



How do I Get an Upgrade?

By Steven Howard

All travellers have different tastes, but one constant comes in the form of air travel - we all want that elusive upgrade.

Whether you normally travel in economy or business class, there's just nothing better than discovering that you have been upgraded at no extra cost. However, an upgrade to business or first will open your eyes to a new world that will make future travel back in the class below less enjoyable. This is, of course, what the airlines are hoping for, they want to convert us!


Most airlines upgrade passengers because they overbook their flights. This happens because they have to count onto their figures a certain amount of cancellations and a few no-shows. So, when the passengers do turn up the airline needs space, especially at the back of the plane, and this is when the upgrading begins.

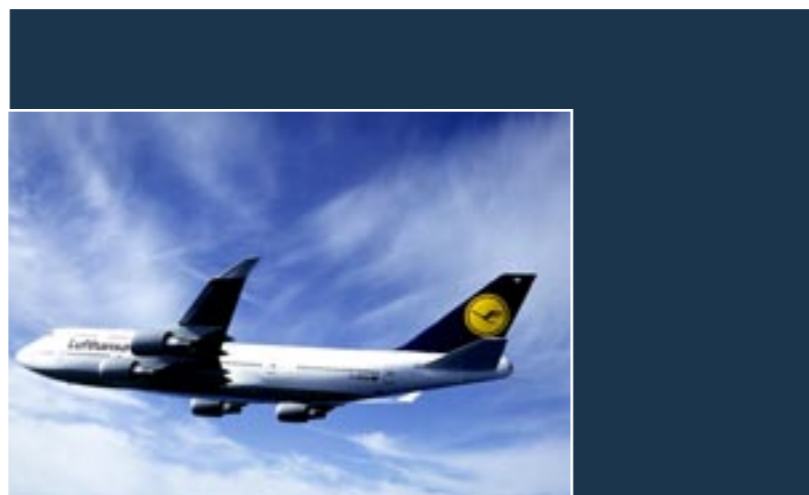
There are a few things you need to do to become a potential upgrade candidate. First, join the airline's frequent flyer programme. If the airline needs to upgrade some passengers, then they will initially check who is a member of their (or their alliance's) programme and then upgrade subject to status. Therefore, if you're the only member on the plane, you stand a very good chance of turning left rather than right upon boarding.

If you are fortunate to be in the higher membership level, then there is another trick to help you get upgraded. When you book your flight, ask the airline if the flight is busy, and if not, can you get onto the busiest flight, as there is then a much better chance that you will be upgraded for the reasons mentioned earlier. It also means that if you are not upgraded, you will end up having a rather cramped journey!

Whether you are a member of the programme or not, it is always worthwhile being nice to the lady who checks you in, she may not (and normally does not) have the authority to upgrade at her own discretion, but she can certainly help. Ask her to put a message in the system stipulating that if there is to be any upgrades, you would really appreciate being included.

At check-in, it does help to be dressed suitably, although not as much as most people would have you believe. There have been many reports on how to get upgraded, and a lot do stress the importance of your appearance, but it is not half as important as being a member of the club, or even just being nice to the lady at check-in - but she is only human - so it may help. At the end of the day, getting upgraded is not an easy thing to achieve. Good Luck!

Steven Howard is the Editor of AsiaTravelTips.com. See the review of his site on page 148. 



Homesick Solution

Star Alliance member Lufthansa has introduced a 'Global Feel - Local Touch' program, which aims to address the individual needs of international passengers. These include a 'Welcome Service' for Asian passengers to make their arrival or transit in Frankfurt easier. For example, passengers from Thailand will be welcomed by a sign in Thai, and Thai-speaking staff are on hand to answer baggage and gate queries, and provide information on airport facilities. Also, Lufthansa employs 123 Thai crew members to make Thai customers feel at home while on board.

Visit www.lufthansa-thailand.com, or www.lufthansa.com for more information.

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