

11 Worst Airports for Food

The Daily Meal had the misfortune of discovering the world’s most disappointing destinations for food

July 30, 2014 | 11:53 AM By [Lauren Mack \(/users/lauren-mack/contact\)](#), Writer

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While most would expect airports in smaller countries like Nepal and the Turks and Caicos would be rustic at best, we were surprised to discover that some of the world’s busiest airports had a depressing dearth of dining options, too.

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“Fried” Catfish with Potato Sticks
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If you’re one of the more than 240 million travelers who will fly this summer, there’s a good chance you or someone you know will face delays or layovers. While many airports like Hong Kong International Airport and Heathrow Airport in London leave many travelers wishing they had a few hours to shop and dine at top restaurants, there are still many — most in far flung locales, but several in surprisingly metropolitan airports — to be avoided.

See 11 Worst Airports for Food (Slideshow)

(<http://www.thedaily meal.com/11-worst-airports-food-slideshow>)

When The Daily Meal set out to determine the 11 Worst Airports for Food, plenty of terrible terminals in airports near and far came to mind. While most would expect airports in smaller countries like Nepal and the Turks and

Caicos would be rustic at best, we were surprised to discover that some of the world's busiest airports had a depressing dearth of dining options, too.

From Asia to Europe to the U.S., it seems no continent is immune to lousy layover food. While many airports like **Chicago Midway Airport** (<http://www.flychicago.com/midway/en/AtAirport/FoodDrink/Food-Beverages.aspx>) and **Taipei Taoyuan International Airport** (<http://www.taoyuan-airport.com/english/shop-dine-service>) have added new food courts offering outposts of noteworthy local restaurants like Manny's Deli in the Windy City and Tu Hsiao Yueh in Taipei (#43 on **The Daily Meal's 101 Best Restaurants in Asia 2013** (<http://www.thedailymeal.com/101-best-restaurants-asia-slideshow>)) in recent years, there are others that have yet to catch on to the culinary concourse craze of opening celeb chef restaurants or local favorites.

Only the world's busiest airports were considered; this eliminated smaller, developing countries like Nigeria and smaller regions that are popular with travelers like Tibet. We also considered airports in close proximity to the world's hottest travel destinations. [slideshow:

Airports that appeared on **The Daily Meal's 35 Best Airport Restaurants** (<http://www.thedailymeal.com/35-best-airport-restaurants-around-world-slideshow>) list were automatically eliminated because there's the chance your flight could take off or arrive in the terminal that houses one of these top restaurants. Even if your flight is parked in a different terminal, some folks may have enough time to venture to these terrific terminals for a quick bite.

The Daily Meal then consulted travel editors, business travelers, well-traveled food experts, and our editors for input. We created a preliminary list of 100 airports. In the end, we kept what we consider to be the 11 most disappointing airports for dining. These include airports with no celebrity chef restaurants or locally-famous or popular restaurants.

While some of the 11 Worst Airports for Food do have edible, viable options like M&S Simply Food in Gatwick Airport near London, the airports that made our inaugural list are deemed a huge disappointment considering the number of flights, connections, passengers, location, and their region's notable culinary heritage.

Our list isn't meant to dissuade folks from traveling to these fantastic destinations (more than 38 million trips were avoided last year because of travel hassles like this), but it is a culinary cautionary tale. This is a gastronomy guide to help hungry travelers who may, if they're lucky, only get their food fix in the friendlier skies. It's times like these — when you're stuck in a virtual food desert — that it's comforting to know some airlines still serve complimentary snacks.

Lauren Mack is the New York City Travel Editor at The Daily Meal. Follow her on Twitter @lmack

(<http://www.twitter.com/lmack>) .



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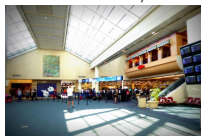


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#11 Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (Florida)

We hope the folks who avoid busier Miami International Airport in favor of the less congested Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport

(<https://www.broward.org/Airport/Terminals/Pages/Terminal1Restaurants.aspx>) aren't hungry. While there's plenty of fast-food (Dunkin Donuts, Miami Subs, and Red Mango), we have to wonder why they haven't upped their game to compete with nearby MIA. Local Chef Allen Susser (of Miami's famed Chef Allen restaurant) opened up Burger Bar by Chef Allen in 2011 but we're disappointed it didn't inspire more local eateries to follow.



