Singapore Airlines makes environmentally friendly flight from LAX

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A Singapore Airlines airplane flies over the Singapore Air Show on Tuesday. Credit: Charles Pertwee/Bloomberg.

Singapore Airlines paints its jetliners blue and gold, but the carrier went green on a flight between Los Angeles and Singapore.

The airline said a Boeing 747-400 completed one of the more environmentally friendly flights over the Pacific on Tuesday, saving more than 11 tons of fuel and reducing carbon emissions by more than 37 tons.

Flight SQ11 departed Los Angeles International Airport on Jan. 31 and stopped in Tokyo before arriving in Singapore's Changi Airport early Tuesday. The aircraft used about 6% less fuel than normally required for a similar flight.

The flight was part of the Asia and Pacific Initiative to Reduce Emissions, or ASPIRE. The initiative is a partnership among carriers in the region to cut greenhouse gases and become more environmentally friendly, the airline said. SQ11 was ASPIRE's fifth green flight.

To be more fuel-efficient, the aircraft underwent a number of maintenance measures, such as a detailed engine wash and airframe polish, before the flight. The airline also worked with aviation authorities in the U.S., Japan and Singapore to ensure optimal air traffic conditions.

"The route an aircraft takes, the altitude at which it flies and the weather it encounters all affect the amount of fuel it burns and the carbon dioxide emitted," said Gerard Yeap, Singapore Airlines' senior vice president of flight operations. "Managing this effectively and in real time is therefore very important for the operating carrier and the environment."

When the final numbers came in, about 23,500 pounds of fuel were saved and more than 74,000 pounds of carbon emissions were eliminated, the airliner said. The flight was speedy too, because it came in about 30 minutes earlier than expected.

The passengers on the flight hardly noticed. In fact, most didn't even know they were part of a test.

-- W.J. Hennigan