

Part of complete coverage on
Out of the Office

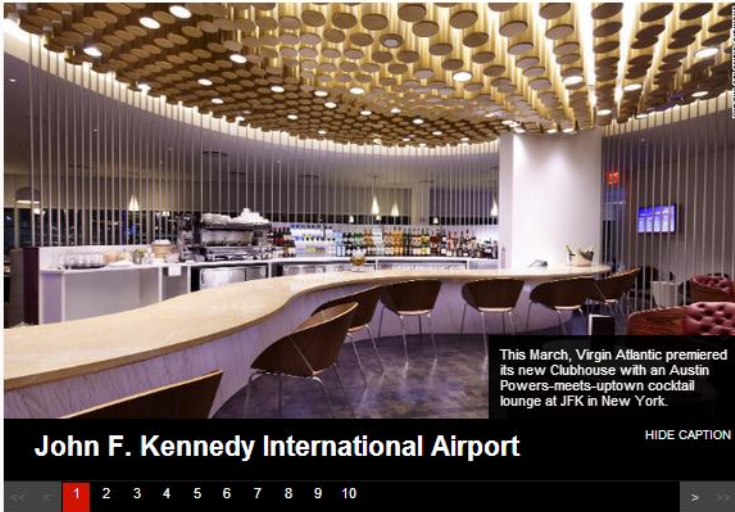
OUT OF THE OFFICE

10 of the world's top airport lounges

DEPARTURES

By **Maud Doyle**, Departures
updated 9:01 AM EDT, Fri August 17, 2012

593 321 24 5
Recommend Tweet Share +1
Print Email More sharing



STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- In the last decade, cities have built exceptionally designed airports
- The JFK Clubhouse in New York, which features a spa, is a standout layover option
- The Concorde Room at Heathrow is a soothing retreat
- Qatar Airways has hotel-style bedroom suites and child entertainment

(CNN) -- Travel is meant to be a rich experience, a means of engaging with culture, cuisine and pleasure. In the last decade, cities around the world have helped this along by building exceptionally designed, clean, well-functioning airports.

Along with them have come equally stunning airport lounges, and the super-luxe first-class areas in international hubs around the world are a testament to a new age of luxury.

Instead of feeling like they're on the wrong side of a quarantine -- and serving decidedly lack-luster food (everyone's had a run-in with those dreaded airport "panini") -- these lounges are oases offering first-rate amenities, privacy and calm. It's all so good, in fact, you might even want to get to the airport early.

Departures: The top villas in Tuscany

Airports are gateways to the world, and these 10 airport lounges cater to global travelers who want the journey to be as memorable as the destination.

Amazing first-class air cabins

We've put Istanbul on our map.
Now offering nonstop service from New York/Newark to Istanbul, Turkey.

Search flights

*Flight schedule subject to change.

UNITED

ADVERTISEMENT

Part of complete coverage on
CNN recommends

8 hotels worth a tour

updated 10:05 AM EDT, Tue August 14, 2012



Sometimes you don't even have to leave the hotel to take in the sights, because what's right there under your

Virgin Atlantic JFK Clubhouse, John F. Kennedy International Airport, New York

The feeling that half of Manhattan has joined you at your gate at JFK is over. This March, Virgin Atlantic premiered its new Clubhouse with an Austin Powers-meets-uptown mod cocktail lounge at its heart, complete with a red leather sofa and purple lighting.

But it's the Clubhouse Spa, featuring Dr. Hauschka products and treatments, that really makes the JFK Clubhouse a standout layover option.

14 outstanding airport amenities

In the end, just like the \$17 million flagship at Heathrow airport, this lounge offers everything you need (massages, facials, foot treatments), everything you didn't know you needed (a Bumble and Bumble salon) and several things that you don't really need at all but are certainly nice to have (anyone for a game of pool?).

Beyond TSA checkpoint in A Concourse, above boarding gates A4 and A5; virgin-atlantic.com.

Departures: Let's go glamping!

British Airways Concorde Room, Heathrow Airport

The decidedly unfashionable herringbone print, velvets and crystal chandeliers of the Concorde Room at Heathrow recall a well-to-do British gentleman's study in all its relaxed, un-modern glory.

