Forbes

LATAM Airlines Transports Over 9,000 Tons Of Flowers In Time For Valentine's Day

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LATAM Airlines in flight   COURTESY OF @LATAMAIRLINES

Just in time for Valentine's Day, more than 9,000 tons of blooms took flight via LATAM Airlines Cargo from Latin America to global destinations. Red and pink roses, mixed bouquets, carnations, chrysanthemums, iris, gypsophila and greenery were jetted from Bogotá and Medellín, Colombia as well as Quito, Ecuador to cities across North America, Europe, Asia, South America and Oceania. This connectivity was made possible thanks to over 100 destinations that make up the LATAM Cargo network linking Latin America to the rest of the world.

"Valentine's Day and Mother's Day are peak periods where LATAM Cargo demonstrates its leadership in Latin America by successfully completing a highly complex operation," said Felipe Caballero, Commercial Director for Central and Northern South America, LATAM Cargo. "We have the expertise to increase frequencies and meet our customers' needs. We are dynamic and rigorous in our operation, and even when demand spikes, we can tackle the challenge of maintaining the cold chain so that these flowers retain their freshness and quality. In this way, we are helping to boost Colombia's and Ecuador's positions as major global producers of fresh flowers."

Caballero references the benefits of working with PERISHABLE, a product of the LATAM Cargo portfolio that specializes in the carriage of perishable freight. In other words, ensuring your flowers are arriving fresh and not wilted. Thanks to its thorough knowledge of the properties of Latin American commodities, LATAM Cargo offers a service that preserves their attributes from the point of origin until their final destination, relying on cold chambers to keep temperature constant while reducing delivery time. It also implements specific measures depending on the nature and origin of the product.

More than 140 LATAM planes took off from Colombia and Ecuador carrying over 9,000 tons of flowers for this year's Valentine's Day. COURTESY OF LATAM AIRLINES

Colombia and Ecuador are two of the biggest producers of flowers that ship to the United States. The Bogotá savanna (or *Sabana de Bogotá*), located in the southwestern part of the Altiplano Cundiboyacense in the center of Colombia, is the country's main flower growing area accounting for 70% of production. It's followed by the Eastern Antioquia region with 25%, with smaller regions across the country making up the difference. In the savanna, the municipality of Madrid has the largest number of hectares planted, although other areas like Funza, El Rosal, Chía, Cajicá, Facatativá, Tocancipá and Tenjo also stand out as large producers. In Eastern Antioquia, the main production zone is La Ceja, followed by Rionegro, Guarne, La Unión, El Carmen de Viboral and the municipality of Santa Elena. In Ecuador, flower production concentrates in the areas of Cayambe and El Quinche, which account for almost 60% of all roses exported, and Latacunga with approximately 1,000 hectares planted.

The main importer of this season's flowers was the United States. The city of Miami plays a crucial role as the epicenter receiving 8,050 tons, equivalent to 88% of the flowers transported by LATAM Cargo during the Valentine's Day holiday, almost doubling regular traffic. Miami is one of the world's largest distribution hubs and home to the cargo operations of LATAM Airlines Group. Miami was trailed only by Amsterdam with 500 tons, and Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Madrid and Paris to lesser extents. Flowers were also flown into New York, Santiago and New Zealand, among other territories. To satisfy the demand, LATAM Cargo increased its cargo frequencies in Colombia from 12 to 23 flights during the week of Valentine's Day. Similarly in Ecuador, the company increased its frequencies from 10 to 31 cargo flights during peak operation times, more than doubling transport options for 4,180 tons of fresh flowers from Colombia and 4,920 from Ecuador.