

Title:

Virgin Blue's Boeing 737-800

Word Count:

510

Summary:

Boeing's 737-800 is the largest member of the strong selling 737 family. Unlike the other Next Generation 737s, the 800 introduced new fuselage lengths, increasing seating capacity to 189 people.

Keywords:

Article Body:

In 2006, Virgin Blue, Australia's number two airline after Qantas, agreed to buy nine Boeing 737-800 jets valued at \$US634.5 million. The Brisbane based company has a programme to expands its fleet of younger, more fuel-efficient aircraft.

Virgin Blue's fuel costs account for over 23% of its gross revenue. It wants newer, more fuel efficient aircraft to lower costs.

By decreasing the variety of aircraft in its fleet, Virgin Blue will also reduce maintenance costs due to economies of scale in engineering technical skills requirements and spare parts procurement.

The company said it ordered the next generation 737 because it is a reliable and cost-efficient aircraft, which is essential in their competitive low-cost market.

In introduction of QANTAS's low cost carrier Jetstar, has further increased pressure on reducing costs.

Like the Boeing 737-600 and Boeing 737-700, the 800 features many improvements including more efficient CFM56-7B turbofan engines. Over 4,000 CFM56-7B engines are in service as part of the most popular engine/aircraft team in commercial aviation.

The CFM56-7B turbofan, with it's swept fan and advanced compressor is among the most modern, efficient and reliable turbofans ever. More than 500 airlines fly CFM56-7B-powered 737s and, since entering service in the mid-90s, they have

accumulated over 50 Million flight hours.

All CFM56-7B engines delivered from mid 2007 were compliant with future Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP), environmental requirements.

The CFM56-7B also powers the Boeing/GE BBJ (Boeing Business Jet) and 737 military variants including transports special mission aircraft.

Another improvement in the 737-800 is the new wing with greater thickness, span and wing area, larger tail surfaces and a new flightdeck.

The flightdeck has six flat panel LCDs which can present information as on the 777. A heads-up-display (HUD) is optional.

Virgin Blue's aircraft feature distinctive winglets. These winglets stand approximately 2.4 metres (8 feet), tall and are installed at the wing tips. They help with reduced fuel burn (by reducing vortex drag), reduced engine wear, and producing less noise on takeoff.

Virgin Blue's Boeing 737 800s feature three toilets, six premium economy seats with extra legroom and red leather upholstery and eight exits.

Recently the company fitted some of its 737-800 jets with video-on-demand systems. Passengers now have the option to view satellite feeds of 24 different pay television channels for a small \$4.90 charge that they pay by swiping a credit card through the card reader that is installed next to the LCD screen.

Until its launch on September 5, 1994 the 737-800 was known as the 737-400X Stretch. Compared with the 400 the 800 is 3.02m (9ft 9in) longer, taking typical two class seating from 146 to 162, while range is significantly increased. The Boeing 737-800 has sold strongly since its launch, and early 2002 was the highest selling Next Generation model. First flight was on July 31 1997, first delivery (to Hapag Lloyd) was in April 1998.

The largest single order for the 800 series has come from the Irish budget carrier, Ryanair. After 28 had already been ordered earlier, a firm order for 100 aircraft was made in January 2002, with an option of another 50, to be delivered over the next 8 years. Ryanair will use the aircraft in a single class configuration, to seat 189 passengers.