



Hermitage Group Digest

Latest news, September - October 2022

Polish tour operator Rainbow has signed the largest charter agreement in the history of exotic tourism

Travel agency Rainbow has signed a contract with LOT for charter services in the winter 2022/2023 tourist season. Boeing 787-8 (252 seats) and 787-9 dreamliner (296 seats) will carry its clients directly to faraway, exotic countries.

The contract amounts to 364.5 million zlotys and is the largest charter agreement in the history of Polish exotic tourism, the tour operator says in a press release. It is also the largest charter contract in the history of LOT Polish Airlines.

Rainbow will fly to the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Mexico, Thailand (Bangkok and Phuket) and Vietnam (Phu Quoc) from four cities in Poland this season.

The agreement provides for the charters to begin on November 2, 2022, and end on May 6, 2023.

An important novelty is the addition of Gdansk city to the dreamliner network, alongside Warsaw, Katowice and Poznan. This is the result of growing demand for exotic vacations and the great potential of the northern part of Poland.

Rainbow has prepared new proposals, the first is the Thai island of Phuket. "This is one of Thailand's most important landmarks, famous for its excellent tourist infrastructure, miles-long sandy beaches, excellent cuisine and plenty of opportunities for water sports," - comments Rainbow's representative.

Rainbow will take clients to Phuket from Warsaw and Katowice.

Asia is also home to another new destination, the Vietnamese island of Phu Quoc. It is "famous for its more than forty kilometres of beaches surrounded by coconut palms. At one of them, Starfish Beach, you can admire starfish, and at Sao Beach you can swing on swings suspended from palms growing by the water itself. Phu Quoc is also famous for the world's longest cable car, located in An Thoi. The island's specialty is its night markets, where you can buy souvenirs from your trip and enjoy local food."

Rainbow notes that it offers many full-board hotels, which is not common in Asia. It will fly there from Warsaw.

For the 2022/23 season, Rainbow is also introducing a new concept of premium exotic roundtrips. The offer includes 30 programs on closer and farther destinations, and is designed for tourists who enjoy sightseeing, but at the same time attach great importance to convenience. Tours in the premium version will be held in groups of up to 25 people, and accommodation is provided in 4 and 5* hotels in places of special tourist value. In addition, the organizer promises special attractions related to the theme of the tour and lunches in original restaurants.

Rainbow's winter offer also includes popular destinations such as Kenya, the United Arab Emirates, Zanzibar, Bali, Gambia, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles and the Philippines.



Source: <https://turystyka.rp.pl/biura-podrozy/art37037451-rainbow-podpisal-najwieksza-umowe-czarterowa-w-historii-turystyki-egzotycznej>

Rainbow: In 360 tours around the world. Sales for the 2023 season are open

You can tour slower or faster, shorter or longer, closer or farther - Rainbow has opened sales of round-the-world tours for the summer 2023 season. It offers 360 bus and air travel programs divided by concepts, such as: 7+7 (leisure + sightseeing), "light", "premium", "comfort" and "for the comfort lovers".

A few weeks ago, Rainbow began selling leisure, residential trips for next summer. Now it is adding roundtrips to its offerings. These are 360 tour programs leading to many corners of the world. 90 of them will be carried out by bus with departure from Poland, more than 140 start by charter flight and almost 130 by regular airlines.

- This year, the popularity of roundtrips has finally returned to pre-pandemic levels, explains Rainbow board member Maciej Szczecura, quoted in a company release issued on the launch of tour sales. - More than 80,000 clients went on roundtrips with us last summer, or 20 percent of all those who travelled with Rainbow in the summer. This share has doubled compared to 2021. That's why we are returning for next summer with a full and even strengthened range of roundtrip events. We are looking at next year's season with great optimism, as we do not expect the return of anti-covid restrictions, which hindered touring in 2020 and 2021 much more than hotel vacations.

You can fly by charter to visit not only European countries such as Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Croatia and Montenegro, but also Turkey, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Kenya and Tanzania. On the other hand, by scheduled aircraft, Rainbow will take clients mainly to farther away, more exotic countries, such as Indonesia, Japan, India, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Mauritius, Brazil, Colombia, as well as to the United Arab Emirates, the USA, Mexico, Cuba and Scandinavia or Israel.

Rainbow stresses in the announcement that its buses setting off from Poland to visit Prague, Vienna or Paris, but also attractions in Italy, Switzerland, France or Greece or Croatia can be boarded in many cities.

