



CWT Traveler

CURRENT NEWS AFFECTING TODAY'S BUSINESS TRAVELER

January 2009

Survey

CWT Traveler wants to know

CWT Traveler would like to give readers the opportunity to weigh in on topics of relevance to travelers. Each month highlights a single survey question, and the following month reveals the results. Readers also have the option to submit potential survey questions to be highlighted in future issues of *CWT Traveler*. January's question is below, along with the link to submit your response.

Have you used your cell phone/mobile device as your boarding pass?

- Yes
- No, and I don't think I will
- No, but I would like to try it

Submit your response [here](#).

Green tip of the month

On the road:

When using paper napkins or paper towels, don't use more than you need. If one is sufficient, use only one.

Current Events

Airlines more prepared for challenging economy

According to industry analysts, despite the current economic situation, the airline industry is actually in a better position to weather the storm than are several other industries. When fuel prices climbed this summer, the airline industry took a proactive approach: they kept planes grounded, reduced flights and added additional fees to baggage and food; all of which helped them save money before the economy plummeted. The industry's quick action prevented them from taking more drastic measures.

Now, even though fuel prices are down, many airlines will continue with their newly established practices (i.e., fees) in order to preserve those additional sources of revenue. Forecasters predict travel demand will continue to decrease in 2009. In response, airlines are continuing to slash ticket prices in an effort to entice travelers worldwide. As a result, passengers may find some packed planes in the months ahead. However, analysts predict the industry will be in a better position in 2009 with its full capacity and lower fuel prices.

Sources: ABC News, dallasnews.com

Hotel reflagging not uncommon

Recently, it has become fairly common for hotels to go through a reflagging. "Reflagging" is a travel industry term for rebranding.

There are a few key things travelers should know about a reflagging. First, it does not necessarily mean anything is wrong with the property. Second, any loyalty programs that previously were honored with the former chain will no longer be valid at that particular property. Additionally, room rates will generally change. If a hotel has changed brands to a more expensive brand, room rates will reflect the change.

While these key factors are important to know, reflagging is not a new phenomenon. It is simply a business practice that is becoming more commonplace in these economic times. Travelers should be aware of this practice in order to ensure the hotel they select is within their company's preferred hotel policy.

Sources: Washington Post, allbusiness.com

Travel Tips

Traveling to Thailand

Editor's note: Global business, and subsequently, global business travel, continues to expand. In response, CWT Traveler will provide to readers insights and tips on traveling from North America to other countries around the world. This month's installment focuses on Thailand.

In business:

- Allow plenty of time between appointments. Travel within the city of Bangkok can be difficult, especially during the rainy season. Gridlock is very common and Thai businesspeople often conduct business from their cars. Thai cities have passenger service on canals, so when street traffic is stalled, consider commuting by boat.
- The best time to schedule business travel to Thailand is between November and March. Most Thai businesspeople vacation during April and May.
- Visitors should be flexible and patient in business dealings, as Thais do not follow the same persistent work schedule as other cultures. Visitors also should not be overly assertive, as that may be considered impolite.
- When dressing for business, men should wear a lightweight suit or slacks and a jacket, white shirt and tie; women should wear plain,

conservative dresses or suits. Women should not wear black dresses, a color the Thais reserve for funerals or mourning.

Good to know:

- Thailand is seven hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (G.M.T. +7), or twelve hours ahead of U.S. Eastern Standard Time (E.S.T. +12).
- The traditional Thai greeting is called a "wai" (pronounced "why") and can be used for both meeting and departing. Hands should be pressed together as though in prayer, arms and elbows should be kept close to the body, and the head should be bowed to touch the tips of the fingers. The height of the hands determines the level of respect being given. The higher the hands, the more respect being shown; however, fingertips should never extend above eye level. Thais will also shake hands with Westerners.
- Visitors should avoid marking private documents and information "confidential." This may only bring more attention than desired.
- Visitors should never point their foot at anyone or cross their legs with one leg resting on the other knee, as both are considered extremely rude. Never point or move something with the foot.

