

Air Travel Issues – US and Canada

For today's survey, we want to ask people about their recent experiences with air travel.

Q1. First, we'd like an idea of how often you travel by air. Thinking over the past 2 years, approximately how many flights would you have taken within Canada and the U.S.?

No flights in the past 2 years

One or two flights

Three to five

Six to 10

More than 10 flights in the past 2 years

[ASK ALL WHO HAVE FLOWN AT ALL IN PAST 2 YEARS:] [NON-FLYERS SKIP AHEAD TO Q5]

Q2. And, in that past 2-year time period, which of the following airlines have you flown with in Canada and the U.S.? (Please select all that apply.)

Alaska Airlines

American Airlines

Delta

JetBlue

Southwest

United

Air Canada

WestJet

[Exclusive:] None of these airlines

[ASK FOR EACH AIRLINE FLOWN:]

Q3. For each of these airlines you've flown in the last two years, how would you describe your overall experience? Please consider both the in-flight experience and any ticketing or baggage service you might have used at the airport. (But, exclude security screening since that is not the airlines' operation.)

[ROWS = ALL AIRLINES CHOSEN IN Q2]

[COLUMNS]

Terrible – want to avoid this airline in the future

Poor

Average

Good

Excellent – look forward to flying them again

[ASK THOSE WHO SAY THEY HAD A TERRIBLE OR POOR EXPERIENCE]

Q4. You indicated you had a negative experience on one or more airlines in the last two years. What were the reasons for your poor experience? Please select the option(s) that most closely reflect the

reason for your poor experience, even if they don't perfectly describe what happened. (Choose all that apply)

[MULTI-CHOICE GRID – ROWS = ALL AIRLINES GETTING A TERRIBLE OR POOR EXPERIENCE IN Q3]

[COLUMNS – MULTI-CHOICE]

Cancelled flight (not due to weather)
 Significant delay/late flight (not due to weather)
 Bumped from a flight
 Lost or damaged luggage
 Poor in-flight service
 Lack of legroom/cabin space
 Poor customer service during booking/check-in/at the gate
 Other passengers ruined the experience

[ASK ALL]

Q5. Now, let's think about the last 10 years. Based on your own experiences and general perceptions about the airline industry, would you say the quality of service on airlines in Canada and the U.S. has improved or worsened, overall, in the last 10 years?

Improved over the last 10 years
 Stayed the same
 Worsened over the last 10 years
 Not sure/Can't say

[ASK FLYERS]

Q6 Generally speaking, when you book a flight for personal reasons (i.e. not a business trip), which of the following statements more closely reflects your overall approach? Please choose the statement that is closer to your own perspective, even if neither is exactly how you feel.

[ROTATE]

I'm willing to pay more for air fare in order to secure a better overall flying experience
 I'm willing to tolerate a poor overall flying experience if it means I get the cheapest possible ticket

[ASK ALL]

Q7 Thinking about the airline industry in Canada and the U.S. as a whole, based on whatever you've seen or heard, which of the following statements is closer to your own opinion?

[ROTATE]

The airline industry is working well – there is competition between airlines, leading to the most favourable combination of prices and service
 The airline industry is broken – airlines operate like a cartel, with minimal competition leading to poor prices and service

Q8. Adjusted for inflation, air fares have dropped significantly over the last 20 years or so. Some people say this is a major improvement because it makes air travel more accessible to the average person.

Others say the decrease is not much of an improvement, because airlines now charge extra fees for things that used to be included in the ticket price (such as meals, seat assignments, and checked bags).

Which of these perspectives is closer to your own, even if neither is exactly how you feel?

[ROTATE]

Lower prices are a major improvement

Lower prices are not much of an improvement

Q9. Recently, there have been some highly publicized stories about negative passenger experiences on airlines – notably, a senior citizen was forcibly removed from a United Airlines flight in Chicago to free his seat for transferring flight crew, and another story of a child being bumped from an over-booked Air Canada flight in Charlottetown, PEI.

Thinking about stories like these, which of the following statements is closer to your own opinion – even if neither is exactly how you feel?

[ROTATE]

These stories show airlines have a serious problem with customer service

These are isolated incidents that have been overblown by the media

Q10. Some people say these horror stories mean governments should implement stricter regulations on the airline industry – such as prohibiting the involuntary bumping of passengers from flights. Others say the bad publicity of these stories will lead the market to punish these airlines, forcing them to correct their problems. Which of these perspectives is closer to your own opinion?

[ROTATE]

Governments should regulate the airline industry more strictly to prevent situations like these

Market forces will punish airlines that provide poor service – governments should stay out

Q11. Suppose the federal government did introduce new regulations on the airline industry – such as a ban on involuntary bumping. What effect, if any, do you think that would have on air fares?

Fares would go up a lot

Fares would go up a little

No effect – fares would not change

Q12. And, suppose air fares increased by 10 per cent as a result of new government regulations – such as a ban on involuntary bumping and a limit on how much airlines can charge in fees. In your opinion, would that be:

[ROTATE]

Worth it to have better protection for air travellers

Not worth it, better to keep air fares as low as possible