1936

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The Iowa Homemaker

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Recommended Citation
The Iowa Homemaker (1936) "Fly with the Greatest of Ease," The Iowa Homemaker: Vol. 16 : No. 4 , Article 5.
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol16/iss4/5

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Fly with the Greatest of Ease

Oh, she flies through the air with the greatest of ease"—the woman who travels by plane these days! The etiquette of air-travel, so new as not to be included in formal guides to social behaviour, deserves a special chapter to itself. Since so many women are flying, a few simple rules, governing the amenities of traveling by air, are suggested by Rosalie Gimple, chief stewardess for United Air Lines, Chicago.

First about clothes for flying! Simplicity, which marks most costumes for daytime and all travel-wear is particularly appropriate for the woman going somewhere by air. Early women air-travelers on regular commercial planes have never gone through what early women-motorists did. Anyone whose memory goes back to 1906 recalls the dusters, the veils, the voluminous petticoats. None of that for early women flyers. Their clothes have always been as streamlined as the planes in which they rode.

Comfort is a primary feature of smart flying clothes. When the trip is to be a long one, non-crushable clothes, such as knitted suits are ideal. Even during the good old summer-time, when clothes are apt to wilt, the breezy comfort of a plane high in the air, helps the smart traveler to look as fresh at the end of the trip as at the start when she takes off in the midst of a group of admiring friends. Plane cabins of the larger airlines are precooled before the take-off during the summer time, and ventilated in the air so that passengers may enjoy cool summer breezes. So well equipped with comfortable, attractively upholstered chairs are planes these days that even delicate frocks and those smooth white suits which are a part of every woman's wardrobe, take the air without a wrinkle. Interiors of airplanes today are as smart as well-appointed drawing-rooms—and far more comfortable than most.

Small close-fitting hats are best in the air, permitting greater comfort, visibility for the scenic-minded traveler, and are more readily handled when they are removed.

Of the 200,000 passengers carried last year by the United Air Lines, 55,000 were women, according to Miss Gimple. Most of these were experienced enough travelers to know that all luggage should be reduced to the minimum. For air-travel, the smart, light luggage and compact clothing which are the mark of the sophisticated traveler everywhere are particularly suitable. However, the airlines allow each passenger 35 pounds of baggage without charge. A really surprising amount of clothing can be packed within this limit. The handbag of the knowing woman air-traveler contains extra handkerchiefs, lipstick, powder and whatever beauty aids she will require for her trip—as she carries no baggage with her into the cabin of the plane.

As for etiquette during the flying time, the rules are few and simple. Only during take-offs and landings are passengers requested to fasten safety belts. At other times, they may move about with what freedom the plane permits. Conversation in the soundproofed planes of today is possible in a normal speaking voice. Cigarette smoking is permitted at all times except at take-offs and landings.

Dining on a plane has advanced far beyond the old sandwich picnic stage. Today full course dinners are served by stewardesses from their compact little cabin kitchens. Although forks, spoons, and other of the ordinary equipment for dining are furnished diners, some picnic manners are sanctioned by etiquette authorities. Fried chicken, on a plane for instance, is eaten with perfect propriety in the fingers. Stewardesses offer a choice of hot coffee, tea, or chocolate to their passengers. Salads, rolls, fresh fruit, cakes and ice cream are served with perfect ease and dispatch. Meals served on the airplanes are of course, complimentary.

"It is the job of the stewardess to make life more interesting and pleasant to her passengers," said Miss Gimple, who supervises United's 150 stewardesses. "She knows the route thoroughly and is prepared to answer any and all questions about it. In addition to being a registered nurse, with a wide knowledge of ways to make her passengers more comfortable physically, she is also conversant with a wide variety of subjects in which her passengers may be interested. Social life while flying today—now that flying is taken so much as a matter of course—is very like social life in your own drawing room—with the same rules of courtesy governing conduct."