

# WTCE 2024 champions wellness and sustainability



Delegates gather at the Beemster Cheese booth at WTCE 2024

The twelfth edition of the [World Travel Catering & Onboard Services Expo](#) (WTCE) concluded on May 30, marking the end of three days of collaboration, networking and discussion at the Hamburg Messe.

WTCE welcomed 3,000 attendees this year, a 15 percent increase from 2023. The diverse program of features, conference sessions and product launches showcased the latest innovations in inflight catering, onboard services and passenger comfort, focused on the key themes of special diets, beverages, nutrition and sustainability.

This year's event included 870 VIP attendees, marking a 3 percent increase from 2023. This included buyers from 145 unique airlines, 50+ travel catering companies and 12 rail operators, representing 72 different countries.

4,000 attendees (including 750 airline buyer VIPs), visited WTCE from the co-located Aircraft Interiors Expo (AIX), enabling passenger experience professionals from the world's leading airlines to discover the most innovative products across all elements of the inflight experience.

Event organizers have confirmed that some of WTCE's most popular products this year included beverages, healthy food, pre-prepared meals, savory snacks, amenity kits, tableware, trolleys, galley equipment and food packaging solutions, the June 17 press release said.

## Showcasing the ambassadors

For the first time, WTCE 2024 featured Ambassadors Melissa Adamski, a leading travel dietitian and nutritionist, and Founder of Nutted Out Nutrition; Kelly Stevenson, former global wine and beverage manager at [British Airways](#) and current Director of JetVine; Matt Crane, Co-Founder of the [Aviation Sustainability Forum](#) (ASF); and Julianne Ponan MBE, CEO of [Creative Nature](#), and passionate allergies campaigner.

The ambassadors added a new dynamic to the event, participating in Taste of Travel Theatre sessions, meeting with airlines and industry colleagues in the dedicated Ambassador Lounge and shaping product trends through a pre-show thought leadership campaign.

### **The role of WTCE Connect**

The WTCE Connect platform for facilitating pre-arranged meetings between exhibitors and attendees saw more than 1,400 confirmed meetings this year.

"WTCE has been incredibly helpful for us as we aim to convince airlines to add plant-based options for everyone, not just vegans. This is our first time at the show, and we have had productive meetings with key customers, thanks to the matchmaking opportunities WTCE Connect offers. It's a rare chance to meet directly with purchasing managers, and the experience has exceeded our expectations," said David Guarch, Business Director at [Beanstalk Foods](#), of the platform.

### **Taste of Travel**

The Taste of Travel theatre, sponsored by [En Route](#), had more than 500 attendees engaging in 16 interactive sessions. The event featured more than 50 speakers discussing topics including culinary trends, sustainability, special meals, nutrition, wellness onboard and passenger experience enhancement.

Matt Crane, Co-Founder of the Aviation Sustainability Forum (ASF) and WTCE 2024 Sustainability Ambassador, presented a session on the current state of cabin waste in the aviation sector. He revealed the latest findings from ASF cabin waste audits, sharing that 659,000 tons of cabin waste is equivalent to feeding every American four times a year.

Other panelists included Daniela Stange, Corporate Sustainability Manager at [IATA](#); Claire Luiten, Sustainability Engineer at [KLM Royal Dutch Airlines](#); Celine Hourcade, Vice President, Group Sustainability & ESG at [SATS Group](#); and Michael Bauer, Cabin & Cargo Architect - Airbassador at Airbus Commercial Aircraft who spoke on the pressing issue of cabin waste and need to break down barriers and implement sustainable solutions onboard.

Closing the Taste of Travel Theatre on day three, Steve Walpole, Chef Director at Steve Walpole Ltd, hosted an interactive live cooking demonstration with Kelly Stevenson, Director of JetVine and WTCE 2024 Beverages Ambassador, who tried and tested product pairings of low alcohol and wellness drinks, including [Longbottom & Co's](#) Virgin Mary mocktail.

### **VIP experience**

At WTCE, onboard buyers and procurement teams from airlines, rail operators and travel catering companies benefited from the exclusive VIP Buyer Program. This included access to the VIP Lounge

and VIP Sample Bags, sponsored by Marfo, featuring more than 15 products from exhibitors such as [VITHIT Drinks](#), [Bamboovement](#) and [Joe & Seph's](#).

