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Russia's Aeroflot Doubles Price of Flights to Crimea

By The Moscow Times

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Ticket prices for flights to Crimea with Russia's Aeroflot has doubled.

The price of a ticket to Crimea with Russia's flagship carrier Aeroflot has doubled after the airline cancelled a special 7,500 ruble ($160) fare for round-trip flights to the recently-annexed region designed to boost tourist numbers and avert a collapse in Crimea's tourism industry.

An Aeroflot spokesperson told the TASS news agency on Friday that the special fare was intended only for the summer season, and ended on Nov. 1. No decision has been made on whether to revive the offer next summer, the agency said.

The cut-price fare for flights to Crimea was introduced in April, shortly after Moscow annexed the region from Ukraine. The low fares were subsidized by the government, which hoped to prevent a catastrophic slump in visitor numbers. Crimea's economy depends heavily on tourism revenues, and in the years leading up to the annexation, Ukrainian tourists made

up two-thirds of the 6 million summer vacationers visiting the peninsula.

With Russia's land grab throwing a hostile border in their way, most Ukrainians changed their travel plans. Local hotel and resort operators looked to their new Russian compatriots to fill the gap.

Now, with the summer travel season over, ticket prices for flights to Crimea have doubled. Aeroflot now charges around 15,000 rubles ($320), while other carriers are more expensive.

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