

# ZAGAT®

## International Airlines **2007**

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Published and distributed by

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## Contents

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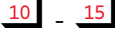

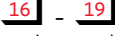



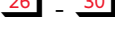


Ratings & Symbols	3
About This Survey	4
Top Ratings:	
Overall	5
Comfort	5
Service	5
Food	6
Website	6
Airports	6
<b>AIRLINES DIRECTORY</b>	
Names, Contact Info,	
Ratings & Reviews	7


This survey was conducted in cooperation with NBC's *Today* show. The reviews published in this guide are based on public opinion surveys, with numerical ratings reflecting the average scores given by all survey participants who voted on each establishment and text based on direct quotes from, or fair paraphrasings of, participants' comments. Phone numbers, addresses and other factual information were correct to the best of our knowledge when published in this guide; any subsequent changes may not be reflected.

## Ratings & Symbols

Zagat Top Spot	Name	Zagat Ratings			
		COMFORT	FOOD	SERVICE	WEBSITE
	Zagair	 12	4	10	10
Contact info	800-977-6000   www.zagat.com				
Review, surveyor comments in quotes	A "fly-by-night operation literally as well as figuratively", this "cheapie" charter suffices only "if Greyhound is booked up", but given planes "older than Moses", seats "salvaged from retired subway cars", "chronic overbooking" and "stale pretzels" flung by "Jurassic"-era flight attendants, critics tout "using sneakers."				

**Ratings** **Comfort, Food, Service** and **Website** are rated on the Zagat 0 to 30 scale as follows and relate to coach class (except for all-business-class carriers):

-  -  poor to fair
-  -  fair to good
-  -  good to very good
-  -  very good to excellent
-  -  extraordinary to perfection
-  low response | less reliable.

**Symbols**  Zagat Top Spot (highest ratings, popularity and importance)

## About This Survey



Here are the results of our most recent **International Airlines Survey**, covering 64 carriers as well as most major airports (a separate Survey covers 20 U.S. domestic carriers). Like all of our guides, this one is based on the collective opinions of thousands of avid travelers who have been there before you.

**FINDINGS:** Each airline was rated on its **Comfort, Food, Service** and **Website**. International carriers generally earned higher scores than domestics for economy as well as premium class - not surprising, since international flights usually involve bigger aircraft and more in-flight service. Singapore Airlines was again voted No. 1 Overall for both economy and premium service, with Cathay Pacific, Emirates and Virgin Atlantic among those that also made strong showings in both categories. Still, international carriers as a whole drew their share of complaints about the top airline irritants cited by surveyors: delays and cancellations, cramped seats/crowding and poor service. As for airports, Hong Kong International, Singapore Changi and Munich International rated highest, and Paris Charles de Gaulle, Beijing Capital and Rome Fiumicino the lowest.

**WHO PARTICIPATED:** Input from 7,498 frequent fliers and travel professionals forms the basis for the ratings and reviews (their comments are in quotation marks). Of these surveyors, 40% are women, 60% men; the breakdown by age is 8% in their 20s; 22%, 30s; 23%, 40s; 26%, 50s; and 21%, 60s or above.

**TOP LISTS:** See pages 5-6 for Top Ratings.

**Z ABOUT ZAGAT:** This marks our 29th year reporting on the shared experiences of consumers like you. What started in 1979 as a hobby involving 200 of our friends has come a long way. Today we have well over 300,000 surveyors and now cover dining, entertaining, golf, hotels, movies, music, nightlife, resorts, shopping, spas, theater and tourist attractions worldwide.

**SHARE YOUR OPINION:** We invite you to join any of our upcoming surveys - just register at [zagat.com](http://zagat.com), where you can rate and review establishments year-round. Each participant will receive a free copy of the resulting guide when published.

**AVAILABILITY:** Zagat guides are available in all major bookstores, by subscription at [zagat.com](http://zagat.com) and for use on web-enabled mobile devices via **Zagat To Go** or [zagat.mobi](http://zagat.mobi). The latter two products should allow you to contact any restaurant by phone with one click.

**FEEDBACK:** There is always room for improvement, thus we invite your comments and suggestions about any aspect of our performance. Is there something more you would like us to include in our guides? We really need your input! Just contact us at [airlines@zagat.com](mailto:airlines@zagat.com).

New York, NY  
November 2007

*Nina and Tim*  
Nina and Tim Zagat

## Top Ratings

Listed in order of descending scores (shown to the left of names).  
Excludes airlines with low votes.

