

American Airlines asks government for more flights to Cuba

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American Airlines is asking the U.S. Department of Transportation for more flights into Cuba's capital Havana, even after the Trump administration cracked down on travel to the island nation.

In fact, the most recent restrictions to other Cuban airports may actually be increasing demand for Havana.

Fort Worth-based American is asking for two additional daily round-trip flights to Havana from Miami International Airport, which would give it eight daily round-trip flights.

On Jan. 16, JetBlue told the Transportation Department that it was dropping 14 of its daily round-trip flights to Cuba, including seven from Orlando, Fla., one from Boston and six from New York's JFK International Airport. JetBlue wants to drop its flights as of April 29.

But American sees enough demand to pick those flights up immediately after JetBlue.

In 2016, the Obama administration allowed eight airlines to start flights into Cuba after direct travel between the two countries was banned for decades.

There are still limitations on who can travel to Cuba, restricting it to government business, journalism and family visits. Last year, the Trump administration said it was cutting back on access for some groups, such as cruise lines, in an attempt to punish Cuba for support of leaders in places like Nicaragua. Then in October, the executive branch said it was adding more

restrictions, prohibiting flights to Cuban airports other than Jose Marti International Airport in Havana.

While several airlines initially showed interest in Cuba flights, airlines such as Silver, Spirit and Frontier all dropped plans in 2017.

Only 20 daily flights are allowed a day to Havana from U.S. cities. Dallas-based Southwest Airlines also flies to Havana from Tampa and Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

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