had taken over the flights to Portland and San Diego previously operated by Horizon. SkyWest also uses Embraer-175 regional jets, the same as Horizon. The San Diego and San Francisco flights were both discontinued in late 2019 and the Portland flight operation was then alternated between Horizon and SkyWest. A complete overview on Horizon Air and SkyWest can be found in the Major airline regional partner's section.



Alaska Horizon Embraer-175 taxiing for departure at the Albuquerque Sunport.

Upon the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, Alaska reduced its schedule at ABQ. The Portland flight had just been upgraded to a mainline Airbus A320 but was soon discontinued altogether. The second Seattle flight, operated by Horizon, was also discontinued. It was due to be upgraded to a mainline Airbus as well for the summer and Albuquerque was planned to have three daily flights for the summer of 2020, two Seattle and one Portland, all with mainline aircraft. Instead, a new flight to San Antonio, Texas was added from May 3 through June 14 as traffic had decreased so much that Alaska combined nonstop flights from Seattle to Albuquerque and from Seattle to San Antonio and operated just one flight on a Seattle-Albuquerque-San Antonio routing. From June 14, Albuquerque had only the one flight to Seattle using a Boeing 737-900. The Portland flight was resumed on October 4, 2020 using Horizon Air and SkyWest Embraer-175's. The Portland flight was upgraded back to a mainline jet once again in the spring of 2022 and a second Seattle flight was also planned with an Alaska mainline aircraft however it was later rescinded as Alaska, as well as most other airlines, began experiencing a worldwide labor shortage which included pilots to fly its aircraft. The second flight to Seattle did operate during the month of September, 2022, and is still planned to return at some point in the future. Alaska also introduced the new Boeing 737-9 MAX on occasional flights from Albuquerque during 2022.



Alaska Boeing 737-9 MAX at Albuquerque in 2022.