

# **LATAM Brazil's First Female Captain Celebrates 30 Years with The Airline**

By Daniel Martínez Garbuno

## **Claudine Melnik was Brazil's first commercial female pilot.**

LATAM Brasil celebrated Aviator Pilot's Day on October 23, 2022 by highlighting the efforts and achievements of Claudine Melnik, the first female pilot in the airline's history. This year, she is celebrating her 30th anniversary with LATAM Airlines and her 27th anniversary as an airline captain.

A native of Curitiba, Claudine began her career in 1992 as a flight attendant at the age of 23 before she became a copilot in 1994 and the first female airline captain in the South American country in 1995.

## **The story of Claudine Melnik**

Her dream of flying through the skies dates back to her childhood, according to Claudine. "I don't know exactly if it was because of a family vacation trip we took or if this desire was already there prior to that. But the fact is that ever since I was very young, I saw myself flying somehow," she said.

As a child, Claudine imagined flying like her cousin, a pilot flying for the Brazilian Air Force (FAB), which only began accepting female pilots in 1982. To achieve her dreams, Claudine took theoretical flight lessons in an aeroclub in Curitiba and practical lessons in Juiz de Fora. By the time she started her career at LATAM, she already had the license to become a pilot.

## **What does she currently operate at LATAM Airlines?**

In 1994, Claudine transitioned from being a flight attendant to a copilot. That year, she took over as a copilot of a Caravan C208 aircraft, and one year later, she became the first female airline captain in Brazil, flying the same model aircraft. For four years, Claudine flew domestic flights.

When LATAM Brasil acquired its first aircraft for long-haul flights, she was part of the first group of copilots who would fly from Brazil to abroad. Claudine's first international flight was to Miami International Airport (MIA) in the United States.

"I made my first international flight with LATAM in 1998, and I remember it as if it were today. Flying abroad is a major goal in our profession, and I am thrilled to know that my colleagues have had this opportunity since their first day with the company," she said.

Currently, Claudine is the commander of Boeing 787 and 777 aircraft, which are used to operate the international routes from Brazil to North America, Europe, and Africa at LATAM Brazil. The captain has accumulated more than 20,000 flight hours, mainly on long-range international routes.

See link for the original article and photos:

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