EXECUTIVE TRAVEL: SMOOTHLY CONVEYED TO FLORIDA ON NEW EMIRATES SERVICE TO FORT LAUDERDALE

News / Airlines, Airports / Routes

Rosemary Behan

My journey on Emirates' new 16-hour, 25-minute flight to Fort Lauderdale begins in Abu Dhabi at 11.30pm, when I'm picked up by the airline's chauffeur service.

The trip to Dubai International Airport is smooth, but unfortunately by the time I checked in online all the window seats were taken and I was allocated an aisle seat on the back row of a 42-seat split business class cabin.

The woman at check-in told me connecting passengers check in much earlier from their original points of departure, and there are no other seats available.

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The gate C business class lounge was not as good as the main business class lounge – which is bigger with more food options – but it was closer to my gate. Because of the late hour of this flight (take-off is at 3am) I was not sure whether to have dinner, coffee, or nothing at all.

The Hungarian purser was very professional, presenting me with an impressive menu, saying: "please don't be shy, try more than one dish for each meal, we have so much food". I placed my requests and had a few hours' sleep on the bed. Mine did not quite lie horizontally but sloped downwards.

The Wi-Fi service, which is free for the first 10MB, was good over Europe, but I soon used up my free allowance, so abandoned it. A cabin crew member told me it only works over land and although it is only $1 for further access, you have to input your credit card details.

I ate a steak sandwich while watching the movie Snowden and after that an Indian breakfast of curried chickpeas with black-eyed peas and potato dumplings, followed by a lunch of king prawns, salad and tangy chicken curry. I finished off with an impressive cheese board.

The flight was smooth and I counted myself lucky to have arrived and cleared Fort Lauderdale airport just an hour before the January 6 shooting in which five people were killed. A limo driver was waiting and whisked me safely to my hotel before chaos unfolded.

The airport is a major hub for JetBlue, an Emirates partner airline offering connections across the country and the -Caribbean.

q&a sunshine state getaways

Rosemary Behan expands on Emirates' new daily service to Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport:

Emirates launched a direct route to Orlando in 2015. Why has it launched a second daily service to Florida?

Tim Clark, president of Emirates airline, says that Fort Lauderdale and Miami are two of America's most exciting destinations for leisure and business travel. "We anticipate our service will contribute to the economy of south Florida by bringing new travellers to the area from across our route network," he says. "The strong performance of the Dubai-Orlando service encouraged us to select Fort Lauderdale as our 11th US destination."

How will the area benefit from this new route?

Mark Gale, chief executive/ director of aviation for Fort Lauderdale airport, says the new service will provide the community with tremendous business and travel opportunities. "With an estimated annual economic impact to our region of more than US $100 million and approximately 1,000 new jobs, we are confident that this new service will mark the beginning of many more great things," he says.

How much do tickets cost?

Returns from Dubai to Fort Lauderdale cost from Dh4,500 return in economy and Dh18,550 in business class.

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What are the aircraft specifications for this route?

A GE-powered, US-built Boeing 777-200LR, presented in a three-class configuration offering eight first-class suites, 42 business class seats and 216 economy class seats.

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