

Q: We love to fly to Asia and Europe. Wait, let me put it another way. We love to visit Asia and Europe, but we hate the sardine-can seats in tourist class. We're getting too old for that kind of torture. What extra money do we have to spend to get flights that offer Pullman type bunks, or at least seats that go back flat so we can sleep during those eight to 12 hours in the air?



A: The best way to do it, providing you're flying on business and someone else pays, is to insist on getting seats that at least permit you to rest flat during the long flight. The cheapest way when you're flying on your own money, is if you have enough frequent flyer points. You may be able to use them to get upgraded from tourist seats to more snooze-friendly quarters.

If you really need comfort, and are willing to spend some of your kids' inheritance, you'll have to be willing to put out the extra dough for a softer flight. Sometimes lots of extra dough. For instance, for a recent non-stop British Airways ticket from New York to London, the economy ticket was between \$450 and \$640.

Reasonable, if you don't mind being stuffed shoulder to shoulder for eight hours. If you want more comfy seats, hold on to your wallet. Business class on the same flight was \$4,300, and first class with champagne, gourmet meals and semi-private comfy sleeping was \$6,700.

However, those prices can fluctuate almost as much as your clock ticks. Feeling the pinch of slumping business because of the slow economy, British Airways and Virgin Air just announced price cuts of nearly 40 percent on some of their overseas flights from the US. Before you buy your ticket for an overseas flight, check all airlines, because your cost will depend on day of the week, day or night (red eye) flights, special price deals and many other factors.