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# Copa Airlines Orders 60 Boeing 737 MAX Jets with CFM LEAP-1B Engines

Copa Airlines commits to 60 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft powered by CFM LEAP-1B engines in a \$13.5B deal, expanding its fleet through 2030.



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By AirPro News Team



This article is based on an official press release from [CFM International](#) and supplementary industry research.

Copa Airlines, the flag carrier of Panama, has solidified a major fleet expansion by committing to purchase up to 60 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft, all of which will be exclusively powered by CFM International LEAP-1B engines. According to an official press release from CFM International, the agreement was formalized on April 28, 2026, during a ceremony attended by Panamanian President José Raúl Mulino.

The comprehensive three-party agreement between Copa Airlines, Boeing, and GE Aerospace/CFM International is valued at approximately \$13.5 billion at list prices. This valuation includes the airframes as well as bundled engine provisioning and long-term maintenance agreements. For Copa Airlines, the acquisition reinforces its highly successful business model and significantly expands operational capacity at its "Hub of the Americas" in Panama City.

At AirPro News, we recognize this order as a pivotal moment for Latin American aviation. By securing a steady pipeline of next-generation narrowbody aircraft, Copa Airlines is positioning

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## The Anatomy of the \$13.5 Billion Agreement

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### Fleet Expansion and Delivery Timeline

Based on the details provided in the official announcement, the [order](#) consists of 40 firm aircraft and 20 options. [Deliveries](#) are scheduled to commence in 2030 and will continue through 2034. When combined with 40 aircraft already pending delivery from previous agreements, this new commitment will enable Copa Airlines to expand its total fleet to over 200 aircraft by 2034.

The deal specifically boosts Copa’s LEAP-1B equipped fleet to more than 120 aircraft. This represents a massive modernization effort, allowing the carrier to gradually phase out its older Next-Generation 737-800 models in favor of the more efficient MAX family.

### Strategic Implications for Copa Airlines

A cornerstone of Copa [Airlines](#)’ profitability has been its strict adherence to a “single-type fleet” strategy. By operating exclusively Boeing 737 aircraft, the airline deliberately avoids the operational complexities associated with mixed-manufacturer fleets. According to industry research, this approach significantly reduces pilot training costs, streamlines maintenance procedures, and simplifies spare parts inventory.

Operating out of Tocumen International Airport, Copa leverages its geographic position to connect North, Central, and South America, alongside the Caribbean. The new MAX aircraft will be deployed strategically: the larger MAX 9s are slated for longer routes such as Buenos Aires, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, while the MAX 8s will be utilized to open and serve secondary markets like Baltimore and San Diego.

**“The incorporation of new aircraft will be fundamental to continue expanding our operations and our network of destinations, and to continue contributing to the economic development of Panama...”**

, Pedro Heilbron, CEO of Copa Airlines, in a company statement.

### Technological Edge: The CFM LEAP-1B

#### Efficiency and Environmental Impact

CFM International, a 50/50 joint venture between GE Aerospace and Safran Aircraft Engines, has been the sole engine supplier for all Boeing 737 aircraft models since 1981. The LEAP-1B serves as the exclusive powerplant for the entire 737 MAX family. According to CFM International, the LEAP-1B engine delivers double-digit improvements in fuel consumption and CO2 emissions compared to the previous-generation CFM56 engines, while also achieving dramatic reductions in engine noise.

For a single-type operator like Copa, the reliability of engine supply and maintenance is just as critical as the airframe itself. The inclusion of GE Aerospace in the announcement highlights a comprehensive package that covers [propulsion](#), Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul ([MRO](#)) agreements, and spare parts provisioning.

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# “The 737 MAX equipped with LEAP engines will further strengthen Copa’s position as one of the leading airlines in Latin America as it expands its network...”

, H. Lawrence Culp Jr., President and CEO of GE Aerospace.

## A Decades-Long Partnership

Historical data indicates that Copa Airlines first became a CFM customer in 1999 with an order for CFM56-7B-powered 737s. The airline later became the first Latin American operator of the Boeing 737 MAX 9. In April 2015, Copa placed its foundational LEAP-1B order, securing 122 engines for 61 MAX aircraft. Gaël Méheust, President and CEO of CFM International, noted in the press release that this latest commitment demonstrates the deep consolidation of collaboration between Copa, Boeing, and CFM.

## AirPro News analysis

We view this \$13.5 billion commitment as a major strategic victory for Boeing, arriving at a crucial juncture for the American aerospace manufacturer. Industry reports from early 2026 highlight that Boeing’s broader delivery picture has been complicated by delivery freezes at Chinese carriers. Securing a massive, firm commitment from a financially disciplined, non-Chinese operator like Copa Airlines provides vital stability to Boeing’s order book during a period of geopolitical and supply chain disruption.

Furthermore, the explicit framing of this deal as a three-party agreement underscores the evolving nature of aircraft procurement. GE Aerospace is acting not merely as a vendor, but as a risk-sharing partner in the MAX program. This deep integration between airframe manufacturer, engine provider, and airline is essential for ensuring operational reliability in today’s constrained aerospace supply chain.

## Frequently Asked Questions

- **How many aircraft did Copa Airlines order?** Copa ordered up to 60 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft, consisting of 40 firm orders and 20 options.
- **What engines will power these aircraft?** The aircraft will be exclusively powered by CFM International LEAP-1B engines.
- **When will the new aircraft be delivered?** Deliveries are scheduled to begin in 2030 and continue through 2034.
- **Why does Copa Airlines only fly Boeing 737s?** Copa utilizes a “single-type fleet” strategy to minimize operational complexity, reduce training costs, and streamline maintenance.

## Sources

- [CFM International Press Release](#)

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