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Southwest Airlines Inaugurates New Service To Cuba, Making Havana The 100th City In Southwest's Growing Network

Inaugural service to Cuban capital achieves milestone for America's original low-fare carrier

DALLAS, Dec. 12, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- [Southwest Airlines Co.](#) (NYSE: LUV) today began service to the carrier's 100th city, Havana, Cuba, with inaugural celebration on flights departing two U.S. gateway airports, Tampa International and Ft. Lauderdale-Hollywood International. Southwest Employees and Executive Leaders joined Customers in traveling aboard the first-ever Southwest flights to Havana. The Company's social media fans joined a conversation by sharing memories and images of the milestone day through the hashtag **#Southwest100**.

"I'm grateful to our more than 53,000 Southwest Employees and everyone who's been part of our Southwest Family during the past 45 years who built our airline to this moment in history—we now operate flights from 100 cities across nine countries," said [Gary Kelly](#), Southwest Airlines Chairman, President, & CEO, before a welcoming delegation at Jose Marti International Airport in Havana. "Our daily nonstop flight from Tampa and twice daily service from Fort Lauderdale bring additional vital links for our Customers who count on us to connect them with places and people that are important in their lives through unmatched value in air travel."

Service to Santa Clara, Cuba, the carrier's 101st city served, begins this Thursday, Dec. 15, 2016. Service to Varadero, Cuba, began Nov. 13, 2016.

From its first flights on June 18, 1971, connecting a triangle of Texas cities with a fleet of just three aircraft, Southwest Airlines launched an era of unprecedented affordability in air travel. The U.S. Department of Transportation later described this phenomenon as "The Southwest Effect," a lowering of fares that increases passenger traffic in new, nonstop markets the carrier serves. Now, with more than 53,000 Employees, Southwest carries more than 100 million people annually aboard the world's largest fleet of Boeing aircraft. With 43 consecutive years of profitability behind it, Southwest also is widely recognized as one of the most honored airlines in the world.

Southwest is the only major U.S. airline to offer all Customers its bags fly free® policy (applies to the first and second checked pieces of luggage, with applicable size and weight limitations) and never charges change fees, though fare differences could apply when plans change.

"Some airlines allow free checked bags on select routes or only in qualified circumstances. In contrast, we proudly offer two free checked bags to every Customer because it's a foundational value in every fare we sell," Kelly said. "In our fifth decade of service, we're now seeing the Southwest Effect in international markets as our Customer-friendly policies reach beyond the U.S. border on our growing route map."

In 2014, Southwest began international service that now touches more than a dozen airports across eight additional countries with service offered from gateway cities across the continental United States. The [Our History](#) section of the Southwest Newsroom at swamedia.com features a full rundown of Southwest's unique history. Video and photos from today's historic flights also are available on the site.

MORE ABOUT SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.

Southwest operates more than 3,900 departures a day during peak travel season across a network of 100 destinations in the United States and eight additional countries.

Based on the U.S. Department of Transportation's most recent data, Southwest Airlines is the nation's largest carrier in terms of originating domestic passengers boarded. The majority of Southwest's fleet is equipped with satellite-based WiFi providing gate-to-gate connectivity that enables Customers to use personal devices to view on-demand movies and television shows, as well as nearly 20 channels of free, live TV compliments of its valued Partners.

Southwest created [Transfarency®](#), a philosophy which treats Customers honestly and fairly, and in which low fares actually stay low.

The airline proudly unveiled a bold new look: *Heart*. A new logo, aircraft livery, interior design featuring a new seat and Flight Attendant galley, Employee-designed uniforms, and an updated airport experience all showcase the dedication of Southwest Employees who connect Customers with what's important in their lives.

Southwest is known for a triple bottom line approach that contributes to the carrier's performance and productivity, the importance of its People and the communities they serve, and an overall commitment to efficiency and the planet. The 2015 Southwest Airlines One Report™ can be found at SouthwestOneReport.com.

Book Southwest Airlines' low fares online at Southwest.com or by phone at 800-I-FLY-SWA.

To view the original version on PR Newswire, visit: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/southwest-airlines-inaugurates-new-service-to-cuba-making-havana-the-100th-city-in-southwests-growing-network-300376676.html>

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