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TRAVEL INDUSTRY TRENDS IN A FEW MINUTES

AUTHENTICITY

SEPTEMBER 2016 #01

QUALITY FARE TAKES OFF AT THE AIRPORT

With more and more of the world being opened up to international tourism, people from around the globe are discovering new culinary territory during their travels. From a late-night bowl of tonkotsu ramen in Osaka to on-the-go tortas in Mexico City, authentic food is what today's travellers want when they visit new places. Not so long ago the opportunity to discover a country's true gastronomic delights came only after clearing customs, getting in a taxi and heading into town. Nowadays, however, those keen to sample local cuisine on arrival in a new destination need not even leave the airport. In airports worldwide, restaurants are offering authentic dishes that showcase the best culinary traditions a country has to offer.

who have communicated a desire for good food. Today more than ever, the airport is a gastronomic treasure trove; its authorities have recognised that people in transit have time on their hands, money to spend and the desire to eat well.



This year is the apex of an ongoing trend that has revolutionised the airport food industry. All across the world high-calibre chefs have poured their efforts into creating quality restaurants, cafés and bistros to meet demand and have been an immense success.

Between 2013 and 2015 the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority saw a [\\$5.1m increase](#) in revenue after introducing local restaurant Ben's Chili Bowl, world-renowned chefs Michael Symon and Carla Hall, and almost a dozen other eateries at its airports.

The recipe clearly works: give people tasty, authentic food and they will happily spend money. Most importantly, the airports that have seen the most success are those that have offered travellers an authentic culinary experience that represents city and country.



AUTHENTIC TASTES FOR DISCERNING TRAVELLERS

Until recently airports were zones of neutrality and transition – Airports have started to listen to travelers

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Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport, for example, is welcoming [five local chefs](#) to whip up traditionally Texan cuisine. One of the chefs, Roland Lorenzo, heads up local institution El Tiempo Cantina – his mother is said to have brought fajitas to the US in the '70s. Tacos, fresh seafood, enchiladas and guacamole are featured on the menu, which offers travellers a real taste of the Lone Star State. Lorenzo is just one of many chefs around the world who are proving that airports should be part of the cultural experience.

Not all airports have fully capitalised on the trend but we are sure to see an increasing number of departures lounges making room for high-quality restaurants that are authentic reflections of their culinary contexts.



What we can expect to see from this growing trend is greater variety and emphasis being placed by airports on their gastronomic offering. The success of chefs such as Bruno Loubet at Gatwick Airport and Michael Voltaggio at Los Angeles International Airport demonstrates that before a flight people are still seeking a good sit-down meal, just as they would on a Saturday evening in their home city.

Bistrot has been offering authentic local cuisine across Europe since 2013: diners can sample fish straight from Lake Geneva at Bistrot Genève Aéroport, or traditional Dutch krentenbollen at Bistrot Centraal Utrecht. The recently opened Bistrot Fiorenzuola d'Arda represents the next step in Autogrill's gastronomic revolution. Sitting on the A1 motorway between the important culinary cities of Piacenza and Parma, Bistrot d'Arda is located in the first-ever bridge motorway diner, built in 1959 by Autogrill. The building was a symbol of gastronomic modernisation at the time and the new Bistrot continues its legacy of quality on-the-go food.