

Food for a long haul flight with food allergies

It can be daunting flying with food allergies, especially when it is a long haul flight and you need to pack your own food for the whole flight.

Remember that any cooked food that is not frozen (rice, salads, meat, eggs) will need to be in a cool pack. For food safety reasons, perishable foods should only be at room temperature for a maximum of 4 hours (the time it would normally take to get to the airport and get on the plane). Food can deteriorate very quickly in the plane if it is not kept cool – even bananas!

Here are some food ideas which you might find helpful (modify to suit your allergies):

Perishable items

- Cold fried rice/noodle salad
- Cous cous/chickpea/lentil salads
- Sandwiches with your favourite fillings
- Home-made frittata/quiche
- Cold chicken legs, lamb chops, ham, turkey, cold rissoles
- Cheese
- Hard boiled eggs
- Olives
- Fresh fruit and vegetable sticks
- Broadbeans
- Pizza (can be eaten cold)

Non-perishable items

- 2 minute noodle cups that you can ask for hot water to be added to in the galley.
- Dried fruit
- Crispbreads/crackers and avocado/dips
- Muesli bars
- Home-made pikelets/pancakes
- Popcorn
- Crisps
- Dried chickpeas/fava beans
- Single-serve cereal packets
- Home-made muffins/biscuits

Try to eat food that needs to be kept cold on the first leg of the flight. You can also try freezing foods (such as frittata, chicken legs, sandwiches and muffins) at home and letting them defrost over the course of the trip to keep them fresh rather than take ice.

If the airline will heat your food for you (most will not), make sure that you have foil containers with lids for heating the food in. Some people recommend taking the food in re-sealable plastic

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containers (that won't leak) and then transfer to the foil containers with lids for heating on the plane. Ensure that the food is heated until steaming to avoid food borne illness.

Always take your own plastic cutlery in case you don't get cutlery on the plane. With some airlines you can just order a fruit platter from the staff which comes with cutlery so that you can eat your food from home. Remember not to eat food that is unlabeled. It is important to note that just because you ordered a certain meal, does not mean that this is what you will be served, A&AA recommend that you always take your own food.

If you need to take an ice brick or gel (greater than 100ml) on the plane you will need a letter from your doctor regarding your need to take ice on board to keep food for the flight cold. Please be aware that customs may still confiscate the ice brick. The MedActiv icool Medicube can be useful for keeping foods cool on a flight. It keeps food between 2 and 8 degrees Celsius for 36 hours.

Learn more here:

<https://allergyfacts.org.au/shop/travel-accessories/medactiv-icool-medicube>

Take disposable wipes to wipe down surfaces such as the tray table, arm rests, screens, remote controls etc when you board, and then hands when you eat.

Customs

Make sure that you have your ASCIA Travel Plan (<https://www.allergy.org.au/anaphylaxis>) completed by your doctor. This letter outlines your need to carry adrenaline (epinephrine) autoinjectors and safe food for the flight.

For international flights you cannot take food with a high liquid content (e.g. sauces, soups, stewed fruit, yoghurt). The size of the container that has the liquid in it, must not exceed 100ml, regardless of what is inside.

Containers larger than 100mls or 100g, even if only partially filled with liquids will not be allowed through the security screening point. For example, a 200g tube of hand cream that is only half full will not be allowed.

If you are changing flights you may not be able to take fresh food on the next flight (depending on customs regulations in your stop over country). Your airline or customs/immigration at your stop over airport may be able to help with this information. Each airport generally has customs information on its website, however it can be difficult to work out if these regulations apply to stop overs. Note that once re-entering Australia, all fresh food must be disposed of before entering the customs and baggage collection areas.

Carry extra (non-perishable) food to allow for delays (and confiscated food) so that you are not tempted to eat unsafe food.

For more travel information head to the A&AA website:

<https://allergyfacts.org.au/allergy-management/risk/travelling-with-allergies>

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