

# The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

## TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER



DANIEL ROLAND

A Lufthansa flight.

## Lufthansa gives an unsatisfactory refund after messing up flight

By Christopher Elliott  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

**Q.** I am writing on behalf of myself and my travel companion about our recent highly unsatisfactory experience with Lufthansa's flight cancellation and rescheduling policies. Lufthansa canceled, rebooked, then canceled and delayed our flights on both ends of our vacation.

Our outbound flight from New York to Delhi was delayed, and we missed our connecting flight to India. Lufthansa eventually rebooked us on another airline but only offered us a \$15 meal voucher, which wasn't even enough to buy a meal in New York. We had a delay of almost 24 hours.

On our return flight, Lufthansa switched planes and didn't have room for us. Instead, they rebooked us on a flight through Frankfurt, Germany, and we experienced a six-hour delay.

According to Lufthansa's site, we are entitled to compensation if we arrive at our final destination with a delay of more than three hours. It also promises compensation if we're denied boarding, which we were on our return flight. At the bare minimum, Lufthansa should refund the \$322 in seat assignment fees we paid.

We could have flown much more cheaply on another airline but chose Lufthansa because of its reputation. Can you help?

EMILY WEIR, *Florence, Mass.*

**A.** Maybe you should have taken another airline because Lufthansa clearly didn't live up to its reputation on your flights to and from Delhi.

Part of the problem is that it's not immediately clear which airline consumer protections apply to your flight. It's true that Lufthansa says it will compensate you for denied boarding and delays, but these are European Union rules that only apply to tickets where the origination or destination is within the EU.

On your flight from New York to Delhi, United States consumer protection laws apply. These say that if the airline can get you to your final destination, and you accept the rebooked flight, it owes you nothing more.

However, your seats ... well, that's another story. You paid for a reserved seat on your flight and didn't get it. You're right; at the bare minimum, Lufthansa owes you a refund for these.

Your case falls into a gray area when it comes to customer service. Clearly, both of your flights didn't go as you had hoped or as Lufthansa had intended. When this happens, your best bet is to negotiate a goodwill gesture then and there in real time.

Ask for a hotel voucher, an extra meal voucher, frequent flier points, or anything a representative is allowed to offer at the time. After your flights end, getting anything will be difficult — if not impossible.

You can also reach out to one of the Lufthansa executives whose names I publish on my consumer advocacy site, Elliott.org. A short, polite email to one of them might have gotten you the compensation you deserve.

I contacted Lufthansa on your behalf. Without comment, the airline refunded you \$61 — a disappointing conclusion to your case.

*Christopher Elliott is the founder of Elliott Advocacy (elliottadvocacy.org), a nonprofit organization that helps consumers solve their problems. Email him at chris@elliott.org or get help by contacting him at elliottadvocacy.org/help/.*

## THE V.I.P. LOUNGE

# Guillaume Côté

on Miami, camping, and M&amp;Ms as comfort food

Last April, Robert Lepage — legendary director of the Metropolitan Opera, Stratford Festival, and Cirque du Soleil — and renowned dancer and choreographer Guillaume Côté debuted a stage adaptation of “Hamlet” told entirely through dance, music, and an innovative set design. The production of “The Tragedy of Hamlet: Prince of Denmark,” in which Côté stars, was such a hit at its world premiere, at Toronto's Elgin Theater, that they took it on what has been, to date, a successful tour — one that will include a stop in Boston, at the Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre, for shows on Feb. 28 and March 1. “I’ve always wanted to play Hamlet, which for theater actors is a coveted role,” said Côté, 43, in a recent phone call from Berlin, Germany. “And to adapt it in this way has been very special.”

The Lac-St-Jean, Québec, native said that it's important to remember that “Shakespeare was a man of the theater — not a writer obsessing over words,” and exploring this play with “gestures and movement adds a really beautiful subtext and different way to see this iconic story.” Côté, one of Canada's most celebrated dancers, has been the principal male dancer in The National Ballet of Canada since 2004 and is artistic director of the Festival des Arts de Saint-Sauveur in Quebec. He said that the story of Hamlet is “really resonating with audiences during these [trying times] with political tensions” and other world issues. “I love telling this story through dance. As a prince, you often show up, fall in love with the swan, get excited, and dance around,” he said. “It's kind of nice at this point in my career to portray a more complex character and dive into that character a little bit more as a complex human being.” We caught up with the father of two — a 10-year-old daughter and an 8-year-old son — who lives in Toronto to talk about all things travel.

**If you could travel anywhere right now, where would you go?** I'd love to go somewhere warm and escape the cold. I loved Costa Rica and would love to go back. The wild beaches are spectacular and the people are lovely.

**Do you prefer booking trips through a travel agent or on your own?** I book trips on my own now. I find there are many helpful apps.

**Thoughts on an “unplugged” vacation?** I love the thought of it, but somehow we have established a sort of availability in our community that is tough to put on hold. Also, a GPS is a good thing.

**What has been your worst vacation experience?** I honestly didn't love Miami. It wasn't really my vibe. I'm not a nightclub kind of person, and I felt that I was constantly out of place.

