

What the Duck!

Rant! What is With The Airlines These Days

Upfront disclosure: this rant comes from a place of extreme privilege. I know that, and I am extremely grateful, but being extremely privileged and extremely grateful does not mean one is not also allowed sometimes to be extremely annoyed.

Frustration with the airline industry should come to no surprise to anyone ~~frugally-minded~~, but I reached a new low with British Airways last week. (I know, privilege.) I had booked a ticket for my fabulous Euro-poopin' Vacation to attend a dear friend's wedding in Italy (privilege, again). I expected better from BA than what I've come to expect from your run-of-the-mill U.S.-based airlines (save for Alaska, the Best Airline Ever), but alas -- trying to pick my seat online, I was told it would cost an extra \$45 (\$45!!) to select a seat in advance of checking in. While I was not about to pay this insane Discomfort Tax for slightly less discomfort, I looked at the seat selection out of curiosity. No kidding, there were only middle seats and one aisle seat directly next to the bathroom. No, and thank you for the pleasure of punching myself in the face.

About 48 hours before my flight, I checked again. Surprise! The price had gone down to \$23 (\$23!!) to reserve a seat. There were still only middle seats available. WTF!

When online check-in opened 24 hours before my flight, guess what! No charge to reserve a seat and there were SO MANY OPEN SEATS -- aisles, middles, windows, the full spectrum of choices. I got a primo aisle seat in the front of the cheap-ass cabin for the privileged price of No Extra Charge.

Who on earth would pay \$45 to reserve a seat in advance? And why does any airline think this is a good policy? All it did was piss me off to the point that I would never choose to fly BA again (there were some other weird policies that factor into this too -- like they don't participate in TSA pre-check, huh?).

Airline industry, if you're out there, stop nickel-and-diming us and turn the focus back to customer service and creating a positive user experience -- that's something I don't mind paying for.