

April 5, 2012



AirTran Airways Awarded Route Approval for Flights Between Chicago Midway and Cancun

DALLAS, April 5, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- Southwest Airlines (NYSE: LUV) today announced that its wholly owned subsidiary AirTran Airways received route authority from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to operate new international flights between Chicago Midway International Airport and Cancun International Airport. AirTran will offer one daily nonstop flight between the two cities beginning on June 3, 2012, subject to Mexican government approval. The flights can be booked today at www.airtran.com.

"We are excited to offer all AirTran Airways Customers this new opportunity to travel to Mexico," said Bob Jordan, Southwest Airlines' Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer and AirTran Airways President. "The additional international service to Cancun is a great example of how Customers are already realizing the benefits of Southwest's acquisition of AirTran."

With a current average of 246 daily departures at Chicago Midway, the combined AirTran/Southwest is the second largest carrier in the Chicago region. AirTran and Southwest currently operate nonstop service between Chicago Midway and a total of 58 cities.

Southwest and AirTran express their sincere gratitude to the DOT for awarding this authority to AirTran, and to the City of Chicago for its enthusiastic support of the new service.

ABOUT SOUTHWEST

Southwest Airlines continues to differentiate itself from other low-fare carriers — offering a reliable product with exemplary Customer Service. Southwest Airlines is the nation's largest carrier in terms of originating domestic passengers boarded and has acquired AirTran Airways, now a wholly owned subsidiary of Southwest Airlines Co. Southwest serves 73 cities in 38 states and remains one of the most honored airlines in the world known for its commitment to the triple bottom line of Performance, People, and Planet. To read more about how Southwest is doing its part to be a good citizen, visit southwest.com/cares to read the Southwest Airlines One Report™. Based in Dallas, Southwest currently operates more than 3,200 flights a day and has more than 37,000 Employees.

ABOUT AIRTRAN

Southwest's acquisition of AirTran, which closed on May 2, 2011, significantly expanded Southwest's low-fare service to more Customers in more domestic markets, creating hundreds of additional low-fare itineraries for the traveling public. AirTran Airways, a wholly owned subsidiary of Southwest Airlines Co., has been ranked the top airline in the Airline Quality Rating study three times in the past five years. The airline's low-cost, high-quality product also includes assigned seating and Business Class. To book a flight, visit airtran.com.

Cautionary Statement Regarding Forward-Looking Statements

This news release contains forward-looking statements regarding AirTran Airways' anticipated service from Chicago Midway International Airport to Cancun International Airport, including anticipated timing of the service and the expected benefits of the service to Southwest, AirTran, and their Customers. These statements are based on Southwest's and AirTran's current intent, beliefs, and expectations and are not guarantees of future results. These statements also involve risks, uncertainties, assumptions, and other factors that could cause actual results to vary materially from those expressed in or indicated by them. Factors include, among others, (i) consumer demand and preferences related to the new service, (ii) changes in the companies' business plans and strategies, (iii) the companies' ability to timely and effectively prioritize strategic initiatives and their related ability to timely implement, transition, and maintain the necessary information technology systems and infrastructure to support these initiatives; and (iv) the impact of governmental and other rules and regulations on the companies' operations.

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