11 Worst Airports for Food (Slideshow)

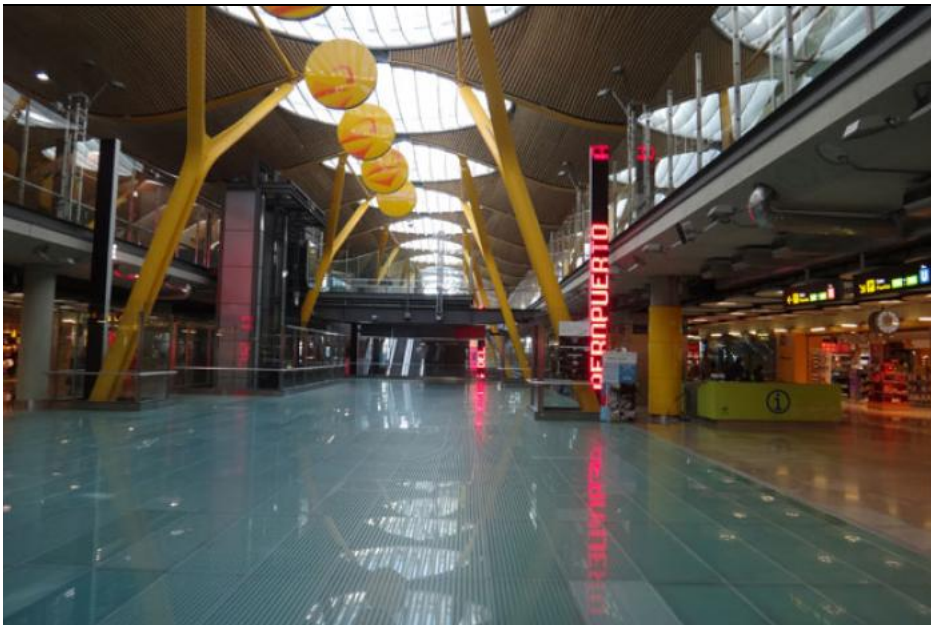
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#10 Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport (Spain)

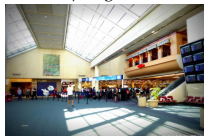
In a city with nine Michelin-starred restaurants and three Bib Gourmand restaurants, we expected much more from **Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas**

Airport ([http://www.aena-](http://www.aena-aeropuertos.es/csee/Satellite/Aeropuerto-Madrid-Barajas/en/LTDA_FP/1237552880997/1237552881450/Restaurants-and-fast-food.html)

[aeropuertos.es/csee/Satellite/Aeropuerto-Madrid-Barajas/en/LTDA_FP/1237552880997/1237552881450/Restaurants-and-fast-food.html](http://www.aena-aeropuertos.es/csee/Satellite/Aeropuerto-Madrid-Barajas/en/LTDA_FP/1237552880997/1237552881450/Restaurants-and-fast-food.html)) in the Spanish capital. Yes, you can get Iberico ham here, but there's nothing else that stands out among the miscellaneous restaurants and fast-food options like McDonald's. Instead, we drowned our sorrows with a couple of *cervezas* and jamón Iberico from MasQMenos in Terminal T4S.

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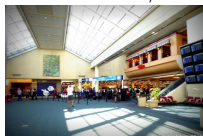
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#9 Gatwick Airport (United Kingdom)

Whether you're traveling through **Gatwick North or Gatwick South terminals** (<http://www.gatwickairport.com/at-the-airport/shopping-eating/>), you won't find traditional fast food. The grub is grab-and-go and the choices pretty much amount to M&S Simply Food (from the folks behind the famed Marks & Spencer department stores) and Boots (a pharmacy, convenience store, and beauty retail chain). While the food at M&S Simply Food includes fresh fruit, salads, sandwiches, and snacks, we bet travelers wishing for more wish they had flown through Heathrow instead.

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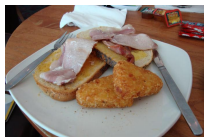
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#8 Orlando International Airport (Florida)

This is obviously not the "house the Mouse built." O-Town's airport food courts are more "oh my" than magical. Millions of theme park-bound travelers can find plenty of shops, restaurants, and even a spa at **Orlando International Airport**

(<http://www.orlandoairports.net/concessions/shops.htm>), but the fast-food options, from Carvel to Starbucks, are overwhelming and the airport hotel restaurants are underwhelming. When we wish upon a star, we hope we won't ever get hungry here.

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#7 Cancún International Airport (Mexico)

While the folks at **Cancún International Airport** (http://www.asur.com.mx/en/airports/cancun/cancun-passengers/food/restaurants.html#.U8c_L41dVWc) make an effort to provide variety, the result is been there, done that: TGI Fridays, Bubba Gump Shrimp Co., California Pizza Kitchen, and Häagen-Dazs. There's also a place to grab snacks on the go, a taco shop, and Mera Restaurant, a non-descript sit down restaurant offering refreshing glasses of clericot (white wine, fresh fruit, sugar, lemon juice, and carbonated water).

