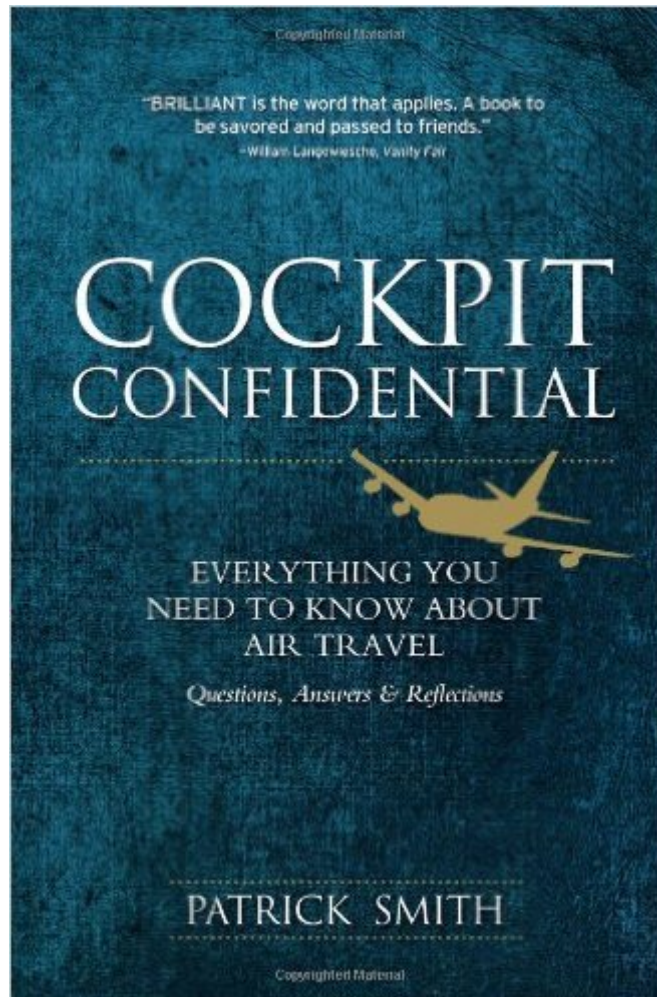


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Cockpit Confidential: Everything You Need To Know About Air Travel: Questions, Answers, And Reflections



Synopsis

A New York Times bestseller 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 the 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•The colors and cultures of the airlines we love to hate 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. It's the ideal book for frequent flyers, nervous passengers, and global travelers. Refreshed and vastly expanded from the original Ask the Pilot, with approximately 75 percent new material.

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Customer Reviews

Expecting an update of Patrick Smith's earlier book,Â Ask the Pilot: Everything You Need to Know About Air Travel, I was surprised to see a completely different book. Yes, he still answers questions that passengers are curious about, such as how dangerous is turbulence, and what is in the air supply in the cabin, but he goes into many other topics that are of interest to people who enjoy

flying. He discusses airline logos and liveries (the paint jobs on the planes) and airline names. Smith is often pedantic and always opinionated, and it all makes for an entertaining book. He has some definite thoughts about the service on airlines, which is a little surprising, since he is a pilot for a major U.S. airline (but he doesn't say which one), and he also has some comments about passengers, which are usually less strident, such as his puzzlement over why sudoku is so popular. Just don't get him started on airport security. One important reason Smith's book may appeal to more people than a straightforward question and answer book would, is that Smith is not only an industry professional, but he's often a passenger, traveling for fun, so he knows what it's like to sit in coach. This dual point of view, which is apparently not very common among airline employees, many of whom don't care to travel on their own time or dime, gives Smith more perspective, so he's not just the lecturer here, he knows your travelin' pain. Not only does he travel, he enjoys airports, flying, and seeing new places. He intersperses his question and answer sections with musings on travel. Most entertaining, in my opinion, were his ramblings on questions of design, such as airline logos and slogans. Smith is a little too honest to completely allay your fears about flying, but I appreciate the straight talk and it gives him a lot more credibility than if he told you not to worry, he's got it covered up in the cockpit. He does have it covered, but there are no guarantees, and he's weathered a couple of hairy experiences. Although you might want to save those sections for when you're on terra firma, much of the book would be quite diverting while you're stuck in the middle seat.

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 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.

If you are a road warrior and aviation aficionado, as I am, you won't learn much that is new from this very easy to read tome. On the other hand, if you don't know much about how the airline industry works or what goes on in the cockpit, you will learn a great deal. The author covers a lot of ground and never gets too technical for the average reader. Well worth the price of the Kindle edition.

I'm an aviation geek, and a former fearful-flyer. Patrick Smith's first book, and his columns over the years have made him a confidant and friend to all types of travelers. Those of us who have been hungry for more are thrilled by "Cockpit Confidential" which gives us new stories, new insights, and

a new look at the most loved/hated industry in the world. Patrick Smith is the author that rescues us from the aviation "experts" put out there by today's news media, preferring facts and level-headed analysis to silly hype. This book is perfect for so many different types of readers. It evokes fond memories of the glory days of aviation, before pajamas and slippers were standard traveling clothes. It reminds us that, despite delays, lost bags, airline bankruptcies, and way too much bashing by the 24-hour news cycle, flying really is an amazing thing. The reader will learn that flying is safe; safer today, in fact, than ever in history. But it's more than that. Smith's unique, liquid writing style will remind the reader that THE JOURNEY is half the fun of getting there! Best of all, Patrick's writing is fun to read. It's a difficult book to put down because it's fun and informative. Guaranteed - you'll look at your next flight differently, and maybe even come to realize there's still a lot of magic in the air.

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