



Icelandair Getting Close On Boeing 757 Replacement Plans

by **James Pearson** · September 9, 2021 · 🔗 54 shares · ⌚ 3 minute read

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Icelandair will decide before the end of the year what aircraft will replace its fleet of aging Boeing 757s. That was what the carrier's CEO, Bogi Nils Bogason, said in an interview with CAPA, reported by AirInsight, on September 8th. While its 757s have low ownership costs, it seeks modern aircraft with appropriate range, lower fuel consumption, and better environmental performance.





aircraft, such as TF-LLX, have already left its fleet. Photo: [Liam Allport via Flickr](#).

Icelandair's B757s

Icelandair is most known for connecting North America and Europe via its Keflavik hub. In this role, longer-range narrowbodies like the 757 play a vital role. They're also important for not having too many seats to fill (vital during winter) and helping to typically achieve a round-trip each day across both Europe and the US/Canada.

[AirInsight](#) says Icelandair has had 24 757s, comprising 22 -200s and two -300s, of which nine -200s and both of its -300s are operational. Its passenger -200 versions have 184 seats while its higher-capacity -300s have 225. As AirInsight reported, Icelandair's CEO said:

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“We are now reviewing our long-term strategy which aircraft will replace the 757, and which aircraft we will use for destinations like Seattle, Portland, Orlando, and so on, going forward. And the plan is to conclude this work before the end of this year.”



Icelandair will need another aircraft for its West Coast operations and any future expansion there. Because of the range of the MAX, especially during winter, this really means the B767-300ER or the A321LR/XLR. However, its 767s have an average age of 22.7 years.

Photo: Tom Boon – Simple Flying.

Icelandair's MAX thoughts

Icelandair now has nine Boeing 737 MAXs, ch-aviation.com shows, comprising six -8s (five active) and three -9s (one active). The type is now the smallest jet aircraft in its fleet and has [quickly become important](#).

The MAX operates many different sector lengths, including Orlando and Seattle – [the latter the world's longest non-stop 737 route this summer](#). No wonder some have said the MAX would replace the 757. Reiterating [previous comments](#) about how well the MAX is performing, AirInsight quotes the carrier's CEO's happiness with the type:

"We are very pleased with the performance of the Boeing 737 MAX and the aircraft has outperformed expectations, both regarding range and fuel efficiency. Of course, it goes hand in hand. And the CO2 emission is about 36 percent lower than on the 757 so we are extremely happy with the performance of the automatics. And the aircraft is, of course, much more environmentally friendly than the 757."



Icelandair uses the MAX on multiple routes this summer, including Seattle and Orlando.
Photo: Boeing.

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To the MAX

The MAX 8 and 9 both have the same *theoretical* and non-real-world limit of 3,550nm. While Seattle has seen the MAX during the summer, it reverts to the B757-200 this winter. This 3,148nm route would likely have payload restrictions in winter because of stronger headwinds that would limit performance. It takes around eight hours *to* Seattle in summer.

This could be why Airinsight says that the MAX is suitable only for 85% of Icelandair's routes, ruling out the West Coast. In that part of the US, Icelandair serves Seattle and Portland (3,248nm), with Anchorage (2,940nm) returning from May 2022. Another type will be needed for Portland and Seattle year-round, and if further expansion – with longer routes – is targeted.



The issue of the 757 replacement concerns West Coast US routes. Photo: [John Taggart via Flickr](#).

Could the A321LR or XLR be ordered?

San Francisco operated between 2018 and 2020, although it might return. If the 3,653nm route does come back – or if Los Angeles (3,748nm) is served in the future, [as it was with WOW](#) – obviously another type will be needed. Could the 262-seat B767-300ER, of which Icelandair has four, be used?

Or might Icelandair order the A321LR/XLR? Both California routes would be similar in range to what was the longest LR route across the North Atlantic: the 3,713nm service [from Stockholm to Chicago](#), operated by SAS.

However, the XLR is expected to be [a real-world B757-200 replacement](#): more



will probably be more conservative than WOW.

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How likely do you think it is that the A321 will be acquired? Let us know in the comments.