Quite simply, this is a retreat -- albeit one with full waiter service, complimentary wines and Champagne and private, hotel-style cabanas with day beds and en-suite bathrooms. If retreating isn't your habit, book a theater ticket with the concierge, then head to the terrace for a drink from the fabulous Concorde Bar and views of the runway.

Terminal 5; britishairways.com.

Etihad's Diamond First Class Lounge, Abu Dhabi International Airport

To enter Etihad's first-class lounge is a dangerous game of choose-your-own-indulgence. Leave the kids at the door. Staff nannies keep little ones busy in the kids' retreat among colorful beanbags and toys; parents head to the Six Senses Spa for a complimentary treatment.

Departures: Spectacular hotel rooftop pools

Then the real decision-making begins. Will it be the Champagne bar for the finest wines and bubbly or the cigar lounge? À la carte dining in a fine-dining atmosphere or dinner at the chefs table? Just don't forget the kids.

Terminal 3; etihadairways.com.

nose is worth further exploration.

10 budget friendly all-inclusive resorts

updated 7:58 AM EDT, Fri July 20, 2012



These all-inclusive resorts really do include all the extras, and they're affordable too.

Five guys take same photo for 30 years

updated 9:01 PM EDT, Fri July 27, 2012



When five teenagers sat down and posed for a picture at Copoo Lake in 1982, they didn't plan on making it a tradition. But that's what it became.

6 spots where masterpieces were born

updated 10:10 AM EDT, Mon August 27, 2012



Whether carefully decorated or intentionally uncluttered, artists' homes and studios show us who they were at the core.

5 hideaways that aren't the Hamptons

updated 1:04 PM EDT, Tue July 31, 2012



The Hamptons are a quick hop from New York, but there are plenty of other lovely escapes within driving distance without the see-and-be-seen vibe.

Why look like a slob while traveling?

updated 11:43 AM EDT, Fri September 7, 2012



New York City's fashion week inspired us to turn to veteran fashion experts for an

Finnair Lounge, Helsinki Airport

From felt walls that swallow outside noise to Marimekko tableware to the wireless, mobile phone-charging system PowerKiss (wireless!), the simplicity and thoughtfulness of the Finnair Lounge make it exceptional. A buffet is always on, and in addition to the views, the elegant Finnish and Nordic furniture designs provide their own easy pleasure. For those on the way to Asia, the midnight buffet is particularly elaborate.

Travelers in need of a spa will need to have patience -- the Finnair Spa (complete with traditional Finnish saunas) will reopen this winter, but in the meantime there are showers at the lounge.

Terminal T2 between Gates 36 and 37; finnair.com.

Lufthansa First Class Terminal, Frankfurt Airport

Lufthansa's First Class Terminal offers its own passport control and security checkpoints, so travelers get personal attention all the way until they walk down the gangplank to the airplane. (Behind security in Departure Area B, there is also a smaller but no less elegant first class lounge for non-Schengen flights.)

Creatively done lighting radiates from behind a black glass wall and from the tops of marble partitions in the restaurant. Everything, from the size of the tables to the marble and oak bar to the monsoon showerheads, is presented generously and thoughtfully.

Next to Terminal 1; lufthansa.com.

Departures: Top hotel room service

The Pier, Hong Kong International Airport

The seasoned traveler will be forgiven for any long-standing preconceptions about eating (or, sadly, not eating) in airports. Thankfully, not far from Gate 62 at Hong Kong International, those expectations will be overturned.

At The Pier — Cathay Pacific's glass-enclosed first- and business-class break area — you'll find freshly made Japanese noodles at the Noodle Bar and proper fine dining and modern decor at the first-class Haven restaurant. (There are also two more fully stocked café/bars.)

In addition to the business centers, the WiFi, the leather armchairs and the pebbled showers, a glass of Champagne also goes a long way to ease travel stress.

Gates 62-66, Northwest Concourse; cathaypacific.com.

enlightened perspective on in-flight apparel.

Landmark handstands and more

updated 1:12 PM EDT, Sat July 28, 2012



Five guys with a clever photo tradition sparked so much interest that we wanted to know what other photo rituals travelers embrace.

Live it up on the French Riviera

updated 10:20 AM EDT, Thu August 9, 2012



Talk about an embarrassment of riches. The sun-splashed South of France has it all.

