

New survey ranks top US airports from travelers' perspective

Denver tops the list and Orlando comes in as a close second in a just released *Wall Street Journal* review of which US airports treat travelers the best.

The *Journal* review of the 20 biggest US airports took into account 15 metrics including security-line wait time, distance between gates for connecting flights, Wi-Fi speeds at the airports, restaurant ratings and ground costs to local destinations, among other things.

Denver (DEN) came in ahead of Orlando (MCO) and number-three Phoenix (PHX) in terms of the top three categories of reliability, convenience and value. Orlando scored high in terms of overall convenience; you don't have to walk much with a tram from the main terminals to the gates, and individual gates are clustered. Phoenix got kudos for its low percentage of canceled flights, and short delay times for departing flights.

The three New York area airports – Newark (EWR), Kennedy (JFK), and LaGuardia (LGA) came in at the bottom of the list with Newark faring the worst at number 20.

Other airports and their ranking are: Atlanta (ATL), 4; Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW), 5; Las Vegas (LAS), 6; Seattle-Tacoma (SEA), 7; Charlotte (CLT), 8; Los Angeles (LAS), 9; Boston (BOS) 10; Minneapolis-St. Paul (MSP), 11; Houston Bush (IAH), 12; Miami (MIA), 13; Detroit (DTW), 14; Chicago O'Hare (ORD), 15; San Francisco (SFO), 16; and Philadelphia (PHL), 17.

The highest-ranking airports had customer choice in common as well, according to the report. All three have strong competition among airlines. Denver has three major airlines connecting customers and Phoenix has two. Denver is the largest airline serving Atlanta, but it still controls only handles 28% of passenger traffic.

Some airports have walking distances of as much as a mile within the terminal as airlines spread out their operations over a bigger airport space, according to an earlier *Wall Street Journal* report. In Chicago, Newark, N.J. and even high-ranking Orlando, moving walkways have been taken out to make room for more restaurants, bars and gate seating.

And the passenger stress level at high-traffic airports like Atlanta or Miami with its ever-increasing numbers of gates can be enormous for the many passengers having to make connecting flights, as this reporter herself has experienced.

The media company put together its report after weighing in the metrics as well as with input from a survey in which 4,800 *Journal* readers participated. Survey participant commented upon their overall experience, as well as specific areas like ease of use, security, restaurants, airline clubs and more.