gategroup and Lufthansa on how FOX First Class dining concept took shape



The Lufthansa FOX menu gives passengers a choice between a signature main and a selection of smaller plates

Lufthansa launched its long-haul service concept FOX (Future Onboard Experience) across all cabin classes this May, marking one of the largest investments in onboard service in the airline's history.

Developed over two years, the concept spans First, Business, Premium Economy and Economy Class, with a focus on personalization, comfort and Signature Moments designed to create a more distinctive onboard experience.

gategroup worked with Lufthansa's culinary, product and inflight services teams to develop the airline's long-haul dining offering, with a particular focus on First Class. Over the past year, culinary workshops, tastings and operational planning helped shape the menu and how it would be served onboard.

Shaping the first Class Menu

In a November interview with *PAX International*, Lufthansa and gategroup revealed what went into the First Class dining concept. gategroup says Lufthansa's passenger feedback and the caterer's own analysis point to a shift in what passengers expect. Alongside premium ingredients and formal

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service, passengers look for the freshness, precision, personalization and the flexibility found in restaurant dining.

“We designed the Lufthansa First Class dining concept around the idea that true luxury means giving passengers the freedom to choose how they want to enjoy their meal,” says Christoph Brandstaetter, Executive Chef – Europe at gategroup.

Lufthansa and gategroup developed the menu with Christoph Kunz of KOMU in Munich, Germany. Kunz brought his restaurant experience, Lufthansa drew on feedback from its First Class passengers, while gategroup’s culinary team, including Executive Chefs Brandstaetter and Max Herzog, adapted the menu for onboard service.



Christoph Brandstaetter, Executive Chef – Europe, gategroup

Signature main or tasting menu
The cuisine draws on classic fine dining techniques and subtle global influences. Each dish uses a few core ingredients to create concentrated flavors, with a restrained presentation.

Passengers will receive a curated sequence of smaller courses, including a trilogy of amuse-bouche, starter and dessert. For the main course, passengers can choose between a signature dish or a selection of smaller portions, a concept designed to feel both premium and surprising, while offering greater flexibility and refinement.

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The smaller courses allow passengers to explore flavors and enjoy a more relaxed, restaurant-style dining experience at their own pace. At the same time, the choice between a single main course and a tasting menu caters to different preferences, appetites and occasions, whether a passenger wants to enjoy one dish or experience a broader culinary journey.

“What was particularly important to us was to ensure that this flexibilility never comes at the expense of the First Class experience. Every option has been developed with the same focus on ingredient quality, culinary craftsmanship, presentation and attention to detail,” says Brandstaetter.



Passengers can enjoy a sequence of smaller courses with a choice of a signature main dish or tasting menu for a flexible, restaurant-style dining experience onboard

Making fine dining work onboard

“A guest chef needs to understand not only how to create an outstanding restaurant dish, but also how to translate that vision into a concept that works consistently in an airline environment. This means taking production processes, logistics, reheating, presentation and onboard service into account from the very beginning, without compromising the original culinary ambition,” Brandstaetter explains.

He says Lufthansa wanted the menu to reflect its German identity through local and regional ingredients while appealing to an international First Class audience.

“Ultimately, the goal is not simply to serve a chef’s cuisine on an aircraft, but to create a culinary experience that passengers recognize as distinctly Lufthansa,” says Olaf Mauthe, Head of Inflight Services at Lufthansa.

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Olaf Mauthe, Head of Inflight Services at Lufthansa

Building on the Business Class partnership
Looking ahead to 2027, gategroup says it plans to build on its partnership with Chef Johann Lafer for Lufthansa's Business Class FOX experience.

"Together with Johann Lafer and Lufthansa, we place great importance on selecting partners who meet our high standards for both product quality and reliability. This strong foundation allows us to create distinctive culinary experiences that bring a touch of German culinary excellence on board," says Brandstaetter.

gategroup's Herman Anbeek, President Europe, says several other projects are also in development.

"We continue to see strong demand from airline partners for long-term culinary collaborations that combine distinctive chef-driven concepts with consistent onboard execution," says Anbeek. "That remains a key area of focus for us as we look toward 2027 and beyond."

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Herman Anbeek, President Europe, gategroup

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