



# How Etihad Is Improving Aviation Fuel Efficiency

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Etihad Airways, the second largest commercial airline in the UAE, signalled its intention to transition towards greener operating methods with the arrival of its latest Boeing 787 craft, the Greenliner. Registered under the code A6-BHM, the Greenliner becomes Etihad's eighth 787-10 and will represent the new face of its sustainable operations plan.

The Greenliner completed its maiden voyage from its manufacturing depot in Charleston, South Carolina late last month. Having successfully taken off ahead of schedule, the environmentally friendly aircraft touched down after a 13-hour, 7,500-mile flight slightly early at around 8am on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020.

## Cutting-edge aviation

The Greenliner is the most sustainable aeroplane of its kind, employing several eco-friendly features to ensure it represents the cutting edge of modern aviation. For starters, it uses a 30% blend of biofuel in its engines, which means that it can reduce carbon emissions by up to 50%. It's also as much as 25% more efficient in terms of fuel consumption compared to other airliners of a similar size.

Meanwhile, it also comes equipped with a highly sophisticated FliteDeck Advisor. This advanced piece of technology tracks the jet fuel's consumption and the mileage gleaned from it, allowing pilots to see at a glance how efficiently the plane is operating. The Advisor also uses a range of different methods to make real-time suggestions on how the flight can be optimised for energy consumption.

Finally, the pilots adopted a different descent strategy to the one traditionally used by commercial aircraft on the maiden delivery flight. Instead of the staggered descent which is commonly favoured, wherein an aeroplane descends, maintains altitude for a brief period, then descends again, the Greenliner used a smoother, more continuous motion which conserves fuel and reduces emissions.

## Research vessel and passenger carrier

It is Etihad's intention to use the Greenliner as something like a guinea pig for its environmental policies, taking full advantage of the onboard FliteDeck Advisor to learn more about how to enhance sustainability during flight. In essence, it will



become a “flying laboratory”, allowing Etihad, the UAE and the aviation industry in general to try out new technologies and improve environmental performance.

However, in the spirit of ensuring that as much use is made of the aircraft as possible, it will also be operating as a standard commercial aeroplane. Indeed, it has already begun life as a passenger aircraft, with its first passenger flights taking place at the beginning of this month.

The move is a welcome one at a time when the travel industry as a whole is undergoing greater scrutiny with regard to its environmental performance. On land, electric vehicles (EVs) are becoming more commonplace in countries around the world, while at sea [new IMO regulations have prompted the creation of new fuel mixes](#). It's surely only a matter of time before the aviation industry undergoes similar review with regards to its rules, so the Greenliner could be an important investment for the future.