

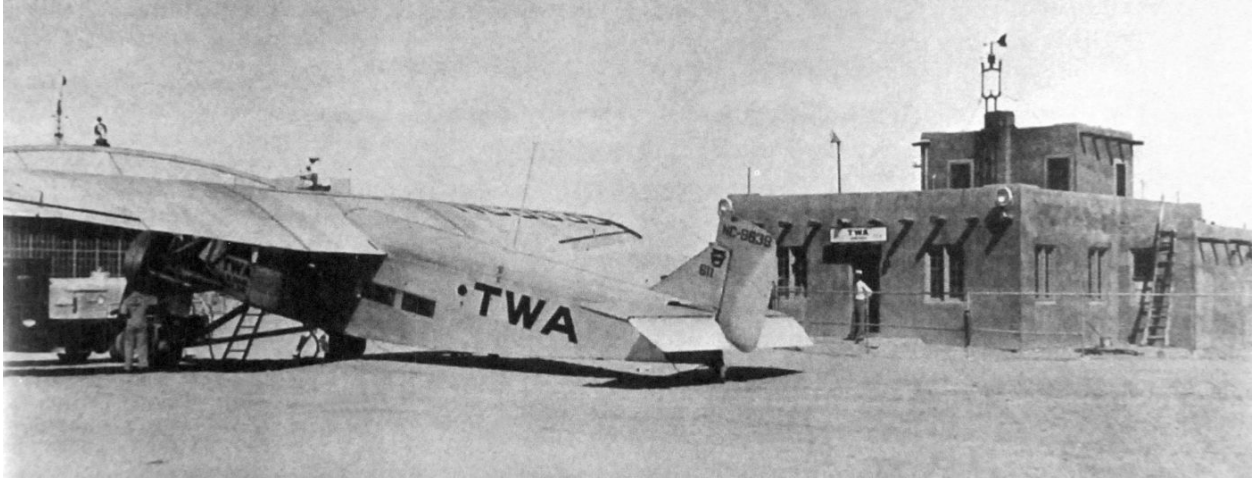


TWA

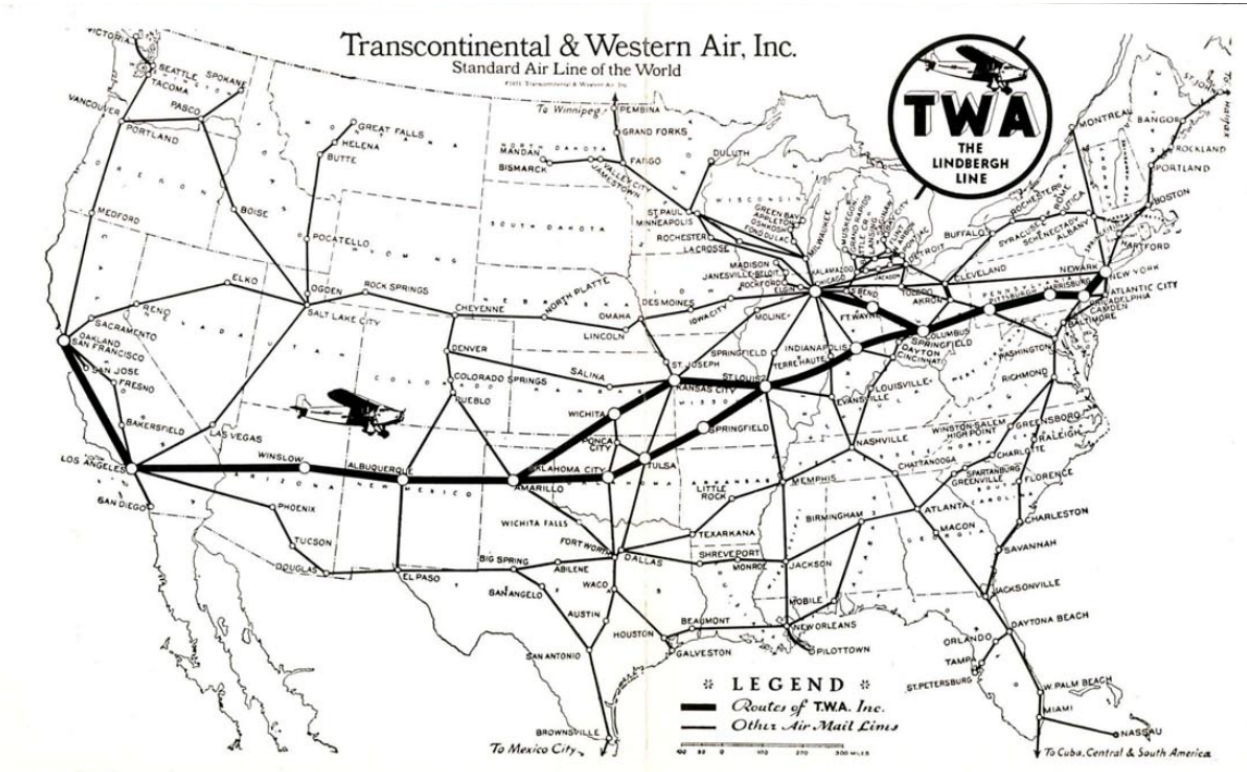
Transcontinental and Western Air Trans World Airlines

