

**FACT SHEET – DOT ISSUES FINAL ORDER  
FOR U.S.-CUBA SERVICE TO HAVANA**

**Background**

On August 31, 2016, DOT issued a final decision in the Havana carrier selection proceeding, finalizing DOT's July 7, 2016, tentative decision in the case. DOT's order allocates 20 daily frequencies to U.S. carriers for scheduled passenger services between the United States and Havana, Cuba.

On February 16, 2016, Secretary Anthony Foxx signed an arrangement to re-establish scheduled air service between the United States and Cuba. Under the new arrangement, each country has the opportunity to operate up to 20 daily roundtrip flights between the U.S. and Havana.

DOT considered applications from 12 U.S. airlines competing for the chance to operate scheduled passenger flights to Havana. The 12 airlines proposed operating a total of nearly 60 daily flights to Havana, far in excess of the 20 daily flights permitted. DOT has accordingly been conducting a carrier selection proceeding. In selecting from among the applicants, DOT said that its principal objective was to maximize public benefits and select the carriers that would offer and maintain the best service for the public.

DOT's decision and other documents in the case are available online at [regulations.gov](http://regulations.gov), Docket DOT-OST-2016-0021.

**Q & A**

**Q. Why did DOT issue this order, and what does it do?**

**A.** This order finalizes DOT's order from July 7, 2016, where DOT tentatively selected eight U.S. airlines to begin scheduled flights between ten U.S. cities and Havana, Cuba.

Twelve U.S. airlines filed applications to conduct scheduled combination services (i.e., passenger and cargo) to Havana. Collectively, the airlines applied for nearly 60 flights per day into Havana, exceeding the 20 daily flights made available by the U.S.-Cuba arrangement. Because the applicants sought more opportunities than are available under the U.S.-Cuba arrangement, DOT conducted a proceeding to allocate the opportunities in a manner that will maximize public benefits.

**Q. Which airlines will be flying from which U.S. cities to Havana, and how often?**

**A.** The selected airlines, routes, and proposed frequency are summarized in the table below:

<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Proposed Routing</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Alaska Airlines	Los Angeles-Havana	Once daily
American Airlines	Miami-Havana	4 times daily
	Charlotte-Havana	Once daily
Delta Air Lines	New York (JFK)-Havana	Once daily
	Atlanta-Havana	Once daily
	Miami-Havana	Once daily
Frontier Airlines	Miami-Havana	Once daily
JetBlue Airways	Fort Lauderdale-Havana	Twice daily (except once on Saturdays)
	New York (JFK)-Havana	Once daily
	Orlando-Havana	Once daily
Southwest Airlines	Fort Lauderdale-Havana	Twice daily
	Tampa-Havana	Once daily
Spirit Airlines	Fort Lauderdale-Havana	Twice daily
United Airlines	Newark-Havana	Once daily
	Houston-Havana	Once weekly (Saturdays)

**Q. Why these cities and why these carriers?**

**A.** In the decision, DOT stated that this proceeding provides an opportunity to introduce scheduled service to Havana after more than 50 years of U.S.-Cuba services being absent altogether or limited only to charters. DOT said that it could best maximize public benefits by addressing a variety of public interest needs. DOT concluded that Cuban-American population centers in the United States are the areas most likely to benefit from scheduled service to Havana. DOT also found that it could promote competition in the U.S.-Cuba market by diversifying the allocation among a variety of carriers and airports, including airports in certain aviation hub cities.

**Q. Why was my city not selected for service to Havana?**

**A.** In the order, DOT noted that with the limitations on scheduled Havana service and the number of requests received, DOT could not select every applicant or every city for service. DOT said that it believes its selections represent the best approach, on balance, to achieving maximum public benefits.

Interested parties may read the Department’s decision and other publicly available documents in the case online at [regulations.gov](http://regulations.gov), by searching for Docket DOT-OST-2016-0021.

**Q. Why was a particular airline not selected for service to Havana?**

**A.** Given the limitations on scheduled Havana service and the number of requests received, DOT could not select every applicant for service. DOT's order stated that it believes that the airlines and cities selected represent, on balance, the best approach to achieve maximum public benefits.

Interested parties may read the Department's decision and other publicly available documents in the case online at [regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), by searching for Docket DOT-OST-2016-0021.

