



## **BUDGET AIRLINES DRIVING ACCEPTANCE OF HIDDEN CHARGES**

**London 4th March 2010:** When it comes to air travel, it seems that although we complain about hidden charges, the budget airlines are gradually educating travellers to accept such charges for services that were once part of the headline flight price, according to new research released by BDRC Continental.

Budget airline travellers stressed more than anything else that they would like to see fewer hidden charges added to their ticket, yet budget airlines are still managing to convince customers that paying extra charges for an ever-widening range of services is acceptable.

Carried out in January, the survey asked travellers what extra charges are acceptable once they had paid for the flight. And the results suggest that some customers are prepared to pay for almost anything. 66% now think it acceptable to be charged for an extra item of hand luggage, 61% consider it appropriate to ask people to dig a little deeper in their pockets for priority boarding and 53% would accept the principle of additional charges for seat reservations.

There are now also notable numbers who feel it is acceptable to be charged for the privilege of being checked in by a member of staff (25%), to check in a bag at all (18%) and to pay for a ticket via a credit (26%) or debit (15%) card (see chart below).

**When purchasing airline tickets extras are often charged separately. Which of these do you think are acceptable to charge for as extras on your ticket price?**

<b>66%</b>	An extra item of hand luggage
<b>61%</b>	Priority boarding
<b>53%</b>	A seat reservation charge
<b>50%</b>	Surcharge on people over a certain weight
<b>29%</b>	A carbon off-setting charge
<b>27%</b>	Assistance to aircraft if have mobility problems
<b>26%</b>	Paying for ticket on a credit card charge
<b>25%</b>	To be checked in via a member of staff
<b>18%</b>	To check in a bag
<b>15%</b>	Paying for ticket on a debit card

Source: BDRC Continental (Q19) Base: All 20-64 year old online users (1005)

Steve Mills, Director of the Tourism, Travel and Leisure Team at BDRC Continental says: “Who would have thought five years ago that a quarter of us would now find it acceptable to pay extra just to be checked in? We all like to moan about these charges for ‘extras’, but the fact is those of us looking for bargain flights still look at the headline flight price when choosing an airline and neither have the time nor inclination to work out the final amount you end up being charged. The fact that this ‘unbundling’ of flight charges seems to be increasingly accepted by the public suggests that this practice is only likely to become more commonplace.”

**So, how do these additional charges add up?**

An extra item of hand luggage	From £6.50 to £70 each way
Priority boarding	From £4 to £16
A seat reservation charge	From £4.50 to £10
A carbon off-setting charge	From £3.50/passenger (depends on distance)
Paying for ticket on a credit card charge	From 2.5% of transaction to £10
To be checked in via a member of staff	From £6 to £80
To check in a bag	From £8 to £15
Paying for ticket on a debit card	From £2.95 to £10

So, in essence, a traveller could be paying in the region of an extra £284.50 on top of the ticket price – not such a budget conscious option after all.

We don't even generally like travelling on budget airlines, with the survey finding that 49% of those with an opinion of budget airlines not enjoying their experience, compared with only 23% among scheduled airline travellers. However, further lowering prices seems to trump all quality measures when it comes to aspects that the public would like to see improved – for both budget and scheduled airlines.

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