

WOW AIR HISTORY



WOW air is an Icelandic low-cost carrier that is headquartered in Reykjavík and based at Keflavík International Airport.

It was founded in November 2011 and operated its inaugural flight in 2012. WOW air was founded by entrepreneur **Skúli Mogensen**, whose extensive business background is largely in technology and telecoms in Iceland, Europe, and North America. The sole owner of WOW air is Titan, an investment company owned by Mogensen, who is the company CEO and sits on the five-person board of directors.

In October 2012, WOW air acquired Iceland Express's operations and network. Iceland Express operated to several destinations in Europe and North America utilising leased equipment. At the end of October 2012, following the acquisition of its operations, flights to Gatwick and Copenhagen saw frequency increases, services to Berlin-Schönefeld, Kaunas, Salzburg and Warsaw Chopin had begun. Kaunas has since been dropped, replaced by existing services to Vilnius. The airline carried over 400,000 passengers in 2013. WOW air carried its one millionth guest in December 2014.

Since 2015, WOW air started expanding into North America, serving first the US, then Canada starting in May 2016. Flights to Los Angeles and San Francisco began in June 2016 using two Airbus A330-300 planes leased from Air Europa. WOW air's annual passenger capacity will more than double in 2016 to over 1.6 million, from approximately 740,000 in 2015. WOW air also runs the travel agency WOW travel, which specialises in low-cost holidays both to and from Iceland.

Destinations

Main article: [WOW air destinations](#)

As of 13 June 2017, WOW air operates services to a total of 33 destinations in Europe, the US, and Canada from its base at Keflavík International Airport.

Fleet

WOW air Airbus A321-200

WOW air Airbus A330-300

As of June 2017 the WOW air fleet consists of the following aircraft:

WOW Air fleet						
Aircraft	In Service	Orders	Passengers			Notes
			XL	Y	Total	
Airbus A320-200	2	—	—	174	174	Both operated by Avion Express ^[8]
Airbus A320neo	1	—	—	180	180 ^[9]	
Airbus A321-200	10	5 ^[10] ^[11] ^[12]	—	200	200	One operated by Avion Express ^[8]
				220	220	
Airbus A321neo	1	1 ^[13]	—	220	220	
Airbus A330-300	3	—	23	319	342 ^[14]	
Airbus A330-900neo	—	4 ^[12]	TBA		365	Deliveries begin 2018 ^[12]
Total	17	10				



There are also other airlines in Iceland. Hereafter is the list of Icelandic airliners

This is a **list of airlines currently operating in Iceland**.

AIRLINE ↕	IMAGE ↕	IATA ↕	ICAO ↕	CALLSIGN ↕	COMMENCED OPERATIONS ↕
Air Atlanta Icelandic		CC	ABD	ATLANTA	1986
Air Iceland		NY	FXI	FAXI	1997
Bluebird Cargo		BF	BBD	BLUE CARGO	2000
Eagle Air			FEI	ARCTIC EAGLE	1970
Icelandair		FI	ICE	ICEAIR	1937
Mýflug			MYA	MYFLUG	1985
Norlandair			FNA	NORLANDAIR	2008
WOW air		WW	WOW	WOW AIR	2012

Here is a review on this company

Review: WOW Air, Los Angles to Reykjavik, & Tips before You Fly

by [James Dozer](#) · November 7, 2016

I know a WOW Air flight review is the last thing anyone expects on here but surprisingly, I get a lot of questions about them. Ever since they acquired some wide-body aircraft, started flying to Los Angeles and San Francisco, and introduced some ridiculously low \$99 fares to Europe, WOW Air became an instant hit and the talk of the town.

All my friends started asking me about them and everyone wanted to know. . . were those \$99 fares to Europe *really* \$99? Or were they more like \$99 plus several hundred dollars in baggage fees? And what about the in-flight experience? How much WOW could \$99 really get you nowadays?

