



Experiencing 5 difference-makers at 40,000 feet

I started to notice huge differences in the aviation industry's latest-generation aircraft, the Airbus A350, the minute we started cruising down the runway. My five senses were strangely calm, which is not a statement I can often make at takeoff.

At the halfway mark aboard my flight from Vancouver to [Hong Kong](#), I was smitten with how my skin, eyes, and lungs responded to the new jetliner and its 40,000-foot cruising altitude. As someone who has logged thousands of miles on almost every type of commercial jet, [Cathay Pacific's specially designed A350](#) is a big departure from the ordinary.

The Airbus A350 is known for its inflight difference-makers—billions of dollars of research went into its materials, sky-high handling, and fuel-efficiency—so geeking out to its inflight innovations was a breath of fresh air (especially up there).

Here are 5 major reasons I prefer this state-of-the-art jetliner by an air-mile.



More moisture

Let's start with the body's biggest organ: skin. Even though I'm fanatical about hydrating in the sky, my skin still crinkles like a piece of tissue paper. Not so on Cathay's newest fleet member. More air humidification and greater oxygenation means my skin wasn't sapped of moisture and stayed plump throughout my 13-hour journey.



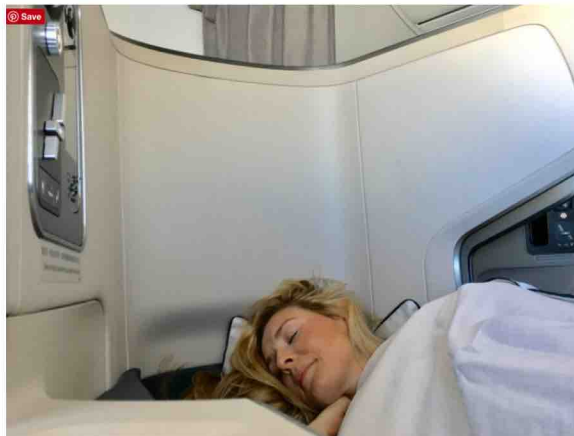
Less inflammation

On 99 percent of my past flights, my wedding ring was difficult to remove given the swelling that occurs at cruising altitude. Thanks to smarter cabin pressurization that reduces inflammation (and fatigue), my ring slid off with ease on the ultramodern airliner.



Light bright

My typical “pre-landing” routine is to apply eye-brightening make-up (for fear that my red-rimmed eyes might scare my fellow passengers during deplaning). On my A350 journey, I opened up my make-up bag out of habit, looked in the mirror, and did a double-take: My eyes weren’t red or dry. Curious about my baby blues’ bright-factor, I learned that aircraft’s lighting system is capable of emitting more than 17 million hues to pamper my peepers and reduce jet lag, in addition to being equipped with panoramic windows to let in the highest quotient of daylight.



Soothing sound

The cabin on [Cathay Pacific's](#) A350 was so quiet I could have slept for the entire flight—if it wasn’t for the movies I wanted to binge-watch on my seat-back’s screen. Even at takeoff I thought “this can’t be right, are we even moving?” the sound was so hush-hush ([evidenced in this video I shot](#)). If you’re used to the “industrial dishwasher” decibel of most airplanes, the barely-there *shhhhh* of the A350 is incredible (read: 20 percent quieter than comparable aircrafts). A number of factors such as advanced aerodynamics and composite materials play into the jet’s ace acoustics, including its ultra-quiet, rattle-reducing set of Rolls Royce Trent XWB engines.



Eco-innovation

Along with wing-flaps capable of morphing their shape midair, the jetliner's posh engines also contribute to its fuel-efficiency, which is 25 percent better than its contemporaries. Up-ping the airline's focus on greener and cleaner flights, biofuel is being incorporated into every A350 delivery from Airbus' headquarters in France to Cathay's Hong Kong hub. With plans to roll out more eco-innovations, the carrier is currently investing in jet fuel made from garbage to one day assist in powering their planes.

And on the topic of garbage, or trash that can be reused: All of Cathay's A350 cabin carpets, blankets, and toiletries cases are made from recycled plastics and nylon (including salvaged fishing nets that are otherwise a hazard for marine life), which along with the innovations, brings all the feels back to flying.