

PAX Perspective Airline Review: Porter Airlines long-haul

In this PAX Perspective Airline Review, *PAX International* Editor Jane Hobson evaluates a [Porter Airlines](#) roundtrip flight from Toronto Pearson ([YYZ](#)) to Los Angeles ([LAX](#)) in PorterClassic.



The outbound flight: I flew Porter Airlines flight PD663 from Toronto Pearson to Los Angeles on Saturday, October 26 at 9:40 a.m. in PorterClassic (Economy) on the E195-E2.

Check-in: Via the Porter Airlines iOS mobile app, I was able to fully complete the check-in process before even arriving at the airport. I had some additional boxes to check in when I arrived at Terminal 3, which was easy to do with the help of the person at the check-in counter. I was through customs and security in no time, relaxing with a coffee near the gate.

Boarding: Porter's boarding process is typical and easy: Passengers with disabilities board first, followed by unaccompanied minors, families travelling with young children, VIPorter loyalty members (that's me!), PorterReserve passengers (this is similar to Premium Economy) and then general boarding.



PAX International Managing Editor Jane Hobson flew with Porter Airlines from Toronto Pearson Airport to Los Angeles Airport

Seating and interior configuration: This flight is operated by an E195-E2 twin jet, in a two-by-two configuration in both PorterClassic and PorterReserve. The aircraft has 16 PorterReserve, 20 PorterClassic Stretch (extra 34 inches of legroom and up to four additional inches of recline) and 96 PorterClassic seats.

The two-by-two configuration is just one of the many ways Porter truly elevates the Economy air travel experience. I was in seat 11B, an aisle seat which I prefer when travelling alone.

As a VIPorter member, I am able to specify my seating preference in my online profile for free, which means I'm most likely to be assigned an aisle seat even when I do not select the seat myself. For a flight just more than five hours, an aisle seat means I can get up for a walk, use the lavatory, stretch and just generally move about freely without disturbing anyone. For those that prefer a window seat, Porter is an excellent option for you as you will never be squished in beside people.

There are two lavatories onboard, one at the front and one at the rear of the aircraft.



Enjoying snacks, white wine and free inflight connectivity onboard Porter Airlines

Inflight entertainment & connectivity: I have been flying with Porter for several years now. It is the perfect airline for flights home to Ottawa and Montreal from my base in Toronto, Canada because I can fly directly from our city airport, Billy Bishop (YTZ).

But flying this long-haul flight with Porter out of Pearson was especially exciting because it has something the De Havilland Dash 8-400s out of YTZ do not offer: Complimentary gate-to-gate connectivity. Free, fast, reliable inflight Wi-Fi is offered in partnership with [Viasat](#) and is genuinely the best inflight Wi-Fi experience I have ever had.

You can connect as many personal electronic devices (PEDs) as you want, with fast, reliable connectivity, just like at home or at the office. This not only makes Porter great for business travellers, but for literally anyone. You can work, stream a show, scroll Instagram and message at the same time, flawlessly. Absolutely no stress about being disconnected through the flight.

From the time I boarded the aircraft at the gate, I connected in just a few easy steps:

1. Put phone and laptop in airplane mode
2. Enabled Wi-Fi, selected Porter Wi-Fi from the available networks

3. The connection portal auto populated; I selected the uninterrupted Wi-Fi for the entire flight option by logging into my VIPorter account (you have the option to create your account here, otherwise you can watch a sponsored ad and get 30 minutes of Wi-Fi—but either way, it is free for everyone).

4. Connected!

Connecting to Porter free inflight Wi-Fi in less than 30 seconds

In a conversation about a year ago, Porter Airlines President Kevin Jackson told *PAX International* that Porter may roll out Wi-Fi across the airline's fleet of Dash 8s in the future, but it all comes back to the passenger experience.

"We'd like to, but we need to find the right technology. It has got to be fast, free streaming for all passengers. We are very thoughtful about every decision we make," he explained.

Power outlets & charging: I was really pleased to find 110-volt connection charging port on the flight for laptops as well as USB charging ports. Charging devices inflight becomes even more important to me when I am actively using my phone, laptop and AirPods throughout the whole flight.

Food and beverage: Inflight service started once the seatbelt signs were turned off after take-off. Porter Airlines is known for its refined inflight experience that always includes complimentary premium snacks along with free beer, wine and soft drinks served in glassware for all passengers. You read that correctly—free, glassware, for everyone.