Well, there was only one way to find out so I booked myself one of those \$99 fares to Iceland to see what this little airline with the purple planes and cheeky marketing was all about. And now that I have had the pleasure of flying WOW Air on two long-haul flights, I wanted to share my experience with you all. Here's my WOW Air flight review from Los Angeles to Reykjavik and some practical tips to know before you book a trip.

WOW what and what does low-cost really mean?

WOW Air is an Icelandic low-cost carrier based in Reykjavik, Iceland. From their hub at Keflavik International Airport (45 mins outside of Reykjavik), WOW Air flies to 23 destinations across Europe and North America. In the United States, WOW Air flies to Baltimore, Boston, Newark, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

And low-cost. . . means just that. The fares can be extremely cheap but don't expect any amenities on-board your flight and do expect to pay for everything from baggage fees and seat assignments to food and drinks on-board. And I do mean expect to pay for everything. Nothing is free on-board. Not even water.

WOW Air is not part of any airline alliance and there is no frequent flier program to earn miles or elite status.

Did I really buy a \$99 ticket to Iceland?

Yes, I did but that was only one way from Los Angeles to Reykjavik. Coming back was more expensive as there were no \$99 fares on the return leg. The cheapest return fare I could find for a day that worked for me was \$279.99. Cheaper return fares were available but none of them worked out for my travel dates.

Buying tickets with WOW Air was actually pretty easy. Their website was simple and functional and allowed me to search several days at a time to find the cheapest fares. Once I found my flights and travel dates, I paid for my flight tickets and had the option of purchasing additional services such as checked bags and seat selections.

Their website even allows you to book tours and airports transfers but I don't recommend you doing that just yet. In fact, I don't recommend you paying for anything extra at all when making your initial booking. That's because US Department of Transportation rules provide you with a 24 hour grace period to cancel your flights without penalty but ancillary fees such as baggage fees, seat selections and tours are non-refundable. So don't pay for any of those until you are confident you will need them. You can always log on at later time, manage your reservation and add those additional services later.

Not wanting to travel alone, I talked one of my friends into joining me on this low-cost journey. The price for our flight tickets totaled \$398.99 per person, roundtrip from Los Angeles to Reykjavik in October, 2016.

Let's talk about WOW Air baggage (or lack thereof).

WOW Air lets you carry on one carry-on luggage and one personal item for free. Your carry-on luggage item can be no larger than 42 x 32 x 25 centimeters (16.5 x 12.5 x 10 inches) and weigh no more than 22 lbs. Your personal item must be no larger than 42 x 20 x 20 centimeters (16.5 x 8 x 8 inches) but does not have a weight limit. For those of you who are visual learners, your carry-on luggage is approximately the size of a large backpack and the personal item is the size of a regular size backpack.

WOW Air has different fees for different routes so check this [link](#) for the most current restriction and fees. But at the time of this posting, for West Coast USA to Iceland, the fee to "upgrade" your small carry-on luggage allowance to a "large" carry-on luggage allowance is \$47.99 per bag, per direction. That allows you to carry on a bag 56 x 45 x 25 centimeters (22 x 17.5 x 10 inches) in lieu of your smaller carry-on. This is not in addition to your free carry-on luggage.

The fee to check a bag is \$67.99. Your checked bag must be within 158 centimeters (62 inches) and cannot weigh more than 44 lbs. These fees are per bag, per direction so double the fee if you are on a roundtrip flight. And in case you were wondering, yes, connecting to Europe will result in higher baggage

fees. For example, from West Coast USA to Europe costs \$76.99 for one checked bag.

On this trip, my friend and I decided to check one bag between the two of us to save some money. We each carried a backpack within the complimentary carry-on bag size limit and one smaller bag within the personal item size limit. Actually, truth be told, my larger backpack was about 2 inches too big but they did not seem to notice (or care) at LAX or KEF. However, I did see some other people who were flagged for having over-sized bags and they had to pay a fee.

Total cost for bags: \$135.98 (\$67.99 per person).

UPDATE 2/2/17 WOW Air just recently eliminated their free carry-on bag allowance. Follow the link at bottom of this post for additional details.

