

Airport Secrets They Don't Tell You (But You Should Know)

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SUMMARY

Mark from Wolters World shares essential airport secrets to enhance the travel experience, focusing on tips for navigating security, dining, and dealing with gate agents. He emphasizes the importance of planning ahead to save time and improve comfort during airport visits.

- *Not all security lines are equal; research which entrance is quicker at larger airports.*
- *Best airport restaurants are often away from food courts; explore for better dining options.*
- *Gate agents can assist with more than boarding; they can help with rebooking and seat changes.*
- *The cleanest airport bathrooms are usually near baggage claim or lounges, as they see less traffic.*
- *Early morning flights generally have fewer delays and less congestion, making travel smoother.*
- *Boarding time differs from departure time; arrive at the gate well before the boarding time.*
- *Lounge access is possible without flying first class, but evaluate if it's worth the cost compared to local dining.*
- *If a flight is canceled, stay at the airport to secure accommodations; leaving may limit assistance options.*

Where are the best toilets at the airport? Are the lounges really worth it? And can those gate agents do more than let us on the plane? Hey there, fellow travelers. Mark here with Wolters World, and today we're in Ghent, Belgium. And today we're going to talk about are the secrets that travelers should know about the airports but they seem not to tell us. And I want to start [snorts] with one. When you get to the airport, security lines. What you have to realize is not all security lines are made the same. If you're at a bigger airport that has multiple security entrances, usually there's one that's quicker than the other. And it's good to do your research to figure out which one you want to go to. Cuz for example, when I go to Chicago, I know if I'm flying out of Terminal 5, the international terminal, it's going to be a lot faster than if I'm flying out of Terminal 2, which has a lot of domestic flights. So, it's really a good idea to kind of think about it beforehand. Now, not every airport has multiple check-ins and multiple security checks. And not every airport you can go in one security place to go to another part of the airport, but it's a good idea to look up cuz it could save you a time, especially if you're running behind getting to the airport. Now, another secret I think is important for us hungry travelers out there is you need to realize the best restaurants, they're not in the food court. They're not at those junctions because the junctions where it's the food court and stuff, that's about fast food. Get in, get your food, and get out. So, it's a fast-paced kind of thing. So, that's where you have a lot more of the fast food things. If you explore down the terminal a little bit more, you go and find the more casual sit-down restaurants, those are usually going to be a better experience. And what's cool to places like Indianapolis or you're going to Atlanta or at my favorite, you go to Tampa, you'll see that they'll be branded restaurants from inside the city. Like you can get a great Cuban sandwich in the Tampa Airport, but you have to go a little bit off the beaten path to get it as opposed to food court. So, if you're going to be sitting there for a while and you want to get something to eat, maybe don't do the