"We introduced certain things to regional flying, like complimentary snacks and beer and wine served in glassware, that were practically unheard of 17 years ago. It is the foundation of our distinct onboard service," Edmond Eldebs, Senior Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer at Porter Airlines, tells *PAX International*.

Utilizing Canadian brands whenever possible, partnerships are built on shared values such as local sourcing, quality ingredients and sustainability. "Our food and beverage partners are deeply passionate about their craft, and have strong relationships within their communities," says Eldebs.

Free drinks in PorterClassic include Mr. Porter Coffee Blend from Café Saint-Henri in Montreal, tea from Sloane Fine Tea Merchants based in Toronto, Pinot Grigio and red Cabernet Sauvignon wine from Jackson-Triggs in Ontario's renowned Niagara Peninsula wine country and Moosehead Canadian lager and Cracked Canoe ultra premium light lager, from New Brunswick in eastern Canada.



PAX Business Editor Robynne Trueman enjoyed red wine and shortbread inflight

Paid drinks (free for PorterReserve passengers) include premium pre-mixed cocktails, such as an Old Fashioned, Espresso Martini, and Margarita from Tumbler & Rocks based in Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta. Passengers can also enjoy the “Fiery Ginger” organic wellness shot from Greenhouse, a Toronto-based juice company.

Complementary snacks for all passengers include All Natural Kettle Cooked Chips from Hardbite in

Surrey, British Columbia on Canada's west coast, Milk Chocolate Shortbread by Cookie It Up in Aurora, Ontario, Zesty Cheddar Roasted Fava Beans from Three Farmers in Saskatoon and Olio d'Oliva and Tamari Almonds from naturSource in Saint-Laurent, Quebec.

Fresh food options are available on flights more than 2.5 hours—free for PorterReserve passengers, and a la carte for PorterClassic passengers.

I enjoyed the Pinot Grigio, Tamari Almonds and Shortbread cookie while streaming Gilmore Girls. A truly relaxing experience—and the inflight crew are always so generous with the refreshments!

Amenities & comfort products: Porter does not offer any amenities and comfort products—but I do not feel like this contributed anything negative to my flight experience at all. As I said above, food, drink and inflight Wi-Fi are complimentary, so I was very content. Anyhow, this is typical for Economy products running medium- to long-haul flights

The PAX Perspective: It was a very enjoyable flight. Whether it is short- or long-haul, I fly Economy Class more often than not but flying Porter's Economy product barely feels like Economy.



PAX Managing Editor Jane Hobson (left) and Business Editor Robynne Trueman onboard Porter Airlines

The return flight: I flew Porter Airlines flight PD664 from Los Angeles (LAX) to Toronto Pearson (YYZ) on Thursday, October 31 at 1:15 p.m. in PorterClassic on the E195-E2.

Check-in: Getting through LAX is always a bit different from Pearson for a couple of reasons, the main one being that it is a larger, busier airport. To no fault of Porter, the computer system was down that morning for about 30 to 45 minutes, so I was delayed checking in at the gate. Nevertheless, I checked my bag, made it through security and grabbed a coffee with time to spare.

Boarding: The boarding process was the same as the outbound flight. It was efficient and I was

tucked into seat 9A in no time.

Seating and interior configuration: Operated again by an E195-E2, the configuration was the exact same as the outbound flight. 9A is a window seat, but I was seated next to our *PAX Tech* Business Editor Robynne Trueman, so I was completely okay with it. In fact, it was really nice to have the experience of travelling with someone. The seats are spacious and comfortable, and Robynne and I chatted over a glass of wine, some coffee and snacks. It feels a lot more like a chic, private coffee date than an Economy flight.



The window view on the autumn flight home from LAX

Inflight entertainment & connectivity: Again, the Wi-Fi was a seamless gate-to-gate connection, so we worked a bit on the way home, watched shows and scrolled socials.

Food and beverage: After a week of successful conferencing in Long Beach, the flight was a much-needed opportunity to relax. Enjoying food and beverage inflight definitely contributed to this feeling, with the crew eager to make us feel at home and well taken care of.

The PAX Perspective: Porter Airlines just gets it. We highly recommend Porter for its seamless blend of comfort, care and thoughtful details. From the enthusiastic crew to free inflight Wi-Fi and free treats, Porter is, in my opinion, one of the best airlines to “actually enjoy Economy.”

The ethos of the airline is to make all passengers feel valued, at ease and looked after. It is clear that PorterClassic Economy is not just about getting from point A to B—it is about ensuring every step of the journey feels special. We trust Porter to deliver this experience each and every time we fly the product—and we cannot wait to do it again soon.