

Emirates develops plant-powered dishes to meet increasing demand



Emirates' vegan cuisine in the sky, zucchini tart

[Emirates](#) has confirmed new concepts are in development to celebrate real, whole and farm-to-fork plant foods. The current development project sees a team of chefs create dishes that feel authentic, vibrant and rooted in culinary tradition, without replacing typical proteins with engineered plant-based meats and substitutes. The new dishes are set to be onboard for passengers in 2027.

Emirates Vice President of Food & Beverage Design, Doxis Bekris, said, "Our focus now is on legumes, grains, nuts, seeds and seasonal vegetables as the heroes of the plate. These ingredients offer natural depth of flavour, texture, and nutrition without relying on ultra-processed alternatives. Instead of replicating meat, we want to draw from cuisines that have always been plant-forward like Mediterranean mezze, Levantine grain salads, Asian noodle bowls, and African stews. In our view this approach feels genuine and culturally rich.

"Although there are many commendable lab-based alternatives available, real food aligns with our sustainability goals and guest expectations for health-conscious choices. It's about transparency for our customers who want to know what they're eating, as well as have confidence that it's good for them and the planet. We want to shift from substitutes to a celebration of plants, where it's not about what's missing - but instead what is gained in authenticity, flavour, and creativity."

Emirates serves half a million vegan meals each year

Emirates now has 488 vegan recipes in rotation across 140 destinations, representing a 60 percent increase in total recipes from 2024 and showing dedication to vegan customers.

Emirates currently serves half a million vegan meals each year. Vegan meal consumption grows in line with passenger volume increases, and last year the top destinations with passengers ordering vegan meals were London in first place, followed by Sydney, Bangkok, Melbourne, Frankfurt, Manchester, Mumbai, Bali and Singapore. Emirates attributes some of the demand to non-vegan passengers who opt for vegan cuisine when flying, as a lighter option, often considered easier to digest.

Vegan options are available to order and pre-order onboard, as well as in Emirates Lounges. Passengers can request vegan meals on all Emirates flights and across all classes of travel up to 24 hours before departure. However, on high-demand routes, plant-based meals are also provided as part of the main menu options.

Vegan cuisine in every class

Highlighting its commitment to culinary excellence for all customers, Emirates offers vegan meals across all classes, as well as complementary products like vegan milk. Supporting the farm-to-fork philosophy, Emirates incorporates fresh produce from Bustanica - the world's largest hydroponic vertical farm. The farm is a joint venture with Emirates Flight Catering that delivers pesticide and chemical-free leafy greens like lettuce, arugula, mixed salad greens and spinach, directly to Emirates' catering facilities.

In Economy class, Emirates passengers can enjoy dishes like pumpkin frittata with sautéed mushrooms and tomato concassé, or spinach cannelloni served with tomato basil sauce, toasted crumbs and parsley, and desserts like vegan chocolate mousse cake drizzled in chocolate sauce and biscuit crumbs, or carrot cake dashed with coconut cream.

In Premium Economy, passengers choosing vegan cuisine will be served dishes like kimchi fried rice served with roasted pumpkin and sautéed oyster mushrooms, followed by desserts like coconut cake with pineapple compote and pistachios.

In Business Class, a range of creatively curated dishes are offered, including braised mushrooms with vegetables in five-spice soy sauce, served with steamed jasmine rice and blanched pak choi. Passengers who have room for dessert can feast on coconut panna cotta with raspberry mousse with fresh berries or chocolate tofu cheesecake.

In First Class, passengers will be treated to elevated vegan cuisine like pumpkin and barley risotto served with rocket, caramelized walnuts, vinaigrette and vegan cheese. Dishes offering a burst of flavours include quinoa salad with grilled aubergine, courgette, sautéed swiss chard and red pepper coulis.

Desserts include strawberry tart with vanilla custard and pistachios, served with berry compote, or a tempting sticky date pudding served with salted caramel sauce, vegan cream cheese, candied pecans and almond butter.

Crafted vegan options in Emirates' Lounges Dubai

At Dubai International Airport, Emirates has seven lounges located in its flagship Terminal 3 - three for First Class and three for Business Class travelers, as well as the Emirates' Lounge catering to all premium passengers.

The lounges offer a wide array of vegan options, from Baharat and turmeric-spiced kofta in coconut gravy at the buffet area, to an à la carte breakfast of warm amaranth porridge with compressed green

apples, red grapes, raspberries and walnuts in the First Class Lounge, amongst many others.

In addition to an array of popular vegan salads, the most in-demand vegan dish in the lounges is the Emirates Green Burger – a soya and flaxseed green burger, with a signature sauce and pickled cucumbers.