= Star Alliance =

Star Alliance is the world 's largest global airline alliance . Founded on 14 May 1997 , its current CEO is Mark Schwab and its headquarters is in Frankfurt am Main , Germany . As of 31 March 2014 , Star Alliance is the largest global alliance by passenger count with 637 @.@ 6 million , ahead of SkyTeam (588 million) and Oneworld (512 @.@ 8 million) . Its slogan is " The Way The Earth Connects " .

Star Alliance 's 27 member airlines operate a fleet of approximately 4 @,@ 000 aircraft , serve more than 1 @,@ 000 airports in 194 countries and carry 637 @.@ 6 million passengers per year on more than 18 @,@ 000 daily departures . The alliance has a two @-@ tier rewards program , Silver and Gold , with incentives including priority boarding and upgrades . Like other airline alliances , Star Alliance airlines share airport terminals (known as co @-@ location) and many member planes are painted in the alliance 's livery .

= = History = =

= = = 1997 ? 1999 : First alliance = = =

On 14 May 1997 , an agreement was announced forming Star Alliance from five airlines on three continents : Scandinavian Airlines , Thai Airways International , Air Canada , Lufthansa , and United Airlines . The alliance chose Young & Rubicam for advertising , with a budget of $ 25 million (? 18 million) . The airlines shared the star logo from the beginning , with its five points representing the founding airlines . The alliance adopted its first slogan , " The Airline Network for Earth " , with its goal " an alliance that will take passengers to every major city on earth " .

= = = Additions = = =

The now defunct Brazilian airline VARIG joined the Star Alliance network on 22 October 1997 , extending the alliance into South America . Also joining were Ansett Australia and Air New Zealand , expanding Star Alliance to Australia and the Pacific . With the addition of the latter two carriers , the alliance served 720 destinations in 110 countries with a combined fleet of 1 @,@ 650 aircraft . The next airline to join was All Nippon Airways (ANA) , the group 's second Asian airline , on 15 October 1999 .

= = = 2000 @-@ 2006 : Expansion = = =

During the early 2000s , a number of airlines joined Star Alliance ; the Austrian Airlines Group (Austrian Airlines , Tyrolean Airways and Lauda Air) joined on 26 March 2000 and Singapore Airlines on 1 April . BMI (British Midland) and Mexicana Airlines joined on 1 July , bringing the alliance 's membership to 13 . The addition of BMI made London Heathrow the only European hub with two alliances . During the year , Emirates considered joining Star Alliance , but decided against it . That year the now @-@ defunct BWIA West Indies Airways , which had entered an alliance with United Airlines , considered becoming a member but did not . In 2000 , the alliance also opened its first three business centers (in Los Angeles , Frankfurt , and Bangkok) and announced the formation of an Alliance Management Team (AMT) , the partnership 's executive body . In September 2001 , Ansett Australia (the alliance 's only Australian member) left Star Alliance due to bankruptcy , giving most of the Australian market to Qantas (a Oneworld member) . That year , Star Alliance announced the appointment of a new CEO , Jaan Albrecht .

Asiana Airlines joined the alliance on 1 March 2003 , Spanair on 1 May , and LOT Polish Airlines (Poland 's flag carrier) in October . Around this time , Mexicana Airlines left the alliance after deciding not to renew a codeshare agreement with United Airlines , later joining Oneworld . US Airways joined the alliance in May 2003 , becoming its second US @-@ based airline . In November

Adria Airways , Blue1 and Croatia Airlines joined the alliance as its first three regional members .
 Although Star Alliance invited Lineas Aereas Azteca in 2005 to join in mid @-@ 2007 , the airline filed for bankruptcy . TAP Portugal joined on 14 March 2005 , adding African destinations to the network . In April 2006 Swiss International Air Lines , the alliance 's sixth European airline , and South African Airways (its first African carrier) became the 17th and 18th members .

