

SAS timeline

More than 60 years in the sky



Throughout history, Scandinavians have been explorers. So it is no real surprise that Scandinavian Airlines has been at the forefront of opening up new airways. Like the Vikings, SAS has conquered the world, albeit with a much friendlier approach. Scandinavian Airlines have grown steadily over the past six decades and today it is much more than just one airline.

The idea to combine three Scandinavian airlines into one took years of planning, but made perfect sense from the start. Why have three small airlines compete on routes that will not sustain enough traffic, when one single, amalgamated airline could meet demand?

The three airlines that came together were: one with no money, no aircraft and no staff (Norway's Det Norske Luftfartsselskap, DNL); one with some money, a small staff and one aircraft (Denmark's Det Danske Luftfartsselskab, DDL); and one with three operational B-17s, 10 DC-4s on order and finances in perfect shape (Swedish Intercontinental Air Traffic, SILA). Together, they became Scandinavian Airlines System, SAS.

1946

SAS' first intercontinental commercial flight to New York takes off on September 17 from Stockholm's Bromma Airport • SAS inaugurates South Atlantic routes to Brazil and Uruguay

1947

Daily flights to New York are introduced

1948

All European operations are merged

1949

Bangkok becomes SAS' first Far Eastern destination

1950

Parent companies ABA (Sweden), DDL (Denmark) and DNL (Norway) transfer all operations to SAS in accordance with a new Consortium Agreement

1951

Bangkok service extended to Tokyo • Nairobi service introduced • South American route extended to Santiago

1952

SAS makes the world's first trans-arctic flight with a commercial aircraft

1953

Nairobi route extended to Johannesburg

1954

SAS opens the world's first Polar shortcut with the Copenhagen – Los Angeles service

1956

Moscow route re-opened • Riga added to the network



SAS timeline in brief (1946–1956)

Scandinavian Airlines has continuously been at the forefront of the aviation industry.

- SAS was born out of Norway's Det Norske Luftfartsselskap (DNL), Denmark's Det Danske Luftfartsselskab (DDL) and Sweden's Swedish Intercontinental Air Traffic (SILA).
- SAS' first intercontinental commercial flight to New York takes off on September 17, 1946, from Stockholm's Bromma Airport.
- SAS makes the world's first trans-arctic flight with a commercial aircraft in 1952.
- SAS opens the world's first Polar shortcut with the Copenhagen–Los Angeles service in 1954.

1957

Another Polar shortcut, Copenhagen–Anchorage–Tokyo, is introduced, establishing the world's first around-the-world network • SAS is part of forming Swedish domestic airline Linjeflyg • Warsaw and Prague added to the route network

1958

Cooperation agreement signed with Swissair

1959

SAS becomes a 50% shareholder of Guest Aero of Mexico • SAS enters the Jet Age with the first jet aircraft, Caravelle • SAS forms THAI International with Thai Airways

1960

The new flagship of the SAS jet fleet, the DC-8-33, is introduced on North Atlantic routes • Monrovia in Liberia added to South Atlantic network • The DC-8 Jetliner introduced on the Tokyo route, slashing flying time from 27 hours to less than 16 hours • SAS opens its first hotel, the 21-storey SAS Royal Hotel Copenhagen

1961

Services to East and South Africa extended

1962

SAS was awarded the prestigious Christopher Columbus Prize (the “Nobel Prize of Communications”) • The ‘Extra City Plan’ is launched in the US, the whole industry follows suit

1963

Route to Kirkenes opened • Montreal added to network

1964

Flights to Chicago commence

1965

SAS becomes the first airline to introduce European-wide electronic reservation system (SASCO) • Non-stop Bergen–New York route introduced

1966

Inauguration of Seattle via Polar route

1967

The Trans-Asian Express, a new East-West shortcut linking Copenhagen with Bangkok and Singapore, is introduced

1968

Dar-es-Salaam added to the African network • SAS is the world's first airline to introduce in-flight entertainment on a flight to New York

1969

Turi Widerøe joins SAS as the first female pilot for a Western airline • Barbados and Port-of-Spain in the West Indies are added

1970

KLM, SAS, Swissair and UTA of France sign a milestone agreement of cooperation, forming the KSSU group

1971

SAS is part of forming Danish domestic airline Danair • SAS' first Boeing 747 jumbo jet is put into service • The Trans-Siberian Express between Copenhagen and Tokyo is launched • New uniforms, designed by Christian Dior of Paris, are introduced

1972

East Berlin route opens • New York - Stavanger route opens • SAS' in-flight magazine *Scanorama* is launched



SAS timeline in brief (1957–1972)

Scandinavian Airlines has continuously been at the forefront of the aviation industry.

