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2020 Best reason to pass on Big Airlines If you travel abroad when coronavirus landed in the United States, there were good reasons to panic. Fear of spreading the virus brought international travel to a sudden halt, making returning to North America almost impossible. Just when it couldn't look more gloomy or uncertain, there came the slightest glimmer of hope from the least expected source. Eastern Airlines, a small Wayne-based carrier (think 10 planes and a staff of about 200), came to the literal rescue. Through careful coordination with State Department and local officials, eastern organized rescue flights, and so far they have flown nearly 24,000 once-stranded U.S. citizens from Central and South America back to the States. [Read more »](#) | 855-216-7601 | [Website](#) [Getty Images](#) It's no secret that traveling by plane can be a hassle. From arriving at the gate in time to waiting for hours before the plane takes off, there's a million things that can go wrong. AirHelp, a company that helps compensate passengers for delayed, cancelled or overbooked flights, looked at everything from on-board amenities to departures in time to determine which airline comes out on top. The services give Qatar Airways - which recently announced plans to launch the world's longest flight - first place in the rankings, citing the airline's quality performance, followed by Netherlands-based KLM-Royal Dutch Airlines. It's pretty telling that no U.S. carrier made it to the top 10 on the AirHelp list. In fact, Delta Air Lines barely made it to the top 15 airlines, but AirHelp praised its on-time flights and claims payout times within the U.S. market. United and American Airlines place 20th and 20th respectively. (The list goes up to 34.) For what it's worth, AirHelp didn't take every airline into consideration - sorry, Southwest! - and a spokesperson for Virgin Airways reportedly told the Daily Mail that she strongly questions the validity of the report. [Aj](#). Check out the full list of on AirHelp - and bookmark this article before booking your next vacation. This content is created and maintained by a third party, and imported into this page to help users enter their email addresses. You may be able to find more information on this and similar content on [piano.io](#) [Passenger Rights Ed Perkins Air Travel Airfarewatchdog Blog Packing Ashley Rossi Health & Wellness Ed Perkins Passenger Rights Ed Perkins Health & Wellness Ed Perkins Booking Strategy Ed Perkins Air Travel Airfar Airfarewatchdog Personal Passenger Rights Shannon McMahon Passenger Rights Ed Perkins Miles & Points Ed Perkins Booking Strategy Ed Perkins Booking Strategy Christine Sarkis Booking Strategy Ed Perkins Passenger Rights Ed Perkins In Honor of Evil Week We'll trade up hve a little. Normally we look for the top five, but this week we are looking the five worst-specifically the worst airlines in the sky. Those who should be grounded, or have fees so high, high, service so awful, aircraft so uncomfortable, or routes so awful that you spend more to avoid them entirely-based on your nominations of course. It's that time of year again: With Halloween getting closer, we feel the need to unleash our... \[Read more\]\(#\) Later this week we asked you to tell us which airlines were the worst. While normally we try to offer some tips to alleviate the horror of the worst five of anything, in this case it's pretty simple: Don't fly with them if at all possible, and choose better, friendlier airlines if at all possible. With that out of the way though, you gave us some great nominees. Let's look at the five you riled against most, in no particular order: Flying can be bad enough without things like fees, frequent delays, crowded places, terrible food,... \[Read more\]\(#\) Spirit Airlines Spirit Airlines has the dubious honor of being the most complained about airline in the United States, comes in dead last in consumer reports ranking of the worst airlines, and is the only U.S.](#)

airline to make a list of the world's worst airlines, according to data from BusinessInsider and SkyTrax. It's a pretty heavy load to bear when you simultaneously call yourself the most consumer-friendly airline. They're not exactly doing themselves any services with cash grabs like hiking baggage fees for the holiday season, in addition to their already impressive set of fees, like fees for gate-checked bags you're supposed to continue on top of their already impressive fees for carry-on luggage. But don't worry, spirit CEO says these fees are a consumer benefit, so you should thank them, right? Well, as long as their prices are so low, yes, and you can hear him say it himself. To their credit, the airline wants to do a better job of explaining its fees. Those of you who nominated Spirit Airlines called out a number of these stories and more, not to mention the airline's 1.5 out of 5 rating on AirlineRatings.com, even more evidence that unless the all-powerful dollar rules every action, you might want to steer clear if you want an at-all-tolerable (and very likely affordable, what with the hidden charges) flight experience. After all, this is the airline that tried to capitalize on the celebrity nude leak to promote