

UK Flights Survey BA Bounces Back And Brits Back Air Fat Tax, Reveals TripAdvisor®

LONDON, U.K. – 16 April, 2010 – TripAdvisor®, the world's most popular and largest travel community, today announced the results of its European Flights Survey. TripAdvisor asked over 2,800 travellers a range of questions about topical air travel issues, including their best and worst airline, overweight passengers, in-flight mobile phones and even 'mile high club' membership.

"The airline industry has seen some major developments in the last six months, from body scanners and strikes to planned additional charges for toilets and overweight passengers," comments Emma O'Boyle, spokesperson for TripAdvisor, "The survey reveals everything from how we book our tickets to the top in-flight passenger annoyances and serves as a useful barometer on how well airlines are currently performing in the reputation stakes."

British Airways Bounces Back

The survey reveals some encouraging news for BA, despite recent strike issues the airline comes in as British travellers' second favourite airline. Despite this, there is clearly still mixed feeling among passengers because BA also takes the second spot in the least favourite airline category. Having just celebrated its 25th birthday last year, Virgin Atlantic takes the top accolade.

Favourite Airlines

1. Virgin Atlantic
2. British Airways
3. Singapore Airlines
4. Emirates
5. Thomson Airways

It is unlikely to come as any surprise to Micheal O'Leary but RyanAir is voted the nation's least favourite airline, with its reputation likely to take a further battering following last week's 'fee-to-pee' announcement.

Least Favourite Airlines

1. RyanAir
2. British Airways
3. easyJet
4. Monarch
5. Thomson Airways

Airline Wish List

When asked which airline travellers had never flown but would most like to, Emirates came out on top. Next on the wish list was Singapore Airlines, followed by Cathay Pacific and then Virgin Atlantic .

Strike It Unlucky

Passengers are divided when it comes to second chances. Of those who have been affected by airline strikes in the last six months almost a third (30%) are adamant they will never use that particular airline again, another third (34%) would continue to use them and 32% are still unsure.

No Air Sex Please, We're British

Only 3% of Brits have joined the 'mile high club' during a flight, yet almost a third (30%) admit they would like to in the future. Two thirds (67%) of reserved Brits would not even consider it.

Top Traveller Annoyances

Rude seat recliners are the biggest in-flight travel annoyance with over a quarter (28%) of Brits angered by this. Yet badly behaved children come a close second with a quarter (25%) of passengers irate about children kicking the back of their seat and a fifth (18%) annoyed by parents not controlling their noisy children.

The TripAdvisor Flights Survey also reveals that:

- **Weighty Issue** – With some airlines now charging a 'fat tax', over two thirds (69%) of British travellers believe overweight passengers *should* pay for two airline seats.
- **Torn Over Technology** – Mobile phones on planes are still unwelcome, 84% are against them but Brits are more tolerant of in-flight internet – two thirds (67%) believe Wi-Fi should be available on flights, yet only 10% would be willing to pay extra for the privilege.
- **Price Wins** – Airfare price is by far the most important factor for travellers when choosing an airline. This trumps departure times, legroom and even safety considerations.
- **In-flight Safety** – More than one in 10 (12%) claim not to feel as safe when flying on a low cost airline despite no evidence or data to support this.
- **Body Scanners** – 80% of Brits support this additional airport security measure.
- **Fare Savvy** – 89% have used a flight comparison website to check prices before making an airline booking.
- **Online v High St** - It seems traditional high street travel agents should be worried – 85% of respondents now buy their flight tickets online, either direct with the airline or through an online travel agent.

"The findings reveal that British air travellers are increasingly savvy about searching out the most competitive fare and are more aware than ever of additional airline fees. With passionate debate around extra fees for toilets, larger passengers and baggage unlikely to go away, it is all the more important for travellers to plan ahead using tools like the Fees Estimator from TripAdvisor Flights to get information before they book," concluded Emma O'Boyle.

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Notes to editors

2,868 travellers – including 936 Britons – took part in the TripAdvisor survey (April 2010)

<https://tripadvisor.mediaroom.com/2010-04-16-UK-FLIGHTS-SURVEY>