### OVERALL\*

#### PREMIUM

- 28** Singapore Airlines
- 25** Cathay Pacific Airways
- Virgin Atlantic Airways
- 24** Emirates
- ANA (All Nippon Airways)
- Air New Zealand
- 23** Japan Airlines (JAL)
- Qantas Airways
- Thai Airways
- Malaysia Airlines

#### ECONOMY

- 23** Singapore Airlines
- 21** Emirates
- 20** Thai Airways
- ANA (All Nippon Airways)
- Air New Zealand
- 19** Cathay Pacific Airways
- Virgin Atlantic Airways
- Japan Airlines (JAL)
- Korean Air
- 18** Malaysia Airlines

### COMFORT

#### PREMIUM

- 28** Singapore Airlines
- 27** Virgin Atlantic Airways
- 25** Cathay Pacific Airways
- 24** British Airways
- Air New Zealand
- Qantas Airways
- Emirates
- ANA (All Nippon Airways)
- South African Airways
- 23** Malaysia Airlines

#### ECONOMY

- 22** Singapore Airlines
- 19** Emirates
- Air New Zealand
- WestJet
- 18** Virgin Atlantic Airways
- Thai Airways
- 17** ANA (All Nippon Airways)
- Cathay Pacific Airways
- Qantas Airways
- Korean Air

### SERVICE

#### PREMIUM

- 29** Singapore Airlines
- 27** Cathay Pacific Airways
- 26** Virgin Atlantic Airways
- Asiana Airlines
- Thai Airways
- ANA (All Nippon Airways)
- 25** Japan Airlines (JAL)
- Malaysia Airlines
- 24** Emirates
- Air New Zealand

#### ECONOMY

- 26** Singapore Airlines
- 23** Thai Airways
- ANA (All Nippon Airways)
- WestJet
- 22** Japan Airlines (JAL)
- Emirates
- Cathay Pacific Airways
- Air New Zealand
- 21** Virgin Atlantic Airways
- Korean Air

\* Overall is the average of Comfort, Service and Food scores.

## FOOD

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### PREMIUM

- 27** Singapore Airlines
- 24** Cathay Pacific Airways
- 23** Emirates  
Virgin Atlantic Airways  
ANA (All Nippon Airways)
- 22** Austrian Airlines  
Air New Zealand  
Japan Airlines (JAL)
- 21** Asiana Airlines  
Qantas Airways

### ECONOMY

- 23** Singapore Airlines
- 21** Emirates
- 19** Thai Airways  
Cathay Pacific Airways  
Korean Air  
ANA (All Nippon Airways)  
Virgin Atlantic Airways
- 18** Malaysia Airlines  
Japan Airlines (JAL)  
Air France

## WEBSITE

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- 21** Continental Airlines  
Virgin Atlantic Airways  
Singapore Airlines
- 20** American Airlines  
Cathay Pacific Airways

- 19** Qantas Airways  
Alaska Airlines  
WestJet  
British Airways
- 18** Delta Air Lines

## NON-U.S. AIRPORTS

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### BEST OVERALL

1. Hong Kong International
2. Singapore Changi
3. Munich International
4. Tel Aviv Ben Gurion
5. Amsterdam Schiphol

### WORST OVERALL

1. Paris Charles de Gaulle
2. Beijing Capital
3. Rome Fiumicino
4. London Heathrow
5. London Gatwick



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**INTERNATIONAL  
AIRLINES  
DIRECTORY**

## INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

COMFORT  
FOOD  
SERVICE  
WEBSITE

### Aer Lingus

14 12 17 15

800-223-6537 | [www.aerlingus.com](http://www.aerlingus.com)

"Cheap and cheerful", especially given the "lilting voices" of the crew, this Irish airline in the oneworld group generally "lives up to expectations", offering "budget" travel nonstop to Dublin (an "easy transfer point for Europe"); still, some take issue with "tight" seating, occasional "lights on" during overnight flights and "no-frills" service; hopefully its "promised new planes will improve things" in coming years.

### Aeroflot Russian Airlines

8 6 7 7

888-340-6400 | [www.aeroflot.ru/eng](http://www.aeroflot.ru/eng)

The Russian state-owned airline became a SkyTeam member in 2006 and has risen above its "image from the past", especially for "lucky" business class fliers who savor "red caviar and vodka" proffered by a "motherly" crew; however, as its ratings show it still has "a long way to go", with "well-worn" seats and "chaotic" terminals that are reminiscent of pre-Gorbachev days.

