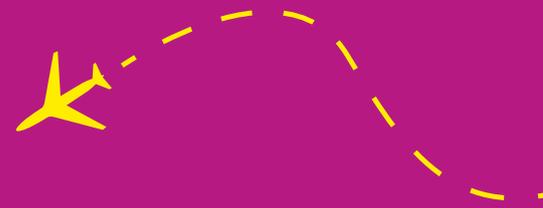




# Bridging heritage and modernity in cabins flying across Asia

World Travel Catering & Onboard Services

**EXPO**



# Introduction

**Asia has solidified its place as the engine of global aviation growth. In 2025, Asia-Pacific airlines transported 390.5 million international passengers – a 9.4% increase year-on-year – outpacing global growth rates<sup>1</sup>. In hubs like Singapore, Tokyo, and Shanghai, the integration of out-of-the-ordinary technology is no longer a vision for the future. It's a routine standard.**

This rapid growth is redrawing the region's aviation map. With Asia's international passenger load factor reaching a record 82.2%, carriers are investing in longer-range aircraft to open previously unreachable direct routes. As a result, airlines that historically didn't widely serve the region are now rapidly expanding their Asian footprints to make the most of this surging demand.

At the same time, this expansion brings new considerations for airlines to top the charts. Health-conscious generations with specific dietary requirements and cultural expectations are filling seats, creating simultaneous pressure on airlines to scale rapidly while delivering next-generation personalisation and experiences. When it comes to comfort and wellbeing, travel has become an experience in itself, not just a means to get from A to B.

It all starts when a passenger clicks 'book'.

Shona Thomson,  
Event Director of World Travel Catering & Onboard Services Expo

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# Catering for Asia's Passengers

## The Active Asian Market

The Asian catering sector is projected to grow at a **CAGR of 6.1% between 2025 and 2032<sup>2</sup>**, driven by a shift toward premiumisation and personalisation.

"The airline catering market in Asia is growing rapidly, driven by rising passenger volumes and evolving expectations," says Robin Padgett, CEO of dnata Catering & Retail. "Airlines are increasingly seeking culturally tailored menus, healthier options, and sustainable practices."

Countries such as **China, India, and Indonesia** are leading this expansion, making Asia the most dynamic region for inflight dining innovation.

**"Catering is more than a functional necessity; it is a brand differentiator. By combining our culinary expertise, technology, experience design and deep knowledge of the aviation industry, SATS is an end-to-end partner who is well-positioned to help airlines reduce complexity, improve efficiency, and enhance brand perception through a seamless food experience."**

Poh Hwee Hian, Senior Vice President, Commercial & Marketing Development at SATS Food Solutions

2. Stellar Market Research, 2025: <https://www.stellarmr.com/report/APAC-In-Flight-Catering-Services-Market/1247>

Geographic positioning proves critical to serving Asian carriers effectively. Industry consensus points toward strategic production sites in Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, and China to optimise supply chain delivery.

- **SATS** demonstrates this approach through its tiered network spanning 33 cities across 10 countries in Asia, enabling support for carriers ranging from full-service carriers (FSC) to low-cost carriers (LCC).
- **Cuisine Solutions** similarly maintains production facilities strategically positioned in the US, France, and Thailand, complemented by a commercial office in the Middle East to increase its airline coverage.

dnata takes a different approach, serving leading Asian carriers across a global network with sites strategically positioned in Australia, Europe, the UK, and the US. “These hubs enable us to deliver culturally tailored meals with consistent quality, leveraging local sourcing and culinary expertise to meet diverse passenger expectations,” Robin Padgett, CEO explains, noting that to ensure freshness, most kitchens are located close to airports, minimising production lead times and delivery distances.

**“Our mission is simple: to guarantee the same exceptional taste and standards across the globe, whether it’s a lamb shank served in Paris, New York, or Bangkok.”**

Gerard Bertholon, Chief Strategy Officer at Cuisine Solutions Inc.

## Heritage meets technological precision

Authenticity has emerged as a non-negotiable passenger expectation, particularly for carriers serving Asian routes as they honour the culinary soul of a region known for demanding perfection on the plate.

With deep Asian culinary heritage and advanced food technology capabilities, SATS delivers authentic flavours in a variety of formats – chilled, frozen and ambient. SATS’ deep understanding of Asian palates, ingredients, and cooking techniques allows us to craft flavours that resonate with the world’s passengers, especially on Asian routes.

