

NAVIGATING TSA

The Transportation Security Administration of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

January 13, 2010

While the standards for security are heightened on international flights you can help expedite your trip through TSA each time you fly by not raising any alarms and following some of the well established guidelines of going through security. These include removing large overcoats, shoes, belts, loose change, your laptop and other metallic items and placing them in separate containers to be x-rayed. Gifts should not be wrapped, in case TSA agents need to inspect packages further. Also, organized packing allows agents to quickly inspect the contents of your bag, avoiding delays. Having shoes that slip on/off and placing your personal belongings inside a deep pocketed jacket will ensure that you don't forget smaller items in the x-ray bins and helps speed things up considerably.

You thought you couldn't travel without liquids? Well think again. Small containers of Moisturizing towels, powdered toothpaste, breadth strips, deodorant crystal sticks, hair gels, shampoo/shaving soaps are all readily available on sites like Amazon and Aveda, or at any Drugstore. Be aware of TSA's strict liquids rules, 3.4oz. Only containers that meet TSA's measurement guidelines will be accepted, this means you cannot bring a half used 6 oz. container.

Passengers arriving from or having been citizens of Iran, Afghanistan, Algeria, Cuba, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen will most likely undergo the most scrutiny. These passengers can expect long delays, full searches of their bags and other personal belongings. Therefore, they must be doubly sure to adhere to the established guidelines so as not to warrant further inconvenient searches. Passengers from these nations should arrive at the airport at least 3 hours ahead of time to ensure making their scheduled flight.

Check the [TSA website](#) and make sure you fall well within their established parameters for what you are allowed, more often than not you cannot argue your way out of having something confiscated or being asked for further screening. Always be respectful of the TSA, being calm, patient and polite makes your trip through security less stressful.

Check [flightstats.com](#) to get up to date info on wait times and check points

for specific screening areas inside airports. You will avoid the long lines and save time.

Think of eliminating the baggage problem altogether. Look into [Baggage Direct](#), [Luggage Express](#), or [Luggage Free](#) where you won't break the bank to get someone to pick up and deliver your bags.

Pretty much the rules remain the same for domestic travel, but if you are a citizen of or coming from one of the above mentioned 14 countries, be prepared to have everything on your person and in your possession scrutinized, thus creating delays, so arrive ahead of time and be aware of the TSA rules.

Anjum Malik is a founding member of www.flyersrights.org and the founder of the Alhambra US Chamber of Commerce, www.alhambrauschamber.org.