Safety and Security:

- The U.S. State Department is concerned that there is an increased risk of terrorism in Southeast Asia, including in Thailand. American citizens traveling to Thailand should therefore exercise caution, especially in locations where Westerners congregate, such as clubs, discos, bars, restaurants, hotels, places of worship, schools, outdoor recreation venues, tourist areas, beach resorts, and other places frequented by foreigners. They should remain vigilant with regard to their personal security and avoid crowds and demonstrations.
- Please contact your CWT travel counselor or click on the State Department Website below for the latest security information for travel to Thailand – http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

Sources: travel.state.gov, "Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands: The Bestselling Guide to Doing Business in More Than 60 Countries," by Terri Morrison and Wayne A. Conaway. Published by Adams Media of Avon, Massachusetts.

Know before you go

It's important for travelers to check travel warnings and health advisories before heading to their destinations, and there are several helpful resources available online.

Travel.state.gov: Here, travelers can find travel warnings, country-specific information, and travel alerts. *Travel warnings* are issued when the U.S. Department of State decides to recommend that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. *Country-specific information* includes news on immigration practices, health conditions, minor political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, and crime and security information. If an unstable condition exists in a country but does not warrant a *travel warning*, it may be included under an optional section: Safety/Security. Finally, the *travel alerts* section includes information about terrorist threats and other potential risks to the security of U.S. travelers.

Cdc.gov/travel: This Website includes helpful information to assist travelers in deciding the vaccines, medications, and other measures necessary to prevent illness or injury during international travel.

Who.int/ith/en: The World Health Organization advises "Travelers may encounter sudden and significant changes in altitude, humidity, microbes and temperature, which can result in ill-health. All people planning travel should become informed about the potential hazards of the countries they are traveling to and learn how to minimize any risk to their health."

Sources: travel.state.gov, cdc.gov/travel, who.int/ith/en

Supplier News

Priority check-in available to more United passengers

United Airlines recently launched its "Premier Line" service, allowing passengers who do not have elite Mileage Plus status to access priority check-in, security screening, and boarding lanes for a fee. This preferential service has been available to United's elite frequent-flyer members at no additional charge and will remain so. However, United is now offering this service to other passengers for a fee starting at USD \$25 per-way, which they can pay through online check-in, on United's Website, or at airport kiosks.

The priority lanes are currently available at Boston, Chicago O'Hare, Denver, Los Angeles, Minneapolis/St. Paul, New York LaGuardia, Newark, Orange County, Portland, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, Washington Dulles, and Washington National airports.

Sources: Business Travel News, United.com

Regional

KLM to resume service between Calgary and Amsterdam

Twelve years after ending service in Calgary, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines has resumed flights between Canada and Amsterdam. This flight will serve as a connection between Canada and Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport—the main hub to connecting flights across Europe and beyond.

KLM expects to be flying an Airbus 330-200 aircraft, with 30 World Business Class seats and 221 Economy Class seats. While actual flight times have not been determined, five weekly flights are expected to begin May 3, with an option to increase flight frequency to daily. While the decision to resume flights between Calgary and Amsterdam was made before the economic struggles began, it has been seen as a vote of confidence for the future of travel and the economy.

Sources: Calgary Herald, allbusiness.com

International

Lufthansa launches Italian airline brand

Lufthansa Airlines has introduced a new Italian brand, "Lufthansa Italia." The Italian airline will fly from Milan to European destinations such as Paris and Barcelona. Flights to these two destinations are expected to begin in early February, with additional routes being added in March.

Additional information can be found at www.lufthansa.com

Sources: Business Travel News, Travel Daily News, Lufthansa.com

Italy gets new high-speed train service

In December, Italy's national railway, Trenitalia, rolled out new high-speed train service between Rome and Milan. The new trains have a maximum speed of 186 miles per hour (300 kilometers per hour), reducing the travel time on the Rome-Milan route by one hour—to a total of three and a half hours.

Amenities on the new trains include free newspapers, beverages and snacks. Additional information can be found at www.trenitalia.com/en.

