

# Q&A with Icelandair: Serving special meals with certainty

This is a special feature from the [March 2026 Special Meals/Pre-WTCE issue](#) of *PAX International*, on [page 24](#).



Inside the box there's a menu card explaining why the meal is presented in the box, along with ingredient and nutritional information

One year after introducing its allergen-guaranteed sealed special meals onboard, [Icelandair](#) has quietly redefined how special meals are handled in the cabin. Developed under the Libero Special Meals Program, commercially distributed by [Foodcase International](#), the initiative builds on a five-year supply relationship between the partners and forms part of a broader onboard collaboration.

Designed around a controlled E.U./U.K. Top 14 allergen-free framework, the program combines sealed, passenger-opened meal boxes with a strict handling protocol aimed at eliminating cross-contact onboard. With clearly displayed IATA suitability codes, transparent ingredient and nutritional information, and simplified heating procedures for crew, the objective is clear: remove ambiguity from special meal service while strengthening passenger confidence and reducing operational stress in the cabin.

Senior Cabin Crew Rósa Gunnarsdóttir has been flying with Icelandair for more than two decades. She has seen special meals handled every possible way, making her perspective on Icelandair's new allergen-guaranteed program particularly telling.



Rósa Gunnarsdóttir, Senior Cabin Crew, Icelandair

**Warde: From a cabin crew perspective, how have special meals traditionally felt on board?**

**Gunnarsdóttir:** Special meals have always been something we handled very carefully, but they also came with pressure. Passengers often had a lot of questions, and as crew you wanted to make sure you were giving the right answers.

I do not have food allergies myself, but a close friend of mine has a daughter with a severe nut allergy. Seeing that changes how you think about food safety completely. You understand how serious it is and how much anxiety families live with every day.

**Warde: How common are special meals on Icelandair flights today?**

**Gunnarsdóttir:** They are very common now. It is not unusual at all. Roughly every third flight will have special meals on board, so this is very much part of normal service.

**Warde: Icelandair's allergen-guaranteed special meal, delivered in a sealed box to prevent cross-contamination and give passengers complete confidence. What the biggest difference you have noticed with the new allergen-guaranteed program?**

**Gunnarsdóttir:** The biggest surprise is that it is easier for us. The process is very clear. We heat the sealed main meal and bread, place them back into the box and deliver the meal to the passenger. The passenger opens it themselves.

**Warde: Why is the meal served in a sealed box rather than plated on a tray?**

**Gunnarsdóttir:** The box is really about safety. Keeping everything sealed prevents cross-contamination or cross-contact. Once a meal is opened or rearranged in an airline galley, you can't

guarantee it's allergen-free anymore. Inside the box there's a menu card explaining exactly why the meal is presented this way, along with full ingredient and nutritional information. That makes a big difference.

