
Addis still at it

By **Jeremy Clark** on | Catering



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The caterer provides service for high-profile events, including United States Embassy functions and other retail enterprises

[Addis International Catering](#) (AIC) has come a long way since it locked down [KLM Royal Dutch Airlines](#) as its first customer in October 2008. Now, AIC provides service to many airlines touching down at Ethiopia's [Addis Ababa Bole International Airport](#) (ADD), including [Lufthansa](#), [Kenya Airways](#) and [Qatar Airways](#), which has twice granted the unit its top award for service within Africa. With Addis Ababa being headquarters for the African Union Commission and the United Nations in Africa, AIC has also earned the reputation of being the go-to caterer for VIP services in the region.

AIC's inception story is rather unusual. From the beginning, owner Sheik Al Amoudi aimed to provide a top-class facility at Bole International Airport that would rival any others on the continent. To achieve

this, he engaged a group of six experts from the airline catering industry from Sweden and the United Kingdom to design, build and run the business with a focus to deliver excellent cuisine and attract, train and promote a local workforce.

Ethiopia is considered Africa's fastest growing economy and this is reflected in the capital, Addis Ababa. The quality of the foodservice sector in the capital has matched this growth in stride, with food retail, hotel, restaurant and café offerings booming. The foodservice landscape is vastly different today compared to when AIC first set up shop.



Addis International Catering facility

The challenges of building and equipping a catering unit to meet European standards in the early 2000s was a significant task. But the result is a unit that today continues to deliver award-winning cuisine to the highest Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) standard for airlines, schools and events as well as to the domestic retail and foodservice sectors.

“From my colleagues’ comments from that period, it was a considerable achievement by the team in Ethiopia to establish AIC,” Chief Operating Officer Fredrik Heinrici tells *PAX International*. Heinrici joined the company in November 2019. “Thankfully with that support we were not only able to deliver the unit to that high specification but have maintained and improved it since.”



Fredrik Heinrici, Chief Operating Officer, Addis International Catering

Today, the caterer employs more than 300 staff and caters special occasions, such as United States Embassy events, official VIP meetings and retail enterprises. It holds contracts to cater a number of the capital's top international schools, some with upwards of 1,000 pupils.

"The future for AIC is very positive as it maintains its reputation for quality and food safety in this ever more demanding, growing market," says Heinrici. "Flexibility and adaptation will be the key ingredients for success, something [we] have already demonstrated an ability to deliver more than adequately."

In terms of expansion plans and capabilities, Heinrici says the caterer has an ongoing and dynamic program to build the quality, food safety guarantees and volume capacity into the domestic food service, contract and retail sectors, as well as planned expansion for event catering.

"The possibility for new carriers and routes is guaranteed. We already serve the world's top-quality carriers and are ready and prepared to address the needs of any new services to Addis," Heinrici says.