### Aerolineas Argentinas

11 11 13 9

800-333-0276 | [www.aerolineas.com.ar](http://www.aerolineas.com.ar)

Travelers note there's "not much difference" between business class and economy on this Argentine carrier; unfortunately, many on both sides of the curtain complain about "old jets", "canceled flights" and "minimal service", not to mention an overly "complicated" website; in sum this airline has a lot of "catching up" to do all around.

### AeroMexico

13 12 14 13

800-237-6639 | [www.aeromexico.com](http://www.aeromexico.com)

"Punctual" service and "free liquor" in economy class are advantages of this Mexican SkyTeam member that many find a "good value for the money"; while some cite "old seating in shorter flights", many are pleased with the "better space" in its newer "modern" planes.

### Air Canada

14 9 14 16

888-247-2262 | [www.aircanada.com](http://www.aircanada.com)

"The only game in town for many Canadian flights", this Star Alliance carrier has many fliers finding it "ok by North American standards, but not by global" ones, especially considering its "inconsistent" service; while some say it has "stripped down to a budget airline", others are satisfied by the "great legroom" and say it's taken a "step forward" in business class, with "flat beds" on some planes.

### Air China

10 9 12 7

866-270-5897 | [www.fly-airchina.com](http://www.fly-airchina.com)

It's "changing for the better" but this decidedly "generic" state-owned Chinese carrier "still lacks the polish of an international airline"; among the gripes are "chaotic" boarding, variable food and "crammed" seating, but a "courteous" staff may help smooth out the ride.

### Air France

15 18 16 15

800-237-2747 | [www.airfrance.us](http://www.airfrance.us)

*Les amis* of this SkyTeam airline (now merged with KLM) report that it's "tuned in for quality" when it comes to "food, wine and comfort"; some say the "stylish" staff ("world leaders in the dramatic opening and closing of galley curtains!") "caters to French customers" and can be

## INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

COMFORT  
FOOD  
SERVICE  
WEBSITE

“uncooperative” on the ground; still, many agree that once airborne, the service is “gracious” (and the “free champagne” doesn’t hurt).

### Air India

8 | 12 | 10 | 7

800-223-7776 | [www.airindia.com](http://www.airindia.com)

The meals on this Indian carrier are a “pleasant change from the usual” in-flight fare (“if you don’t mind curry”), but otherwise patrons warn of “ancient” planes, a “dreadful” check-in process and “next-to-useless” website; while first class is “a far cry” from the “crowded” economy section, many passengers feel that it “needs to take some lessons from other airlines” when it comes to comfort and service.

### Air Jamaica

13 | 14 | 15 | 11

800-523-5585 | [www.airjamaica.com](http://www.airjamaica.com)

Good-humored guests praise the “party atmosphere”, “personable” crew and free drinks that “get you in the island mood” on this small Jamaican airline; “plenty of legroom” is another perk, though “last-minute cancellations”, a “disorganized” check-in process and “negligible food” dampen its Caribbean charm.

### Air New Zealand

19 | 18 | 22 | 17

800-262-1234 | [www.airnewzealand.com](http://www.airnewzealand.com)

“A dream to fly” enthuse the many admirers of this “premium” New Zealand airline, a member of Star Alliance, offering “impressively comfortable” seating (especially the “flat beds” in Business Premier), “fantastic food” and “awesome kiwi wines”; “modern” planes and “exceptional” service make it a “top contender for long-haul flights.”

### Alaska Airlines

15 | 11 | 19 | 19

800-252-7522 | [www.alaskaair.com](http://www.alaskaair.com)

It’s “convenient” and “good at getting there on time” say satisfied customers of this “consistent” airline offering service to Canada and Mexico (a “hidden gem” for some routes); most report that the “accommodating” flight attendants offset the “basic” food and “cramped” seating.

### Alitalia

12 | 13 | 12 | 12

800-223-5730 | [www.alitalia.com](http://www.alitalia.com)

While it “offers better food than most”, this Italian SkyTeam member gets knocked on almost every other count, from “delayed” flights to “shabby”-looking cabins to the crew’s “appalling attitude”; many find service on the ground “difficult” too (“don’t form close bonds with your luggage”).

### American Airlines

12 | 9 | 13 | 20

800-433-7300 | [www.aa.com](http://www.aa.com)

“Lots of routes” are the main draw of this oneworld member that offers a “passable” “middle-of-the-road” experience (“nothing special in the air”); the “seat comfort depends on the type of plane you’re flying”, ditto the “uneven” service (stronger on international flights); on the plus side, its “punctuality” and website “upgrade” are both liked.

