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Life

The Etiquette of Bringing Your Own Meal on a Plane; Los Angeles chef Nancy Silverton's advice for travelers with carry-on meals: Be considerate of your seatmates

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Flying is no picnic for chef **Nancy Silverton**. With airlines charging for in-flight meals, Los Angeles restaurateur has advice for travelers in search of the perfect carry-on meal.

It's a mistake to think about bringing food on a plane as you would brown-bag a lunch for the office or pack a picnic on the weekends, says Ms. **Silverton**, whose Mozza Restaurant Group is in California, but she travels frequently as a food personality. Travelers who want fresh foods cooked to taste with high-quality ingredients from home must take into account the security lines, needs of other airline passengers and tight space.

"You have to be very sensitive to the small amount of real estate on the tray table and to the people around you," says Ms. **Silverton**, the James Beard award winner for Outstanding Chef 2014. "Especially if you're in a middle seat."

TSA security rules forbidding liquids over 3 ounces stop many gourmet ambitions. Yogurt doesn't make it past the X-ray machines. Salad dressings or liquid condiments such as sriracha will get punted as you take off your shoes and pull out your laptop.

On board, be mindful of strong smells, says Ms. **Silverton**. The frequent flier who loves a tuna sandwich or stinky cheese might have seatmates that feel otherwise.

Elbows are a worry in the confines of economy class, so choose foods that don't need to be assembled before you eat them. Ms. **Silverton** suggests avoiding meals that require a knife and fork. But anything that can be eaten in a bowl with a spoon gets her nod of approval: grain salads, small pastas or chopped salads.

Since salads have to be dressed at home first, the long steep in salad dressing will make for soggy greens by the time you dine, Ms. **Silverton** says. Rather than choosing delicate lettuces, such as bibb or arugula, opt for sturdy leaves such as endive, romaine or chicory.

Finger food is Ms. **Silverton**'s preferred pick for an airplane meal, but hand-held nibbles come with their own cautionary rules. You have an audience of strangers so "think about what you want to watch someone else eat," says Ms. **Silverton**. "I'll never forget six people picking up whole chicken legs and chomping on them on a train ride, which was very unappealing."

Ms. **Silverton** suggests travelers bring pre-cut fruits such as apples so other passengers need not see you biting into a big item.

Sandwiches and wraps can be a healthy and fresh hand-held choice. While picnickers are warned off using mayonnaise that will be hours away from refrigeration, Ms. **Silverton** says your sandwich is unlikely to spend much time in direct sunlight. "I'm not skittish about food at room temperature."

Bread, cheese and charcuterie is the kind of substantial travel meal that can be assembled in a home kitchen or on the road as you begin the return journey from a long trip. And more often now, such items can even be

purchased in the airport terminal. Try a fresh baguette with sliced cured meats, such as salami or prosciutto, chunks of hard cheeses, such as Parmesan, with a fist full of olives, mixed nuts and dried fruits.

To accompany an onboard gourmet extravaganza, choose a red wine from the beverage cart Ms. **Silverton** suggests. "When I think of a plane, I think of red wine, warm mixed nuts and a book I can finish."

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