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The High Table

Celebrity chefs are all the rage—including, increasingly, on airlines' stratified menus *by Fiona Morrow*

The airline industry's culinary mile-high club is peppered with fine-dining chefs, hired to bring a touch of glamour—and hopefully a lot of flavour—to the business of business class travel. Vancouver's top toque, David Hawksworth, signed up last fall to become Air Canada's official chef for those paying the front cabin premium, charged with designing dishes that still look and taste good at 35,000 feet. Still, true foodies might find better value skipping the airline upgrade and reserving a table at the chefs' restaurants instead.

AIRLINE FOOD FACTS

\$14.8 billion

Estimated worth of the global airline food industry

\$7.40-\$13.20

Cost to airline of typical economy meal

\$22-\$44

Cost to airline of typical business class meal

\$27 million

Amount Singapore Airlines spends on Champagne per year

SOURCE: ARCHERY STRATEGY CONSULTING
* FIGURES IN CANADIAN DOLLARS



AIRLINE	CHEF	COST OF ENTRY**	IN THE SKY	ON THE GROUND	NOTED
AIR CANADA 	David Hawksworth (Hawksworth Restaurant, Vancouver) 	Available on all outgoing international business class flights and in international Maple Leaf Lounges Business class: Vancouver-London Heathrow \$4,149 Economy: \$1,185	Tamari roasted sablefish, bok choy, brown rice, chili-miso vinaigrette 	Hawksworth Restaurant: Pan roasted sablefish, puy lentils, cauliflower, crispy chicken skin gremolata: \$42	1,200 Hawksworth meals are prepared daily in Air Canada's five catering kitchens sited across the country
ALL NIPPON 	Pierre Gagnaire (3-Michelin-starred chef with 11 restaurants globally) 	Available on first and business class international flights departing Japan Business class: Vancouver-Tokyo \$4,214 Economy: \$1,345	Sautéed fillet of beef, black truffle-flavoured burdock roots, green pepper sauce 	Pierre Gagnaire Tokyo: Chateaubriand of Japanese beef, foie gras toasts, white bean and squid stew, seared tongue with autumn truffles: \$136	All Nippon's menus are developed by a team of 25 top chefs (including Gagnaire) they call "The Connoisseurs"
QATAR AIRWAYS 	Nobu Matsuhisa (32 restaurants worldwide) 	Available on international business class flights in and out of Doha Business class: Vancouver-Doha \$4,635 Economy: \$1,252	Braised lamb shank, chickpea and saffron sauce, parsley mashed potato, roasted root vegetables 	Nobu Doha: Nobu-style veal chop: \$143 	Renowned Indian chef Vineet Bhatia also develops menus for QA
VIRGIN ATLANTIC 	Lorraine Pascale (former supermodel, British celebrity TV chef) 	Available only on Upper Class flights out of the U.K. Upper (business) class: London Heathrow-Los Angeles*: \$7,333 Economy: \$876	Seafood linguine, prawns, scallops, salmon, white wine sauce, zucchini ribbons 	Pascale closed her Covent Garden cupcake shop in 2014 and now concentrates on her TV and cookbook career. To try her recipes, you'll have to buy her book— Everyday Easy —and make something yourself	Pascale switched from catwalk to celebrity chef when Selfridges contracted her to supply 1,000 of her Christmas cakes

*Virgin Atlantic doesn't fly to Vancouver **Flight prices sourced Oct. 26 via expedia.ca for return flights in Feb. 2016 except Qatar Airways, sourced direct