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Less stress when you travel

National travel expert Captain Karen Kahn offers tips for avoiding unnecessary holiday travel stress.

Posted on Tue, Nov 24th, 2009 2:18 pm by Renee Cooper

Santa Barbara, Calif. - As we head toward the holidays, I am sure thousands, if not millions, of people nationwide are beginning to stress about their holiday travel plans. Air travel can be daunting. No matter how much experience you have had with it, the hassle and worry associated with navigating a bustling airport and enduring a long flight tends to weigh heavy on travelers' minds.

From the unwanted elbows and comments from tightly packed neighbors to the numerous check-in, security and boarding lines, stress is a constant for most people flying during the holiday season. As a frequent traveler myself, I am here to tell you with a little planning, air travel can be enjoyable, even relaxing.

The key to avoiding travel stress is organization. Do yourself a favor, follow my 12 tips and you will fly with peace of mind and avoid more grief than you can imagine.



What To Bring With You:

Your choice of gear can make the difference between a relaxing getaway in the sky, and a seemingly endless stay in a sardine can.

- 1) Carry a comfortable neck pillow to use as either a low back or neck support. Label it with your name and cell phone number, just in case you mislay it.
- 2) Carry soft foam earplugs to eliminate noisy seatmates.
- 3) When flying, wear slip-on shoes (for easy security removal) that have room for your feet to swell in-flight.
- 4) Carry an empty water bottle, which you can fill inside of security and save the cost of buying expensive airport bottled water.
- 5) Take snacks (dried fruit, protein bars, jerky) in individual plastic bags. Any excess should be carried in the original unopened packaging if travelling to a foreign country where sealed packages for personal use are usually allowed.
- 6) Take reading material you can discard along the way to lighten your load. Magazines and must-read paperwork that you do not have to return home are good candidates for travel reading.

Security:

What should be as simple as taking off one's shoes has the ability to cause more stress and wasted time than any other step in the flying process. Don't be afraid of the security line. Plan ahead!

- 7) Plan your travel togs to exclude any large metal buckles, bracelets, necklaces or pins to keep metal detector gymnastics to a minimum.
- 8) Place your bags on the x-ray conveyor belt in the order you want to reattach (stack) them. That's suitcase first, then briefcase, then computer inside the security bin, then shoes and jacket/purse in the last bin.

Dont Forget:

Before you leave your house, know where all of your important paperwork is. Stay organized and you will minimize your worries.

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9) When you make your reservation; keep a list of alternative flights, just in case your flight is late or cancels.

10) When flying internationally or when you have more than one connecting flight, be sure you have on-going boarding passes for the second leg of your journey. Know your connecting gate and recheck the monitors at your intermediate stop to be sure the gate has not changed.

11) Always check for your passport, wallet, tickets, purse, and identification before you move from any long-seated location (boarding area, airplane seat, car, bus, etc.).

Once You're in the Air:

12) After takeoff, remove your carry-on bag from under the seat in front of you and place it behind your legs. Now you can stretch out and relax.

Following these tips will help you ensure a smoother, more carefree journey and leave you free to worry about more important issues.

Have a safe and enjoyable trip!

Having spent the last 30+ years at 30,000 feet with other people's lives in her hands, Captain Karen Kahn certainly has mastered the art of confidence, determination, and professional and personal growth. Today, as speaker, author, career counselor and one of the few pioneering female pilots still working, she inspires others on how to harness their own inner Captain and soar through life with confidence. Please visit Captain Karen Kahn's website at www.captainkarenkahn.com.