

Title:

Flying Internationally on Chartered Planes

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Summary:

If you're a budget traveler, chartered planes will cross your travel planning path at some point in time. The quality of charter flights can be both good and bad.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

If you're a budget traveler, chartered planes will cross your travel planning path at some point in time. The quality of charter flights can be both good and bad.

During certain times of the year, flying to a particular location can be very expensive. One way to beat the expense is to book a seat on a charter flight. I did this very thing once, booking a round trip ticket to Europe during the high season. The seat set me back \$400, a savings of about \$350 at the time.

The chartered flight had good and bad points. I don't want to get sued, so I'll leave out the name of the company in the following.

Bad Points

I was flying out of Los Angeles and into Paris on an unnamed charter flight. The fun started upon arriving at the airport. The flight left at 2:00 in the afternoon, but the ticket window wasn't open at noon. An hour later, a very long line of passengers were starting to grumble about being ripped off since the ticket window still hadn't opened. A riot was ready to break out when a tired looking man came out and opened the window at 1:45. In response to shouts asking how we were supposed to all board the plane in 15 minutes, he kindly let us know the flight was delayed by three hours.

Bad Point Number One: Customer Service Stinks on Chartered Flights.

Once on the plane, I was extremely fortunate to be located one row in front of

the toilets and directly in front of an emergency exit. Because of the emergency exit, my seat did not recline! Admittedly, this was more bad luck than anything to do with the charter company. The smell of the lavatories, however, was very strong. The flight was 11 hours, most of which I spent cursing myself for being cheap.

Bad Point Number Two: You Get What You Pay For.

Good Points

There is one very good point when it comes to flying charter. While the initial booking is cheap, most travelers fail to take full advantage of the nature of a charter flight.

Charter flights have first class seating. Not many people who can afford first class tickets will take a charter flight. In fact, the first class section may be close to empty. When you check in, make sure to ask if you can upgrade to first class for the flight. If you can, it is usually very cheap to do so. On my return flight from Paris to Los Angeles, I upgraded for a whopping \$50 and immediately became a travel snob. "You call this water?! I demand 1949 Perrier! And a lobster! And I want to fly the plane!

Charter flights definitely are a cheap way to fly. Just keep in mind you get what you pay for.