

Guest column: Authenticity takes flight in APAC with En Route International

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En Route's Tom Lay explains that authentic ingredients, cooking techniques and regional traditions help airlines create a true sense of place onboard, enhancing both brand identity and the passenger experience

Airline food in the Asia Pacific region is changing. Travelers are paying closer attention to the details that connect them to a place, and menus are becoming an important part of that experience. Authenticity is moving to the center of how airlines express their identity onboard.

For many passengers, food is part of the journey. Standard "international" options still have a role, but more travelers now want dishes that reflect where they are or where they are headed. Ingredients, cooking methods and regional culinary traditions carry real meaning. Airlines that bring these elements onboard can create a stronger sense of place and stand out in a crowded market, ultimately helping to positively shape the brand and the passenger experience.



Tom Lay, Marketing & Creative Director, En Route

Adapting local recipes for service at altitude is not straightforward, though. Dishes need to hold flavor, meet safety and quality standards, and work within the limits of the galley. This is why it is crucial to work with a passenger solutions partner that can collaborate with airlines and that holds the expertise to translate regional inspiration into reliable onboard offerings.

For [En Route](#), close partnerships with regional manufacturers and suppliers are key to this. By sourcing ingredients locally and collaborating on menu development, airlines can offer dishes that feel genuine while supporting regional producers and reducing reliance on imports.

Underlying all of this is a sophisticated logistics network that keeps quality consistent from kitchen to cabin. This network encompasses cold chain systems, regional warehousing and export expertise. This infrastructure allows airlines to serve authentic dishes at scale, not just as one-off features for seasonal celebrations.

One recent success shows how localization can work in practice. A popular baked pepper handheld snack was adapted for onboard service for a major carrier without losing its distinctive flavor. It struck the right balance between familiarity and novelty, quickly becoming a passenger favorite. This kind of menu development shows how culinary insight and operational know-how can bring authentic regional dishes to life.

Building on that success, we are finalizing additional variations featuring char siu pork and honey soy₂

chicken, each designed to deliver authentic flavor in a format that performs seamlessly onboard.

Looking ahead, authenticity and localization are set to shape the future of airline catering in the Asia Pacific region. Food continues to be one of the clearest ways airlines can express brand and place.

At En Route, each menu is a chance to share regional flavor and identity in a way that feels true to passengers. By combining local knowledge, culinary expertise and reliable logistics, airlines can create dining experiences that resonate long after the flight.



Travelers are increasingly drawn to the details that connect them to a destination, with menus playing a key role in that experience