

US airlines slash flights over virus crisis

March 16 2020



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US airlines have announced drastic reductions in flights after President Donald Trump's administration banned foreign travelers arriving from Europe.

United Airlines said it would announce a cut in capacity of around 50

percent for April and May, as the United States ramps up restrictions to try and contain the spread of the [coronavirus](#).

"We also now expect these deep cuts to extend into the summer travel period," said chief executive Oscar Munoz and company president Scott Kirby in a letter to employees published on the airline's website on Sunday.

In the first half of March—usually the busiest month of the year—United had "welcomed more than one million fewer customers on board our aircraft than the same period last year."

Revenue for March 2020 was projected to be \$1.5 billion lower than last March, the letter added.

The airline has begun speaking to unions "about how to reduce our payroll expense," it said, acknowledging this would be "painful" but that senior staff had already been told their salaries would be halved.

American Airlines said it would reduce all international capacity by 75 percent.

"This suspension will last through May 6," the carrier said. "This change is in response to decreased demand and changes to US government travel restrictions due to coronavirus."

It also said domestic service would be reduced by 20 percent in April compared to last year.

Its competitor Delta said it would "significantly reduce its US to Europe flying beginning Monday, March 16, following the US government directive restricting travel between the US and Europe."

Southwest Airlines said it "will likely make service reductions based on demand."

The US restrictions on [travel](#) from Europe took effect at midnight Friday and were later extended to Britain and Ireland as of Tuesday.

US airlines had already suspended flights between the US and Italy, hard-hit by the virus, and earlier between the US and China where the new coronavirus emerged in December.

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