



FLYING FEARS EXAMINED

News / Airlines



FROM the moment you step onto your plane, there are many things that put travellers on edge. Happily, it turns out that a lot of the worries are needless.

For starters, don't worry about somebody opening the door while you're a mile up in the air. As pilot Patrick Smith explains, even the Hulk can't open an aeroplane door while the plane is in midflight. "Cabin pressure won't allow it," he says.

That said, some popular myths are rooted in reality. For those who fear that they can get stuck on the toilet of an aeroplane by flushing while sitting on it, Adam Savage, formerly of TV's MythBusters show, put the fear to the test.

He actually did get stuck — but just for a moment. Should that happen to you, try to relax: You will be free, but it won't feel great when you have to pry yourself off the seat.

For many people, just getting on a jet is reason enough to call for a cocktail or three, and blame getting inebriated on flying itself. Folk wisdom has it that you get drunk faster when you're miles above the ground than you do when you're on it. But Skyscanner cites research saying there's no physiological difference.

Do lightning bolts flashing by outside your plane window scare you? Relax. As the Washington Post reveals, you have to go back to 1963 to find an aeroplane being brought down by lightning. And that happened because electricity in the sky ignited fuel vapours, which led to an explosion.

That was a once-in-a-lifetime incident and unlikely to happen today, thanks to enhanced safety precautions.



Don't worry about lightning while flying. *Source: istock*

Lightning aside, the other so-scared-you-hold-the-hand-of-the-passenger-next-to-you moment is extreme turbulence. While it's undeniably frightening, as long as you're buckled in — and don't spill hot coffee all over yourself — you'll probably survive unscathed.

Again, that info comes courtesy of pilot Smith: "For all intents and purposes, a plane cannot be flipped upside-down, thrown into a tailspin, or otherwise flung from the sky by even the mightiest gust or air pocket."



This kind of scenario is rare. Picture: Facebook *Source: Facebook*

Finally, a cautionary word about mobile phones: As reported by CNN, using your phone won't bring down a plane, but it may interfere with radio transmissions between the cockpit and the airport. Whatever call you're making is less important than the one being relayed from the control tower to the pilot.

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