Source: <https://turystyka.rp.pl/biura-podrozy/art37177191-rainbow-w-360-wycieczek-dookola-swiata-otwarta-sprzedaz-na-sezon-2023>

40 destinations! Where you can fly to in winter from Tallinn Airport

At the end of October Tallinn Airport will start winter flight schedule with non-stop flights from Tallinn to about 40 destinations.

Traditionally, the number of flights at airports is reduced in winter, so that travel is more comfortable and quieter. "In our winter schedule, we have the right flights for city, ski and southern holidaymakers," said Eero Pärgmäe, board member of AS Tallinna Lennujaam, about the convenience of the winter flight schedule.



"The choice of destinations is wide for those who prefer holidays in major European cities. Such popular destinations as Berlin, London, Paris and Rome are covered. It makes sense to discover cities such as Vienna, Nuremberg and Istanbul," said Eero Pärgmäe and added that fans of active skiing are offered seven interesting places in the winter schedule. "Anyone planning a ski vacation should consider these destinations: Salzburg, Milan, Munich, Zurich, Nuremberg, Vienna and Venice (Treviso airport), which are convenient to get to the best ski resorts in the region."

Package tours remain popular. Charter flights will be available to Tenerife and Egypt - Hurghada and Sharm el-Sheikh. "A trip to such a place can easily be booked at a travel office. In addition, during the winter season Ryanair will resume direct flights to Cyprus-Pafos," explained Eero Pärgmäe.

The winter flight schedule is valid from October 30, 2022, until March 26, 2023.

Source: <https://turist.delfi.ee/statja/120081030/40-punktov-naznacheniya-kuda-mozhno-budet-uletet-zimoy-iz-tallinnskogo-aeroporta>

Russian main carrier Aeroflot announced new flights in winter schedule to Bangkok, Dubai, the Seychelles and Egypt

Aeroflot Airlines plans to expand the list of international flights in the winter schedule by adding direct flights to Dubai, as well as to Sharm el-Sheikh, Hurghada, Bangkok and even Goa, said CEO of Aeroflot Sergei Aleksandrovsky during the Eastern Economic Forum.

"Thailand appears in the winter schedule: sales have already been launched to Phuket, and we also plan to open the flights to Bangkok soon. We plan to start flights to Dubai from October," he said.

In addition, Sergei Aleksandrovsky announced two additional weekly frequencies on the route Moscow - Mahe (Seychelles). Also, according to the head of the airline, the possibility of opening flights to Sharm el-Sheikh and Hurghada, as well as Indian Goa is being considered.

The sales of tickets for these flights have not started yet, and only daily flights to Dubai have appeared in the carrier's schedule. The flights are planned to be carried out on Airbus A330-300 aircraft. These planes have gone through the so-called "lease cleaning" and have been included in the Russian register.

Source: <https://profi.travel/news/55953/details>

A major Russian tour operator took over all Aeroflot flights to Egypt

Tour operator Biblio-Globus can become the exclusive owner of blocks on direct regular flights of Aeroflot airline from Moscow to Hurghada and Sharm el-Sheikh.

Aeroflot announced the launch of direct flights from Moscow to Hurghada and Sharm el-Sheikh from October 1 (flights SU422/423 and SU426/427). The flights are carried out on Airbus A330-300 aircraft, which have been "leased cleared" and transferred to the Russian register. However, since November, more spacious Boeing 777-300ERs have been announced in the Aeroflot schedule.



Meanwhile, tickets for these flights are not available for free sale either on the website of the national carrier or from authorized agents. Also, several major tour operators have confirmed that their booking systems do not “load” them to form GDS tours. Even seats in business class and premium economy are not available for open sale, which was not previously the case with Aeroflot flights, which were also completely “blocked” by Biblio-Globus, for example, from Moscow to Antalya.

Only flights with a connection to Sochi by Rossiya Airlines to Egypt, remain on open sale.

At the moment, tickets for direct flights by Aeroflot to Hurghada and Sharm el-Sheikh can only be booked as part of a package tour on the tour operator's website.

Source: <https://profi.travel/news/56114/details>

The first Russian tour operator announced direct charters to Thailand

Tour operator PEGAS Touristik has launched the sale of tours based on direct charter transportation to Phuket. The flight program from Moscow is scheduled from October 29 with a frequency of 4 flights a week on the wings of the strategic partner Pegas Fly.

A wide-body Boeing 777-200 with a capacity of 440 seats in economy class has been announced for the route.

