

Whenever possible, we always go red-eye, flights that depart around midnight or later. There are so many advantages, it just doesn't make much sense for this retired couple with a choice of flights to do it any other way. First of all, many of our flights are on Southwest, the airline with no assigned seats. As a popular low-cost airline, most SW daylight flights are jam-packed.



And if you don't get yourself an A boarding pass, you'll be so far back in the seating area, you'll arrive at the destination an hour behind all other passengers. Well, not exactly true, but if you book a SW red-eye, which are usually not totally sold out, your chances of getting a window seat in the front of the cabin are much better.

Another advantage is price. Check daily schedules on all airlines, and you may find some red eye flights are half the price of the daytime ones. It's an economic advantage to airlines to cut prices on night flights, because they must adhere to 24-hour schedules and don't want their planes to fly with money-losing empty seats.

Speaking of empty seats, there are many of them in airport waiting rooms at midnight and later. It's much quieter and there's no hassle of mobs of people running for loading and unloading flights. Another important area at midnight is security, where there won't be long lines of anxious passengers dragging bags, taking off shoes and milling around.

An additional benefit is just the ease of getting to the airport for your flight. No drive-time lines of cars clogging highways and freeways. Whether you take your own car (more room in the airport parking lot) or ride a bus or a cab, you can be fairly sure you won't be caught in a traffic jam and miss your flight.

And finally, once you're aboard your flight, you can unwind, sit back, take off your shoes, pull down your eye shade and snooze away peacefully. If you're really lucky, there won't be any loud and hyperactive little kids on your red-eye flight. Then, several hours later, you'll wake up fresh and feisty in the morning, ready to tackle whatever is next on your agenda. Your daytime agenda, of course.