### ANA (All Nippon Airways)

17 | 19 | 23 | 17

800-235-9262 | [www.fly-ana.com](http://www.fly-ana.com)

“Gracious”, “refined” service and “delicious” food win compliments for this “well-run” Japanese member of Star Alliance that pleases with

## INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

“premium economy cabins”; on the downside, a few find the seats too “small” and the airline generally geared more toward “Japanese fliers” than Westerners.

**Asiana Airlines**

▽ 15 | 19 | 22 | 12

800-227-4262 | www.us.flyasiana.com

“A good choice for less expensive flights in Asia”, this Korean carrier in the Star Alliance group is known for “warm, polished cabin crews” and “fantastic” meals; still, as there’s a “vast difference between the old fleet and new”, some passengers are stuck with “tight”, “worn” seats, while others are treated to “upgraded” entertainment options on newer planes.

**Austrian Airlines**

15 | 16 | 18 | 15

800-843-0002 | www.aua.com

“On-time” service, “competent” crews and “hearty” meals (especially for long-haul, business class customers catered to by an onboard chef) add up to an overall “pleasant” experience on this Star Alliance airline; true, it strikes some as merely “average”, but the Vienna hub makes it easy to “jump into Europe.”

**Avianca**

▽ 16 | 16 | 19 | 11

800-284-2622 | www.avianca.com

It’s fairly “bare-bones” say customers of this Colombian airline who characterize the cabins as “a little run-down”, also citing “overbooking” and language difficulties (“if you don’t speak Spanish”) both on-board and online; still, “spacious” legroom, “friendly” attendants and even “real meals” do their part to “change that ‘rusty’ image.”

**bmi**

14 | 9 | 15 | 14

800-788-0555 | www.flybmi.com

This “cheap” and “cheerful” Heathrow-based carrier (and Star Alliance affiliate) is best for “short hops around Europe” though it does offer nonstop service to select U.S. cities via Manchester; surveyors reckon “you get what you pay for” on this “no frills, no thrills” provider, i.e. “adequate” food and “functional service.”

**British Airways**

15 | 14 | 17 | 19

800-247-9297 | www.ba.com

“Good old English know-how” is alive and well on this “reliable” one-world affiliate where “first class is first class” and economy fluctuates between an “afterthought” and a “cattle car” (even so, the cheap seats are “head and shoulders above” most U.S. airlines); flat-bed seats (available in business and first) are “godsend on long hauls”, compensating for the “predictable food” and “the chaos that is Heathrow.”

**✈ Cathay Pacific Airways**

17 | 19 | 22 | 20

800-233-2742 | www.cathay-usa.com

The “flight attendants actually attend” you on this oneworld member with service so “exceptional” that some actually “wish their flights were longer”; all other facets of this “Ritz-in-the-sky” experience are similarly “world class”, with particular kudos for its “cream of the crop” airport lounges and onboard entertainment options rivaling “Times Square on a Saturday night”; in short, they “value their customers.”

## INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

COMFORT  
FOOD  
SERVICE  
WEBSITE

### China Airlines

12 12 15 9

800-227-5118 | www.china-airlines.com

"Good" if "not luxurious" sums up the reaction to this Taiwan-based transporter serving most of Asia (but not mainland China) at rates that are somewhat "cheaper" than the high-profile competition; "not bad" service is blunted by "outdated movies", "less-than-comfortable" seating and "worn-out" cabins in need of an "upgrade."

### China Southern Airlines

11 10 13 6

888-338-8988 | www.flychinasouthern.com

"No frills" says it all about this "adequate" Chinese carrier that allows you to "be at one with the common folk", while boasting "new planes" and "on time" schedules; on the other hand, the seats are "cramped", the service "lacks polish" and as for the food, "it might be better not to eat."

### Continental Airlines

15 13 17 21

800-525-0280 | www.continental.com

"Often comparable to the best foreign competition", this SkyTeam member boasts "convenient schedules", "many nonstops" and "bend-over-backward" service (insiders insist "BusinessFirst is the only way to travel"); maybe some planes "need to be refreshed" - and "improved with lie-flat beds" - but the overall package is well "above average" and there's seemingly "nothing their website can't do."

