EL AL Israel Airlines Takes Delivery of its First Boeing 737-800

El Al Israel Airlines, the flag carrier for Israel, today took delivery of its first Boeing Next-Generation 737-800. The carrier has two additional 737-800s and two 737-700s on order with Boeing.

"El Al chose the 737 jetliners following a thorough evaluation of competing aircraft - an evaluation that was based on economic and technical requirements," said Joel Feldschuh, El Al president. "The Next-Generation 737's low operating costs, combined with low acquisition costs, make this the ideal airplane for El Al. We are very pleased to have this new airplane in El Al's fleet."

The 737-800 seats 162 to 189 passengers, depending on the configuration. El Al has chosen to configure this 737-800 with 146 seats in two classes.

"This airplane and this configuration are an important part of the changes we're making at El Al to focus more attention on passenger room and comfort," Feldschuh said. "During the last year, we've changed our livery, cabin interiors and textiles, graphics, and even our flight attendant uniforms. Now we're adding the Next-Generation 737-800, which clearly supports our business objectives and helps us differentiate ourselves from our competitors."

Features of the Next-Generation 737 include a new stowage bin design that provides more head room than any other single-aisle airplane and more space for carry-on luggage. The flexible interior has adjustable seats, making it possible to quickly tailor the interior to match a higher demand for business or economy seats on a particular route.

During the selection process, El Al launched an advertising campaign asking the Israeli public which jetliner family it preferred: the Boeing Next-Generation 737 or the Airbus A320. Both manufacturers demonstrated their respective airplanes to the airline and its passengers. A survey released after the demonstration flights showed that three out of four Israeli fliers prefer Boeing.

"Not only did El Al select the 737 based on investor appeal, value for money and operational success, but its passengers selected Boeing airplanes based on comfort," said Tom Basacchi, Boeing Commercial Airplanes Group vice president - Europe/Russia Sales. "An all-Boeing fleet will maximize commonality and further lower operating, training and maintenance costs, translating into increased savings and revenue for El Al."

The Next-Generation models - the 737-600/-700/-800/-900 - build on the strengths that have made the 737 the world's most successful commercial jetliner while incorporating improvements designed for the 21st century. The 737 family alone has won orders for more than 4,200 airplanes - more orders than the company's biggest competitor has secured for its entire product line since it began business.

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