

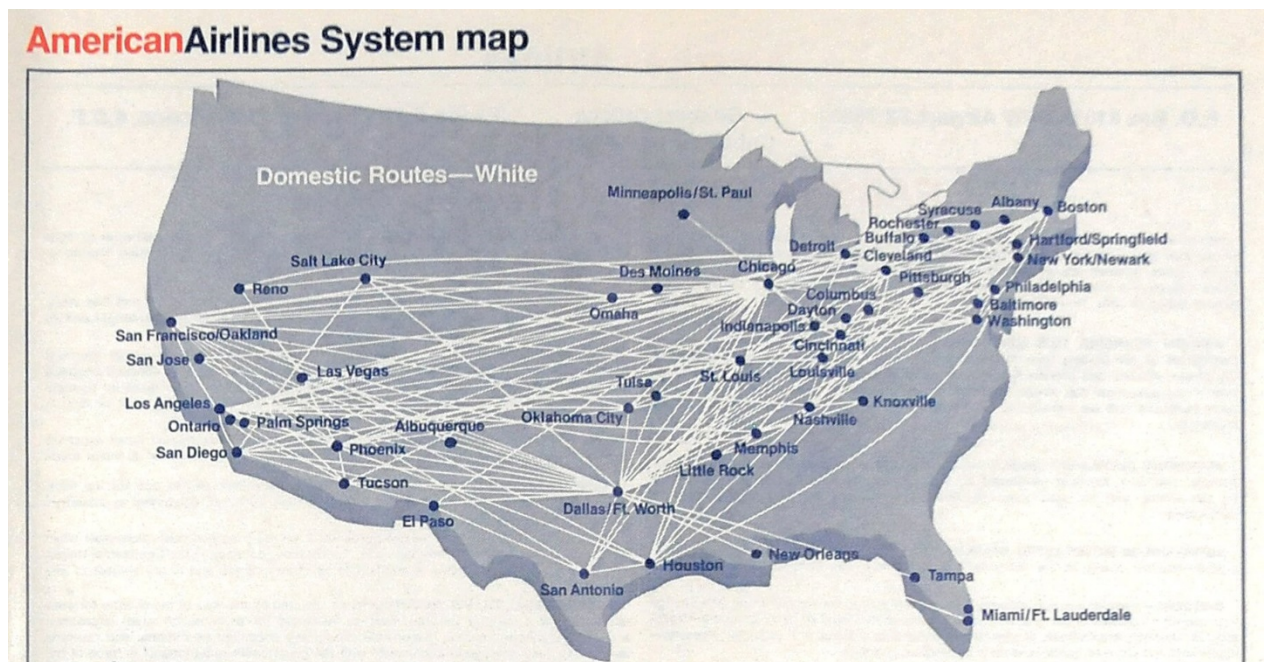


American Airlines

American Airlines is a United States legacy airline established in 1930 and currently based in Fort Worth, Texas. The airline began with a southern transcontinental route across the U. S. and has since built major hubs at Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW), Chicago, Charlotte, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, and Phoenix. American inaugurated service to Albuquerque on January 20, 1979 with one daily flight to DFW and one to San Francisco, both with Boeing 727 aircraft. American had been requesting to serve Albuquerque for many years during the 1970's while all airlines were still regulated and was the first carrier to begin serving the city after the Airline Deregulation Act was passed by congress in late 1978. The San Francisco flight was discontinued only three months after it began but two more flights to DFW were added in June 1979 right as Continental Airlines was discontinuing their three daily flights to DFW. Flights to Chicago were added one year later and service to El Paso was flown from 1985 through 1989 as an extension off flights from Chicago to Albuquerque. A single flight to Phoenix was planned in early 1983 but did not materialize. American introduced its first McDonnell Douglas MD-80 aircraft to Albuquerque in 1985, an aircraft that became the companies' work horse for over 35 years, and was the only aircraft American flew to Albuquerque for many of those years. Up to nine flights per day were flown to DFW and up to four per day to Chicago with MD-80's. Larger 188-seat Boeing 757's were flown on select flights to DFW from 1992 through the end of the millennium and the 727's ended service to Albuquerque in 1993 as the type was being retired from American's fleet. American maintained a consistent schedule of flights from Albuquerque to Chicago and Dallas/Fort Worth through the 1990's.