### CSA Czech Airlines

14 14 17 12

800-223-2365 | www.czechairlines.com

"Great for a nonstop flight into Prague", this SkyTeam affiliate is "passenger oriented" with "efficient" service and "value" pricing; surveyors say it's best for "short hauls" ("why bother with first class?") since the "small seats" and "small planes" are only "fairly comfortable" and fitted out with "'80s-style entertainment systems."

### Delta Air Lines

12 12 15 18

800-221-1212 | www.delta.com

"Ok but not up to" top international standards, this SkyTeam member has somewhat "improved since coming out of bankruptcy" and manages to "get the job done" with "passable" food and "friendly" if "Americanized" service; sure, some "cabins need retrofitting", yet even if they're "not the best in the business", "they do try" hard.

### EgyptAir

▽ 10 8 11 7

800-334-6787 | www.egyptair.com.eg

This "pretty basic" Cairo-based airline (the newest member of the Star Alliance) is Egypt's national carrier and though "ok for local travel", it may be too "cramped" for longer hauls; given "not very good crowd control" and the "need for new planes", some feel they're "not ideal for the U.S. traveler."

### EL AL

14 16 17 15

800-223-6700 | www.elal.com

"No one does security better" than this Israeli fleet where the staff "actually seems to want your business" and is so "accommodating" and "focused" that most feel "really safe"; "oy vey", the cabin can be "noisy" and their website "confusing", but the kosher food is "better than expected" and "even economy ain't so bad."

## INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

COMFORT  
FOOD  
SERVICE  
WEBSITE

### ✈ Emirates

19 21 22 17

800-777-3999 | [www.emirates.com/usa](http://www.emirates.com/usa)

"Top-of-the-line everything" makes it "fun to fly" on this Dubai-based airline where the "sheer luxury" of first class (awash in "space, privacy and caviar") extends to a "surprisingly comfortable" economy section with food and service so "incredible" that only the "seat reminds you that you're in coach"; swanky extras like "superlative entertainment systems" and "world-class" airport lounges remind old-timers of the "early days" of air travel "when passengers were pampered."

### Eos Airlines

29 27 28 21

800-458-1277 | [www.eosairlines.com](http://www.eosairlines.com)

What may be the "best transatlantic experience for the money", this new carrier approximates a "private jet" experience with "only 48 passengers" aboard a plane built to hold 220; "great food", "comfortable sleeper seats" and "low business-class prices" are all part of the "amazing" package; though it only flies from New York/JFK to London at present (and lands at Britain's Stansted Airport, a "drawback"), Paris and Newark will be added to the route map in 2008.

### EVA Air

17 18 20 15

800-695-1188 | [www.evaair.com](http://www.evaair.com)

Known for pioneering the concept of different economy classes, this Taiwanese carrier offers some of the "best deals in the air", notably its "minimal upgrade" to Evergreen Deluxe status that's "worth every cent you pay"; while comfort levels "depend on the aircraft" (the newer planes are naturally "quite nice"), "at least they smile when they cram you into a tiny seat."

### Finnair

17 15 20 14

800-950-5000 | [www.finnair.com](http://www.finnair.com)

If "headed to Helsinki", there's "nothing better" than this Finnish one-world affiliate featuring "exemplary" food, "aim-to-please" service and some of the "cleanest cabins" around; though a few find it "predictable" verging on "boring", economy prices are a "good deal" and the "recently improved website" is "much better" than its previous incarnation.

### Iberia

11 11 12 12

800-772-4642 | [www.iberia.com](http://www.iberia.com)

"Passable" is the word on this Spanish airline, a oneworld member based in Madrid providing a "rough-around-the-edges" experience that "definitely feels like a state-run carrier" owing to the "dated" cabins, "not tasty" food and service that "doesn't go the extra mile"; on a more positive note, prices are "low" enough to make them "serviceable for short flights."

### Icelandair

14 13 19 16

800-223-5500 | [www.icelandair.com](http://www.icelandair.com)

Almost all the flights of this "straightforward" carrier stop at Reykjavik, the capital of "fabulous Iceland", which does help to "break up the trip", plus there are special stayover deals to promote local tourism; overall, the airline is "great pricewise" (despite a "no-legroom" economy class that's "more like a U.S. carrier") and as a bonus, the flight attendants are "tall, blonde" and "courteous."

## INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

COMFORT  
FOOD  
SERVICE  
WEBSITE

### Japan Airlines (JAL)

16 18 22 17

800-525-3663 | www.ar.jal.com

This Japanese oneworld member reminds nostalgic passengers that “flying can still be exciting and pleasant” thanks to “refreshingly friendly” service, “modern entertainment systems” and “exceptional” food that “actually tastes like something one might eat on land”; “petite” seats in the “nothing-fancy” economy cabin seem to be its major shortcoming.

