



What are the safest and most dangerous jets in the air today?



GREAT

→ BOEING 777

Airlines like Continental, Delta, and United have flown this long-haul jet on more than three and a half million flights with no fatal crashes. An advanced wing design allows the 777 to fly higher than other jets, and the plane's landing gear—the largest ever incorporated into a commercial aircraft—gives it greater stability and maneuverability on runways and taxi areas.



GOOD

→ AIRBUS A340

The Airbus's four engines (versus the standard two) allow it to fly extended routes with little risk of engine failure. Commercial pilots have used the jet since 2003 with no fatal crashes. The A340's only major nonfatal close call occurred in 2005, when an Air France flight from Paris to Toronto landed during a thunderstorm, careened off the runway, and burst into flames.



SCARY

→ FOKKER F28

A short-range, Dutch-engineered jet flown by small foreign airlines, the Fokker has been involved in 21 fatal crashes since 1972. These dinosaurs were built starting in 1964, and at last count 160 were still in service. U.S. carriers don't fly them, but if you're on a chartered flight in Indonesia, Nigeria, or Peru—where an out-of-control Fokker killed 42 passengers in 2003—look out.



WRITE YOUR WILL

→ TUPOLEV TU-154

Flown in Iran, China, and Russia, the Soviet-built TU-154 is a medium-range jet that's averaged more than one fatal event per year since 1990. The most recent spill occurred in August 2006, when a Tupolev flown by the Russian airline Pulkovo crashed while en route to St. Petersburg, killing all 160 passengers. NATO's code name for the Tupolev: "Careless." —C.M.

How can I ace security?

→ PACK WITH CARE. Your electronics should sit cleanly in one layer in your bag. "A tangle of wires can get you a bag check," says Transportation Security Administration spokesman Christopher White. Store valuables in your carry-on, so they don't sit exposed on the

conveyor belt. **→ CHECK YOUR METAL.** Detectors are set off by an aggregate amount of metal, so a quarter in your pocket isn't going to put you in the beep zone, but a western snap shirt combined with enough foil gum wrappers could. **→ MANAGE YOUR BINS.** Put your coat and shoes in the first bin. Use the last bin for your

laptop so it's closest to you when you pass through the metal detector. **→ OR SKIP THE LINE** with Clear, a new members-only, security-line-hopping pass. You go through a security check when you apply for the pass, pay \$128 per year, then breeze through exclusive security lanes at airports like JFK and Denver (flyclear.com). —T.S.

Seriously—two hours before flight time?

Conventional wisdom says that's when you need to be at the airport. To make sure you spend your first night of vacation at the beach bar instead of on concourse B, consult this chart about average security-line wait times at major airports. If your airport isn't here, find it at waittime.tsa.dhs.gov. —T.S.

Numbers reflect average delay time in minutes on Fridays between 1/08/08 and 2/05/08

AIRPORT	7 A.M. (AVG/MAX)	10 A.M.	NOON	5 P.M.
New York JFK	15/15	11/20	20/27	12/20
Chicago O'Hare	12/25	12/15	15/25	16/18
Seattle	9/14	10/15	5/10	11/25
Los Angeles	8/13	15/38	11/19	8/16
San Francisco	8/9	7/9	6/9	7/9
Denver	6/15	5/11	3/6	11/25
Salt Lake City	7/18	18/25	7/15	5/11
Albuquerque	5/9	4/5	5/8	5/10
Burlington, VT	4/8	4/8	2/2	2/3



How should I book my ticket?