 = = = 2007 : Tenth anniversary = = =

 By May 2007 , Star Alliance 's 10th anniversary , its members had a combined 16 @,@ 000 daily departures to 855 destinations in 155 countries and served 406 million passengers annually . The alliance introduced Biosphere Connections , a partnership with UNESCO , the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) , and the Ramsar Convention On Wetlands to promote environmental sustainability .
 Today , nearly 30 % of global air travellers use the services of our member carriers or , looking at it from an overall industry perspective , two thirds of worldwide air travellers use one of the three airline alliances .
 VARIG left the alliance on 31 January 2007 , and the two Chinese airlines Air China and Shanghai Airlines joined on 12 December .

 = = = 2008 ? 2010 : Second decade of operations = = =

 On 1 April 2008 , Turkish Airlines joined the alliance after a 15 @-@ month integration process beginning in December 2006 , becoming its seventh European airline and 20th member . EgyptAir , Egypt 's national airline and Star Alliance 's second African carrier , joined on 11 July 2008 .
 On 27 October 2009 , Continental Airlines became the 25th member of Star Alliance after leaving SkyTeam three days earlier . According to alliance CEO Jaan Albrecht , " Bringing Continental Airlines into Star Alliance has been a truly unique experience . This is the first time an airline has moved directly from one alliance to another and I would like to thank all those involved in ensuring a smooth switch " . At the time , it was rumored that the switch was Continental 's first move in a planned United Airlines @-@ Continental merge . Two months later , Brussels Airlines joined the alliance .
 Brazilian carrier TAM Airlines joined Star Alliance on 13 May 2010 , increasing its foothold in South America . Aegean Airlines , Greece 's largest airline by number of passengers , joined on 30 June .
 Shanghai Airlines left the alliance on 31 October 2010 when it merged with China Eastern Airlines , a SkyTeam member . On 29 September , the chief executive board approved Ethiopian Airlines as Star Alliance 's 30th member . In 2010 the alliance flew to 1 @,@ 172 airports in 181 countries , with about 21 @,@ 200 daily departures .

 = = = 2011 @-@ present : Further expansion = = =

 Since 2011 , more airlines have joined , and others have left due to their collapse or restructuring . In August 2011 , after several delays , Air India was rejected for membership when it did not meet alliance requirements . On 13 December 2011 , Ethiopian Airlines joined , adding five countries and 24 destinations to the alliance 's map .
 Star Alliance had a tumultuous 2012 , with Spanair leaving early in the year when the carrier ceased operations . In early March , Continental merged with United Airlines , ending its membership in the alliance . BMI left on 20 April after its acquisition by International Airlines Group (IAG) , the parent company of Oneworld members Iberia and British Airways . On 21 June , Avianca , TACA Airlines and Copa Airlines joined the alliance , increasing its Latin American presence . In November , Blue1 left the alliance , becoming an affiliate of parent Scandinavian Airlines . Shenzhen Airlines joined on 29 November , augmenting Air China 's Chinese network .
 On 8 March 2013 , TAM Airlines announced its departure due to its merger with LAN Airlines to become LATAM Airlines Group . With the addition of EVA Air on 18 June and TACA 's integration

into Avianca , the alliance now had 28 members and was the largest of the three major airline alliances . On 13 December , Air India was again invited to begin an integration process with Star Alliance . On 31 March 2014 , TAM Airlines moved to Oneworld , and US Airways and an American Airlines affiliate also left the alliance . That day , Avianca Brazil announced that it would join Star Alliance in 2014 as an affiliate of Avianca . After TAM Airlines and US Airways left , the alliance had 26 members . On 24 June , Air India was approved , joining the alliance on 11 July . Avianca Brazil then joined the alliance on 22 July 2015 . Future Connecting Partners member Mango , South African Airways ' low @-@ cost subsidiary , will be joining in 3Q 2016 .

