

Healthier Holiday Travel

Tips to Stay Healthy on Airlines



by B. Kay Sugg

This is the time of year when many of us will be flying to various destinations either for a winter vacation or to visit family for the holidays. If you fly often, you have probably learned through experience, positive or negative, some of the important things to know about an airplane's cabin environment which can impact your health as well as your enjoyment.



Here are some tips that will help to ensure that you maintain your health and arrive at your chosen destination ready to enjoy the holiday:

1 Prescription Meds

In your carry-on bag, take prescription medications in their original packaging and have prescriptions with you. Take more than you need since your return home could be delayed by weather or other reasons, and it is sometimes difficult or impossible to get a prescription filled in another country or even another state. Make sure any vitamins or supplements are in their original packaging also, since medicine in unmarked containers can cause problems and delays when passing through airport security.

3 Hydrate

Once you have passed the security checkpoint, purchase your own bottle of water (or bring an empty bottle and fill it up after the security check) rather than drinking that offered on the plane. Water held in the tank onboard is questionable, and when it is used to brew coffee and tea, it doesn't reach a high enough temperature to kill E. coli which some plane water samples have tested positive for.

5 Stretch

On long flights, remaining seated for long periods of time slows the blood flow in leg veins and in some individuals can result in swelling and pain in the ankles and legs. In susceptible people, this increases the risk of blood clots forming in the veins which could be a serious problem if a clot broke off and traveled to the lungs (causing a pulmonary embolism). Stretching your legs, exercising your feet and ankles while sitting, and periodically getting up and walking in the aisle will help to combat this problem.

2 Moisturize

Ideal indoor humidity is between 30 and 45 percent, but humidity in a plane is usually low—about 20 per cent. This can cause dry skin, itching, and eye irritation. If possible, wear glasses instead of contacts during the flight and carry eye drops and skin moisturizer. Also, drink water (that you bring onboard) as often as possible to stay hydrated.

4 Healthy Snacks

If you will be on a long flight on a plane that serves meals, check ahead of time to learn what the options are. If you need a special diet, you should request it several days in advance and call the day before your flight to confirm that they will have your requested meal. Take a few healthy snacks in your carry-on as an alternative if you decide not to eat the meal provided.

6 Sanitize

In the plane's lavatory, another magnet for germs and pathogens, use a paper towel to close the toilet lid before flushing (which sprays fine mists of water and potential germs into the air if not closed). Avoid washing your hands at the lavatory sink (water is not that clean); use hand sanitizer (that you bring on the plane with you) instead.



7 Bring Your Own

Take along your own neck pillow (or purchase one at a kiosk in the airport) to use on the airplane. Many airlines no longer provide pillows, but if your airline does offer blankets and pillows, unless wrapped in plastic, they may have been used multiple times since they were laundered and may be loaded with germs and “drool” from other passengers.

These are just a few ways that you can be proactive in protecting your health when flying. So, enjoy your flight and have a happy holiday!

8 Disinfect

Take travel-size disinfectant wipes (Lysol, Clorox, etc.) to clean off the seatback tray table before and after you use it. Studies have found that the tray table is like a petri dish for health hazards including the superbug Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA), which can be fatal. It kills an estimated 20,000 Americans annually. Wipe off the seatbelt buckle and arm rests as well.

9 Limit Exposure

The dry, recycled air on a plane makes it easier for illness to spread, so if you have been exposed to any communicable disease (measles, chicken pox, etc.), you should check with your doctor who can test for exposure and advise you on whether you should fly. You could become ill on the flight or make many other people sick as well if symptoms develop during the flight. Do not rely on the airline to supply you with medications such as Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Pepto-Bismol, etc. Instead, plan for the worst-case scenario and pack your own. You can also pack a face mask to wear on the flight.

HOLIDAY APPLE CRISP

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups apples peeled + sliced in 1/4 inch thick pieces
- 1 tablespoon coconut oil melted
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger

TOPPING INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 cup old fashioned oats
- 1/3 cup pecans chopped
- 1 tablespoon coconut oil
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup

This Healthy Apple Crisp recipe is gluten/dairy free, and sweetened with just maple syrup. Naturally sweet & delicious, it's the perfect healthy dessert!

Source: <https://thecleaneatingcouple.com/healthy-apple-crisp/>

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 and prepare a greased 8x8 baking dish.
2. Peel + cut apple slices into 1/4 inch thick slices.
3. Melt coconut oil. Toss apples with coconut oil, cinnamon + ginger. Set aside.
4. Mix together crisp topping.
5. Pour apples into bottom of the baking dish. Layer crisp topping evenly on top of apples.
6. Bake at 350 for 20 min until apples are fork tender and crisp topping is golden brown.
7. Top it with vanilla ice cream for an extra kick!

