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Why Finnair has turned the kids loose in its catering kitchens

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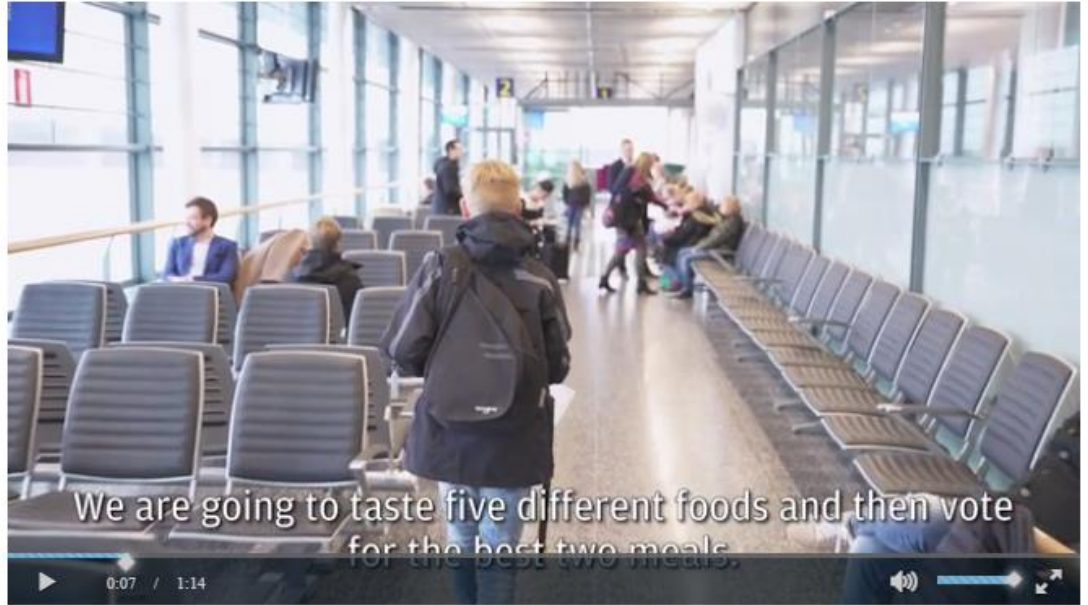
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Maarit Keranen

Added Maarit Keranen



Passengers flying in the economy cabin on Finnair's nonstop flights between Chicago and Helsinki this summer may feel like they're back in grade school.

And what fun that could be.



While airlines all over the world compete to see what highfalutin' chef they can nab to create snazzy in-flight grub, Finnair is taking a refreshingly different tack.

The carrier turned to Finnish school kids to help develop meals that will be served in economy class on the airline's long-haul flights – including Chicago-Helsinki – starting July 5.

According to the folks at Finnair, Finland is famous the world over for the quality of its school system, and that includes the free school meals available to children in grades one through nine and in high school.

So why not turn to students who obviously know good food when they taste it to help develop in-flight meals? A group of students from the Cygnaeus elementary school in Turku, Finland, were selected for the menu development project in conjunction with Finnair chefs at the airline's catering facility in Helsinki.

So after much discussion and cooking and tasting, what did the kids vote to put on Finnair flights? The meals to be served to Finnair economy cabin passengers will include potatoes and meatballs, a favorite of many Finnish children, and another hearty-sounding dish, macaroni and meat casserole.

Finnair says it's proud to be spotlighting the culinary chops of some the nation's well-schooled kids. Added [Maarit Keranen](#), head of in-flight service at Finnair: "Healthy and balanced school meals are an essential element of the well-recognized Finnish school system, and we are proud to highlight these tasty meals as part of our in-cabin service."

Finnair, Finland's national carrier, is a member of the Oneworld airline alliance, which also includes American Airlines (NASDAQ: AAL), a major presence at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport.

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