discounted airline tickets. The nomination thread for Spirit is full of your experiences and horror stories flying the airline. One of you mentioned that you paid for a ticket, went to the airport, and the plane just never showed up. Another of you noted that a relative died and Spirit charged them triple-digit cancellation fees when they tried to get a refund, and even then only offered credit for a future flight. Another of you shared a story where you were stuck on the asphalt in a Spirit plan for hours without food or water, and the list goes on. Seriously, go over to the nomination thread and read the stories yourself. Frontier AirlinesFrontier Airlines was once a good example of how big a cost carrier carrier Bve. Flyers considered it friendly, comfortable, reasonably priced and effective. Then it was bought by the ex-CEO of Spirit Airlines after winding down a bankruptcy in 2008, and everything changed. Like many so-called low-cost carriers, the low cost of your fare applies, and not the fees associated with everything from hand luggage to the use of overhead trash cans and seat reservations. Frontiers fees are so confusing that they can be different based on which website you book your tickets through. Also, do you remember the study that put Spirit as the most complained about airline in the United States? Guess who's number two. Horror stories don't just end on fees that wind up blowing ticket prices past the cost of regular full-service companies, either. Back in 2012, Frontier just canceled flights without telling anyone, and old schoolers who remember how wonderful it was to fly the now-defunct Midwest Airlines—what with their hot, freshly baked cakes aboard each flight—can still be sore as Frontier canned that perk not too long after acquiring them. But hey, look on the bright side—if you're flying with this one Frontier captain, you'll get pizza if you're stuck on the asphalt for too long. It's a pilot who cares about his passengers. Those of you who nominated Frontier did it for a number of reasons. Some of you marked the fees for each little thing, but others of you pointed out that if you're prepared for the fees, you can save a lot of money—but what you can't prepare for is Frontiers customer service. You shared horror stories where asking questions about staff result in scowling faces and sarcastic answers, flight attendants straight up lying to passengers, and the fact that they have an email-only customer service center (which of course is supposed to keep costs down, right?) Worst of all, most of you didn't hate Frontier, you were mostly just disappointed in it. You can read the stories in the nomination thread here. RyanairOh Ryanair. Like many of the other cheap airlines in the lineup, Ryanair's bread and butter are packed planes and exorbitant fees that drive up your travel expenses. When people point to how low-cost airlines are misleading customers, charge them for every little thing, and then ultimately result in a still unpleasant flying experience, people generally point to Ryanair as an example. As we mentioned in the nomination thread, not just the Ryanair charge for things like the privilege of stowing a musical instrument in the same way as any other baggage (mind you, not as special baggage, just plain baggage that happens to be an instrument), charge you to print a boarding pass at the airport, charge you individual booking fees for each member of your party even though you book them all at the same time, charge a fee for booking with a credit card, charge you a fee to check in online and then another (of course larger) fee to check in at the airport, and the list goes on. After all, their CEO is the guy who thinks airplanes don't need seat belts and should stand-room just because after all, they're pretty much buses flying, right? He doesn't have much love for his employees either, telling flight crews to lose weight so he can save on fuel, and gloating in front of a bunch of laid-off workers. Other airlines, such as Aer Lingus, which has been in Ryanair's acquisition attractions, have been so terrified of the idea that they have blocked repeated bids to be taken over by Ryanair. But hey, tickets are cheap and the flights are short, right? Those of you who nominated and supported the nomination of Ryanair stressed these fees as well, pointing out that even if you follow all the rules and get everything square before your flight, good luck if something goes wrong—the airline's customer service is near non-existent, and others pointed out that often the way they save money is by landing so far from their advertised cities that you have to arrange another form of transit to get to where you're really trying to go. Some of you saw Ryanair's nomination and called them the winner, hands down. Others of you step up to defend the airline, saying that if you get the fees and understand them before booking, you get a quick flight to where you need to go in Europe without spending lots of money. The problem is that depends on the company being transparent about its fees. One of you explained that some of the company's controversies, like saying they want to pull toilets from their flights or charge to use them, are really just publicity stunts... which is somehow supposed