



## British Airways Press Release

### British Airways announces major winter 2026 expansion

March 16, 2026



- The airline's long-haul route network is set to grow by nine per cent\*
- New destinations include Melbourne in Australia and Colombo in Sri Lanka
- Expansion includes boost to winter capacity on several popular leisure routes including Cape Town, Tokyo and Barbados
- In response to the Middle East conflict, the airline also added additional flights to Bangkok and Singapore
- British Airways Holidays notes customers looking for alternative getaways, with an increase of more than 50 per cent in holiday searches for the Caribbean

British Airways has announced a significant planned expansion to its network for winter 2026, with the addition of two new destinations, Melbourne in Australia and Colombo in Sri Lanka.

In addition, the airline will be adding more flights for winter to Cape Town (South Africa), Haneda (Tokyo), Bridgetown (Barbados), Kingston (Jamaica) and San Jose (Costa Rica). The new schedule reflects a **nine per cent\* growth** in British Airways' long-haul route network, as the airline continues to invest in providing more choice for customers.

These planned new routes and frequency growth for winter 2026 is in addition to short-term capacity increases to destinations to meet customer demand, as a result of the situation in the Middle East. British Airways added seven extra return services to Bangkok and Singapore in the last week and will continue to review its schedule and add additional flights to destinations as needed.

Demand for travel continues to remain strong, and as customers look for alternative holiday destinations in the immediate term, British Airways Holidays has seen a rise in searches for popular destinations like Antigua and Gran Canaria, which have increased by 63% and 50% respectively.

**Neil Chernoff, British Airways' Chief Planning and Strategy Officer**, said: "We're delighted to announce sizeable growth to our flying schedule for winter 2026, including two notable new destinations that I'm confident will prove popular with our customers. We're also increasing services across several high-demand routes around the world. Together, these changes represent a significant investment in our long-haul leisure network, adding even more options and choice for our customers.

"Elsewhere, we know there is short-term demand as a result of the situation in the Middle East. To support customers with alternative routes from popular destinations we have already launched additional flights, and we will continue to monitor customer demand and add flights to our schedule if we're able to do so."

#### WINTER 2026

##### Melbourne, Australia

British Airways will commence flights to Melbourne in Australia from 9 January 2027, launching in time for the Australian Open and the Melbourne Grand Prix. Flights will operate year-round from London Heathrow, via Kuala Lumpur, on a daily basis.

Melbourne is the capital of the state of Victoria, and is known as the country's culture hub and world-renowned for its coffee scene. It's also the gateway to southern Australia and its array of attractions including Grampian's National Park, the Great Ocean Road and the High Country with its breathtaking landscapes and famed vineyards.

Customers have a choice of four cabins – World Traveller (economy), World Traveller Plus (premium economy), Club World (business class) and First. Return fares start from £1,130 (including taxes and carrier fees) and are on sale from 17 March.

##### Colombo, Sri Lanka

Launching on 23 October 2026, British Airways will fly three times per week from London Gatwick to Colombo, the vibrant gateway to Sri Lanka.

The route will operate for the winter season only, taking customers directly to the Indian Ocean island and home to picturesque beaches, scenic wildlife, vibrant culture and rich cuisine.

Customers have a choice of three cabins – World Traveller (economy), World Traveller Plus (premium economy) and Club World (business class). Return fares start from £620 (including taxes and carrier fees) and are on sale from 17 March.

#### Frequency growth

In a significant planned expansion to the winter 2026 schedule, the airline is increasing frequencies across several of its popular routes:

In a significant planned expansion to the winter 2026 schedule, the airline is increasing frequencies across several of its popular routes:

- A third daily flight from London Heathrow to **Cape Town**, South Africa, will start in December
- London Heathrow to Haneda in **Tokyo**, Japan increases to double daily from the end of March, and continues throughout the winter schedule
- A daily **Barbados** flight from London Gatwick will commence on 25 October, a new route that will complement the existing London Heathrow service to the Caribbean island, and will have onward tags to Grenada, Guyana and Tobago
- There is more dedicated capacity to **St Lucia** in the Caribbean, as daily flights become a standalone service from 25 October
- San José in **Costa Rica** increases to five per week, and moves to London Heathrow
- **Kingston** in Jamaica and **Punta Cana** in the Dominican Republic, both served from London Gatwick, will go up to four per week
- To the US, **New Orleans** increases to four per week, **Baltimore** becomes daily and **Houston** moves to 12 per week
- **Delhi** continues to be served three times a day, as the frequency growth introduced at the start of the summer season remains in place
- London Heathrow to **Abu Dhabi** will return for its planned winter schedule, operating daily from 25 October

#### SHORT-TERM CAPACITY

In addition to the planned growth for winter 2026, British Airways has also introduced seven additional return services from London to Bangkok and Singapore over recent weeks, to meet rising demand for these routes as a result of the situation in the Middle East.

