# Former flight attendant warns against in-flight food and drink risks



A former flight attendant, Alex Quigley, has raised concerns regarding the consumption of certain refreshments while flying, cautioning travellers about potential health risks associated with in-flight food and drink. His remarks come in the wake of several high-profile incidents related to food hygiene on airlines in recent months.

Quigley, who has shared his insights with Delish, warned passengers to forego ordering hot beverages such as coffee and tea. He explained that the water used for these drinks is often stored in tanks, which can remain stagnant for long periods without proper cleaning. "There's no telling how often or when the tank has been cleaned last," Quigley stated. He further elaborated, "This is a beast for bacteria," admitting that he never witnessed anyone emptying, refilling, or washing these tanks between flights.

In addition to beverages, Quigley advised caution when it comes to in-flight meals, particularly meat-based options. He highlighted the importance of trusting the flight crew to store and handle food safely, emphasising that delays and mechanical issues could jeopardise the integrity of cooked meals. Quigley remarked, "You're putting the trust of storing any meat in the flight attendant's hands... there's a possibility the cooked meals aren't actually being stored appropriately or have exceeded the storing time allotted for the meal."

He also pointed out that certain types of food might contribute to discomfort for fellow passengers. Foods that are known to induce gas, such as dairy, beans, fatty items, green vegetables, and sodas, may negatively affect air quality inside the cabin. "Air in the airplane is circulated, it's never fresh," Quigley explained. "That means if someone passes gas, you're breathing that in over and over again, so this is more so for common decency."

Alcohol consumption was another area Quigley addressed, noting the heightened risks associated with drinking at high altitudes. "When pressure is decreased in the airplane, the body can't absorb oxygen as well," he said. This led him to suggest that avoiding alcohol on flights could serve passengers well, as it may enhance the effects of intoxication.

Quigley's warnings follow recent reports of poor food hygiene on airlines, which have raised concerns within the aviation industry. Notable incidents include an Air India passenger discovering a dead cockroach in her omelette while flying from Delhi to New York, and a Scandinavian Airlines flight needing to return to its departure airport after a mouse emerged from a meal on a journey from Norway to Spain. Moreover, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) shut down Delta's catering facility in Detroit last year due to identified food safety issues during an inspection.

Darin Detwiler, a food safety adviser at Northeastern University in Boston, commented on the overall challenges posed by confined travel environments. "Airline passengers should be aware of food safety issues in the in-flight catering industry," he said, highlighting the complexities of managing foodborne illness outbreaks in such settings.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.unilad.com/news/travel/flight-attendants-five-items-never-order-on-a-plane-199098-20250402> - This article corroborates Alex Quigley's concerns about the hygiene of in-flight beverages, specifically highlighting the potential bacterial growth in water tanks used for hot drinks like coffee and tea.
* <https://www.unilad.com/news/travel/flight-attendants-five-items-never-order-on-a-plane-199098-20250402> - It also supports Quigley's advice to avoid gas-inducing foods and meat-based meals due to potential storage issues and the discomfort these can cause fellow passengers.
* <https://www.unilad.com/news/travel/flight-attendants-five-items-never-order-on-a-plane-199098-20250402> - Additionally, it discusses Quigley's warning about alcohol consumption at high altitudes, which can enhance intoxication effects.
* <https://fortune.com/2022/04/26/delta-airlines-fda-food-safety-issues-detroit-catering-facility-closed/> - This article supports the report about the FDA shutting down Delta's catering facility in Detroit due to food safety issues, highlighting concerns within the aviation industry.
* <https://www.foodsafetynews.com/2021/11/study-highlights-food-safety-risks-in-airline-catering/> - It discusses the challenges of managing food safety in airline catering, reinforcing Darin Detwiler's comments on the complexities of managing foodborne illnesses in confined travel environments.