

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER



PETER MORRISON/AP/FILE

Aer Lingus jets at Dublin Airport.

Aer Lingus withholds a full refund after a flight cancellation

By Christopher Elliott
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Q. My wife and I were scheduled to fly from Paris to Philadelphia. Aer Lingus canceled the flight due to “operational issues” and told me to request a refund. I paid \$5,246 for the tickets, but the airline only refunded \$4,502.

I’ve emailed repeatedly about the missing \$744 and keep getting new case numbers with promises to “contact me soon.” It’s been weeks without a resolution. What can I do?

JAMES JONES, *Naples, Fla.*

A. When an airline cancels a flight for reasons within its control, passengers are entitled to a full refund under European consumer regulations. But Aer Lingus left you in a financial holding pattern.

EU Regulation 261/2004, the European consumer protection law, requires an airline to fully refund you within seven days if you paid by credit card. Aer Lingus’s partial refund and radio silence violate both its contractual obligations and EU consumer protections.

Here’s what should have happened: After canceling your flight, Aer Lingus needed to promptly refund the full \$5,246 without you having to ask. Instead, it shortchanged you by \$744 and ignored your follow-ups — a classic airline runaround.

Airlines often bank on travelers giving up, but EU rules don’t let them off the hook. When you pay with a credit card, a chargeback for the missing amount could pressure Aer Lingus to act (a step worth considering if this happens again).

I can’t believe it would do this to you. The tickets you purchased were pricey business-class fares. Aer Lingus should have bent over backward to help you, considering your value as a customer.

You did the right thing by documenting every interaction. Paper trails are critical. Still, when companies stonewall, escalating to executives is key. I’ve published contact details for Aer Lingus’s leadership team on my consumer advocacy site, elliott.org. A polite but firm email to these decision-makers often breaks the logjam. It looks like you tried the contacts, but they ignored you.

I’ve reviewed the correspondence between you and Aer Lingus, which I frankly find frustrating. The airline offered you a full refund, which you accepted, and then it failed to follow through. Instead of a coherent answer to your repeated question, it just kept sending you new form responses with new case numbers.

If anything, your case is a reminder to always check your airline refund. Never assume that just because the airline offered you a refund that you will receive all of it — or any of it. Check your credit card statement to make sure that you received everything.

So, why did Aer Lingus short you by \$744? Based on the emails it sent you, it looks like it might have broken out taxes into a separate charge. Aer Lingus might have also recalculated your refund based on currency fluctuations. It’s difficult to know for certain. I asked Aer Lingus about your refund, but it would not tell me why it withheld the \$744.

What it would do is fix this for you. After I reached out to Aer Lingus on your behalf, it refunded the \$744 that it owed you.

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 VIP LOUNGE

Evan Dando

on Junior Mints, using YouTube for travel, and how Martha’s Vineyard became a nightmare

The Lemonheads frontman Evan Dando may now call São Paulo, Brazil, home, but his Massachusetts roots run deep, which is why he said he is especially excited about performing at Boston’s Wilbur Theater Nov. 26 for a stop on the band’s “Love Chant” world tour, which kicked off earlier this month in Alabama. In a recent phone call from somewhere between tour stops in Atlanta and Norfolk, Va., Dando, 58, recalled seeing his first concert — Heart — at the Hatch Shell when he was 9. “We had just moved from Essex to Boston, and I walked to the concert by myself. I had seen bikers on TV, but at that concert I saw that they were real,” he recalled. “I remember hearing [Heart] sing ‘Barracuda.’ They [sisters Ann and Nancy Wilson] were like a female version of Led Zeppelin.” He also spent many years living on Martha’s Vineyard, a place he called “beautiful,” but one that has changed and become unaffordable for most. “Everyone there has fancy cars now and socially, it’s a nightmare. It’s like a small town on steroids,” he said. “Everybody knows everything about everyone.” The Lemonheads, whose first hit (in 1992) was “It’s a Shame About Ray,” released eight albums between 1987 and 2006, then two albums of covers in 2009 and 2019. “Love Chant,” the band’s first album of original material in nearly 20 years, was released on Oct. 24. “I wasn’t going to do this album, because I really liked the last one in 2006,” Dando said. “But this record is really exciting for me. I have never gotten that close to what I wanted [a record] to sound like.” The singer/songwriter/guitarist said he is eager to share his newly released songs live with his fans — especially with his “incredibly talented” bandmates John David Kent (drums) and Farley Glavin (bass). “It’s gonna be good,” he responded when asked what his Boston-area fans can expect. “I don’t have a crystal ball handy, so we’ll have to see.” Dando is married to video director Antonia Teixeira, who is working with The Lemonheads on the current tour. “She keeps the heat off my back and helps me stay sober,” Dando said of his wife, who has three adult children (“My new family,” he said). We caught up with Dando, who lives in São Paulo with Teixeira and their three cats and two dogs, to talk about all things travel.

If you could travel anywhere right now, where would you go? Home, because I feel comfortable there.

Do you prefer booking trips through a travel agent or on your own? I prefer booking trips on my own. Well, really, my wife does it.

Thoughts on an “unplugged” vacation? No thoughts. Sounds boring.

