I rode the Northeast Regional from Baltimore to Washington, which was definitely not the idea many locals think of when given the choice of rail. The MARC offers service along the same line, however, there are more stops. In any case, I could have a dose of the long – distance service that operates Washington D.C. to New York and/or Boston.

The very nice and functioning website Amtrak.com works well for buying tickets, viewing a ticket/booking, and the amenities are shown on the train.

No one goes on the train without a seat, apparently. All tickets that I saw were either Reserved Coach or Business Class, both of which come with a seat. The difference between Coach and Business is that the seats have more legroom, a footrest, larger recline, and (as advertised) a complimentary beverage. I was never offered a beverage on this ride at all, neither did I ask. I also figured that you can’t reserve seats (unless you’re leaving sometime next year in Business Class… Amtrak will extend pre-booking services to Business Class on the Northeast Regional, also in place on Acela First Class).

In the morning, I got to Baltimore Penn Station at 7:30 in the morning and had a coffee at Dunkin Doughnuts and brought a doughnut there. The waiting area doesn’t have very many chairs, just a long wooden bench (with backrest) lined up along the walls of the station.

There was a departures board with all the trains and the departure gate of the train. It appears that gate E is used by most Amtrak services based on what I saw on the departures board. The departures board is very hard to miss once you enter the station and/or the waiting area.

Entry to the platforms are highly discouraged unless you’re travelling. It’s cold, windy, while upstairs in the waiting room, you have access to coffee, delicious doughnuts, customer service, and a warm waiting area. At least that was my thinking.

There is an announcement that is broadcast about 10 minutes before the train departs. It’s the boarding call… except that there is no train to board at the time. At least most people had their coffee with them… I usually don’t drink unless I’m flying.

At least two tracks were being used for MARC services. I guessed that I was doing something out of the ordinary when I entered the platform area because you’d think of people taking the N.E. Regional going to New York City, not the sub 1-hour journey to Washington, D.C.

I also appreciated the large “Baltimore” sign.

I didn’t hear an announcement about where the Business Class carriage will be. Or I probably wasn’t paying attention, with me videotaping Amtrak N.E. Regional Train 172 entering the station. Where I stood was where the Business Class car was… so I assumed it would be where I stood when my train, 111, entered. I could not be more mistaken… it was at the other side of the platform! So I sprinted 6 cars (at least I go out for runs every day I can), where I was stopped by the conductor, asked which cabin I was on, and was told, “We’re going to leave very soon, so how about you get on the train and walk to the end?” I agreed, and it was probably the best idea I had in a while… the train departed as I was walking through the quiet car.

Tickets were checked, and a blue slip was placed above my seat. I had the conductor scan my boarding pass, and I soon began to measure the seat.

There is a footrest,

A drop – down table (really small, too embarrassing that I didn’t get a picture), and a safety card.

Power outlets… because it’s 2019! And most of us use electronics that need to be recharged (like phones)!

For those travelling in a large party, there are tables with four seats facing each other, four per carriage. I highly recommend those travelers use those seats. Also works for solo travelers using a laptop/has to work given the large space. Tables can be expanded if necessary. Seats stay facing each other – direction can’t be changed unlike other seats on the train.

And now for the technical stuff. Everything is to the accuracy of my measuring tape. The pitch is 48” and it definitely helped me a lot and will most definitely help on the long journey between Washington and New York. To put this in perspective, that’s four feet long! By comparison, the mode (number that happens most often, sorry for the math reference but I can’t think of how else to put this) pitch for First Class on airline seats (recliners in First Class) are 37-38” on longer flights! The width is 19.5” for each seat, so both seats between the armrest is around 40” because there is no armrest in the middle. First Class recliners on an airline are around 20” with a big armrest in the middle. The recline is 10” which is very good if you’re the person reclining. If you’re getting reclined into, and you have the tray table out, it’s going to be really bad. I suggest working with your laptop in your lap or else you’re going to have some laptop damage. Airline seats in First Class (recliner style, of course) are less than that, with the highest at around 7” deep. The armrests on the side are 2.25” so it’s more than large enough. And the padding of the seats are over 6.5” at the narrowest point. In other words, the padding won’t really affect the pitch at all.

We arrived at a low-level platform in Washington Union Station. The conductor made an announcement, not offering an apology, but emphasized that we can’t go to all doors, but only those that have someone standing next to them or with stairs deployed.

As I walked to the station, I could see the wheels equipment and electrical stuff. No surprise as that was how low the platforms were. At least the train is equipped with stairs.

I turned right after exiting the waiting area and walked outside. The metro station is very close to the train station building, but it isn’t connected (annoyingly, so you’d have to deal with bad weather if that were the case) and you’d have to leave the train station.

Overall, I think it’s worth it if you’re going to take the train from Washington to New York or somewhere around that general area. If you’re going Boston to Washington or the other way around, take the Acela or fly because of the time (unless you’re flying on a day that you’re sure will have a very bad weather system that will potentially delay your flight by a lot. Then take the Acela or Northeast Regional.).