

## September 23, 2013 (Flying Home)

Around 1 AM, I wake up and find the room is a bit stuffy. I get up to open the window and find that there's no latch for opening it. I walk to the front desk and ask if there's a way to open the window. I'm told that someone will come open it for me. Fifteen minutes later, no one has come to open the window. I return to the front desk to inquire again. A different person is there. He grabs a lever and comes with me. He goes out on the balcony outside my room and opens the door to the balcony rather than my window. It works. With the balcony door now open, the room cools down and I'm able to sleep some more.

At 5:30 AM, my alarm wakes me up. After a shower, I'm out of the hostel and walking to Gare du Nord to catch the RER train back to Charles de Gaulle Airport.

I arrive at the airport around 7:30 AM for my 10:50 AM flight. I already have my boarding pass from yesterday so I head straight to the gate.

I'm very early and see signs to the Air France lounge. I decide to give it a try and see if my Delta Gold Medallion car will allow me in. Success! I'm in.

The Air France lounge is much better than the lounge in Zagreb yesterday. There's a complete layout of breakfast foods including pastries, meats, eggs and fruit. I eat myself silly. I hope the food will help me feel better. The sleep last night has greatly improved how I feel.

Around 10 AM, I must leave the lounge to board my plane to Detroit.

The nice thing about flying home from Europe is that it's a morning flight and I'm not trying to sleep in the uncomfortable airplane seat. I watch a documentary movie called "Knuckleball" that tells the story of two recent knuckleball pitchers.

The plane lands in Detroit on time. I go through Immigration and Customs and have time to get a supper at Taco Bell. It's 2 PM Detroit time.

At 3 AM, my plane boards. But after pulling away from the gate and taxiing out to the runway, we return to the gate because of a mechanical issue with the plane's computer.

At first the pilot says he'll try to reboot the computer and see if it clears the issue. It doesn't. But since it still appears to be a possible quick fix, they leave us on the plane for a little while.

Waiting on the plane, I seek out help from the flight attendants. Because of my sinus congestion, my ears still haven't cleared from landing 3 hours ago, All sounds are muted like I'm hearing everything underwater. Their tricks succeed in opening up my right ear. My left ear remains plugged.



Eventually they announce that the maintenance issue will require a crew with a truck to open up the tail. They have us all return to the terminal. Delta gives everyone a \$10 voucher that can be spent in the airport. Well, my voucher is for \$10, but I notice another passenger's voucher is only \$6. I purchase the October issue of "National Geographic" and a bottle of flavored water.

Back at the gate, it takes a half hour before the truck even arrives for the repairs and another 45 minutes until the crew arrives to begin working on the plane. Meanwhile, Delta announces that everyone will be given a \$50 voucher for a future flight for the delay.

At 6:30 PM, after a 3 hour delay, the maintenance problem is fixed and everyone boards the plane again. It's interesting because if it was a car, they'd test drive it. They don't, of course. The actual flight is the test drive. I hope the problem is fixed.

The flight goes without further incident and I get home safely.