



SEASONAL NONSTOP FLIGHT SERVICE ANNOUNCED BETWEEN MONTEREY AND CHICAGO

From the Magnificent Mile to 17-Mile Drive: United's new route connects two iconic destinations and marks the airline's return to mainline service at MRY.

Monterey, Calif. (October 23, 2025) - The Monterey Peninsula Airport District (MPAD), See Monterey, and Visit Carmel today announced new, once-weekly seasonal nonstop service between Monterey Regional Airport (MRY) and Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD), operated by United Airlines, beginning Saturday, May 23, 2026. The new flight gives Chicagoans easy and direct access to Monterey County, California's 99 breathtaking miles of Pacific coastline and renowned destinations and attractions including the charming village of Carmel-by-the-Sea, rugged cliffs of Big Sur, the prestigious greens of Pebble Beach, the verdant fields of the Salinas Valley and an award-winning wine and culinary scene.

The flight will operate weekly on Saturdays through late August, arriving in Monterey around midday and departing back to Chicago later that afternoon, an ideal schedule for travelers seeking a convenient start or finish to their Central Coast getaway. Bookings for the new route are now open at United.com and in the United mobile app.

United's new service connects California's Central Coast directly with the airline's Midwest hub, complementing existing United routes between Monterey and Denver, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. In addition to the direct service, travelers from the Midwest and East Coast will now enjoy seamless, one-stop connections to Monterey County, while local residents gain easier access to nearly 100 destinations across the country via United's Chicago hub.

"We're excited to provide the Monterey community with the first direct flight to Chicago in nearly 50 years with the launch of our seasonal service starting next summer," said Mark Weithofer, United's Managing Director of Domestic Network Planning. "This new flight unlocks the opportunity for travelers from Chicago and all across the country to explore the iconic sights and coastal views of Monterey, while connecting local residents to United's expansive route network from our hub in Chicago."

"This new flight represents another step forward in improving air service in and out of MRY – an essential factor in our region's economic vitality," said Chris Morello, Interim Executive Director of Monterey Regional Airport. "Our Board continues to prioritize air access as a foundation for growth across agriculture, defense, higher education, and tourism. United's decision to bring mainline service back to Monterey is a strong signal of confidence in the Central Coast market."

"This new connection is a significant step forward in See Monterey's long-term strategy to expand air access and visitor markets," said Rob O'Keefe, President & CEO of See Monterey. "We've been investing heavily in the Chicago market and are already seeing traction. United's new nonstop service gives us a powerful foothold in the Midwest, benefiting leisure travelers, the group and meetings market, and our key local industries. It's a tangible example of our MCT 2030 roadmap in action, strengthening sustainable tourism and economic opportunity countywide."

"This is a tremendous win for our entire region as visitors from Chicago (and beyond) will now have an even more seamless route to visit our destination." said Amy Herzog, Executive Director of Visit Carmel. "We can't wait to welcome more Midwest travelers to experience Carmel-by-the-Sea's breathtaking beauty, incredible food and wine experiences, and timeless charm – essentially all that makes this corner of California so special."

The new service underscores a growing momentum in Monterey County's tourism and economic development landscape. Most notable in aviation is the metamorphosis of MRY with a number of enhancements including a new terminal opening in 2027, providing more opportunity for continued airlift development. In addition, new hotel openings, enhanced visitor infrastructure, and a robust slate of global events, continue to elevate Monterey County's position as one of the most desirable destinations on the West Coast.

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About Monterey Regional Airport

Monterey Regional Airport (MRY) is Monterey County's only commercial airport and accommodates over 600,000 passengers each year. The airport serves nine nonstop markets with an average of 17 daily departures. We are committed to providing our customers with superior services and a convenient, hassle-free experience in a safe, secure, professional environment. The MRY Metamorphosis, an FAA-required Safety Enhancement Program, includes a replacement terminal that will welcome passengers in 2027, and will transform how Monterey residents and visitors travel. Be sure to visit www.montereyairport.com or follow @montereyairport on Facebook, Instagram, and X.

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About See Monterey

See Monterey is a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization that drives tourism for Monterey County. Tourism is the largest industry on the Monterey Peninsula and the second largest in the county. See Monterey is a partnership of the hospitality community and local governments that aims to generate community prosperity and enrich economic vitality for Monterey County through the responsible growth of the tourism economy. In 2024, travel spending in Monterey County was \$3.1 billion, supporting nearly 28,000 jobs and generating \$310 million in state and local tax revenue that directly benefited the community. For more information, visit www.SeeMonterey.com and follow @SeeMonterey on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

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About Visit Carmel

Visit Carmel is the official destination marketing organization promoting Carmel-by-the-Sea as a world-renowned, storybook destination. From inspiring restaurants and wine tasting rooms to boutique shops, art galleries, and the famous Carmel Beach, visitors can explore it all within walking distance of Carmel's charming hotels and inns. For more information visit www.CarmelCalifornia.com and follow @VisitCarmel on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok.

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