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## Finnair Looks To Take Comfort & Cuisine To New Heights

*Airline upgrades Toronto service with wide-body aircraft*

Alison Kent



*Of Finnair: Heidi Ahonen, area vice-president; Anni Väyrynen, flight attendant; Tommi Korhonen, general sales agent & Fredrik Charpenier, sales manager, global sales*

Starting June 1, and with seasonal service offered Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays through Sept. 21, Finnair will operate service on its Toronto to Helsinki route with upgraded and two-class Airbus A330 wide-body aircraft. Flight schedules are timed for smooth transfers and ease of travel, with connections through Helsinki, and onwards to European, Asian, and other Finnair network destinations.

Tommi Korhonen, managing director of Northern Europe Inc. and general sales agent for Finnair, explains "While Finnair has been flying the Toronto to Helsinki route seasonally for 25 years, previously, we had been flying with our narrow-body single-class aircraft."

"The big news that we'd like to get out in the market, and especially to travel agents, is the launch of our upgraded mainstream wide-body aircraft on this route," said Korhonen. "As well, we now have our new Business class level of service on-board, which we haven't had in a number of years."

All A330 aircraft have 229 seats in Economy, plus 42 more in Business class, with both cabin classes featuring improved and complimentary in-flight entertainment, including more than 150 TV shows and 72 movies on demand.

This announcement was shared on Tuesday afternoon in Toronto at 'Cool Nordic' – an event focusing on Nordic cuisine, design and style.

"We are one of the major sponsors for this event," explained Korhonen, "and because of both our upgraded Business class and this new service, we wanted to bring in Juha Stenholm, our head chef of product development, and Finnair flight attendant, Anni Väyrynen today to help highlight and showcase this brand-new food program on-board."



*Juha Stenholm, head chef of product development, Finnair*

On-board, Finnair Business class passengers will experience Signature Menus created by renowned Finnish chefs, Pekka Terävä and Tomi Björck, while at yesterday's Toronto-based event, Stenholm prepared and shared dishes of note, including Terävä's enticing appetizer of cured salmon with scallop pâté, cucumber and marinated white asparagus.



*Anssi Partanen, manager of corporate marketing, Finnair*

According to Anssi Partanen, manager of corporate marketing for Finnair, it was two years ago that Finnair first began dedicating efforts to "bringing the glamour back to travelling by air" with a focus on creating "the best Business class service in the sky."

"With air travel," said Partanen, "there are two questions most often asked. The first is: did you arrive on time? And the second is: what was the food like on-board?"

Finnair aims to exceed customer expectations on both accounts. In terms of the food program, along with this team of celebrated chefs, Business class meals are prepared fresh each day and in many cases, dishes are not plated until on-board.

"When first working with the chefs, we determine what we want passengers to experience and enjoy on the plate," Partanen explained. "We then ask ourselves, how does it look? How does it fit on the tray? How does it fit on the trolleys? What can be heated up on the plane and what can be served successfully? What we've ended up with are these fantastic menus and meal selections."

This unique culinary program not only offers innovative in-flight menu options, it also serves as a way to showcase the local ingredients of Finland.

"Our Signature Menus feature such selections as caramelized pork, slow-cooked veal cheek, cured salmon, yellow curry butternut squash, and asparagus soup with snails," said Partanen. "As our chefs develop these menus they also develop a written element to them, with the stories behind the ingredients included on the menu cards and written by the chefs themselves."



As for that first question most often asked, with 9.2 million passengers transported to more than 60 European and 15 Asian destinations in 2013, Finnair has frequently been recognized for being one of the most punctual airlines, boasting a 99 percent transfer reliability rate.

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