Sources: New York Times, Associated Press

Government/Legislation

ESTA—now mandatory—is a FREE service for VWP travelers to the U.S.

Beginning on January 12, international travelers to the United States from the 27 countries that participate in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) need to receive an electronic travel authorization before departing to the United States. The application should be submitted to <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/> at least 72 hours prior to travel. The authorization will be valid for multiple entries to the United States for up to two years or until the passport expires, whichever comes first.

Alert: Travelers should be aware that there is **no fee** to submit an ESTA application. Some Websites, unaffiliated with the U.S. government, offer to assist travelers with their applications for a charge of anywhere from USD \$50 to \$250. Travelers visiting Websites that require payment for this service should be aware that they are not at the official ESTA Website of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Sources: Travel Weekly, www.dhs.gov

Technology

U.S. Department of Homeland Security to expand US-VISIT biometric categories

On December 18, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced its plans to expand the categories of non-U.S. citizens required to provide both digital fingerprints and a photograph upon entering the United States through US-VISIT.

US-VISIT is a program that records biographic and biometric data to confirm the identities of non-U.S. citizens visiting the country. According to the DHS, expanding the US-VISIT biometric categories is "a positive step forward in a process designed to further improve public safety and national security while ensuring the integrity of the immigration system."

Additional non-U.S. citizens required to provide biometrics now include lawful permanent residents of the United States; persons entering the United States who seek admission on immigrant visas; persons entering the United States who seek admission as refugees and asylees; and Canadian citizens who are currently required to obtain a Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Document upon entry, or require a waiver of inadmissibility to enter the United States. Some U.S. visitors will continue to remain exempt, including non-U.S. citizens younger than age 14 or older than 79, as well as Canadian citizens on short-term visits under B visas.

Sources: CNET News, dhs.gov

Marriott moves to eco-friendly key cards

Marriott International has purchased 24 million plastic key cards made of 50 percent recycled material to be used in its hotels. This is one of Marriott's many "greener" practices to reduce its environmental impact. This change alone is expected to save 66 tons of plastic from ending up in landfills.

Sources: Marriott.com, Travel Weekly

Industry Trends/Innovations

Airlines continue to test biofuel options

In January, Continental Airlines pursued alternative fuels by taking a passenger-free demonstration flight using new biofuels—the first airline in the United States to do so. The airline collaborated with Boeing, Honeywell's UOP, and CFM International to research, test, and produce the new biofuel.

Made from a special blend derived from algae and jatropha plants, the new fuel consists of 50 percent traditional jet fuel and 50 percent biofuel. The innovative construction further supports green efforts as it reduces carbon emissions and doesn't contribute to deforestation or affect food crops or

water resources. The fuel is expected to burn cleaner and be less expensive in the long run.

Others airlines have tested similar biofuel blends. Air New Zealand successfully tested "green diesel" in December 2008. Its biofuel mix was constructed from jet fuel and jatropha oil; an oil from jatropha trees that produce inedible nuts. Japan Airlines will also conduct a biofuel flight in early 2009 with a blend of three biofuel feedstocks.

Sources: Continental Airlines, ATW Online, Travel Weekly, Airtravel, New Zealand Herald, Reuters

Keep the giving spirit alive in '09 by donating frequent-flier miles

None need to be reminded about the economic downturn. But a reminder about the ways individuals can make non-monetary charitable donations may be a good idea. Charitable organizations are faced with increased needs and decreased funding during these challenging times, and travelers should keep in mind the donation possibilities using frequent-flier miles via the major North American air carriers.

Check the following links for additional details.

- [Air Canada](#)
- [American Airlines](#)
- [Continental Airlines](#)
- [Delta Air Lines](#)
- [Northwest Airlines](#)
- [United Airlines](#)
- [US Airways](#)

Many of the frequent-flier programs have partnered with a variety of humanitarian organizations, and some have partnered with environmental organizations as well, offering members numerous ways in which to put their miles to good use.

Sources: Air Canada, American Airlines, Continental Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Northwest Airlines, United Airlines, US Airways