TWA, which was based in New York City, began operations as Transcontinental Air Transport (TAT) on July 8, 1929 with a coast to coast route from Los Angeles to New York. The route began at the Glendale airport in Los Angeles, California, stopping in Kingman and Winslow, Arizona, then Albuquerque (ABQ), and continued to Clovis, New Mexico where it finished flying for the day and passengers then boarded a train for an overnight trip to Waynoka, Oklahoma. The next day another aircraft continued the journey to Columbus, Ohio with stops at Wichita, Kansas City, St. Louis, and Indianapolis followed by another overnight train that completed the historic transcontinental trip to New York in roughly 48 hours. At that time there were no navigational aids to assist aircraft with flying at night. The initial aircraft used was a twelve passenger Ford F-5AT tri-motor. Western Air Express (WAE), a competing air carrier, had begun service to Albuquerque two months earlier with a similar route from Los Angeles but their route continued on east to Amarillo, Wichita, and terminated at Kansas City. WAE was also operating other routes but due to the great depression and a ruling called the Watres Bill which involved awarding of a new air mail contract that both carriers needed, TAT and the Los Angeles to Kansas City route of WAE were forced to merge. The merger took place on July 16, completed by July 24, 1930, and the one carrier became known as Transcontinental and Western Air, or "TWA". Three months later on October 25, 1930, navigational beacons for night flight had been established which allowed TWA to complete the entire coast to coast trip by air, eliminating the links via trains as well as the stops in Clovis and Waynoka. Further east, new stops were added at the Pennsylvania cities of Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia replacing the train service there and a new link to San Francisco was added on the west coast. The new air mail contract also began. TAT and WAE had been operating from different airports at Albuquerque and all operations were moved to the WAE airport on the west side of the city. This airport then became known as the "TWA Airport". In 1934 TWA introduced 14-passenger Douglas DC-2 aircraft capable of flying nonstop from Los Angeles to Winslow which eliminated the need for a stop at Kingman, Arizona. Three years later, the 21-passenger Douglas DC-3 came online which became the backbone of

TWA's fleet through the 1940's. Some of these aircraft were equipped with sleeping births allowing for continuous travel through the night.



TWA Ford Tri-motor at the TWA Airport on the west side of Albuquerque c1931.



TWA route map from 1932. Many routes of other airlines were also shown in lighter print.



TWA Douglas DC-2 at the TWA Airport in Albuquerque c1934.



TWA Douglas DC-3. TWA used the slogan "The Lindbergh Line" in honor of aviator Charles Lindbergh. DC-3's served Albuquerque "ABQ" from 1937 through 1953.

