

China's homegrown C919 aircraft arrives in Hong Kong in maiden flight outside the mainland

December 12 2023, by Zen Soo



In this photo taken Dec. 12, 2023 and released by Hong Kong Government Information Services, the Chinese-made C919, is welcomed upon arrival at the Hong Kong International Airport. The Chinese C919 commercial passenger jet has arrived in Hong Kong in the Chinese-made aircraft's first foray outside of mainland China. The C919 plane and another Chinese-made aircraft, an ARJ21, landed Tuesday and will be on display at Hong Kong's international airport until Sunday. Credit: Hong Kong Government Information Services via AP

A Chinese C919 jet arrived in Hong Kong on Tuesday in the Chinese-made plane's first foray outside of mainland China as its manufacturer prepares to take on Airbus and Boeing in the market for single-aisle commercial aircraft.

The C919 was due to perform a flyby over the city's scenic Victoria Harbor on Saturday, giving people on the waterfront a glimpse of the new aircraft, weather permitting.

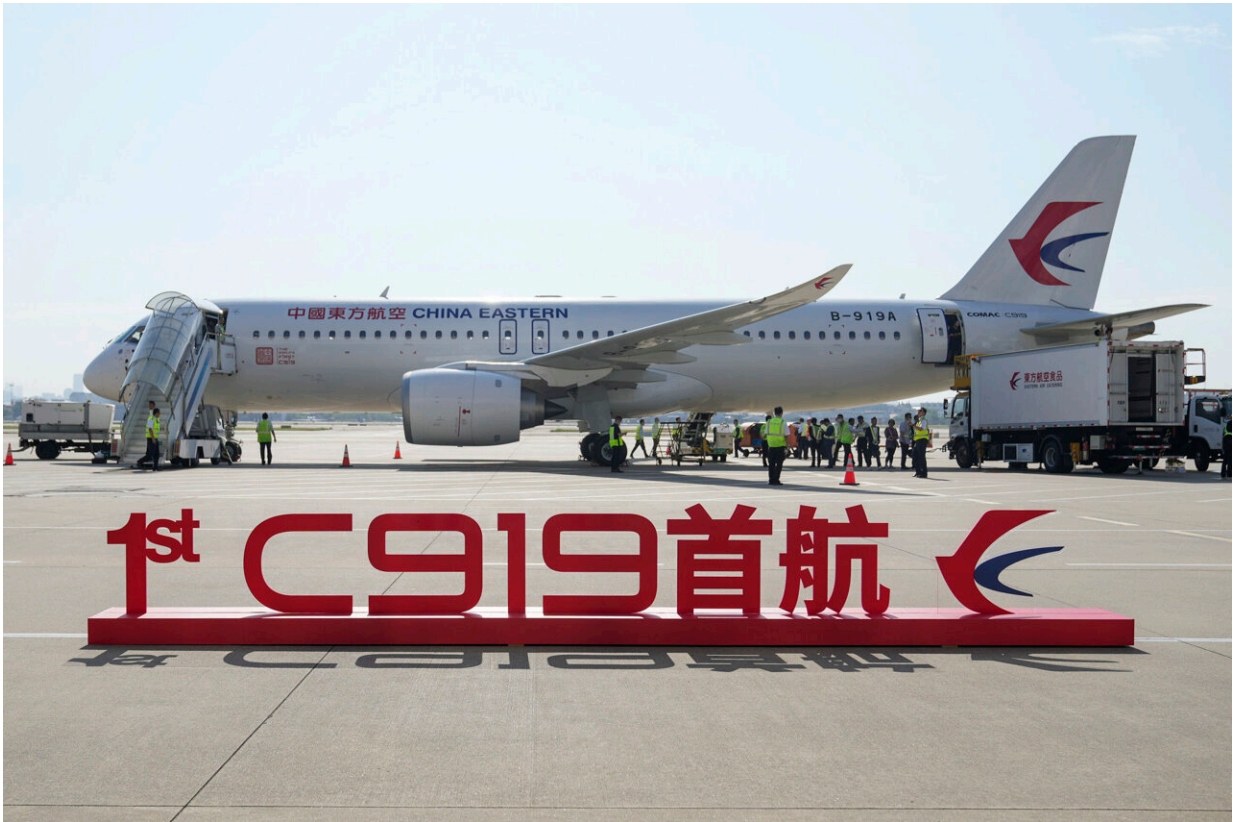
As a precaution, flying of drones and remote control planes, kits and releases of balloons will be restricted, the government said in a statement.

