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## 5 Reasons You Will Love Flying Finnair Business Class on the New A350

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A couple of weeks ago I wrote about the newest addition to Finnair's livery – the highly anticipated A350. You can read all about it in my [Finnair A350](#) post, but I'll sum up a few of the more salient points here. The Airbus A350 XWB (extra wide body) is a new family of long-range jets with new designs for both aerodynamics and engines. Only a few airlines have taken delivery of this next generation aircraft, and I was fortunate to snag a seat on Finnair's A350 from New York to Helsinki – a route they only ran for a week or so before returning it to its normal service to Asia. They sponsored my flight as part of my attendance at a conference, but the chance to fly the A350 was just a lucky quirk of fate. There's nothing quite like being on a brand new plane, but even better than that brand new plane smell was the opportunity to try out the newest [Finnair Business Class](#) product. They've made some advancements with the Business Class section on the A350, so I thought I'd devote an entire post just to that special experience.



### **1. Ambience, Mood and Service**

In-cabin mood and ambience is important, and more and more airlines have begun to understand this and to work with plane manufacturers to introduce new concepts and technologies all designed to make the passengers feel more at ease. Finnair is no exception to this, and the first thing passengers will notice is the unique look and feel of the A350 cabin itself. When passengers board the plane, they are greeted by the sight of clouds drifting across a blue sky throughout the cabin. The cabin also has a fresh style that is light, airy and decidedly Nordic. The dynamic ambient mood LED lighting gradually changes to suit the time of day to ease customers into a relaxing flight experience. The lighting can actually create 24 different scenarios, including the Northern Lights. The plane also features large panoramic view windows to allow more natural light into the cabin.

While those features are nice, ultimately when we fly our own personal satisfaction comes down to just a few factors, one of them being service. I can be fairly critical when it comes to in-flight crew, but I could honestly find no faults in the friendly, kind and helpful crew onboard the Finnair A350. When an airline introduces something totally new and different, like the A350, there's bound to be a certain pride amongst all employees, but especially those fortunate enough to work onboard the new planes. This pride was evident with everything I saw in the flight attendants, to quietly brushing off dirt from the brand new seats to making sure that all of the Finnair Business Class customers were well taken care of. During the overnight flight, the meal service was swift, allowing passengers to get some sleep if they wanted. Throughout the night snacks were available in the galley, but flight attendants also came around with snack trays and drinks for some middle of the night refreshment. Likewise, the breakfast service wasn't conducted too early, but with just enough time to eat, clean up and get ready for arrival.



## **2. Full-Flat Bed Seats and Peaceful Relaxation**

If onboard service is one of the most important aspects of any flight, then surely the seats we call home for several hours is the other vital aspect. Given the fact that the A350 is brand new, I expected a lot from the seat onboard and luckily not only were those expectations met, but they were well exceeded.

Because it's an extra wide body, the A350 has more space and wider seats for greater passenger comfort. In the Finnair Business Class, there are 46 seats arranged in a 1-2-1 configuration, which means everyone has direct aisle access, a feature I absolutely love and wish every airline would adopt. The seats themselves are one of the largest Business Class seats I've seen, and extend to long full-flat beds within a few seconds. The space in and around the seat itself also made sense. There were well-placed cubbies and other storage areas where I could conveniently put my amenity kit, headphones, iPad and magazines. Of course the real test came when it was time to sleep, and the combination of the longer bed, the cozy blankets and pillows and the in-cabin ambience all managed to put me to sleep almost right away – an absolute rarity for me when I fly. That ability to relax and sleep comfortably is the most important aspect of any Business Class product and immediately endeared me to the Finnair A350.

Technology also played a role in my comfort. The Finnair A350 is quieter than current-generation planes, up to 20%, and a new air conditioning technology means that there is draft-free air management, adjustable temperature zones and lower cabin altitude which all translate into a more comfortable flying experience.



