

Local Airlines Jacked Prices for Holidays

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Aeroflot raised the fare on flights to Sochi from 10,000 rubles to 23,000 rubles as the New Year approached. **Andrei Makhonin**

Aeroflot raised prices of international flights by 60 percent and domestic flights by 80 percent during the New Year's vacation rush.

Price statistics compiled by the Region investment company on flights within Russia and to the United States and Europe show that Aeroflot prices grew more quickly than any other airline during the holiday season.

Prices peaked on Dec. 30, when Aeroflot tickets for popular international flights rose 67 percent and sometimes even doubled. Foreign air carriers, as a rule, did not increase their prices. As such, Alitalia flights to Rome, KLM flights to Amsterdam and Czech Airlines flights to Prague were sold out two weeks before that date.

The data show that Aeroflot's 82 percent price boost for domestic flights was not the largest, however. S7 raised prices 170 percent, while UTAir raised its prices only 22 percent.

S7's most-expensive ticket on Dec. 30 was for a flight to Sochi for 27,000 rubles (about \$870). That is in contrast to Aeroflot's lowest-price flight there for 23,000 rubles and UTAir's for 14,000 rubles. An S7 employee said only a few tickets were sold at that price with more than 80 percent of the tickets on that flight sold at a lower price.

In December, Sibir offered the cheapest flights on that route, with prices ranging from 5,000 rubles to 6,000 rubles, while UTAir flights cost 7,000 rubles and Aeroflot charged 10,000 rubles. Aeroflot also charged the highest rates to Kazan, St. Petersburg and Perm.

An Aeroflot spokesman agreed that the airline had the highest prices in December and over the New Year. He also noted that those flights were booked at a rate of more than 90 percent.

"We invest significant sums in the development of service and updating the fleet — the youngest in Eastern Europe. Logically, passengers should pay more for the high [level of] service," the spokesman said.

Dmitry Gorin, chairman of the Russian Association of Tour Operators transportation committee, said Russian airlines are more sensitive to conditions on the local market than international carriers. All airlines were heavily booked during the period and even the most expensive tickets sold, he added.

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