

## [Airbus A380 Fuel Efficient New King of the Air](#)

The Airbus A380 is the largest jet airliner ever built and is the world's first double-deck passenger aircraft. The first flight took place from Toulouse, France on 27 April 2005 and led to a flight test program involving five Airbus A380s. The Airbus A380, launched in October of 2007, is a sleek, energy-efficient aircraft, designed to accommodate up to 850 passengers in a 2-deck configuration.

The plane is ideal for long-haul routes, with a range of over 8000 miles, roughly the distance between New York and Hong Kong. The Airbus A380 will not only revolutionize the world of passenger air transit, but it will also change airports themselves. LAX will be spending \$121 million on construction and improvements of its runways, taxiways, boarding gates and other infrastructures to accommodate the airplane's large dimensions and increased passenger capacity, even strengthening the Sepulveda tunnel.

The Airbus A380 is a double-deck, four-engined airliner manufactured by Airbus. The A380 can carry up to 850 passengers and 20 crew members. Wow! That's big. The Airbus A380 is a plane that has superseded the Boeing 747 as the largest passenger airliner. In the early 90s, Airbus executives decided to challenge Boeing's dominance in the large passenger jetliner market and so started the A380 program. The resulting Airbus A380 is the largest passenger airliner in the world. It is a double-deck, wide-body, four-engine eye popping giant of an aircraft.

The Airbus A380 demonstrated its quality and operational maturity under realistic conditions for the first time on a number of scheduled flights at the end of March 2007. As innovation partners, Lufthansa and Airbus subjected the mammoth aircraft, certified last December, to over a week of practical testing as part of its so-called Commercial Route Proving. The Airbus A380 is a monster in the aviation field, eclipsing the once king of the skies, the Boeing 747-400 in just about every measurable category (except fuel consumption).

The double decker fuselage design extends the length of the plane, allowing for 50% more floor space than the 747-400, which means they can now pack in up to 850 passengers in the all-economy configuration, finally bringing that lovely economy slaughterhouse feeling to the skies. The Airbus A380 is expected to enter commercial service during 2007 with the first operator being well managed and well financed Singapore Airlines.

While Singapore Airlines will receive the first four A380s to roll off the assembly line, with expected delivery date in the fall of 2007, another long haul carrier, Qantas, will not be far behind. Qantas will bring the behemoth to American shores on flights to Australia in 2008. Singapore Airlines A380 is certainly impressive, raising the stakes in the Airbus Boeing battle for supremacy in the skies.

Reporters went crazy over the 12 suites, like cabins on an ocean liner, "a class beyond first class", according to Singapore Airlines. Some of the suites have configurations which convert to double beds. This soon lead Singapore Airlines to warn passengers about getting a bit too friendly while in the air. It seems a good many passengers who could afford the suites wanted to make woopie at 37,000 feet above sea level.

The 60 flat-bed business-class seats on the upper deck have all of the bells and whistles to completely pamper passengers. Singapore Airlines A380's will have a configuration of only 471 to 500 seats. That's fewer seats than are found on many 747s.

Singapore Airlines is only putting 500 seats in total in their Airbus A380's as they are giving a lot more room for economy class passengers. The biggest plus about this new aircraft is that airfares will be reduced (may be short lived with current jet fuel costs) and going on long haul flights will be a new and exciting experience. Singapore Airlines will use the plane on its Sydney and Singapore routes from late 2007 in a 485 passenger configuration.

Qantas has also announced it will use the A380 on its Los Angeles to Sydney to Melbourne route in a 501 seat configuration. Singapore Airlines, one of the world's premiere operators, features fully enclosed first class compartments including beds, desks, and extra storage. Some have gone so far as to suggest that the A380's wide cabin may eventually include casinos, beauty salons, and duty-free shops!

In an age of rapidly increasing jet fuel costs the fuel efficient engines of the A380 will be welcomed by the airlines. The initial move to furnish passengers with more room on flights will likely give in to adding more seats as airlines will have to aggressively look for ways to increase revenues to offset fuel expenses.

If Singapore Airlines can continue to fill the twelve "beyond first class" compartments at the reported \$12,000 per passenger for the Sidney to Singapore flight the move to crowd passengers up to the 850 passenger maximum configuration may be delayed.

However, in an age of high jet fuel prices and the need for the airlines to operate at maximum efficiently the huge Airbus A380, which many airline analysis at first considered a turkey, may prove to be instead a life saver for the airlines that can afford them in the first place.

The A380 is highly fuel efficient. With its large passenger carrying capability the airlines can reduce the number of flights, fill the A380 flights to maximum capacity, and thereby increase the profitability of flights.

### About the Author

Gerald "Taipan" Greene is a retired forex trader and portfolio manager who worked in Asia for over 20 years. The nickname was acquired in Hong Kong and is now used for a number of financial, political, and Internet business related blogs. One of them is at [Air Travel Hub](#)

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