

Inflight



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An MRO ANatomy
ANA upgrades its IFE

**Revolution in
airbourne Wi-Fi**
The quest for free IFC

A star is born
STARLUX takes to the skies



Illy CEO Andrea Illy enjoys a cup of illy premium dark roast coffee with a United flight attendant, on the announcement of its global coffee partnership in 2015.

A welcome

cup of Joe

A mathematician,

a physicist and a materials expert walk into a café and order the perfect cup of coffee. This may sound like the start of a joke, but a team of such researchers at the University of Portsmouth claims to have found the key to making the ultimate espresso.

The answer it seems is fewer coffee beans, ground more coarsely. The result, according to the study published in the journal *Matter*, is a drink that is cheaper to make, more consistent from shot to shot, and just as strong.

According to Dr Jamie Foster, a mathematician at the University's School of Mathematics and Physics, the starting point was to create a new mathematical theory to describe extraction from a single grain, many millions of which comprise a coffee 'bed' which you would find in the basket of an espresso machine.

Says Dr Foster: "The conventional wisdom is that if you want a stronger cup of coffee, you should grind your coffee finer. This makes sense because the finer the grounds mean that more surface area of coffee bean is exposed to water, which should mean a stronger coffee."

However, "When beans were ground finely, the particles were so small that in some regions of the bed they clogged up the space where the water should be flowing," Dr Foster said.

Coffee is one of the world's most widely traded commodities. On average, 95 million cups of coffee are consumed on a daily basis in the UK, with fresh ground coffee pods generating a turnover of £305 million in 2017. With such a thirst, have airlines woken up and smelt the coffee, asks Alexander Preston

"These clogged sections of the bed are wasted because the water cannot flow through them and access that tasty coffee that you want in your cup. If we grind a bit coarser, we can access the whole bed and have a more efficient extraction.

"It's also cheaper, because when the grind setting is changed, we can use fewer beans and be kinder to the environment.

"Once we found a way to make shots efficiently, we realised that as well as making coffee shots that stayed reliably the same, we were using less coffee."

But could this research be in vain for the airline industry, after the 2019 Airline Water Study newly released by DietDetective.com and the Hunter College NYC Food Policy Center at the City University of New York revealed that





United is upgrading its Kosher coffee to provide both regular and decaf Illy coffee within all cabins over the next several months.

the quality of drinking water varies by airline, and many airlines have possibly provided passengers with unhealthy water.

The study noted that as an aircraft flies to numerous destinations it may pump drinking water into its tanks from various sources at domestic and international locations. The water quality onboard also depends on the safety of the equipment used to transfer the water, such as water cabinets, trucks, carts and hoses.

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE...

Unhealthy water violates the US federal government’s Aircraft Drinking Water Rule (ADWR), which was implemented in 2011 and requires airlines to provide passengers and flight crew with safe drinking water.

“Alaska Airlines and Allegiant win the top spot with the safest water in the sky, and Hawaiian Airlines finishes No. 2,” says Charles Platkin, PhD, JD, MPH, the Editor of DietDetective.com and the Executive Director of the Hunter College NYC Food Policy Center. He advises that to be extra safe: “Do not drink coffee or tea onboard.”

But it’s a message that doesn’t seem to be resonating that much with passengers.

According to beverage solutions provider SkyTender, “We’ve noticed a very clear trend among passengers; the expectation of a premium coffee offering as a lifestyle product. What was once a luxury product is now part of almost every passenger’s morning routine.

“This is a far cry from coffee that is served onboard to the majority of passengers, limited in choice and from poor quality water sources. Our mission has been to be

“ Once we found a way to make shots efficiently, we realised that as well as making coffee shots that stayed reliably the same, we were using less coffee. ”

instrumental in that change and actually make it happen.”

In 2019, the company unveiled its SkyBarista range, including a coffee trolley, trialled on numerous flights with overwhelmingly positive results from passengers and crew alike.

SkyTender claims to have been the first to offer coffee specialties brewed with the purest quality water, freshly prepared in front of the passenger.

SkyBarista offers authentic barista coffee quality and 50 shades of choice: several blends and

hints from toasted hazelnut, to caramel or a subtle touch of dark chocolate.

According to the company, its various solutions have a certain intelligence which helps in the supply chain optimisation. “The intelligence of our systems allows for the close tracking of consumption and related trends onboard, supply chain optimisation and inventory control and shrinkage control”.

COFFEE-FUELLED CREATIVITY

B/E Aerospace (now Collins Aerospace) and Nespresso worked in close co-operation to develop a machine that produces the highest level of in-cup quality to meet Nespresso’s exacting standards.

More than 15 % lighter and designed to be significantly more reliable than competing products, the new Nespresso machine features a fully automatic brewhead that requires the user to do nothing more than insert a Nespresso capsule and at the press of a button, brew a Nespresso Ristretto, Espresso or Lungo.

When United began serving Illy coffee on all its flights in mid-2016, it did so having deployed a team of food and beverage experts and engaged employees in both the airport and onboard. While in-flight, employees and customers tasted several brands and blends and provided their feedback.

Illy’s Research and Development team spent months testing many parameters for brewing and serving coffee in flight ranging from different roasts to grind size in order to achieve the highest quality cup of coffee

The SkyBarista platform, from SkyTender, can increase ancillary sales and customer satisfaction by serving a variety of coffee specialties, in a cup or as a pot service.





Nespresso has worked with airlines since 1994, focused primarily on the First and Business Class cabins.



Lion Coffee is the favourite local coffee of Hawaii residents, and complements the airline's existing menu of island-inspired beverages and cuisine.

when brewed and served at 35,000 feet. The team recommended a darker roast bean to ensure a bold flavour with noticeable chocolate notes. After testing the blend with customers, they most frequently selected Illy's dark roast as the best taste.

A similar research process was undertaken by Hawaii Coffee Company, which recently announced a multi-year agreement with Hawaiian Airlines to serve its Lion Coffee onboard its aircraft.

"We consider many product attributes when looking for the best coffee to serve our guests, specifically the quality of the roast and the overall sensory experience," said Renee Awana, Managing Director of Product Development at Hawaiian Airlines.

"Lion Coffee developed the Exclusive Blend for Hawaiian Airlines to deliver the best cup of coffee brewed at high altitudes. Hot water boils at a lower temperature in-flight than on the ground, which is not enough to extract the

optimal flavour characteristics for a rich cup of coffee. At the same time, lower humidity onboard reduces the palate sensitivity. Lion Coffee steps up to these challenges with the Hawaiian Airlines Exclusive Blend which uses select 100% Arabica coffee beans most optimal for this blend, roasted a darker French roast to bring out the rich aroma and bold flavors when brewed onboard. The taste profile of the Exclusive Blend is smooth, full-bodied and bright, with a clean finish". ■


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