- SAS establishes the world's first around-the-world route in 1957.
- SAS forms THAI International in 1959.
- SAS opens its first hotel, the 21-storey SAS Royal Hotel Copenhagen in 1960.
- SAS becomes the first airline to introduce European-wide electronic reservation system in 1965.
- SAS is the world's first airline to introduce in-flight entertainment on a flight to New York in 1968.
- Turi Widerøe joins SAS as the first female pilot for a Western airline in 1969.

1973

SAS places its largest single aircraft order, for more DC-9-41s, worth US\$105 million • Flights to Delhi commence

1975

SAS introduces the world's most northernmost scheduled service, Svalbard

1976

Service to Lagos inaugurated

1977

Flights to Kuwait are introduced • Gothenburg–New York non-stop service commences

1979

Business Class is introduced on intercontinental routes

1980

SAS opens its first hotel outside Scandinavia, the SAS Kuwait Hotel • Business Class introduced on North American routes

1981

SAS EuroClass is introduced on all European routes • SAS receives its first Airbus, “Snorre Viking”

1982

First Business Class makes its debut on intercontinental flights and SAS becomes the first airline to offer business travelers separate check-in counters and special airport loungers, the Scanorama Lounges

1983

SAS introduces special seminars, dubbed “charm schools”, for some 11,000 employees, to improve customer service • A new striking corporate identity is unveiled • Hotel Scandinavia becomes the first SAS hotel to offer lobby check-in for full-fare passengers

1984

SAS is awarded the ‘Airline of the Year’ award by Air Transport World • SAS Commuter operations begins • A hovercraft feeder service between Copenhagen Airport and Malmö, Sweden, is introduced

1985

First non-stop flights between Stockholm - Bangkok • SAS takes delivery of its first MD-80, while the last 747 is retired

1986

SAS celebrates 40 years with a series of open-house parties in Scandinavia. Half a million people participate • SAS wins the ‘Best Passenger Service Award’ from Air Transport World • SAS Leisure forms Spanish airline Spanair

1987

SAS signs a cooperation agreement with Thai Airways • SAS forms a joint information and reservation system, Amadeus, with Air France, Iberia and Lufthansa

1988

Copenhagen - Beijing service introduced • SAS acquires a major hold of Airlines of Britain Holdings, and forms an alliance with British Midland

1989

Cooperation with All Nippon Airways and Continental Airways begins • Stockholm–Tallinn route introduced • SAS International Hotels acquires 40% of the Intercontinental Hotels Group. The stake is sold in 1992



SAS timeline in brief (1973–1989)

Scandinavian Airlines has continuously been at the forefront of the aviation industry.

- Business Class is introduced on intercontinental routes in 1979; on North American routes in 1980.
- SAS EuroClass is introduced on all European routes.
- SAS introduces “charm schools”, for some 11,000 employees in 1983, to improve customer service.
- SAS is named ‘Airline of the Year’ in 1984.
- SAS wins the ‘Best Passenger Service Award’ from Air Transport World in 1986.
- SAS Leisure forms Spanish airline Spanair in 1986.
- SAS is part of forming the joint information and reservation system, Amadeus.

1990

Agreement signed with LanChile, including a 35% ownership stake • Services from Copenhagen to Berlin, Prague and Riga are introduced

1991

Services from Copenhagen to Chicago, Hong Kong, Kiev and St Petersburg are introduced • SAS starts operating separate joint services with Austrian Airlines and Varig

1992

SAS introduces Jackpot, a discount fare option • EuroBonus, SAS' frequent flyer program, is introduced • EuroSleeper seat introduced • SAS acquires Swedish domestic airline Linjeflyg. In early 1993 Linjeflyg's operations are integrated into SAS' network • Service to Vilnius introduced

1993

Six new European routes from Copenhagen are introduced

1994

SAS International Hotels and Radisson Hotels International sign a cooperation agreement, becoming Radisson SAS Hotels Worldwide. Within a year it becomes the fastest-growing hotel chain in Europe • Copenhagen - Osaka route introduced

1995

SAS' largest investment ever with the order of 41 Boeing 737-600 twinjets for Scandinavian and European routes • SAS and Lufthansa announce a strategic alliance, with the aim to combine all their route networks between Scandinavia and Germany • SAS acquires a major hold in Latvian airline airBaltic • SAS publishes its first environmental report • SAS EuroBonus wins the coveted International Freddie Awards as 'Program of the Year', and continues to win the prestigious award for the next six consecutive years

