



Flying with Babies

Free Sample — Chapters 1–4

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Flying with Babies

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Field-tested advice for parents traveling with babies and toddlers, from booking through arrival.

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Before You Fly

1 About this book

Our first piece of advice for flying with a baby? Don't do it.

But if you must – and we know you must – keep reading.

As a new parent, the thought of taking your baby on a plane can be terrifying. You're probably picturing a baby screaming non-stop for hours while a planeload of strangers glares at you. Or being stranded in a foreign airport with no milk and no idea what to do.

It doesn't have to be that way. With a bit of preparation and some common sense, flying with a baby can actually be enjoyable.

We're Matt and Sherry, frequent fliers based in Bangkok, Thailand. We took our daughter to ten different countries before her first birthday. Honestly, the biggest surprise was how kind everyone is to you when you've got a baby in your arms – fellow passengers, airport staff and airline crew alike.

In this book we've gathered our own hard-won experience, along with the best advice we could get from cabin crew, pilots and doctors. The aim is simple: to give you everything you need to know before you step on that flight.

There are plenty of tip lists floating around online. What we wanted to write was something more complete – a guide that walks you through the whole journey, from booking the flight to stepping off it at the other end.

One thing to be aware of is that airlines and airports are wildly inconsistent in how they treat infants. We can't list every airline's rules on infant tickets, baggage allowance and the rest. There's simply too much of it, and it changes all the time. Instead, we'll show you how to find the right information for your flight, and which questions to ask the staff.

We do mention some baby "equipment" we've found handy along the way. But don't worry – you don't need to spend a fortune to get ready for a flight.

We've focused mostly on younger children, from newborns up to three or four years old. That said, we hope there's something useful here for older kids, and their parents, too.

Finally, at the back of the book you'll find a detailed checklist of what to pack.

2 The Golden Rule

Most parents who dread flying with a baby have a specific memory in mind. A flight where a baby wailed non-stop for hours, or a toddler kicked and thumped the back of their seat the whole way.

Here's something worth knowing: kids are remarkably good at reading your mood. More often than not, when there's an upset child on a plane, it's because the parent is upset and stressed too.

Think about everything that winds us up before we've even sat down. Booking the flights, packing, racing to the airport, fighting through the crowds. It's no wonder so many adults are short-tempered and frazzled by the time they board. Just watch how often people lose their cool in an airport. When you're stressed and distracted and not paying attention to your baby, they feed off it and start crying right along with you.

So here's our golden rule: **focus on keeping yourself as calm and relaxed as possible, and your baby will most likely stay calm and relaxed too.**



“Maybe if you relaxed, I wouldn't have to carry this entire family's emotional baggage.”

Before you read on, stop for a moment. What part of flying do you find most stressful? Now think about what you could do to prepare for it, and take the edge off.

The rest of this book is full of practical tips to make all of this easier: getting ready for the flight, finding your way through airports, and looking after your baby once you're in the air. Bon voyage!

3 How old should a baby be to fly?

Your experience will vary enormously depending on how old your baby is. Here's a rough guide to what to expect at each stage.

0-1 month: There's no real minimum age, but in those first few weeks you should probably only fly if it's genuinely essential. The early days are hard enough without adding an airport to the mix.

2-6 months: If you can, take a short hop of a few hours to get your baby used to the idea of flying. They won't understand what's going on, of course, but they can get used to the noise and the changes in pressure.

6-15 months: The golden age of flying with a baby. They don't take up much space, they sleep a lot, and they're easy to keep entertained.

15-24 months: Once your baby can walk, things get trickier. Keeping them entertained and in their seat is harder work, and they'll soon outgrow the bassinet once they hit 9-10kg.

24 months and up: From their second birthday, you'll have to pay for a full-price ticket. We cover ticket prices in more detail below.

4 Short haul versus long haul flights

Short haul flights are usually just a few hours long. They might be domestic, or hops between neighbouring countries.

Expect smaller planes, typically with a single aisle, and fairly basic service. On a traditional airline you'll probably get a drink and a snack; on a budget carrier you'll be buying anything you want on board. There almost certainly won't be a bassinet. The upside is obvious – the flight is short, so neither you nor the baby has to put up with the discomfort of flying for very long.

Long haul flights are a different beast. They run anywhere from five or six hours up to twelve or fifteen, usually international routes on much larger planes.

Here you can expect a proper meal service, a better chance of a bassinet, and more attentive cabin crew. The catch is the sheer length of the thing, which can be exhausting for everyone. There seems to be a tipping point at around ten hours – anything longer than that feels far more draining. For really long journeys, it's worth thinking about breaking the trip with a stopover, which we'll come to later.

5 Enjoying the sample?

You've read the first four chapters — about the book, the golden rule, how old your baby should be to fly, and the difference between short and long haul flights.

The full guide covers everything from booking your flight through stepping off the plane at the other end: choosing seats, packing, bassinets, security, food, crying, turbulence, and more, with cartoons sprinkled throughout to keep you smiling.

[Get the complete guide for \$5 at flyingwithbabies.com](<https://flyingwithbabies.lemonsqueezy.com/checkout/buy/f019b76c-9867-41f1-b9c0-0870c8136f27?logo=0&discount=0>)

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