For dnata Catering & Retail, regional fluency is the bedrock of the passenger experience. “For us, tailoring menus to reflect regional and cultural tastes is at the heart of how we collaborate with airlines,” they state. This commitment is evident in their specialised work for

Chinese carriers, where chefs have refined dishes like drunken corn-fed chicken and fried barramundi infused with rice wine pickle juice. Beyond flavour, these teams focus on the technical elements required to preserve the tastes and textures of delicate staples for inflight service at 30,000 feet.

**“Our approach starts with understanding the cultural heritage of the traveller. We don’t just serve a meal; we refine and elevate signature dishes so they can be celebrated onboard as a form of storytelling and identity.”**

Robin Padgett, CEO of dnata

Cuisine Solutions mirrors this trend for cultural blend, employing over 61 chefs from more than 20 nationalities to ensure genuine flavour profiles, such as curry bases built from locally sourced spices.

Its expertise in sous vide – vacuum-sealing and precise water-bath cooking – provides a significant operational edge. As Tomu Odawara explains, “Sous vide has many inherent advantages in the process as we can fast-track steps such as marination, which normally take longer periods of time in traditional cooking methods.” This precision ensures that complex, marinated flavours remain strong despite the tests of long-haul catering.

**“Sous vide is a great way to innovate on simple ingredients and bring enhanced texture and flavours from vegetables, legumes, grains... This is not just a trend, it’s a global shift.”**

Tomu Odawara, Cuisine Solutions Director OBS at Cuisine Solutions Inc.

## Addressing dietary evolution and wellness

Health consciousness and special dietary requirements represent tick box areas to immediately create passenger loyalty and commercial opportunity.

dnata observes a shift in passenger demographics: "With more health-conscious generations travelling and greater awareness of allergens and intolerances, we're seeing a significant rise in lifestyle-driven food choices." While Western menus often centre on animal proteins, many Asian traditions provide a natural blueprint for plant-forward dining. dnata's approach includes creating dishes that are naturally gluten-free and introducing vegan options celebrated for their flavour and composition.

**"Airlines are increasingly partnering with local chefs and incorporating plant-based options, which are becoming standard across the industry. There's also a growing interest in diversifying protein sources by introducing locally sourced fish varieties such as barramundi."**

Olivier Boinet, OBS Europe Key Account Manager at Cuisine Solutions Europe

## Guaranteed techniques to win taste buds

To meet these complex demands, industry leaders are shifting toward specialisation:

### Foodcase

Positioning itself as a global outlier, Foodcase offers the only completely allergen-free special meal programme without "may contain" statements. Born from the personal experience of its coeliac founder, the programme provides absolute safety for the most sensitive passengers.

### SATS

Special dietary meals represent a growing focus for SATS. With the Indian diaspora driving significant passenger growth worldwide, demanding for more authentic, satisfying AVML (Asian Vegetarian Meal) options is increasing. SATS is reimagining this category by drawing on diverse culinary expertise and extensive network of kitchens across Asia. AVML entrees are developed at its Bengaluru facility, using locally sourced ingredients and traditional spices to capture the authentic flavours of India.

### dnata Catering & Retail

Focusing on high-altitude texture engineering, dnata has refined the moisture-ratio cooking required for delicate staples. By adjusting the physics of starch at 30,000 feet, they ensure that regional comfort foods – such as bao and congee – retain their authentic feel and do not degrade during the dry-heat regeneration process in aircraft ovens.



## Protein's commercial gains

The definition of a "satisfying" inflight meal is being defined more by the nutrition within rather than the first bite. "One of the most significant trends we observe – not only in Asia but globally – is the strong demand for high-protein meals," says Gérard Bertholon, Chief Strategy Officer at Cuisine Solutions Inc. This demand has spurred the development of high-protein breakfast items like egg bites and egg buns, ensuring wellness is prioritised from the first service of the day.

This shift is also encouraging a move toward regional provenance. Olivier Boinet, OBS Europe Key Account Manager at Cuisine Solutions Europe, shares that airlines are increasingly "diversifying protein sources by introducing locally sourced fish varieties such as barramundi," introducing plant-based options and local sourcing as the new industry standard.

## Digitalising Supply Chains

**"Innovation is not only about cash or money spent in each cabin, it's about creativity, creating touchpoints that give each cabin's service its special and unique moments."**

Foodcase

Behind the shift toward personalised and wellness-focused experiences lies a technological engine. As airlines move away from "one-size-fits-all" service, digital integration has become the essential link between culinary creativity and operational reality.

