

Historic Brazil-Africa air route to boost trade

Latam Airlines has initiated the company's first Latin-American airline route connecting Brazil to several African countries. Its flights from São Paulo, Brazil to Johannesburg, South Africa have been welcomed by both countries.

 By [Katja Hamilton](#) 6 Sep 2023



Source: [Pexels](#)

The initiative comes on the back of Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's announcement of his country's desire to improve trade relations with South Africa and to boost travel and tourism opportunities across the Atlantic at the Brics2023 Summit, held in Sandton City, Johannesburg.

Lula said in 2022, Brazil's trade with Africa had dropped by one third compared to 2013 – when it was almost \$30bn.

“This is unacceptable,” he said. “The trade flow with Africa still corresponds to only 3.5% of Brazil's foreign trade.”





The establishment of the first non-stop São Paulo-Johannesburg flight aligns with Lula's vision to facilitate the exchange of ideas, goods, and services between the two continents. This links in to his signing of Brazil's new Growth Acceleration Program which is set to resume infrastructure work that has been paralysed, to speed up those in progress, and to earmark new projects.

“We expect to mobilise \$340bn to modernise our logistics infrastructure – investing in roads, railways, waterways, ports, and airports.” he said.

Speaking at the Summit, ahead of Latam Airlines' announcement, Lula said it was inexplicable that there had been no direct flights between São Paulo and Johannesburg, Cairo, or Dakar, all essential to increase the flow of people, commerce, and tourism.

“Our network of commercial agreements is also incipient. The Mercosur agreements with Southern Africa and Egypt date back to my second term.

“Today, more than 65% of Mercosur exports to Africa go to countries with which there is no agreement in force. There’s plenty of room to grow.”

“ SAA returns to São Paulo, Brazil with direct flights from Cape Town & Joburg. Open for sale today     Launch flights out of Cape Town on Tues, 31 October 2023 & from Johannesburg on Mon, 6 November 2023. Don't miss out! [#BookNow](#) For more info, visit <https://t.co/R4GdKuwKMW> pic.twitter.com/yIZyNiCLsD— SAA - South Africa (@flysaa) [June 29, 2023](#) ”

South African Airways' resurgent journey

Joining Latam Airlines' in its efforts to streamline travel between the two nations, is South African Airways (SAA), which is also set to provide direct flights from Cape Town and Johannesburg to São Paulo. The launch flights out of Cape Town are on Tuesday, 31 October 2023 and from Johannesburg on Monday, 6 November 2023.

This will be the airline's first inter-continental flight following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, when SAA suspended all international, regional, and domestic flights in line with international travel restrictions. (The airline emerged from business rescue in April 2021 and subsequently recommenced operations late in the year, reintroducing numerous regional and domestic routes only at the time.)

Furthermore, the government of Cape Verde has announced the re-establishment of flights connecting the African archipelago with Fortaleza, Ceará, effectively linking northern Africa with northeastern Brazil.



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Potential multilateral air services agreement

This development could pave the way to the Brics Business Council establishing a multilateral agreement air services for the Group, which would include the leading national transport and aviation authorities. This was revealed at the BRICS2023 Summit. This will unlock opportunities through the African Continental Free Trade Area strengthening post-pandemic socio-economic recovery.

It will also be the precursor to the establishment of an independent agency that will be providing energy statistics, data policy recommendations and look at sustainable solutions for industries across the Brics nations.

This will inform Brazil's production of sustainable aviation fuels (Safs), which will attract a lot of investment opportunities to Brazil.

Latam Airlines' announcement has been embraced by president of the Brazilian Tourism Board (Embratur Marcelo Freixo. He said, this expansion will simplify exploration of the cultural treasures, natural wonders, and business prospects in both destinations. It is expected to play a pivotal role in promoting mutual understanding and collaboration between Brazil and South Africa.

This will benefit both business- and leisure travellers.

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