

Airlines Need to Lose Weight for Low-Costers to Take Off

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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In-flight meals and luggage transport could become optional extras for airline passengers as the authorities think up ways to create low-budget airlines in Russia.

Russia's current Air Code specifies that airlines must serve meals, transport a set amount of luggage at no extra cost and offer ticket refunds. Experts have said that setting up a low-cost service in Russia is proving difficult, because budget airlines tend to charge extra for these services to make up for the cheaper tickets.

Under the Transportation Ministry's new proposal, airlines won't be required to serve food and hot drinks to all passengers, Vedomosti reported Thursday. In August the ministry also proposed charging extra for luggage. Currently, airline passengers can bring at least 10-kilograms-worth of checked-in luggage with them for free.

Russian airports' average tariff for servicing one passenger on an internal flight is 221 rubles

(\$6.6), the report said. Baggage registration and handling accounts for up to 20 percent of this fee.

By charging extra for luggage, airlines can save on baggage handling costs and use the extra room on the planes to add more passenger seats, the ministry said. A Boeing 737, for example, can save 50,000 to 90,000 rubles on each flight by adding 2,000 kilograms of passenger weight.

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