

Emirates, Turkish Airlines win exemption from US laptop ban

DUBAI, UAE - Emirates and Turkish Airlines announced on Wednesday that they had won exemption from a US ban on passengers taking laptops and tablet computers on flights from their Dubai and Istanbul hubs. They are the latest carriers after Abu Dhabi's Etihad to win a reprieve after Washington imposed new rules in March on direct flights from 10 airports in Turkey, the Middle East and North Africa.



Electronic devices ban on flights from Abu Dhabi to US lifted

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"The ban on electronic devices has been lifted with immediate effect for flights to destinations in the United States," an Emirates spokesman told AFP.

He said the airline had won the exemption after implementing new security measures demanded by Washington when intelligence officials learned of efforts by the Islamic State group to produce a bomb that could be hidden inside electronic devices. They required the installation of sophisticated imaging technology for X-ray and ultrasound screening of carry-on devices. All other electronic devices larger than a mobile phone had to be transported only in checked luggage.



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The laptop ban triggered a fall in demand for Emirates' US-bound flights and in May the airline reduced services on five of the 12 US airports it serves.

Please fasten your seatbelts and enjoy your own electronic devices

Istanbul's Ataturk International Airport, the only airport in Turkey with direct flights to the United States, introduced the same new screening procedures to earn the country's flag carrier an exemption.

"Dear Passengers, #WelcomeOnBoard to our US-bound flight. Please fasten your seatbelts and enjoy your own electronic devices," Turkish Airlines said on Twitter late on Tuesday.



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Its first flight to benefit from the new exemption was its 6.45 am (0345 GMT) service to New York's John F Kennedy International Airport on Wednesday, the Dogan news agency reported.

Etihad was the first airline to meet the new US security requirements, with its exemption starting on Sunday. It earned praise from the US Department of Homeland Security for its swift action.

Britain announced a similar ban on personal electronic devices for flights originating from six countries, including Turkey but not the United Arab Emirates. Turkish Airlines chief executive Bilal Eksi said on Wednesday that he expected Britain to lift its ban on the airline's flights "shortly".

Source: AFP

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