**What is your favorite childhood travel memory?** I loved camping with my parents. One summer, when I was 8, we traveled to the South of France and traveled all over. It was very beautiful. In the summertime, we would camp closer to home and go to Northern Maine near the Montreal border.

**Do you vacation to relax, to learn, or for the adventure of it all?** I like two types: the type of vacation where you can stop and think [and] watch time go by slowly, and the type of vacation where you



Guillaume Côté in Costa Rica.

meet new people and explore new places and cultures.

**What book do you plan on bringing with you on your next vacation?** I'd like to start “2666” by Roberto Bolaño. I've heard a lot about it, and it would be wonderful to find the time to dig in.

**If you could travel with one famous person/celebrity, who would it be?** Anthony Bourdain. Why? I loved the show on CNN and read his biography. I love the idea of immersing yourself in another culture and getting to know the people there.

**What is the best gift to give a traveler?** An extra phone battery. I've become very dependent on my phone for recommendations and reservations, so having a little extra battery life in my pocket is always helpful.

**What is your go-to snack for a flight or a road trip?** I don't know why, but I always get M&Ms for

every flight. I know it's not healthy or even that great, but somehow it's my comfort snack on the plane.

**What is the coolest souvenir you've picked up on a vacation?** When I was in Russia a few years ago, I brought back a framed photo of [Vaslav] Nijinsky, the Russian ballet dancer and choreographer, that I found in a small antique shop. I still have it hung up in my house and I love it.

**What is your favorite app/website for travel?** Tripadvisor.

**What has travel taught you?** Always be kind to everyone.

**What is your best travel tip?** Stop and look around before rushing into plans. Sometimes the best things to see will reveal themselves to you organically.

JULIET PENNINGTON



## HERE

### WINTER STAYCATION PERKS

Take advantage of the sweet deals being offered close to home with Meet Boston's “Pick Your Perk Winter Promo.” Formerly the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau, Meet Boston is a not-for-profit marketing organization touting fun things to see and do in the city, and this promo aims to tempt you to experience a few. From slurping oysters on the half shell to admiring the Monet collection at the MFA to watching the skaters on the Common's Frog Pond, there's plenty to taste and experience on a winter staycation. When you book a two-night stay at one of almost 40 select hotels in Boston and Cambridge, Meet Boston's special offer provides admission for two to one of three popular Boston attractions: the Museum of Fine Arts, the WNDR Museum, and the Harry Potter Exhibi-

tion. In addition, the deal includes a \$50 e-gift card to Legal Sea Foods. The hotel selection is plentiful, and can suit your needs from simple and stylish like Aloft Boston Seaport and Yotel Boston to luxury properties including the Boston Harbor Hotel, The Langham, and The Newbury Boston. The promotion is available now through April 15. [www.meetboston.com/pick-yourperk/](http://www.meetboston.com/pick-yourperk/)

## THERE

### DOWNTOWN D.C. HOTEL DEBUTS

Those heading to our nation's capital for spring break or other activities (hello, cherry blossoms!) will want to consider staying at the recently opened Arlo Washington D.C. Located within the heart of downtown, within walking distance of Penn Quarter, Judiciary Square, and Capitol Hill, the 445-room hotel offers easy access to the city's top attractions, including the

National Mall, museums, convention center, and premier dining, shopping, and entertainment venues. The renovation of this National Register of Historic Places building, formerly the 1888 Harrison Apartments, juxtaposes the original Romanesque Revival style with a new 12-story addition. Guest rooms and suites feature white oak furnishings, natural textures in soothing colors, and custom light fixtures. Black-and-white penny tiles in the bathrooms were inspired by the original tiles in the Harrison Apartments. Some rooms have balconies overlooking the city, and the new building boasts an interior courtyard and expansive fitness center. Enjoy Spanish cuisine at Arrels, the signature restaurant by Chef Pepe Moncayo, and sip cocktails in its lively ground-floor bar and lounge. Bodega by Arrels serves coffee and espresso drinks and grab-and-go breakfast and lunch items. ART DC, a rooftop bar and lounge with resort-style pool, serves Japanese-style hand rolls, yakitori, and other Pan-Asian cuisine. Check online for special sweet deals, including book direct and save 15 percent; or get 20 percent savings when booking 14 or more days in advance. Rates from \$179. 202-737-7000, <https://arlohotels.com/washingtondc/>

## EVERYWHERE

### PLAY LONGER WITH THERMAL COMPRESSION TIGHTS

Keep your joints protected and warm this winter with Men's and Women's KX2 Alpine, a supportive thermal base layer with built-in knee and hip support. Perfect for snowboarding, skiing, and other cold-weather activi-



ties, the fleece-lined tights are constructed on an anti-bacterial compression base and feature low-profile knee sleeves built right into the pants. A “Tri-Tech” support layer, which incorporates a thin layer of medical-grade, perforated neoprene around the knees and hips, helps to relieve knee pain and provide extra support, stability, and protection to active and recovering knees. Can be worn under custom knee braces to stop them from sliding down. Wear as a base layer or on its own. Either way, these compression tights can turn a half day into a full day of outdoor adventures. \$120. <https://bracelayer.com/>

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