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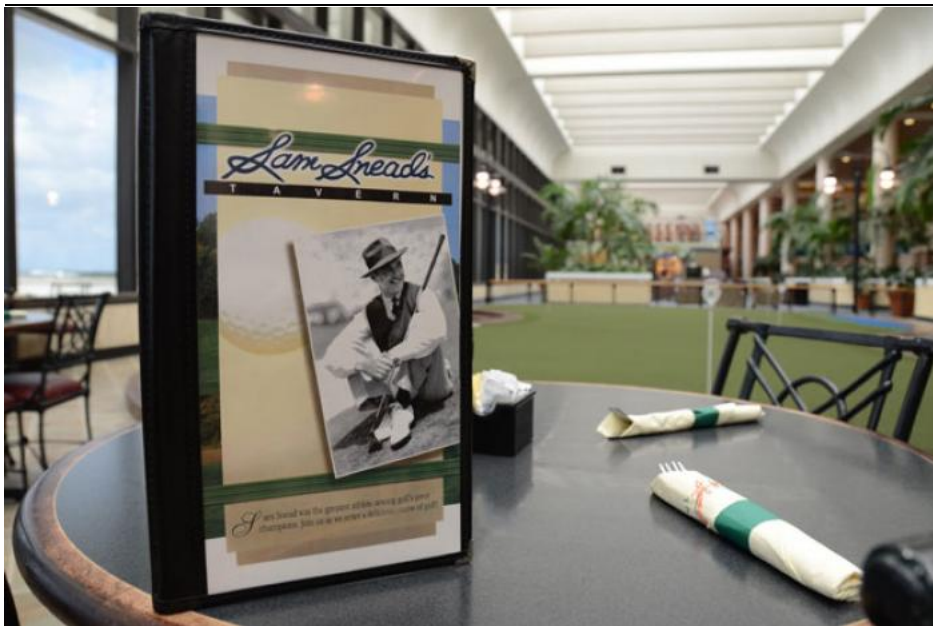
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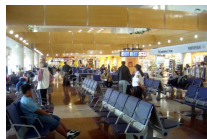
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#6 Palm Beach International Airport (Florida)

There are no champagne wishes and caviar dreams at **Palm Beach International Airport** (<http://www.pbia.org/restaurants-shopping/>). The hungry, well-heeled travelers who pass through this airport near posh Palm Beach can choose from mediocre meals at fast-service restaurants like Chili's Too and California Pizza Kitchen ASAP. The golf-inspired restaurant Sam Snead is a feeble attempt to liven up the terminal.

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#5 Soekarno-Hatta Airport (Jakarta, Indonesia)

Jet-lagged travelers with the munchies will only find fast-food (McDonald's, Dunkin' Donuts, and Hoka Hoka Bento, an Indonesian fast-food chain that sells Japanese fare) and a rustic hotel restaurant at the **10th busiest airport in the world**

(<http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-04-02/atlantas-still-the-worlds-busiest-airport-but-maybe-not-for-long>). The sole consolation is that the Golden Arches are open 24/7.

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#4 Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport (San Juan, Puerto Rico)

Busy doesn't necessarily mean better when it comes to airport food courts and **Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport** (<http://aeropuertosu.com/en/restaurantes/>) is no exception. The busiest airport in Caribbean offers options from Auntie Anne's Pretzels to Carl's Jr. to Subway. We give the airport credit for at least adding a little local flair like sit-down eatery Mango's Village which serves so-so Caribbean fare and tacky touristy, but in a terminal of terrible choices, tolerable Margaritaville (yes, *that* Margaritaville owned by singer Jimmy Buffett where you can have a purported Cheeseburger in Paradise but it will cost you).

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#3 Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport (China)

At the **15th busiest in the world**

(file:///C:/Users/lem2111/Downloads/Guangzhou%20International%20Airport)

, travelers would expect to find more than a handful of options. Here, the retail shops outnumber restaurants which are stationed at “Jinlong Food Street,” which is really just a cluster of Cantonese restaurants which serve passengers and airport staff. Beyond security, there’s more of the same. This might be the one time travelers are grateful to see a McDonald’s.

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#2 Noi Bai International Airport (Vietnam)

For years, the Vietnamese government worked hard to keep many Western fast-food chains out. With the arrival of the first McDonald's in Vietnam only just this year, it's not surprising capital's airport hasn't caught up. What is disappointing is the lack of food options, even local. While some would make do with eating jumbo-sized bags of duty-free chocolates and sweets, travelers don't even have that option. Here in Hanoi, it's just the essentials – *phở* (the signature noodle soup of Vietnam) and coffee – and little else.

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#1 Beijing Capital International Airport (China)

The second busiest airport in the world tops our list of the worst airport for food because, even six years after hosting the Olympic Games, the architectural marvel of an airport is a virtual food desert. **Beijing Capital International Airport**

(<http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-04-02/atlas-still-the-worlds-busiest-airport-but-maybe-not-for-long>)'s cavernous terminals are punctuated with Spartan fast-food outposts like Starbucks and KFC, a handful of nondescript "Chinese" cafes, and food kiosks selling tea and instant noodles. Just like the concessions at Olympic venues like the Bird's Nest, travelers can't help but get the impression that food is an afterthought. It's a supreme letdown as this is the **world's second busiest airport** (<http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-04-02/atlas-still-the-worlds-busiest-airport-but-maybe-not-for-long>) and Beijing is home to 21 of the restaurants on The Daily Meal's 101 Best Restaurants in Asia.

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