From 1937 through 1939, a new airport on the southeast side of Albuquerque (still in use today) was constructed with the help of TWA to handle larger four-engine aircraft. The four-engine Boeing 307 Stratoliner with accommodations for 33 passengers was introduced in 1940 and was able to fly nonstop from Los Angeles to Albuquerque then onto Kansas City, Chicago, and New York, significantly cutting down the time and number of stops for the coast-to-coast flight. When the United States entered World War II a year later, the Stratoliners were reassigned to serve with the US Army while the DC-3's maintained service to Albuquerque. In April 1945, the Stratoliners returned to service calling at Albuquerque four times daily although DC-3's continued the most frequent service. New routes were introduced from Albuquerque to Phoenix, Tucson, and Las Vegas, first served through Boulder City,

Nevada. A ticket office was opened in downtown Albuquerque at the Hilton Hotel which remained open through the 1970's. From 1945 through 1948 TWA operated as many as 34 daily flights around the clock through Albuquerque, 17 eastbound and 17 westbound.



TWA Boeing 307 Stratoliner. The Stratoliner's served ABQ in 1940 through 1941 and were then assigned to serve in World War II. After the war, the aircraft returned to service with TWA briefly in 1945.

In 1946 TWA began flying the much larger Lockheed Constellation four-engine aircraft which allowed the carrier to begin routes crossing the Atlantic Ocean from New York to Europe, Africa, and Asia. TWA then began using the trade name "Trans World Airline" and in May 1950, settled on the name "Trans World Airlines" (plural). Lockheed Constellations, nicknamed "Connies", gradually started operating through Albuquerque by 1949 along with an occasional four-engine Douglas DC-4 from 1950. The Connie's prevailed and became the mainstay of TWA's fleet through the 1950's having the ability to fly nonstop from Albuquerque to Chicago which was developing into the carrier's primary domestic hub. Several versions of the Connie were developed, the -049, the -749, the -1049 Super Constellation, and the -1649 Jetstream. TWA began service to Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1948 and acquired 40-seat Martin 404's, replacing the DC-3's by 1953. Santa Fe was served with the 404's but briefly saw Constellation service before flights ended there in September, 1960. Service was also initiated to the Grand Canyon in the early 1950's but flights there, as well as to Winslow, Arizona, ended in 1953 at the time the DC-3's were retired. Westbound flights from Albuquerque to Los Angeles were now stopping at Phoenix or Las Vegas with some flights operating nonstop.

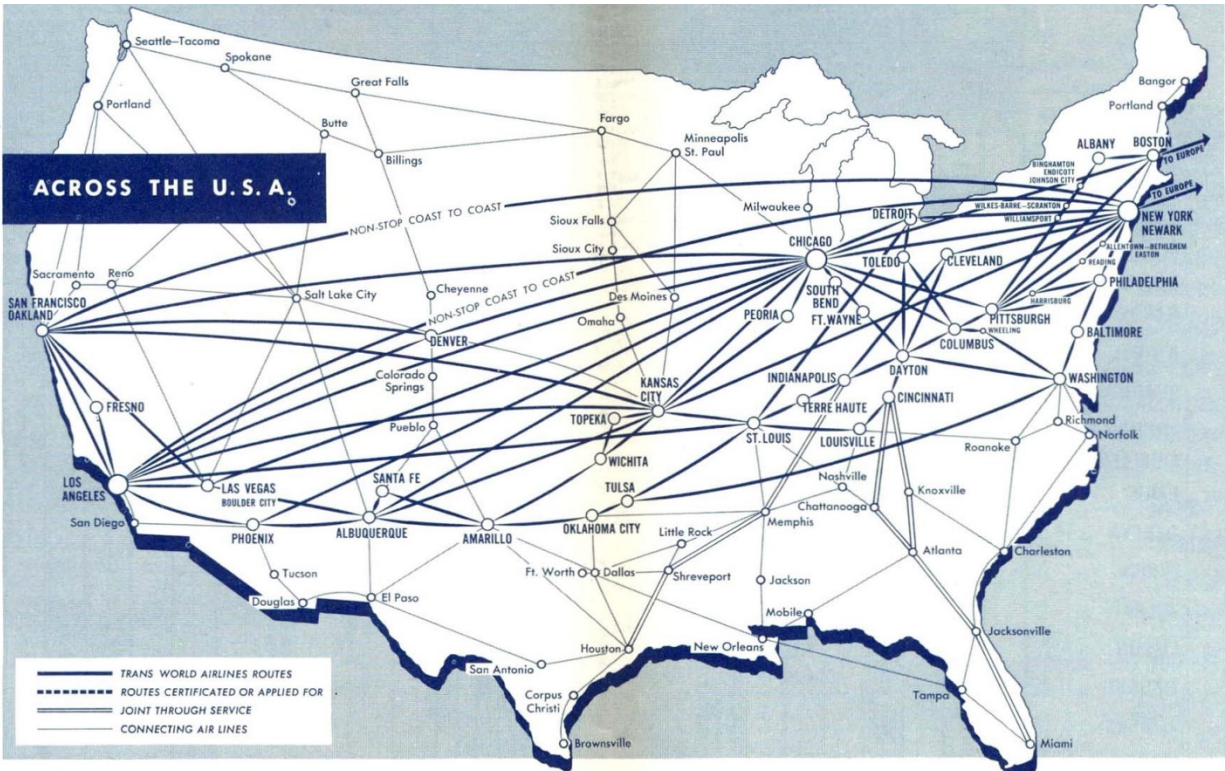
In 1955 TWA suffered a devastating accident when one of its new Martin 404's crashed into the Sandia Mountains east of Albuquerque while on a quick flight to Santa Fe. All 16 persons onboard had died. Marginal weather and a malfunctioning compass were determined to be the cause of the crash.