Technology integration is transforming operational efficiency across the sector. dnata Catering & Retail is integrating AI-driven forecasting tools to better predict demand, optimise inventory, and reduce waste. "Pre-ordering systems are gaining traction in Asia, following success in other markets," they note. "Passenger adoption of pre-selecting meals is growing year on year, and with recent advances in AI, we anticipate this will soon become standard."

Sustainability initiatives are becoming core requirements rather than value-adds. dnata has committed to reducing carbon footprint and waste to landfill by 20%, having already diverted up to 65% of waste globally. Key initiatives include switching to renewable energy sources,

such as installing solar panels at facilities in Singapore and Australia and using biofuels in their UAE-based fleet.

**"Inflight dining is an integral part of the overall flight experience, shaping how passengers feel, remember, and connect with a journey. By translating insights into inflight formats, we help airlines design dynamic meal sequences that enhance comfort, connection, and satisfaction throughout the journey."**

Poh Hwee Hian, Senior Vice President,  
Commercial & Marketing Development at SATS

Looking ahead, the consensus among these companies is that technology will move from behind-the-scenes to the passenger's fingertips:

**"Sustainability and local sourcing have shifted from being a value-add to a core requirement, with provenance becoming increasingly important."**

Robin Padgett, CEO of dnata Catering & Retail

- **Customisation** - Future inflight apps and smart tray tables will allow for real-time meal sequencing and personalised dining windows
- **Retail Evolution** - Low-Cost Carriers are utilising end-to-end digital platforms to manage onboard retail, turning the meal service into a curated, data-driven shopping experience.
- **Visible Sustainability** - Digital menus and entertainment screens will provide real-time transparency, allowing passengers to track the provenance of their ingredients and the carbon-offset impact of their meal choice.
- **Creativity Over Cost** - As Foodcase notes, the ultimate goal of new technology isn't just PAX efficiency; it's about freeing up resources to create "special and unique moments" in every cabin, maintaining the human element of service.

**"We act as a strategic partner by delivering tailored meal solutions that match each airline's specific needs. Through customised recipes and close collaboration with our international teams, we ensure consistent quality and elevate the passenger experience"**

Jérôme Stenger, General Manager Europe & International OBS at Cuisine Solutions Europe

# Amenities

**The amenity kit has come a long way from a drawstring bag of earplugs and a toothbrush. Today it is one of the more deliberate expressions of an airline's identity - a physical object passengers hold, use, and sometimes keep long after landing. In Asia, where service standards are high and details are noticed, keeping an eye on the amenity offering carries commercial revenue opportunity.**

Linstol, which has been supplying the aviation amenities market for over three decades, defines the service: "Amenity kits have become micro-brand experiences. They're no longer just functional items; they're storytelling tools that express national identity, luxury, and sustainability." For Asian carriers, they also represent a growing opportunity for brand collaborations that generate press and strengthen passenger loyalty.

Global Inflight Products, which serves full-service, regional, and low-cost carriers across Asia, takes the view that amenity kits are increasingly used to reinforce "consistency, care, and values rather than serving as standalone giveaways", helping airlines connect better with its passengers.



## The Essentials, Elevated

Functionality remains the foundation when it comes to what's in the kit. Eye masks, socks, dental kits, and skin-care basics continue to anchor the offer across economy and premium economy cabins. But across Asia's increasingly competitive long-haul routes, presentation and material quality now carry far more weight than they once did. As Linstol notes, "even in economy, passengers increasingly expect thoughtful design, premium materials, and subtle branding that reflects the airline's personality."

Business and leisure travellers pull in different directions. Business passengers – the key growing segment on regional Asian routes – tend to want quality, utility, and understated design with practical skincare and minimal fuss. Leisure travellers, particularly the younger demographics now driving Asia's passenger growth, respond better to immersive experience and collectability. Here, items that are photogenic, culturally rooted, or brand-driven perform best. Designing kits that satisfy both without inflating cost requires careful supply chain management. Linstol describes their approach as modular design and smart sourcing – maintaining production scale while introducing distinctive elements through material choices, patterns, or collaborations.



Both suppliers also point to a clear market shift toward gender-neutral products. Global Inflight Products focuses on inclusive formulations suitable for all passengers, while Linstol emphasises that whether a kit is universal or differentiated, it should always feel considered and consistent with the airline's identity.