### 3. Delicious Nordic Inspired Menus

Just like the design, the food is also inspired by Nordic tastes, with some special extras on the A350. The signature menu, which is always changing, comes with its own philosophy that mirrors the ethics and devotion to nature that I found throughout my time in Finland. The goal behind the A350 signature [Finnair Business Class](#) menu is to locally source everything and to ensure that it is fresh, good and pure. Flying from Helsinki, they offer the best that the lakes and forests have to offer, similarly when flying from Asia they take with them the spices and flavors of the region. Add in the Marimekko tableware specifically designed for Finnair, and it's the perfect reflection of Nordic peace and tranquility.

On my flight from New York to Helsinki, I was welcomed onboard with a choice of drink, including a special beverage designed just for the A350 – The Blue Sky. Combining Lapponia Blueberry Liquor and Nicolas Feuillatte Brut Grande Réserve and served in an Ultimata Thule glass (originally created for Finnair's first flight to New York in 1969) it's the perfect relaxed but dignified start to a flight that you'd expect from Finnair. Meal service itself started with a beef yakitori amuse bouche, followed by a salad of baby field greens. Main course offered an option between: pan roasted chicken with leek fondue, grilled beef tenderloin with creamed Yukon potatoes or a rigatoni pasta with red pepper sauce – I went with the beef. A robust cheese course followed and the meal ended with a collection of chocolates and ice cream. I was starving well before I even boarded the flight, so the meal was a perfect and delicious start to my flying experience.



During the night a variety of snacks were offered in the galley for any Finnair Business Class passenger to enjoy, and then a light breakfast was served about an hour before landing. Fresh bagels with (or without) smoked salmon, egg and cream cheese was accompanied by fresh fruit, yogurt and other warm and tasty pastries. Hunger was no longer an issue, and I left the flight that morning in Helsinki full and content.



#### **4. Fantastic Entertainment, Complimentary Wi-Fi and Amenity Kits**

Finnair even redesigned their in-flight entertainment system with high-definition video and 12-inch touchscreens featuring hundreds of movies and TV shows. The A350 also features full Internet access, free of charge to Business Class passengers and making it easy for guests to use their own devices, especially when Bose noise-cancelling headphones are included at each Finnair Business Class seat.

I also love amenity kits, and the new Marimekko amenity kits were a winner for me. Available in three distinctive prints, the long-haul Business Class amenity kits include the normal essentials like eyeshades, earplugs, toothbrush and paste and Clarins moisturizer and lip balm. The Marimekko printed bags look so good though, I kept mine and am using it as a mini-toiletry bag for short trips.



## 5. Lounges and Total Package

Of course the luxury of a great Business Class is best experienced before (or after) the long-haul flight through airline lounges. While flying with Finnair, I had the opportunity to relax in two of their Helsinki lounges, one devoted to long-haul flights and the other to shorter flights in Finland and around Europe. The Schengen Area lounge is large, light and airy, reflecting that unique and unmistakable Finnish sense of design and style. There's everything you'd expect, food, drinks and plenty of space to either get work done or just relax. For me, the most important feature was something I used immediately after my long-haul flight as I waited to connect to my next flight – the showers. It's amazing the curative effect that a simple hot shower can have but it's a luxury that for me transforms my arrival into new countries making me feel alive and awake.

Leaving Helsinki flying back to the U.S., I had the chance to spend some time in their massive, Non-Schengen Area lounge; a true premium lounge if there ever was one. Once again, the colors, use of light and space are all undeniably Finnish and instantly have a calming effect even on the most stressed out traveler. There's plenty of comfortable seating, most of which have their own power outlets – another must-have convenience for modern travelers. Food and drinks are always available, but one of the most unique features is the Finnish sauna, available for any passenger to use. I chuckled when I saw it, but was in no way surprised. The Finns love a good sauna and after spending a couple of weeks in the country, seeing one at the airport made sense even to me.

**Overall**, my [Finnair Business Class](#) experience on the new A350 was as good as I could have hoped for. I never knew I'd be on the A350 until I was actually on it; that's how brief the service to the US was. But I'm thankful that I had the opportunity to try out the latest and greatest product from Finnair and to get a real sense of the company and what it believes as an airline. From service to comfort and food to leaving the airport, flying Finnair Business Class was a luxury and convenience that dramatically improved my own travels around Finland and is easily one of my new favorite Business Class experiences.