

United Airlines and DIRECTV bring live TV to seatback via Starlink

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Live TV streaming content from DIRECTV IN FLIGHT includes free access to more than a dozen channels, including FOX, Fox Sports 1, Apple F1, ABC, ESPN, TNT, CBS, NBC, TBS and BBC, featuring live soccer, news, weather, business and entertainment

[United Airlines](#) and [DIRECTV](#) have partnered to enable passengers to watch live streaming TV on Starlink-enabled, United seatback screens through July 20, which will allow soccer fans to catch all the action from the summer's biggest sports tournament through the last match on as many as 150 Starlink-enabled aircraft.

Through DIRECTV and BBC, United passengers on these aircraft have free access to more than a dozen live TV channels, including FOX, Fox Sports 1, Apple F1, ABC, ESPN, TNT, CNN, CBS, NBC, TBS and BBC News, offering live soccer, sports, news, weather, business and entertainment.

In 2024, United signed an agreement with SpaceX to bring Starlink's fast, reliable Wi-Fi service to the airline's mainline and regional aircraft fleet, for free for MileagePlus® members. Today, Starlink is active on more than 400 United mainline and United Express® aircraft, and the carrier expects to outfit its entire fleet before the end of 2027.

"United is adding Starlink to more aircraft than any other airline in the world and teaming up with

DIRECTV is a way for us to give customers a glimpse into the future of inflight entertainment with live sports and do it during one of the world's most popular sporting events," said Andrew Nocella, United's Chief Commercial Officer. "Our journey started nearly a decade ago with a decision to install screens in every seat. We already have more than 160,000 screens across our fleet, with plans to basically double that number soon via new deliveries and retrofits. But just having static screens with On Demand content was never our end game. The real customer benefit happens when those screens are dynamic and offer real-time, streaming content just like your phone. That is where the combination of Starlink's reliable and fast connectivity and DIRECTV IN FLIGHT live TV is a game-changer."

This initiative uses the "Viasat Live TV" and "Thales 360" web-enabled applications to tap into live TV content and present it to passengers' seatback screens; streamed to the aircraft using Starlink connectivity.

[Thales](#) has equipped 69 United Airlines aircraft with 360Stream Live TV, for an enhanced inflight entertainment experience. Passengers on select United flights can enjoy live sports, news and entertainment across 12 channels provided by DIRECTV.

Thales' 360Stream Live TV on United airlines provides:

- Access to "happening-now" live content with up-to-the-minute coverage that is beyond the recorded linear content from traditional TV channels
- Digital Video Recording (DVR) capability so passengers can play, pause, rewind, or skip to live – just like they would at home
- Dynamic Channels feature that ensures only channels with active content are displayed, optimizing bandwidth use and enhancing creating a smoother viewing experience
- Near-real time highlights and recaps wirelessly delivered to the aircraft when they are most relevant

The addition to United Airlines IFE comes in time for live-sports season this summer, giving passengers front-row access to the world's premier sporting events and entertainment like the NBA Finals, Golf U.S. Open and TONY Awards.