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Flight Review: Helsinki to Bangkok in Finnair's New Business Class

June 4, 2013 at 2:06 PM | by [JasonD](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)



We recently [showed](#) you some pictures of the **business class** product **Finnair** is rolling out across its entire fleet of long-haul Airbus planes, and **now we can tell you what it's like to fly it, having spent nearly 24 hours in the cabin on a recent trip to Thailand.**

As it happens, one leg was an overnight and one leg was a day flight, giving us plenty of time to put the product to the test for both sleeping and lounging/working. Flight AY89 left Helsinki Vantaa (HEL) at 5.10pm, arriving at Bangkok Survanabhumi (BKK) at 7.15am the next morning. Flight AY90 left BKK at 8.55am, arriving at HEL at 3.20pm the same day. Naturally, in the name of proper research, we also picked two different seats on opposite sides of the cabin in our quest to find the best seat of all.

We'll break down our experience for you in parts, starting with how we ended up on Finnair, the cabin & first impressions, and which seat you should choose.

Gallery: Onboard Finnair's latest business class



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Why Finnair?

We chose to book on Finnair for a number of reasons, but we'll start with the best one: **business class fares can be an outstanding value.** Our basic requirement was to get from London to Southeast Asia and back, and we wanted to fly business without spending a fortune. We also needed to fly **Oneworld** and gather enough points from the trip to re-qualify for our Emerald status, and a direct trip, even in business, wasn't going to cut it.

We knew Finnair could be good value if originating from continental Europe, and a little bit of research later we had our trip figured out. Bangkok was an easy choice as it was by far the cheapest, and at the moment the route where you are virtually guaranteed the latest business class product. **We paid roughly \$2,000 for an open-jaw return ticket, saving half the cost of flying directly from London, and we've seen fares even lower than that.**

The four legs also got us a total of 380 Tier Points with British Airways' Executive Club, taking us comfortably across the line to another year of top-tier status. As a bonus, we got to try a completely new airline, so what's not to like?



Cabin configuration & first impressions

There are **two different configurations of the Airbus A330-300: one with seven rows of business class, and one with ten.** The first seven rows are always between doors one and two, with a second mini-cabin of three rows in the larger business class set up. On both our legs, we had only seven business class rows, for a total of 35 seats.





The cabin has a funny layout, with five seats abreast alternating between 2-2-1 (A-C-D-H-L) and 1-2-1, in a slightly staggered pattern. This gives almost all seats aisle access, and makes it a relatively easy choice where to sit depending on whether you are traveling alone or with someone else (incidentally, you will find the same product on SWISS).

Compared to British Airways Club World, which we use most frequently, and some of the other newest business class products, the cabin is quite open, with the seat enclosure not reaching above the headrest. This is only the case when fully upright for take-off and landing however; as soon as you recline to lounge, it becomes a much more private pod.

We questioned the color choice when we saw the first images, and while it's sort of Scandinavian in an icy tundra kind of way, overall it's a little hospital green/grey for us. Warmer, deeper, tones would have been more our thing, but then there's no accounting for taste.

Which seat to choose?

We don't necessarily feel that there would be a truly 'bad' seat to choose, but we do have some recommendations. For solo travelers, best options are the 'throne' seats (2A, 4A, 6A - the first picture above) or window seats on the right (2L, 4L, 6L - pictured below).



Uneven numbered 'L' seats (1L, 3L, 5L, 7L) are more exposed to the aisle, and they make it more difficult to look out the window because of the large armrest between the seat and the fuselage. Couples are best served by any of the seat pairs, although we would avoid in all cases row 1 and 7 due to the proximity to the galley and lavatories. We'd also steer clear of the mini-cabin in the second layout given the proximity to the main Economy cabin, the galley providing more of a buffer than just a curtain.

*Stay tuned for a Part 2 on Thursday, where we detail seat comfort, food, in-flight entertainment, and service.

[Photos: JasonD for Jaunted]