VIPs also had access to Digital Gift Bags, showcasing premium selections available to collect from exhibitor booths such as Soothing Solutions and La Fabrique Cookies.

"The show is indispensable for discovering new products and understanding market trends. It's a highlight of my calendar, providing unparalleled networking opportunities and insights into the western markets, crucial for our global offerings," said Cameron Woodward, Senior Manager Customer Experience at [Qatar Airways](#).

## **Innovation at WTCE**

This year, WTCE provided exhibitors with a platform for their latest innovations and product reveals.

[4700BC](#) introduced its latest product, Gourmet Mix-Up, while [The LSG Group](#) and The Vegetarian Butcher announced a partnership to offer plant-based and vegan meals in airline catering.

Sustainability was a significant talking point at this year's event, with SKYPRO presenting its eco-fabrics for uniforms.

In the realm of passenger comfort, [Buzz Products](#) revealed a new sleep collection created in collaboration with Nest Bedding for American Airlines.

[dnata](#) unveiled its cooking robot, developed by BOTINKIT. Visitors to dnata's stand experienced live cooking demonstrations, displaying the robot's ability to replicate a chef's stir-frying technique with precision and consistency.

In the New Exhibitor Village, up to 20 pioneering companies highlighted new products set to enter the airline industry. Exhibitors in this area included Swypes, Kate's Real Food, Lockdown Liquor & Co, POSHI and The Drinks Bakery.

## **Steps to Sustainability**

The Steps to Sustainability feature was popular among both attendees and exhibitors. In this section of the expo, eight companies showcased their products while 19 exhibitors starred on the trail. Among them were [Procurall Solutions](#), [Deli Lites](#), [deSter](#), [Royal Smilde](#), [Cocohagen](#), [Reedbut Group](#), [Linstol](#), [FORMIA](#) and [more](#). They showcased a variety of eco-friendly options for onboard catering and services.

"We've engaged with most of our targeted airlines, offering an easy, cost-effective way to achieve onboard sustainability with our new launch, [Ecoffee Cup](#) Aero. Being part of the Steps to Sustainability trail at WTCE has been a fantastic opportunity to connect with the right buyers and promote our product, something we couldn't have accomplished without this platform," said Jeremy Hassett, Business Development Manager, Ecoffee Cup.

## **Elevating the passenger experience**



The official PEC Welcome Party, sponsored by Eutelsat OneWeb

During the Passenger Experience Conference (PEC), which took place at the Hamburg Messe on Monday, May 27, experts and visionaries from airlines, airframers, OEMs, suppliers and design organizations collaborated on improving passenger experiences, covering topics such as customer feedback, healthy onboard food demand, circularity strategies, legislative support, sustainable design, data-driven decisions and AI (Artificial Intelligence) integration for enhanced inflight services.

Speakers included Anne de Hauw, Founder of IN Air Travel Experience; Matt Crane, Co-Founder of the Aviation Sustainability Forum (ASF); Melanie Berry, Director of Customer Experience at Iberia, plus many more. The conference concluded with the official Welcome Party, sponsored by [Eutelsat OneWeb](#), providing networking opportunities for industry stakeholders before the first day of WTCE and AIX.

“WTCE 2024 has once again proven to be an unmissable event for the inflight catering, onboard services, and passenger comfort industries. With groundbreaking product launches and numerous networking opportunities, the show continues to set the benchmark for innovation and collaboration in the sector,” said Polly Magraw, Event Director of WTCE, at the conclusion of the 2024 show.

She continued: “The Ambassador Program, the Wellbeing Walk-through and the new Steps to Sustainability feature were particularly successful. These initiatives provided attendees with in-depth looks at the latest advancements in passenger wellness and sustainable practices in line with WTCE’s core themes of travel nutrition, special diets, beverages, and sustainability, all of which were projected in the Taste of Travel Theatre. Anticipation for next year’s event is already building as WTCE continues to solidify its reputation as the leading global platform for airline and catering industry professionals, and we are already excited to return to Hamburg next April.”

The World Travel Catering & Onboard Services Expo 2025 is set to take place from April 8 to 10, 2025 at the Hamburg Messe.