

A new era of choice for passengers

Marking fastjet's newest international route in Africa, the inaugural flight between Harare in Zimbabwe and Johannesburg in South Africa took off on 1 February 2016.



Flight FN8102 departed Harare International Airport at 6:15am and landed in Johannesburg's O.R. Tambo International Airport at 7:55am. The return FN8108 flight from Johannesburg took off at 8:40am and was welcomed back to Harare at 10:15am with an official launch ceremony attended by CAAZ chief executive officer, David Chawota, ZTA chief operating officer, Givemore Chidzidzi as well as other senior officials.

"Today's flight is an important milestone in fastjet's route expansion and is a result of working closely with the governments and civil aviation authorities of Zimbabwe and South Africa to bring affordable, reliable, safe, and on-time flights between the two countries," says Richard Bodin, fastjet's chief commercial officer.

A new era of choice

The launch of the Harare/Johannesburg flights kick-starts a new era of choice for passengers who have either been forced to pay prohibitively high fares on flights between the two cities or were compelled to travel by road on a journey that could take up to 20 hours to complete. fastjet, who recently celebrated flying over 1,800,000 passengers with an On Time Performance of over 90% since its first flight in November 2012, will initially operate the route once daily on its modern Airbus A319 jet aircraft, with an additional daily flight expected to be quickly added as consumer demand increases.

The commencement of flights on the Harare/Johannesburg route is due to fastjet Zimbabwe receiving clearance from the Zimbabwean and South African governments to operate flights between the two respective countries. The airline also announced that it intends launching a second international route flying between Victoria Falls and Johannesburg in the near future. Furthermore, it expects to receive approval for additional international flights to connect Zimbabwe to further East and Southern Africa markets within the first quarter of 2016.

Lowest priced fares sparks further competition

Fares on the new route start from \$80 one-way, excluding taxes (\$50 departing Zimbabwe or \$35 departing South Africa), with fastjet advising passengers to book well in advance of their intended departure date to take advantage of its lowest priced fares.

The impact of the fastjet flights between Johannesburg and Harare has already been considerable, demonstrated by the fact that fares on competing airlines flying between the two countries have dropped by as much as 40% since fastjet announced its flights between South Africa and Zimbabwe. "The fact is that competition is good for consumers. It brings choice and it brings air fares down," says Bodin.

fastjet expects many of its passengers on this new route to be first time flyers who, because of prohibitively high fares, could previously not afford to travel by air. "Our objective is to make air travel between Zimbabwe and South Africa more accessible than ever before. The only alternative to flying is to undertake long and uncomfortable journeys by road, which can take up to 20 hours from Harare to Johannesburg," says Bodin.

Strengthening ties, boosting business

Supporting this statement is recent research undertaken by the airline, showing that up to 40% of passengers on all routes were first time flyers able to afford air travel for the first time, thanks to fastjet's low fares. "Making it easier for more entrepreneurs, traders, tourists and other visitors to travel between Zimbabwe and South Africa will strengthen the countries' relationship, boost tourism and business sectors, create jobs and contribute significantly to both countries' economic growth," says Bodin.

fastjet's luggage upgrade option, 'Freighty', will be available for purchase on this route, allowing passengers to transport up to 80kg of checked in bags. The Freighty luggage option, in particular, is expected to be popular with traders flying with fastjet to purchase wholesale produce in Johannesburg to transport back to their home markets to sell.

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