

Hapag-Lloyd Flug Flies First Boeing 737-800 with Blended Winglets

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German carrier Hapag-Lloyd Flug has earned another page in the aviation history books by being the first airline to fly the Boeing 737-800 with blended winglets. The test flight took place Sept. 26 in Seattle.

The flight is the latest of several significant events involving Hapag-Lloyd and the Boeing 737-800. The airline was the airplane's launch customer in 1998, with 16 orders, and it operates the largest 737-800 fleet in Europe, with 17 airplanes in service and nine more on order.

Hapag-Lloyd provided one of its 737-800s as a certification-test airplane for the blended winglet technology. This airplane is expected to go into service early next year, which will make Hapag-Lloyd the first airline to commercially fly a 737-800 with blended winglets. Additional winglets are being retrofitted on Hapag-Lloyd's current fleet of 737-800s through a contract with Aviation Partners Boeing, a joint venture that offers blended winglet technology for in-service Boeing commercial airplanes.

Unlike traditional winglets typically fitted at abrupt angles to the wing, this new advanced "blended" design gently curves out and up from the wing tip, reducing aerodynamic drag and boosting performance. Some of the performance improvements resulting from blended winglets on a 737-800 include:

- An extended flying range of more than 150 miles.
- Improved cruise fuel mileage of up to six-percent, resulting in nearly a five- percent reduction in gate-to-gate fuel consumption.
- A payload increase of up to 6,000 pounds.
- More efficient climbing while at the same time using less thrust - creating less noise and emissions, and providing lower engine maintenance costs through greater engine utilization.
- Improved take-off performance at high-altitude airports, in hot climate conditions and at obstacle-limited airports. (The 737-800 already is well below the current environmental standards for emissions and the winglets will even further enhance the airplane's environmental performance.)

Blended winglets are offered by Boeing on new 737-800s as an option and are installed during production. For Hapag-Lloyd and other customers electing to retrofit winglets, the procedure involves removing the 737-800's wingtip and performing minor structural modifications to the wing before attaching the winglet. The modifications take about two weeks.

Hapag-Lloyd Flug is one of the leading German charter airlines serving mainly destinations around the Mediterranean, in the Canary Islands and the Caribbean. The Hanover-based airline is part of Preussag AG, one of the world's leading travel groups.

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