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James Pearson

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J.J. Lasne 2.1K Points • 12 September, 2021 ...

As much as I would like to see Icelandair flying the Airbus to California, the carrier is an all-Boeing equipment operator and it could be quite a bit of disruption to change manufacturer.

Reply 1

AYplat • 12 September, 2021 ...

Replying to J.J. Lasne

Who knows. Many airlines use Boeing narrowbodies and Airbus widebodies, or vice versa. If they decide their best option of replacing B757/767 fleet is Airbus then they will do it. But narrowbodies they have already decided, it is going to be MAX fleet for the next two decades.

Reply

TransAtlantic 1.8K Points • 11 September, 2021 ...



switching from an airbus fleet adds complications. icelandair also moves a lot of freight that will not work as well on a321...[See more](#)

Reply 1

Chippy757 • 10 September, 2021

...

I think icelandair should definitely order a 787-9 for 3 reasons...

1. To carry more passengers from the densely populated west coast and making the airlines earning more Money from tickets
2. Giving passenger more space to live around in on a wide body that a narrow body can't provide
3. Icelandair c...[See more](#)

Reply

AYplat • 11 September, 2021

...

Replying to Chippy757

I am also thinking that in order for Icelandair to survive they need to up their game. It would probably mean ordering B787-8 to replace B757 (which would be huge upgrade) and adding half a dozen B787-9 to the mix to replace B767.

Reply

1 reply

foxbat25 • 9 September, 2021

...

Icelandic needs an aircraft that offers lie-flat seats for their long hauls. I like their routing, hate the aircraft seating and no lie-flats. We passengers really don't care if it is Boeing or Airbus, we care about the comfort onboard: lie-flat in business/first, seat pitch and width in economy....[See more](#)

Reply 5

JFP 43K Points • 9 September, 2021

...

I can see Airbus pursuing an Icelandair order at an "almost any costs" basis to "poach" yet another Boeing customer. I see training, maintenance, fleet integration, and other subsidies being offered under the table. While Airbus will offer "generous" discounts, it's the "cost of ownership/operatio...[See more](#) (Edited)

Reply 4 2

Mike • 9 September, 2021

...

Replying to JFP

I think Icelandair doesn't really have many options. It needs the A321LR/XLR

Reply 1

AYplat • 9 September, 2021

...

Replying to JFP



Boeing widebodies or vice versa, just to be able to negotiate better deals.

Icelandair has already nailed their stance of narrowbodi...[See more](#)

Reply 2

1 reply

BoeingChapter11 • 9 September, 2021



Icelandair has doubled up during the summer to Chicago with a 757 and a 767. If Icelandair switched to the A321 they could offer 2 flights a day to ORD and LAX. The A321XLR also has the legs to reach Caribbean destinations like Cancun and Havanna in the winter.

Reply

BoeingChapter11 • 9 September, 2021



The A321NEO/LR/XLR is so vastly superior to the 737MAX in terms of cabin width, range, passenger and cargo capacity that Boeing just can't compete. A321NEOs to the East Coast and Europe, A321XLRs for the Weatern US including destinations like LAS, SLC, PHX and SAN, giving Icelandair coverage of t...[See more](#)

Reply

Algi • 9 September, 2021



Boeing could always revive their proposal of offering a longer range 737 Max 8 with the wing and fuel tanks from the Max 9, giving around another 300-500nm range.

Reply

PhxAvYT 180 Points • 9 September, 2021



My guesses :

737MAX-10 and A321LR/XLR for 752

I don't know about a 753 replacement

Might go with the 788 for the 763s

Reply 1

AngryFlier 320 Points • 9 September, 2021



It will require some big changes at the airline, but it makes a lot of sense for Icelandair to go with the A321LR which will provide them with coverage of basically all of Europe, North America and even parts of North Africa. The A321XLR is another great option that adds even more range and capabili...[See more](#)

Reply 7 4



Boeing fans love to give the truth a thumbs down. Boeing was way too quick to kill the 757, Fat Albert was just so cheap to produce. A 757MAX would be beating the A321LR, and there would be no discussions about the MOM. Boeing had another opportunity in the early 2010s, but squandered the few eng...**See more**

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3 replies

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