

SAS innovations

SAS – the world’s most innovative airline

As the national carrier of not one, but three of the world’s most contemporary countries, there has always been certain expectations on Scandinavian Airlines to represent its region well. Not too surprisingly, SAS has introduced more significant ‘firsts’ during aviation history than any other airline.

Over the past six decades, SAS has consistently been at the forefront of the industry, introducing innovative new products that its competitors quickly adapt for themselves. SAS has been the first to open new routes and serve new destinations long before other airlines followed suit. Some of SAS’ innovations include:

The first trans-arctic flight with a commercial aircraft

At 8.30am on November 19, 1952, SAS’ first DC-6B, ‘Arild Viking’, took off from Los Angeles. 28 hours and six minutes later it touched down in Copenhagen, following two intermediate stops at Edmonton, Canada, and Thule, Greenland.

First airline to introduce Tourist Class

These discounted ticket options, introduced in 1952, came with certain conditions. It was originally only available on transatlantic routes, but became so successful it was offered on all routes in 1954. The entire airline industry followed suit shortly afterwards.

First airline to fly directly over the North Pole

In 1953, a test flight between Bodø, Norway, and Fairbanks, Alaska, became the first commercial aircraft to ever fly directly over the geographical North Pole. SAS also became the first airline to introduce a special Polar navigation system to overcome the problems of flying over the magnetic North Pole

Launching the world’s first Polar shortcut

When the Copenhagen to Los Angeles route opened in November 15, 1954, it was hailed as “The first new commercial route in a thousand years” in a headline by a Swiss newspaper. The new route cut the travel time between California and Scandinavia from 36 hours to 22 hours. Surprisingly, SAS had no competition on the Polar route for five years until 1959.

Establishing the world’s first around-the-world service

In 1957, SAS became the world’s first airline to offer regularly scheduled routes around the world, Copenhagen-Anchorage-Tokyo-Copenhagen, without a change of aircraft.

First airline to offer various destinations at no extra cost

In 1962, SAS launched the ‘Extra City Plan’ in the US, allowing passengers to visit various European cities (in addition to Copenhagen) at no extra. In fact, a total of 25 cities across Europe were offered at the same price as a direct flight. One after another, SAS’ competitors on the Atlantic routes introduced similar offers and today, it is a worldwide standard.

First to introduce a Europe-wide instant booking system

In February 1965, SAS introduced SASCO, a Europe-wide ‘instant booking’ electronic reservation system. In 1987, SAS was part of forming the information and reservation system Amadeus, named after Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, with Lufthansa, Air France and Iberia.



SAS Innovations in brief

As the world’s most innovative airline, Scandinavian Airlines has been at the forefront of new technologies, trends and markets.

- SAS was the first airline to introduce Tourist Class.
- SAS introduced the Polar shortcut, which was hailed as “The first new commercial route in a thousand years” by a Swiss newspaper.
- SAS established the first around-the-world service in 1957: Copenhagen-Anchorage-Tokyo-Copenhagen.
- SAS was first to introduce a Europe-wide instant booking system, SASCO, in 1965.

First airline to introduce in-flight entertainment

SAS was the first airline to show movies onboard its flights. The first in-flight entertainment program was launched on a flight to New York on September 15, 1968.

First airline to employ a female pilot

In May 1969, 31-year-old Norwegian Turi Widerøe became the first female pilot for a Western airline. She was the daughter of aviation pioneer Viggo Widerøe and had previously flown seaplanes for Widerøe Airlines (which SAS acquired in 1997).

Turi became a celebrity in the US, and in 1971 she was presented with the prestigious Harman International Aviation Trophy at the White House, along with the Apollo 11 astronauts who had landed on the moon. A year later, some 200 million people saw the documentary *What Makes Turi Fly?*

The first female SAS captain, Swedish Lena Lindeberg, was appointed in 1995. And on April 20, 1998, the first SAS flight with an all-female crew departed Stockholm for Dublin.

First airline to feature an in-flight exercise program

In 1977, SAS added the unique 'Exercise in the Chair' program to its in-flight entertainment. The worldwide response and media attention to the airborne physical fitness program was far greater than SAS could possibly have expected, and created new waves of goodwill for SAS worldwide. Today, there is also a handle bar onboard in Business class to stretch your back during the flight.

First airline to offer separate check-in and lounges

In 1982, SAS introduced its new concept First Business Class on intercontinental routes. SAS thereby became the first airline to offer its business travelers separate check-in counters and exclusive airport lounges.

First western airline to serve a Baltic capital

In 1989, the Stockholm-Tallinn (Estonia) route was launched. In 1990, a Copenhagen-Riga (Latvia) service was introduced, and flights to Vilnius (Lithuania) followed in 1991. SAS served Riga as early as 1956, but later withdrew its service. Today, the SAS Group partly owns Air Baltic and Estonian Air, the two largest airlines in the Baltics.

First airline to introduce sleeper seats

In 1992, SAS introduced the EuroSleeper, a special seat almost as comfortable as a bed, which could be booked at an extra surcharge. It was particularly popular on SAS' US routes.

Introducing a ladies' favorite

SAS was the first airline to feature windows in its Business class restrooms, which were rolled out during the 1990s. Still to date, few airlines have copied this concept, which has become a particular favorite with the ladies.

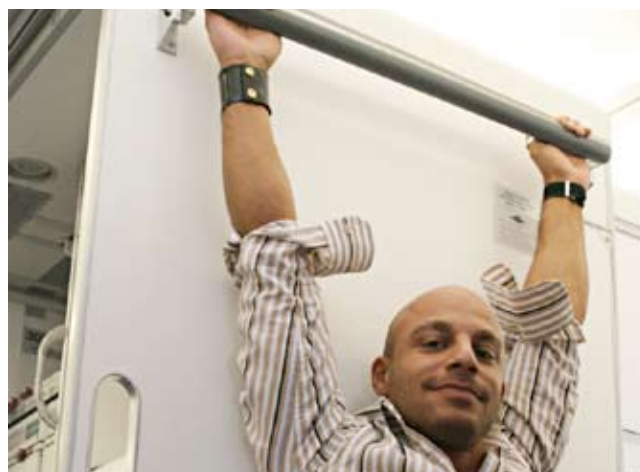
Introducing biometrics check-in

SAS was the first airline to introduce biometric security check-ins in a domestic market. Following a successful trial period in northern Sweden, fingerprint readers were rolled out across Sweden in the first half of 2006.

Green flights

SAS aims to be the world's most environmentally-conscious airline and was first to implement green approaches, saving 150 kilograms aircraft fuel (or approximately 475 kilograms carbon dioxide) per landing.

SAS has carried out over 2000 domestic green approaches at Stockholm Arlanda airport, and in December 2007, SAS became the first airline to conduct a trans-Atlantic green flight from the US to Stockholm.



SAS Innovations in brief

As the world's most innovative airline, Scandinavian Airlines has been at the forefront of new technologies, trends and markets.

- First airline to introduce in-flight entertainment in 1968, and in 1977, first to add an in-flight exercise program: 'Exercise in the Chair'.
- First airline to introduce sleeper seats.
- First airline to feature windows in Business class restrooms.
- First airline to introduce biometric check-ins across a whole domestic market.
- First airline to implement green flights, both domestic and trans-Atlantic.