

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



FOR JETBLUE, LONDON CALLING

JETBLUE

BY CHRISTOPHER MUTHER | GLOBE STAFF

For the past several months, JetBlue has been hinting, both subtly and not so subtly, that it may extend its reach and begin transatlantic flights to Europe. If the airline does move forward with the plan, one of its first routes would likely be Boston Logan to London Heathrow.

The airline is expected to announce a decision sometime this year.

“London is now the biggest market we don’t serve out of Boston,” Martin St. George, chief commercial officer for the airline, said at a transportation conference last fall. He said customers have told the carrier, “Can you just look at London because this is what we’re paying, your service is fantastic.”

JetBlue CEO Robin Hayes noted in a television interview with Bloomberg that business-class fares to Europe can be “obscene.” He said that JetBlue could shake up that market by introducing European flights, which would include the airline’s Mint class. Mint is JetBlue’s version of business class with lie-flat seats and other amenities.

Currently you can find Mint fares on flights from Boston to Los Angeles as low as \$549 one way (they generally run around \$1,000). If JetBlue could offer those sorts of fares to London, it could lure business-class customers away from key rivals. Last-minute business-class fares on some carriers can run as high as \$10,000.

“When we think about transatlantic, we do think we

can disrupt largely around a Mint-like product because we’ve been so successful on flying to the West Coast with Mint,” said Joanna Geraghty, JetBlue’s president and COO, at the Skift Global Forum, a travel-industry conference.

The official word from JetBlue is that no decision has been made, but the new route would be possible because the airline has the option to take delivery of the Airbus A321LR. The A321LR can easily travel from the East Coast to Europe.

“The transatlantic market — especially on the premium end — suffers from the same lack of competition and high fares as transcon routes have seen,” said Philip Stewart, manager of JetBlue corporate communications. “We have not committed to the LR, or to adding Europe to our network, but that is certainly an environment that JetBlue competes well in.”

JetBlue has gained a following thanks to its legroom (the most of any US airline in economy), its free snacks, live TV, and free onboard Wi-Fi.

But not everyone is bullish on the idea of JetBlue entering the European market. Henry Harteveltdt, a travel industry analyst and founder of the Atmospheric Research Group, said the airline would be wise to continue shoring up routes within the United States before planning an overseas route.

“I don’t think it’s the logical next step,” Harteveltdt said. “I’m not saying it’s a bad thing for JetBlue to do, but there’s a lot of the US that JetBlue does not serve. So my concern about JetBlue going across the Atlantic is that it

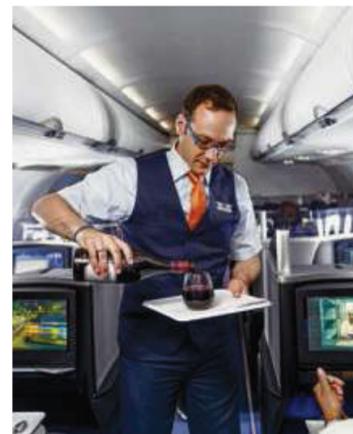
is more of a distraction than a strategic move.”

Although JetBlue has a strong presence in Boston, New York, and Fort Lauderdale, Harteveltdt said the airline lacks a traditional hub in the middle of the country, so it’s unable to compete for a large number of customers who travel within the United States.

JetBlue is the largest airline in Logan, with just over 30 percent of the market share. But Delta Air Lines has been steadily adding new destinations out of Boston as it grows its presence at Logan, most recently adding flights to Las Vegas and Philadelphia. European flights could help JetBlue maintain its Boston stronghold.

For now, fans of the airline will need to be patient and wait to hear if there’s a chance they will soon be offered Terra Chips and Cheez-Its on flights across the Atlantic.

