

Yet Another Reason to Fly Privately

BY JAMES D. BUTLER | SEPTEMBER 2008

Just for fun, I often ask commercial air travelers how they enjoy their flights. Turns out, they're not having fun at all.

Here are some recent comments:

"I'm not doing that again."

"There's got to be a better way."

"A complete mess."

"What an ordeal. It took me days to recover."

Recently released statistics for 2007 bear out these complaints:

- 20% of travel time is spent in delays at the gate, in taxi lines and circling the airport, at an annual cost of \$41 billion.
- 30% of all flights (1.6 million flights in all), were delayed at least 15 minutes. (This does not include time spent waiting in security lines and at baggage claim, or the fact that the airlines have quietly increased projected flight times so that the numbers won't look so bad.)

All in all, airline passengers are more dissatisfied than at any time since 2001.

Once an elegant experience, flying today is more akin to traveling in a cattle car. Legroom has been eliminated and new checked baggage charges have led passengers to stuff more and more into their carry-ons. The result—you're cramped into less and less space; indeed, you may experience your seatmate in a way you probably don't know your best friend.

Passengers, feeling like they're treated disrespectfully by security personnel, ticket agents and flight attendants, in turn tend to leave their manners at the gate. Flight attendants report passengers attending to personal hygiene matters in flight (don't ask!), leaving chewed gum on seats, and stuffing seat pockets with all kind of debris (including dirty diapers).

If all that isn't bad enough, now the airlines are eliminating flights and retiring aircraft, further restricting the flexibility of an air travel system that is already stretched to the breaking point. Thus, when weather or equipment problems cause flight de-

lays, whereas you used to be able to hop on the next flight, now it may be a day or two before you can find a seat, leaving you stranded and with a feeling of anger and helplessness that sparks a kind of "road rage" we hear about more and more, as cranky passengers and crankier airline personnel face off in venting frustrations that neither has caused and neither can remedy.

Contrast this nightmare with flying on a private jet. You fly where you want to fly, when you want to fly and with whom you want to fly. You fly direct (not through the airlines' arbitrary hubs). No long layovers. No redeyes. No lost luggage. No intrusive searches.

You fly on a clean, well maintained and safe aircraft, with a pilot who'll even help you with your luggage. Catered meals and drink of your choosing await you; there's internet and phone service and, perhaps most importantly, a comfortable seat with plenty of legroom.

Many clients come to us for the first time after they've reached the breaking point with the airlines. I can't tell you how many calls we get from new clients who say, "I just had a horrible experience with the airlines. I'm not doing that again. What are my options?"

As private air travel advisors, we analyze your needs and budget and go out into the marketplace to find you the best private air travel options — whether it's a one time charter flight, a 25 hour jet card, a fractional share, or a combination thereof. In all we do for our clients, our goal is the same—find the best price for your flights with an experienced operator on well maintained and appropriately equipped aircraft flown by top notch pilots—all with an impeccable safety record. In leaving the airlines behind, our clients find that the sense of civility and peace of mind that comes with private jet travel is priceless. As one client summed it up, "Flying privately used to be a luxury, but today it's a necessity."

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