

Flight Review – AirAsia Gold Coast to India | Skyscanner Australia

Low Cost Airline AirAsia is blitzing the discounted airfare market, offering ridiculously cheap airfares to India. Actually, AirAsia loves a travel bargain and offers incredible bargain airfares to 130 destinations. [Skyscanner Australia](#) boarded AirAsia's inaugural flight to Amritsar, India's holiest city, to find out why the airline has won Skytrax' World's Best Low Cost Airline for ten years straight.



Onboard AirAsia from Australia to Amritsar, via Kuala Lumpur

The Aircraft: [AirAsia](#) Airbus A330 Gold Coast to Amritsar, via Kuala Lumpur (and return)

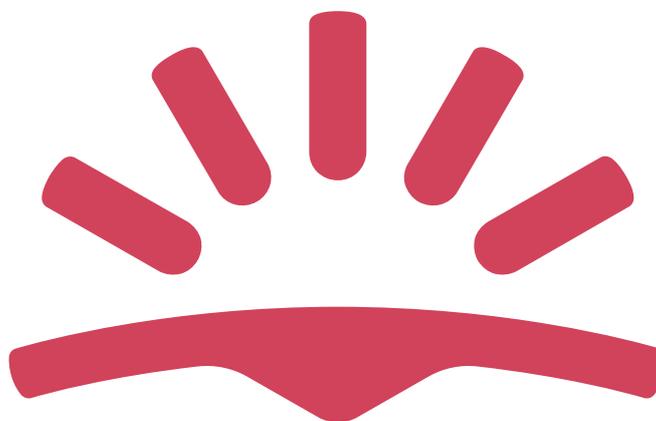
Bound for Amritsar, home to India's famed Golden Temple, onboard [AirAsia's](#) inaugural flight Indian city, I sample AirAsia's Economy and Premium cabins. We get off to a shaky start when our 8.25 pm [Gold Coast to Kuala Lumpur](#) flight eventually departs from Brisbane in the early hours of the morning. With [Coolangatta Airport](#) bound by curfew restrictions, it's the first time a reroute to Brisbane has occurred since AirAsia started flying from the Gold Coast.

It's a minor inconvenience as we board a bus to Brisbane Airport and depart for KL a few hours late, but the AirAsia crew handle the situation with professional efficiency. I'm seated in the Quiet Zone which lives up to its name (apart from

the world champion snorer seated in 12C). With mood lighting, an absence of crying babies crying and few passengers wandering the aisles, I log some solid sleeping hours.

On the return flights from Amritsar to KL to Coolangatta I travel in Premium, enjoying the spacious luxury of a flatbed snuggled beneath a fluffy duvet in AirAsia's signature red. The Premium Cabin is subdued and quiet with just 12 passengers. Despite multiple configurations via an electronic key pad, the bed is not quite flat. However it's near-horizontal space offers an immensely pleasurable sleeping position, crew are considerate and helpful and Malaysian style meals are surprisingly good. Considering the low cost for Premium Flatbed, it's a screaming bargain.

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What makes AirAsia different from other airlines?

Low airfares are the obvious difference between AirAsia and full service international airlines. Named World's Best Low Cost Airline for ten consecutive years, the annual Skytrax Awards are the Oscars of the aviation industry. Over 20 million customers from 100 countries voted for 335 airlines who were nominated for the awards with AirAsia dominating their category with Norwegian Air and Easy Jet rounding out the podium.

Transiting at Kuala Airport Airport

AirAsia offers a Fly-Thru option for travellers transiting in KL and Bangkok. Luggage is checked through to your final destination, enabling quick airport transit if connections are short. If on the other hand you have a long layover, Fly-Thru avoids the hassle of managing bulky luggage while in transit.

As I'm travelling light with no checked in bags, I breeze through KLIA2 Terminal

on arrival and check into [Tune Hotel KLIA](#), a five minute walk after clearing immigration. The AirAsia-owned hotel provides a convenient layover option with compact, clean rooms with comfortable beds, block-out curtains, double-glazed windows and showers with plenty of hot water – all a traveller really needs!

Tips for flying with a Low Cost Carrier

Travelling with a Low Cost Carrier can be confusing. With budget airlines adding on fees and charges it can be difficult to work out how to get the cheapest airfare and the best deal.

