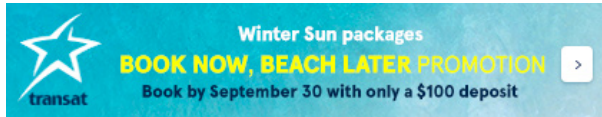




Travel Industry TODAY



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ARE YOU IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL

How to Enjoy Long Haul Flights

Steve Gillick

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24 SEP 2012: Steve Gillick has written a two part article on Long Haul flights. While many passengers automatically reject the idea of spending 12 to 14 hours - or more - getting to a

vacation destination, Steve shows agents how to coach clients into experiencing destinations that could change their lives. Here's the first installment.



What do you mean the flight is 13 ✦ hours? If Franitan is that far away then forget it!

Ever get this reaction from clients who are looking to extend their travel experiences by exploring new destinations? One of the problems is that they don't always do their research and when they find out the actual flying time, they tend to want to return to a 'comfort destination' ✦ one where you hop on the plane and 3-4-5 hours later, you are lying on a beach or buying your Park admission tickets, or plunking your first token into the slot machine.

Travel certainly has changed in our fast-food/high speed world where client expectations may not be fine-tuned to the joys of actually travelling somewhere.

Of course we are not talking about the arduous journeys from days gone by—we are talking now of supersonic transportation that allows travel from major Canadian cities direct to Asia or Europe or Africa or South America in a matter of hours. But still some clients take a look at the flying time and nix the trip right away, thereby denying themselves new experiences that could change their whole perspective—and focus—not only of travel, but of the globe.

Coach your clients

So what is the role of the travel professional? Put the 'journey' into context and actually 'coach your clients' on how to enjoy the long-haul flight as an adventure in itself. Travel Counsellors, simply put, 'counsel' their clients about travel options. Going to a new destination, half-way around the world, can be an exciting suggestion to clients of all generations.

Pre-requi-seats

Novice travellers don't concern themselves too much with seat selection as they don't know the seating protocol for long distance flights. Travel Counsellors can play a key role here in providing sage advice.

· Some enjoy the window seat The Pros? They have a view and also a 'wall' to prop up their pillow while they sleep. The Cons? You are probably travelling at night time where there is nothing to see. Unless you bring your own pillow there is usually a gap between the seat and the window and your tiny airplane pillow will keep falling down. And of course, you will have to disturb the

one or two people sitting beside you, each time you need to use the washroom or stretch your legs.

- Some enjoy the aisle seat Pros? You can be master of your own domain. Go to the washroom or go for a walk whenever you choose; have a bit more 'space' on one side of you; flag down the flight attendant without having to push the concierge button. Cons? You will have to move when your seat mates want to go to the washroom or go for a walk; you have to ensure that no arms or legs are in the aisle when the flight attendants wheel the serving cart up and down the aisle, or whenever another passenger walks by.

- No one prefers the middle seat. Unless of course you are travelling with a companion where one of you will have the window or aisle seat.

- Many people don't like the back of the plane ♦ most of the time, that's where the washrooms are located and it can get noisy from activities in the galley where the food is prepared. Also, you will have to wait until all the rows in front of you disembark before you can get off the plane, and then the line ups at immigration may be very long. Travel counsellors should counsel their clients to pre-select their seating well in advance.

Be a seat guru to your clients

Need extra help with this? Sites such as www.seatGuru.com will have the seating plan for just about any airplane currently in use. You can show your client the layout, check where the 'not so good seats' are located (eg seats next to a washroom or window seats where no actual window exists, etc) and provide counsel.

Flight Preparation

Your client has chosen a direct flight to Asia of Africa that could last 12-14 hours. How can you help them prepare for this experience? Here are some tips

Experienced long-haul travellers have their own tried and true routines. Bring a small bag on board with you containing your flight essentials. This may include

- Aspirin or similar, just in case.
- Any medication (properly labelled) that you usually take.
- Toothbrush and travel size toothpaste (it is always refreshing to wash up once or twice during the flight)
- Wet/dry towel
- Facial Tissues
- Pen/writing pad (for capturing any creative thoughts during this great opportunity for thinking and reflection as you embark on an adventure)
- A great book to delve into, or magazines to read
- An ipod or computer chocked full of your favourite tunes or podcasts or movies (just in case you don't care for the selection provided by the airline)
- A map and guide book of the destination you are

about to visit (prop up your enthusiasm by learning about the destination)

- Emergency snacks (nuts, candy, energy bars ♦ any comfort food you like). This is so you can munch whenever you choose and not feel hostage to the food service times on the flight.
- Extra socks, underwear, T-shirt (yes, the airline can lose your bags even on a direct flight, so be prepared with a change of essentials)
- Ear plugs, just in case the person next to you is either a constant talker ♦ or a sniffer, or a snorer.

Getting settled after Boarding the Flight

One of the key times on the long-haul flight. You might want to wait until your seat mates are settled, (unless you are sitting by the window).

- Get comfortable
- Loosen your belt
- Take off or loosen your shoes (to promote better circulation)
- Put your reading material, music, water and snacks in the seatback in front of you
- Have a sweater or jacket handy as it sometimes gets cool during the flight. Most long haul flights provide a pillow and blanket. If you don't see them - ask for them just in case ♦

Don't miss part 2.



Steve Gillick

A tireless promoter of "infectious enthusiasm about travel", Steve delivers his wisdom once a month in his column *The Travel Coach*.

[Read more from Steve Gillick](#)