

The Travel Checklist



Totally Useful Airport Advice from **AirportTips.com**

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Introduction

Back in the days when people would venture overseas via luxury liner or traverse cross-country in a sumptuous railway car, travel was actually a glamorous proposition. Today ... well, not so much.

Instead of sleeper cars, we're wedged into tiny seats with a perfectly acceptable amount of legroom if you happen to be under three-feet tall. The rest of us contort ourselves into pretzels and pray the guy in front of us doesn't feel like reclining.

Though flying can be an excruciating process, the discomforts of flight can be the least of the traveler's problems. There's packing, parking, and the much-dreaded security line. Which is why we came up with AirportTips.com and *The Travel Checklist*.

By combining our research with user reviews and advice, AirportTips.com will answer all these questions (and more!) with our fun, user-friendly platform. We can help you solve dilemmas like -

- ▶ **I'm at Terminal 5 at JFK and I'm supposed to be at Terminal 9 - what's the quickest way to get there?**
- ▶ **I'm planning a trip to Chicago - what are the public transportation options out of the airport?**
- ▶ **Where can I find a gluten-free, vegan meal in LaGuardia airport?**

While *The Travel Checklist* will help turn your next business trip into a pleasure by breaking down the process and making it easy and efficient. For example ...

- ▶ **Is the pin in my femur going to set off the metal detector?**
- ▶ **How can I cram a Paul Smith suit into a carry-on?**
- ▶ **They want me to go through one of those scanners - are there going to be even more naked photos of me on the internet now?**

Before you roll your eyes and decide that someone as organized as you doesn't need to bother with a checklist, know that extensive research has proven that having a set checklist of procedures to follow makes any process approximately a thousand times easier and more efficient. When Dr. Atul Gawande - author of *The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right*, instituted a simple checklist program into eight hospitals in 2008, "major surgery complications dropped 36% and deaths plunged 47%."*

Hear that? Deaths were cut nearly in half.

Now obviously, we're not talking about life or death situations here, but if you've ever missed a flight or arrived at your hotel only to realize you'd stumbled into a swinger's convention (or worse, prom!), this book is for you.

In fact, if you've ever made a travel mistake EVER, this book will help you. We can't guarantee that your flight will be on time, but we can help you pack efficiently, pass through security unscathed, and who knows - possibly even land at your destination wearing a smile.

* *Time Magazine*, "Atul Gawande: How to Make Doctors Better," 1/4/2010.



How to Book a Trip Without Losing Your Mind or Emptying Your Bank Account

It used to be that even mid-sized companies had a department – or at least an employee – who would make all the business travel arrangements. These days, though, along with cutting back on expense accounts across the board, most of us wind up booking our own tickets and figuring out where we’re going to stay on our own.

But how? With the bottom-line on everyone’s mind, finding the least expensive option is usually a priority. Luckily, that doesn’t mean business travel has to be unpleasant. By following the checklists and guides we’ve included, travel might actually become something you look forward to doing.

Q Should I book my flight and hotel together?

A It depends. You can save some money purchasing a package deal, but the only way to know for sure is to do a lot of comparison shopping, and be very flexible about flight times and hotel locations. Since most business travelers don’t have this luxury, we’re going to concentrate on booking them both separately.

Checklist for Cheap Flights

To get the cheapest possible flights you should ask yourself the following questions. Have I ...

- given up caring about which carrier I fly? My **frequent flyer miles** will not grow mold.
- started this process no more than **a month before my travel dates**, but no less than two weeks?
- compared multiple websites?** (A consolidator site like Kayak can do this for you)
- checked individual airlines' websites**, because sometimes there are unadvertised specials?
- tried to get **the lowest advertised price** through the airline's website in order to maintain frequent flier points?
- purchased my ticket on a **Tuesday around noon**, as that's the cheapest time to buy?
- arranged it so (if possible), I'll be flying on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Saturday - **ideally Wednesday?**
- avoided traveling around the holidays?** If I must, I'll fly on the actual holiday itself.
- chosen flights that are **early in the morning or in the evening?** I've avoided mid-day - that's for the lazies (and the folks with money to burn).
- accepted that I might have to deal with a **layover?** The difference can sometimes be hundreds of dollars. (See page TK for how to make the most of your layover.)



Checklist for Getting a Great Seat

Have you ever found yourself wedged in the middle seat of the last row in front of the bathroom? That seat doesn't recline – but the ones in front of it certainly do. Meanwhile, you're bolt upright, squished between a five-year-old traveling alone for the first time and a chatty obese cat lady who smells of cheese.

In order to get the best seat possible, make certain you've ...

- joined that airline's **frequent flier program** as soon as I decided which tickets I was going to buy.
- arranged to purchase my ticket **one month in advance** – more notice means more seating choices.
- gone onto **seatguru.com** to figure out the best seats on the particular type of plane I'll be flying.
- kept the **seatguru.com** window open as I purchased my ticket, and completed the checklist below!

Checklist for Picking Your Seat

Before I've picked my seat(s), I've made sure to **avoid** ...

- Front-row seats facing a wall.** I need leg room and who wants to stare at a wall for hours!
- Last-row seats**, even along an exit row, because they don't recline.
- "Between" window seats.** While not as unbearable as a middle seat, a window seat with no window is not fun for anyone.
- Any seat too close to the bathrooms.** Even setting aside the smell factor - which can be epic, especially on a long haul - people will constantly be hovering over you and bumping your book or laptop. Then there's the smell.
- Sitting too far from the wings if you get freaked out by turbulence.** The closer you are to the wings, the less you will feel it.
- Pretty much any seat that's not an aisle seat.** Aisle seats mean extra legroom, which counts for a lot in coach!

If, after following all these steps, you still end up with a horrible seat, try to get to the airport early enough to ask the person manning the check-in counter to swap you.



Travel Tip: 5 Best Travel Apps

Your smartphone is only as clever as what you've put into it, so make sure to download these apps before you leave home.

- ❶ **Wi-Fi Finder** - this bad boy will direct you to the nearest Wi-Fi hotspot, so you never have to worry about roaming.
- ❷ **Google Maps** - this is a no-brainer.
- ❸ **Flight Board** or **TriplIt** - either of these will give you up-to-the-minute details of your flight status. Also good if you're picking up someone from the airport - no need to sit around in the parking lot for an hour.
- ❹ **Sit or Squat** - when you gotta go, you gotta go. And this app will tell you where the nearest place to do so is located.
- ❺ **Using Miles** - coordinates all your frequent flier miles and hotel-reward points, so you'll know instantly when you've accumulated enough work miles to take a vacation.

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