What has been your worst vacation experience? When my friend Malcolm got run over by two Canadians on a motorcycle in Jamaica. He was injured pretty badly.

What is your favorite childhood travel memory? The first time I went to France for the summer



Evan Dando, lead singer of the Lemonheads, in Ubatuba, Brazil.

in 1976.

Do you vacation to relax, to learn, or for the adventure of it all? I go on vacation to relax.

What book do you plan on bringing with you to read on your next vacation? The Quran. It’s full of inspirational stuff. I like to read the Bible and the Quran.

If you could travel with one famous person/celebrity, who would it be? Robert Louis Stevenson. “Travels with a Donkey [in the Cévennes]” is one of my favorite books and he is one of my favorite authors. He took off for the South Pacific. ... He did it right.

What is the best gift to give a traveler? A tent if they’re going camping. And a knife, a good attitude, and some patience. And oh, an iPod — one of those teeny ones — with a selection of my favorite songs on it.

What is your go-to snack for a flight or a road trip? Junior Mints.

What is the coolest souvenir you’ve picked up on a vacation? One time I got a wheat-back penny back as change when I was buying Junior Mints at the airport. It’s old, from before 1950-something.

What is your favorite app/website for travel? YouTube. You can find anything on YouTube. We used it to find a place to stay last night between Atlanta and Norfolk [where the Lemonheads were playing that night].

What has travel taught you? It’s taught me I can move around.

What is your best travel tip? Keep a good head and always carry a light bulb [a quote from Bob Dylan when, at a 1965 press conference in London, he was asked about his message].

JULIET PENNINGTON



HERE

FESTIVE CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS IN MAINE

Lovers of all things Christmas will want to visit Kennebunkport for the Christmas Prelude, an 11-day event that offers holiday magic for all ages (Dec. 4-14). This charming coastal village in Southern Maine — celebrated in summer months for its beaches, historic downtown, and lobster rolls — transforms itself into a Christmas fantasy land with festive lights, a towering decorated tree in Dock Square, and fun events daily. Highlights include Santa arriving by lobster boat (and later in the week, by fire engine!); Christmas fireworks display; the 15th annual Pooch Parade (open to all decorated pups and their owners); Mrs. Claus serving up hot cocoa to kids of all ages; candlelight caroling on the grounds of St. Anthony’s Monastery; a family street festival with strolling carolers, ice carving, and food vendors; and so much more. <https://christmasprelude.com>. Looking for an appropriate “Christmas-y” place to stay? The 33-room Kennebunkport Inn offers a Christmas Prelude Package that complements its over-the-top holiday décor, which is visible from the moment

you arrive, including exterior windows adorned with wreaths, and fireplaces in the public spaces that sport colorful stockings. If you’re staying in a room with a fireplace, you can request stockings as an add-on during booking. Your own in-room holiday tree can also be an add-on option. On-site restaurant, The Burleigh, transforms into The Tinsel Bar, a merry cocktail haven decked in twinkle lights, floor-to-ceiling ornaments, and outdoor heated dining structures for cozy holiday sips. Rates in December from \$189. www.kennebunkportinn.com



THERE

LAVISH ESTATE OPENS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

If you’ve ever wanted to stay in a grand Edwardian estate, now’s your chance. Following a meticulous 10-year restoration and \$25 million investment, Vancouver Island is celebrating the opening of Rosemead House. The 1906 property, once the famed Old English Inn, is now a boutique hotel with 28 individually styled guest rooms in the original manor, and a newly constructed wing, the Grove Collection. Hundreds of hand-selected antiques — sourced from more than 50 UK estate auctions — are showcased alongside rare furnishings and china from London’s famed Savoy and Dorchester hotels. Guests are welcomed by replica Buckingham Palace gates and can retreat to The Crown Mezzanine library, surrounded by art and heirlooms, including pieces once used in “The Crown” Netflix series. Amenities include Janevca Kitchen & Lounge, recently named a finalist for Air Canada’s Best New Restaurant 2025, offering wood-fired cuisine, small plates, and signature cocktails; the Salt & Ivy Spa, a 3,800-square-foot sanctuary with relaxation lounge and



treatment rooms; and a fitness center with Peloton bikes, yoga space, free weights, and state-of-the-art equipment. Winter/summer rates from \$319/\$460 (Grove); and \$390/\$532 (Manor). 250-384-0940, <https://rosemeadhouse.ca>

EVERYWHERE

LUXURY GARMENT BAG ELEVATES YOUR TRAVEL GAME

Who says garment bags need to be dull and stodgy? When you’re ready to up your game in the world of travel accessories, consider Olivet’s chic new luxury garment bags. Bridal and event stylist Olivia Ivey Bannock saw a need in the market for bags for women who want to travel “as stylishly as they dress,” and the elegant Olivet collections were born. Available in sophisticated pastels and limited-edition prints, these garment bags are made from durable, water-resistant fabric and feature thoughtful interior pockets, convertible folds — including compact suitcase mode — and a luxe exterior finish. Winter arrivals are available now, in holiday bow and winter rose classic styles, as well as spring and summery looks in the moiré, poppy, and gingham collections. The bridal collection bags come in ivory, pale blue, and primrose pink. From \$210. www.shopolivet.com

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