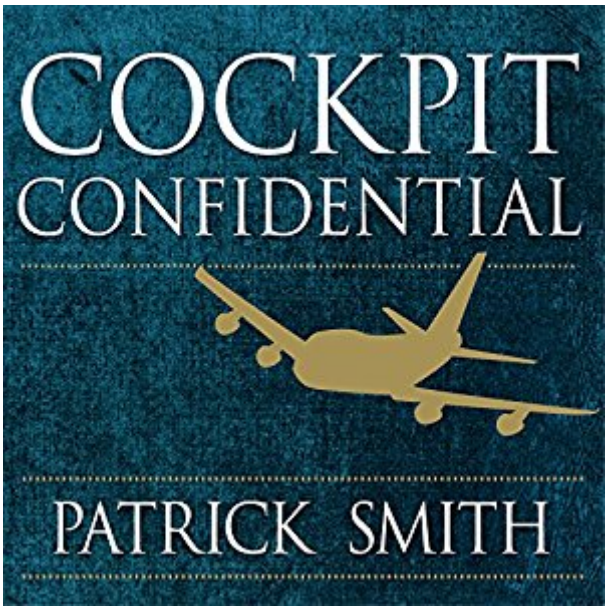
Cockpit Confidential: Everything You Need To Know About Air Travel: Questions, Answers, And Reflections



Synopsis

For millions of people, travel by air is a confounding, uncomfortable, and even fearful experience. Patrick Smith, airline pilot and author of the web’s popular "Ask the Pilot" feature, separates fact from fallacy and tells you everything you need to know: How planes fly, and a revealing look at the men and women who fly them Straight talk on turbulence, pilot training, and safety The real story on congestion, delays, and the dysfunction of the modern airport The myths and misconceptions of cabin air and cockpit automation Terrorism in perspective, and a provocative look at security Airfares, seating woes, and the pitfalls of airline customer service Cockpit Confidential covers not only the nuts and bolts of flying but also the grand theater of air travel, from airport architecture to inflight service to the excitement of travel abroad. It’s a thoughtful, funny, at times deeply personal look into the strange and misunderstood world of commercial flying.

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Customer Reviews

Are you a nervous flyer? Are you someone who’d rather drive than fly? Are you someone who doesn’t get excited looking at the lights of planes as they line up in the night sky outside a busy airport, coming in for a landing, one after the other? On the other hand, do you know what the terms "OAG", "triple 7", and "Runway Two-niner" refer to? If you’re the latter and not the former, you’ll enjoy Patrick Smith’s new book, "Cockpit Confidential".Patrick Smith - the name "Smith" is a nom-de-plume - is an airline pilot and blogger, who operates out of Boston. He used to blog for SALON magazine but I’m not sure he still writes for them. In any case, he has his own website,

askthepilot.com, and this new book. His previous one, "Ask the Pilot: Everything You Need to Know About Flying", was published in 2004. Smith has been been a pilot and in love with all forms of air travel since, as a child living in Boston, he'd sit on the Revere beach and watch in awe as planes landed at nearby Logan Airport. He grew up to make a living as first a pilot for a commuter carrier - flying up and down the Atlantic seaboard and all around New England - and then he "graduated" to flying cargo jets for a freight airline. Finally, he's now flying for an international passenger airline. (I think it might be Delta, from what I've been able to glean from his writing. Or, if not, American.) He has been subjected to layoffs during his career and is quite honest about how he - and other pilots - struggle with the on-going airline politics and economic ups-and-down that make a pilot's career somewhat haphazard.Okay, Patrick Smith and I are airline fanatics. And, probably so are most people reading this review. Most of us fly a lot - Smith is lucky that he gets paid to do so - and we like to see new places. We're also fascinated by the arcane of the airline industry - old tickets from the 1940's and clips from newsreels of passengers boarding a plane in the 1950's outfitted in suits and ties and hats. We know what local airlines were swallowed up by what larger airlines, and we know airport codes. Patrick Smith is talking to US in his book. We "get" him, and he "gets" us.His new book talks about his own, long love of flying. He writes about how difficult it is to "catch on" in the airline industry, and how that industry has weathered crashes - both physical and economic - and the changing requirements of the TSA. Smith doesn't like the TSA - who does? - and is not shy in giving some recommendations which might not please the politically-correct among us. Looking at the September 11th terrorist attacks in particular, he talks about how the TSA and other government groups reacted by imposing the wrong "rules" in the hopes of making airplane travel "safer". "Safer" than what? Smith recounts the many terror attacks and hijackings of airplanes and airports in the 1970's and 1980's that we've seem to have forgotten. Is the taking away of a butter knife from the flight bag of pilot Patrick Smith by over-zealous TSA officials going to make the plane and the passengers Smith is going to fly be any "safer"? Hell, no. And what about those stupid restrictions on 4oz of toothpaste and mouthwash? Good lord, it's half the battle of flying today just getting through TSA security.Author/pilot Patrick Smith covers Sept 11th and many other subjects in his new book. It's not a book most readers will be particularly interested in, but for those of us who read his blog, look-in-awe at his YouTube videos of night-landings at JFK taken from the cockpit, and enjoy flying and the history of flying, this book's for us.

