

# CAL to cut Jamaica to Fort Lauderdale route



Flashback: Caribbean Airlines' all-economy Boeing 737-800NG is given a water cannon salute at the Sangster International Airport, Jamaica, on March 11, 2025. PHOTO CARIBBEAN AIRLINES

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Just months after Caribbean Airlines (CAL) restarted flights between Montego Bay/Kingston and Fort Lauderdale, the airline is ending the service due to poor performance. In a media release on Tuesday, the airline said the decision was taken due to the “current economic conditions impacting the Jamaica–Fort Lauderdale market,” which requires the airline to “reallocate resources”.

The last service will operate on November 1st, 2025. CAL has offered passengers holding confirmed tickets a full refund or the option of placing their ticket value on hold to be used toward future travel.

CAL has been operating flights from Kingston to Fort Lauderdale since December 2024, and Montego Bay to Fort Lauderdale since March 2025 using a leased all-economy class Boeing 737-800NG with 189 seats. The aircraft, which was based in Jamaica, will return to T&T and be used for seasonal winter flights until January 2026. The aircraft will then be returned to the lessor.

In March, the airline said the decision to restart the service was based on customer feedback and targetted the 300,000-plus Jamaicans living in Fort Lauderdale and the surrounding areas.

At the launch of the daily service between Montego Bay and Florida, CAL CEO Garvin Medera went one step further and promised the airline was “in for the long haul”. Stakeholders such as the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), and the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA), applauded CAL’s moves at the time.

However, despite stakeholders welcoming the additional service, both routes have been plagued by low load factors. Attempts to attract passengers with promotions such as discounted mileage redemptions and reduced fares were not enough to translate into higher bookings. According to

data from the US Department of Transportation, on several occasions the airline operated at less than 50 per cent capacity. And in at least one case, the airline transported less than 200 passengers one way for an entire month, despite offering 1,500-plus seats one way. The flights also faced stiff competition from US-based carriers Spirit Airlines and JetBlue, which both service the same routes.

Caribbean Airlines' chief commercial officer, Martin Aeberli, is adamant, however, that the airline is not pulling out of the Jamaica market completely.

"Caribbean Airlines remains steadfast in its mission to connect people and communities across the region and beyond," Aeberli said.

"While adjustments to our schedule are sometimes necessary in response to evolving market conditions, our commitment to delivering a safe, reliable and customer-focused service remains unchanged. We will continue to serve Jamaica and the Diaspora through other gateways within our network," Aeberli said.