to make it better (when we really know that if there was no outcry, they would probably just do it.) Anyway, read more in the nomination thread here. DeltaDelta is a massive, full service airline, so it's no surprise that they would have some hiccups here and there, but that's not what many of you nominated them for. By and large, most of you cited Delta as one of the worst for your own horror stories and systemic customer service problems, including things like lost luggage, diverted flights, late departures and arrivals, missed connections, and more. The airline wants to brand the world's most trusted airline, but then ends up doing things like bumping a plane full of passengers to make sure that a college basketball team comes to their game or forces a disabled passenger to crawl across the tarmac to their wheelchair. In surveys, Consumer Reports found Delta as one of the best older carriers, but still below some other favorites like Southwest and JetBlue, both of which are often cheaper, and offer superior customer service. Consumer Reports isn't the only one that gives Delta middling points—The U.S. Consumer Satisfaction Index is similar, and Skytrax gives it three stars, far below lots of other options around the world. JD Power was a little less kind. That said, most independent studies put them far from it especially when people people there do things like dig through the trash to reunite a child with his late father's t-shirt and the CEO himself gives up his seat to a mother trying to get home. Do these things for crowded places, terrible customer service over the phone or at the airport, or late everything? Probably not, especially when you're not the lucky one their team goes above and beyond. In the nomination thread, many of you shared with you about your horror stories surrounding Delta in support of their place among the worst five. Among the highlights: A reader's single-stop flight turns into a terrible three-stop, three-connection disaster complete with lost luggage that never showed up until the day after the final arrival (and after you've made your way to the airport to get it), Delta destroys Christmas by stranding a passenger and refuses to refund their tickets, and Delta provides a legally blind woman boarding pass for a flight that had already departed. Seriously, we were surprised by the stories, and you will be too. read more in the nomination thread here. United AirlinesA hilarious nomination for United Airlines turns into enough votes to make the top five on its own, which we won't complain about a piece. It's not that United don't have a part of the problem either. For one, their customer service department seems to be staffed largely by robots and has been for a while. They've also been known to look for ways to pack more people on airplanes, like making seats even thinner than they already are. They are also one of the few airlines with the honor of being fined by the Department of Transportation for delaying legitimate refunds to passengers. It's no surprise that they don't have too many friends and champions—even former Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist has taken his hatred for the airline public more than once. The nail in the coffin? this cringeworthy new security video. Those of you who nominated United did so largely based on this hilarious 2011 Joan Rivers bit at the airline during an appearance on Letterman. Even so, some of you said that her jokes, while funny, were pretty spot on with your own experiences—getting stuck in Newark overnight with no regress or accommodation (which apparently isn't a new thing), shipping a person to a place and his pets half a world away, delays for mechanical issues, lost luggage, screwed up confirmed reservations, and more. Read more in the nomination thread here. Now that you've seen the top five worst, it's time to put them to a vote and determine the community's least favorite total: We're skipping (dis) honorable mentions this week, because we're sure we could fill a whole series of articles just with your shared experiences with different airlines you can't stand for one reason or another. Whatever airline you fly, know your rights before heading to the airport, and try to make the most of the flight you're on. If you fly one of the airlines, consider a DIY aircraft emergency kit so that the inevitable issues don't derail your your travel (or life, for that matter.) If you've ever sat in a plane on the tarmac just to get your flight cancelled, just been pushed... Read more, the top five are based on your most popular nominations from the call to contender thread earlier this week. Don't just complain about the top five, let us know what your preferred option is—and make your argument for it—in the discussions below. Hive Five is based on reader nominations. As with most Hive Five posts, if your favorite was omitted, it didn't get the nominations required in the call for the challenger post to make the top five. We understand it's a bit of a popularity contest. Do you have a proposal for hive five? Send us an email at tips+hivefive@lifehacker.com!Photos by Josh Beasley, Aero Icarus, Aero Icarus, Aero Icarus, Ikarasawa and Aero Icarus. Icarus.

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