
Food and drink brands flock to WTCE 2019

By **PAX International** on December, 4 2018 | Events



World Travel Catering® & Onboard Services

EXPO | 2 – 4 April 2019 Hamburg Messe, Germany

The [World Travel Catering & Onboard Services Expo](#) (WTCE) – part of [Passenger Experience Week](#) – returns to Hamburg Messe April 2 to 4, 2019, providing food and drink brands with the opportunity to meet with buyers from international airlines, rail companies and cruise lines.

The importance of onboard hospitality

The travel catering market has never been more buoyant and the inflight sector alone expects to achieve a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.4% over the next seven years, taking its value to around US\$29 billion^[i]. And it's no surprise when you consider a 747 flying across the Atlantic is stocked with almost seven thousand items, including 500 bottles of wine and 350 bags of pretzels.

The growth is driven by ever-increasing passenger numbers demanding food and drink options that reflect what they can purchase on the ground, be it in a supermarket, restaurant or cafe. Catering is now a prerequisite for airlines, rail businesses and cruise lines who are striving to improve the onboard experience, and seeking out the very best in food and drink is a key driver for the thousands of professionals attending Passenger Experience Week.

Halls of inspiration

The free-to-attend exhibition features a smorgasbord of new food and drink products that reflect the trends taking the travel catering world by storm, with visitors seeking out innovations in gut food, vegetarianism, "free-from" and world foods. And with three other co-located events covering the entire passenger experience industry, there is no better place for brands to meet new contacts across the onboard services sector.

As demand for meat-free food soars – up by 987% in 2017, according to Just Eat – WTCE 2019 visitors will be hunting for the latest vegetarian, vegan and plant-based options. Among the products being showcased will be [Fleury Michon Airline Catering](#)'s pre-prepared seasoned farro with red bell peppers, creamy vegan spinach and rustic carrot meal, and [Chum Fruit Snacks](#)' 100% natural, no added sugar, gluten-free vegan snacks.

Thanks to a shift in consumer preferences towards "healthier" products, the free-from movement shows no sign of abating and these products remain popular with travelers across the world. During WTCE 2019, visitors will be seeking the most exciting launches, including those from [Langerhuize kosher meals](#) and [Dr. Schär Group](#).

It's not just about food though. Onboard operators are paying more attention than ever before to their drinks offer. Reflecting the ever-growing consumer focus on health and wellbeing, this year buyers will be looking for more companies offering non-alcoholic beverages. Among those already confirmed to exhibit are cold-pressed juice producer [Bless International Group Limited](#) and [Radnor Hills](#), which manufactures a wide range of spring waters and soft drinks.

Alcoholic beverages are still popular among global travelers, highlighted by Virgin Atlantic's recent launch of a Flying Bartender program. As with every edition of the expo, there will be a large number of dedicated alcohol suppliers at WTCE 2019, including new exhibitor [Caves d'Esclans](#), a leading producer of a renowned range of Côtes de Provence Rosés.

Gaining industry insights

One of the most eagerly anticipated features of WTCE is the Taste of Travel program. Spanning all three days of the show, the specially curated, free-to-attend sessions will feature live demonstrations from the world's leading onboard chefs and exclusive presentations from passenger experience professionals. Covering a diverse range of pertinent issues, such as sustainability, wellbeing and food waste, it's an opportunity for brands to learn about the trends coming to the fore in 2019 and beyond.

And to further demonstrate the innovation at the show, suppliers will be able to sample food and drink products during lunchtime sessions, enabling attendees to experience novel new products in an informal setting.

Networking facilities

Additionally, the Heineken-sponsored, free-to-attend Drinks Reception at the Taste of Travel Theatre on Tuesday, April 2 provides yet another opportunity for brands to get together with visitors to discuss opportunities to generate revenue opportunities onboard.

Archana Sharma, Exhibition Director, WTCE said in a statement: "WTCE presents a premier opportunity for food and drink brands looking to break into the onboard industry. Its co-location with Passenger Technology Solutions, Aircraft Interiors Expo and Passenger Experience Conference completes the line-up for the annual, not-to-be-missed Passenger Experience Week which offers airline, rail and cruise professionals a vitally important platform to source new products and define the future of the passenger experience industry. We look forward to welcoming food and drink brands to WTCE to meet with the industry's creative, trend setting innovators and to discuss the exhilarating opportunities to transform their business overnight."

For more information on the opportunities to exhibit at WTCE or to register to attend, WTCE's [website](#).

[\[i\] "In-flight Catering Service Market to 2025 - Global Analysis and Forecasts by Catering Service; Catering Types; Aircraft Class; and Flight Type"](#)