

10 things you need to know before travelling by plane

1. Things you can't take in your luggage

Explosive and flammable substances are forbidden in hand luggage and checked baggage by every airline. These include gas torches, firecrackers, and kindling for barbeques.

For safety reasons, you can't hold in your hand luggage (what you take into the plane) objects that could be used as a weapon. For example, sharp scissors, tools, or corkscrews.

The most restrictive rules concern liquids. You can't take more than 10 bottles with a capacity of 100 ml each in your hand luggage, all such bottles must be packed in one transparent bag with a capacity of 1 liter. You can have medicine in your hand luggage, including in liquid form, but only in an amount that is indispensable during the flight.

2. Packing suitcases is an art

Each airline has its own rules about the size and weight of hand luggage and checked baggage. It is important not to take bags that exceed these limits because you'll pay a large fee for oversize luggage at the airport.

Most airlines, let you take a second, smaller bag onto the plane together with your hand luggage – something like a handbag or rucksack with a laptop. Pack your luggage in a way that makes it easy for you to take something out during a security check.

Checked baggage will travel a long way before it returns to your hands. That is why it is so important to make sure nothing sticks out, like belts, zippers, pins, etc. If you attach a sleeping bag and foam mattress to your rucksack, pack everything in stretch foil. This way you'll be sure that nothing gets damaged or falls out.

3. Be ready for check-in

Your luggage isn't the only thing that will be checked at the airport. You also have to go through a personal security check. When it's your turn, take a basket located near the conveyor belt, empty your pockets and put everything into the basket, take off your jacket, jumper, scarf, trouser belt, etc. and put those things into a basket as well.

Your things will go through a scanner on a conveyor belt and you will walk through a special gate. Airport staff can also ask you to remove your shoes if the alarm goes off.

4. Each country has its own rules

In the European Union, customs rules about transporting alcohol, tobacco, food, and plants are the same in most countries. When you go outside the EU, each country has its own rules. The penalty for traveling with forbidden goods or having too much of a particular product also depends on the rules of each country. The gentlest form of punishment is destruction of the goods. However, in many countries in the Middle East, for example, there is a huge fine for transporting alcohol.

Rules can also apply to cash or valuable objects like pieces of art, historical objects, and parts of animals under protection, like ivory.

5. Be dressed for flying

It seems like a small thing, but you really should pay attention to the clothes you wear. The longer the flight lasts, the more uncomfortable you might feel in the wrong outfit.

Comfort is the most important thing! Make sure that nothing squeezes or scratches you during a long flight. Even if you are traveling in the middle of the summer, take socks and a jumper on board. The air conditioning is always running on the plane, so you will probably feel cold.

If you have long hair, tie it up low on your neck so it won't disturb you when you lay your head down on your seat.

6. Keep your mobile in airplane mode

Even though we can read more and more articles saying that mobile phones don't disrupt the functioning of airplanes, most airlines enforce a ban on the use of mobile phones during a flight. The exception to that rule is using a mobile in airplane mode, which is available in most types of phones.

Some planes offer a Wi-Fi network onboard. In most cases, you'll pay an extra fee for this service.

7. You can take food onboard

It is not true that you can't take food on an airplane. If you don't purchase meals onboard, you can get hungry during a flight. Take some snacks or sandwiches with you, just be sure they don't smell too strongly and don't leave crumbs around. There are restrictions on drinks. To avoid them, buy your drinks in the departure lounge after going through the security check.

Food for children is a different story. Parents or guardians can take milk and other food for children on a plane. During security checks, they should be shown to security staff. In most cases, a parent has to try a child's food in order to be allowed to take it onboard. You can heat food using a microwave oven on most planes.

8. Candy is not just for kids

During take-off and landing, changes in pressure can cause discomfort in your ears. If you happen to suffer from a runny nose, it can be quite unpleasant. There are a few ways to deal with this problem.

Try swallowing your saliva, chewing some gum, or sucking on a candy. This should help relieve the symptoms. If you have issues with a runny nose, use nose drops half an hour before take-off and landing.

If a fear of flying causes you to have stomach problems, make sure you're properly prepared for the flight. Get enough sleep before you leave, eat a light meal, and try to bring a pleasant distraction to focus on – it can be a book to read, some favorite music to listen to, or a paper and pencil for drawing.

9. Kids get bored

Every kid, even the biggest airplane fan, gets bored after a while without much movement. Be prepared for this moment. If you can't take your child's favorite toys with you, a piece of paper and crayons should be enough. Suggest drawing pictures of your child's journey – what the plane looks like, the airport, the landscape, etc.

You can also play games that don't need equipment, like rock-paper-scissors, making up words that start with the last letter of the previous word, etc. You can also make up stories – guessing what places you're flying over now, what shapes you see in the clouds, etc.

10. Kids can visit the pilots' cabin

Of course, this is under condition that the pilots agree. Don't bother asking about it before take-off, because pilots are very busy then. Ask a stewardess during the flight if your child can visit the cabin after landing. If there is no delay and the crew is not in a hurry, there is a good chance that the captain will walk you through the cabin.

Some airlines have special loyalty programs for kids – they get points for miles traveled that can be exchanged for a tour of the cabin.

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