== Member airlines and affiliates ==

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 A Founding member.B Airlines operating under Air Canada Express , Air New Zealand Link , Cimber A / S , Lufthansa Regional , Tyrolean Airways and United Express are not necessarily members of Star Alliance . However , flights are operated on behalf of the respective member airlines , carry their designator code and are Star Alliance flights.C Members of Lufthansa Regional that are fully owned by Deutsche Lufthansa AG.D Air Canada Express flights are operated by Air Georgian , EVAS Air , Jazz Aviation , Sky Regional Airlines.E Air India Regional flights are operated by Alliance Air.F Air New Zealand Link flights are operated by Air Nelson , Eagle Airways and Mount Cook Airline.G Lufthansa Regional flights are operated by Air Dolomiti , Eurowings and Lufthansa CityLine.H United Express flights are operated by Cape Air , CommutAir , ExpressJet Airlines , GoJet Airlines , Mesa Airlines , Republic Airlines , Shuttle America , SkyWest Airlines and Trans States Airlines.I South African low @-@ cost airline Mango will join the alliance as a Connecting Partner in the third quarter of 2016.K Vanilla Air and Tigerair are now part of Value Alliance .

== Former members and affiliates ==

== Customer service ==

 Codeshare flights of Star Alliance airlines are consistent . This cooperation led to suspicions of anti @-@ competitive behavior ; the alliance was suspected by the European Union of being a virtual merger of its members , and speculation existed that if government regulations were relaxed the members would merge into one corporation .
 Star Alliance developed a " regional " concept in 2004 , which helped it penetrate markets with participation by smaller regional carriers . Regional Star Alliance members had to be sponsored by an alliance member . The alliance no longer designates airlines as " regional " members , now referring to its 27 airlines as " members " .
 In 2007 , alliance members flew 18 @,@ 521 daily flights to 1 @,@ 321 airports in 193 countries with a fleet of 4 @,@ 025 aircraft . Its members carried a total of 627 @.@ 52 million passengers , with revenue of US $ 156 @.@ 8 billion (? 145 billion) . It had 28 percent of the global market based on revenue passenger kilometers (RPK) , greater than the combined market share of all airlines not in one of the three major alliances . All alliance carriers combined employed over 405 @,@ 000 pilots , flight attendants , and other staff . Star Alliance was voted best airline alliance in the Skytrax 2007 World Airline Awards .

=== Member hubs ===

=== Co @-@ location at airports (under one roof) ===

= = = Premiums = = =

Star Alliance has two premium levels (Silver and Gold) , based on a customer 's status in a member 's frequent @-@ flyer program . Member and regional airlines recognize Star Silver and Gold status , with a few exceptions mostly pertaining to airport lounge access . Membership is based on the frequent @-@ flyer programs of the individual airlines . Many members have a premium status beyond Gold , which is not recognized across the alliance .

= = = = Star Alliance Silver = = = =

Star Alliance Silver status is given to customers who have reached a premium level of a member carrier 's frequent @-@ flyer program . Benefits are priority reservation wait @-@ listing and airport stand @-@ by . Some airlines also offer priority airport check @-@ in , baggage handling and boarding ; preferred seating ; an additional checked @-@ luggage allowance , and waived fees for two checked bags .

= = = = Star Alliance Gold = = = =

Star Alliance Gold status is given to customers who have reached a higher level of a member airline 's frequent @-@ flyer program . Benefits are priority reservations wait @-@ listing , airport stand @-@ by and check @-@ in and baggage handling ; an additional checked luggage allowance of 20 kg (or one extra piece , where the piece rule applies) , and access to designated Star Alliance Gold lounges the day and place of departure with the presentation of a Star Alliance boarding pass . Some airlines also offer preferred seating (an exit seat or a special section of the plane) ; guaranteed seating on fully booked flights , subject to the booking class code and notice period , and free upgrades in the form of a voucher , certificate or automatic upgrade at check @-@ in . United restricts US lounge access for their Gold Members to long @-@ haul international passengers ; Gold members from other carriers are welcome in US lounges run by United on all itineraries .

= = = = Qualifying tiers by airline = = = =

= = Livery and logo = =

Some Star Alliance members paint some of their aircraft with the alliance livery , usually a white fuselage with " Star Alliance " across it and a black tail fin with the alliance logo ; the color or design of the engine cowlings or winglets remains , depending on the member 's livery . Singapore Airlines is the only exception , formerly keeping its own logo on the tails of its aircraft but now using the Star Alliance logo on white tails . Asiana Airlines was the first Star Alliance member to paint its aircraft in the current Star Alliance livery . Aircraft painted in an airline 's regular livery have the Star Alliance logo between the cockpit and the first set of cabin doors .