

Europe Inflight Catering Market - Growth, Trends, Covid-19 Impact, and Forecasts (2023 - 2028)

Market Report | 2023-01-23 | 89 pages | Mordor Intelligence

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Report description:

The European inflight catering market is projected to record a CAGR of 8.1% during the forecast period.

The European region is one of the major aviation industries that was severely impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The airlines in the region had to decrease their aircraft operations significantly and restricted their inflight services, including catering services. Nevertheless, the passenger traffic in 2021 witnessed an increase compared to the previous year, and a full recovery is expected by 2024. As the passenger traffic is returning to pre-COVID-19 levels, the airlines in the region are gradually reintroducing inflight catering menus.

In the European region, currently, the focus on food quality and offerings is more pronounced toward the economy class of airplanes, which have become notorious for serving sub-standard food over the years. Economy class passengers contribute to airline revenue, and they continue to be the most important class of passengers for carriers. To maintain their shares, most carriers are in the process of improving the quality of food served.

Due to growing competition on profitable long-distance routes, airlines are collaborating with famous chefs to make a difference. Partnering with star chefs can help the airlines carve out special dishes to attract passengers and increase market share. This is anticipated to propel the growth of the European inflight catering market during the forecast period.

Europe Inflight Catering Market Trends

The Bakery and Confectionery Segment is Expected to Dominate the Market During the Forecast Period

Scotts International. EU Vat number: PL 6772247784

tel. 0048 603 394 346 e-mail: support@scotts-international.com

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The bakery and confectionery segment currently dominates the European inflight catering market, and it is expected to continue its dominance over the market during the forecast period as passengers from the region prefer bread and other baked items in most of their dining compared to the other regions. There has been a notable rise in domestic and intra-Europe travel in 2021, with a total market share capturing more than 60%. This shift in operations has changed the average flight duration from 45 minutes to 60 minutes. In such short flights, the guests' preference change has led to an increase in demand for bakery and confectionery items. Among bakery products, sweet and sour bread, flavored croissants, and cheese confectionaries witnessed the highest market share. However, some of the airlines in the region are converting the complementary services into retail services, which may help the airlines increase their revenues and mitigate their pandemic losses. For instance, from December 2021, Lufthansa began to charge the passengers in Economy and Premium Economy on long-haul flights for mid-flight snacks and liquor as part of their recovery plans from pandemic losses. Earlier in 2021, the airline removed free snacks and drinks for economy class passengers on short-haul routes to support onboard retail service. The introduction of new snacks and sweets into their menu is anticipated to properly the growth of the market.

The United Kingdom is Expected to Witness Significant Growth During the Forecast Period

According to the Advance Passenger Information (API), and Border and Immigration Transaction Data (BITD), UK air arrivals were 28.60 million in 2020 and 22.84 million in 2021. The air arrivals decreased by 20.1% in 2021 compared to 2020. However, during the second half of 2021, air arrivals increased by approximately 88% compared to 2020. As the aviation industry in the country is recovering gradually, major airlines like British Airways and EasyJet are currently increasing their global connectivity with the introduction of new destinations, which is expected to bring new menus onboard aircraft. As the airlines in the country look to improve their food offerings based on season and flight destination, partnering with star chefs is helping them to modify their dishes without incurring high costs. In this regard, in October 2021, Virgin Atlantic introduced its new autumn menu options and reintroduced onboard favorites across all its cabins, including new meal, beverage, and snack options. Major companies are investing significantly to strengthen their presence in the United Kingdom. For instance, in March 2020, Alpha LSG signed an agreement with Emirates to cater six daily flights out of London-Heathrow Airport to Dubai Airport. The company already services the airline's regional operation in the United Kingdom from London to Gatwick, Stansted, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle, and Glasgow. Such developments are expected to help the growth of revenues from the country during the forecast period.

Europe Inflight Catering Market Competitor Analysis

The inflight catering market in Europe is consolidated, and it is primarily dominated by a few major players, such as Gategroup, the Emirates Group, DO & CO Aktiengesellschaft, and Newrest Group Services SAS. These companies increased their market presence in the past through the acquisition of local restaurants and other smaller catering companies. The acquisition of LSG's European operations by Gategroup will result in Gategroup accounting for a major share of the European inflight catering market in the coming years. In addition to this, catering companies are introducing new technologies to reduce overall operational costs and increase their operational efficiencies. For instance, KLM Catering Services (KCS) is more focused on technological integration to fight the crisis. In October 2020, the company announced its plans to use a robot for inflight catering services. The integration of robots will allow catering services to reduce operational costs, increase flexibility, and focus on a customer-centric approach. The introduction of new cost-cutting measures as well as partnerships with new airlines is anticipated to help the companies increase their geographic presence in the region in the coming years.

Additional Benefits:

The market estimate (ME) sheet in Excel format
3 months of analyst support

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