



There are two basic kinds of layovers. The scheduled one that requires a connection in another airport. Because of time differences and other factors, you expect to wait for the second flight for a specific length of time.

No problem if all goes as planned. However, particularly at year-end holiday season, if that second flight is delayed, your wait may stretch to four, five or more hours. That's cause for concern, frustration and if there are more delays, outright anger.

An Aeromexico flight recently scheduled to take off from Mexico City for Seattle, caused passengers to wait six hours in the terminal. Much worse, then after everyone was aboard, it sat another 16 hours on the tarmac. When the flight finally did get into the air, because of thick fog, it landed in Portland, Oregon. Passengers needed buses or another 170 mile flight to get to Seattle. Unfortunately, the Aeromexico incident is not unusual. Any flight can be delayed for hours because of bad weather, unexpected equipment problems or overcrowded air routes. Or all of the above and more.

Trapped passengers can't do anything about it, other than fret, fume and fuss. However, there are ways to make the interminable waits a bit more tolerable, whether stuck in your airline seat or slumped for long layovers in the airport.

Make up your mind to play it as cool as you can. Actually, there's no other choice if you want to preserve your blood pressure and sanity. Preplanning for delays can be of considerable help. First of all, with the security measures now in place, you've already come to the airport an hour before your scheduled flight.

That gives you a lot of waiting time, even if all is moving smoothly. You can pass the time doing something other than listening to the guy next to you yakking on his cell phone or screaming baby on the other side.

Bring along such helpers as smartphones, and internet-access laptops that play DVDs, and a couple of discs. If you're not into electronics, take a paperback or two, crossword puzzles and a

deck of cards. And, if you don't want to pay airport restaurant prices for food while you wait, bring a supply of small snacks.

Take items that could make snoozing a bit more comfortable. If the airport waiting area isn't too crowded, look for quiet areas where you can stretch out. Find a quiet wall away from foot traffic, and make a spot for yourself against it.

If you've brought a heavy coat, soft-sided carry-on bag, visored cap or sleep mask, gather a bunch of newspapers to make a sleep nest with them all. Then, wrap yourself up, lie down, put your tired head on your bag and dream away.

On a recent cross-country flight, we sat in our airline seats for five hours before the aircraft finally took off. While still on the tarmac, and with all passengers fussing and grumbling, some bright character got the idea of doing a sing-along.

We and many others stopped griping and grinding our teeth and relaxed enough to join in. The most popular song on that flight was the old Sinatra classic, "Come Fly With Me." Of course, as seasoned seniors, we also sang out, "Come, Josephine, In My Flying Machine".