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Airline launches first plastic-free flights

Hi Fly, Portugal, aims to ban plastic items from its planes by end of 2019.

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Edited by Kelly Maile



Plastics

The first plastic-free passenger flight left Portugal for Natal, Brazil, on Wednesday without a single-use plastic item on board. Portugal-based airline Hi Fly said more than 700 passengers will take part in four plastics-free flights.

According to the [news release](#), the airline introduced passengers to bamboo cutlery and an array of paper packaging and containers that can be easily composted. Single-use plastic items that were redesigned include cups, spoons, salt and pepper shakers, packaging for bedding, dishes, individual butter cups, soft drink bottles and toothbrushes.

"This historic Hi Fly flight underlines our commitment to making Hi Fly the world's first plastics-free airline within 12 months," Hi Fly President Paulo Mirpuri said. "Our corporate mission is based around sustainability and we work hand in glove with the Mirpuri Foundation to make sure that our corporate practices match our wider responsibilities to the planet."

The four test flights will prevent 350 kilograms of single-use plastic waste from entering the environment. With more than 100,000 flights departing a day around the world and 4 billion commercial aircraft passengers a year, the potential to make a difference is "enormous," said Mirpuri, who is also president of the Lisbon-based Mirpuri Foundation, a non-profit organization focused on environmental sustainability.

"The test flights will help us trial the many substitute items we have developed and introduced, in a real-world environment," Mirpuri said. "We know we may encounter some initial teething problems, but we are confident of addressing these over the coming months."

Hi Fly aims to make its entire fleet plastics-free by the end of 2019. The airline announced its move to go plastic-free by 2019 in March.

Director-General of Tour operator Pedro Ramos said he believes that "future generations will thank those of us who have been prepared to stand up to try to make a difference now."

Portuguese Minister of Environment João Pedro Matos Fernandes has said the state will cease the use of all single-use plastics by January 2019.