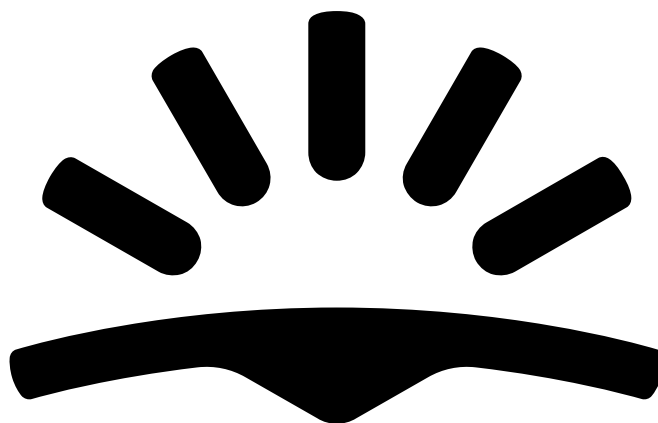


Inflight Entertainment - latest and greatest ways airlines keep you entertained | Skyscanner Australia

Airlines know they have a captive audience. Whether your flight is a short-haul fling that's over before your tray table is stowed or is a tedious all-day affair, the difference between good and dreaded flights can be measured by onboard distractions (movie binge – yes!). [Skyscanner Australia](#) checks out the latest in aviation inflight entertainment.



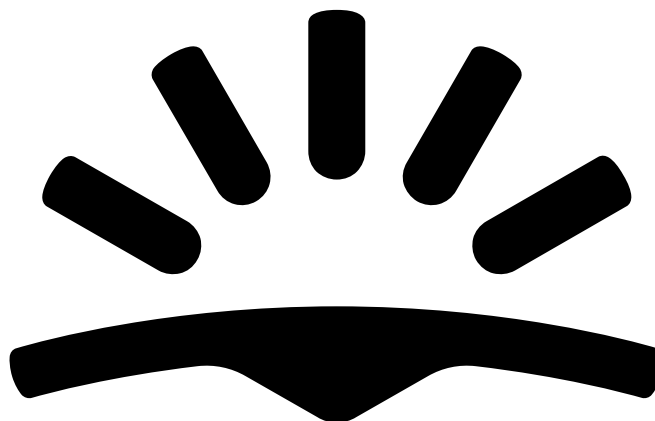
Inflight entertainment backgrounder

Almost one hundred years ago the first film, a grainy black & white *Howdy Chicago*, was shown onboard an Aeromarine hydroplane. It was another 40 years before inflight movies went mainstream after Motion Pictures developed a system for commercial aircraft. Though it took a while for inflight movies to catch on during the Golden Age of flying as reading remained popular amongst well-heeled travellers. Long before Low Cost Carriers arrived at the departure gate, air travel was a luxury limited to travellers with deep pockets.

It's hard to imagine a time when knitters wove their magic in the clouds – a pastime long since discarded since knitting needles were declared dangerous, quashing all aspirations for inflight yarn-bombing.

It's even more difficult to image a time when Captains and Crew would socialise with passengers in plush cabins. Unheard of in today's security-conscious environments, pilots would even welcome nervous flyers to visit the cockpit as a way of allaying fears about aircraft safety. Try getting into the cockpit today and you'll be arrested. (we definitely don't recommend it!).

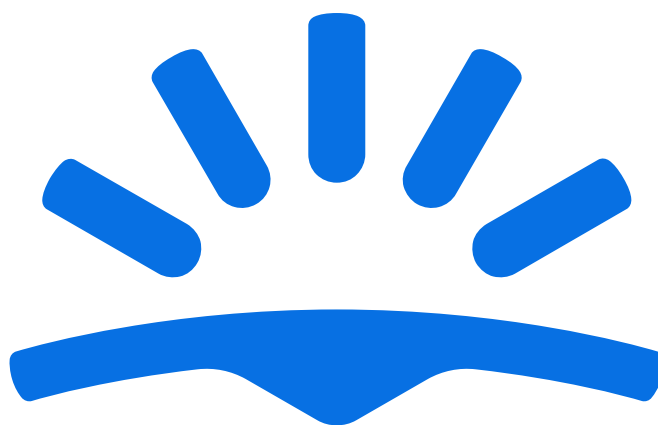
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Inflight entertainment at the airport

For some travellers, inflight entertainment (known as IFE in the aviation industry) begins before they step onboard as airports board the IFE bandwagon. London, Geneva and Frankfurt were the first to roll out entertainment kiosks where travellers download movies onto their own devices. Now also available at many US airports, expect to see more of these kiosks popping up at an airport near you. They are a godsend if you're the sort of disorganised traveller who forgets to download your favourite TV show or audible book during the pre-departure rush.