American Boeing 727-200. This aircraft and the shorter 727-100 flew the initial service to Albuquerque in 1979 and continued to serve the city until 1993.



American route map from early 1979.



American MD-80's began serving Albuquerque in 1985 and ran 34 years with as many as twelve flights per day before the last in the fleet was retired in 2019.



American occasionally ran the larger Boeing 757 on select flights through Albuquerque during the 1990's.

American merged with Trans World Airlines (TWA) on December 2, 2001 and four flights per day from Albuquerque to TWA's hub at St. Louis were added with the MD-80. The merger happened right after the events of September 11 that year which created much hardship for American leading to the St. Louis hub being downsized and the ending of the Albuquerque-St. Louis flights by 2003. American Eagle, a consortium of smaller regional airlines operating on behalf of American Airlines, began flights from Albuquerque to Los Angeles and DFW in early 2002 but the flights were discontinued later that same year. In 2008 the Chicago flights began to be replaced by the smaller American Eagle regional jets and Eagle service to Los Angeles returned in 2011. Service to Los Angeles was operated with 44-seat Embraer-140 regional jets and the Chicago flights were operated by 65-seat Canadair CRJ-700 jets.



American Eagle Embraer-140 at the Albuquerque Sunport.



American Eagle Canadair CRJ-700 at the Albuquerque Sunport.

American succumbed to bankruptcy in 2011 which led to a merger with US Airways. The two companies were merged on December 9, 2013 but remained operating separately until a full integration was completed on October 17, 2015. With the merger, American announced a new logo and livery for its aircraft, replacing the old livery that stood for 45 years. US Airways had been operating only “US Airways Express” flights from Albuquerque to Phoenix however during the summer of 2015 the carrier briefly operated a new flight to their hub in Charlotte, North Carolina using a mainline Airbus A319 aircraft. As the merger was in progress at that time, this flight was referred to as an “American Airlines” flight and some US Airways Airbus aircraft had already been repainted into the new American livery. This was the only time a flight to Charlotte was operated from Albuquerque and has since not returned. The US Airways fleet also contained Airbus A320 and A321 aircraft which began to appear on flights from Albuquerque to Phoenix as well as on legacy American flights to Chicago and DFW. American also introduced the Boeing 737-800 to Albuquerque in 2015 and began replacing mainline flights to DFW that had long been operated with MD-80 aircraft. The 737-800 now appears on flights to Chicago and Phoenix as well. Flights to Los Angeles continue to be flown by American Eagle however these flights were upgraded with larger 76-seat Embraer-175 regional jets in 2015. The 175’s are also now used on occasional flights to the other three hubs American serves from Albuquerque. On September 5, 2019 the last MD-80 flew from Albuquerque to DFW ending over 34 years of MD-80 service to Albuquerque. Newer Boeing 737-8 Max and Airbus A321neo aircraft have also joined American’s fleet beginning in 2019 and occasionally one of these aircraft will work its way through Albuquerque.

The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, held during the first week of October of each year, is by far the largest annual event in the city attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors. Beginning In 2017, American adds extra flights and upgrades many of its American mainline and American Eagle flights at Albuquerque with larger jets during this event.



American Airbus A319 at the Albuquerque Sunport, formerly operated by US Airways and now wearing the new livery for American Airlines introduced in 2013.



American Boeing 737-800 at Albuquerque was introduced to the city in 2015.



American Airbus A321 at Albuquerque. The A321 was seen at Albuquerque on several isolated occasions in the late 2010's and began regular service to the Sunport in November, 2021.



American Eagle Embraer-175 operated by Envoy Air at Albuquerque.



American Eagle Canadair CRJ-900 at Albuquerque, operated by Mesa Airlines and formerly operated as US Airways Express.



American Airlines and American Eagle destination map of North America in 2015 showing all of the new cities served with the merger of US Airways.

