



Article Name: Uganda Airlines' Historic  
London Takeoff

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## Uganda Airlines' Historic London Takeoff

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Uganda Airlines is set to make a transformative leap in its international profile with the highly anticipated launch of direct flights from Entebbe to London Gatwick on May 18, 2025. This move re-establishes a crucial link between Uganda and the United Kingdom—a route that has been dormant for nearly a decade. The airline's decision is both symbolic and strategic, signaling Uganda's readiness to reposition itself as a central hub for East African air travel. For regional travelers, including those from Rwanda, South Sudan, eastern DRC, and Kenya, this route offers an attractive new option for Europe-bound traffic while placing Uganda firmly in the spotlight of global aviation corridors.

The airline will deploy its flagship Airbus A330-800neo on this route, one of the most modern wide-body aircraft. With a three-class configuration—20 business class, 28 premium economy, and 213 economy seats—Uganda Airlines is positioning itself to compete with established long-haul carriers by offering comfort, efficiency, and reliability. The A330neo's advanced fuel efficiency and extended range make it the ideal aircraft for the nine-hour direct route to London. This is part of the airline's broader fleet strategy that includes four Bombardier CRJ-900s for regional routes and two Airbus A330-800neos for intercontinental operations. By



maximizing the utility of its high-capacity long-haul aircraft, the airline aims to build economies of scale and reduce per-passenger costs over time.

From a financial perspective, the route to London is not just about connectivity—it's a calculated investment. According to internal estimates and comparative benchmarks, this route could generate upwards of USD 35–40 million annually in gross revenue if load factors remain above 70% across all classes. Revenue will not only come from passengers but also cargo, as the UK is among Uganda's top export markets. With over \$22.6 million in exports to the UK in 2024—mainly coffee, flowers, and fish—Uganda now gains a faster, fresher, and more competitive supply line. Beyond cargo, the increased passenger inflow is expected to drive up tourism numbers, particularly among the Ugandan diaspora and British eco-tourists drawn to Uganda's wildlife, culture, and adventure experiences.

Despite recording an operational loss of \$65 million in 2024, Uganda Airlines sees this launch not as a financial burden but a strategic foundation for long-term profitability. Entering the European market allows the airline to diversify its route portfolio, attract foreign currency inflows, and elevate its brand visibility. The move also supports national goals of improving trade logistics, enhancing diplomatic relations, and positioning Uganda as a serious player in global aviation. With strategic codeshare agreements, customer loyalty initiatives, and smart route planning, the Entebbe–London link could become not only the airline's flagship route but a model of how emerging African carriers can compete on the world stage. This isn't just a route—it's a national statement in motion.

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Afema Ronnie is a dedicated aviation sustainability leader and business development strategist with a robust background in sustainable air transport management. Holding both a Master's degree in Sustainable Air Transport Management and a Bachelor's in Business Analytics, he is also a licensed pilot with extensive experience in the aviation industry. As an award-winning sustainability advocate and recipient of the African Aviation Sustainability Award 2023, Afema has driven transformative climate action within the sector.

His expertise spans strategic business development, project management, and the implementation of pioneering sustainable aviation practices. Through his work as an aviation journalist and AviaDev Ambassador (2022), Afema continues to influence industry advancements and champion innovative solutions for a greener future.