



Photo shows visitors taking pictures outside a retired Airbus 330 air-plane turned into a coffee shop.



People sit on airplane seats as they dine in at a Thai Airways pop-up airplane-themed restaurant at the airline's headquarters in Bangkok. — AFP photos

WITH TRAVEL LIMITED, PLANE CAFES TAKE OFF IN THAILAND



A Thai Airways flight attendant wears a face shield as she speaks to a customer at a pop-up airplane-themed restaurant at the airline's headquarters in Bangkok.

With millions around the world stuck at home due to the pandemic, "plane cafes" in Thailand are offering customers the chance to pretend they are in the sky—and the idea seems to have taken off. On board a retired commercial airplane in the coastal city of Pattaya, coffee drinkers make themselves comfy on first-class-style seats and pose for photos by the overhead lockers. Boarding passes in hand, some "passengers" even opt for a tour of the cockpit. "With this cafe I can sit in first class and also mess around in the cockpit pretending to be the captain of the plane," 26-year-old Thipsuda Faksathong told AFP. "It's a lot of fun."

Chalisa Chuensranoi, 25, said her visit was as good as any trip she had taken before the pandemic, which shuttered Thailand's borders in March. "Sitting right here in the first-class section... really gives me the feeling of actually being on a plane, cruising through the air," she said. In another cafe at the headquarters of national carrier Thai Airways in Bangkok, hungry diners appear even to have missed plane food as they gobble up spaghetti carbonara and Thai-style beef served on plastic trays by cabin crew.

But for Intrawut Simapichet, 38, who came to the cafe with his wife and baby, the experience is about more than a meal. "Normally I'm a person who travels very



People walk up a jet bridge, normally used by passengers to board an airplane, at a Thai Airways pop-up airplane-themed at the airline's headquarters in Bangkok.

often, and when we are forced to stay at home... it's kind of depressing," he said as fellow passengers posed with luggage by a fake airplane door. "(The cafe) relieves what's missing." Thailand was the first country outside China to detect a coronavirus case, but it has since registered a low toll, with about 3,400 infections and 58 deaths. Travel restrictions

have nevertheless eviscerated the tourism-reliant economy, while Thais have founded themselves stuck due to quarantine requirements in other countries. The government is currently mulling travel bubbles with select countries that also have low tolls. — AFP



Photo shows visitors sitting in the cockpit of a retired Airbus 330 air-plane turned into a coffee shop.



This photograph shows visitors enjoying business class seats in a retired Airbus 330 air-plane turned into a coffee shop at an attraction site, outside Pattaya in Chonburi province.



A macaron is presented at a Thai Airways pop-up airplane-themed.



A Thai Airways flight attendant wears a face shield at a pop-up airplane-themed.



Photo shows the tail of a retired Airbus 330 air-plane turned into a coffee shop.



A visitor walking past figures of soldiers displayed outside a retired Airbus 330 air-plane turned into a coffee shop at an attraction site, outside Pattaya in Chonburi province.



A Thai Airways flight attendant wears a face shield as she helps customers to take a photo with a mobile phone at a pop-up airplane-themed at the airline's headquarters in Bangkok.