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Travel tips
for people of size

TRAVEL TIPS FOR PEOPLE OF SIZE

Air Travel used to be fun but now it is just a complicated and stressful way to get from point A to point B. When you are a person of size, air travel can be an experience like no other. This brochure lays out a few tips that can make your travel experience a little easier.

Flight Booking Tips

- Book early for the best airfare and the best seat selection.
- Direct flights are much better than connecting flights but, if you must book a connecting flight, keep in mind the time between flights. An hour is the minimum recommended time to transfer from one flight to another.
- Choose an airline that is people of size friendly. Most US carriers will enforce the purchase of a second seat if you cannot lower both arm rests and fasten seat belt using one extender. (See back page for more details)
- A window seat will give you a little more shoulder room but hip room remains the same. The average seat is approximates 18 inches wide. Check <http://www.Seatguru.com>.
 - Consider upgrading to premium or "economy plus" seating if the airline offers the option.
 - The seats in Executive/First class are larger however the arm rests do not go up between seats.
- If you need to book a second comfort seat, most airlines require that you book directly with them rather than online. This will also ensure your seat selection is correct. The reservation agent will make a note in your file with your special requirements.
- To manage costs, consider sharing your second seat with another person of size and purchase three seats in a row.

While you can discreetly ask your flight attendant for a seat belt extender as you board, you may find it more convenient to carry your own. They are available on several websites including: www.amplestuff.com/travelproducts.aspx, www.mysizeusa.com , www.store.moreofmetolove.com and <http://living-xl.destinationxl.com>.

Packing Tips

- Wear comfortable clothes with nothing that will set off security. Be prepared to remove your watch, belt, jewelry and any electronic devices. Be sure to wear shoes that you can easily slip out of as you will have to take them off for security as well.
- Pack 5 days of any medication in your carry on just in case your checked luggage doesn't make it to your destination on the same flight you do. Medication is exempt from carry on size limits as long as it is declared to security and a reasonable size. If you use a CPAP machine, you can declare it at security; it will not count against you as carry on luggage.

Airport Tips

- Check your reservation a few days prior to your travel date. Airlines may change the plane type if the flight has too many or too few passengers booked on it. This may impact your seat.
- Allow extra time at the airport. The standard recommendation for arrival at larger airports is two hours before your flight.
- Check with the airport directly for curb to gate assistance. Airlines will also offer airport assistance to aircraft. Contact your airline at least a day in advance to request a bariatric wheelchair or scooter, if applicable, as larger chairs may not always be available on demand at the airport.
- Ask for pre-boarding so that you have a little extra time to settle in.
- Smile and say hello to your seat mates... It is harder to be annoyed with someone if they are being nice.

we come in all sizes...

Meals and Restrooms

- Washroom size may possibly be an issue. Try to plan accordingly.
- The table in the seat arm or from the seat ahead of you will probably not work for you even in Executive class, but if you have booked a second seat use its table.
- Consider bringing your own sandwich which you can eat without a table so as to avoid any issues at meal time.

Arrival

Once you have arrived at your destination, don't be in a hurry to get off the plane. Wait until everyone has pushed their way off; you will see them all again waiting at the baggage carousel!

- You are able to use airport assistance again, be it wheelchair assistance or electric cart. The airline ground agent should be able to call for an electric cart to come to the gate. If you arrange wheelchair assistance from the airline prior to your flight they will have it waiting for your flight and will take you directly to baggage.
- From there, again check on the airport website, you can arrange for assistance to the curb.
- It is a good idea for you to have your hotel phone number to arrange to meet their shuttle (if they offer the service), in case signage is not clear. Or get an idea of the cab fare to their front door.
- Booking an airport limo to meet you upon arrival is also an option. They are much more comfortable than a cab. Booking a prearranged limo will save you money over getting one at the airport.
- It is a good idea to familiarize yourself with the airports you are traveling through. Check the airport website for helpful information and maps.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAVEL AGENTS

When making reservations for a person of size, you need to take special care that their flying experience will be as comfortable as possible.

- Call the airline to verify their policies with regard to passengers of size.
- Do they require a passenger of size to purchase a second seat?
- Ask the airline to note that the seats must be side by side in a row where the arms go up, even in the event that there is an equipment change. Check back with the airline a couple of days prior to departure to verify that everything is as it should be.
- If you are booking a hotel, make sure it has an elevator and, if applicable, make a notation requesting that the client be placed as close to the elevator as possible.
- If there is not an elevator in the hotel, request a room on the ground floor with a note that the guest has mobility concerns and cannot use stairs.

Understand that your client has probably been discriminated against at every turn in their life. Be kind. Be compassionate. Think of how you would want to be treated. Give them a good experience and you will make them a repeat client!

AIRLINE INFO

Please note these policies can change without notice.
Please check each airline's policy at time of booking.

Southwest: Passengers should purchase an extra seat or risk being asked to do so at the airport by staff. If the flight is not sold out, the passenger may claim a refund.

http://www.southwest.com/html/generated/help/faqs/extra_seat_policy_faq.html

American: Passengers over 250 lbs. should purchase a second seat but no policy is in place.

<http://www.aa.com/i18n/travelInformation/specialAssistance/extraSpace.jsp>

United: If you are unable to fit in the seat with both armrests down and buckle the belt using one seat belt extender, you must purchase a second seat. The cost of this seat, whenever purchased, will be the same fare as the original ticket.

<http://pss.united.com/web/en-us/content/travel/specialneeds/customersize/default.aspx>

Frontier: If staff determines that two seats are required, the seat will be sold at the lowest possible fare, with a refund available if there are one or more open seats on the flight.

<http://www.frontierairlines.com/faqs/customer-of-size-faqs>

Continental: If you are unable to fit in the seat with both armrests down and buckle the belt using one extender, you must purchase a second seat. The cost of this seat, whenever purchased, will be the same fare as the original ticket.

<http://pss.united.com/web/en-us/content/travel/specialneeds/customersize/default.aspx>

JetBlue: A second seat is required with no refund if flight is not full, however this is not posted on their website. They do boast that their seats offer the most room.

<http://www.JetBlue.com>

Delta: The airline will try to book you next to an empty seat, however, if there is no empty seat available, you will be asked to purchase a seat on the next available flight. This policy is not posted on their website but is dealt with on a case by case basis.

<http://www.Delta.com>

Air Canada: A free extra seat is available within Canada with medical approval – may be approved for up to 2 years. For all other itineraries, fees for the extra seat vary by destination and by applicable fare at time of booking.

<http://www.aircanada.com/en/travelinfo/before/specialneeds/specialseating.html>

WestJet: A free extra seat is available within Canada with medical approval - may be approved for life. For all other destinations a second seat must be purchased at the best available fare

<http://www.westjet.com/guest/en/travel/special-arrangements/special-needs/one-person.shtml>

Most Canadian airlines offer 50% off fare when purchasing a Comfort seat to US and international destinations

International Airlines

Most international carriers require you to purchase a second seat at the same or higher fare

Air France: A 25% discount on an extra seat.

http://www.airfrance.ca/CA/en/common/guidevoyageur/assistance/particuliere_pfc.htm

British Airways:

www.ba.com

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