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# Airlines phasing out first class

By Chris McGinnis on May 25, 2016 at 6:37 AM



Japan Airlines' spacious leather and wood trimmed first class sanctuary (Photo: JAL)

**Whenever we see news about international first class cabins these days, it's usually that they are being discontinued.** This trend has been going on for at least 20 years, and it shows no signs of slowing down – which makes us wonder: Does international first class have a future?

In recent news:

Cathay Pacific has just decided it **will not put a first class cabin** into its new Airbus A350-900s or the larger A350-1000s it has on order, instead configuring them with business class, premium economy and regular economy seating. News reports cite Cathay executives as saying the airline will still offer first class, **but that the market for it is becoming a “niche segment” that will only allow it to work on key international business routes.** Qatar Airways new A350s have no first class. Singapore Airlines's new A350, which debuted in March, has none, either. Nor does the new Finnair A350.

Lufthansa, which has long been a defender of first class for international routes out of its Frankfurt hub, **doesn't feel the same way about its Munich hub.** This coming winter, it plans to **eliminate it** on many intercontinental A330-300 flights out of Munich, including service to Charlotte, Montreal, Boston, Chicago, New York JFK and Washington Dulles.

Air India earlier this year decided to **get rid of the first class cabin** on the three 777-200LRs that it uses for its new Delhi-San Francisco route. Airline officials told the India Times that **the occupancy rate for seats in the front cabin was only reaching about 25 percent.**

Late last year, Emirates created the world's largest passenger airliner – an Airbus A380 with 615 seats – by eliminating first class and reconfiguring the plane with 58 business class and 557 economy seats. Other A380s in Emirates' large fleet have 489 or 517 seats in three classes.

Delta got rid of international first class a long time ago, and we reported a few months ago that United is gradually following suit, ordering new 787-8s, 787-9s and A350s that have no first class cabins. It also plans to end first class on its existing three-class 767-300s, although it will continue on some 777s and 747s for now. American still has a few first class seats flying around, but will they be pushed out of the sky with it rolls out a new international premium economy seat later this year?



Korean Air's first class cabin was empty on a recent Seoul-Atlanta flight (Photo: Chris McGinnis)

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For the **more analysis** on the first class phase out, or to read the entire story **check in on the [TravelSkills.com](https://www.travelskills.com) blog!**