The year 2020 arrived with the COVID-19 virus causing a pandemic that nearly shut down all air travel by seeing a drop in traffic of more than 95 percent by April of that year. Most airline flights at Albuquerque cancelled from late March through April due to very low passenger loads, some flights having no passengers at all. The May schedule for Albuquerque was planned to have 19 daily flights and introduce the larger Airbus A321 but instead a greatly reduced schedule was implemented with only seven flights per day, all using American Eagle regional jets. Service to Chicago and Phoenix was dropped to only one flight per day each while all flights to Los Angeles were discontinued. As traffic improved slightly for the summer months, some American mainline jets returned on the Albuquerque to DFW route by July, 2020. Traffic dropped off again by winter 2020/2021 and all mainline jets were again discontinued from January through May of 2021 except for one flight to DFW during the month of March. Some normalcy resumed on June 3, 2021 when seven mainline jets returned to the Albuquerque schedule including one each to Chicago and Phoenix. A total of 17 flights were operating including the reinstatement of three Eagle flights to Los Angeles. Airbus A321 aircraft finally began appearing on flights to DFW by November, 2021 and in March, 2022, five of the six DFW flights were operated with Airbus A321's. New American Eagle service to Austin, Texas began in January, 2022.

A complete look at American Eagle service to other cities in New Mexico is shown below.



American Eagle 

American Eagle

In 1984, American introduced a new regional feeder operation called “American Eagle” where several commuter airlines began service to many smaller cities on behalf of American Airlines. These commuter airlines included Metro, Simmons, and Wings West to name a few. The first American Eagle flights to New Mexico began in September, 1994 when Wings West Airlines inaugurated service to Farmington with a single eastbound flight to Lubbock and DFW as well as a single westbound flight to Las Vegas and Los Angeles. These flights initially operated with 34-seat Saab 340 aircraft and were used as a link between the American Eagle hub operations at DFW and Los Angeles. The flights were upgraded to 46-seat ATR-42 aircraft in March, 1995 however all service to Farmington ended just over one year after it began. In 1997 and 1998, Aspen Mountain Air began service to Santa Fe from DFW using 32-seat Dornier 328 prop aircraft. Although Aspen Mountain Air used the “AA” code on its service to Santa Fe, the carrier was not officially considered as an American Eagle affiliate.

By 1998 all carriers operating as American Eagle were consolidated and became “American Eagle Airlines”. In 2002 American Eagle began serving Albuquerque with single flights to Los Angeles and DFW using Embraer 140 regional jets (RJ’s). This service was also operated as a link between the two hub cities, much like what was previously done at Farmington. The Eagle flights at Albuquerque were discontinued later the same year but returned in the fall of 2008 with flights to Chicago using Canadair CRJ-700 RJ’s. The Chicago flights were only operated during the slower winter months for the first two years but became year-round in 2010 replacing American’s MD-80’s on the route. American Eagle returned to the Albuquerque-Los Angeles market in 2011 with three daily flights and in the following year other regional airlines once again began operating under the American Eagle banner. To avoid confusion between the “American Eagle” banner and “American Eagle Airlines”, the latter was renamed

to “Envoy”. In 2013 the American Eagle flights to Chicago began operating with new Embraer-175 regional jets flown by Republic Airlines. New Eagle service from Albuquerque to DFW and Phoenix began in 2014 as American was merging with US Airways. These Eagle flights were operated by Mesa Airlines using 76-seat Canadair CRJ-900 RJ’s. In 2015 the Los Angeles flights were switched to Embraer-175’s operated by Compass Airlines. SkyWest Airlines also joined the American Eagle family with supplemental flights on each of the four American routes from Albuquerque. New Eagle service to Austin, Texas began in early 2022 using Embraer-175’s flown by Envoy.

