

Media Release

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THE UNWRITTEN RULES OF PLANE ETIQUETTE

Flight Centre is doing its bit to unravel the mysteries of plane etiquette, with a guide to the social tactics to pursue and avoid at 30,000-feet.

The company has drawn on its 28 years' experience to compile a list of 10 commonly aired in-flight grievances and to suggest strategies that can be adopted to minimise the risk of passenger-related turbulence at 30,000 feet.

Flight Centre New Zealand's PR Manager, Marie Pilkington, said the unofficial guide covered a range of in-flight concerns from luggage placement and seat-related border crossings to toilet etiquette and rights to the middle arm rests.

"Kiwis travellers are extremely good natured and don't tend to get too upset or let too many things overshadow the excitement of taking off overseas," she said.

"In compiling this guide, we have looked at the issues that have been aired from time to time and have suggested ways that these issues can be avoided."

1) Boarding and disembarking by row

Boarding your flight is straight forward – simply join the queue when invited.

Once aboard, carry your luggage directly in front or directly behind, as luggage carried to the side will leave a path of destruction (and more than a few headaches) among the aisle-seat dwellers who have already occupied their positions.

When it's time to disembark, don't try to beat passenger 1A to the door if you're seated in row 50. The passengers in rows 2 to 49 just won't let it happen.

2) The overhead locker

This humble storage unit is now prime real estate, as travellers cram more into their hand luggage to avoid checked baggage charges, to reduce the risk of lost luggage and to pave the way for a fast airport getaway.

Ensure your bag is within the required dimensions, only bring one and, wherever possible, stow it in the locker directly above you. Don't deposit your bag above seat 1A and then proceed to your seat at the back of the plane. Trust us – there will be flow-on effects.

3) The arm rest

Let's face it; the middle seat doesn't have a lot going for it.

As you settle in to your window or aisle seat, spare a thought for the disadvantaged middle seat dweller.

If you have established early elbow dominance on shared armrests, make some space for the middle seat dweller, who otherwise faces a long and uncomfortable journey without arm support.

4) Chair reclining

On short flights (under two hours), reclining should be kept to a minimum and avoided completely during meal times.

On longer flights, the one-in, all-in rule should apply.

5) Border crossings

Space is an extremely precious commodity in the economy cabin.

Don't attempt to cross your neighbour's border (unless invited) by stretching the legs or extending the arm span to read a fold-out map or a broadsheet newspaper.

Changing the channel on your neighbour's entertainment screen, stealing peanuts and reading over the shoulder are also frowned upon.

6) Footwear

You're in close proximity to your neighbours. If there is any suggestion or past history of odour issues, footwear should remain on or should be carefully secured.

7) Mindless chatter

Before engaging in mid-flight banter with your neighbour, look for the obvious clues that point to a reluctant chatterer.

Headphones on or face buried in a book means "I don't want to talk".

8) Knees in the back

You're in a confined space, so the occasional bump to the seat in front is inevitable. Regular knees in the back are, however, almost a declaration of war.

9) Hands off the headrest

Like knees in the back, hands on the headrest in front are frowned upon.

Avoid the temptation to pull the headrest in front for extra leverage when standing. The consequences of a poorly timed headrest shake can range from mild whiplash to severe red wine spillage.

10) The bathroom

Reaching the bathroom without breaching one or two of the rules above can be challenging.

So, if you're likely to be a regular bathroom visitor, request an aisle seat and empty the tanks before boarding to avoid the rush that inevitably occurs once the fasten seatbelt sign is switched off.

On arrival at the bathroom, "fast and clean" are the rules. Toilet-based readers take note – the complementary newspaper should remain in the seat pocket.

- ENDS -

Discover Europe and the World of Travel shows

Try out some of the above tips by booking your next holiday at Flight Centre's Discover Europe and the World of Travel shows in October.

Christchurch - Saturday, 17 October at the Christchurch Convention Centre

Auckland - Sunday, 18 October at the ASB Showgrounds, Greenlane

Wellington - Saturday, 31 October at the Wellington Town Hall

Entry is FREE.

www.flightcentre.co.nz/discover

About Flight Centre

Flight Centre New Zealand is New Zealand's largest travel agency, with approximately 900 staff in more than 140 retail stores and support businesses nationwide.

The company has won the JRA "Best Places to Work" Large Workplace category award for seven consecutive years.

Flight Centre Limited globally almost 13,000 staff in countries including Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Hong Kong, India and China.

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