

Digital Article

Dining in the skies

I often hear people say, “An airplane isn’t a restaurant; it just gets you from point A to B.” While this may be true, every food tray, from a simple snack to a hearty meal, reflects care, brings comfort and sparks a small moment of delight in the skies.

Your in-flight meal may seem like a small detail in the grand scheme of travel. However, that meal on your table, the one you eagerly devour on board after a seven-hour layover at the airport, tells a much bigger story. One of the farmers and food artisans, supply chains and safety checks, smart design and social impact.

The Customer Behind Every Menu

That story starts with you, our customer. When designing or refreshing our menus, we start with real preferences and dietary needs. We also take into account allergies and intolerances, vegan and vegetarian choices, halal and kosher options, gluten-free, flexitarian, as well as medical and child-specific requirements.

On top of this, feedback gathered through post-flight surveys, cabin crew reports, and tasting panels also goes a long way in guiding what stays, what goes, and what gets better.

At Kenya Airways, we believe in creating food based on the customer’s preferences because when passengers are involved in menu design, satisfaction rises and food waste falls. That belief inspired our 2024 Inflight Menu Tasting Event at our Nairobi hub, where frequent flyers were invited to sample and vote on new meal options.

Even with meticulous planning, palates can change at altitude. When the response to a dish differs in the air, we refine the recipe, texture, seasoning, or plating quickly. Through these initiatives, we ensure that our menus truly reflect our customers’ preferences, enhance satisfaction while also reducing waste.

More than a Tray: Stewardship, Livelihoods and Safety

We also recognise a good meal isn’t just about taste, appearance, texture, or portion size it’s also about the journey behind it. From responsible sourcing to smarter loading, sustainability guides every step of our in-flight meal.

We source locally and organically where possible to support farmers and cut down on transport emissions. We’ve also shifted towards biodegradable, reusable, or recyclable packaging materials and designing lighter service ware to reduce both waste and aircraft weight.

To minimize food waste, we focus on better forecasting, right-sized portions, and waste segregation on sustainability showcase flights, helping us increase recycling rates and reduce landfill impact. Building on these efforts, pre-order and buy-on-board initiatives are being developed to further reduce over-catering and ensure we carry just the right amount of food on each flight.

Beyond the environmental impact lies the social impact. Our catering ecosystem is designed to uplift and empower both our partners and customers. We work with suppliers who uphold fair labour practices and safe working conditions. We also honour cultural and religious dietary

needs so that more passengers feel seen, respected, and nourished. By offering balanced meal choices and clear nutritional and allergen information, we help you make confident, informed dining decisions.

However, all this means little without trust. That's why we adhere to IATA and other relevant guidelines to ensure robust food safety, hygiene, and traceability across partners. Our Catering Standards Manual unifies all kitchens under the same benchmarks for quality, presentation, and sustainability, while regular audits, data reviews and corrective actions keep every tray consistent to your destinations.

At 35,000 feet, food isn't just nourishment. It's a promise: to delight customers, to support communities, and to protect the planet.

As we mark this year's World Food Day themed "**Hand in Hand for Better Foods and a Better Future,**" we celebrate the teamwork behind every tray. The choreography of chefs, nutritionists, quality teams, and planners who rise before dawn so the right meal boards the right aircraft, prepared safely, presented beautifully, and sourced responsibly.

So, the next time you unwrap your meal onboard, remember, you are tasting hundreds of thoughtful choices, all made with one purpose: to serve food that connects people, sustains livelihoods, and respects our shared home.