1996

SAS celebrates its 50th anniversary, serving 103 destinations in 34 countries • Harmonization and name change of SAS parent company to SAS Danmark A/S, SAS Norge ASA and SAS Sverige AB • SAS and United Airlines begin code-sharing • Stockholm to Dublin and Manchester routes introduced • SAS becomes the first European airline to operate the MD-90

1997

SAS becomes a founding member of Star Alliance™ with Air Canada, Lufthansa, Thai Airways International and United Airlines • SAS obtains a major stake in Norwegian commuter airline Widerøe's Flyveselskap

1998

SAS acquires the Finnish domestic airline AirBotnia (which is rebranded as Blue1 in 2004) • SAS becomes part-owner of Swedish domestic airline Skyways • Stockholm - Chicago service introduced

1999

SAS introduces a new corporate identity, as well as internet bookings and traffic information via mobile phone • SAS forms alliance with Singapore Airlines • SAS orders four A330s and seven A340s to service intercontinental routes

2000

Website is redesigned and a system for mobile phone bookings is introduced • PC power outlets added to intercontinental fleet



SAS timeline in brief (1990–2000)

Scandinavian Airlines has continuously been at the forefront of the aviation industry.

- EuroBonus, SAS' frequent flyer program, is introduced in 1992.
- SAS acquires a major hold in Latvian airline airBaltic in 1995.
- SAS becomes a founding member of Star Alliance™ in 1997.
- SAS EuroBonus named 'Program of the Year' in 1997, and continues to win the prestigious Freddy Award for the next six consecutive years.
- In 1998, SAS acquires the Finnish domestic airline AirBotnia (which is rebranded as Blue1 in 2004).

2001

A single SAS share is established and SAS is listed on the stock exchanges in Stockholm, Copenhagen and Oslo • Copenhagen–Washington D.C route opens • SAS acquires Braathens of Norway and creates SAS Braathens

2002

SAS increases its Spanair stake to 74% (and to 95% in 2003) • SAS wins the Best Environmental Report at the European Reporting Awards • Economy Extra class is launched

2003

SAS introduces the low-cost concept Snowflake • Spanair joins Star Alliance™ • SAS acquires 49% of Estonian Air

2004

Several new routes from Copenhagen are introduced: Athens; Krakow; Shanghai; Venice and Zagreb • Incorporation of a completely new business model • Blue1 becomes a regional Star Alliance™ member • SAS launches the first-of-its-kind Crew Guide • As part of Turnaround 2005, SAS is divided into separate airlines in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, while SAS International is formed to serve intercontinental routes. All operate under the SAS brand

2005

SAS launches one way fares on European and Scandinavian routes • SAS becomes the first airline in the world to offer wireless internet access in all classes on all intercontinental routes

2006

The new SAS Business Sleeper is rolled out on intercontinental fleet • Audio/video-on-demand entertainment is introduced • Biometric check-in introduced in Sweden • SAS celebrates 60 years

2007

SAS becomes the first airline to offer complimentary wireless Internet and IP telephony in all lounges • Stockholm–Beijing route inaugurated • SAS announces its new five-year plan, Strategy 11 • SAS Braathens is renamed SAS Norge • SAS acquires 100% of Spanair in preparation to divest the airline • SAS International introduces new fare flexibility and choice • Copenhagen–Dubai route launched • More than 10 new direct routes from Stockholm are introduced • SAS carries out the world's first trans-Atlantic green landing

2008

Economy Extra on all long-haul routes is upgraded • SAS announces plans to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions by 20% by 2020 • SAS becomes Europe's most punctual airline once again • EuroBonus launches Seat Prognosis tool • SAS presented with the "Leadership in Technology Award" by Airline Business magazine

2009

SAS launches Core SAS, combining the four separate SAS airlines into SAS Scandinavian Airlines • SAS divests shares in Estonian Air and Spanair • EuroBonus Shop launched • Mobile boarding passes introduced



SAS timeline in brief (2001–2009)

Scandinavian Airlines has continuously been at the forefront of the aviation industry.

- SAS acquires Braathens of Norway and creates SAS Braathens in 2001.
- SAS launches Economy Extra class in 2002.
- In 2004, SAS is divided into separate airlines in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, while SAS International is formed to serve intercontinental routes.
- SAS launches one way fares on European and Scandinavian routes in 2005.
- The SAS Business Sleeper is rolled out in 2006.
- SAS launches Core SAS in 2009, becoming one airline