

# The inspiration for 'Top Chef' alum's new menu items for American Airlines

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Chef Grueneberg's exclusive creations for American customers include grilled roman-style artichokes and mushroom bolognese in Flagship First Dining as well as artichoke ravioli and spinach and ricotta rotolo pasta on select Flagship routes.

This is a dream come true for Chef Grueneberg. The Top Chef alum is also a 2017 James Beard award-winner and owner of Monteverde Restaurant & Pastificio in Chicago. She is thrilled to bring her love for travel and passion for Italian cooking to American customers.

What excites you about working with American?

A year or so ago, I said out loud, "I think I want to create dishes for an airline." Now, it's coming full circle, and I'm very excited to be working with American Airlines. I'm an Executive Platinum AAdvantage® member on American and love to travel, so I've recently been spending even more time on planes. I've been able to gain a lot of first-hand knowledge of operations up in the sky. I'm so happy that I can use that knowledge to craft dishes to enhance travelers' experience on board.

What is your favorite thing to eat while traveling?

If I'm having a full meal, I love crunchy salads and comfort foods like chicken parmesan. I am also a sucker for a great cheese plate. Sometimes I'll just pack snacks to bring in my carry-on, and it's usually assorted nuts with maybe gummy bears or Skittles.

How many countries have you visited and where is your favorite place to visit?

I've been fortunate enough to have visited about 20 different countries. My favorite place is Italy, but no shock there. There are still so many regions of Italy left to explore, and I hope to continue to check them off my list.

What would you like customers to think or feel when they are tasting your new menu items?

I want travelers to be transported to another place while also thinking "Oh, this is good." Perhaps the dish reminds them of a favorite meal growing up, or it just feels like a big warm hug in the sky.

What is the inspiration behind your menus for American?

I typically look toward the ingredients as inspiration as well as developing flavor through cooking techniques. It's also no surprise that I love pasta. The ones that tend to do best onboard are veggie-focused. I used that information to create my signature style and craft flavorful pasta dishes that will hopefully keep travelers satisfied up in the air or in the Flagship Lounge.

Chef Grueneberg's exclusive creations for American Airlines customers include:

#### Flagship First Dining

- Appetizer: Grilled Roman-style Artichokes — black truffle, fontina fonduta, fresh lemon
- Entrée: Mushroom Bolognese — Fusilli pasta, cremini and porcini mushrooms, peas, carrots, Parmigiano Reggiano
- Dessert: Dark Chocolate Budino — candied citrus, mandarin olive oil, feuilletine chocolate crunch, fresh whipped cream

#### Flagship Lounge

- Salad: Tuscan Kale Salad — beets, apples, goat cheese, spiced sesame, sunflower and pumpkin seed medley, tahini dressing

Flagship First and Flagship Business from U.S. to Europe, U.S. to South America and transcontinental flights between John F. Kennedy International Airport and Los Angeles International Airport or San Francisco International Airport.

- Entrée: Artichoke Ravioli — blistered cherry tomato sauce, green olive pistachio pesto
- Entrée: Spinach and Ricotta Rotolo Pasta — pomodoro sauce, basil pesto, pine nuts

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