

## The original plan shouldn't have been replaced

I really should have known better. When I check to make sure we had a scannable bar code after the "good" agent re-routed us to Marseille, it wasn't there. It was pretty strange; UA seemed to think we had a flight to Marseille, but you could say it was in print only, on a computer screen, my computer screen, looking like it had been tacked onto a legit reservation. No seat shown even.

So on that endless flight from SFO to Munich, the one I was destined to not get to sleep... I didn't get to sleep. I kept plugging away, trying to figure if the change to Marseille was real or not, and wondered if perhaps Kevin and I might make it, but not the luggage.

Listen to your initial instincts. They're usually right. Especially when they detect something wrong.

I contacted United again, via the chat line, and told new guy what I was, and wasn't, seeing. He saw the same issue, and thought it could be fixed by re-issuing the tickets. He didn't think that would be too big a deal, but it took over 15 minutes handling each one. That just didn't seem right. And afterward, I could see it still wasn't seeming to be right; still no seats shown. But we figure we'll get to Munich and United said they'd have a bunch of staff there to help out all the people with connections. Only, when we got off, there weren't any. What is going on?

I send Kevin off to wait in the super-long passport control line, thinking we had to start making progress to where our flight was supposed to be leaving from, right? While I backtracked to see if anybody had shown up at the gate to help, only I couldn't quite get there; it was past one of those one-way sections with security guards who couldn't understand my need to just talk with the woman about 20 feet away, because maybe she had answers. But no, that wasn't going to happen.

So we get through passport control (eventually) and start following the convoluted route to the G gates which takes you outside security and down to baggage claim, and we're wondering, at this point, what if our bags come off here, because they have no place to go? Nobody knows where to send them? For a couple of minutes we watch for one of our 4 bags, but nothing shows up, so off we go again, back through security, and find G16 where, both to our surprise and expectation, we're told there's no record of us for that flight, and she's way too busy to rebook us onto it. Thank goodness she didn't, because that would have separated us from our luggage, which we realized after calling United and talking with a baggage tracking person there. Our stuff was being held in limbo land, waiting for someone to tell it where to go.

At this point, our job was clear. #1 priority was to not get separated from our luggage! So this time we go off in search of a Lufthansa service center, another pretty long trot, with very long lines. But I'd already looked at all the alternatives to getting to Grenoble, and at this point, none of them were time-sensitive. But what was it going to cost us to get back on track? I had horrifying thoughts running through my head; would Lufthansa treat this as a brand new flight, and bill me for it, even though it was United that created the nightmare?

As it turned out, things couldn't have gone better at the Lufthansa service center. Her job was to fix what United broke, and she did that by putting us onto the direct flight to Lyon that left at 6pm. That's an awful long time at the airport, but, hopefully, we will soon be on a plane that's also carrying our bags! Then connect to a train and finally get to Grenoble just before midnight. Which sounds awful, but not too long ago it was feeling like we just needed to reverse course and head home.

And, someday, I'll get to sleep again. It is so hard keeping the eyes open. Fingers typing, no problem! But those eyes. They just want to sleep.