food court. Walk a little bit to get the better grub at your favorite airport hub. Now, I mentioned those gate agents before and I think another secret people don't realize is gate agents can do a lot more than just help you get onto the plane. They can help you rebook your tickets. They can get people's seats moved around and be nice to them because they can decide who doesn't get on the plane as well. Now, another thing I mentioned at the beginning is where are the best toilets at the airport? Well, I'm not going to lie to you. The best toilets at the airport are actually by baggage claim or by the lounges. Why? Well, think about it. When people get off the plane, they want to go to the bathroom right away. So, those bathrooms in the terminals by the busy gates, yeah, those get used a lot more than the other ones. But, all of them get cleaned, but the ones that aren't used as much, they tend to stay cleaner longer and that's why at baggage claim, no one's thinking, I want to go to the bathroom. They're thinking, I want my luggage and I want to go home, right? And so, that would be a cleaner one to do. Also, good idea to use the bathroom there because if you're waiting and you someone could take your bag on that baggage claim, woo, it's better to do it at baggage claim cuz it's going to be cleaner. Now, in terms of the lounge or by the lounge, nobody that's going to the lounge is going to use a bathroom in the terminal that's outside the lounge. They're going to wait till they get inside. So, therefore, even if you don't get to use the lounge, you get a benefit because the bathrooms by the lounge are used less. Now, the airport secret I use the most when I travel is take the early morning flights if you want the least amount of headaches. Why? Well, if you take that early morning flight, usually your plane landed the night before, so you don't have the delays. Also, when you go to check in, there's not 3,000 extra people there. It's just the first people flights that are there. So, it's usually faster to get through security, faster to check in, faster to get to your gate and that takes a lot of the stress away. Also, what you have to realize, that means you're probably going to have less delays and less cancellations if you're taking those morning flights cuz the morning flights go and as the day goes on, the delays get more and more and more. The cancellations get more and more and more. That's why early flight a lot better off. So, you're going to travel for holidays or anything like that, don't take the afternoon flight. Get up in the morning, get suck it up, take that early morning flight so you have less chance for problems. Another thing that isn't a secret, they actually put it on your boarding pass and it's actually a lot of times signed up in the airport is this secret that people forget. Boarding time and departure time are very different because a lot of people think, "Oh, departure's at 4:15, so I'll get there at 4:15." No, no, no, no, no. If departure's at 4:15, they're closing that door at 4:00 or maybe 3:45.

So, you need to be there earlier. And I'm going to tell you, you might get to your gate, you know, 5 minutes before departure and everybody's gone. The gate agents are gone because they got everybody on the plane already and you're like, "Wait a minute. What What's going on? I'm here. What's going on?" And they are not going to feel sorry for you. And they are definitely not going to open the door for you to get on that plane. So, that's why when you have your boarding pass, look at the boarding time. That's when you need to be at the gate. Not the departure time, not 10 minutes before departure. No. Be there at the boarding time when it's time to start boarding. Otherwise, you might find the secret place where they keep all the pillows and blankets for all the people that have to sleep in the airport overnight. Now, another secret that you probably heard from a number of other travel bloggers and they probably told you to buy credit cards and stuff like that, but it is really true. You don't have to fly first class to get lounge access. There's a lot of ways you can do it. You could have a credit card that lets you in. You can, you know, have perks with your, you know, membership with an airline or maybe you have the miles for it. Or you can actually pay for it. So, you don't actually have to be a first class passenger to get in those lounge. But here's another secret.

Those lounges, they're not always worth it because if you're paying 50 bucks a person, let's say there's a family of four, so you're paying \$200 to get into that lounge to have little tiny sandwiches and a few drinks here and there, wouldn't it be better to you have gone that restaurant down the way towards the end of the terminal and had a really good meal from a local restaurant in that town? Cuz it's probably going to be less and you're going to have better food when you're there. Now, let's say your flight gets canceled while you're at the airport.

One thing I want to tell you, if they cancel your flight, do not leave the airport until you get your accommodation booked. Because if you leave the airport, like I was flying from Indianapolis to New York to Scotland and our flight in Indianapolis literally the plane broke. Like no joke, like the wheel fell off, okay? And they're like, "Oh, like we're stuck in Indianapolis." And we're starting to leave, but I call up the agents and like, "Hey, yeah, our flight's canceled. What can we do? It broke." Like, "Oh, do you have a place to stay?" I'm like, "No." Then they're like, "Well, don't leave the airport."

Cuz once you leave the airport, we don't have to help you anymore." So, what you want to do is stay in the airport whether you're on the phone or you're waiting to talk to an agent like on the phone or in person. Obviously, you can't leave when you're on the phone in person. But, you don't want to leave the airport cuz they don't have to help you once you go. Especially if you got one of those connections that you're stuck in a city. It's their job to put you up for the night or at least help you get a more affordable accommodation option.

