

## What Can't You Take On A Plane

There is no doubt that everyone's senses have been on red alert in the last few years regarding terrorism. You can't pass through an airport without seeing an increased level of security and with many travellers nervously looking around them, scrutinising their fellow travellers with suspicion and doubt. Anyone arriving with a bag is looked upon with distrust - in an airport? Of course, after terrorist events of the last few years it is difficult to relax again. Attackers were foiled when their plans to get liquid explosives onto a flight in water bottles was discovered and thwarted. This is when authorities clamped down on what could be taken on board an aeroplane and plastic bottles of all sorts were eliminated. Of course, if you've had enough of worrying about this type of thing and are simply after an easy going holiday, you could always try getting a way for a bit of a surfing holiday. There's nothing quite like the sun, sea and surf to make you forget your troubles. That is, of course, if you can get your surf board on the plane. British Airways have banned certain sports items from being carried on a plane and that includes surf boards. They say they are bulky and take up too much room. How has this only recently been discovered? Surf boards have been around much longer than aeroplanes and they just decide they don't fit? They're inches thick, for goodness sake! How can they take up too much room? Maybe the authorities are more concerned that these surf boards might be disguised as something more sinister. After all, if you can make a bomb from a bottle of liquid then surely you could make something much more destructive when it takes up a six foot space albeit a few inches thick. And just look at the dodgy appearance of a surfer. All that bleached surfers hair and bronzed skin, rippling muscles, piercing eyes.... oops, going off on an entirely different train of thought there! The news towards the end of 2007 that British Airways were banning sportsmen and women from taking surf boards on a plane was met with uproar and a petition was quickly mounted but the authorities are unrepentant, saying that this is a measure people will just have to put up with because they no longer have the space in the cargo area. Has somebody made the planes smaller when we weren't looking? Is someone claiming a breach of health and safety issues when they have to hold the bursting luggage in with their backs while someone quickly slams the door? Of course, surf boards are easily hired abroad but that's tantamount to treason to a real surfer. That board is their life, their love, their baby and very often their livelihood. They spend many a wet, cold hour riding the waves to perfection, making contact with their prized surf board and lovingly applying the wax. To not take their surf board with them, particularly when entering events abroad, would be sacrilege. Many of the world's surfing events are held on small, remote British islands and this poses a problem because it is often only British Airways that service these islands, omitting the choice of surfers to use a different airline. This now begs the question as to whether someone high up in BA is in cahoots with someone from the islands surf board hire business?

## About the Author

Holiday expert Catherine Harvey looks at the refusal of BA to allow surf boards on a plane. To find out more please visit <http://www.transsurf.co.uk/>

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