- 1. BUY IN ADVANCE.** The first rule of travel still stands. Worried that you'll get screwed by last-minute fare drops? Many airlines, like US Airways and United, have a guaranteed-fare rule, which entitles you to a travel voucher if a lower fare becomes available.
- 2. FLY BETWEEN 9 A.M. AND 3 P.M.** "Security lines are shortest in the middle of the day, when business travelers are at work," says Ann Davis, spokeswoman for the Transportation Security Administration. And Saturday is the slowest air-travel day of the week.
- 3. GO DIRECT.** In case you haven't noticed, missed connections are becoming more common. If you have to connect, make sure you have at least a two-hour layover.
- 4. FLY ON CHRISTMAS OR THANKSGIVING.** "The actual holiday is the one day during the peak season when it's going to be easier," says Todd Curtis, founder of the air-travel-statistics Web site AirSafe.com and a former safety analyst at Boeing.
- 5. USE SMALL AIRPORTS.** Flights leave less frequently, but the security lines are shorter and delays are less likely. —RACHEL BERTSCHE

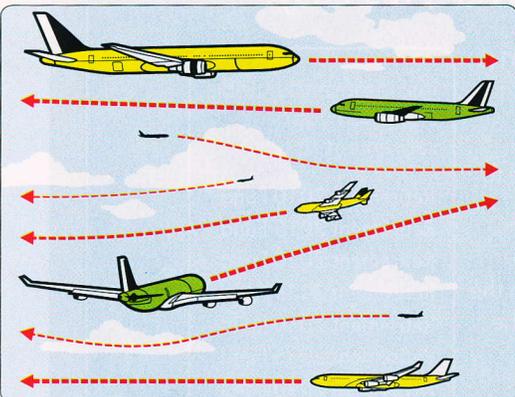
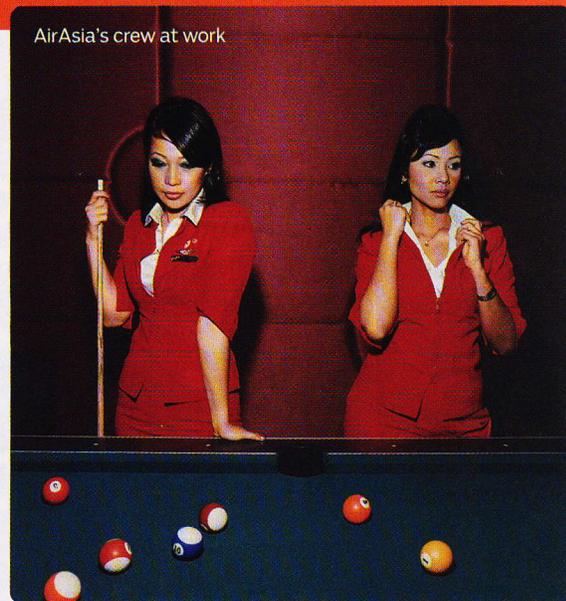
ARRIVED LATE IN 2007 → 58 PERCENT INCREASE IN PASSENGER COMPLAINTS FROM 2006 TO 2007 → 80 PERCENTAGE OF ON-TIME ARRIVALS FOR SOUTHWEST AIRLINES IN 2007 → 69 PERCENTAGE OF ON-TIME ARRIVALS FOR AMERICAN AIRLINES IN 2007 → 16,691 DELTA PASSENGERS INVOLUNTARILY DENIED BOARDING IN 2007 DUE TO OVER-



Is eco-friendly air travel possible?

Short answer: not yet. But your environmental footprint varies greatly depending on what type of jet you fly in. Here's a rough look at the damage inflicted by those big, fat fuel guzzlers, according to carbon-offset calculator TerraPass. —AMY MARR

AIRCRAFT	CO ₂ EMISSION RATE (POUNDS/HOUR)	÷ MAX CAPACITY	= CO ₂ PRODUCED PER PASSENGER PER HOUR (POUNDS)
Gulfstream GV <i>private jet</i>	10,613	18	590
Embraer ERJ 145 <i>small regional jet</i>	11,436	50	229
Airbus A340 <i>common long-haul jet</i>	46,800	380	123
Boeing 737-800 <i>most popular aircraft</i>	15,994	162	99
2006 Hummer H2 <i>sin of the road</i>	79 (at 60 mph)	5	16



What happened to "free flight"?