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SIMON LEWIS STUDIO/JETBLUE

HERE

MAINE SHOWCASES CULINARY TALENTS

Pack your appetite and make a beeline north for Maine Restaurant Week (March 1-12). Headquartered in Portland, this showcase of the state’s great restaurants and chefs also takes place in a variety of towns, including Camden, Lewiston, and Kennebunkport. Check to see if your favorite restaurant is participating — or try someplace new — and enjoy multi-course meals at fixed prices ranging from \$25 to \$55 per person. Special events include the 10th annual Incredible Breakfast Cook-Off (kicking off the week on Feb. 28); and CRAVE, featuring Maine bakers creating sweet and savory treats with coffee as an ingredient. www.mainerestaurantweek.com. The Portland Harbor Hotel is offering two special packages for restaurant week visitors, one including breakfast (starting at \$169 for two guests) and one including dinner and breakfast (starting at \$239 for two guests), with meals at their restaurant, *BlueFin North Atlantic Seafood*. www.portlandharbor-hotel.com/portland-harbor-hotel-about.php

COZY IGLOOS ADD WARMTH TO WINTER

While in Maine, check out the cozy Igloo Ice Lounge at the Kennebunkport Inn. Each of the four igloos — set on the hotel’s expansive outdoor deck — hosts up to eight guests, and offers sunny afternoon and nighttime starlit views. Perch on fur-lined seats wrapped in a warm blanket, and snack on small plates, such as fried



NICOLE WOLF

chicken wontons and braised beef tacos, while sipping specialty cocktails, wine, and beer. (Tequila-based “Toasty Toddy” or bourbon with cocoa and coconut cream? Anyone?) Open from 4 p.m. until 8 or 9 p.m. daily through March 31. Want to stay the night? An Igloo Stay & Play Package includes two-night accommodations; snowshoe rentals for two; L.L.Bean boat tote filled with winter themed goodies; and two Igloo Ice Lounge drink tickets. Rates from \$395. 800-573-7186, kennebunkportinn.com/igloo-ice-lounge

THERE

HOTEL DEALS ENCOURAGE TRAVEL TO DC

The US government is back in business — at least for the moment — and visitors to the nation’s capital can take advantage of great deals. To incentivize bookings and recoup losses incurred during the extended shutdown, several hotels have lowered their rates, allowing travelers to scoop up

luxury travel offerings for less. Perfect for family, business trips, or couples looking for an affordable getaway. For deals less than \$200 per night — a steal in D.C. — check out these properties: The Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner. Rates from \$166, bit.ly/2l61LuY; JW Marriott Washington, D.C. Rates from \$159, bit.ly/1qDkPBx; and the Mayflower Hotel, Autograph Collection rates from \$143, bit.ly/2DrBi5t

HIP AND HOMEY UK HOTEL

Manchester continues expanding its



hip destination street cred with the recent debut of Whitworth Locke, a 160-unit studio and suite hotel located in three rehabbed cotton mills. The historic 19th-century buildings, transformed by New York architects/designers Grzywinski + Pons, fuse the comfort of residential living with the service and amenities of a hotel. Situated steps from the city’s independent restaurants, bars, boutique shops, and lively nightspots. Within a soaring glass atrium that knits together all three buildings, the Conservatory Pop-Up Bar hosts a regular calendar of DJ sets and other events, and provides a gathering spot for enjoying innovation cocktails, craft beer, and wine. Rates from \$76 (low season) and \$154 (high season). www.lockeliving.com/whitworth-locke

EVERYWHERE

FLEXIBLE AND TOASTY TOUCHSCREEN GLOVES

Fight back against numbing polar vortex winds with Mujjo’s new Touchscreen Gloves. The stretch-knit fleece fabric, tailored to the shape of your hand, is engineered with a durable triple-layer top that is laminated in a 3M Thinsulate sandwich. The glove mimics the conductive properties of the skin, making it touchscreen compatible. Optimized grip lines, made from sticky silicone, allow a phone to stay tightly nestled in your palm — even on wet and stormy days. A stretch cuff seals snugly

around the wrist, keeping out the cold air. Based in the Netherlands, Mujjo can ship the gloves worldwide. They are also available from US online retail sites. \$49.95. a.co/d/bwHAtf5



COLLAPSIBLE DOG CRATE

Traveling with your dog just got easier with Diggs’s Revol Collapsible Dog Crate. Designed to be stylish as well as comfortable, this modern canine crate is easy to set up and collapse. Features include three access points, two doors, spacious interior with round edges, silver and graphite siding, attractive mesh pattern, and wheels for convenient transport. Accommodates dogs up to 30 pounds. Folds flat for storage at your destination. \$224.99. www.diggs.pet/products/revol-collapsible-dog-crate

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