

I was just trying to be funny after the flight attendant charged me five bucks for use of a pillow for a couple of hours. My joke was, "Next you'll install pay toilets up here." She wasn't joking when she replied, "They're discussing that right now at corporate headquarters."

Using the heavy increases in oil prices of 2007 and 2008 as reasons, almost all airlines have tried to offset them by nickel and diming passengers with extra costs. Some are so subtle, you'd hardly notice them, while others are in-your-face reality.

"Check your bags, folks? That'll be \$25 each."

"No, ma'am, we don't serve free meals anymore. But if you want a sandwich and soda, it'll cost you \$10"

"You want an aisle seat, sir? That'll cost be another \$25."

"You want to switch to an earlier flight? It'll cost you an extra \$50."



Taking their cues from auto dealers who load up new cars with all kinds of extras at extra costs, airlines are sneaking in fees for services that had been free for generations. Even though oil

prices have come down from their outlandish robbery to just merely overpriced, airlines are still raking in money for their sneaky fees.

How can you avoid the extra costs when you fly? There are ways of saving. First, leave the big suitcases at home, travel with carry-on bags and don't check anything. Don't buy food in the air. Get a sandwich or salad in an airport shop, or better still, make your own before you leave home. If you'll be on a long flight, instead of paying for a blanket and pillow, carry a little inflatable pillow and lightweight blanket that can fit into your carry-on.