### KLM Royal Dutch Airlines

15 15 19 16

800-225-2525 | www.klm.com

Following a merger with Air France, this longtime Dutch carrier and SkyTeam member remains as “reliable” as ever, with especially “pleasant service”, though critics claim “they have a lot of catch-up to do in business class”; furthermore, U.S. travelers report a “confusing website” that redirects you to the Northwest home page for booking in the States.

### Korean Air

17 19 21 13

800-438-5000 | www.koreanair.com

“Getting better” all the time, this Seoul-based carrier (and SkyTeam affiliate) showed the most marked improvement since our last Airline Survey, particularly in its “high level of service” and in the “roomy” first-class cabin where night flights are “like sleeping in the clouds”; “old-style” seating and an “unfriendly website” detract, but overall they’re “working hard to compete in a tough market.”

### LAN Airlines

15 15 19 15

866-435-9526 | www.lan.com

A “desire to serve is what makes the difference” on this “professional” Chilean carrier (and oneworld member) offering nonstop routes to select Latin American destinations for a “fair price”; maybe their “website is still in the ‘90s” and the food onboard is just “decent”, but this airline “gets the job done” well enough to remind some of the “era when airlines actually cared about their customers.”

### L'Avion

▽ 21 16 18 13

866-692-6759 | www.lavion.com

This new Paris–New York/Newark carrier is a business class–only venture with just 90 seats in an aircraft designed for 220, yet it features prices that are “less expensive” than competitors’ premium classes; while “certainly better than coach” (thanks to touches like “individual DVD players” and four feet of legroom), there’s “only one aircraft in the fleet” at present, though a second plane is to be added in January 2008.

### LOT Polish Airlines

▽ 13 11 13 12

212-789-0970 | www.lot.com

Based in Warsaw, Poland’s national carrier falls somewhere between “average” and “not bad”, but is “certainly not up to the level of Western fleets and not even close to the Asian airlines”; still, it has an “old-time traditional” feel that appeals to nostalgic types, while its membership in the Star Alliance pleases modernists.

### Lufthansa

15 15 18 18

800-399-5838 | www.lufthansa-usa.com

“Typical German efficiency” makes for a “well-oiled machine” on this German Star Alliance member that’s “not warm and fuzzy but reli-

## INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

able", with "planes that run on time, of course"; nitpickers say "business class is more pedestrian" than most and overall the carrier "lags behind the others in seat comfort and food quality", but fans insist it's "perfectly nice for short hauls"; P.S. "Frankfurt airport isn't their fault."

**Malaysia Airlines**

16 | 18 | 20 | 13

800-552-9264 | www.malaysiaairlines.com

Experience "air travel the way it used to be" via this "accommodating" Malaysian airline featuring "spacious seating", "attentive" service and a "very good" food menu (that's "very big on satay"); too bad there are no code-sharing agreements with other carriers, but the "wonderful lounge in the Kuala Lumpur airport" helps distract from this "real weakness."

**Malév Hungarian Airlines**

▽ 13 | 13 | 14 | 11

800-223-6884 | www.malev.hu

Given that there are "not many options to Budapest", this "old-school" Hungarian carrier is a "reasonably comfortable", "reasonably priced" option that also "serves proper meals on short flights" and is a one-world affiliate to boot; still, downsides include "small" planes, "rude" service and sundry "website problems."

**MAXjet**

23 | 20 | 21 | 18

800-435-9629 | www.maxjet.com

Offering only "business class seats at premium economy prices", this boutique carrier flies nonstop from New York, Las Vegas and Los Angeles to London's Stansted Airport; drawbacks like "recycled planes" and "frequent delays" are counterbalanced by "excellent value" and "flight attendants who seem like they actually want to be flying."

**Mexicana**

12 | 12 | 15 | 12

800-531-7921 | www.mexicana.com

"Basic" seems to sum up the in-flight experience on this "no-frills" Mexican airline, offering "fair to middling" food and "service similar to the level of a U.S. carrier" (critics snipe they were "glad it wasn't an overnight flight"); complicating matters is a "confusing website" where it's "difficult to get results."

