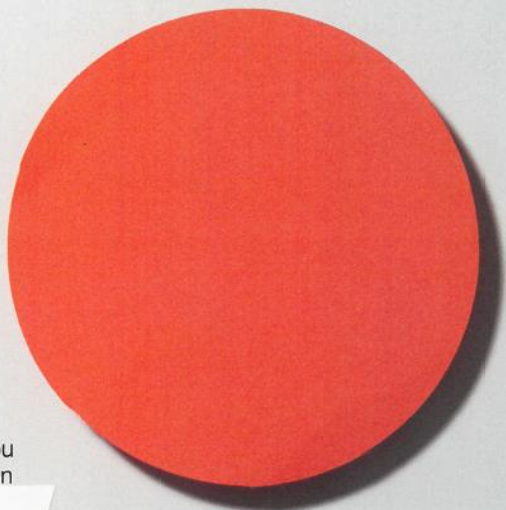




• BEST LONG HAUL • TOP HOTELS FOR RUNNERS • 5 COFFEE PIT-STOP •

Travel Top 50 2014/15



We've scoured the globe via road, rail, sea and sky to bring you the best in travel. Buckle up and join us for our annual rundown

Tt 50

1

Bracing beds

From alpine escapes in Italy and Switzerland to the Four Seasons Ritz's rooftop running track in Lisbon, we've highlighted the best places to rest your head.

2

Cross-continental chic

We've selected a French-made tote bag, an onboard look to keep you snug from take-off to touchdown and the very best duty-free buys.

3

People power

Meet the friendly flight attendants manning the first-class cabins of Cathay Pacific, plus Swedish rail-operator SJ's politest host.

4

Fit for purpose

We let off some steam with some post-flight jogging routes and introduce a Tokyo shop in which to kit up for keeping in shape.

5

Pretty fly

From Jetfly's private fleet to Air New Zealand's sharp livery, we round up the best in aviation from economy to first class.



Lufthansa

• 37

Best first-class flights*JAL, Lufthansa*

They may not shout as loudly as their Middle Eastern adversaries but the first-class offerings on both Japan Airlines (JAL) and Lufthansa are a cut above the rest in terms of their attention to detail.

JAL doesn't brag about its JAL Sky Suite 777 but it probably should. The lie-flat seat converts into a bed and passengers have a choice of hard or soft mattresses. To top it off, an amenity kit designed in collaboration with Spanish fashion house Loewe will ensure that you arrive fresh-faced for your first meeting.

We appreciate an airline investing in its existing fleet as Lufthansa has in the first-class cabins of its Boeing 747-400s. The German carrier added a smart recliner to the mix and an adjacent bunk to up the offer. Book it while you can as the 747s won't be around forever; Lufthansa's newer first-class offering on the Airbus A380 has an upgraded lie-flat seat but no bed. — TMA

jal.com; lufthansa.com



JAL

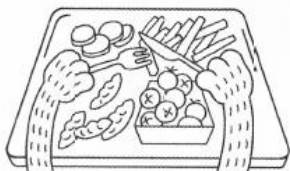
• 38

Most sensible pass-around meal concept*ANA's crudités*

It can be hard to drum up enthusiasm for airline food but All Nippon Airways (ANA) has come up with a delightfully simple offering for its business-class passengers on the Haneda to Singapore route: refreshing crudités and tasty snacks. Passengers can pick from a canapé-esque selection that includes cucumber and carrot sticks with a southern island dressing, marinated prawns and wasabi peas — a Japanese favourite. Keeping things this simple is a refreshing lesson in airline cuisine. — FW

ana.co.jp

Last time I ate my wasabi peas far too quickly...



• 39

Best hotel GM*Masaru Watanabe, Palace Hotel, Tokyo*

Masaru Watanabe (*pictured*) joined the Palace Hotel staff 28 years ago at the age of 22 and has been here ever since. Watanabe has done almost every job in the hotel, starting as a bellboy and working his way up through banquet waiting and sales until he was made executive director and general manager in 2012, when the hotel reopened after a three-year rebuild. It says much for the company that it kept 90 per cent of its 500-strong staff on payroll during the hiatus, determined that the service would be as good as ever when the hotel reopened.

Always ready with a smile and a well-cut suit, Watanabe is a welcoming presence in the lobby. "If a guest comes to stay I want them to feel they're in Japan," he says. — FW

palacehoteltokyo.com