

Airbus details high-density A380plus

Alex Derber

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Airbus has promised airlines a 13% reduction in seat costs from an upgraded version of its Airbus A380 widebody.

Dubbed the 'A380plus', the revised aircraft will feature up to 81 more seats, new winglets and a higher maximum take-off weight of 578 tonnes.

Airbus says that aerodynamic refinements to the aircraft's wing combined with new wingtip devices will grant 4% lower fuel burn while the remaining cost savings will come from increased cabin density and a revised maintenance programme.

To squeeze in more passengers, Airbus has proposed the following changes to the cabin: an 11-abreast, 3-5-3 configuration in economy class (23 more passengers); relocation and redesign of the forward stairs (20 more passengers); a new aft-galley stair module to replace the rear spiral stairs (14 more passengers); a move from eight- to nine-abreast in premium economy (11 more passengers); removal of sidewall stowages on the upper-deck (10 more passengers); and a new, combined crew-rest compartment (three more passengers).

Across four classes, these changes should increase the A380's average seat count from 497 to 575, Airbus says.

Fully loaded, the A380plus will have the same 8,200nm range as current models, although it will be able to fly 300nm further without the extra passengers.

The new 4.7m winglets, meanwhile, consist of upwards and downwards sections, and appear of a roughly similar design to Boeing's 'Split Scimitar' devices.

"The A380plus is an efficient way to offer even better economics and improved operational performance at the same time" says John Leahy, Airbus COO Customers.

The A380plus is currently at the development-study stage.

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