Let's talk about those WOW Air seats.

WOW Air is an all-economy class airline but not all WOW seats are created equal. In fact, not even all of their Airbus A330s are configured the same way so don't even bother with the seating chart on SeatGuru.com. Just follow the seating chart on WOW Air's own website when selecting your seats. Standard economy class seats offer 31 inches of leg room. XL seats offer at least 32 inches of leg room and XXL seats offer at least 35 inches of leg room. WOW Air A330s are configured in a 2 x 4 x 2 layout. Seat selection fees for West Coast to Iceland are \$10.99 – \$12.99 for standard seats, \$48.99 for XL seats and \$57.99 for XXL seats. Again, these are per direction so double the price if you have a return leg.

If you don't want to pay for seat selection, your seat will be assigned to you at the counter upon check-in. Depending on how full your flight is, you might get lucky with an XL seat or even an XXL seat for free but you might also end up with a middle seat in the back of the plane by the lavatory. And there is no guarantee your entire party will be seated together so choose your own adventure.

Also, keep in mind that seat selection fees are non-refundable and your **seat selections are unable to be changed once you have selected your seat(s)!**

Pro tip: If you are flying to Iceland/Europe at night-time, make sure to pick a window seat on the left side of the plane. On my flight, we were able to get a glimpse of the Northern lights from the windows. Conversely, if you are departing Iceland at night-time, pick a seat on the right side of the plane.

Because we wanted to sit together, we ended up selecting seats ahead of time. We both got standard seats. Total price for seats: \$51.96 (\$25.98 per person).

WOW Air flight review, Los Angeles to Reykjavik.

Flight: WW174

Aircraft: Airbus 330-300

Los Angeles (LAX) to Reykjavik (KEF)

Depart: 12:40 PM on Wednesday (1:40 PM actual), gate 156

Arrive: 4:10 AM next day (5:09 AM actual)

Duration: 8hrs 29mns

Seats: 11 H&K

At LAX, WOW Air operates from the Tom Bradley International Terminal (TBIT). WOW Air does not have their own dedicated staff at LAX so ground services are contracted with Hallmark Aviation. The check-in counters are located in check-in area A. According to their website, the check-in counters open 2 hours before departure but in actuality, were open at least 3 hours before departure. I got to the check-in counter 3 hours before my 12:40 PM departure and the agents were already assisting passengers.



WOW Air LAX check-in

If you did not select your seat, now would be the time to do so. If you already pre-paid and selected your seats, now would be a good time to double-check your seats as WOW Air's IT systems are notoriously horrible. Even though I confirmed our seats that morning for our flight, when we arrived at LAX, our seats were screwed up. We were no longer assigned to our seats and someone else had already checked-into one of our seats. And we weren't the only ones. Two other people had the same problem while we were there. Reading online later, I found that MANY people have also reported the same problem with their seats. Unfortunately for us, the only two seats together were located in the back of the plane.

However, I should add that the WOW Air Station Manager at LAX was awesome. Seeing that we were disappointed with our re-assigned seats, she proactively paged the passenger that was assigned to my selected seat and politely asked her to switch seats with us. Luckily, the girl didn't care and we were back to our original purchased seats. Fortunately, this worked out in this case but I don't know what would have happened if the girl said "no." Would WOW Air have to refund me for the seat selection fee if the seat selection was never honored? I'm no expert in this area but that has to be some sort of DOT violation right? Selling a service that is not honored later?



WOW Air A330 parked at LAX

As expected with all their check-in problems, boarding and our ultimate departure was delayed approximately 60 minutes. At approximately 12:50 PM, boarding started with those needing special assistance, followed by seats in reverse order (higher numbered seats boarded first). Despite the late boarding, the entire boarding process was smooth and orderly and we were ready to push back within 20 minutes.



WOW Air in-flight experience. . .

