
WestJet celebrates first flight of new Dreamliner

By **Rachel Debling** on May, 1 2019 | Airline & Terminal News



The first flight of WestJet's 787-9 Dreamliner departed from Calgary to London on April 29

[WestJet](#)'s new 787-9 Dreamliner took to the skies on April 28 for its inaugural flight, traveling to London's Gatwick Airport (LGW) from Calgary International Airport (YYC).

The airline's Dreamliners carry 320 guests in a three-class cabin configuration and feature 16 of the carrier's new Business Class private pods with lie-flat seats. An upscale Premium cabin and an updated Economy cabin are also featured in the aircraft.

Arved vonzur Muehlen, WestJet's Chief Commercial Officer, said in a statement from the airline: "Today is a fantastic day for WestJet as we take this important step in our journey to become a full-service global network airline. The London market has quickly become an important one for us with service from six cities across Canada. It is no accident that the first transatlantic flight on the Dreamliner is to our largest international market, from our largest hub and home in Calgary."

Guy Stephenson, Gatwick Airport's Chief Commercial Officer, also commented: "The three years since WestJet's inaugural flight from Gatwick have been a real success story, with thousands of business and leisure passengers enjoying the vital low-cost connections between the UK and Canada that these services have provided. WestJet's presence at Gatwick continues to grow, and it's very exciting for us to be supporting the airline as it moves into this important new era.

"The launch of the 787 Dreamliner will offer around 24,000 more Gatwick-Calgary seats per year on the same number of aircraft, and its highly fuel-efficient engines will also help us in our ongoing mission to become the UK's most sustainable airport."

A number of representatives were present on the aircraft's first flight to help promote Indigenous

tourism, including Hal Eagletail of the Tsuut'ina Nation; members of Treaty 7 of Southern Alberta; Keith Henry, President and CEO of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada; and David Goldstein, President and CEO of Destination Canada.

"Being a part of this inaugural Dreamliner flight with WestJet provides a fantastic opportunity for us to raise awareness across the UK and rest of Europe of the powerful Indigenous experiences waiting to be explored across Canada," Henry said. "Our research shows that a third of international visitors to Canada are requesting ways to experience Indigenous culture. WestJet is literally opening up new airways for us into these important markets."

The flight also carried WestJet Founder and Chairman Clive Beddoe, for whom the Dreamliner, tail 901, was named.

"Today is an emotional experience that I am delighted to share with my family, 320 WestJet guests and our fantastic flight crew," said Beddoe. "We are pleased to see significant demand for our Business and Premium cabins as we provide travelers with conveniently-timed flights along with our signature brand of Canadian care."

Other notable names also commented on the launch.

Janice Charette, the High Commissioner for Canada, said: "This shows a high degree of confidence for the future prospects of leisure and business travel between Canada and the UK. We are also excited that WestJet has taken this opportunity to use today's event to showcase Canada's Indigenous peoples and to their contribution to tourism in Canada."

Bob Sartor, President and CEO of Calgary Airport Authority, also noted: "As this first Boeing 787 Dreamliner takes flight for London-Gatwick, WestJet embarks on a new era of international service for the airline. We're proud that WestJet's story took off at YYC, and we're here to support the airline going forward as more destinations are added."

Up next, WestJet will launch its inaugural direct Dreamliner flight between Calgary to Paris on May 17 with its final transatlantic flight between Calgary and Dublin on June 1.