A tri-tailed TWA Lockheed 049 Constellation at the new Albuquerque Municipal Airport c1949. Connie's would go on to serve ABQ until 1964.



TWA's smaller Martin 404 served both Albuquerque and Santa Fe in the 1950's.



TWA's domestic route map from 1956. Many routes of other airlines are also shown.

TWA entered the “jet age” in March, 1959 with the Boeing 707 and two years later introduced a similar four-engine Convair 880 jet. Both types began service to Albuquerque on April 30, 1961. The three-engine Boeing 727 arrived in 1964 for short haul routes and the last Connie prop aircraft flew through Albuquerque on October 6 of that year making TWA an all-jet carrier at the Albuquerque “Sunport”. A new route to Oklahoma City and Tulsa was also added. Convair 880's were mostly used at the Sunport during the mid and latter 1960's. As the other airlines serving Albuquerque were also introducing jets, a new and much larger terminal building was constructed just east of the old terminal. This new terminal opened in 1965 and is still used today although it has been expanded and modified several times.

TWA had a monopoly on most of the prime markets from Albuquerque but in 1969 new routes were awarded to the other airlines serving the Sunport for nonstop service to Chicago, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Phoenix, and San Francisco. Continental Airlines, which had also served Albuquerque since the early 1930's, grew much stronger and by the late 1970's had exceeded TWA in number of flights operated at the Sunport.



TWA Boeing 707-131 landing at the Albuquerque Sunport in 1969. TWA also flew the larger 707-331B Intercontinental through ABQ until 1983.



TWA Convair 880 parked at a gate at the Albuquerque Sunport in 1972. The 880's served ABQ from 1961 through 1973.



TWA Boeing 727-100 “Star Stream” departing the gate at the Albuquerque Sunport in 1969.

In 1970 TWA introduced wide-body jumbo jets, first with the Boeing 747 followed by the Lockheed L-1011 Tristar two years later. The 206-passenger L-1011 began serving Albuquerque on May 1, 1974 with a single daily flight to Chicago however this aircraft was too much capacity for Albuquerque at the time and ended after eight months. The Convair 880's consumed a tremendous amount of fuel and were retired in 1974 followed by the 707's in 1983. Nonstop flights to St. Louis began in 1978 and a new route to San Diego was awarded to TWA but complications with the San Diego airport prevented the flight from starting. The wide-body L-1011 did return in 1982 operating on a flight to St. Louis that would run on and off over the next ten years. A new wide-body, Boeing 767, was introduced in 1983 just prior to the 707 retirement and occasionally served Albuquerque in place of the L-1011. By then TWA was serving Albuquerque exclusively with 727's and either an L-1011 or 767.

As with many airlines, TWA was periodically hit with strikes by its unionized personnel. One notable strike occurred during the summer of 1966 when TWA's mechanics walked off the job crippling the airline for six weeks. The International Association of Machinists, or IAM, also struck against five other major U.S. carriers during this time. A second major strike occurred in November and December of 1973 when TWA's flight attendants walked off the job. Thanksgiving travel was grounded that year but the airline was back up and running for the Christmas Holiday.

