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Russia Restores Old Planes to Address Growing Airline Fleet Shortages

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Red Wings Tu-204-100B. **Pavel Adjigildyaev (CC BY-SA 3.0)**

Russian airlines will receive mothballed Soviet- and Russian-made aircraft in 2026-2027 to maintain passenger traffic, state industrial conglomerate Rostec told the pro-Kremlin daily Izvestia.

The plan involves nine Tupolev Tu-204/214 jets, one Antonov An-148 and two Ilyushin Il-96 widebody planes delivered to carriers including Red Wings.

Ten of the 12 aircraft, which are reportedly up to 30 years old, have already been returned to service, Rostec told Izvestia.

Airlines are also bringing foreign-made aircraft back into operation, with the Rossiya airline planning to expand its use of refurbished double-deck Boeing 747 jets that had been placed into storage during the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to state aviation regulator Rosaviatsia, Russian airlines were operating 1,088

aircraft out of a total fleet of 1,135 as of October 2025, 67% of which were foreign-made.

Experts told Izvestia that the restoration program is an effort to offset a growing shortage of planes under Western sanctions.

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The shortage has persisted despite a government program to replace foreign planes with domestically produced models launched after the West sanctioned Russia's civil aviation sector in 2022.

Under that plan, the industry was supposed to produce 127 aircraft of various types between 2023 and 2025, including Superjets, Il-114 turboprops and Tu-214s.

But the civil aviation fleet received 12 new Superjets and one Tu-214 during that period.

The Tu-214 is not used for commercial passenger flights and is instead flown by Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov, Reuters reported last year.

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