

## Air France celebrates 70 years of direct Paris-Johannesburg flights

Air France commemorates its 70th anniversary of non-stop flights connecting Paris and Johannesburg.



Source: Supplied.

Ever since its inaugural flight in 1953, Air France has played a pivotal role in promoting international travel, fostering cultural exchange, tourism, and business opportunities between France and South Africa.

Today, Air France operates daily direct flights between the two cities on the Boeing 777-300ER, offering travellers a new, refurbished cabin with economy, premium economy and a state-of-the-art business-class experience.

“Johannesburg remains an important destination in Air France’s extensive network of cities around the world,” comments Wilson Tauro, country manager, Southern Africa for Air France-KLM.

“This year, we are thrilled to celebrate 70 years of direct flights between the two cities – a route that remains incredibly popular with both French and South African travellers. This milestone reflects our commitment to providing exceptional service, and it is a testament to the enduring trust and loyalty of our passengers. We look forward to connecting Paris and Johannesburg for decades to come.”

Air France remains committed to connecting Paris and Johannesburg and has continuously invested in this route to ensure

this is done as comfortably and quickly as possible.

In fact, Air France was also one of the only airlines to operate repatriation flights during the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic. Together with sister airline KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, they carried out 97 repatriation flights to Paris and Amsterdam from both Johannesburg and Cape Town, returning 18,934 passengers home.

## Expanded Rugby World Cup capacity

This year, the Rugby World Cup will take place in France and has, naturally, seen a great amount of interest from South African fans hoping to watch their country defend its title live. As part of Air France's commitment to connection, the airline has announced that it will be increasing its frequency from seven to 10 flights between Johannesburg and Paris a week during the tournament to meet this demand.

"The Rugby World Cup is a much-anticipated and major sporting event worldwide, even more so for South Africa as the defending champions, so naturally we expected the demand during this period to increase," adds Tauro. "We are very happy that we are able to add an additional three flights per week to our current daily flights between Johannesburg and Paris to satisfy the demand. The additional flights are performing well, and we look forward to welcoming all the South African rugby fans on board."

## A rich, fascinating history

Air France, under Union de Transports Aériens, first flew from Paris to Johannesburg in 1953 on a Douglas DC-4 aircraft which carried just 64 passengers. Being over 8,700km away, the aircraft had to stop and refuel in Tripoli, Kano, Brazzaville and Livingstone during its twice-monthly trip before landing in Johannesburg.

The trip took a whopping two days and five hours to complete. In January 1954, because of increasing demand, the flight doubled in frequency and the service changed to weekly flights between the countries.

In 1964, the flight operated on a Douglas DC-8 aircraft, was shortened to just one stop in Brazzaville. The new aircraft carried 249 passengers and completed its journey in just 11 hours and 17 minutes – a massive improvement in travel time for passengers visiting Johannesburg.



### Generative AI and sustainability driving investment in tourism technology

17 May 2023



In 1983, the airline operated the flight on a Boeing 747-200 allowing passengers to fly directly to Johannesburg for the very first time without a single stop to refuel. This allowed the 271 passengers on board to reach Johannesburg in just 10 hours and 30 minutes. With the increase of demand, the service was upped to three flights between the cities per week.

A series of significant aircraft upgrades were introduced on the route in the years ahead, bringing the total number of passengers to 516 up until 2023 on the popular A380. In fact, the Air France's A380 to Johannesburg became the first A380 to fly between Europe to Africa and serviced the route until 2023 when the Boeing 777-300ER was introduced.

Celebrating seven decades of connection, Air France extends its gratitude to its loyal customers, partners, and employees who have contributed to the success of the Paris-Johannesburg route. The airline looks forward to continuing its commitment to excellence, innovation, and seamless travel experiences, connecting people and cultures across continents, for many years to come.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>