For me, I purchased this bok for two reasons:***** I have a huge fear of flying....yes, I have taken over 20 flights before, but 5 of them had slight turbulence and 2 had moderate to almost severe

turbulence. This scared me so much that I have not been on a plane in the last couple of years!Since I read this book during stressful circumstances, I did find this book helpful. It is overall a very good book that was written by an airline pilot. What I really like about this book is the fact that it is in Question and Answer form. And also that is is in a conversational manner. I felt like I was sitting across the table from Patrick Smith asking him questions.There were many of my questions answered in the book...about lightening'so effects on a plane, wind shear, take-offs and landings and more!The reason that I rate this book 4 stars is because I would have liked to see more details, especially about flying in bad weather, while this was covered, it could have used more details.So 4 stars it is. Good read!

Patrick Smith is a co-pilot, one of the two people in the cockpit of passenger airliners, a very erudite writer, with a passion for flying, for explaining and for traveling in interesting places around the world. I've greatly enjoyed his first book, and receive the updates to his website -- a continuing source of fascination and a very welcome source of information when the media is discussing something new. He often re-sets the facts and best of all explains why.Other reviews here have done a great job of describing what is in this superb book. Instead of adding to the praise, I would like to give you an update, right from his computer. Judge for yourself whether you can resist his prose in the books or online.I can't.Robert C. RossJuly 2015***Q&A With the Pilot (Part 2)July 9, 2015ANOTHER OLD-TIMEY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SESSION.Eons ago, back in 2002, a column called Ask the Pilot, hosted by yours truly, debuted in the website Salon, in which I fielded reader-submitted questions about air travel. (United Airlines later stole my name and began running a stripped-down version of the same thing in its magazine.) ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s helpful, I think, to touch back now and then on the format that got this venerable enterprise started.
ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s Ask the Pilot classic, if you will. Expect more of theseÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â|On a flight from London to New York, I noticed that our 747 was flying almost parallel with, and very close to, a Lufthansa plane. It remained next to us for at least a couple of hours as we crossed the Atlantic. We were close enough that I could clearly see the blue and gold tail emblem and the Lufthansa name on the fuselage. I assume our pilots were aware of it, and vice versa?What you describe is common when flying between Europe and North America. The east-west routes across the North Atlantic consist of a series of one-way parallel ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“tracks,ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• as we call them, made up of sequential points of latitude and longitude. Flights along the same track are sequenced by time, one behind the other. Or, they are stacked vertically, with a minimum of 1,000 feet between each plane. The tracks are 60 miles apart, however, so you were likely on the