**Northwest Airlines**

13 | 11 | 14 | 18

800-225-2525 | www.nwa.com

Surveyors split on this U.S. SkyTeam member: fans tout "refitted" planes, "great in-flight entertainment" and "state-of-the-art seating" (in premium classes), but foes fret about "dull" menus that "rarely change" and "dour" service that was "better when they were in bankruptcy"; ultimately, the ayes win out: it's "not a bad option - if you have to choose an American airline."

**Olympic Airlines**

10 | 10 | 10 | 9

800-223-1226 | www.olympicairlines.com

Some of the "best prices to Greece" around are the main selling point of this otherwise "unpredictable" air carrier that many say is "fraying at the seams"; "shabby" cabins, "nonexistent service", "no e-tickets" and "old-fashioned seats" are bummers, but for "quick flights between Crete and Athens", it's a "good value."

## INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

COMFORT  
FOOD  
SERVICE  
WEBSITE

### Philippine Airlines

▽ 12 | 12 | 15 | 9

800-435-9725 | [www.philippineairlines.com](http://www.philippineairlines.com)

Fans feel “welcome” on this “friendly” Philippine carrier based in Manila that may feature “not as many amenities as other airlines” but compensates with “bargain” tariffs; granted, the “snacks are stingy” and “their in-flight entertainment has seen better days”, but pragmatists say the ride in economy is “just like everybody else’s.”

### Qantas Airways

17 | 17 | 20 | 19

800-227-4500 | [www.qantas.com.au](http://www.qantas.com.au)

“One of the best for long flights”, this “doesn’t-miss-a-beat” Australian oneworld member is “impeccable” in the premium classes and “better than average” in the “back of the bus”; the “relaxed Aussie style” translates into “comfortable” trips both onboard and in the terminal (“they practically carried us through immigration and customs”), while the “easy to navigate” website “shows you different flight pricing options.”

### Royal Air Maroc

▽ 13 | 12 | 15 | 8

800-344-6726 | [www.royalairmaroc.com/Marchand/Eng](http://www.royalairmaroc.com/Marchand/Eng)

Ok, there’s “nothing royal about it”, but this Moroccan carrier is a “great way to go nonstop” to Casablanca, although “that’s about it”; travelers report “abrupt” service and “baggage handling that takes forever”, and note the need for “new planes” and a “better website.”

### SAS (Scandinavian Airlines System)

15 | 14 | 18 | 15

800-221-2350 | [www.flysas.com](http://www.flysas.com)

This “civilized” Star Alliance member earns “solid-performer” status for its “attentive” staff, “great” in-flight Internet connections and “spacious” seating (though some economy customers find it “too tight” if you don’t opt for Economy Extra); although critics call the service rather “cool”, “Swedish meatballs and a Tuborg” help warm up travelers, plus “Copenhagen airport as a hub is magnificent.”

### Silverjet

▽ 23 | 20 | 23 | 21

877-359-7458 | [www.flysilverjet.com](http://www.flysilverjet.com)

Travelers from New York to London (with Dubai being the latest destination) tout this single-class “little gem” for its “superb service” and “relaxing” lounges in private terminals; some sniff it’s “not as comfortable as hyped”, adding that the Luton airport is “out-of-the-way”, but the majority maintains this “business class alternative” is a “good idea” as well as a “good value.”

### ✈ Singapore Airlines

22 | 23 | 26 | 21

800-742-3333 | [www.singaporeair.com](http://www.singaporeair.com)

“Reminiscent of the golden age of flying”, this “superlative” airline (a Star Alliance member) is rated No. 1 once again by surveyors who “love” its “sumptuous” “up-to-date” aircraft, “sensational” crew and “superior” meals; though a few economy fliers would like “more legroom” in coach, most agree that economy “surpasses the business class” of other carriers, and first class is pure “luxury.”

### South African Airways

16 | 16 | 18 | 14

800-722-9675 | [www.flysaa.com](http://www.flysaa.com)

“Welcoming” service, “comfortable” seating and “on-time” flights add up to a “pleasant” experience on this South African carrier in the Star

## INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

Alliance group; while a few customers fault the website and reservation system, most are satisfied onboard by the “full meals” and “in-seat entertainment screen” – “a life-saver” for the long haul.

### Swiss International Air Lines 16 | 16 | 19 | 17

877-359-7947 | [www.swiss.com](http://www.swiss.com)

“French flair and Teutonic efficiency” come together in this “reliable” Basel-based airline (a Star Alliance affiliate) that recently merged with Lufthansa; although some surveyors find the design rather “old”, “spare” and in need of an “upgrade”, others appreciate the “competent” staff and perks like “tasty food” – “who can argue with Swiss chocolate?”