**"The trend is firmly toward gender-neutral, universally usable products. Passengers across Asia expect amenities that feel inclusive and considered – design that works for everyone without feeling like a compromise."**

Global Inflight Products

## Sustainability with Substance

Nowhere feels the pressure of sustainability felt more heavily than among Asia's major carriers, many of whom have made public ESG commitments that extend to every corner of the cabin.

- **Linstol** uses recycled Social Plastic® sourced through a partnership with Plastic Bank, rPET fabrics, and FSC-certified paper, with end-of-life recyclability built into the design process. The company has also developed Aqua Thread, a performance fibre made from oyster shells. A UN Global Compact signatory with an EcoVadis Gold rating, Linstol works directly with airline partners across the region to deliver measurable outcomes rather than broad environmental claims.
- **Global Inflight Products** follows a similar approach through its Green is Possible platform, using recycled, recyclable, and reduced-plastic materials while communicating impact in specific, verifiable terms – an increasingly important consideration for Asian carriers experiencing tightening regulatory expectations and passenger scrutiny alike.

**"Asian carriers tend to be highly collaborative and design-driven, which can mean a more thorough process, but one that ultimately results in exceptionally refined outcomes aligned with the airline's brand values."**

Linstol



## Reading the Region

Asia has a rich melting pot of culture, giving the amenity sector a design resource few other markets can match. The suppliers working most effectively in the region are the ones treating that as an asset to catch the attention of passengers.

Linstol draws actively on traditions spanning Japanese minimalism, Korean and Chinese skincare rituals, and the artistry embedded in regional craft heritage, translating these into contemporary products that feel genuinely rooted rather than superficially themed. With concept-to-cabin timelines of six to twelve months, and Asian carriers known for being particularly thorough and design-driven in their development process, getting that cultural reading right from the outset is essential.

**“Asia’s rich cultural heritage offers endless inspiration – from the serenity of Japanese minimalism and the artistry of Kazakh design to the mindfulness embedded in Korean and Chinese beauty rituals. We aim to celebrate these traditions respectfully, translating them into modern forms that feel authentic and emotionally resonant for passengers.”**

Linstol

Looking ahead, both suppliers point toward wellbeing as the next major area of development – products that support physical comfort and recovery during the long-haul flights that are becoming increasingly central to Asia’s expanding route network. Global Inflight Products is already developing digital health gadgets, compostable products, and cooling pads designed to ease facial and leg fatigue in flight. Meanwhile, Linstol anticipates kits becoming more personalised and fully circular, with materials designed to re-enter production systems rather than go to landfill.

**“The amenity kit of the future will be smaller, smarter, and more purposeful. We’re already developing products that go beyond comfort – digital health tools, compostable materials, and targeted recovery solutions for the long-haul passenger. The Asian market, with its high expectations and rapid growth, is exactly where we expect these innovations to take hold first.”**

Global Inflight Products

# Closing

Asia's aviation market is growing fast, and passenger expectations are growing at the same rate. The region's carriers are navigating a specific set of pressures: a passenger base that is younger and more health-conscious than a decade ago, cultural expectations that vary significantly across markets, and a competitive environment in which the quality of onboard experience is a genuine factor in how people choose to fly – and more importantly – who with.

What comes through consistently is that those keeping pace with these demands are the ones taking the detail seriously. In catering, that means culinary teams with regional knowledge, cooking techniques adapted for altitude, and supply chains that can handle complex diets and allergens. In amenities, it means material choices, cultural references, and sustainability credentials that hold up to scrutiny rather than box ticking claims.

Across both sectors, the Asia market is rewarding rigour on provenance, environmental impact, and cultural authenticity. The airlines ready to invest in the details will experience a well-timed return on investment as passenger numbers are projected to climb in the region by over 7% in 2026<sup>3</sup>. For those that don't capture the moment, an increasingly observant passenger is unlikely to be lenient when booking their next flight when brand image and product quality drive airline loyalty.

3. IATA Global Outlook for Air Transport, December 2025



# Connecting with the Asian Market at WTCE

For buyers and carriers looking to expand or refine their presence in the Asian market at WTCE, the following 2026 exhibitors offer expertise in regional compliance, cultural authenticity, and high-growth logistics.

## Caterers

- Cuisine Solutions
- Foodcase International
- SATS
- Dnata Catering & Retail

## Brands in the sky

- Farmley
- 4700BC Gourmet Snacks
- Boncafé
- Piccadilly Distilleries

## Amenities

- Linstol
- Formia
- Global Inflight Products
- Procurall Solutions
- MILK
- Buzz

## Supply Chain

- Immfly
- Shenzhen YUTO Packaging Technology

