



# AIR CANADA

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## Avianca, TACA Airlines and Copa Airlines join Star Alliance

### Strategic Network Expansion in Latin America

PANAMA CITY, PANAMA and BOGOTA, COLOMBIA, June 21, 2012 /CNW Telbec/ - Star Alliance, the way the Earth connects, today welcomes Avianca, TACA Airlines and Copa Airlines, hereby cementing its presence in Latin America and adding close to 50 new airports to the network.

Star Alliance founding member Air Canada operates non-stop flights from its Toronto hub to Bogota (Colombia), Lima (Peru) and San Jose (Costa Rica) that connect to its new Star Alliance partners' networks throughout Latin America.

"On behalf of the Star Alliance Chief Executive Board, it gives me great pleasure to welcome Avianca, TACA Airlines and Copa Airlines to the Star Alliance family. The addition of these quality aviation groups strengthens our presence in the rapidly growing Latin American market," Mark Schwab, CEO Star Alliance said: "With Avianca, TACA Airlines and Copa Airlines our customers now enjoy increased connectivity across the Americas by connecting through five new Star Alliance hubs right in the middle of the American continent."

Such wide ranging choice for travellers in today's globalised world is something only airline alliances can offer, as they link individual networks of their member carriers. With Avianca, TACA Airlines and Copa Airlines now being part of the Star Alliance network, passengers from within and outside the region will be able to connect seamlessly through the Copa Airlines hubs in Panama City (Panama) and Bogota (Colombia) and the Avianca, TACA Airlines hubs in Bogota (Colombia), San Salvador (El Salvador), Lima (Peru) and San Jose (Costa Rica).

In addition to the network, Avianca, TACA Airlines and Copa Airlines customers will also gain access to the full breadth of the global Star Alliance benefits by using their existing frequent flyer memberships to collect and redeem miles on all member carriers. Those customers with higher status privileges in the LifeMiles programme of Avianca, TACA Airlines or in Copa Airlines' Mileage Plus programme will be entitled to the Star Alliance Gold benefits, which offer priority services across the whole network, including extra baggage allowance, priority baggage delivery and access to over 990 lounges world-wide. At the same time, holders of Frequent Flyer cards of the other Star Alliance member carriers will be offered the Star Alliance Frequent Flyer benefits when travelling on the Avianca, TACA Airlines and Copa Airlines network.

A further benefit which Star Alliance offers is fare products both for the corporate and leisure customer. With the home bases of both airline groups being located in one of the fastest growing regions in the world, these are ideal markets for expanding Star Alliance Corporate Plus, Conventions Plus and Meetings Plus. At the same time, the popular Star Alliance Round the World fare can now offer customers routings which include destinations such as the Galapagos Islands, Cuzco and the Jungles of Central America as well as many beach resorts in the Caribbean.

Fabio Villegas, CEO of AviancaTaca Holding said: "The integration of Avianca, TACA Airlines into the global Star Alliance network is a milestone in the development of our own merged organisation and the quality of our travel services. More than 17,000 employees at Avianca, TACA Airlines are proud to be offering customers a consistently high quality of service right across the globe, at a standard that matches that of the most prestigious airlines on this planet."

"Joining Star Alliance is an accomplishment for our company. We are proud to become part of the largest and most prestigious global airline network and to draw the world's attention to the Isthmus of Panama," said Copa Airlines CEO Pedro Heilbron. "In addition, Copa will provide frequent flyers around the world with more benefits and travel options throughout the Latin American region, making it easier for them to connect through Tocumen Airport and visit our country."

Avianca, TACA Airlines serve more than 100 destinations around the world, operating a fleet of more than 150 modern short, medium and long range aircraft. The carrier group directly employs over 17,000 people and has more than three million members in its loyalty programme. Avianca, TACA Airlines, which each consolidate several smaller Latin American carriers, agreed to a strategic merger in October 2009, creating a combined network focusing on North, Central and South America, the Caribbean and cities in Europe. TACA initially began negotiations for Star Alliance membership in 2008.

