

747 Is Retired

The Queen is retired! And yes, that affects you...particularly if you do a lot of flying. It all started back in 1970. Back then, if you planned a trip to Hawaii flying with United, your travel agent would tell you something you never heard before: you will be going on a brand-new airplane, the **747**, called the *Queen of the Skies*. But it ended on 7 November this year where it all started...California to Hawaii.

Boeing announced plans for this large aircraft on April 1966, followed by the test-flight from the Boeing factory in the Seattle area in Feb. 1966. Its first commercial flight was from New York to London for *Pan American World Airways*, the leader in world travel airlines. United flew the four engine DC-8 with 180 to 220 passengers to Hawaii for a whopping \$1455 round-trip **coach** and \$2000 **first-class**.

With the advent of the 747, airlines like United could carry almost 400 passengers on a flight...and if you were lucky enough to be in *1st Class* you could have gone to the upper-deck lounge after take-off where an elegant buffet of Hawaiian food and free-flowing mai-tais awaited you. Those were the days...people used to *dress up* to fly...even in coach/economy. Multi-course meals were served even in coach on some flights.

Airline economics have changed over the past years as more fuel-efficient planes like the Boeing 777 and Airbus A350 started covering the same routes at lower cost. Trans-Atlantic flights by British Airways, KLM, Lufthansa & Virgin Atlantic continue to use the Queen on long-haul routes with large numbers of passengers...British Airways with the most 747s (36) in service.

Along with United, Delta is expected to drop their 747 flights early this year leaving the A380 the largest plane...and yes, on this plane you'll still be able to go to the upper deck for seats, but not for a lounge or snacks.

Maybe not the large planes we once had, but they're better than the choice at "**Kittyhawk NC**" a few years ago. Enjoy your flight—you deserve it.