Now, really crazy secret that people don't realize is delays aren't always the worst thing. I know some people get really upset, "We're delayed. We're going to be leaving late. Oh, I'm going to miss my connection." Well, sometimes it does work out. I know for us, we've had flights that got delayed so much we missed a connection and then instead of having going from Atlanta to London to Tel Aviv, they just switched us to the Atlanta to Tel Aviv direct flight, which saved us a lot of time. So, just be relaxed. Those delays could mean that other people are on the plane. Maybe it helps you get an upgrade sometime. I know for myself, sometimes we have delays on other flights and flights have been canceled. When we get on our plane, when we buzz in to like get on, they're like, "Oh, you've been upgraded."

Because they had to move us around. So, just remember, it's it isn't always a bad thing. Don't don't kill the messenger when there's delays. Oh, also, another secret, if you don't want to get bumped from a flight, make sure you are a member of the frequent flyer program of the airline you're flying with. I don't care if you're only going to fly with them once, become a member because the last people they're going to kick off are their loyal members, right? So, that's going to be a really key thing.

Another secret the airlines don't want to tell you is the fact that yes, they do overbook a lot of their planes because let's be honest, people miss connections, people decide not to fly, people get explosive diarrhea and they're like, uh, yeah, no, I'm not flying. It happens. I'm just saying. I'm just saying, okay? But, they know that. So, they always oversell it a bit. And the thing is what I want you to know, the secret is if they start offering like, "Hey, we'll offer you \$200 if you'll take a lat- later flight or \$300 for this." And they start asking for, "We're going to give you like credit for United Airlines or credit for Delta." What I recommend is ask for cash. Why? Because airline credit, it disappears after a period of time. It's not forever. So, what you should do is like, "Hey,

I'm willing to do it, but can we make it cash instead of airline credit?" And if they say no at first, then just wait because if nobody is taking the- taking up on their offer, they'd rather have cash at a lower amount than that e-credit, okay? So, remember that. Now, another little trick the airlines like to do is, um, early arrival. Have you ever noticed that?

They like to say, "Yet another early arrival with our airline." What you have to realize is the airlines make the schedule, okay? So, they know how long it takes to fly someplace. And so, what they do is they kind of pad it a little bit. So, they give it a little 10-minute little extra here at the beginning and a little 10-20 minute extra on the end so we always get there on time. I know my favorite flight, the one I take most of the time, it's an hour and 15-minute flight. But, the actual travel time, like the gate-to-gate, is 2 hours. So, if there's any delays or anything like that, they've already got like a 45-minute buffer in there to help them out to be on time. So, don't be surprised when they say, "Oh, uh, early arrival." Yeah, yeah, they they should be getting there early because they kind of scheduled it. And then I want to tell you a secret that might really upset you. And that is they might rebook you even if you didn't miss your flight.

Have you ever like had a really tight connection and the flight gets delayed so you're like running through the airport to get the next one and you get to the gate and you put your ticket down and they go, "Oh, sorry. We gave your seat away." You're like, "Hey, I'm here. I have the ticket. I have the boarding pass. It says it." Look, if you have a very tight connection and the system does not think you can make it from your flight to the next flight, don't be surprised if they automatically rebook you onto a later flight. Now, if that does happen and there's still space available on that flight, ask them to the gate agent. Remember, the gate agent can do things. Ask them to put you back on that flight. If there are no spaces available, make sure you take all the information, okay? And ask them if this was involuntary denial of boarding because that gives you a little bit more leeway when it comes to getting, you know, money back or you have any issues later on, all right? So, what are some of the secrets you see airlines and airports do to trick us travelers or to keep us happy and and and delighted that we, you know, arrived early. Let me know in the comments below so we can help other travelers enjoy traveling around the world. And I want to say a special thank you to all our members on YouTube and our patrons on Patreon who make honest travel videos like this possible.

You all are awesome. And if you want to find out how you can help support us making these honest travel videos, go to Walt Go to patreon.com/waltersworld or click the join button down below on YouTube to find out how. Anyway, I wish you all the best. I'll say bye from here in beautiful Ghent, Belgium.