With recent events accounted for, ticket prices increased. The first time I checked (which was two days before the price increase, mind you), prices for the same flight were for 720 RMB. Now, this flight is going out for 1,200 RMB, a 66% increase. I basically had no choice when I booked this flight, having taken it two years ago and two weeks before this flight with a forgettable experience (this was before I started reporting).

I got here at 4:20 in the morning, only to see Check – in still closed until 5:00… After I checked my bags, I cleared security.

I had a remote gate today, which meant a trip downstairs to ground level for a bus to my plane. The plane was sitting there, across the tarmac, and I grabbed a few pictures before boarding.

Flight attendants were checking boarding passes and I was directed to the other side for my flight. I’ll get to the service hospitality later.

My seat was over the wing. Had I not assigned myself a seat earlier in the week, I would be sitting near the back of the plane. Many seats in the cabin over the wing were for a charge, nevertheless, some seats were free to assign.

We departed a little late at 7:22, seven minutes after our scheduled departure time. Despite a late departure, we would arrive 46 minutes before our scheduled arrival time of 10:40.

Seated over the wing means a much smoother ride because the wings absorb most of the turbulence. However, you get to listen to the loud flight controls and the engines. Works for me!

You also don’t get much views… not that you need it, from the clouds that we encountered most of the ride.

I happened to be riding on a plane with Wi-Fi and the 10.5” PTV screen. I don’t think there are many of those with one flying with China Eastern though (the one I flew on two years ago didn’t have any, neither did the one I flew on a week ago), but I was still surprised.

Speaking of which, I found the seats to be very modern. The seats are pitched 31.5 inches, and I measured the middle section to confirm this. The width is 18 inches, which is about standard on an A330 aircraft. The recline is a very generous 6 inches, and the armrests are 2 inches wide. I measured those in the middle as well.

There weren’t many choices, and the map was a slideshow. It’s still an improvement over nothing. I decided to sleep.

And that decision worked ok. When I woke up, a box of food had been set on the tray table for me to eat. No hot option (I was told there was congee, but since I dozed off and since they didn’t want it to get cold, I declined it, to the flight attendant’s concern).

At the time, people were finished and refills were being offered. Having never gotten one earlier, I had an Orange Juice to drink. It tasted fresh.

Wi-Fi is available. I was able to use WeChat to message the ground for free.

I went to the rear bathrooms because everyone was lined up in the middle. I slept for another 30 minutes. This flight is less than three hours long. I heard a rumor that food is legally required to be served for flights scheduled for over 2 hours. If that’s the case, there isn’t much time for sleeping.

Let’s do the math. The flight lasted 2 hours and 32 minutes. There’s an hour that’s gone for departure and arrival. Then the meal service lasted for 40 minutes (it could’ve been longer). This gives us 52 minutes remaining. Had the flight lasted 2 hours, there would be 20 minutes remaining… let’s say that we should hope that the meal served is delicious. The flight attendants would also be rushed to ensure that every mouth is fed.

There are also afternoon flights, out of meal hours. Who eats lunch/dinner at 3 pm? Would they be served afternoon tea? Let’s say that I’m flying Guangzhou to Shanghai. It leaves at 2:30, arriving at 4:45. What would I be served? If they call it a snack (like four years ago, an afternoon flight Beijing to Guangzhou), sometimes, it’s more likely a large snack on a tray or in a box.

Flight attendants were running around the cabin at least once every ten minutes with a box of food and congee because people were waking up. It seems like they’re genuinely concerned for their passengers and always try to offer food to those who wake up.

They also put up with screaming babies on the flight very well. Someone in the middle section not far from my seat did not like the descent and screamed for at least 15 minutes until arrival at the gate (something that suspiciously sounded like wanting to use the bathroom). Two flight attendants tried to solve the problem, even offering food. It didn’t work well, but the flight attendants at least tried.

What that showed was how the flight attendants were trying to keep the flight experience enjoyable (like leaving a box of food on the tray table for me so I can eat). A lot of things may seem small, such as opening the lavatory door, but in the end, it helps everyone.

We had another bus gate on arrival. I was forced to concede that it was because we parked at the International Departures area, and since the jetbridge would lead us into the Border Control area, we needed to go to domestic arrivals. No problem, it was a short ride, and plus, I was quick enough to get a seat.

Overall, the flight was great. I liked the morning arrival, allowing me to have an afternoon of productivity. However, what really impressed me was the service. I was impressed to see that they actually cared for their passengers. I would choose this flight again in a heartbeat!