

How to fly like a seasoned business traveller

You've probably seen George Clooney take on the role Ryan Bingham in *Up in The Air* in which he travels from one place to another to fire employees on behalf of companies who don't want to get their hands dirty while downsizing. While he revels in his ability to navigate airports and check-ins at hotels, earning a staggering amount of air-miles, few of us would enjoy flying every day and living out of suitcase.



©irstone via [123RF](#)

For some, however, business travel is a necessity and Sue Petrie, British Airways' Commercial Manager for Southern Africa shares a few hints and tips that can make a big difference to business travellers:

Make it work for you

If you have to travel for work, you may as well get the full benefit of time away. Loyalty programmes like British Airways On Business enable your enterprise to earn points when you travel on BA, Iberia, and American Airlines, and you're entitled to members-only offers and discounts. British Airways' Executive Club enables you to graduate to higher tiers where you can, for example, get cabin upgrades and access to business lounges, and use the points to, say, take your family on holiday with you.

Sort your paperwork early and go electronic

Visa requirements can seem onerous, so the earlier you get yours done, the better, along with any vaccinations you may need if you're travelling internationally, and the documentation to show you've had your shots. Saving all the documents to your smartphone or tablet can also be useful if you mislay the hard copies.

Get app-y

Apps like [ba.com](#) enable you to check in for your flight on your mobile device and save your boarding pass to it. Most seasoned travellers have harnessed the power of technology to some extent, and Petrie suggests the following apps for those who don't already have them.

- Scannable enables the camera on your smartphone to record documents at a quality similar to those that have been scanned or photocopied. Take a picture of that all-important, game-changing, freshly-signed contract and the app straightens and neatens it so you can email it. It's quick and discreet, and it's also a way to keep track of your expenses. Take a shot of your slips and mail them to your accounts department before they fade (the slips, not the accounts staff).
- There's no shortage of online project-management tools, but Trello has earned the loyalty of its 10m users through the canny use of colour-codes, to-do lists, and timelines. It's loosely modelled on Kanban, the just-in-time system of supply-chain management originally developed by Toyota and now widely used in many industries.
- AroundMe uses your mobile device's GPS to find facilities like banks, ATMs, parking-garages, eateries and medical facilities, while Wi-Fi Finder does the same but for Wi-Fi hotspots.

Be a little flash

Many business travellers will go to great lengths to ensure they only travel with cabin luggage, but if you do have to check luggage into the hold, take a moment to familiarise yourself with bag-drop arrangements and any restrictions on the size of cabin luggage. Also, many travellers find it helpful to mark their luggage with a brightly-coloured tag of some sort that makes it readily recognisable on the conveyor.

Stash it all

So, you have your boarding pass on your smartphone and you've stashed keys, wallet, and change in your carry-on baggage, to save you time passing through the metal detectors at the security checkpoint. If you're travelling internationally, you may have opted to wear slip-on shoes and to pack your belt in your carry-on luggage to avoid having to take them off and put them back on again at security. We've all stood behind fellow travellers who arrive at the checkpoint with a locksmith's supply of keys and their life's savings in coins in their pockets. There's not much you can do about that, but once you're airside, you can spend some time productively.

Find a haven

Airport lounges provide a haven from the thrum of departure lounges. The best have space for some work, something to eat, a decent wine list, facilities to shower and freshen up. Sadly some have Wi-Fi so slow that it harks back the days of dial-up internet, but without the fond nostalgia of that rustling sound modems made.

At Heathrow's Terminal 5, there's an arrivals lounge and the Elemis Travel Spa helps you get your George (or Amal) Clooney on before heading to your first meeting of the day. Locally, the Slow Lounges at a number of South African airports are a cut above, and there's even one at the Radisson Blu Hotel opposite the Sandton Gautrain station, which provides boardrooms and lounges.

Be nice

Any of us may forget our manners when we're preoccupied with an upcoming meeting or presentation, but air-travel

requires that everyone observes some simple decorum so that it can be enjoyable. The basics: be nice about sharing armrests; don't man-spread (pushing your legs apart while sitting and earning the ire of fellow passengers), switch your devices off when asked to, and pay attention to the crew during safety announcements. Other guidelines apply life in general as much as air-travel: don't drink too much and misbehave, and don't insist on talking to people who prefer to be left alone.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>