

Air Europa First in Spain to Fly Boeing 737-800 with Winglets

Air Europa this week became the first airline in Spain to operate a Boeing 737-800 equipped with winglets, the upward-swept extensions on the tips of the wings. The carrier leased the airplane from Tombo Aviation in November.

Air Europa, an all-Boeing airline based in Palma de Mallorca, also plans to install the visually distinctive winglets on all 737-800s in its fleet.

"We chose to equip our 737-800s with winglets because they will increase the distance the airplanes can fly, and also significantly lower fuel costs," said Juan Jose Hidalgo, Air Europa president. "The winglets are capable of reducing fuel burn by up to 4 percent on flights longer than 1,850 kilometers, and we plan to use our 737-800s on routes from the Canary Islands to Europe."

Besides decreasing fuel burn, winglets can increase the distance a 737-800 can fly by up to 150 miles (240 kilometers), improve takeoff performance, increase the amount of weight the airplane can carry by up to 6,613 pounds (3 metric tons), reduce noise on takeoffs and lower engine maintenance costs. Boeing developed the winglet technology in cooperation with Aviation Partners, Inc.

The 737-800 and the other new 737 models have the most advanced-design technology in the single-aisle jetliner market, with an all-new wing and updated liquid-crystal displays in the flight deck. The Air Europa 737-800s, which will seat 186 passengers, also have an interior modeled after the spacious interior of the award-winning 777.

The 737-800s are powered by new CFM56-7 engines produced by CFMI, a joint venture of General Electric of the United States and Snecma of France. The engines meet community noise restrictions well below current Stage 3 limits and below anticipated Stage 4 limits.

"The new Boeing 737s already have a reputation for environmental friendliness," said Heiner Wilkens, senior vice president and general manager of Boeing in Europe. "The takeoff benefits of winglets give 737 operators flying in and out of busy, noise-sensitive European airports even more of an environmental edge."

Air Europa, founded in 1986, has become one of Spain's largest private airlines, flying more than 6.5 million passengers on domestic and international routes so far this year. The carrier, which has operated 737-800s in its fleet since 1999, also flies Boeing 737-300s, 737-400s and 767-300s.

Air Europa is part of the Globalia Group, a holding company consisting of Air Europa, Viajes Halcon (travel agency), tour operator Travelplan, and Globalia Training, among others.

Tombo Aviation, Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Mitsui & Company, based in the United States. Mitsui's subsidiaries -- Tombo Aviation in the United States and Tombo Aviation Netherlands B.V. -- play a key role in the company's aircraft operating lease business. The two subsidiaries currently lease 33 airplanes to airlines worldwide.

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