



MARGINAL NOTES

Etihad Airways has appointed acclaimed chef Thomas Utherr as its Corporate Executive Chef to oversee the introduction of onboard chefs in its Diamond First Class cabins along selected routes from October. By the end of 2011, the service will be available on all flights offering first class.

AIRLINES

Food For High Flying Vegans

Vegan travellers offer some food for thought whilst revealing their mid-air culinary adventures and misadventures

By Samiha Nettikkara

The first thing to be taken off the menu when some airlines set about their cost-cutting measures back in 2008 was the food. Three years down the line, full service flights on medium or long haul routes do offer meals to its passengers but when it comes to vegan food, the onus is on the passenger to understand the codes of special meals (SPML), and ensure that the airline provides it.

The special vegetarian meals, aside from the Vegan Meal, usually also include Raw Vegetarian Meal, Vegetarian Indian Meal, Vegetarian Jain Meal, Vegetarian Oriental Meal and Vegetarian Lacto-Ovo-Meal. “If you are flying a full service airline, ask for Non-lactose Veg Meal (NLML) or Vegan Meal (VGML), suggests NG Jayasimha, lawyer and campaigner, Humane Society International, Hyderabad.

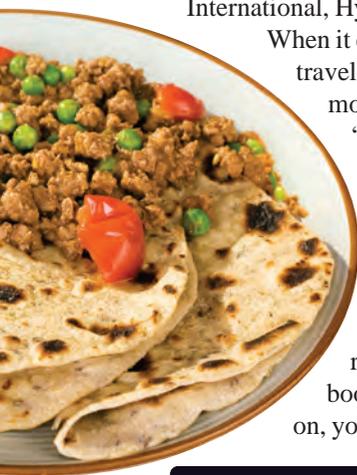
When it comes to international travel, culinary options are more accessible for vegans.

“In general, they have a standard vegan meal called VGML or strict vegetarian or western vegetarian. This is different from AVML or Asian vegetarian. If you request this at the time of booking or with a call later on, you will get it. It won’t be

much better than the regular airline food, but you will be served first and it isn’t bad at all,” says Dr Nandita Shah of SHARAN, Mumbai.

Vegan travellers also have to look into any pre-requisites set by the airline for booking special meals. Jet Airways offers vegan meals on all full service flights on both domestic and international sectors. The meal with the SPML code ‘Vegan’ has to be booked at least 12 hours before departure time. The dishes include a salad, entrée and fresh cuts for dessert. The salad and entrée combinations available are Green Salad with Subz Jalfrezi, Zeera Pulao, Palakwali Dal, and Roti; Tossed Salad with Methi Pulao, Rajma Masala, and Roti; Cucumber and Carrot Salad with Makkai Palak, Biryani Rice, Dal Tadka, and Roti; and Cucumber, Capsicum and Tomato Salad with Aloo Methi, Yellow Rice, Dal Panchmael, and Roti.

Kingfisher Red does not serve special meals, but requests for vegan meals on Kingfisher Airlines can be made at least 24 hours before the flight departure through the reservations office, the telephone numbers mentioned on the website or the travel agent. The airline also requests the passenger to additionally register the request on the website while purchasing the ticket. Most airlines have this policy where those travelling on a standby or waitlist basis can-



ENGLISH FIZZ British Airways now serves ‘Balfour Brut Rosé’ sparkling wine from the Hush Heath winery in Kent, alongside an existing range of champagnes to customers in first class.