



What Will Happen to 91 Abandoned Spirit Airlines Planes?

Description

Spirit Airlines unexpectedly ceased operations last week, leaving around 17,000 employees without jobs and thousands of passengers stranded. High fuel prices, two bankruptcies, and a failed government bailout led to the airline's sudden collapse. At the time of its shutdown, Spirit had 91 out of 114 aircraft at 26 airports across the United States.

The airline had faced financial difficulties for years, particularly as it struggled to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on travel. In late 2024, Spirit became the first U.S. airline to file for bankruptcy since American Airlines in 2011, but it struggled to recover, leading to a second bankruptcy filing soon after. Attempts at a merger with JetBlue were also blocked by the government.

The situation worsened when jet fuel prices surged by about 70% since the beginning of the war in Iran. Despite efforts by the U.S. government to support Spirit, the airline was unable to secure the necessary assistance, and its final operational flight, NK1833, landed in Texas just before the company announced its closure.

In the days following the shutdown, stranded passengers and former staff were left to find alternative travel arrangements. Other airlines stepped in, offering discounted fares to assist those affected. Most customers who purchased tickets with credit or debit cards have reportedly been refunded.

Spirit's 114 aircraft are now in storage, pending decisions about their future. The Nomadic Aviation Group has been hired to ferry the planes to desert storage facilities in Arizona, where they will remain until new owners are found. The average age of the fleet was around seven years, indicating that many planes still have operational life left. However, high fuel costs may impact future interest from airlines in acquiring these aircraft.

Vocabulary List:

1. **bankruptcy** //ˈbæŋkrʌptsi// (noun): when a company cannot pay its debts
2. **bailout** //ˈbeɪl,aʊt// (noun): money or help from government to save company
3. **stranded** //ˈstrændɪd// (adjective): left somewhere and unable to leave
4. **surged** //sɜːdʒd// (verb): increased suddenly and by a lot
5. **fleet** //flit// (noun): all the planes owned by one company
6. **ferry** //ˈfəri// (verb): to carry people or things between places



Comprehension Questions

Multiple Choice

1. How many employees were left without jobs due to Spirit Airlines' shutdown?
Option: 10,000
Option: 15,000
Option: 17,000
Option: 20,000
2. At the time of its shutdown, how many aircraft did Spirit have operational?
Option: 91
Option: 100
Option: 114
Option: 120
3. What major event contributed to high jet fuel prices affecting Spirit Airlines?
Option: COVID-19 pandemic
Option: War in Iran
Option: Merger with JetBlue
Option: Second bankruptcy filing
4. Who did Spirit Airlines attempt to merge with?
Option: American Airlines
Option: JetBlue
Option: United Airlines
Option: Delta Airlines
5. What was the flight number of Spirit's final operational flight?
Option: NK1833
Option: NK2022
Option: NK1500
Option: NK3000
6. Where are Spirit's aircraft currently stored?
Option: Texas



- Option: Florida
- Option: Arizona
- Option: California

True-False

- 7. Spirit Airlines was the first U.S. airline to file for bankruptcy after American Airlines.
- 8. The U.S. government was able to successfully bailout Spirit Airlines.
- 9. All passengers with tickets were refunded after the shutdown of Spirit Airlines.
- 10. High fuel prices have risen by about 50% since the beginning of the war in Iran.
- 11. Spirit Airlines had 114 aircraft across the United States at the time of shutdown.
- 12. Spirit Airlines' final operational flight landed in Texas.

Gap-Fill

- 13. Spirit Airlines ceased operations last week, leaving around 17,000 employees without _____.
- 14. The airline had _____ out of 114 aircraft at the time of its shutdown.
- 15. Spirit became the first U.S. airline to file for bankruptcy since American Airlines in _____.
- 16. The average age of Spirit's fleet was around _____ years.
- 17. Attempts to merge with JetBlue were blocked by the _____.
- 18. Spirit Airlines was unable to secure necessary assistance despite efforts by the U.S. _____.



Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. 17,000 2. 91 3. War in Iran 4. JetBlue 5. NK1833 6. Arizona

True-False: 7. True 8. False 9. False 10. False 11. False 12. True

Gap-Fill: 13. jobs 14. 91 15. 2011 16. seven 17. government

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