

FLIGHT CHECK

Fiji Airways

BUSINESS CLASS



FLIGHT NUMBERS

FJ970 and FJ890

ROUTE

Cairns to Nadi;

Nadi to Dallas Fort Worth

AIRCRAFT

Boeing 737 Max 8; Airbus A350-900

SEAT

1F and 19K, both window seats

FLIGHT TIME

Cairns to Nadi: 4 hours;

Nadi to DFW: 11 hours 43 minutes.

Cairns to Nadi scheduled to depart at 12.25pm, takes off at 1.04pm and lands at 7.06pm local time, 31 minutes late. Nadi to DFW scheduled to depart at 9.15pm, takes off at 9.45pm, and lands at 4.28pm local time, two minutes ahead of schedule.



DENISE CULLEN

Take a seat

Fiji Airways' Boeing 737 Max 8 has eight business class seats, in a 2-2 configuration. Upholstered in white leather, the comfortable seats have a 130cm pitch and 20cm recline. The Airbus A350-900 (pictured) has 33 business seats in a 1-2-1 layout, facing forward, with direct aisle access. The middle two seats suit couples, but passengers can deploy privacy screens. While they offer a pitch of only 111cm, they convert to lie-flat beds, which staff make up

with a mattress topper and duvet. I find the bed firm and, like other tall passengers, a tight fit. Still, I get enough sleep to put me in a better mood than the US Customs and Border Protection officer at the other end.

Tech talk

Both seats come with USB ports, in-seat power and plenty of storage space. Soon after takeoff, attendants hand out instructions on how to access complimentary, unlimited wi-fi. On the Boeing 737 Max 8, I break a nail trying to extract the remote control that works the 33cm wall-mounted entertainment screen (the millennial sitting next to me subsequently points out the button release). I find the 43cm touchscreen on the Airbus A350-900 more intuitive to operate. Phitek noise-cancellation headphones are available on both legs, as are pillows and blankets featuring Fijian motifs, bottles of Fiji Water, and amenities kits containing eye mask, socks, moisturiser, ear plugs, dental kit and a pen.

That's entertainment

The AVANT Up in-flight entertainment system from Thales gives passengers access to a wide variety of movies, TV shows, music, audiobooks and games. There's a sparsely populated "About Fiji" section. I settle back to watch Joker: Folie De Deux followed by Juror #2, before listening to David Lyndon Huff's Sound Therapy: Meditation while drifting off to sleep.

On the menu

Upon embarking, business-class passengers on both flights are offered sparkling wine or orange juice. The in-flight menu has standard options such as chicken provencale and vegetable linguine, alongside Fijian dishes. On the Cairns to Nadi leg, I lunch on ika vakalolo (walu fish in coconut cream) with prawns, sweet potato and spinach, which is delicious and satisfying. This is always the first dish to run out, but you also have the chance to order it on the Nadi to DFW leg, along with Fijian barbecue chicken and purini pudding. There is a small but sufficient list of Australian, New Zealand and American wines to choose from. We eat breakfast about two hours before our arrival in DFW; fresh tropical fruits, pastries, and cooked breakfast items such as a red pepper, tomato and herb frittata.

THE VERDICT

Staff respond swiftly to my requests, such as for bottles of water, or to have the bed made up, however, I occasionally feel they could be more proactive in anticipating passenger needs. This is a minor point though. Fiji Airways has as its tagline, "Welcome to our home", and the smiles that accompany every interaction feel genuine. Overall, the attitude-free service on board feels like a comforting hug.

At your service

Every passenger is greeted with a heartfelt "Bula". Bubblegum-scented hot towels are provided on arrival, and before each meal. Requests for water, chocolate, or help retrieving bags are handled cheerfully and promptly. The bathrooms are clean, spacious and stocked with Pure Fiji products.

In the bag

Business-class passengers can take two pieces of cabin baggage, weighing up to 7kg each, and three pieces of checked baggage, weighing up to 30kg each.

Make your points

Fiji Airways recently gained full membership to Oneworld. Other airlines in this network include Qantas and British Airways. The carrier is also part of the American Airlines AAdvantage loyalty program.

On the ground

The Fiji Airways Premier Lounge at Nadi International Airport opens daily from 5am until the last scheduled departure. A wall of live greenery at the entrance gives way to a space filled with relaxed dining and booth seating. Constellation lighting twinkles overhead. On my first visit, the lounge is heaving; on my second, it is almost empty. Buffet stations offer a selection of solid options. Sadly, the signature duavata cocktail (containing Fiji's own Blue Turtle gin) isn't available due to a lack of lime juice. The restrooms, each containing a single shower, are well-maintained.

In the know

This Cairns departure represents a new route for Fiji Airways, giving the residents of far north Queensland direct access to Fiji, plus an alternative way to reach the US. Fiji Airways was recently awarded Five Star Major Airline status at the APEX Official Airline Ratings 2025 for the third consecutive year. It also won Best Cabin Crew in Australia/Pacific at last year's Skytrax World Airline Awards.

The bottom line

A one-way business class fare from Cairns to DFW from \$7556 based on an airline website search departing two months from publication.

Denise Cullen was a guest of Fiji Airways. fijairways.com

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