

Tips for Surviving Air Travel Delays, Diverts and Cancellations

Weather. A severe event (icing, hail, thunderstorms, and lightning) at origination, enroute, or at the destination triggers a domino sequence of delays, cancels, and/or diverts. **Full Planes.** Flights have little room to accommodate passengers that have been displaced by a cancelled or missed flight connection.

1. The agents have a lot of discretion, and they're human beings. If you treat them as though the situation is somehow their fault, you can expect the situation to worsen. If you treat them with respect, you'll probably find they'll be willing to help you
2. Arrive early at the airport. If the flight is canceled or delayed, you will be ahead of others in rebooking.
3. If the weather forecast is "iffy" on your travel day, change your plans to go earlier or later. Often airlines will waive change fees if this is your reason for requesting the change (see Tip #1). Remember, others will be doing the same thing. There are very few empty seats so do not delay your decision to act!
4. Don't schedule connections any tighter than two hours for domestic or three hours for international travel. Remember inbound customs clearance delays! If stuck with a tight connection, try to choose seats at the front of the plane for quicker deplaning. If a tight connection is inevitable, use the plane's lavatory an hour prior to arrival and study a map of the terminal and gates. The reason for this should be obvious.
5. Expect to be separated from your checked baggage. Take a carry-on with the minimum essentials—toiletries, prescriptions and a change of clothing and your cell phone charger. Bring a book and/or load a movie on a tablet. Carry snacks. Avoid checking luggage in the first place. If you miss a connection, your bags are going on ahead without you.
6. If possible, avoid major hubs that are delay prone: Atlanta, Chicago, New York, Denver.
7. Apps:
 - a. Use "My TSA" for airport status, delays and when in doubt about what may be carried or checked. Apply for TSA Pre-Check to speed screening.
 - b. Use the airlines' mobile apps for check-in, flight status, boarding passes, gate changes, and your baggage carousel. Register your cell phone number with the airline to receive this info by text or voice message.
 - c. Use apps like Seat Alert to find open seats on flights you may be interested in (note: input "American Airlines" and then the flight number for Envoy or American Eagle flights).

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- d. Use “Next Flight” to locate flights to your destination, status and times.
8. Rebook on another carrier if the problem is not weather related. Request your original airline endorse your ticket to the other carrier (see Tip #1).
9. Rebooking after a missed connection? Never stand in line to talk to an agent face-to-face! Use the airline’s 800 number immediately (have it saved on your phone). See note Tip #1 above. Use the airline’s app to rebook on a later flight.
10. Schedule departures on the earliest flight. Flights later in the day are impacted by the preceding cancels, delays and diverts. Your options for same day re-routing will be significantly reduced if you take later-day departures.
11. On a flight that is delayed? Ask the flight attendant for help. Crew members can notify the staff at your next gate..they can also arrange for transportation to move you from your arrival to departure gate. Again, see Tip #1.
12. Travel insurance – it’s an extra expense, but it can save a lot if tours are at risk. Check details of your credit card—often companies include travel insurance as a bonus.
13. Check for compensation. Once your travel plans have been restored, check to see if you qualify for various forms of compensation. Submitting claims often result in some form of voucher or reimbursement. If traveling in Europe, familiarize yourself with EU Flight Compensation Regulations.

**Bad weather and maintenance issues are a fact-of-travel-life.
Pack your patience!**