**Q. When can I buy a ticket for a scheduled flight to Havana?**

**A.** The airlines authorized by DOT are now positioned to seek Cuban government authority and begin making the local arrangements necessary to launch their services. Most of the airlines propose to begin their Havana services in the fall and winter of 2016/2017, and will likely begin selling tickets well in advance of their planned startup dates.

**Q. When will flights to Havana start?**

**A.** The airlines have proposed varying startup dates for their services, but most are planned for fall and winter 2016/2017. DOT's decision contains requirements that the carriers begin their services within 90 days of the issue date of this final order.

**Q. Are there any more U.S. Government regulatory requirements for the selected airlines beyond selection by DOT?**

**A.** The chosen carriers must comply with all applicable requirements of the FAA and the TSA and all applicable U.S. Government requirements concerning security.

**Q. What opportunities are available under the U.S.-Cuba arrangement?**

**A.** Under the terms of the U.S.-Cuba arrangement, the DOT may allocate up to 20 daily round-trip frequencies for U.S. carrier scheduled passenger or all-cargo services between the United States and Havana. For scheduled passenger or all-cargo services to and from each of the other nine international airports in Cuba, DOT may allocate up to 10 daily round-trip frequencies at each airport, for a total of 90 daily non-Havana U.S.-Cuba round-trip frequencies. There are no frequency restrictions on charter service.

**Q. Where can I find the text of the U.S.-Cuba arrangement?**

**A.** The text of the arrangement can be found on the Department of State's website at <http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ata/c/cu/252525.htm>.

**Q. What will happen to the current charter services between the U.S. and Cuba?**

**A.** The U.S.-Cuba arrangement allows for unlimited charter services to and from any point in Cuba, and the proceeding accordingly did not address charter services, which can continue as before. DOT's sole focus in this proceeding was on the allocation of scheduled service frequencies to Havana.

**Q. Does this order mean that I can travel to Cuba as a tourist?**

**A.** No. While the new arrangement reflects a major step forward in President Obama's policy of engagement with Cuba, the Department recognizes that significant limitations and requirements remain in place concerning air transportation between Cuba and the United States. For example, travel for tourist activities remains prohibited by statute. Any award of authority in this proceeding will not relieve parties from complying with the applicable requirements and regulations of other U.S. agencies, and with all applicable laws of the United States. This new arrangement will facilitate visits for travelers that fall under [one of 12 categories authorized](#) by the U.S. Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). Prospective travelers should also review OFAC's [Frequently Asked Questions Related to Cuba](#).

**Q. How do I certify that I fall under one of the 12 approved categories for travel to Cuba?**

**A.** Travelers are encouraged to check with the U.S. Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), and can find valuable information on their website at the link below:

<https://www.treasury.gov/about/organizational-structure/offices/Pages/Office-of-Foreign-Assets-Control.aspx>

The U.S. airlines authorized to serve Cuba may also have information on their websites to help prospective ticket buyers determine whether they are eligible for travel.

**Q. Do I need a visa to travel to Cuba?**

**A.** Travelers are encouraged to check with the U.S. Department of State, and can find valuable information on their website at <http://www.travel.state.gov>

**Q. What are the rules about importing items from Cuba, including cigars?**

**A.** Significant limitations and requirements remain in place concerning air transportation and travel between the United States and Cuba. Travelers are encouraged to check with applicable U.S. Government agencies to ensure their travel plans comply with regulations and requirements of those agencies, and with applicable laws of the United States. Such agencies include, but are necessarily limited to, the Departments of [Commerce](#), [Homeland Security](#), [State](#), and [Treasury](#). Information on U.S. Government and Cuban Government requirements can be found at the Department of State's website at the link below.

<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/cuba.html>

**Q. Is there anything I'm not allowed to bring into Cuba?**

**A.** Significant limitations and requirements remain in place concerning air transportation and travel between the United States and Cuba. Travelers are encouraged to check with applicable U.S. Government agencies to ensure their travel plans comply with regulations and requirements of those agencies, and with applicable laws of the United States. Such agencies include, but are necessarily limited to, the Departments of [Commerce](#), [Homeland Security](#), [State](#), and [Treasury](#).

Travelers should also ensure that they comply with Cuban Government requirements. Travelers to Cuba can find additional information from [the Cuban Embassy](#) in Washington, DC.

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