

Airline starts to weigh luggage AND passengers

4th March 2024



Finland's national carrier Finnair has started weighing passengers on its flights from the capital city of Helsinki. The weigh-ins are being done on a voluntary basis and are completely anonymous. A company

spokesperson said the new initiative is to ensure safety standards on flights are adhered to. He said any airplane should not exceed the prescribed maximum weight for safe take-offs and landings. This weight is made up of the aircraft itself, the fuel, checked baggage and cargo, onboard catering, water tanks, and passengers. Finnair said airlines never know the exact weight of passengers and their carry-on baggage, so they have to rely on average estimates provided by aviation authorities.

Passengers who volunteer to be weighed are stepping on weighing scales at the departure gates at Helsinki Airport. Finnair officials were initially concerned about a customer backlash because weight is such a personal issue. However, in the first week of the tests, over 1,000 passengers had agreed to be weighed. The company said: "We hope to have a good sample of volunteers, both business and leisure travellers, so that we can get the most accurate information possible for important balance calculations." It added: "Our customers have taken it really positively so far." An official said travellers could "rest assured" and have "peace of mind" that their weight would not be linked to their personal data.

Sources: sky.com / theguardian.com / euronews.com

Writing

It is wrong to weigh people before they board an airplane. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

Finland / passengers / flights / capital city / anonymous / initiative / aircraft / cargo / volunteer / weighing scales / backlash / business / leisure / balance / peace of mind

True / False

- 1) All passengers flying with Finnair must now be weighed. T / F
- 2) Weight is important in ensuring safe take-offs and landings. T / F
- 3) The weight of an aircraft includes water tanks. T / F
- 4) Airlines know exactly how much their passengers weigh. T / F
- 5) Finnair said it had no concerns about a possible customer backlash. T / F
- 6) More than 1,000 passengers were weighed in a week. T / F
- 7) Finnair was not interested in weighing business class passengers. T / F
- 8) The weight of passengers is kept entirely confidential. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. carrier | a. comprised |
| 2. anonymous | b. retaliation |
| 3. initiative | c. precise |
| 4. made up of | d. unnamed |
| 5. exact | e. representative |
| 6. initially | f. airline |
| 7. backlash | g. cross section |
| 8. sample | h. details |
| 9. official | i. scheme |
| 10. data | j. at first |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Would you volunteer to be weighed?
- c) Are you worried about your weight?
- d) What might Finnair change after it finishes its tests?
- e) How much do you worry about the security of your personal data?
- f) What advice do you have for Finnair?
- g) What do you think of airports?
- h) What questions would you like to ask Finnair?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Finland's national | a. customer backlash |
| 2. being done on a voluntary | b. are adhered to |
| 3. ensure safety standards on flights | c. by aviation authorities |
| 4. the prescribed maximum weight | d. assured |
| 5. rely on average estimates provided | e. of mind |
| 6. departure | f. carrier Finnair |
| 7. initially concerned about a | g. gates |
| 8. Our customers have taken it really | h. for safe take-offs |
| 9. travellers could rest | i. positively so far |
| 10. have peace | j. basis |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of your national carrier?
- What do you think of being weighed before you fly?
- Should passengers pay for their ticket according to their weight?
- Do you ever worry that airplanes are too heavy?
- What do you think of flying?
- How safe is flying?
- Should there be more limits on the weight of baggage?
- What do you think of taking off and landing?

Spelling

- Finland's national iacerrr Finnair
- completely mnaynuoo
- the new ntvetiia
- exceed the bdircrpees maximum weight
- carry-on begagag
- iiavatno authorities
- at the aepreudt gates
- officials were intaiiy concerned
- a customer bhcklsaa
- get the most aucretac information
- important balance claoitnsaulc
- rest aesrdus

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. d	3. i	4. a	5. c
6. j	7. b	8. g	9. e	10. h

Role Play

Role A – Food

You think the food is the best thing about airplanes. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): seat comfort, in-flight entertainment or other passengers.

Role B – Seat Comfort

You think seat comfort is the best thing about airplanes. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): food, in-flight entertainment or other passengers.

Role C – In-flight Entertainment

You think the in-flight entertainment is the best thing about airplanes. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): seat comfort, food or other passengers.

Role D – Other Passengers

You think other passengers are the best thing about airplanes. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): seat comfort, in-flight entertainment or food.

Speaking – Airplanes

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things about airplanes at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| • Flying | • Seat comfort |
| • Food | • Other passengers |
| • Flight crew | • Reading material |
| • Legroom | • In-flight entertainment |

Answers – True False

1 F	2 T	3 T	4 F	5 F	6 T	7 F	8 T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.