

PAX Perspective Airline Review: Cathay Pacific Premium Economy extra-long-haul

In this PAX perspective airline review, *PAX International* Managing Editor Jane Hobson takes you along on a [Cathay Pacific](#) roundtrip journey from Toronto Pearson ([YYZ](#)) to Hong Kong ([HKG](#)) in Premium Economy.



The outbound flight: I flew Cathay Pacific flight CX805 from Toronto to Hong Kong in Premium Economy on the A350-1000. Flight time: about 16 hours.

Check-in: I checked in through the Cathay Pacific iOS app 48 hours before departure and retrieved my boarding pass with no fuss. Once at Terminal 3, I checked my bag and breezed through customs and security. A promising start to a very long travel day.

Boarding: Premium Economy passengers board ahead of the general cabin, and that distinction makes the experience feel elevated from the first moment. Crew were warm and genuinely welcoming, calmly guiding everyone to their seats. Upon seating, crew served hot towels and welcome drinks. Choices: juice or sparkling wine. I never turn down bubbles at altitude.



Crew delivered welcome drinks with enthusiasm and welcoming smiles

Seating and interior configuration: The A350-1000 operates this flight with a 32-seat Premium Economy cabin (Business: 46. Economy: 256). It is the smallest cabin onboard and feels exclusive and spacious.

Note: This route is also operated by the 777-300ER, which features some upgrades such as privacy wings, 4K screens with Bluetooth audio and complimentary Wi-Fi for Cathay members (expected by the end of the year). This review focuses on the A350-1000.

The Premium Economy cabin features a two-four-two configuration. This means you only ever really disturb one seatmate when accessing the aisle.

The seats are 18 inches wide with a generous 40-inch pitch and 9 inches of recline. Leg, calf and foot rest extends from seat, allowing several possible lounging positions. Adjustments are made on the

buttons at the armrest. My personal space felt genuinely roomy. On a flight of this length, that makes a remarkable difference.

The seats could use a more modern look, but they deliver on comfort. Premium Economy here hits the sweet spot between elevated experience and reasonable price.

Overhead bins were surprisingly spacious. With only 32 seats in the cabin, passengers had ample room for both carry-ons and personal items, leaving clear floor space around seats that made the cabin feel even more open.

The dedicated Premium Economy lavatory was another welcome perk. No long lines to wait in.



Prosecco welcome drink

Inflight entertainment and connectivity: The 12-inch HD seatback screens looked modern and responded quickly. Brightness and volume controls were straightforward.

Headphones were provided and comfortable enough for a long flight. I rotated between my wireless headphones, earbuds and the provided pair. My ears were tired by the end, but the noise isolation from the provided set was impressive.

There was a decent mix of new releases, international films and classics. I watched “Freakier Friday,” “Crazy Rich Asians” and “The Proposal,” fully leaning into my comfort-movie era. I also explored the music library and fell asleep to soft piano tracks. A small luxury. Seatback remotes made it easy to adjust content without sitting up.

Connectivity was limited on this particular aircraft. Here is the Wi-Fi breakdown:

- Business or First class passengers (and eligible Cathay members) receive complimentary Wi-Fi.₃

- Premium Economy passengers can purchase Wi-Fi for USD 24.95 for the full flight or USD 9.95 for one hour.

I chose the full flight package. Messaging worked with mild delays, but photos were nearly impossible to send and receive. Social apps like LinkedIn, Instagram and TikTok worked inconsistently or not at all. Knowing this, I skipped the purchase on the return flight (more on that below).

I look forward to trying the 777-300ER Premium Economy with complimentary Wi-Fi for Cathay members.



Crew delivered hot towels once passengers were seated in Premium Economy

Power outlets and charging: Each seat has AC and USB charging ports, though they are tucked in near the armrest area and not particularly conveniently located. Between headphone cords, device cables and the seatback remote, things were a bit... tangled to say the least. But all my devices charged, which is what matters most on a 16-hour flight.

Food and beverage: The first drinks and snack service came shortly after reaching cruising altitude. I chose a cola and flavored almonds. Crew passed through often with full-sized water bottles, which felt rare and very appreciated.

Meal service followed a couple of hours later. Presentation was clean, bright and simple on white tableware and a black non-slip tray with silver cutlery. I preordered the vegan/vegetarian special

meal. The first entrée, a potato and vegetable dish, was bland and needed seasoning. The fresh fruit and salad were the highlights.

The second meal, described as pasta, was more like noodles with tomato sauce and did not leave much of an impression.

As a lacto-ovo vegetarian, I relied heavily on the galley snacks: popcorn, a noodle cup, a granola bar and gummy candies (which were vegan, gluten-free and free of the top 14 allergens, which earned extra points in my book). Crew repeatedly encouraged passengers to help themselves to these snacks, which created a relaxed, gracious environment.



A view of the seatback screen and first meal

Amenities and comfort products: The amenity kit included a toothbrush, toothpaste, earbuds, an eye mask and socks. Identical to the kits I have collected from previous Premium Economy flights. A refreshed design or a small skincare product like lip balm or hand cream would elevate the offering.

The return flight: I flew back on the A350-1000 and boarded CX826 from HKG to YYZ. Flight time: about 15 hours.

Boarding: The boarding process mirrored the outbound. I settled into seat 30D, received a hot towel and enjoyed a welcome juice.

Seating and interior configuration: The layout was identical, but this time I was in an aisle seat near the lavatory. That meant easy movement, frequent stretching and quick access to the galley snacks, which I certainly took advantage of.

Inflight entertainment and connectivity: I skipped Wi-Fi this time and embraced a more analog flight experience with my book, music and a couple of movies. The inflight entertainment lineup felt less exciting on the way back—after nearly 16 hours on the way there, I had already watched my favorites.

Food and beverage: The vegan/vegetarian meal again missed the mark, but I made sure to request ice cream in advance. The crew kindly saved a Häagen-Dazs Cookies & Matcha Green Tea Limited Edition cup for me. It was delightful and a subtle nod to regional flavor.

The PAX Perspective: Cathay Pacific Premium Economy turns an extra-long-haul into something far more enjoyable than expected. The extended leg, calf and foot rest, generous space and attentive service make this cabin an excellent choice. Crew consistently delivered warm, genuine hospitality that defined the experience. We highly recommend Cathay Pacific's Premium Economy experience for your next extra-long-haul adventure.



Häagen-Dazs Cookies & Matcha Green Tea Limited Edition ice cream cup