

5 Tips for an Enjoyable and Comfortable Plane Ride

Contributed by Webmaster
Tuesday, 10 March 2009
Last Updated Tuesday, 10 March 2009

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If you think the average plane ride is pleasant or fun, you haven't been on one lately. And it's not just the post-9/11 security hassles. It's how cramped, uncomfortable, and annoying it can be to actually be on the plane. Whether it's the impossibly small seats, the too-close-for-comfort proximity to the person next to you, the crying baby behind you, or the lackluster on-board snacks, the average plane ride can make one wonder why they even bothered leaving home. But it doesn't have to be this way! The following 5 tips (discovered from hard-earned traveling experience) can make the ride much less of a hassle, and even, dare we say, pleasant!

1) Dress appropriately (yes, this really matters!)

Ever squeeze yourself into an airplane seat for 4 hours and think to yourself, "man, I wore the wrong clothes for this"? You know the feeling. It was cold, so you thought it'd be smart to wear three shirts, thick pants, possibly a pair of boots. But before long, you're feeling stuffy, cramped, and crowded by all the clothes you're wearing. You squirm, you reposition yourself every which way, you try to straighten out your clothes, but every adjustment just makes you more uncomfortable and focused on how much the ride sucks than before. This can make a plane ride worse than almost anything else. The solution? A smartly chosen outfit that is light, uncluttered, and as simple as could be. A pair of snug-fitting (but not tight) jeans, a light long-sleeved shirt, and comfortable sneakers or sandals is a good model to follow.

2) Bring a book and/or music

Many a traveler has told himself "eh, I don't want to lug a book around, I'll just watch the in-flight movie." Many a traveler has also had his plan foiled by the in-flight movie being something like "Honey, I Shrunk The Kids" or "George of the Jungle." Don't want to spend hours watching movies you fought tooth and nail not to see when they were in theaters? Bring something to read or listen to! If possible, bring something you've been meaning to read, but haven't had time to. In this way, something you were dreading (the flight) can be thought of as something pleasant (catching up on much-desired reading.) It'll also help to tune out crying babies, snoring, and other distractions.

3) Get an aisle seat at all costs

There's no getting around how cramped most airplanes are, but getting an aisle seat can make all the difference. At least with an aisle seat, you can extend one of your legs more than six inches in front of you, allowing for a possible nap or semi-comfortable seating position. Aisle seats also usually get first dibs on drinks and snacks as they are being passed around. Plus, you won't have to disturb someone every time you want to go use the bathroom.

4) Bring a small, light backpack with some snacks

Let's face it: the in-flight snacks are usually pretty bad. (Some of them aren't even serving snacks anymore to cope with rising fuel costs!) The easiest way to combat this is to bring a small, light, carry-on backpack stocked with your favorite snacks. The longer the flight, the more snacks you should carry. You can also use the backpack to store your reading material or music, letting you enter and exit the flight with nothing in your hands.

5) Remain seated when the flight lands until most of the passengers are gone

For some reason, everyone on the plane seems to stand up as soon as it lands. They apparently believe standing up will enable them to leave before the staff authorizes it, which, generally, takes 15 minutes after the plane is fully stopped. This causes commotion, impatience, and even arguments as the standing passengers fret over why they can't leave the plane yet. Why not avoid this circus and just stay seated until people are visibly leaving the plane? Use the time to finish the last few pages of that chapter you're reading!

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