### TACA ▽ 11 | 9 | 13 | 10

800-400-8222 | [www.taca.com](http://www.taca.com)

Considering that it offers some of the “cheapest fares to South America”, many travelers are “surprised” by this Salvadoran carrier’s “new fleet” and its “professional, attentive” flight attendants; “direct” flights are another bonus, but some peeved patrons note the extra charge for food and say a “prop plane would be more comfortable.”

### TAP Portugal 13 | 12 | 14 | 10

800-221-7370 | [www.flytap.com](http://www.flytap.com)

A “good deal” and convenient routes are often the main draw for travelers on this Portuguese Star Alliance airline that otherwise strikes many as “mediocre” with “inconsistent” service; its “confusing” website can also be a deterrent, though a few find the carrier “improved” in recent years, with “spacious” seats for economy class.

### ✈ Thai Airways 18 | 19 | 23 | 15

800-426-5204 | [www.thaiair.com](http://www.thaiair.com)

“Signature Thai hospitality” with “attention to detail” impresses fliers on this Star Alliance carrier known for “lovely service” and “enticing menus”; although a few cite “small seats” on older planes and say the premium seating is “not good for sleeping”, its newer aircraft (with a “sherbet”-like color scheme) offer “bright LCD screens” and “great legroom for economy.”

### Turkish Airlines 16 | 17 | 18 | 13

800-874-8875 | [www.flyturkish.com](http://www.flyturkish.com)

“Efficient, on-time” service boosted by a “quick and easy” check-in process makes for “happy” passengers on this “nicely run” Turkish carrier; while pickier types find it fairly “perfunctory”, most call the crew “accommodating”, the legroom “adequate” and the food “decent” “even on short domestic flights.”

### United Airlines 12 | 10 | 12 | 18

800-241-6522 | [www.united.com](http://www.united.com)

With “extra legroom”, “Economy Plus is the way to go” assert fliers of this airline that facilitates worldwide travel with its “Star Alliance code shares and connections”; otherwise, critics say “mooo” to regular economy (where they “pack you in”) and call business class “variable” until “lie-flat seating is fully implemented”; in sum, the remaining “outmoded” cabins, “surly” “staff attitudes” and “ordinary” food “just don’t compare to many of the international carriers.”

## INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

COMFORT  
FOOD  
SERVICE  
WEBSITE

### US Airways

10 8 11 15

800-428-4322 | www.usairways.com

Surveyors say this Star Alliance member's "international product is better than its domestic" and benefits from "transparency in pricing", but it ranks overall as an "average airline" with service that can fluctuate "wildly"; "small, small planes and long, long flights" with "poor food" are part of the reason fliers call for an "overhaul", while even Envoy Class offers "more room and little else."

### Varig

12 12 13 9

800-468-2744 | www.varig.com

"Recovering from bankruptcy with style", this former Star Alliance carrier (recently purchased by São Paulo-based Gol Airlines) offers a "choice of entrees and wines in economy - a flash from the past"; still, some find it "unreliable", with cabins that "should be in museums", "way too little" seat separation and attendants that are "not sufficient in number to handle a full flight."

### Vietnam Airlines

12 12 16 7

866-677-8909 | www.vietnamairlines.com

"Nice, new planes" and a "competent" staff make this state-owned Vietnam carrier a "reasonable" choice for long and short flights; thought some say it "still has a long way to go" ("feels like being on the back of the bus") and the website "needs an update", there are "no major gaffes" to set it back.

### Virgin Atlantic Airways

18 19 21 21

800-862-8621 | www.virgin-atlantic.com

You "feel like a rock star" on Richard Branson's "chic" British outfit that "reduces the size of the pond to an enjoyable puddle" with a "verve unmatched by other airlines"; Upper Class passengers "love" the "stand-up cocktail bar", "pampering" treatment (sometimes including massages and manicures) and "pod seats" with "180-degree beds", not to mention the "heavenly" Heathrow lounge housing a free restaurant, salon and spa; those who find the seats "cramped" in economy advise "Premium Economy is worth the difference in price."

### WestJet

19 11 23 19

888-937-8538 | www.westjet.com

This "low-cost" "winner from north of the border" provides a "fresh" one-class alternative for travel around the U.S., Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean; its "extremely friendly" crews "go out of their way to serve passengers" and the "seats are comfy" with "onboard TV", so even if the "food is limited", most agree it "can't be beat" for short hauls.