C919 and ARJ21 received a "ceremonial water salute" as they arrived, the statement said. An official welcoming ceremony is planned for Wednesday at the airport.

The C919 and another Chinese-made aircraft, an ARJ21, will be on display at Hong Kong's international airport until Sunday and can be visited by officials and lawmakers, representatives from the aviation industry and youth groups, among others, it said.

The maker of the C919, the Commercial Aircraft Company of China, or COMAC, designed many of the C919's parts, but some of its key components are still sourced from the West, including its engine.

The aerospace industry is viewed as an important step on the path laid out by Chinese leaders to transform the country from the world's low-cost factory into a creator of profitable technology.



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, a sign which reads "1st C919 inaugural flight" is seen in front of the Chinese made passenger aircraft prepared for its first commercial flight from Shanghai on Sunday, May 28, 2023. A Chinese C919 jet arrived in Hong Kong on Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2023, in the Chinese-made plane's first foray outside of mainland China as its manufacturer prepares to take on Airbus and Boeing in the market for single-aisle commercial aircraft. Credit: Ding Ting/Xinhua via AP, File



The Chinese-made C919 arrives at the Hong Kong International Airport in Hong Kong, on Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2023. The Chinese C919 commercial passenger jet has arrived in Hong Kong in the Chinese-made aircraft's first foray outside of mainland China. The C919 plane and another Chinese-made aircraft, an ARJ21, landed Tuesday and will be on display at Hong Kong's international airport until Sunday. Credit: AP Photo



Chinese-made jets, the C919, front and the ARJ21, back, arrive at the Hong Kong International Airport in Hong Kong, on Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2023. The Chinese C919 commercial passenger jet has arrived in Hong Kong in the Chinese-made aircraft's first foray outside of mainland China. The C919 plane and another Chinese-made aircraft, an ARJ21, landed Tuesday and will be on display at Hong Kong's international airport until Sunday. Credit: AP Photo



In this photo taken Dec. 12, 2023 and released by Hong Kong Government Information Services, the Chinese-made ARJ21 is welcomed upon arrival at the Hong Kong International Airport. The Chinese C919 commercial passenger jet has arrived in Hong Kong in the Chinese-made aircraft's first foray outside of mainland China. The C919 plane and another Chinese-made aircraft, an ARJ21, landed Tuesday and will be on display at Hong Kong's international airport until Sunday. Credit: Hong Kong Government Information Services via AP



In this photo taken Dec. 12, 2023 and released by Hong Kong Government Information Services, the Chinese-made C919 touches down at the Hong Kong International Airport. The Chinese C919 commercial passenger jet has arrived in Hong Kong in the Chinese-made aircraft's first foray outside of mainland China. The C919 plane and another Chinese-made aircraft, an ARJ21, landed Tuesday and will be on display at Hong Kong's international airport until Sunday. Credit: Hong Kong Government Information Services via AP



In this photo taken Dec. 12, 2023 and released by Hong Kong Government Information Services, the Chinese-made ARJ21 touch down at the Hong Kong International Airport. The Chinese C919 commercial passenger jet has arrived in Hong Kong in the Chinese-made aircraft's first foray outside of mainland China. The C919 plane and another Chinese-made aircraft, an ARJ21, landed Tuesday and will be on display at Hong Kong's international airport until Sunday. Credit: Hong Kong Government Information Services via AP

More recently, the focus has turned to other strategically important industries such as computer chips, renewable energy and artificial intelligence. But China is expected to become one of the world's biggest aircraft markets over the next two decades.

The narrow-bodied C919 airliner was in development for 16 years and

received certification in 2022. It has a maximum range of about 3,500 miles (5,630 kilometers) and is designed to carry 158-168 passengers.

COMAC delivered its first ARJ21s in 2014. A smaller aircraft, it can seat 78 to 90 passengers depending on its configuration, with a range of up to 3,700 kilometers (2,300 miles). It was designed as a rival to aircraft made by Bombardier Inc. of Canada and Brazil's Embraer SA.

China's aviation market has been growing rapidly as a rising middle class travels more for leisure and business. COMAC plans to build 150 C919 planes each year for the next five years, according to earlier Chinese state media reports. It has said it has hundreds of orders, mainly from Chinese airlines.

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