Virgin Atlantic's Boeing 747 Fleet Keeps On Growing

The Boeing Company today confirmed an order from Virgin Atlantic Airways Ltd. for five 747-400s, bringing their total count of 747s to 24 -- 13 of which will be 747-400s. These airplanes are the latest in the United Kingdom-based airline's 747 fleet, which began operations in 1984 with one Boeing 747-200.

"While other carriers are cutting their network, Virgin will be offering more seats to more destinations than ever before," said Richard Branson, chairman of Virgin Atlantic.

Known as the "Queen of the Skies," the Boeing 747 ranks as the world's largest and fastest subsonic-commercial jetliner. The 747 is the best-selling twin-aisle airplane in the industry, with more than 1,320 ordered, including this order.

Over the years, Boeing has built 18 different 747 models. The 747-400, the model currently in production, has sold more than any other 747 version and has proven to be the flagship of many airlines worldwide. The 747-400 is the only jetliner able to carry 416 passengers 7,280 nautical miles in nonstop comfort.

"We are proud of the success Virgin Atlantic has had with the 747," said Toby Bright, vice president-Europe and Russia, Boeing Commercial Airplanes Group. "With lower seat-mile costs than any other airplane in the world, and the ability to carry a large number of passengers over long distances, it is only natural that Virgin has chosen the 747-400 to meet its expansion plans."

The new Virgin Atlantic 747-400s will be powered by General Electric CF6 engines.

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