same track as the Lufthansa jet, a thousand feet higher or lower, and slightly offset horizontally. Offsetting horizontally reduces collision hazards, unlikely as they are, and helps avoid wake turbulence. Standard offsets are 1 mile or 2 miles (pilotÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s choice) to the right. A plane one or two miles away horizontally and only a thousand feet lower or higher will basically appear parallel to you.The tracks go west-to-east in the evening, when the vast majority of planes depart North America for Europe, and east-to-west in the mornings and afternoons, when most flights are headed the other way. Those going against the flow ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â• a morning flight from New York to London, for example ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â• will be assigned a ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“random route,ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• clear of the organized tracks. Each track is assigned a letter designation. The locations of the tracks are different every day, varying with weather and winds aloft. Track ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“AÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• on Tuesday might consist of a totally different string of latitude/longitude fixes than WednesdayÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s track ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“A.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•Separate from ATC communications, thereÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s an open radio frequency (VHF 123.45) used on the track system that allows crews to talk to each other. While this is useful for passing on information about turbulence and whatnot, a lot of the conversation is casual. The likes of ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“WhatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s up? Where are you guys headed?ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• is heard all the time. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s quite possible that your crew and the Lufthansa crew were chatting at some point.[Illustration of North Atlantic tracks not shown in this extract.] At what speed or altitude is the landing gear extended?Normally the gear is extended just prior to the ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“final approach fix,ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• the position of which itself depends on the approach youÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re flying, but is typically around four or five miles from touchdown. The landing gear produces quite a bit of drag and occasionally weÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ll lower it sooner, as a way of increasing the rate of descent or helping us slow down, when necessary. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s not the preferred method (itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s noisy and uses more fuel), but itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s helpful when air traffic control is hurrying you down or requesting troublesome speed adjustments. The captain said weÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢d be following a more direct route than originally planned. Then, as we began our descent, he indicated that the landing gear would be lowered earlier than usual in order to use up excess fuel. I fly all the time but IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢d never experienced this before.This kind of thing happens very rarely. It sounds as though your shortcut left the plane with so much fuel that it would have been above its maximum landing weight for the runway (perhaps, because of wind or weather-related reasons, the only available runway was a short one?). The increase in drag produced by the landing gear would result in considerably more fuel burn, helping get the plane within limits. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s a wasteful,

loud, and frankly unprofessional technique, but it works. One time I was flying from South America to New York. Because of a pressurization malfunction we had to divert to Puerto Rico. We were above landing weight, however, and the dispatchers recommended that instead of landing heavy, which would entail a time-consuming inspection, that we should descend to a lower altitude and deploy the gear for the last half-hour or so of flight.Some planes ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • mainly the bigger ones ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • have fuel jettison capabilities, but thatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s more for emergency returns, medical or mechanical diverts, and that sort of thing. Planes never jettison fuel in normal operations. I recently flew on a new 737-900, in seat 13A. I was surprised to find there was no window in this row, although there was ample space for one. Why?You see this on a lot of planes. Usually itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s because thereÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s some sort of internal component ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • ducting, framing, or some structural thing ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • that doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t allow space for a window. Some turboprops are missing a window directly adjacent to the propeller blades, and youÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ll find a strip of reinforced plating there instead. This is to prevent damage when, during certain conditions, the blades shed off chunks off ice. How come there are no direct flights from Europe to Hawaii? The distance is somewhere around 6,000 nautical miles from the bigger Western European capitals, but thatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s well within the reach of long-haul aircraft.I canÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t imagine such a route would be profitable. It has two critical factors working against it. First, itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s a very long distance. Second, itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s a leisure destination with little premium-fare traffic, meaning that yields would be low. Cheap tickets, limited first or business class traffic, and long distances: thatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s a terrible economies-of-scale combo that will only work if you can consistently fill a jumbo jet to the gills. And even thatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s no guarantee of turning a profit. And how many Europeans are interested in vacationing in Hawaii in the first place? There are many closer sun-and-sea options: Turkey and the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean resort islands, Thailand, etc. Heck, there wasnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t even a Hawaii to New York nonstop until just a couple of years ago when Hawaiian Airlines came in to give it a try (the route continues, though IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve been told it only makes money in the winter high season). Most people headed to Hawaii will connect through one of the bigger West Coast cities. I love watching airplanes in the night sky, but what do all the different lights mean? YouÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve got green lights, red lights, white lights; steady lights and flashing lights. What does it all mean?Wow, youÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re really going to make me do this? If you insist. Mind you there are variations, but hereÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s a generic rundown:Navigation lights (wingtips and tail): Colored lights that show a planeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s orientation: red on the left, green on the right, white in the

