

Why do we get emotional on flights? | Skyscanner Australia

You're confined to a metal tube hurtling through the stratosphere. Sharing your fate with a few hundred strangers you've a tiny allocation of personal space for the next however many hours. How to spend it? If you're like many travellers you'll shed a tear or ten. [Skyscanner Australia](#) looks at why we get emotional when flying.

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As a card-carrying member of embarrassing rom/com movie marathons I've shed my share of sappy tears at 30,000 feet. But I'm not alone. It's actually quite common for travellers to be more emotional in flight than they are on the ground. Emotions run rampant at altitude creating a sort of mile high blub club.

There is a plane-load of anecdotal evidence but there's not a lot of science to figure out why. Virgin Atlantic Airlines polled their Facebook fans a while back to find out if passengers had succumbed to high emotion at altitude.

Movies were the catalyst for many to well up. With many hours to kill, movies are invariably responsible for opening tear duct floodgates. According to The Guardian, the top three in-flight tearjerker movies are: *Toy Story 3* (again!), *The Blind Side* and *Eat Pray Love*. Though alcohol should take some responsibility too with an Upper Class traveller boasting that Virgin's "Peach Bellinis get me emotional every time."



I did my own poll amongst friends and colleagues and their responses were staggering. Not so much in that they admitted to crying on planes. Everyone does that, right? What really surprised me was how emotionally vulnerable we become mid-flight. Crying through movies (even the worst ones!), reflecting on memories of loved ones and longing for places that held an emotional connection were common.

One traveller said that when flying on an older aircraft with old-fashioned drop down screens, *Marely and Me* (yes, Marley is a serial offender!) had the whole plane crying. She said, "it ended up being hilarious with much nose blowing and

sniffing as the credits rolled.” Indeed, a stash of tissues are essential with another traveller confessing to using her scarf in lieu of tissues.

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Others attributed their high emotions to air pressurisation and oxygen levels within the confined space of an aircraft at altitude. Then there’s the travellers curse, [jet lag](#) to contend with too.

Some thought that high emotions were inevitable due to pre-departure stress. There’s often a rush to get everything done before departure, whether it’s work, family, home or pets to be sorted. Toss in an emotional farewell to loved ones in the unforgiving lighting of an airport terminal and there’s nowhere to hide.

Supporting this theory, one frequent flyer said she “cries so much!” and actually looks forward to crying on planes. She speculated that it’s a scheduled time for emotional release and that because we’re so busy in our daily lives we don’t allow space to process thoughts and feelings. “Stick yourself in a small space for several hours, add wine and distance from family and you’ve got a recipe for tears,” she said.

Now that we’ve got the emotional part of travel sorted, let’s get those [flights](#), [hotels](#) and [car hire](#) booked with Skyscanner Australia. Don’t forget to stash a pack of tissues in your carryon bag!

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About the author

Fiona Harper is one of Australia’s most respected travel writers. Follow her at [Travel Boating Lifestyle](#)