

## Playing the Waiting Game: Surviving Long Flights and Airports Delays

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Waiting. It's something that happens a lot these days if you're traveling by air.

In these days of heightened security, you're expected to be at the airport a lot earlier than a few years ago. Then there's the boredom of the flight itself, particularly if it's a long flight -- and we know a lot about long flights! Living in England, and if you enjoy visiting America as much as we do, you're looking at a flight of at least six or seven hours and if you want to head for Orlando, then that becomes nine and a half hours, while California is around 11 hours away from us. So how do you deal with the boredom?

The first thing we always do is make sure that we're at the airport early -- and I mean really early. If the advice is to be there three hours before your flight is due to depart, then we aim to get there at least four hours beforehand, just to be on the safe side. It may sound like a long time, but by the time you've checked your luggage in -- as that's something that you can't do ahead of time online! -- then gone through security checks, it can take as long as a couple of hours at the larger airports at the busier times of year. Coming back from our Disney cruise around the Mediterranean was a prime example. We stood in line for baggage check-in for well over an hour in Barcelona and by the time we added in security and walking to the gates, it took a grand total of an hour and 45 minutes. We had less than an hour before we were due to fly out.

However, if things go faster than that for you, there are usually plenty of other things you can do. Always double check the facilities at the airport you're flying out of before you travel. What restaurants or fast food outlets do they have there? Are there any that might suit your party for perhaps breakfast, lunch or dinner, depending on the time of day you're flying? The chances are that the food may well be better there than on the plane if a meal will be served at all during your flight. There are a number of shorter flights, particularly inside America, where food is no longer served free of charge, so you're going to have to pay to eat one way or the other. We've often had some great meals at airports and it's a good way to use up an hour or so.

Another fun activity is browsing the shops and we're not just talking about Duty-Free here! Most airports have a good range of shops these days and one of our favorite places to head for is a bookshop to check

---

out any good reads that we might want for the plane. We've picked up some excellent books in the past and of course, once you've bought them, you can get them out immediately and start reading them, helping to make the wait for your flight go even faster.

Does your airport have an observation area, where you can watch the planes taking off and landing? Even if it doesn't, quite often some of the gates have great views and if you know ahead of time which gate, or which area of the airport you'll be departing from, it's worth heading off there to see what's happening outside. It's a good activity for youngsters and can help to stave off boredom for them.

Once you've managed to fill all your time up before you board the plane, then what do you do during the next few hours, as you head to your destination? The first option you have is to take your own entertainment. We've already talked about books, but you can also take newspapers, magazines or puzzle or coloring books for the younger members of your party. Then there are the more hi-tech options, such as laptop computers, DVD players or game consoles. Don't forget these will need to be scanned separately from the rest of your luggage at most airports throughout the world. It's certainly a requirement of the TSA in America and the Department of Transport in the UK.

It's not just up to you to bring your own entertainment with you though. On most long haul flights, you'll find that your airline will also do its best to entertain. After all, they know that long flights are not only boring, they can be very trying for children and the last thing they want is a plane full of screaming children! On most long flights, you'll have a choice of movies and TV shows that you can usually watch on the screen on the seatback in front of you and you'll get your own headset so that you can hear what's going on.

Although some airlines still provide a traditional rotation of entertainment, which usually starts a new film or TV show every two to three hours, once all the movies are finished, some airlines now operate an "on demand" service, which not only allows you to start a new cycle whenever you want, but you can also pause and rewind if you miss something important.

Let's not forget as well that sometimes the best way of passing the time on a long distance flight is by getting some much needed shut eye. If you're taking an overnight flight, particularly if you're heading east, which is always worse for jetlag, then it's worth trying to grab a few hours of sleep, no matter how uncomfortable it may be. Even if you don't actually drop off to sleep, closing your eyes and relaxing can be a help to get you through the next day when you get to your destination.

.....

Another way of coping with long flights is to think of what's waiting for you when you get to the other end. Even if you're on your way home, that's something to look forward to, even if you might not think so at the time! On the way out to your vacation though, the thing that keeps us going throughout our nine and a half hour pilgrimage to Orlando is the fact that there's a magical place waiting for us at the end of our long journey. And through everything -- the waiting at the airport and the flight -- that's what keeps us going.

*About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)*

Article last updated: 9/20/2007

View the latest version online at:

<http://www.passporter.com/articles/playing-the-waiting-game-surviving-long-flights-and-air-ports-delays.html>

Copyright by Cheryl Pendry. All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act. Resale of this guide is strictly prohibited without the copyright holder's permission. If you purchased this publication from someone other than PassPorter Travel Press, please call 877-929-3273.

View more PassPorter Articles online at <http://www.passporter.com/articles/>