According to Anna Podgornaya, General Manager of PEGAS Touristik, tours are currently being sold in pre-order mode without financial obligations for tourists. Payment will only be required after confirmation of the demand. The cost of the tour for 8 nights starts from 103 000 rubles per person in 1/2 DBL.

As a reminder, Aeroflot will start operating flights to Phuket in October. So far, tour operators offer only GDS tours based on this transportation.

In addition, a number of tour operators sell tours to Thailand on the basis of transit flights through the territory of Kazakhstan.

Source: <https://profi.travel/news/55999/details>

Tour operators opened sale of tours to Sri Lanka

AZUR Air plans to launch direct regular flights to Colombo (Sri Lanka) from four Russian cities: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Krasnoyarsk and Novosibirsk.

Blocks of seats on flights have already been confirmed by tour operators ANEX Tour, Intourist and Coral Travel. Tours have already begun to appear in the booking systems of these companies.

A tour on a direct flight from ANEX starts from 125 000 RUB for two people for 9 nights with accommodation in a 3* hotel without meals. The same hotel on HB system will start from 136 000 RUB for two people.

The announcement of direct flights has not yet had a significant impact on the cost of tours to Sri Lanka. For comparison, the prices of tours based on regular flights with transfers to the UAE in the booking system of one of the major tour operators start from 120 000 RUB for two people for 8 nights. With a high degree of probability, the cost may turn out to be slightly higher after specifying the flight, experts say, however, in the case of direct flights, surcharges are also possible.

Source: <https://profi.travel/news/56012/details>

Tour operators began offering tours to India based on Aeroflot flights

Russian tour operators have launched the sale of GDS tours to Goa on the basis of regular Aeroflot flights, which are planned to start in the winter schedule. Currently, such offers have appeared in the assortment of at least three tour operators: ANEX Tour, Biblio-Globus and Coral Travel.

Recall that Aeroflot announced the launch of new winter destinations in mid-September. From November, the national carrier will begin operating flights to Bangkok and Dabolim Airport (Goa), as well as resuming the flight program to Colombo (Sri Lanka), which was suspended in July due to an incident with the carrier's aircraft being detained.

Flights are planned to be operated on wide-body aircraft Airbus A330-300, which are owned by the airline and transferred to the Russian register.

At the same time, the pricing policy of tour operators, judging by the offers in the booking systems, is quite different. ANEX Tour and Coral Travel have basic offers starting from 320 000 RUB and 266 000 RUB for a tour for two people with accommodation in a guesthouse without meals. At the same time, Biblio-Globus has the cost of tours with similar components starting from 90 000 RUB for two people, including flight tickets.

Source: <https://profi.travel/news/56062/details>

Turkey proposed alternative to “Mir” cards

Turkey will discuss with Russia the possibility of connecting to country's payment system TROY.

The issue of switching to TROY cards will be included in the agenda of the meeting of the Central Banks of Turkey and Russia in Kazan on October 5.

Turkey Payment Method system under the abbreviation TROY is an internal payment system of the Republic of Turkey. The system has been operating since 2016 and offers the issuance of credit, debit and prepaid cards, uses electronic banking to move funds between banks and enterprises.

In addition, the system TROY may be available in ten more countries besides Russia.

Earlier, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that Turkey has other alternatives to the Russian card “Mir”, and the authorities are currently evaluating their effectiveness. According to him, Turkey intends to offer an effective method of payment for Russian tourists, which at the same time will ensure compliance with sanctions against Russian banks.



Source: <https://profi.travel/news/56106/details>

New Egyptian airline launches flights to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova

In Egypt, a new airline Red Sea Airlines has started operating flights, which is focused primarily on working with the CIS markets, as well as on transportation within Egypt.

On September 22, the airline operated its first flight on the route Sharm El Sheikh — Cairo. At the moment, the carrier plans to start operating flights to Tashkent, Bishkek and Chisinau. Flights with a frequency of 1-2 flights per week will begin in October.

According to open sources, the carrier received a license back in 2021, but it took more than a year to prepare and launch flights. Now the airline's fleet consists of two Boeing 737-800s with a capacity of 189 seats. Both are based at Sharm El Sheikh International Airport.

Tickets are currently not available for public sale and will only be sold as part of travel packages.

In addition, the carrier's owners plan to launch flights to Russia in the nearest future. According to a representative of Red Sea Airlines, the airline is currently planning to purchase additional vessels for its fleet specifically for Russian transportation.

Source: <https://profi.travel/news/56107/details>