When legislation created U.S. Airline Deregulation in 1978, TWA changed its route structure and moved the primary domestic hub from Chicago to St. Louis while beefing up schedules to its New York-JFK international domicile. Nonstop flights from Albuquerque to New York-JFK operated for short periods in 1979 and again in 1981. TWA also tried operating a mini-hub at Albuquerque in 1979 with a total of 21 daily nonstop flights to twelve cities but this proved to be unsuccessful and was scaled back later that same year. The west wing of the Sunport terminal was expanded in 1980 with four gates equipped with the airport's first jetbridges in which TWA entered into a lease and moved its operations to. A new and much longer ticket counter was built and TWA opened an Ambassador's Club to serve its

premier customers. One daily flight had remained on the original transcontinental route linking Los Angeles to New York with stops at Albuquerque, Amarillo, Wichita, and Chicago using a 727-200 however flight 346 eastbound and flight 315 westbound were discontinued on April 28, 1979 ending the historic initial multi-stop coast-to-coast route.



TWA Boeing 727-200 at Albuquerque wearing a new paint scheme adopted in 1975 which brought back the similar double red stripe livery used by the prop aircraft of the 1950's. 727's served ABQ until 1998.



TWA's widebody Lockheed L-1011 Tristar served Albuquerque in 1974, 1982, and again from 1986 until 1992.



TWA's widebody Boeing 767-200 also served Albuquerque in the 1980's.



A TWA route map from 1979 showing all the routes flown from Albuquerque while TWA was operating a mini-hub at the station.

Airline deregulation also brought many new carriers to Albuquerque including Southwest Airlines, which started flights over many of TWA's routes. Albuquerque's grandfather airline was forced to downsize and by 1985 TWA had discontinued all routes except for St. Louis, its primary hub, maintaining four to five flights per day. By 1982, Southwest surpassed both TWA and Continental to become the busiest airline at Albuquerque. However, the St. Louis route did well for TWA and during the summer of 1987, two flights were operated to the hub with wide-body L-1011's. More fuel-efficient McDonnell Douglas MD-80 aircraft joined the TWA fleet in 1984, becoming the only type calling at ABQ after the 727's were retired and the L-1011 was discontinued.



TWA McDonnell Douglas MD-80 at Albuquerque wearing a new and final livery adopted in 1995.

TWA, struggling financially since the 1970's, entered Chapter 7 bankruptcy in 2001. With most of its assets acquired by American Airlines, the company ceased operating at the end of the day of December 1, 2001. Its last flight, TW416, an MD-80 aircraft, departed Albuquerque with a traditional water cannon salute ending an era of 72 years of commercial airline service to New Mexico's largest city as well as the states' primary air transportation hub. The MD-80 then circled and did one last fly-by over the airport before continuing to St. Louis. As with most other major airlines, TWA did have its own feeder carrier system known as Trans World Express (TWE) however no TWE flights ever served anywhere in New Mexico.

American Airlines maintained flights from Albuquerque to St. Louis for an additional two years but the hub was located in between American's two largest hubs at Chicago and Dallas/Fort Worth. American had also struggled after the events of 9/11/2001 forcing the downsizing of operations at St. Louis to the point where the city was no longer a hub. American itself declared bankruptcy in 2011 and merged with U-S Airways two years later, maintaining the American Airlines brand. U-S Airways had a

tradition of painting one aircraft in the color scheme of each of the airlines that it had merged with in the past and American continued this tradition by introducing a Boeing 737-800 aircraft painted in the double red stripe paint scheme of TWA. TWA is remembered in many ways throughout the Albuquerque Sunport and the American Airlines aircraft painted in a TWA color scheme passes through “ABQ” on occasion which is most welcomed. The former TWA Ambassador’s Club is now used for conferences and other meetings but contains several artifacts remembering TWA. Complete information on the American Airlines operations at Albuquerque can be found under the link for American.



An American Airlines Boeing 737-800 at Albuquerque painted in the colors of TWA in 2015.