



## ✈ UP IN THE AIR

### Pros and cons of regional airports

Booking long-haul flights from regional airports rather than major hubs is a growing trend. It used to be that you drove past the local airport and headed to one of the major terminals, and with good reason—most regional airports offered few connecting flights, fewer direct services, and had poor corporate facilities.

But the last decade has seen a surge of carriers moving into the regions. Direct regional long-haul flight fare can often be slightly more expensive than those from London, for example. However, the price differential weighs heavily in the regions' favor once accommodation and travel costs to a distant hub airport are factored in.

And some regional airports themselves have also risen to the challenge. For example, in the UK, most offer an experience that is a breeze compared with Heathrow Terminal 3 on a bad day. Moreover, many have either invested in facilities for the business traveler or have had airline investment, such as the posh lounges opened by the Middle East carriers jostling for dominance at Manchester airport.

### TSA testing less security hassles

Testing for a new program aimed at getting certain travelers through airport security with less hassle is expanding to airports in Las Vegas, LAX and Minneapolis over the next few months, in addition to Atlanta, Dallas, Detroit and Miami.

Eligible travelers are those who participate in American and Delta frequent flier programs as well as those who are part of three other trusted traveler programs. These people volunteer more information about themselves so the government can vet them before they arrive at airport security checkpoints.

The program works this way: the participating traveler will go to a dedicated lane at airport security checkpoints and provide the TSA officer with a boarding pass that has trusted status details embedded in the barcode. If the traveler is deemed part of a "low-risk" category, he or she will likely be able to keep on belts, shoes and jackets and leave laptops and liquids in bags when going through the screening process.

## THE SMART MONEY

### Amex: why biz travel continues despite rising prices

Although rising prices for airfare and hotels, this should have little impact on business travel, according to a report by American Express. For business class air travel, short-haul prices are slated to rise 5-7%, while long-haul could be up 3-5%. Hotel prices are also slated to increase slightly. But business travel will continue to be essential to global economic performance and act as an enabler of business growth, said Christa Degnan Manning, director of research at American Express.

"More and more companies

understand the importance of putting people on the road and its criticality to converting prospects, retaining clients, and ultimately driving growth, particularly in emerging nations..." she said.

"There's a link between travel and a company's top-line growth," said Alicia Tillman, vice president of global communications marketing services for American Express' global business travel. In an earlier AMEX survey, it found that companies that utilize business travel estimate that they won over half of their perspective customers through face-to-face contact. That compares with less than one-third without personal meetings. "Despite emerging technologies that can serve as alternatives to travel, nothing really replaces what you gain with those in person interactions," Tillman said. She added that travel is seen as a competitive advantage. It also helps build client relationships.

## THE GREAT ESCAPE

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