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## Would You Pay A Fee for Good Airline Food?

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You may hate checked-baggage fees, but would you feel better about a fee for good airline food? Pre-ordered food is likely to be the next frontier for airlines fees, travel industry consultant Jay Sorensen, president of IdeaWorks, tells AOL Travel News.

Free food in coach on most U.S. domestic flights is already a thing of the past, and Sorensen believes the days of free meals on international flights are also numbered.

Complimentary meals will be replaced by pre-ordered, pre-purchased meals, he says.

But he predicts the new meals will be a big step up from both free and for-sale offerings currently found on flights.

Sorensen explains traditional food service on U.S. airlines was "designed to save money, not to impress." When airlines started selling food on board, they used old practices. "They were trying to sell stuff off a cart, and they were terrified about waste," he says. "So the food was unattractively packaged and shelf-stable."

But pre-ordered meals will feature an attractive menu and food that is freshly prepared with more of an emphasis on taste rather than shelf life.

United Airlines is already offering pre-ordered meal "upgrades" – business class-style brunches – on transcontinental flights for \$19.

On flights to Frankfurt and London from San Francisco, United is testing pre-ordered premium meals, also for \$19, with a choice of grilled tenderloin, grilled chicken or cheese tortellini. Free meals are also still available on the flights.

Internationally, Dutch airline KLM is experimenting with pre-ordered meals that resemble dishes served up in restaurants. The "a la carte menu," priced at about \$19.95, is available on flights from Amsterdam to 10 long-haul destinations, but not to the U.S.

The options look more enticing than the mass-produced chicken-or-beef commonly served in economy cabins with such offerings as Indonesian Rijstaffel (chicken satay, beef stew with coconut-flavored rice, vegetables and traditional Dutch thousand-layer spice-butter cake). For now, passengers can also still opt for a free economy meal on the KLM flights.

But Sorensen predicts such pre-ordered, pre-purchased meals will soon become the industry's norm.