

# BIG MOMENTS IN Airline Food

In-flight meals have changed a lot since their debut nearly a century ago. Take a look....



**1919**  
The **first airline meal** is served on a Handley Page Transport flight from London to Paris. The cold box lunch includes fruit and a sandwich and costs three shillings.



**1928**  
Passengers traveling between Berlin and Paris on Lufthansa's 15-seat **Flying Dining Car** enjoy the first in-flight hot-meal service. Warm food is loaded onto the plane in insulated bottles.



**1936**  
United Airlines introduces the **first functional airplane kitchen** and gives passengers a choice of entrée: fried chicken or scrambled eggs.

**1946**  
Pan American Airways serves **complete meals** of meat, potatoes and vegetables in partitioned trays. The frozen dinners are heated in convection ovens mid-flight, a concept that inspires the TV dinner seven years later.



**1958**  
Pan Am starts **daily commercial transatlantic jet service** from New York City to Europe, launching the golden age of air travel: white tablecloths, silver coffee carafes, fine china and extravagant beef and chicken dishes.



**1971**  
Texas-based **Southwest Airlines** **takes off**, marketing itself as the "peanut airline" and offering rock-bottom fares in exchange for minimal perks. The company offers nothing to eat but a free packet of peanuts.

**1987**  
To cut costs, American Airlines chief Robert Crandall decides to **remove one olive** from every first-class salad plate, saving the airline \$40,000 per year!



**2000**  
Jet Blue arrives and gains a following by offering **free snacks**, including its signature Terra Blues chips. These days, the airline hands out about 8 million bags of them annually.



**2001**  
In the wake of September 11, air travel drops, and **nearly every major airline eliminates meal service** on domestic flights to cut costs. As a safety precaution, all knives are temporarily banned from both commercial flights and airport restaurants.



**2007**  
Emirates opens the **largest flight catering facility** on earth—big enough to make more than 115,000 meals a day.



**2016**  
Food Network chef **Maneet Chauhan** partners with American Airlines to revamp menus for international flights from the US. She creates dishes like duck confit pot pie and lamb osso buco.



**2017**  
A flight attendant makes headlines after blogging about the difficulty of serving **Diet Coke** in the air: Apparently it's so fizzy that it takes longer to pour than other drinks. It hasn't stopped fliers from ordering it, though!



AIRPLANE: FLYING DINING CAR; PEANUTS: EMIRATES PLANE AND KITCHEN: GETTY IMAGES; LUNCH SERVICE: DELTA FLIGHT MUSEUM; FROZEN MEALS AND TRANSATLANTIC SERVICE: PAN-AMERICAN WORLD AIRWAYS, INC. RECORDS; SPECIAL COLLECTIONS; UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI LIBRARIES; CORAL GABLES; FL: DIET COKE: LARA ROBBY/STUDIO D; CHAUHAN: AMERICAN AIRLINES; PLASTIC CUTLERY: ALAMY; OLIVES: ANDREW PURCELL