This review contains two flights. Please scroll down to see the review for the Chicago to Frankfurt segment.

If you’re wondering why I picked a six – hour transit, it’s because I wanted to check out the E-175. It’s also because I wanted to give myself time due to how unpredictable the weather in the Midwest is… we had a snowstorm in May and we had a record amount of snow this year.

# United Express Minneapolis to Chicago on an Embraer E-175

## Boarding

Boarding is in their five – group – two – line system. I rather like this as it gives more flexibility in the timing. I made a chart telling you which line to go. Just note that for group 2 you’d line up in line 2 (green line) but boarding through line 1 (blue line) after group 3 is called.

Surprisingly boarding music was played for a small plane. I rather liked it, but I didn’t expect it on the small plane.

## Cabin and Interior

I rather like this E-175 plane. This flight is normally operated by the smaller E-170, but there was an aircraft change in our favor. Now more people can fly First Class! Unfortunately, I purchased Basic Economy, so no upgrades, but who really needs First Class on a short hop?

So, the extra six seats comes from First Class given Economy Class seat counts remains the same.

The seats are specified on their website as 18” width by 31” pitch. I measured 18.1” width and 31.25” pitch, so it’s roughly the same. Armrests were 1.75” wide, probably contributing to the 18.1” width. Recline was 2.5”, which is less than the specified 3”.

## Food and Beverage

For this short of a flight, I didn’t need a drink or a snack. But it was still offered. I had a Diet Coke, which was served on ice. Pretzels were handed out and I enjoyed it while watching the Wisconsin land pass by.

## Crosswinds!

During our takeoff from Minneapolis I noticed we had a crosswind from the left. This was because of the swaying of the plane. Just after takeoff was also some more swaying.

Landing in Chicago on Runway 27L was also challenging, with a 20 – knot crosswind from the south (our left).

## Overall

I found this flight to be decent for such a short flight. I didn’t need a snack, but a drink was refreshing.

# United Airlines Chicago to Frankfurt on a Boeing 777-200ER

## Boarding

Boarding was also with United’s 5 – group procedure. Once again, I made a chart about this procedure.

I like the blue jetbridge. Makes everything much less boring!

Boarding music was played. There were also some people who saw some open Economy Plus seats, but they were moved back.

## Cabin and Interior

The cabin was relatively new, even though the plane was far older than the seats. There is now a problem…

Firstly, the flight was about 80% full. I was seated in a “Preferred Seat” after an aircraft with the new interior was scheduled to operate my flight. This now means I’m seated over the wing. I did convince the middle seat person to move to a seat on the other side after seeing they were open on the seat map.

Suddenly, with an empty middle seat, the flight became far too much more comfortable. Now we can have more space to spread out and we no longer need to fight over armrests. I can also measure seats without feeling too bad.

So, the pitch was 31”, which is considered average. These seats appear to be slimline seats, which didn’t become a problem for my knees as I had the same amount of legroom (if not more) as 32” with older seats.

Recline was 4” which is ok considering these seats cradle forward, therefore adding 1.5 extra inches to the recline. It’s one more than the 3” specified on United’s website.

Finally, the width. It’s the biggest part in the 10 – abreast cabin of the Boeing 777. It’s where people complain the most. I’m certainly not one of them. I can handle the 17.25” on this plane. This was probably because of the empty middle seat, but I noticed no difference, I still felt comfortable *because of the empty middle seat.* I feel like the experience is going to be different if the cabin is full.

Finally, there were some other elements with the new cabin reconfiguration. I decided to use a rough drawing to explain it to you.

The Galley have changed a bit so that the carts are facing the sides instead. This adds three crew jumpseats and gives passengers a bar area where they don’t have to worry about intruding into the galley.

They also refitted new lavatories, which are still ok. A new lavatory is also added just behind seats 37JKL. It’s where, had they not added the new lavatory, seats 38JKL would be, but there would be way too much passengers using four lavatories.

## Food and Beverage

This was a dinner flight, meaning I got to experience dinner, albeit two hours later than I usually eat dinner.

A beverage service was started, and I had a (full can) Diet Coke with Ice. It was served with Pretzels.

Tonight’s meal is a choice of Chicken or Pasta. I choose the Chicken.

Drinks were served once again, and the full can was offered again.

The Chicken option were strips of Chicken in Cheese Sauce. There was some Orzo rice in it. Somehow this was ok.

The Quinoa Salad was bland, and I didn’t attempt to finish it. I did finish the bread roll served with it.

Lemon Sorbet was served, and I choose to use the spoon provided with the entrée and the meal.

Near the end of the flight, I woke up to another meal being served with a large croissant and yoghurt. I had a coffee. The Flight Attendant got worried about me having coffee bland, but I told her I usually have coffee like this, during the few times I drink it.

Food and Beverage was decent for this flight (except for the salad), and I could not be any more satisfied.

## Entertainment and Wi-Fi

This plane is fitted with a new screen at every seat. I measured with a measuring tape, but I didn’t write it down in my notes and comes up with an around 10” screen.

You can view the selections in different types of viewing modes, including list and photo mode. You can drag to skip to a part of a movie/video.

Audio options were available. And for once, having a decent IFE screen, I put my phone away. Speaking of which…

Charging your phone through the USB port was an excellent option as opposed to using the 110V plug as you don’t have to bend down too much to access it. In addition, it charges very fast and you don’t have to worry about battery damage like some other cabins with similar screens.

None of that (except the USB power port) was needed as I was sleeping after meal service was completed and as breakfast was being served.

## Service

I really liked the service on tonight’s flight. The flight attendants looked very happy and they were very enthusiastic about their job. They also offered the entire can whenever possible and they wonder about people who like their coffee as – is (no sugar, no cream), in a good way.

They also had polite conversations with their customers and I noticed they passed through the cabin very often.

## Arrival

We had one of those gates where you needed to leave through stairs and board a bus to the terminal. This will haunt me until I leave Germany.

I did like that these gates provide you with a view of the aircraft.

## Overall

This was a decent flight. I liked the timing of the departure and I like the new configuration. If United really wants to offer a competitive product in Business Class and a Premium Economy, then I think this will be the great aircraft to do so. I also like some other cabin elements they used, such as the overhead bins. I really think United should continue with that, and maybe continue installing mood lighting? That’s what makes a cabin even more aesthetically pleasing but the lights won’t go off in that case. I prefer a dark cabin while sleeping.

Service was a really nice part of the flight and I was really surprised to see a crew this happy.