



AIR CANADA

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Air Canada operates final cabin-loaded cargo flight, returning aircraft to passenger service



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Air Canada has operated its final cabin-loaded cargo-only flight using its fleet of temporarily converted passenger aircraft. Flight AC7272, operated with an Airbus A330-300 aircraft, touched down in Toronto from Bogota on May 14 for what was the last cabin-loaded flight operated with a mix of Boeing 777s and A330s. The A330-300 aircraft will be reconverted back to passenger service to meet the return of global travel demand.

This final flight comes more than two years after Air Canada became [the first passenger airline globally to go to market removing seats to double cargo capacity](#) by utilizing the cabin to load additional cargo. That first flight, operated with a Boeing 777 that would normally carry more than 400 passengers, was on April 18, 2020, and its cabin was filled with critical PPE, including face masks, gloves, and gowns for healthcare workers.

In all, Air Canada would operate up to 11 temporarily reconfigured aircraft at the height of the pandemic.

The bold move to quickly reconfigure three Air Canada passenger aircraft initially was in response to the drastic drop in global passenger travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent dramatic reduction of the airline's passenger schedule. While these curtailments were necessary, they also heavily impacted the urgent transport of goods that would normally be transported in the bellies of passenger aircraft.



With high demand for transporting critical medical and other vital supplies rapidly to Canada and then across the country in the initial phases of combatting the COVID-19 crisis, along with the ongoing requirement for reliable cargo space to ensure that cargo customers would have consistent access to international routes, Air Canada and Air Canada Cargo rapidly converted a mix of Boeing 777 and Airbus A330-300 aircraft that would otherwise be parked. Eleven aircraft were converted into temporary freighters by removing the passenger seats to enable transport of lightweight cargo in the cabins.

With passenger travel demand recovering and with cargo demand remaining high, Air Canada Cargo will now utilize a fleet of converted Boeing 767-300 freighters, two of which are now in service, with six more to come by the end of 2023. Additionally, Air Canada Cargo continues to utilize belly space on Air Canada's globally scheduled passenger flights.

“Developing and sustaining this solution was an incredible group effort from many departments within Air Canada,” said Dotane Harel, Director, Regulatory and Operations Process Engineering. “These aircraft have considerably increased Air Canada’s cargo capacity in time of need. It is with mixed emotions that we see this chapter fold, and we’re looking forward to working with our new Boeing 767-300 freighters.”

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 