

# The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

## TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER



ADOBE

## I booked the wrong airport, so can I get a refund for my ticket?

By Christopher Elliott  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

**Q.** I had a ticket to fly home from San Francisco to New York on American Airlines this summer. A day before my flight, I learned that my father had a stroke. Because I have macular degeneration, I had to call American Airlines to change my flight. I spoke with three different representatives. They were unhelpful and gave me misleading information.

But after a lot of back and forth, I changed my ticket for an additional fee of \$1,149. Between the chaos of my father's condition and the rude agent, I realized I had booked the wrong flight. I was flying back from the wrong airport — San Jose instead of San Francisco. It was much too far from where I was, and I wouldn't be able to get there on time. I immediately called American Airlines to explain my mistake and advised the agent I would not be on the San Jose flight.

The representative indicated that the airline could not refund me at that time, but that I should follow up with the customer service department for a refund. I saw a seat online from San Francisco to New York and asked him to book it. He did, but it cost an extra \$1,648.

Because of these events and my disability, I paid \$2,797 in change fees to move up my flight one day. I want a refund for these charges.

LINDA BRUCIA, *New York*

**A.** I'm so sorry to hear about your father. I hope he is well on his way to recovery. There's so much that went wrong with this case that it's hard to know where to start.

Airlines strongly prefer that you make your flight changes online. But American Airlines should have been accommodating because of your disability and your state of mind, having just learned of your father's stroke.

I don't know if American believed your story. For example, you said you had to call the airline because of your macular degeneration, but you later checked the flights online. That might have made the representatives question your narrative. (And, for the record, I believe you.)

You asked for a ticket change, but I think the representative misunderstood you and put in for a refund. American should have changed your ticket from San Jose to San Francisco. But it looks like you purchased an entirely new ticket. That should have left you with a ticket credit for your original flight from San Jose to New York.

But, more to the point, you had a complicated interaction with the reservation agents. And that's understandable. You were under a lot of stress at the time. When you're trying to solve a consumer problem, it helps to remember the three Ps — patience, persistence, and politeness. I have more strategies on how to fix any airline problem in my free guide to booking an airline ticket, which you can access at [www.elliott.org/airline-problems/best-way-buy-airline-tickets-guide/](http://www.elliott.org/airline-problems/best-way-buy-airline-tickets-guide/). I also publish the names, numbers, and e-mails of American Airlines' executives on my consumer advocacy site at [www.elliott.org/company-contacts/american-airlines/](http://www.elliott.org/company-contacts/american-airlines/).

I contacted American Airlines on your behalf to see if we could get this sorted out. It looks like you already disputed the charges for your first ticket on your credit card. American said that it would not fight the dispute as a goodwill gesture, so you will get your money back.

*Christopher Elliott is the chief advocacy officer of Elliott Advocacy, a nonprofit organization that helps consumers resolve their problems. Elliott's latest book is "How to Be the World's Smartest Traveler" (National Geographic). Contact him at [elliott.org/help](mailto:elliott.org/help) or [chris@elliott.org](mailto:chris@elliott.org).*

## THE VIP LOUNGE

# Allison Feaster

on Spain, having an open mind, and feeling calmer in the window seat

**W**hat Allison Feaster brings to her role as vice president, player development, and organizational growth for the Boston Celtics goes beyond her Harvard University education and her years of operational experience in the NBA and the NBA G-League. Feaster, 46, spent more than two decades on the court, too — first as a standout player at Harvard, then professionally in the WNBA and overseas. In her fourth year with the Celtics, Feaster finds straddling basketball and business operations a good fit — and is especially proud of her work as co-leader of the Boston Celtics United initiative that fights against racial and social inequality in Greater Boston. "This is near and dear to my heart," Feaster said in a recent phone interview, adding that having an opportunity to work with so many "amazing" community organizations — including those that help former inmates and women in shelters — makes her "cherish this platform and what we do even more." We caught up with the Chester, S.C., native, who has a 16-year-old daughter, Sarah Strong, and who lives in Boston, to talk about all things travel.

**Favorite vacation destination?** I called Europe home for 18 years, so somewhere in Spain or France would be at the top of the list. If I have to choose one, I would say Ibiza in the Balearic Islands [off the coast of Spain].

**Favorite food or drink while vacationing?** I love the local cuisine, whatever that may be. I love fruits, vegetables, and I am a pescatarian. If it's in Spain, pan con tomate y queso curado y un zumo de naranja for breakfast. Y para comer, es un arroz negro con sangria.

**Where would you like to travel to but haven't?** Maldives. It's one of those destinations where I could only dream of visiting [and experiencing] the people and the culture. I'd love to have that connection. I also am really intrigued by the concept of a lodging that's suspended over the ocean.

**One item you can't leave home without when traveling?** My iPhone. I've been known to document everyday experiences with excessive picture taking.

**Aisle or window?** Window. Although I travel ex-



Allison Feaster boards a plane.

tensively, I have a slight fear of flying and am really bothered in turbulent air. Sitting by the window calms me.

**Favorite childhood travel memory?** Sitting with my great-grandfather outside in our driveway drinking Coca-Cola from a glass bottle while listening to the sounds at dusk in rural South Carolina — whip-

poor-wills, cicadas, crickets ...

