

Airports Lounges Aren't Just for VIPs: Tips for Business Travelers

by Gary Cucchiara on September 17, 2013

Now that airlines have taken away most of the comforts of flying, airport lounges can be an oasis for weary business travelers. Many feature workstations, Wi-Fi, free food, open bar, and even showers.

If you don't otherwise qualify for access into these exclusive clubs, there are other (legitimate) ways to get in. Below are a few options:

Purchase an annual membership from the airline: Most of the major air carriers allow passengers to buy annual memberships to their airport lounges. Fees can range from \$400-500 per year. While you can pay using frequent flier points, this option only makes sense if you primarily travel on one airline.

Buy a day pass from the airline: For infrequent travelers or those who use a variety of carriers, purchasing a day pass is generally a better option. Most passes cost around \$50, but passengers who purchase online, buy in bulk, or carry airline branded credit cards are often eligible for discounts.

Enroll in a non-airline lounge program: There are also several companies that offer airport lounge memberships. The largest program, Priority Pass, provides access to 600 airline lounges in more than 300 cities worldwide. Membership costs range from \$99 to \$349 per year.

Sign up for a credit card with airport lounge perks: Several credit cards allow users to access certain airlines' lounges. American Express and Diners Club are two popular examples. While these cards carry high annual fees of up to \$450, they provide entry into the airport lounges of most major carriers.

Visit a public lounge: Airports in the United States and abroad are increasingly offering pay-in lounges, which are open to all members of the public. You simply pay for your entrance or any services you would like to receive, from a massage to a hot shower.

Sources: Travel and Leisure and USA Today

If you have any questions about this post, please contact me, Gary Cucchiara, or the Scarinci Hollenbeck attorney with whom you work.