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Airbus A350 or A330neo: Which is the ideal aircraft for Latin America?

The Latin American market is redefining its fleets: why the operational simplicity of the A330neo is gaining ground against ultra-long-range models.

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3 min. Several

The composition of the widebody aircraft market in 2026 shows a clear division between the evolution of proven platforms and designs from scratch. According to an analysis by Addison Schonland of our partner publication AirInsight, Airbus began the year with a dominant position in the single-aisle segment, while in the widebody sector it is competing intensely with the Boeing 787 family and the anticipation surrounding the certification of the 777-9.

Airbus's proposal rests on three pillars designed to cover different network needs and financial capabilities: the **A330-900**, the **A350-900**, and the **A350-1000**. One of the competitive advantages highlighted by the manufacturer is the **Common Type Rating**, which allows pilots to transition between models with minimal training, reducing operating costs.

Comparison of capabilities and performance

La diferencia en el rendimiento técnico define el rol de cada aeronave en las redes globales. El **A350-900** y el **A350-1000** alcanzan una velocidad de crucero de Mach 0.89, un 9% superior a la del **A330-900**. No obstante, el A330neo no busca competir en velocidad, sino en simplicidad y bajo riesgo financiero.

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Modelo	Alca
A330-900	7.20
A350-900	8.10
A350-1000	8.70

El **A350-1000** se posiciona como el líder en cap a sus hermanos menores. Esta versión es la op cada asiento adicional genera ingresos margin



La economía del combustible y el costo de capital

El diseño del A350, compuesto en un 70% por materiales avanzados y fibra de carbono, permite un consumo de combustible un 25% inferior a las generaciones anteriores. Sin embargo, este rendimiento tecnológico conlleva un precio de adquisición más elevado.

El **A330-900**, con un valor de mercado de aproximadamente 107 millones de dólares, representa solo el 68% del costo de un A350-900. Para aerolíneas con capital limitado o que operan rutas de medio y largo radio (menores a 7.000 nm), el ahorro mensual en el leasing, que oscila entre 250.000 y 400.000 dólares, compensa la brecha en eficiencia de combustible.

El escenario en América Latina

In the regional context, the adoption of these models followed a path of optimization. **Azul Linhas Aéreas** established itself as the leading operator of the **A330-900** in the Southern Cone, using the aircraft to connect its **hub** in Viracopos with the United States and Europe. The Brazilian airline opted to retire its A350s to standardize its long-haul fleet, prioritizing the cost efficiency of the A330neo. Similarly, LATAM also operated a fleet of A350-900s but retired all 13 aircraft in 2021, consolidating its long-haul fleet with Boeing 767, 777, and 787 aircraft.



LATAM Brazil will replace its Airbus A350s with Boeing 787s registered in Chile.

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Meanwhile, the Latin American ultra-long-haul market remains dominated by foreign carriers flying the A350 to the region (such as Iberia, Air France, and British Airways). Avianca maintains its preference for the Boeing 787 Dreamliner family, although Grupo Abra, its controlling holding company, decided to add five Airbus A350s in an attempt to fill the gap left by Azul's retirement of its larger fleet.

Beyond this strategic shift, the A330neo is presented as Airbus' most viable alternative for operators in the region seeking to renew their A330ceo or Boeing 767 fleets without assuming the capital costs of a completely new design.

That is the path followed by **Aerolíneas Argentinas**, a long-time operator of the A330ceo, which is in negotiations to finalize an order for 4 A330-900s, the first of which should arrive during 2026. The Argentine company prioritizes the commonality of its crews, maintenance and simulators, a key differentiating asset for incorporating a new generation of aircraft.

Aerolíneas Argentinas incorporates four Airbus A330neo and 14 Boeing 737 MAX 9 and 10 in a plan financed with its own resources

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