

On location: Porter previews E195-E2 economy experience



One of Porter Airline's Embraer 195-E2 fleet

[Porter Airlines](#) operated its first Embraer 195-E2 preview flight today from Skycharter at Toronto Pearson Airport. *PAX International* was onboard and got a sneak peek into the airline's new premium economy experience, PorterReserve. From roomier seats to fast, streaming wifi from [Viasat](#), the redefined economy experience builds on familiarity while introducing elements that elevate the passenger experience.



Porter Airlines VP and CCO Kevin Jackson

“The core onboard experience is exactly the same.” VP and CCO Kevin Jackson tells *PAX International*. “You’re not going to come on board and feel like there’s a brand disconnect. It’s exactly what you expect from Porter, which a few extra things added.”



Porter Airlines President and CEO Michael Deluce

“The pandemic put things on pause, but the pandemic also created a lot of opportunities to acquire a significant number of aircraft. We’re acquiring 50 aircraft from now until the end of 2024. With infrastructure at important airports like Pearson we’ll be launching a substantial schedule over the next coming weeks,” says President and CEO Michael Deluce.

Loyal Billy Bishop passengers will now have the opportunity to fly Porter to other destinations, including western Canada, and the Billy Bishop operation will “remain core to our business and will stay unchanged going forward,” Deluce says.

When Porter started flying in 2006, it set out to “redefine what was expected from air travel.” The airline built its regional passenger experience around the promise of speed, convenience, and

especially service. “With the expansion of our fleet, we are setting out on a mission to redefine air travel again. This time, we’re expanding from elevating regional air travel to elevating economy air travel across Canada and North America,” Deluce said in the opening remarks before the preview flight.

How will Porter elevate Economy Class for everyone?

“First, it starts by giving more space on board,” Deluce said in his opening remarks. “Our entire E2 fleet as well as our Dash 8’s are two by two configurations, so Porter will be the only carrier that offers no middle seats to its economy customers, and that is a significant differentiating factor. Second, we’ll provide a level of onboard amenities to every passenger that’s unmatched by any airline in North America. This includes our signature, complimentary beer and wine served in real glassware and a selection of free, premium snacks. On longer flights, we’ll also have the option of fresh, high-quality meals as part of the passenger’s airfare or purchased onboard. And on our E1 aircraft, every passenger will enjoy fast, free, streaming wifi. We’ll be the first in Canada to offer that.”

Porter's signature economy experience is now referred to as PorterClassic. Travellers who select this option have the chance to purchase special perks, such as extra legroom, extra baggage, and travel flexibility. PorterClassic seats have 30 inches of seat pitch on every aircraft. When travelling on the E195-E2, PorterStretch seats are available for purchase, offering a minimum of 34 inches of seat pitch.



A seat onboard Porter's new E195-2 fleet

PorterReserve has all the benefits of PorterClassic, plus additional perks bundled with airfare. Dedicated check-in, early boarding, extra legroom, checked bags, flight changes, and fresh meals on longer flights are part of the all-inclusive economy experience. When travelling on the E195-2, PorterReserve includes the first four rows of the cabin (16 seats) and offers 36 inches of seat pitch, which is similar to business class legroom on other narrowbody aircraft. On the Dash 8-400 fleet, PorterReserve will be in the first two rows (six seats) with 32 inches of seat pitch. PorterReserve is available on all flights starting February 1, 2023.

In the next several years Porter will be rolling out up to 100 E195-E2 aircraft. "We are very proud to be the launch customer in North America for the aircraft," Deluce said.

On the catering side, Porter is partnering with Optimum to develop menus and work with local kitchens. Optimum brings product to SkyCafe so it can cater to the last mile. "Where it is possible to roundtrip the food, it will all be served out of Toronto," CCO Kevin Jackson tells *PAX International*. In remote cities like Vancouver where there is a need to have a kitchen, Optimum will help local caterers there to produce the food.



Inside the PorterReserve meal box



Croissants onboard courtesy of [Nadège Toronto](#)

How has Porter worked to reduce single-use plastic?

“That is a challenge we continue to work through. It is our mission to eliminate all single-use plastic and we’re not 100 percent of the way there yet,” Jackson says. “But where we could, we did. In the experience today the meal will be served in all recyclable and compostable materials. The cutlery used onboard today is made of agave and the glassware of course is reusable.”

Jackson also says that the small branded water bottles on many Dash 8 models are starting to be phased out. The airline is moving toward serving water in a compostable cup. “There are certain service limitations where we can’t do that,” Jackson says. Some of Porter’s Dash 8 routes, like Toronto to Windsor or Ottawa that have a short flight time don’t have the service time to pour water.

“We are challenging ourselves to move away from single-use plastic where we can and where, operationally, we must keep it we will keep it for now but see if there’s something else we can do long term. We’ve been planning this transition for months.” Currently, passengers on Dash-8 routes will see a mixture of plastic and paper. For the new fleet, the intention is that there will be no single-use plastic.