On this leg, my friend and I chose seats 11 H and K, the two seats located on the right side of the plane. On this plane, row 11 was the last row of seats on the right side of the forward cabin and row 12 was the last row of seats on the left side. I was initially concerned about the lack of recline because of the wall behind us but these seats were actually great. The recline was normal and we didn't have anyone seated behind us pulling on our seats to get in/out of their seats (big pet peeve of mine btw). Speaking of recline, I don't have the exact numbers but the recline was pretty good for an economy class seat. I would estimate it at 6 inches of recline.

Pro tip: The toggle to recline the seat is not located where you would expect it to be. It is actually hidden underneath the seat. It's located on the left hand side, towards the front of the seat cushion (next to the emergency life vest). Most people couldn't find the seat recline button so you will have a pretty good chance that your neighbor up front won't recline into your lap.

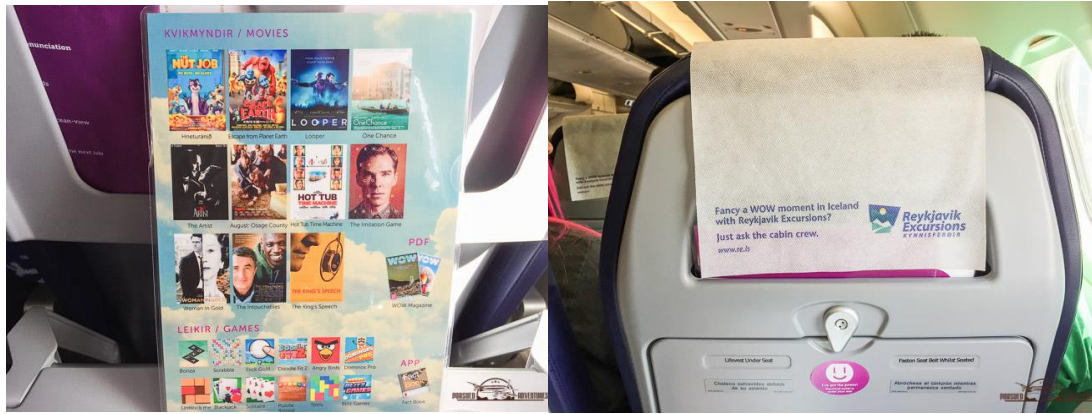


The seats themselves weren't the best. The slimline seats were not very well padded. They were hard and uncomfortable and made everyone get up quite often to walk around. Storage-wise, other than the single, seatback pockets, the seats lacked storage spaces for your small electronics/personal items. I had to store the majority of my things in my backpack underneath the seat in front of me. And lastly, the seats did not have adjustable headrest to provide your head and neck with any support throughout your flight.

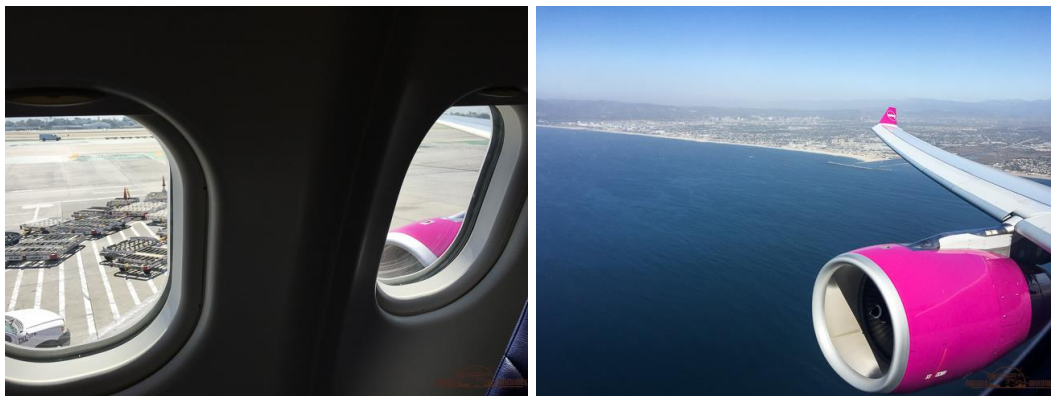
The seat width was pretty standard but the leg room wasn't bad. I know the websites say 17 inches of width and 31 inches of pitch but in actuality, I think the actual dimensions are larger than those listed.

