

Scratch one day off this trip...

We knew our flight into Paris was going to be late; we didn't know just how late. By the time we finally left Newark, it was pretty clear there was no way to catch our train from the airport to Lourdes. A flight that I had planned on at least pretending to sleep went completely south; I was up nearly the entire time researching alternatives.

Normally, no biggie, you just take a later train, right? Not in this case; by the time I realized how bad things were, every single train heading to the south of France, via just about anywhere, was sold out for the next two days. And no way to fly to Lourdes; it's not a very popular airport. The only viable alternative was to find a way to get to Toulouse, and take the 2 hour "local" train from there to Paris.

So I quickly booked an award ticket from Paris to Munich to Toulouse, thinking there'd be enough time (two hours) between flights to get our bags and recheck for the next flight. Well, maybe, if both United and Lufthansa used the same terminal. Nope. United's in 2E and Lufthansa's in the galaxy farthest from (2B). The only way it could work would be if I could get our bags transferred directly to the new flight. You can't call anyone on a plane, so I engaged a United rep on their "chat" facility. A rather useless endeavor because he said he knew the number to call but couldn't do it himself because the baggage department didn't do chat. I think there's another expression for what some at United didn't do.

So I get all the info together and text my wife and daughter, and they try to call the baggage department. And the recording says hold times are running an hour, and not once, but twice, the line disconnected at about 50 minutes. This is at midnight for them; they needed to sleep, so I did what I could to work things at my end.

There was no way to work things at my end. We landed and got through passport control and discovered the magnitude of the trek from terminal 2E to 2B and with luggage in hand and just an hour before the flight would leave, it was obvious flying to Toulouse today wasn't going to happen. I rebooked the flight for tomorrow, get a room at the Ibis Styles at the airport, and tomorrow will fly to Toulouse (the long way, via Munich) and then take the train to Lourdes. And Tuesday morning see our first stage, without a day to loosen up our legs.

Three travel days to France is a bit much.