**Guilty pleasure when traveling?** Too much good food and drink!

**Best travel tip?** Have an open mind and leave your preconceived notions and prejudices at home.  
JULIET PENNINGTON



## HERE

### NEW YEAR'S WEEKEND FESTIVITIES

Looking for a fabulous place to ring in the New Year? Head to the tip of the Cape, where First Light Weekend in Provincetown offers holiday parties galore (Dec. 30-Jan. 1). Kick off your celebration at Canteen's Holiday Market and Winter Lodge, a seaside spot to enjoy European winter foods and drinks (think homemade pretzels, schnitzel, potato pancakes, and grilled sausages) while perusing handcrafted items from local artisans. On New Year's Eve, decorate your bicycle and cruise Commercial Street (and win prizes!) at the Light Bright Bike Ride, followed by fireworks over the harbor at dusk. The entertainment highlight is a Town Hall performance by Tony winner Christine Ebersole, making her Provincetown debut with Billy Stritch on piano. At noon on New Year's Day, join an intrepid group at the Johnson Street beach and dive into the harbor at the sixth annual Polar Bear Plunge, followed by warm-up cocktails and chili at Harbor Lounge. Plunge registration fee includes T-shirt and donation to the Center for Coastal Studies. Check website for additional events and places to stay. <https://ptown.org/calendars/first-light/>

### DANCE ON DEMAND

You don't have to wait until summer to enjoy spectacular dance performances courtesy of Jacob's Pillow. The famed dance center in Becket recently debuted Jacob's Pillow On Demand, an array of new free and paid digital offerings premiering through spring 2023. Programming includes seven full-length films of recent performances from summer festival seasons 2021-2022. In addition, dance fans can sign up for a bundle of new programming to watch, read, and listen to on a monthly basis, including the Inside the Pillow Lab short film docuseries that captures residency behind-the-scenes moments; multimedia essays on Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive; new PillowVoices podcasts; and highlights from recent summer PillowTalks that explore relevant topics in the dance world today. <https://watch.jacobspillow.org>

## THERE

### CHECK IN PADDLE OUT AT WAIKIKI

Calling all surfers and beach lovers! Following a multi-million-dollar renovation, The Twin Fin, formerly known as the Aston Waikiki Beach Hotel, debuts as a surf-inspired beachfront hotel on the beach best known as the birthplace of modern surfing. The ho-

tel was named after a surfboard with two fins — popular in the 1970s and again today — that is ideal for small to medium waves, similar to the ones guests can access directly in front of the hotel. The 646-room hotel (including 48 two- and three-bedroom suites) has updated contemporary rooms featuring tropical patterns and blue hues designed to echo the island's beaches and bright waters. The pool deck boasts six new cabanas, pool service overlooking the island's iconic landscape, and DJs and musicians provid-



ing upbeat ambience in the evenings. Food offerings include Tiki's Grill & Bar, Wolfgang Puck Express, gelato-pastry-coffee bar, and more. On the beach, water sport rentals, surfboards, umbrellas, paddleboards, and beach chairs are available. Rates from \$239 per night. 808-922-2511, [www.twinfinwaikiki.com](http://www.twinfinwaikiki.com)

### CO-BRANDED SAILING SERIES

Give yourself a holiday present by booking one of the new trips offered jointly by Ponant and Smithsonian Journeys in 2023 and 2024. The new series of co-branded sailings combine the luxury and amenities of Ponant with the educational expertise and illuminating perspectives of Smithsonian Journeys' experts. Among this series is a nine-day circumnavigation of Sicily on Le Champlain, a ship that accommodates up to 184 guests and 118 crew members, with two restaurants and a spa (April 14-22). Departing from Valletta, the capital of Malta, the itinerary includes visits to Greek ruins, Norman cathedrals, active volca-

noes, and a handful of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Includes one shore excursion in each port, and transfer to and from the airport in Valletta. Rates start at \$6,500 per person. 844-747-2873, [us.ponant.com/the-mediterranean-a-circumnavigation-of-sicily-with-smithsonian-journeys-ec140424-12](http://us.ponant.com/the-mediterranean-a-circumnavigation-of-sicily-with-smithsonian-journeys-ec140424-12)

## EVERYWHERE

### LET'S GO CRAZY!

Crazy, an Italian clothing brand with a heritage in competitive backcountry skiing and mountaineering, celebrates its second year in the US market with a new winter collection designed to be fast and lightweight. The performance-wear company aims to allow you to move effectively in the mountains by reducing weight and volume. Think an athletic fit and lightweight technical fabrics rather than the heavy fleece and wool found in traditional mountain clothing. Both men and women can check out the Levity Jacket, a super light, water-repellent down jacket that removes unnecessary seams and fabric while also providing freedom of movement. \$650. [www.crazy.it/us/en/](http://www.crazy.it/us/en/)

### ULTRA-LIGHT HIP PACK

Outdoor clothing and gear company Topo Designs offers a new, durable, lightweight recycled nylon ripstop fanny pack you can use on the trail or in the city. The TopoLite Hip Pack's features include an adjustable waist/shoulder strap, internal hanging pocket in main compartment, adjustable micro cord attachment points with carabiner, and YKK zippers with micro cord pulls. Ultra-packable and water resistant. Available in three colors. \$39. <https://topodesigns.com/products/topolite-hip-pack?variant=41210550288437>

NECEE REGIS