Is the photo better than the vacation?

updated 9:22 AM EDT, Mon July 23, 2012



Brent Larson and his bride look like an ad for their resort, glowing, in love and sun-kissed in paradise. The photo doesn't tell the whole story.

NewsPulse »

Most popular stories right now

Girl missing after 911 tweet found safe

Younger candidate eyes Venezuela's Chavez

5 things to watch in tonight's debate

Obama, light a cig; Romney, throw deep

Woman's face scarred after spa visit

Explore the news with NewsPulse »

Qantas First Lounge, Sydney Airport

Modernity, with polished surfaces, clear glass and stainless steel, is the norm of airport luxury today, give or take a Dutch modern knock-off table or two and a leather armchair. Which is why we're thrilled with the 98-foot, 8,400-plant vertical garden that greets passengers at the Qantas First Lounge at Sydney Airport.

It leaves the air in the atrium feeling cleaner and lighter. Better yet, part of the garden is incorporated into each of the Payot Paris day spa treatment rooms, so you can forget, for the moment, that you're in transit.

The upper floor of the lounge, designed by Marc Newson and replete with recliners and sofas (in addition to those leather armchairs), also includes an open kitchen restaurant serving food by Australian chef Neil Perry.

International Terminal; qantas.com.au.

Qatar Airways Premium Terminal, Doha International Airport

Doha airport knows how to do things on a massive scale better than anyone, which is why Qatar Airways worked with it to create this first- and business-class terminal cum mall cum hotel.

It includes a handful of worthwhile airport elements (duty-free, fine boutiques) and complements them with the fundamentals of a fine lounge (a full-service Elemis spa, including Jacuzzi and sauna; several restaurants, cafés and bars; private meeting rooms and business centers).

Hotel-style bedroom suites and child entertainment round out the offerings, and the result is truly over the top.

Near main Departures building; qatarairways.com.

Singapore Airlines SilverKris Lounges, Singapore Changi International Airport

At Singapore Changi International, as throngs of travelers roll handcarts piled high with suitcases to overflowing check-in lines, Passenger Relations Officers greet first-class passengers of Singapore Airlines curbside, taking their bags, guiding them to an armchair in the first-class check-in lounge and checking them in personally.

Next it's off to the first-class SilverKris Lounges, where, depending on their mood, guests can choose from meeting rooms, café/bars or 13 Italian-leather slumberettes. Don't worry -- the staff will wake you before your flight.

Terminal 2 on Level 3 (North Wing); Terminal 3 on Level 3; singaporeair.com.

More from CNN Video:



'Cheetah robot' faster than Usain Bolt



Animated Granholm fires up DNC

More from CNN Travel:



When does an airplane become political?



Man up, gents! Cigars, booze and 'impish' behavior



More than a holiday: The luxury superyacht that doubles as a science lab



Report: Amtrak employees failing drug, alcohol tests at alarming rate

From Around the Web

What's this?



Lawsuit Alleges City Made Secret Deal for Outer Borough Taxi...
Patch - Bayside, NY



Free in Vegas: 7 Sights that Won't Break the Bank
Frommer's



ADVERTISEMENT

Sponsored links

Business Admin Classes

Train In Business Administration. Short-Term Programs Available Now!
www.BCBeth.com

Swiss Lounge, EuroAirport Basel Mulhouse Freiburg

Guests of the Swiss Lounge can sun themselves under an enormous glass dome, surrounded by bright, simple materials -- like chrome and wood -- rather than some of the richer, upholstered surfaces found in other first class lounges. The architecture is open, the greenery is plentiful and the staff at the welcome desk is attentive.

Expect warm and cold buffets, leather recliners facing the panoramic windows, a proper European bar and a Japanese bridge in an atrium surrounded by palm trees. Somehow, it all works together impeccably -- Priority Pass just voted it the best airport lounge of 2012.

Y Terminal on the Departures Level; swiss.com.

Travel Business Class

Asia-Europe-Hawaii-S America 60%off International Travel now on Sale
www.businessclasstraveldiscount.com

Virgin Atlantic Flights

Fly Virgin Atlantic w/ Seatback TV 300+ Hours On-demand Entertainment.
www.Virgin-Atlantic.com