Follow Skyscanner's Tips below to secure bargain airfares and a comfortable flight when flying with a Low Cost Airline.

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Choose your AirAsia seat in advance

The Airbus A330 has seat configuration of 3 x 3 x 3 in the Main cabin and 2 x 2 x 2 in Premium Cabin.

When booking online you'll be given the option to choose your seat. Listen up as this part gets confusing and costs vary depending on where you choose to sit. Hot Seats (bulkhead) have more leg room than Standard Seats. Quiet Zone seats (rows 7 to 14) are located in a child-free cabin (10yrs and under not permitted) between the Premium and Main Cabin. Different seating fee levels apply during initial booking, after initial booking or at the airport, getting more expensive with each option. In economy the options are a Hot Seat, Standard Seat, or Twin Seats (towards the rear).

Premium Flatbeds (rows 1 to 2) can be booked at the time of booking or by upgrading at the airport if available.

If you don't choose a seat in advance (and pay the relevant fee) the airline will automatically allocate seating. If you're a solo traveller, you'll probably get lumped with the dreaded middle seat.

Our tip: Quiet Zone cabin doesn't tend to be as crowded as the Main Cabin – you might just be lucky enough to score an empty seat adjacent, or the holy grail of economy class – a whole row to yourself!

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Define your comfort level and pay accordingly

Being a low cost airline, AirAsia is, naturally, all about cheap airfares. But low cost doesn't always mean low comfort. Upgrade options are available at the time of booking and are cheaper when made in advance. There are two airfare levels: Premium Flatbed or Economy with a couple of seating options within Economy in the Main or Quiet Zone Cabins.

Premium Flatbed's main attraction is a 19" wide seat that flattens out into a near-horizontal position – perfect for sleeping on an overnight flight. Pre-flight extras include generous 40kg baggage allowance, access to AirAsia Premium Red Lounge at KLIA2, unlimited flight changes and priority boarding and baggage. Onboard, complimentary duvet, pillow, meals, water and a tablet with inflight entertainment ramp up the comfort level. There's also a universal power point, privacy screen and adjustable reading light.

In the **Economy Cabin** (for a fee) you get to choose your seat allocation, baggage allowance and a meal. Seats are surprisingly roomy for a budget airline (17" width and 31" pitch – equivalent to Qantas A330), recline slightly and are upholstered in leather.

The **Quiet Zone** is an exclusive cabin behind the Premium Cabin (no children under 10yrs permitted) where peace and quiet is encouraged and soft ambient light helps passengers sleep. Quiet Zone travellers have the advantage of being served meals before the main economy cabin and also get to disembark at the

destination first (along with Premium passengers).

Our Tip: If your flight is overnight and more than 8 hours, splurge on the (relatively cheap) flatbed option – your rested body will thank you for it!

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Order AirAsia meals in advance

First up, let's be honest – inflight dining is rarely a highlight in the sky beyond being a welcome distraction to break up the monotony of a long haul flight. But, having travelled on four AirAsia flights for this review I can honestly say I looked forward to each meal. Perhaps it's because meals are Asian style (it's hard to mess up curry and rice!) but each was surprisingly good quality. Meals are served with a bottle of water and alcoholic drinks are available for purchase.

Ordering your meal in advance means you'll be served first, meals are cheaper than if purchased onboard and you'll receive your first choice. If you're the kind of person who likes to snack regularly, take your own snacks as there are very limited options once the initial meal service is completed.

Our tip: Order your meal at the time of booking your flight to save a few dollars, plus your meal will be served first – important if you plan on sleeping much of the flight.

BYO comforts in AirAsia economy class

For long haul AirAsia flights I recommend taking your own tablet/mobile device, ear buds and plugs, eye mask, inflatable pillow and large scarf or jacket to double as a blanket. But don't stress if you forget these essential comfort items – you can purchase personal items and rent a duvet and pillow!

Our tip: Load up your device with movies, podcasts or audible books before flying and don't forget to pack your own earbuds or noise cancelling headphones.

The Verdict: AirAsia is highly recommended for its good value airfares, staff that make a real effort to ensure passenger's comfort along with modern, clean aircraft.

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