The two airlines of Copa Holdings - Copa Airlines and Copa Airlines Colombia - serve 64 destinations in 29 countries. The group recently strengthened its presence in Colombia, by rebranding Aero Republica to Copa Airlines Colombia. Copa Airlines' Hub of the Americas at Tocumen International Airport in Panama City, Panama, is Latin America's leading hub, with major traffic from

the Caribbean, and Central and South America. Copa's entrance into Star Alliance reinforces its 12-year-old alliance with United-Continental.

As of today, the Star Alliance network is comprised of 27 members offering more than 21,500 daily flights to 1,356 airports in 193 countries.

#### About AviancaTaca

Avianca and TACA Airlines, together with other regional airlines, constitute AviancaTaca Holding SA. The conglomerate provides air services in a range of countries in Latin America, the United States and Europe. With a modern fleet of 150 short, medium and long haul aircraft and an exceptional team composed of more than 17,000 employees, Avianca and TACA Airlines directly serve over 100 destinations in 25 countries, which connect with over 750 destinations in the world through partner airlines around the globe. With over 4 million members in their frequent flyer program, the multi-hub operating model offers passengers multiple flight options through their hubs in Bogota, Colombia, San Salvador, El Salvador, Lima, Peru and San Jose, Costa Rica. The airline group also offers a broad portfolio of aviation products and services, including cargo, courier, specialized aviation support and tourism packages. After receiving the most prestigious awards for the rigor and quality of their air and ground services, Avianca and TACA Airlines continue working to identify and exploit synergies to further benefit customers. For more information about the airlines visit [www.taca.com](http://www.taca.com) or [www.avianca.com](http://www.avianca.com)

#### About Copa Holdings

Copa Airlines and Copa Airlines Colombia, subsidiaries of Copa Holdings (NYSE: CPA), are leading Latin American providers of passengers and cargo services. Copa Airlines operates the most complete and comprehensive intra-American network through its Hub of the Americas in Panama's Tocumen Airport, with more than twice the number of international flights and destinations than any other hub in the region. Currently, the airlines provide service to 64 destinations in 29 countries in North, Central and South America and the Caribbean, while operating one of the youngest and most modern fleets in the industry, consisting of 80 aircraft: 54 Boeing 737NG aircraft and 26 Embraer-190s. Since 1998 Copa Airlines has been part of a comprehensive alliance with Continental, now United, including co-branded participation in MileagePlus, code shared flights and other marketing initiatives. The Copa-United alliance is considered the most complete and successful airline alliance between a US carrier and an airline in Latin America. To make reservations, check seat assignments, log on to a MileagePlus account, create a trip log, check in for flights, print boarding passes or purchase tickets via secure transactions in 11 currencies, visit [copa.com](http://copa.com).

#### About Star Alliance:

The Star Alliance network was established in 1997 as the first truly global airline alliance to offer worldwide reach, recognition and seamless service to the international traveller. Its acceptance by the market has been recognised by numerous awards, including the Air Transport World Market Leadership Award and Best Airline Alliance by both Business Traveller Magazine and Skytrax. The member airlines are: Adria Airways, Aegean Airlines, Air Canada, Air China, Air New Zealand, ANA, Asiana Airlines, Austrian, Avianca, TACA Airlines, Blue1, Brussels Airlines, Copa Airlines, Croatia Airlines, EGYPTAIR, Ethiopian Airlines, LOT Polish Airlines, Lufthansa, Scandinavian Airlines, Singapore Airlines, South African Airways, SWISS, TAM Airlines, TAP Portugal, Turkish Airlines, THAI, United and US Airways. EVA Air and Shenzhen Airlines have been announced as future members. Overall, the Star Alliance network offers more than 21,500 daily flights to 1,356 airports in 193 countries.

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