

BEST-KEPT TRAVEL SECRETS

On a Delta Flight, a Flight Attendant Charged a Passenger for an Overhead Bin. Here's Why It Was Pure

Genius Sometimes, the best customer service can end up pleasing everyone. [↗](#)

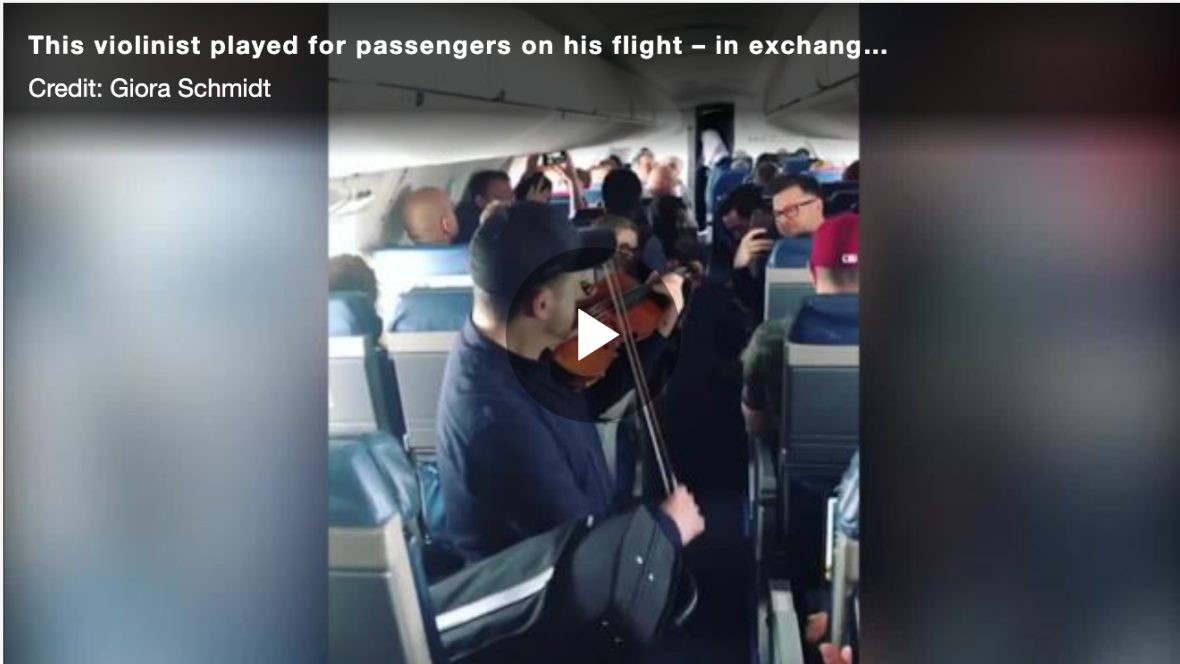
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Giora Schmidt couldn't fit his instrument into the overhead locker, so he struck a deal with the flight attendant and played some beautiful Bach...

This violinist played for passengers on his flight – in exchange...

Credit: Giora Schmidt



Airlines are charging for everything these days. Soon, it'll be bathrooms and air.

There's one contentious area, however, that already frustrates passengers beyond reason. Overhead bin space.

Some, like American, believe that by putting bigger overhead bins into their planes, passengers will be happy. Some airlines, like United, are effectively already charging for bin space.

Perhaps, though, they might consider the compensation demanded by a flight attendant on a recent Delta flight to Cincinnati. You see, as Classic FM reports, a passenger only just made the flight.

Worse, he had a fancy violin with him. This is because the passenger was American-Israeli violinist Giora Schmidt. Schmidt knew he could be in trouble. Or, rather, his violin could be.

Airlines have varying attitudes toward musical instruments.

Why, last year a cellist was thrown off an American Airlines flight in a dispute over her cello. A violinist had a painful struggle with Southwest, too.

What fate would Schmidt suffer? He explained:

I opened the compartments one by one and all were filled, but with mostly smaller soft items (coats, backpacks etc.) that could easily fit underneath the seats. Rather than start negotiating with each passenger I signaled to the flight attendant to see if she might be able to assist. I informed her that my violin was an Italian "antique" that I used professionally and putting it [in the hold] was non-negotiable.

This isn't going to end well, is it?

The minute a passenger makes non-negotiable statements, they're asking for incarceration.

Yet this particular flight attendant appears to have been blessed with unusual humanity. And ingenuity.

She announced to the passengers that there was a famous violinist on board. And, if one of the passengers could just move their stuff to underneath their seat, the violinist would perform a concert.

And so it was that after refreshments and a dose of turbulence, Schmidt pulled out his violin.

The plane was small. He couldn't stand up. He explained:

I then took a knee and proceeded with the Bach E Major Prelude - with ear pressure and all! This was an absolute first for me. I couldn't believe how much the passengers appreciated it - filming on their phones, and with a huge round of applause at the end.



It's not always easy to feel hopeful for the world.
It's not always easy to feel hopeful for the world of airlines.
So many flight attendants, in such a case, would have just said no.
They might have even had the passenger removed, once he made his violin non-negotiable.
That's why I find myself so charmed by this tale. Delta HQ seems to be too.
An airline spokeswoman told me:

We were impressed and send our thanks to Giora for the impromptu concert. Delta is appreciative of the time he took to share his talents with fellow customers.

And it all began with one flight attendant whose approach to customer service was based on decency, thoughtfulness, and surprise.
It's really not a bad strategy.