

# 5 Truths About Airline Food That Flight Attendants Know (and You Don't)



by SOPHIE MIURA



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Trying to [maintain a healthy diet](#) when you're traveling can be a real challenge. No matter how good your usual diet is, the moment you step foot on a plane, you start to crave salty snacks, sauces, and Bloody Marys. What gives?

It's not all in your head. Earlier this month, we visited the [Finnair](#) head office in Finland to find out how the company is revolutionizing in-flight dining and discovered a few little-known truths about airline food. As it turns out, unique cabin conditions, including high altitude and pressure, subtly alter the way you crave and taste food. **Here are five little-known truths about airline food flight attendants know (and you don't):**

## You Crave Umami

Unlike other basic tastes, umami or savory taste is actually heightened in mid-air. "This is why drinks which are high in umami ingredients, such as tomato juice, are quite popular onboard flights. They're tastier in the sky," Finnair explains. Hence, your obsession with airline Bloody Marys.

## Sauce Doesn't Just Enhance Flavor

Ever wondered why airline food typically comes with rich condiments or meat is served in a stew-like sauce? Apparently, that's not just to add flavor. "Due to low humidity at high altitudes, airline meals are often accompanied with sauces in order to prevent the food from being too dry," Finnair explains.

## Engine Noise Changes Your Sense of Taste

High altitude and cabin pressure isn't the only thing that wreaks havoc on our taste buds. "Studies suggest that an airplane's engine noise can reduce our sense of taste, too." When Cornell University tested the [impact of airplane noise on taste](#), researchers discovered it dulled the taste of sweetness and made umami more intense.

## Pilots and Co-Pilots Never Eat the Same Food

You'll never catch the pilot and co-pilot eating the same meal, Finnair explains. The reason isn't preference—it's for safety. "[They] will eat different meals in order to reduce the risk of food poisoning. If one of them gets sick, the other one should be okay."

## Don't Love Airline Food? There Are Usually Options

Airline food has a notoriously bad reputation, but Finnair is doing its best to change that. The airline has partnered with Swedish top chef Tommy Myllymäki and the [Culinary Team of Finland](#) to create meals that rival your favorite restaurant.

One little-known fact is that you're not necessarily restricted to eat the main meal on your flight menu. In fact, Finnair has over 20 different specialty meal options in business class and over 10 in economy. If you're trying to be healthy, ask for a low-salt option before your flight.