



TRAVEL TIPS

How To Leave Stress Behind When Flying *Seven Top Tips for Travelers*

(NAPSA)—The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced recently that travelers should expect more delays due to increased flight congestion. What can travelers do?

Scott Ackerman, Director of Customer Care at Orbitz, the popular online travel site, monitors travel conditions around the clock to provide real-time information for individual travelers concerning flight and airport delays and other events potentially impacting their itineraries. He offers these tips for avoiding delays:

1. **The Early Bird Catches the Worm:** When traveling east, most summer flight delays are tied to severe weather after 1 p.m. You can avoid thunderstorm delays by scheduling flights that land before lunchtime. The opposite is true when traveling west, since dense fog along the coast typically causes morning delays and you're better to schedule a flight that arrives in the late afternoon.

2. **Monitor the Weather:** Stay abreast of weather conditions by checking with resources such as the national weather service Web site (<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/>) a couple days of prior to traveling. If thunderstorms are looming, check with your airline or travel agent to see if you can stand by for an earlier flight. This can also be helpful when making flight con-



If you remember to plan ahead and know your resources, a stress-free trip can await you.

nections at one of the major airline hubs.

3. **Stay Plugged In:** Sign up to receive an airline's or travel Web site's wireless travel status updates, which provide information on flight delays and gate changes sent directly to your cell phone, pager or e-mail on the day of travel. With an agency such as Orbitz, you can also have your "Care Alert" sent to friends and family to keep them informed of your flight status.

4. **Keep Snacks on Hand:** Since many airlines no longer serve in-flight meals, pack a protein bar, piece of fruit and a bottle of water in your carry-on luggage in case you get delayed on the runway.

5. **Check Airline Flexibility**

Policies: Your airline may waive fees for flight changes due to severe weather—check for airline waiver rules with your airline or online travel agency.

6. **Fashion Forward:** Dress appropriately to zip through security checks more quickly amidst packed airport crowds. Clothing items to watch out for include jewelry; shoes with steel tips or heels; belt buckles and clothing with metal buttons or snaps. Remember to get your laptop out of your briefcase to go through separately.

7. **Keep Your Toothbrush Close:** Pack a carry-on bag with toiletries, medications and one change of clothes, to make sure you're prepared in case your luggage is late or you're stuck overnight at the airport.

Linda Rau, a St. Louis-based interior designer, agrees that being prepared can help reduce travel stress.

"I was sitting in the airport having breakfast and my cell phone rang—it was one of those cool wireless travel alerts that I signed up for with my online travel agent," said Rau. "It notified me that my flight was going to be delayed and even gave me an approximate departure time and recommended alternative flights I could try to get on via standby. So, I decided to order another cup of coffee and relax."