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Onboard flight tracking

Have you ever looked out an aircraft window and wondered, ‘Where am I?’ and ‘What is that lake/town/island below?’ Don’t worry, pilots wonder the same thing. Fortunately, they have the answers!

Australian company Inflighto has tapped into pilots knowledge to create an IFE app from a Captains perspective. Superseding those outdated ‘moving maps’ where the aircraft was superimposed over an aerial world map that never seemed to progress, the Inflighto app combines highly accurate flight tracking technology to show an elevated perspective. Sophisticated technology displays flight-path data and identifies key landmarks below along with weather overlays. Aviation geeks will love the In-flight Chat option that allows passengers to chat with flight crew and fellow passengers in an open chat-room dedicated to their specific flight. Social media shareability ensures real-time ‘I’m on a plane!’ bragging rights.

Travellers onboard Kenyan-based Scenic Air Safaris can enjoy personalised commentary from the Pilot and Guides through headsets as they cruise at low altitude above wildlife reserves and game parks.

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[Inflighto app](#)

Pre-flight apps on your own device

Long gone are the days when the only entertainment option was a movie shown on those screens that dropped down from the aircraft ceiling. Remember those? As airlines find innovative ways to maintain their bottom line, seat-back screens are being phased out in favour of travellers using their own devices tapping into onboard networks streaming content.

Virgin Australia ask passengers to download their app before boarding in order

to access movies, games and music. Depending on which Qantas aircraft you're flying on, IFE could be offered via a seat-back screen, Qantas-provided iPad or via the Qantas app downloaded to your own device. With Netflix, Foxtel and Spotify available at the swipe of your finger, flying is a good excuse for binge catch-ups of your favourite shows.

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Inflight wifi is here

Like it or not, inflight internet is here. The logical extension to airline apps, Qantas and Virgin Australia are both ramping up their internet wifi rollouts. Qantas is fitting out their domestic Boeing 737 fleet with a satellite internet system before equipping all Airbus' which dominate the Melbourne-Sydney-Brisbane triangle. Expect full connectivity across the domestic network by the end of 2018 with wifi capability on international flights to follow.

Virgin Australia is not too far behind with its Boeing fleet expecting to be wired, or is that wireless, by early 2019. But don't expect high-speed wifi to be free. Airlines are likely to capitalise on business travellers desire for high-speed wireless for a fee.

Low Cost Carrier Tiger Air's partnership with Twentieth Century Fox aims to get the jump on domestic rivals by offering new release movies and TV shows via an app across its entire Australian network.

International carriers like Thai, Scoot, Emirates, Qatar Air and Singapore Airlines are some of the carriers operating out of Australia with onboard wifi. Technology company Inmarsat predicts that over half of the world's aircraft will be equipped for inflight wifi within the next six years. Soon, the inflight digital detox will be non-existent.

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Inflight e-commerce

It's no surprise to see airlines taking digital connectivity a step further and utilising connectivity to upsell products and services. Finnair has an e-commerce platform as part of its onboard wifi with its Nordic Sky portal offering destination guides and retail shopping. More useful is the capability to book an airport taxi on arrival or make a tour, cruise or dinner reservation.

Philippines Airlines have added a surprise element to the digital shopping experience with their myPAL Surprise service. Let your loved ones know you're thinking about them while they're away by ordering a heartfelt gift to be delivered inflight. Swiss chocolate, Bottega sparkling wine and Bulgari perfume are just some ways to surprise your nearest and dearest in the air.

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Dining in the air

Dining has become an increasingly important part of the flying experience, a welcome departure from the frugal 'food in a box' food offerings of the recent past. Singapore Airlines have always been ahead of the game with their Book the Cook service for First, Business and Premium Economy travellers. Oddly, the service was never available for Perth travellers until recently. Dukkah encrusted pan-seared Tasmanian salmon with white wine sauce? Yes, please.

LATAM have ditched the in-flight tray on long-haul flights in favour of a limited a la carte offering with three menu options for individual gourmet dishes that are 50% bigger and influenced by Latin American cuisine. Slow-cooked lamb with ginger squash puree, roasted red onions and sautéed green beans is just one dinner option on the Melbourne-Santiago service.

Emirates crew are now taking meal and drinks orders from business class passengers via in-seat smartphones that beam requests from seat to galley, enabling crew to keep premium passengers fed and watered efficiently. Other improvements at the pointy end include makeovers to onboard lounge bars inspired by private yacht cabins serving canapes, handpicked wines and cocktails mixed by a bartender.

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