

FAIR OR DANGEROUS? MOST TRAVELERS SUPPORT AIRLINES' FAT TAX



In a recent survey conducted by a leading travel site Skyscanner, 76% of people support the so-called “fat tax”. Nothing is ever black and white, and such a tax produces very strong public reaction.

Many airline operators have been openly discussing an unheard of tax, which would apply to obese passengers whose size does not fit the standard seat. **Some of their flying customers simply require more space and, as airlines claim, it is only fair for such passengers to be charged more.** The dispute of the “fat tax” has been quite passionate and both parties have valid arguments.

In a recent poll conducted by a leading travel site Skyscanner, 76% of people fully support the fat tax. They believe that if a passenger occupies two seats because of being overweight, the airline should be compensated as the seat could have been sold to someone else. 22% of voters opposed such idea by stating the obvious: it is the airline’s sole responsibility to cater for all kinds of passengers: tall and small, tiny or heavy. Such discrimination seems unforgivable.

Even though both parties’ comments make perfect sense, there is room for negotiation and compromise. Given that a flight is not fully booked, obese travelers who did pay extra might have a right to claim their money back. According to some of the pro-tax voters, to be fair, charges should be calculated on the weight of the person and luggage combined.

The airline operator Ryanair has been considering to charge obese fliers more though has been very careful. Last year, nearly 30,000 people supported the tax on their website survey. On the other hand, nothing has yet been decided. **In 2008, Air France was ordered by court to give a L 5,000 compensation to an obese passenger who - after having his waist measured at check-in - was told to pay for two seats.**

Obesity across all nations is increasing and is a very sensitive subject. According to the World Health Organization, a shocking 93.5 % of people are obese in American Samoa, the Pacific nation of Kiribati is just above 80 %, though USA, Germany, Israel, Egypt or the U.K. are not too far behind. Perhaps, this is a time to start a real consideration of what the fat tax really means.

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