

So there's this undeniable "carrot" that is sought by travelers; how to link places on the cheap...the really cheap....

In the past I flew Air Asia which was rough, until I got to VivaColombia...viva Colombia indeed, but those flights..but these were planes taken in remote places, not exactly in my back yard....

But then I tried to go to Barcelona from Chicago and found that the "carrot" of low-cost travel was now local to me...\$150 to Barcelona.."WOW" is right.But there were restrictions...the\$150 is for human trafficking...anything beyond a wallet,and not too many bills in that wallet...but if you have baggage, then we have a fee for you.

So \$150 became \$185 with luggage and I clicked on "commit". From this point we were a couple. My expansive dupa in their shrinking seats. The Battle was On...

Arriving in Gate "M", a new one for me...and I guess "M" may mean "meager"...there were surprises...

An attractive hostess in the hot pink colors of "WOW" came by, offering up these little Icelandic pails of what appeared to be lard. I had seen a lot of lard in my youth...mom baked a lot and I would always ask her why her cookies tasted so good and she would reply, "It's the lard kid, I don't spare it."

So for only \$8.50 I followed the others and bought my pail. It came with this flat paddle and I just couldn't make the connection....we we going to make cookies? Ahh....no.

As they called for boarding, I took note that those in rows 37 to 25 had no lard. I was holding a pass for 7D, and lard matron rolled by and commented, "lay it on thick kid"... I was confused...

Right there, O'Hare concourse 'M' and folks were applying white lard to their outer edges; shoulders to knees..it was crazy... I followed the suggestions and was soon properly lathered...

I had my backpack slung over one shoulder, the little pail in my left hand and passport and boarding pass in my right. Thru the last check and down the ramp...and onto the tarmac. We were instructed to put our carry-ons into carts by row, then divided into two teams. There were a bit over 200 people standing out there, with about 100 under each wing...

Each team took turns winding the propellers one full rotation under the guidance of the crew. Apparently "proper tensioning" is important on the main rubber-bands that will control our flight..then one we had all taken our turns "turning", and remember those of us with the low row numbers are still properly "lubed" ...this long bar drops below each wing and the teams are told to line up and grab the bar; it was so exciting...

Turns out WOW airlines uses a "manual" transmission we were all going for a "push start" first we had to push the plane away from the gate, and then once the pilot feels a little movement, he'll ease off the clutch and apply some gas.....the rubber-bands are for take-off, but we've got to get to the runway first...

So after about twenty minutes, the plane is now slowly moving...I don't know if you've ever jumped onto a moving plane, but it adds something beyond the \$185 price; it adds adventure...

We all made the "hop" back rows first, and eventually I got my turn here as well...ascending the ladder, I quickly realized the need for the ladder...all the better to squeeze past the seats of travelers..the getting to the seat was a slippery affair, but actually sitting down in it was near impossible. The distance between seat back and the seat in front of me was no more than 10 inches...and I have that big dupa...

The guy behind me saw the shocked look on my face and offered that I had "clearly" missed the "leg-room requirement" box on the booking form....turns out that the assumption is that your femur length NOT exceed 8-inches...Anything beyond that was my responsibility and for a small upcharge I could declare I was "adult size". Thus knees became integrated with the arm-rest mechanism for the seat in front of me....well at least on an international flight; there'd be the free beers coming...but no. WOW airlines has this great policy of "what about us?" the crew doesn't exactly "serve" they are actually served by the customer...so the crew asked us for drinks...some came prepared; I did not.

Over the next six hours I performed all variations of airline "yoga"; from 'pressed lotus flower in book' to 'downward scowling dog' as I tried to find comfort in a sea of compression. The standard seating

position closely resembled the “emergency – brace for impact” position on other airlines...my knees got a full visual inspection...

But some of this was in gest...I’ll leave you to sort it out...but for \$185 I got to Iceland and then Barcelona...if you don’t need frills, this is your airlines, but who knew breathable oxygen was a perk? I have gone six hours without eating a few times in my life and I did so again...the coffee cart came down the aisle at the five-hour mark, it’s greased sides made this odd “popping” sound as it passed the aisle seats....I had hope, perhaps just this once, a bit of kindness....I unfolded from my “coiled roll of stamps” pose long enough to gaze over...to see the woman the aisle scrawling her signature on a tablet, agreeing to the \$3.80 charge for a flat black....the lid was another 20-cents....

They say life is a journey, not a destination, but WOW airlines really makes you appreciate the luxuries you didn’t know you had... now how do I get the lard out of my hiking shorts?

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