There was only one tiny armrest between the two seats but the window seat passengers do get some extra hip space as the seats do not meet up exactly with the curvature of the fuselage.

As expected, there were no personal, in-flight entertainment screens, complimentary overhead movie screens or even WiFi on this flight. If you forgot you were flying WOW Air and didn't bring anything to entertain yourself, you can rent an iPad pre-loaded with movies and games for about \$17 USD. But the selections looked pretty outdated so you're better off sleeping or making friends with the other passengers. Electrical outlets were provided underneath the seats (one outlet for every two seats).



Row 11 on the right side of the plane (and row 12 on the left side of the plane) gets two windows for awesome views of the engines.



No pillows or blankets were provided and the climate controls did fluctuate frequently during flight. It would go from Arctic cold to mildly hot every couple of hours. I would recommend packing a light jacket in your carry-on bag just in case.

During flight, the flight attendants did walk the cabin frequently and conducted several passes with the food and beverage carts. Unfortunately, nothing was free but the food and beverage prices weren't too terrible if you wanted to buy some food on-board. My friend and I ate prior to boarding but we got hungry about 4 hours in. We each ended up buying a hot chicken risotto dinner which was quite tasty. The chicken was moist and the risotto was a little soggy but the seasoning was flavorful.

Total price for food: \$11.50 per person.

WOW Air Los Angeles menu



WOW Air chicken and risotto

Arrival into Keflavik International Airport.

Keflavik is a tiny airport and immigration was fairly quick and easy to get through. If Iceland is your final destination, after immigration (but before baggage claim), there is a duty-free shop where everyone loaded up on their bottles of booze. They also sell food and local SIM cards (pre-loaded with data) if you need one before heading into the city. If you need transportation into the city, there are GrayLine and Flybus counters directly after customs where you can book an airport transfer to the city. If you are just transiting, the airport does provide free WiFi to help pass the time.

WOW Air flight review overall thoughts.

Let's look at how much we paid for everything:

- Airfare: \$398.99
- Seats: \$25.98
- Baggage: \$67.99
- Food: \$20.00

So after it was all said and done, my “\$99 flight to Iceland” ended up costing \$512.96 a person. Don’t get me wrong, that’s still an incredibly cheap price to get to Iceland but I don’t know if it was actually worth it. It was extremely annoying having to pack so lightly and worrying if my bags were gonna fit within such size constraints. The seats were not that comfortable and the in-flight experience wasn’t all that great. But most importantly, even though it was only a few bucks here and there, I really hate being nicked and dined for everything. For me, I value the convenience of not having to fill up my water bottle beforehand or paying extra for a cup of coffee (or two) on-board.

Luckily for us, we came fairly prepared. We knew about the luggage restrictions, packed accordingly, loaded up on plenty of water and snacks at the airport and had an iPad full of movies to entertain ourselves for the 8 hours. So for us, we did not have a totally bad experience but I can tell you other people did not fare as well as we did. Some people were definitely unaware of WOW Air’s low-cost concept and were extremely upset with all the additional fees for basic services that we have grown accustomed to on airplanes. I guess as the saying goes, you get what you pay for.

If you are able to manage your expectations accordingly, WOW Air is not a bad option to get from North America to Iceland or the rest of Europe for that matter. But for me, I wasn’t a fan of the low-cost business model and I will most likely stick to the traditional carriers to get to Europe. WOW Air really is trying to change the way we think about international travel but it’s geared for a very specific target group. If you do decide to give WOW Air a try, just make sure to add up all the additional fees and costs to see if your total price will actually be cheaper than booking with a traditional carrier.

Have you flown WOW Air before? If so, please tell me your thoughts in the comments section below.

Thanks for reading!

This document was made by the author of the livery for JARDesign A330.

Christian Fonck, Geneva, August 2017

Sources: Wikipedia, Internet