

US' Top Nine Outrageous Airline Fees and Extreme Flying Charges

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An ABC USA report says that just in time for the US summer flying season, it looks like airlines and airports have found new ways to squeeze some more money out of us.

The latest fee is dropping somebody off at the terminal curb, with drivers at UK's Luton Airport, north of London, England and favoured by discount airlines now charging pay to drop off travellers. That's right, the airport is charging motorists roughly \$A2:00 just to pull up to the curb and let grandma out to catch her flight. Have the airlines simply gone too far? Well, love them or hate them - and we guess most folks hate them -- these add-on fees look like they are here to stay.

So, buckle up, put your seatbacks and tray tables in an upright position and get ready for ABC News' list of the nine most outrageous flying fees....and don't fret, we're sure there will be plenty of more fees coming soon to an airport near you.

Paying to Pee: Don't laugh too hard (especially if you had that extra cup of coffee before boarding your flight.) Discount European airline Ryanair is actually considering charging passengers about \$A2:00 for each use of the on-board toilets. No word on when and if this will actually happen, but just a few years ago, nobody would seriously talk such a fee.

A Place to Rest Your Head: It's one thing to remove pillows and blankets from planes to save weight and, therefore, fuel., but US carrier JetBlue took things one step further selling pillows for \$7. The airline says this isn't your father's pillow but a high-quality pillow and blanket kit, customized for the airline by CleanBrands. JetBlue is calling it the world's cleanest pillow and blanket travel kit.

The \$US2 [nearly \$A3] Soda: US Airways gave up on this fee earlier this year but it still makes our list just for the outrage factor. We just hope they didn't drop the fee to get people to drink more water and soda in hopes that they will someday charge for the bathrooms.

Booking Over the Phone: Most of the major Australian and U.S. airlines charge \$A20 to \$A68 to book your flight over the phone. We all know that in this do-it-yourself age, booking over the Internet is cheaper and sometimes easier. But every once in a while it is reassuring to hear a human voice on the other end of the phone. And besides, do we get to charge them for being forced to listen to that horrible hold music?

Checking Bags: This is probably one of the most frustrating and hated fees out there. Every major airline except Alaska, JetBlue and Southwest charge to check luggage. Airlines typically charge \$A20 to check that first bag and another \$A35 for that second bag -- each way. That could be an extra over \$A100 for a roundtrip flight.

Airport Check-In: We once again hop across the pond and back to Ryanair for another outrageous fee. The airline now charges people to actually check-in at the airport instead of online. Fees can be as high as \$A20 to see that smiling desk agent print your boarding pass for you.

Curbside Check-In Back in the United States, United, US Airways, Alaska, JetBlue and Spirit charge nearly \$A3 to drop your bags off curbside instead of at the main check-in desk. Yes, it's a nice convenience but this is on top of the \$20 to \$48 that passengers are already paying to check their bags. And finally, you are expected to tip.

Seat Assignments: Discount airline Spirit started charging passengers last year just to reserve a seat assignment in advance. It now costs passengers \$A20 for an exit row seat on Spirit, \$A14 for an aisle or a window and \$A7 for that dreaded middle seat. And that is one-way.

Drop Off Fee Finally, we come back to Luton Airport's new fee for motorists who want to drop off or pickup passengers at the terminal. All we ask is: after paying all the other fees, who is going to have any cash left to pay to exit the airport?