Free flight—the notion that commercial pilots should pick their own routes to save fuel and shorten travel times—has been dying a slow death at the hands of the FAA, overseers of air-traffic control. The idea, first brought before Congress in 1994, is enchantingly simple: Pilots would fly the routes of their choosing and change those routes when necessary to avoid other planes. "Today, I have all the navigation capability I need to fly the way I want, anywhere I want," says R. Michael Baiada, 58, a captain for United Airlines. But pilots have to do the bidding of ATC, and the low-tech system corrals aircraft into indirect, congested routes. Michael Boyd, an aviation consultant who's testified before Congress on the subject of free flight, says ATC uses just 3 percent of available U.S. airspace. And because ATC's technology is so out of date, controllers separate planes at great distances—imagine the traffic jam that would ensue if cars on an interstate had to stay 100 yards apart. Boyd estimates that free flight could be implemented for less than \$5 billion and be operational within three years. The system would free up more controllers to monitor takeoffs and landings, which would ease the congestion at major airports. But don't expect to see free flight soon. Instead, the FAA is hard at work on its NextGen system, a \$15 billion technology update that should be ready sometime around 2025. —M.B.

How do you beat fear of flying?

For the 30 million Americans who live with aerophobia, boarding a plane is like walking the plank. I know. I've asked strangers to hold my hand at 20,000 feet, and I've caused flight delays by bolting for the door before takeoff.

Here's what didn't fix my problem:

- **REVIEWING THE STATISTICS.** I don't care if flying is about 20 times safer than driving. Phobias are irrational fears, remember?
- **ANXIETY MEDS LIKE ATIVAN.** I still begged to get off the plane; I just slurred my words as I did it.
- **EMDR** (eye-movement desensitization and reprocessing). The concept: My brain would reprocess my fears if I talked about them while a therapist zigzagged his fingers in front of my eyes. The reality: What do you think?

And here's what did:

- **HYPNOTHERAPY.** I relaxed in a La-Z-Boy while surrounded by New Age music, flashing lights, and the voice of a therapist saying happy things about flying. Three sessions later—don't ask me how—I was ready to fly. —DIANNA DELLING

What happened to glamorous flight attendants?

Nothing. They're all beautiful, especially when they're beaming down at you from the booze cart. But we know what you mean. In the U.S., safety and practicality—not to mention fair hiring practices—have ushered out the days when airlines shamelessly sold sex appeal and designers like Ralph Lauren put together outfits for TWA. That's probably a good thing. But some foreign airlines continue to care about style. Malaysia-based AirAsia's flight attendants sport fitted uniforms, while Singapore Airlines continues to market its glamorous "Singapore Girls." And, says Brian Finke, a photographer who spent two years working on his book *Flight Attendants*, Icelandair wins points because "the flight attendants still wear hats." —C.M.

Which is the least reliable airport in the country?

Newark Liberty, which is smaller than JFK and LaGuardia airports but absorbs runover from New York's two major hubs, suffered the most delayed arrivals in the U.S. last year (39% of all flights). Newark's average arrival delay (71.7 minutes) also ranked dead last among the country's 32 major airports.

Which is the most reliable airport in the country?

Salt Lake City wins the gold star with the fewest delayed departures (15% of all flights) and arrivals (19%) of any major airport, as well as the second-fewest cancellations (0.7% of all flights). Metropolitan Oakland had the shortest delays last year, averaging 41.8 minutes on departure and 45 minutes on arrival. —R.B.

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, January–December 2007

BOOKING → 43 JETBLUE PASSENGERS INVOLUNTARILY DENIED BOARDING IN 2007 DUE TO OVERBOOKING → 35 AVERAGE AGE OF NORTHWEST'S DC-9 FLEET, THE OLDEST DOMESTIC FLEET IN SERVICE → \$30,000,000 AMOUNT AMERICAN AIRLINES SAVED BY REMOVING MEALS FROM COACH IN 2002 → 3 PETS LOST BY DELTA IN