

# TRAVEL WEEKLY

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## **LATAM seeks to bolster U.S.-Brazil business**

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Flying to South America from the U.S. often means an overnight flight and multiple stops. In other words -- no sleep.

LATAM Airlines Group, Latin America's biggest airline, is aiming to change that and, in the process, attract more U.S. visitors to Latin America. Along with more flights, the airline also is adding more comfortable seats.

The Chile-based airline inaugurated the only nonstop flight between Boston and Sao Paulo in 2018, making Boston the sixth U.S. destination served directly by LATAM. Other nonstop flights connect Sao Paulo to Los Angeles, Miami, New York and Orlando, with seasonal flights to Las Vegas.

Even bigger news is the airline's plan to spend \$400 million to revamp cabins and upgrade seats in two-thirds of its global fleet over the next two years.

"The transformation of our cabins will enable us to offer an industry-leading onboard experience with more options, flexibility and personalization to better serve every passenger," said Claudia Sender, a LATAM vice president. Comfortable seats in business class and economy are especially important on LATAM's overnight U.S.-Brazil flights.

Brazil's decision early this year to eliminate visas for U.S. travelers, which takes effect next month, should help drive up visitor numbers. By offering more nonstop flights to Sao Paulo, the airline's Brazil hub, LATAM hopes to keep building its U.S.-Brazil business in the future. (Visa requirements for citizens of Canada, Australia and Japan also were dropped.)

"Sao Paulo has the best connections to other parts of the country -- all of the other major cities in Brazil are just a couple hours away," noted Guilherme Testa, a LATAM director based in Sao Paulo.