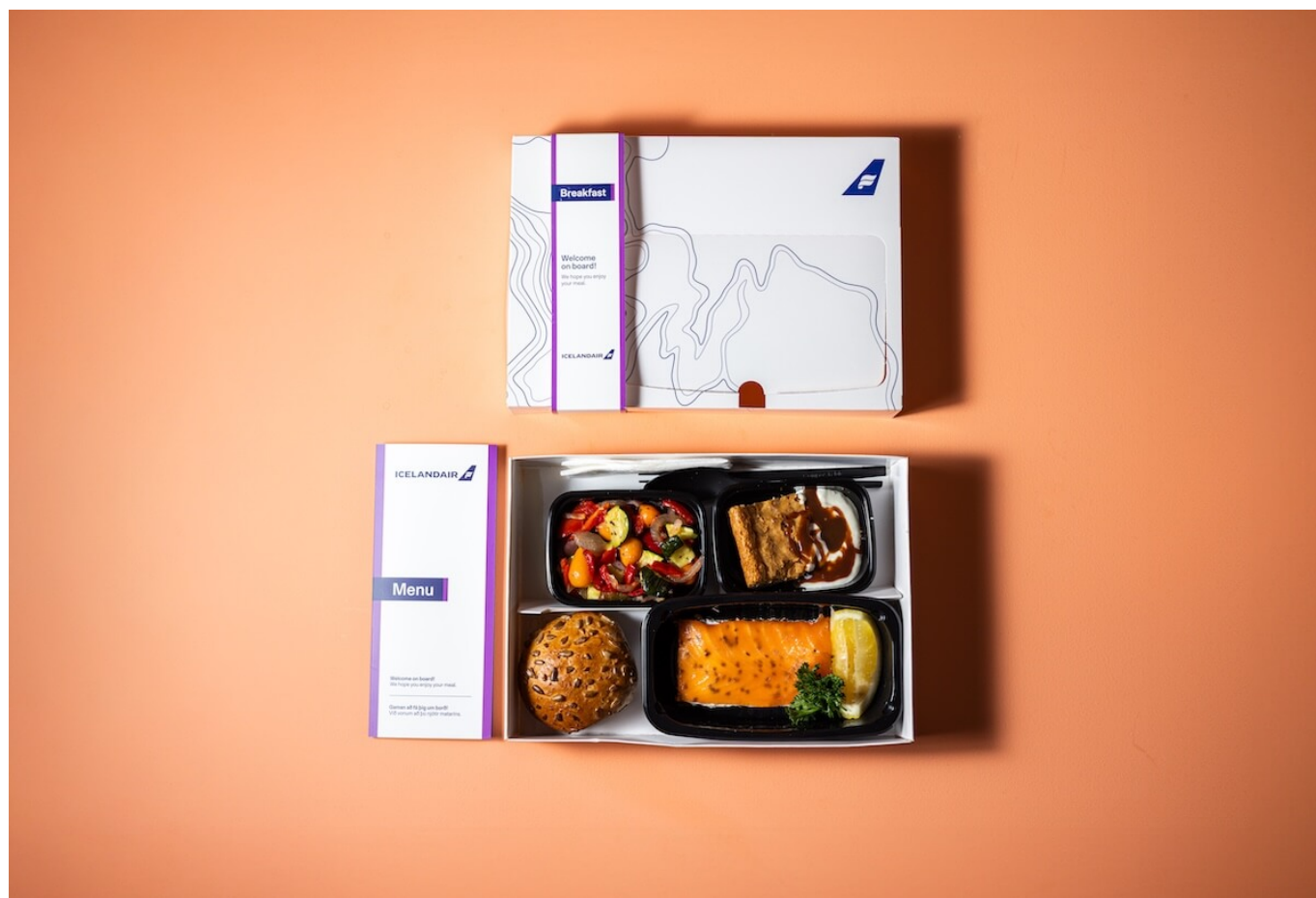
**Warde: Do passengers mind receiving their meal in a box?**

**Gunnarsdóttir:** Not at all. They appreciate that Icelandair has gone to these lengths to protect them. It reassures people. Passengers are much calmer now. Before, passengers would understandably ask lots of questions. Now the answers are already there, and they feel confident eating the meal.

**Warde: Passengers sometimes have multiple dietary requirements. How is that handled?**

**Gunnarsdóttir:** All special meals are free from the Top 14 allergens and fall into three clear categories — meals with meat, plant-based meals and meals suitable for medical needs such as low salt or low fat.

For example, a vegan, gluten-free meal can safely accommodate both dietary requirements. The applicable IATA meal codes are clearly listed on the side of the box, allowing passengers to confirm suitability immediately.



The meals are served in boxes, keeping the contents sealed to prevent cross-contamination

**Warde: Do passengers comment on the quality or taste of the food?**

**Gunnarsdóttir:** Yes, very positively. People often expect special meals to be a compromise, but that has not been our experience.

**Warde: Did it take time for crew to adapt to this way of working?**

**Gunnarsdóttir:** A little at first, as with any change. But once you understand why the meals are handled this way, it makes complete sense. It is safer for passengers and easier for us.

**Warde: Overall, how would you describe the change?**

**Gunnarsdóttir:** Compared to how things were before, it feels like a good place to be. Passengers feel reassured, crew feel confident and everything runs more smoothly.