

Strategies



TERMINAL FARE GETS AN UPGRADE

Gone are the days of rushing through security and jumping straight onto your flight—you can thank the TSA for that. “Travelers are spending more time in airports than ever,” says Frank Sickelsmith, vice president of restaurant development for HMS Host, one of two major firms that turn airports into epicurean hangouts. The upside? “Now they can have a full sit-down meal instead of grabbing and going.” And that’s where innovators like Sickelsmith come in.

In 2013, Americans spent \$5.15 per passenger on in-terminal concessions—up from \$4.43 four years ago—making concourse cuisine a \$533 million industry. Mix that kind of revenue with a dash of hometown pride, and it’s clear why big-name chefs and entrepreneurs are eager to tackle the hurdles of gate-side dining. (You try getting your local fishmonger past TSA.) “It’s an incredible

opportunity to be a mouthpiece for your city,” says Bryan Caswell, the Houston chef who opened **3rd Bar Oyster & Eating House** at the city’s George Bush International last summer. In the past year alone, Jose Garces debuted **Local**, a swank tavern in Philadelphia’s Terminal F; Minnesota resident Andrew Zimmern opened **Minnibar**, a sandwich shop in Minneapolis-St. Paul’s Concourse G; and Louisiana legend Dooky Chase launched a namesake Creole joint at New Orleans’s Louis Armstrong.

Equally invested in raising the bar are the airports themselves. Among the goals of LAX’s new, \$1.9 billion Tom Bradley International Terminal: put L.A.’s top culinary talent in the spotlight. “Even if you’re only here on a layover, you’ll get a genuine taste of the city,” says *Top Chef* winner Michael Voltaggio, who opened a branch of his West Hollywood spot **Ink.sack** alongside cult favorite **Umami Burger**, Suzanne Goin’s **Larder at Tavern**, and the Mexican cantina **Border Grill**.

In New York City, the push to go gourmet has practically become a competition. *LaGuardia* has new venues by hot-ticket chefs Jim Lahey (**Crust**) and Andrew Carmellini (**Victory Grill**); JFK’s just-opened, \$1.4 billion Delta wing (operated by OTG management) has outposts of **Shake Shack** and Marcus Samuelsson’s **Uptown Brasserie**. This all adds up to a new understanding of what an airport could—and should—be. Says OTG’s CEO, Rick Blatstein, “We’re making it part of the journey.”



PDX,
CONCOURSE D

The Bees
Knees

DRINK UP FOR THE FLIGHT

Airport bars are also upping the ante, with local brews and wines. Order these drinks at our new favorites.

THE DRINK

Stone Ruination IPA

THE BAR

Stone Brewing Co.,
at San Diego’s T2

THE DRINK

A tasting flight of
California Cabernets

THE BAR

Crú, at Denver’s
B Gates

THE DRINK

The Bees Knees, with
Aviation American Gin

THE BAR

House Spirits
Distillery, at Portland,
Oregon’s Concourse D

THE DRINK

Paumanok Chenin
Blanc from Long
Island’s North Fork

THE BAR

Wibar, at LaGuardia’s
Terminal C



WHAT’S YOUR
GUILTY-PLEASURE
AIRPORT SNACK?



SOLEDAD
O'BRIEN
JOURNALIST

“I grab a bag of Swedish Fish when I’m running to a flight—pure sugar, delicious, and chewy.”

Hungry? Download this: **GateGuru** Yelp-like reviews (courtesy of your fellow travelers) indicate which spots are worth the trek. Don’t have time to sprint? A nifty feature helps you choose among the closest options. *Free; Android, iOS, Windows.* + **iFly Pro** Detailed maps offer bird’s-eye views of your terminal, making it easy to pinpoint the location of your preflight provisions—as well as nearby ATM’s, restrooms, and the best duty-free shops. *Free; Android, iOS.* + **LoungeBuddy** Dig up the details on individual airport lounges (including which ones charge for their chow). *Free; Android, iOS.*