American Eagle began serving Roswell, New Mexico on September 5, 2007 with two daily flights to DFW using 50-seat Embraer 145 RJ’s. This service, which was in planning for over 20 years, was such a success that a third flight was added only seven months later. A westbound flight to Los Angeles started in August, 2009 but ended after one year. New westbound service from Roswell to Phoenix began in March, 2016 with a 50-seat Canadair CRJ-200 regional jet operated by SkyWest and was upgraded to a 65-seat CRJ-700 jet a year later. Flights to DFW were also upgraded to CRJ-700’s in 2017 and for a period in early fall 2017, all three flights to DFW were flown with 76-seat Embraer-175 aircraft. A 76-seat Canadair CRJ-900 was briefly run on one DFW flight near the end of 2017 but by early 2018, all flights went back to operating with CRJ-700’s by SkyWest Airlines. With the start of the COVID-19 pandemic In March of 2020, service at Roswell was reduced to one daily flight to DFW while the single flight to Phoenix was suspended for one year, resuming in April, 2021. Service to DFW was increased back to three per day in June, 2021 bringing the Roswell station back to its full schedule. All flights have been operating with CRJ-700’s flown by SkyWest through 2022 however one flight to DFW is due to be upgraded with a CRJ-900 flown by Mesa Airlines in early 2023.

American service to Santa Fe returned on June 11, 2009, this time officially by American Eagle and with Embraer-140, Embraer-145, and Canadair CRJ-200 regional jets to DFW. A single flight from Santa Fe to Los Angeles was added later that year. The Los Angeles flight ended in September, 2015 and a new westbound flight from Santa Fe to Phoenix was added in December, 2016 using the larger CRJ-700 jet. All flights from Santa Fe to DFW were also upgraded to CRJ-700 jets in early 2017 with as many as four per day. A second flight to Phoenix was added in mid-2019 operated by Mesa Airlines using an even larger Canadair CRJ-900 jet. Two DFW flights were also upgraded to CRJ-900’s for a short time in early 2020. During the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, service from Santa Fe to Phoenix was suspended and returned by summer, 2021. A Saturday only flight to Los Angeles was also added during the summer of 2021. All Santa Fe service has been operating with CRJ-700 aircraft by SkyWest Airlines through 2022 but plans are to upgrade some flights to DFW and Phoenix with Embraer-175’s by Envoy in early 2023.

American Eagle flights from Albuquerque to Chicago, Dallas/Fort Worth, and Phoenix continue to intermix with American mainline jets and are operated by American Eagle carriers Envoy, Mesa, and SkyWest Airlines. Other carriers that have flown under the American Eagle banner in New Mexico include Compass, ExpressJet, Republic, and Wings West Airlines. More information on each of these carriers can be found under the “Major airline regional partners” section.



American Eagle Saab-340B, operated by Wings West, served Farmington in 1994 and 1995.



American Eagle Canadair CRJ-200, operated by SkyWest, at the Roswell International Air Center.



American Eagle Canadair CRJ-700, operated by SkyWest, at the Santa Fe Regional Airport.

In October, 2007, American flew a vintage Douglas DC-3 aircraft into Albuquerque and Santa Fe while on a tour of the United States. The aircraft is named “Flagship Detroit” and is maintained by volunteers. Many other American Airlines aircraft have also landed at Albuquerque for various reasons including the Boeing 707, 747, 767 and 777, McDonnell Douglas DC-10 and MD-11, and the Fokker 100.

American is the second busiest carrier at Albuquerque behind Southwest Airlines and, as of early 2023, has provided 44 years of service with as many as 20 flights per day to the Albuquerque Sunport. American has also adopted a US Airways tradition of painting one aircraft in one of the color schemes of a carrier that each had merged with in the past. US Airways has Airbus A319's in the colors of America West and PSA while American has now painted two Boeing 737-800's in the colors of TWA and Reno Air. (There are also aircraft in the colors of several other carriers that did not serve New Mexico). A former US Airways Airbus A321 retains the colors of that carrier. Other specialty paint schemes American has applied to its aircraft include a 1960's American retro livery and a OneWorld livery as American belongs to the OneWorld Alliance of carriers from around the world that work together to provide world-wide service.



American's vintage Douglas DC-3, "Flagship Detroit", visited Albuquerque and Santa Fe in October, 2007.



American Boeing 737-800 “AstroJet” in a retro paint scheme from the 1960’s at the Albuquerque Sunport.



American Boeing 737-800 in the OneWorld Alliance paint scheme at the Albuquerque Sunport.



American Boeing 737-800 in the colors of TWA at the Albuquerque Sunport.



American Airbus A321 in the colors of the former US Airways at the Albuquerque Sunport.