

Fiji Airways takes inflight dining to new heights



[Fiji Airways](#) has launched its inaugural inflight Business Class menu from multi-award-winning Kiwi-Fijian Chef Richard Cross.

Available onboard all Fiji Airways international flights, the debut Business Class menu offers fine-dining at 35,000 feet and includes signature dishes such as kava and cinnamon ice cream, and dehydrated vegetable garnishes. A refreshed menu cycle will launch every quarter with molecular gastronomy and house-smoked produce set to feature on upcoming menus.

Business Class passengers can enjoy gourmet meals such as grilled tiger prawn cutlets with sriracha mayo and crispy noodles on a caramelized pineapple bed, grilled aged tenderloin in a creamy peppercorn sauce and mashed potato, herb-crusted chicken breast stuffed with feta and creamy spinach, mash potato, broccoli and grilled carrot ribbonettes.

A highlight of the inflight dessert menu includes the signature kava and cinnamon ice cream, as well as cookies and cream banoffee parfait, and bittersweet chocolate panna cotta.

Showcasing indigenous vegetables in a new light, modern cooking and preservation techniques have been used to transform the likes of cassava, sweet potato (yellow kumala), dalo and plantain banana into edible garnishes you'd expect to enjoy in a fine-dining restaurant.

Cross will also be introducing house-smoked local produce as a regular feature on the airline's Business Class menu, including smoked walu fish and smoked beef tenderloin.

To elevate the Business Class experience, passengers will be treated to dessert and salad dishes in bowls resembling a tanoa, traditionally used to prepare the ritual drink of kava. Fiji Airways uses eco-

friendly "Food For Thought" packaging, reads the April 20 press release. It is used particularly in Economy Class, which will save up to half a million liters of water per year and will remove up to two tons of plastics annually from onboard.

"Airline catering has its challenges but I'm looking to change that. My vision is to use cooking and presentation techniques like dehydrated vegetable garnishes, molecular gastronomy, and house-smoked produce that you would expect to see in fine dining restaurants and serve them 35,000 feet in the air," said Cross.

The press release said Cross has big ambitions for the airline.

"I like to stay ahead of the curve and experiment with new ideas, so I am really excited to be able to implement a range of innovative techniques across our Business Class service," said Cross.

Cross' inspiration derives from his 28 years of experience as Executive Chef at various international luxury resorts and his wealth of travel across America, Europe, the Maldives and Australia. After living in Fiji for over nine years, Cross likes to champion local Fijian ingredients in creative ways and also draws on his Kiwi heritage with the inclusion of ingredients such as lamb and seafood, as well as inspiration from the classic Kiwi BBQ.

"Chef Cross and his team have created an inflight dining experience for our Business Class guests that is equal parts phenomenal and uniquely Fijian. Our new menu is one of the dozens of ways we plan to wow our guests when we welcome them home to Fiji -- our returning flyers will love the fresh additions and new guests will certainly get the taste of Fiji they're looking for," said Andre Viljoen, Fiji Airways Managing Director and CEO.

Cross runs regular workshops in the airline's Aviation Academy in Nadi, Fiji, providing hands-on training for the crew to ensure they can confidently execute the new techniques. He is also working directly with the crew onboard, to guarantee the finest quality is executed across all flights.

Cross was appointed Executive Chef of Fiji Airways in December 2021 to oversee all catering functions of the airline. Cross' previous roles include Executive Chef at luxury resorts such as JA Resorts & Hotels in the Maldives, Sheraton Hong Kong, Vomo Island Resort, Radisson Blu Resort and Mana Island Resort in Fiji, Millbrook Resort Queenstown New Zealand, amongst others.