

Total solar eclipse: Delta makes history with flights on path of totality



Two Delta Air Lines flights offer optimal views of the total solar eclipse (Photo Credit: Delta News Hub, April 8, 2024)

[Delta Air Lines](#) made history today, flying along the path of totality during a total solar eclipse for the first time since the airline's inception. While initially, passengers flying on flight DL 1218 from Austin to Detroit were the only ones fortunate to fly on the path of totality with the airline, Delta added a second flight due to popular demand.

Two Delta Air Lines flights travelled to Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport ([DTW](#)) on April 8 to deliver optimal views of the total solar eclipse to passengers: DL 1218 from Austin-Bergstrom International Airport ([AUS](#)) and DL 1010 from Dallas Fort Worth International Airport ([DFW](#)).

"Let the Delta Air Lines 'Climbing the cosmos' #eclipse flight begin!" wrote Dr. Joe Leader, APEX / IFSA / FTE Group CEO, in a LinkedIn post. "We're flying along the path of totality at max speed—so should have just over 10 minutes on DL1010 DFW-DTW."



GCEO Dr. Joe Leader (middle) and family at today's Delta Air Lines event (Photo Credit: Dr. Joe Leader)



Guests at the event were invited to try the thematic cocktail, a Blackberry Moonrise Corona Colada (Photo Credit: Dr. Joe Leader)



Passengers aboard the eclipse flight also received some 'Climbing the cosmos' swag (Photo Credit: Dr. Joe Leader)

Preparing for the historic flight

Captain Phillip Marshall and Lead Line Check Pilot Captain Phil Daniels were selected to fly the DL 1218 AUS-DTW route for the April 8 solar eclipse.

“It was definitely exciting to be selected to do something we don’t ever get to do,” said Daniels. “I’m looking forward to giving customers memories to hold on to and to fly with my boss.”



Captain Marshall and Captain Daniels working on precision and timing in a flight simulator on April 5

“I was very excited about the opportunity to do something like this and for our A220 fleet to be highlighted,” Marshall said. “I’m always willing to do what it takes to get the job done, and I always love flying with Phil.”

Safety is the airline’s top priority, which is why Delta Air Lines prepared carefully for this historic flight.

“Whenever we do anything even the slightest bit different from our normal flight routine, we run it through our channels and have as many people look at it as possible to get different perspectives involved,” Marshall said.

Flight superintendent Chris Clisham on the flight dispatch team, was one of the many personnel in charge of the alignment of experts across meteorology, flight planning, strategic planning and operations management for today’s totality path flights. Clisham’s team was assigned a flight superintendent for DL 1218 and DL 1010 exclusively.

“We always aim for punctuality with departures and arrivals, but this flight adds an element of hitting an airspace at a specific time,” Clisham said. “Most people don’t realize how intricate and how precise lining up with the sun’s shadow really is.”

The unique opportunity to view the solar eclipse at totality during the flight means that Delta Air Lines team members have been hard at work to ensure both aircraft are in the correct place at the precise time for the best view.

“We’ve been in constant communication with Memphis Center, and we’d like to complete the turns before we leave their sector,” Clisham said.

Marshall and Daniels both acknowledged the challenging position of Clisham and his team to get the correct timing and positioning for the Delta flights on April 8.