
Taste of Travel 2019 set to tackle hot topics

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Sustainability is one of the world's hot topics, with consumers changing their purchasing decisions in order to reduce their impact on the environment. In the aviation industry, [Emirates](#) alone serves more than 180,000 meals every day and, together, the world's leading carriers will create 10 million tonnes of waste annually from leftovers and packaging by 2030, according to [IATA](#).

To help airlines, rail operators and cruise lines identify innovative products and services that will reduce their impact on the environment, this year's World Travel Catering & Onboard Services Expo's (WTCE) Taste of Travel program will have a focus on sustainability when it returns to Hamburg in April.

The program will offer three days of free-to-attend educational content including up-to-the-minute insights, live chef demonstrations and new product launches, bringing innovation and inspiration to visiting onboard professionals. It forms a key part of this year's [Passenger Experience Week](#) that provides a unique opportunity for the aviation, rail and cruise sectors to improve the experience they offer their customers.

The Taste of Travel Theatre will feature a stellar line-up of expert speakers, complemented by networking and product sampling across all three days. And as well as focusing on sustainability, sessions will delve into the growing trend for personalization, pre-ordering and dining on demand, while the spotlight will also be put on how Gen Y and Z eat and, of course, the latest food trends.

The importance of sustainability

From April 2 until 4, four Taste of Travel sessions will cover sustainability, ensuring that attendees are fully up-to-speed on best practices and innovative, environmentally friendly forms of packaging.

Matt Rance of MNH Sustainable Cabin Services will take to the stage to lead a debate on "Sustainable Thinking," which will look at how suppliers and airlines can better work together to provide a cradle-to-grave approach for onboard products. He will be joined by a panel including Gail Yates, Head of Inflight Services at Virgin Atlantic; Bill Carrejo, Director, Sales and Sustainability at Linstol; and Leonard Hamersfeld, Director & Founder of Buzz Products.

Also including sustainability in his *Onboard Innovations* session will be airline trends specialist Raymond Kollau. He will reveal exclusive intel on trends, themes and developments in inflight passenger experience, with a particular focus on hospitality.

The drive to reduce plastic packaging is well known and two sessions titled Best Sustainable Packaging and Less Plastic in the Air are expected to be hugely popular. The former invites five exhibitors to give a quick-fire pitch on the environmental credentials of their packaging, while the latter will take a closer look at the challenges of product pack formats in the aviation sector. An expert panel, chaired by Editor of Packaging News Phil Chadwick, will comprise Vassilios Georgakopoulos, Director of Product Innovation & Concepts for LSG Group, and Martin Kersh, Executive Director of the Food Service Packaging Organisation, who will debate this topical issue.

Appealing to the next generation

Today's travelers expect onboard services to match their wants and needs, and operators that can perfect the art of personalising services will score points. The "Dine on Demand" session, led by Werner Kimmeringer and Craig Devoy of Yates+Partners, will highlight the challenges of introducing onboard, restaurant-style dining, and provide menu samples from the premium cabin.

Meanwhile, Mariette Abrahams – who heads up a team of nutrition and social media experts, researchers, data scientists, business analysts and app developers at Personalise Me! – will lead a lively, interactive session to analyse and discuss how consumers are using technology to personalize their food, health, travel and lifestyle using real-time data. will lead a lively, interactive session to analyse and discuss how consumers are using technology to personalize their food, health, travel and lifestyle using real-time data.

Nodding to the key current trend for pre-ordering your inflight meals, Delta Airlines' executive chef Christian Hallowell will host "Pre-Ordering – Passengers Know What They Want" to explore the increasing demand for this service. He'll also be cooking up some flavorful onboard selections. And later, "How Gen Y and Z Eat," presented by Ariane Van Mancius of Now/New/Next, will offer an insight into the new rules of social media.

Other highlights

Other not-to-be-missed sessions include: "Best Breakfast," where five exhibitors will be invited to give a quick-fire pitch on why their items should be stocked onboard; and "Gut Health," led by Martin Ward, culinary consultant, who will present a selection of meat-free, gluten-free and allergy-friendly meals suitable for free-from and gut-health aware passengers.

Meanwhile, Fine Dining on the Rails will take visitors through Great Western Railway's latest Pullman fine dining concept. There will be plenty of sampling to get a taste of the newest products on the market, with free-from examples to showcase the answer to gluten, wheat, dairy, eggs and nut intolerances. Czech Railways will also demonstrate its latest dining concepts in co-operation with JVL Catering.

Archana Sharma, WTCE Exhibition Director, said in a statement: "We're proud to be presenting such a fabulous line-up of speakers this year. It's never been more important for operators to understand what makes customers tick and what it will take to ensure they feel they have received the very best in onboard services that match their needs and, increasingly, their values."