back. Always turned on.Anti-collision lights (on the wingtips and sometimes the upper or lower fuselage as well): Very bright, white flashing lights that basically mean ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“look out, here we are!ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• Used night and day. Turned on just prior to the takeoff roll; turned off again just after landing.Rotating beacon (upper or lower fuselage): A red flashing light used any time aircraft is moving. Turned on just prior to taxiing or towing; turned off again after engine shut-down. Means, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“stay clear!ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•Landing lights (most commonly wing-mounted and/or mounted on the nose gear strut): Very bright, white, forward facing beams. Used during takeoff, approach and landing. Always off for taxi and cruise flight.Taxi lights (normally on nose gear strut): White, forward facing beams. Assist with ground visibility during taxi. Usually left on for takeoff and landing as well. Runway turnoff lights (if installed, wing-mounted): Bright white lights aimed slightly askew, to aid in high-speed turns when exiting the runway.Logo lights (if installed): Spotlights mounted in the top of the horizontal stabilizer and aimed at the tail. Shows off your carrierÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s ugly logo and helps pilots and ground controllers identify traffic. On for taxi, takeoff and landing; optional during cruise.

Aspiring writers would do well to study this beautifully crafted book. Beginning by addressing the questions that flyers most often ask, such as the dangers posed by turbulence, Smith goes on to provide a reliable, readable guide to the inner dimensions and untold stories of civil aviation, including the challenges of aviation careers, difficult landings, cockpit relationships, and more. The author begins with the questions most readers would likely ask, but drills down to deeper and deeper levels. The author’s English is superb -- and on more than a few occasions, memorable. Above all else, this book is a tribute to the lost joy of traveling. Read it, and book a flight!

Know About Parkinson’s Disease) (Volume 2) Law 101: Everything You Need to Know About American Law (Law 101: Everything You Need to Know about the American Legal System) Air Plants: A Beginners Guide To Understanding Air Plants, Growing Air Plants and Air Plant Care (Air Plants, Ornamental Plants, House Plants) Air Fryer Cookbook: 450 Amazingly Healthy & Delicious Air Fryer Recipes. (With Nutrition Facts of Each & Every Recipe) (Air fryer Cookbook, Air fryer Recipes, Air fryer Recipe Book) Air Fryer Cookbook: Healthy & Easy Air Fryer Recipes for Everyone (Air Fryer Recipe Book, Air Fryer Cooking, Best Air Fryer Recipes) Everything You Need to Know When Someone You Know Has Been Killed (Need to Know Library) Air Fryer Cookbook: 365 Days of Air Fryer Cookbook - 365 Healthy, Quick and Easy Recipes to Fry, Bake, Grill, and Roast with Air Fryer (Everything Complete Air Fryer Book, Vegan, Paleo, Pot, Meals) You Don’t Know What You Don’t Know: Everything You Need to Know to Buy or Sell a Business The Chicken Whisperer’s Guide to Keeping Chickens: Everything You Need to Know . . . and Didn’t Know You Needed to Know About Backyard and Urban Chickens Air Fryer Cookbook:: The Only Air Fryer Recipes Cookbook You Need To Master Air Fryer Cooking (Volume 1) Air Fryer Cookbook: The Only Air Fryer Recipes Cookbook You Need To Master Air Fryer Cooking BOOK BUNDLE: The complete set of 3 awesome Air Fryer cookbooks: Air Fryer Made Simple, Air Fryer Advanced, Air Fryer Ultimate. Make pro level dishes from the comfort and privacy of Your kitchen! Air Fryer Recipes Cookbook: Delicious 123 Recipes to Fry, Bake, Grill, and Roast with Your Air Fryer(Air Fryer Cookbook, Oil Free Cookbook,Healthy Air Fryer Recipes) Air Fryer Recipes: The Ultimate Air Fryer Recipes Book for Your WHOLE Family - Includes 101+ Delicious & Healthy Recipes That Are Quick & Easy to Make for Your Air Fryer (Air Fryer Series)