

Finland's national carrier cuts over 10% of workforce

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In this Monday, Nov. 16, 2009 file photo, passenger planes of the Finnish national airline company Finnair stand on the tarmac at Helsinki international airport, Helsinki. Finnish carrier Finnair will start selling business class airplane food in supermarkets in a move to keep its catering staff employed and to offer a taste of the airline experience to those missing flying in the COVID-19 times. The state-controlled airline said that in a pilot scheme the handmade meals, called "Taste of Finnair", would initially be offered at one store as of Thursday, Oct. 15, 2020. (Markku Ulander/Lehtikuva via AP, file)

Finland's national carrier said Tuesday it will cut 700 jobs - over 10% of its workforce - by the end of March next year due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global travel.

Finnair, which is heavily focused on flights from Europe to Asia, said that some 600 of the redundancies would be in Finland and another 100 outside the Nordic country. Pilots and cabin crew would not be affected.

Finnair CEO Topi Manner said in a statement that "the corona pandemic has been completely unfair to our industry and unfortunately many Finnair employees now must experience its financial implications personally."

He said that the job cuts and other planned changes at the carrier based in Helsinki are "necessary and inevitable."

"Finnair's re-build requires us to be competitive when aviation gradually starts to recover. Therefore, in the future, we will have to do many things differently in order to succeed in the competitive market," Manner said.

The coronavirus pandemic has forced almost all global airlines to halt most of their flights. Finnair has already temporarily laid off a large part of its 6,500 staff and its flight traffic was down 91% in September from the previous year. The layoffs are the first permanent cuts it has announced so far.

Finnair is majority-owned by the Finnish state.

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