The airline has added more than 3,300 extra seats between 10 and 19 March for customers travelling to and from these destinations and continues to monitor its network closely to make adjustments based on where customers want to fly.

British Airways has extended the temporary reduction in flights to the region, with flights to Amman, Bahrain, Dubai and Tel Aviv cancelled up to and including 31 May, and flights to Doha cancelled until 30 April.

#### MOST SEARCHED DESTINATIONS

British Airways Holidays has seen a boost in interest for holidays to the Caribbean, with Barbados searches [on ba.com](https://www.britishairways.com) up 46% and Antigua searches up 63% versus last year. Searches for Indian Ocean holidays have also increased, with the Maldives up 32% and Mauritius up 42% versus last year. Closer to home, holiday searches to the Canary Islands are on the rise, with Tenerife up 38% and Gran Canaria up 50% versus last year.

The airline has also seen similar trends for flight searches, with the Maldives up 74%, Barbados up 18% and St Lucia up 26%, when compared to February 2026. Overall, searches for flights from the UK to the Caribbean, South West Pacific and South Asia have increased by 40%, and for short-lead travel in the next two weeks, figures are up 155%.

## Notes to editors

\*Nine per cent increase based on the number of long-haul flights operated by British Airways from London in the winter 2026 schedule, vs winter 2025.

### Melbourne, Australia

British Airways Holidays offers seven nights, at the 4\* [Oaks Melbourne on William Suites](#), from £1589pp, travelling on selected dates between 1 February - 28 February 2027 inclusive. Includes economy (World Traveller) return flights from London Heathrow Airport, one checked bag at 23kg per person and accommodation. Book by 19 March 2026. For reservations visit [www.ba.com/holidays](http://www.ba.com/holidays).

Route	Flight number	Frequency	First Sector	Second Sector
LHR-KUL-MEL	BA33	Daily From 9 Jan 27	21:10-18:05 +1 (LHR-KUL)	19:45-06:40 +1 (KUL-MEL)
MEL-KUL-LHR	BA34	Daily From 11 Jan 27	16:35-21:35 (MEL-KUL)	23:15-05:20 +1 (KUL-LHR)

### Colombo, Sri Lanka

British Airways Holidays offers seven nights, at the 5\* [Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo](#), from £999pp, travelling on selected dates between 1 November - 30 November 2026 inclusive. Includes economy (World Traveller) return flights from London Gatwick Airport, one checked bag at 23kg per person and accommodation with breakfast. Book by 29 March 2026. For reservations visit [www.ba.com/holidays](http://www.ba.com/holidays).

Route	Flight number	Frequency	Departure	Arrival (local)
LGW-CMB	BA2045	Mon/Wed/Fri From 23 Oct 26	17:30	09:00+1
CMB-LGW	BA2044	Mon/Wed/Fri From 24 Oct 26	11:00	17:00

### Full list of frequency additions for winter 2026

Route	Winter 26 frequency	Aircraft	Previous frequency	Start date
LGW-BGI-LGW	Daily (winter only)	777-200	New route (plus onward flights to Grenada, Guyana and Tobago)	25 Oct
LGW-UVF-LGW	Daily	777-200	Now a dedicated service	25 Oct
LHR-SJO-LHR	5 per week	787-8	Increase from 3 per week	25 Oct
LHR-HND-LHR	Double daily	787-8	Increase from 10 per week	25 Oct
LHR-CPT-LHR	Three times daily	787-9	Increase from 17 per week	13 Dec
LGW-KIN-LGW	4 per week	777-200	Increase from 3 per week	25 Oct
LGW-PUJ-LGW	4 per week	777-200	Increase from 3 per week	25 Oct
LHR-BWI-LHR	Daily	787-8	Increase from 6 per week	25 Oct
LHR-MSY-LHR	4 per week	787-8	Increase from 3 per week	25 Oct
LHR-IAH-LHR	12 per week	787	Increase from 11 per week	25 Oct
LHR-DEL-LHR	Three times daily	787	Increase from double daily	25 Oct

Note that final schedule is subject to scheduling and slot constraints.

To download this release and associated images or video please

[click here](#)



Contact Us	<a href="http://ba.com">ba.com</a>	Heritage	Instagram
IAG/Financial Results	About British Airways	Fleet Facts	Facebook
Aviation Sources	Corporate Responsibility	Sponsorship	LinkedIn
Student/Research	Careers	BAFT	YouTube
Awards	oneworld Press Office		TikTok

©British Airways - all rights reserved

