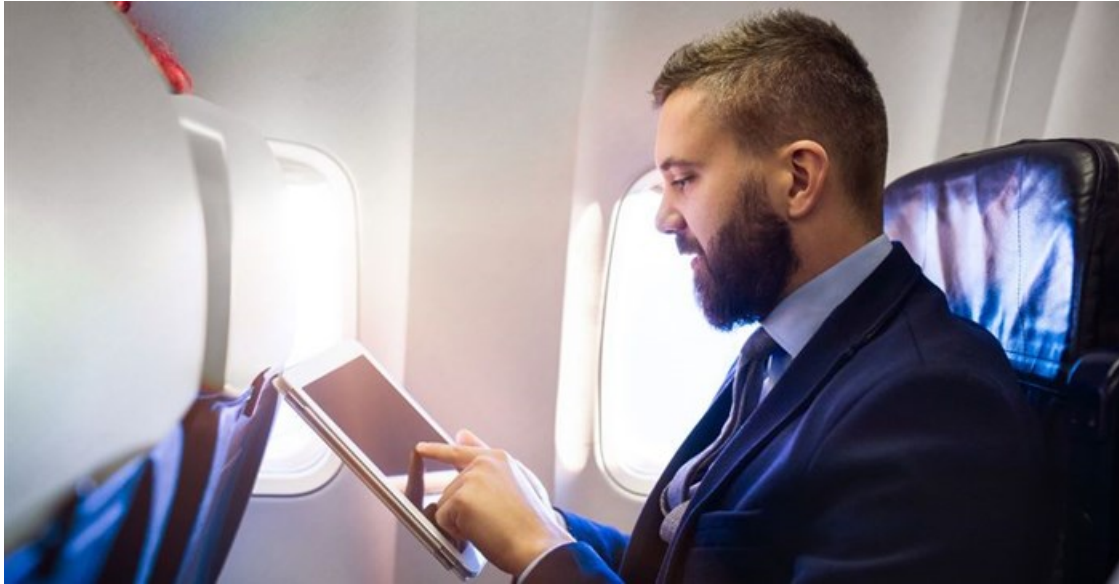


# A travel guide for savvy business travellers

As the younger generation moves up in the business world, business travel is becoming more popular. This generation is shaping local and international travel trends, with research showing that millennials are more willing to travel for business than the older generations.



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Cheapflights data shows that there has been a significant increase in travel over the last year to many business capitals around the world. There has been a 65% rise in travel from South Africa to London and Dubai, as well as an astonishing 370% increase to Sydney. Although Los Angeles has a strong holiday appeal, it is also a top business destination with a 90% hike in business travel over the last year. With this category growing so quickly, Cheapflights shares some useful tips for savvy business travellers.

## The trade-off

The airport at 6am is a very different place to that in the middle of the day - it's crawling with half-asleep business people, long lines and hundreds of coffee cups. It can feel like a stressful hustle getting from the drop-and-go to the terminal gate, so travellers try everything from checking-in online the night before, to sleeping on the plane in an attempt to try and make a 6am flight seem normal.

"This presents us with a trade-off. Is the first flight out really worth it? The early flights tend to be expensive, it means cutting sleep short and it can be quite stressful to get through check-in on time. Mid-day flights are generally a few hundred rands cheaper than those taking off first thing in the morning and around 7pm at night. On top of this, travellers are likely going to have to contend with rush hour traffic when they take off or land. And for what? To attend a 9am meeting instead of a 10am meeting? It may not be worth the effort," says Phil Bloomfield, Cheapflights Global Head of PR and Communications.

## Use the down time

For early morning flights leaving before day break, try and restore order by catching up on lost hours of sleep during the flight. If sleeping isn't an option, do some work. Just because there isn't Wi-Fi in the sky doesn't mean that work can't get done. Use the time to draft emails and catch up on outstanding ones from the weekend. They can be sent off from the office later on.

“On the flight back home, take it easy. There isn’t anything that can be done at this time of day, so take some ‘you-time’ and forget about work. Tune out, ignore the laptop, sit back and relax,” advises Bloomfield.

## **Loyalty points**

Using business travel to fund leisure travel is a savvy tip for any frequent business flyer. Take advantage of the various loyalty programmes such as SAA Voyager Miles and British Airways Frequent Flyer. Many airlines also offer air miles points linked to credit cards, so these can be added to the overall collection. At the end of the year, there may just be enough for a family holiday.

## **Booking flights**

In most cases, the company will pay for travel, but even so, booking in advance helps. Take the time to book the most appropriate departure time, choose an airline that offers small comfort benefits like in-flight meals and entertainment, as well as the all-important loyalty points. Check-in online beforehand and choose the best seat.

“Consider travelling on an off-peak day like Wednesday, as research shows that it is the cheapest day of the week to travel on, and it also helps avoid the Monday business rush. SA Airlink is establishing additional flights between Cape Town and Pretoria later this year, which should provide most options to choose from and hopefully more convenient ones too,” explains Bloomfield.

## **Transport to and from the airport**

Getting to the airport at 5am is inconvenient and there aren’t too many options at that time of the morning. “Having a friend or family member help out is the most likely first choice, but failing that, and excluding Uber and a taxi, arrange a storage service like the Durban Parking Service or Extreme Park and Fly,” says Bloomfield. They will collect the car from the drop-and-go, store it while you are away and have it ready for collection when you arrive back.

## **Packing**

Avoid taking luggage that needs to be checked in. This will save time and money. A 7kg carry-on bag is plenty big enough for most business trips. Avoiding checking in a bag also allows you to skip the bag-drop counter and the luggage carousel on the other side and also eliminates the need for a trolley, making navigation through the airport a whole lot easier. Take note that some airlines offer tickets without a baggage allowance, for significantly lower rates.

## **Stay connected**

Try and make use of the USB charging ports on the plane and don’t get caught out later on when you are out and about and don’t have access to a bedside drawer full of charging cables. As much as travelling for business can be a pain, using these tips can make it bearable and even profitable.

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