



Jeremy Clark

# Plate weight

Jeremy Clark weighs in on the trend towards more ludicrous or tacky plating offerings onboard



If you happen to follow me on Twitter – and if you don't, then @trayset is where you need to be – you will know that I am regularly moved to point out ludicrous plating offerings in restaurants and share it with the very vocal @wewantplates movement.

Until now, airlines have largely avoided this pitfall but recently I was presented with a cheese selection on a slab of Welsh slate that weighed way more than the combined rest of the trayset provided.

That got me thinking about how little trayset equipment has changed. The standard trayset is pretty much the same as it was in the 1950s – sure the dishes are lighter or come in weird shapes, and disposables have increased but little else. Disposables I dislike intensely. On some Economy trays the packaging seems to outweigh the contents and is often more nutritious.

Business cabin equipment is conspicuous

by its sheer weight and quantity. Recently, I unravelled a napkin to be deluged by a tsunami of cutlery – more than I could ever use to eat the meal with and probably enough to open a small hotel. “Who needs this much?” I thought as half of it clattered noisily to the floor. They even brought additional silverware with the dessert so by the end my table looked more like a scrap metal yard.

One airline, I noticed recently, decided that the unoccupied area of the tray needs to be covered

by a 750g floor tile. Why?

That, times 124 seats is – er, well almost another passenger.

In my work I sometimes get to advise on this area of the service so here are my tips – for free.

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**Cutlery:** The standard knife, fork and spoon is just fine – we can use for both courses and if we want spares, we'll ask. Teaspoon can be optional with the hot drink. In Economy if using disposable then please be sure to offer ones that don't snap at the first stab of a pea.

**Cups:** Large enough for a proper drink. Forget any ridiculous thimbles designed by Coco Chanel or whoever. Think 'mug'. In Economy, think melamine. Never polystyrene – ever!

**Hot meals:** In Economy, bring back melamine or china please. Foils should be banned.

**Glasses:** Ones that don't tip over. Never plastic. The clue is in the name – GLASS.

**Trays:** Simple. Ones that don't slide off the table at the slightest opportunity.

**J Class cruets:** Make these into something the passenger can steal without guilt (see Virgin Atlantic's). Some 50% of them are going to get pinched anyway, just accept that.

Finally, **First Class:** Very easy. Champagne flutes and teaspoons only. They ate before boarding, they don't need impressing and they are quite happy with a tin of caviar and a bottle of Bolly. •

