

The Landing

The Venerable B-747 Flies West

On November 7, United Airlines celebrated its last B-747 passenger-carrying revenue flight by recreating the airline's first 747 passenger flight from San Francisco, Calif., to Honolulu, Hawaii. The farewell flight featured a 1970s-inspired menu, retro uniforms for the flight attendants, and vintage inflight entertainment.

Come 2018, the passenger version of the 747 will be retired from the fleet of U.S. airlines. In tribute, *Air Line Pilot* shares some interesting facts about "*the Queen of the Skies*."



NUMBER 01

The 747's design required **75,000 engineering drawings** and more than **15,000 hours** of wind-tunnel testing. The current production model, the 747-8, is the third generation of the airframe.



NUMBER 02

The 747 has a **distinctive upper-deck "hump"** that allows it to be converted into a freighter. Boeing had been developing a supersonic transport, akin to the Concorde, and was concerned the aircraft would quickly make the 747 obsolete—thus making its ability to transition to a cargo aircraft essential.

NUMBER 03

The **1,500** 747s produced have logged more than **35 billion miles**—enough to make **74,000 trips to the moon** and back—and have flown **3.6 billion people**, the equivalent of more than half the world's population.



NUMBER 04

Complex high-lift devices were used so that the 747 could operate out of existing airports. Leading edge slats and three-part fowler flaps increase the massive wings' surface area by **21%** and increase lift by up to **90%**.

NUMBER 05

The **development** of the 747-400 **began in 1985**. With a new glass cockpit, the number of lights, gauges, and switches decreased from **971** to **365**, and the crew requirement was reduced from **3 pilots** to **2**.

NUMBER 06

The 747-400's lower cargo deck handling system allows baggage handlers to load or unload more than **65,000 pounds** of cargo—the equivalent of **625 pieces** of luggage combined with **20 tons** of revenue freight—in less than **15 minutes**.



NUMBER 07

A 747-400 has more than **171 miles** of wiring, **5 miles** of tubing, and **6 million** parts—half of which are fasteners.

NUMBER 08

On a typical international passenger flight, a 747's cabin crew serves more than **5 tons** of food.

