

My trip from Nanaimo (YCD) to Edmonton (YEG) to see the family.  
October 19, 2022.

By Terry Baker

Although the flights had quite a few open seats, I decided to use some of my aeroplane points to secure positive travel.

For 42,120 points, I got YCD-YVR-YEG-YVR-YCD. I ignored the seat selection as preferred seat was \$17.25 and every other seat was \$12.25.

I took my chances on the seat assigned which was acceptable. Seat 30F - YVR-YEG-YVR, 17F YCD-YVR and 15A on YVR-YCD. The meal on board the YVR-YEG-YVR portion was a packet of pretzels.

I was unable to secure the free chauffeured car from Berwick Retirement Community, where I reside, and selected the Nanaimo Airport Shuttle at \$42.00 each way. Pick up was with a smart SUV at 13:00 and got to YCD at 13.30 in nice time for the flight.

Changes to the boarding arrangement since I was last through YCD in 2019 is that there are two lanes, one for checked luggage and the other for carry-on luggage; I had only a carry-on. I had forgotten my cell phone in my top pocket, and had to go through the arch several times, before a pat down located it. I then proceeded to the waiting room as there was no queue.

I felt quite strange sitting in a large area without being surrounded by people with wheelchairs or walkers - I must get out of my Berwick Seniors Community more often!

Flight AC8034 was a Dash-8-400. The flight departed 20 minutes late due to an ATC request. I have yet to fly on a noisier aircraft. I have had many flights on a DASH -8-400, but never one this noisy. My head was ringing by the time I got to YVR. I had to locate the next gate, C44, in another wing of the terminal, but with plenty of time.

The next aircraft was a Boeing 737 MAX-8. In the 3 seats, the 30-row centre one remained unoccupied, so I had room to put my jacket. The overhead bins are quite large and deep.

Passengers with the traditional carry-on luggage were encouraged to place their luggage on its side, stacking them like library books, which makes for more room.

My seat was aft of the wing, I had a view of the flaps. It was strange not to see half the wing drop down on take-off and landing, similar to those on the DC-8.

Instead, control was just a peek of a flap, the rest was the row of five large flaps (spoilers) on the wing which just about moved slightly until the wheels hit the runway when they shot near vertical similar to those on the DC-8, to assist in braking the aircraft.

After a very long trudge down the corridor in Edmonton (YEG) to the exit, I ended up standing outside arrivals, next to post 8, which is the taxi lane, so I realized I needed to cross to the next lane and, using my cell phone, let my family know where I was.

My family spotted me and drove over to pick me up, a friendly airport worker pointed out the vehicle to me.

We stopped off at the Subway at the airport for a bite to eat and fill the gas tank before a long 3.35-hour drive to Cold Lake where they live.

By this time, it was dark, and the road lanes could have used a fresh coat of white paint as the lane separators were quite dim. Oncoming headlights did not help matters, and I would hate to have had to travel along that route in wet weather. However, we arrived safely at their home in Cold Lake.

On Thursday I was woken up with two squirreling youngsters (6 & 3 years old) crawling all over me, what a grand awakening. Friday arrived all too quickly, with the two girls crawling all over me again first thing - such a treat.

Brunch was the left-over goulash supplemented with an egg, and a fried one on top - lovely, my first fried egg for many a year, usually my eggs are poached.

After packing we were ready for the long drive back to Edmonton, but in better weather - at least we could see where we were going.

We arrived at the airport in fine style, having taken the incorrect entrance, due to poor signage, and we had to back up and get into the correct lane for departures.

After our goodbyes there was a long walk to check in and into security with no problem this time.

At gate 66, there was the usual crowd congregating around the check-in positions which were labelled Zone 1 and 2 and 3-6.

Next at gate 64 was WestJet, also for Vancouver with their sign of Zone 1, 2, 3, 4 – Boeing 737-800. There was no real semblance of order in the crowd waiting for Zone 3-6, and when the check-in started it was like a "flying wedge". People have no idea on how to queue.

I presented my Air Canada ID card (1984 version). And, after checking it, she said, "Wow this is an old one" and I said, "I'm old as well" to which she looked at me and responded "No way". - made my day!

The flight was mostly full, and, with so much carry-on luggage, an announcement was made to encourage passengers with carry-on to check them in at no charge.

Same seat, 30F, same empty centre seat, lots of space. After take-off, I fooled around with the entertainment buttons, confusing array of options but no instructions, but nothing of interest to me.

Dinner was the usual pretzels. Flight was smooth and comfortable and on time.

On arrival, switched channels to gate C38 for the YCD flight. Another DASH-8-400, but, in seat 15A, the flight was relatively quiet and smooth.

Arrived on time after a rainfall, the first in many weeks. My Nanaimo Airport Shuttle was waiting for me and after arriving at Berwick and coughing up another \$42.00, I was home.

A quick unpacking, shower and into the sack, totally exhausted, but happy that I had made the effort to see my great granddaughters for the very first time.