PASSENGERS CAN LEARN FROM A380 CAPTAIN'S NEW CREW SURVIVAL GUIDE

News / Airlines

A trend emerging from the bookshelf targets road warriors who are desperate for tips on how to overcome jet lag, weeks on the road and dicey food choices. None, however, comes with the experience of the true road warriors – pilots – the men and women who sit in the heady air at the front of the plane surrounded by glowing computers who guide us safely through our collective journeys.

While Sleeping for Pilots & Cabin Crew, is written for those who have linked their stars to the airline profession, there is much in this book passengers can learn about the strategies that counter everything that makes travel more of a battle than it should be. **The book is written by an anonymous Airbus A380 captain currently "on tour" in Dubai.** (Guess which airline he works for. His airline doesn't want to be mentioned but, if it were smart, it would repackage the book taking out the sophomoric references to air and cabin crew's life on the road and put it in their seat pockets the way Northwest used to publish manuals on how to do business overseas.)

Sleeping for Pilots & Cabin Crew is also for anyone who works "the back of the clock" and insomniacs who want to learn how to quell their restless brains into effective sleep patterns. It starts with the premise that it is a crew's legal obligation to show up for work rested. But that is easier said than done across time zones. Fatigue remains one of the most critical safety issues in our 24-7 lifestyles and the author wants to ensure readers are well-rested. This pilot wants to turn the sleep troubled into professional sleepers.

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He has laid out strategies not only for sleep, but also for solving life's problems in manageable chunks so that worries are eliminated once your head hits the pillow. It is based on hard sleep science from the likes of the Mayo Clinic and Harvard Medical School who suggest that most people's first acquaintance with insomnia comes when they are suffering from jet lag.

"Ninety percent of getting a good sleep in a hotel room, or any room, is feeling safe and comfortable," he writes. "Once your subconscious is satisfied, and your brain emptied, only then will it let you sleep. Being able to sleep when you want is the mark of a professional sleeper without unnecessary or dangerous sleep aids."

Most books concentrate on what to eat or drink – or, more importantly, what not to eat and drink – while in-flight but this book gives you tools far beyond that and suggests the key to road warrior survival is in the preparation before the flight down to the minutia of packing and readying a room for sleep.

But it also discusses safety and security measures that many travelers would never think to do both on the street and in the hotel. It provides a greater sense of urgency to many of these practices that even veteran road warriors may not know.

The book is divided into two parts, an important device that establishes the science and offers valuable tips and then provides a how-to manual for maximizing health on the road. Indeed, the book also defines when an issue may require a doctor's attention. The good news, the author has done the homework and lives the life and if you need to check out his methods, there are copious references at the end.

"These tips and tricks have been tested in the laboratory of life under the harshest conditions in the world: the *moving sleep cycle* of the flight crew," he says. "The best way to get rest before the flight is by taking control of your life and ensuring a large slab of preflight sleep."

He spends a lot of time discussing health and factors that could damage sleep but he also discusses everything from seasonal effective disorder and getting enough Vitamin D. In addition, the author covers the NASA nap – a 26-minute power nap in the cockpit – now sanctioned by regulatory authorities who, oddly refuse to offer the same amenity to controllers.

The second part is amazing for all the tips and tricks on how to get the most out of being a road warrior including how to score theater or concert tickets for half price, how to get upgraded as well as how to set up house as an expat working overseas. The author references websites and other handy resources for increasing creature comforts during travel including lounge access and how to be served first on board so you can beat everyone else to the bathroom. His greatest suggestion for expats is to hire a local – a fixer – to get things done which has the added benefit of embedding the expat into the people and culture rather than cloistering them behind the walls of an expat community.

Important advice is to splurge on insurance to ensure medical evacuation in case it is necessary as well as how to stay connected with family and friends on the cheap by joining WhatApp, which leverages wifi for such tasks.

Sleeping for Pilots & Cabin Crew is available through Amazon both as a Kindle book for eReaders and a paperback book.

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