

Aviation: Has AirAsia-X perfected teleportation?

AirAsia-X has announced the world's first mass-market "superhop" long haul flights. How do they do it?

The AirAsia website explains: "A key principle of the AirAsia X business model is high frequency, point-to-point medium to long-haul services. Covering destinations between four and eight hours in flight duration from Kuala Lumpur, AirAsia X complements AirAsia's current extensive route network."

So, lots of flight, out of Kuala Lumpur (KL) direct to your destination.

Well, not quite, in some cases: "Our cost savings that we pass on to passengers through low fares, are derived from maintaining a simple aircraft fleet and a route network based on low-cost airports, without complex code-sharing and other legacy overheads that weigh down traditional airlines."

So you can't change airlines if the AirAsia-X plane doesn't go. And you won't necessarily end up at the airport nearest the city you choose to go to. And often the airport you do end up at won't have rapid transit systems to the city or even a full-service terminal.

But for business travellers, who are being offered the chance to purchase "premium seats" and the world-shattering ability to reserve a seat (instead of the famous "AirAsia scrum" in which the world, his wife and granny fight over overhead baggage space and seats, a system so dismal that AirAsia even offers an upgrade option - pay more money and get on earlier so you have less people to fight with) the really, really good news is the amazing time saving that AirAsia-X will offer.

Note the "point to point" - i.e. KL to where you are going - for destinations between four and eight hours from KL.

Destinations include London and Manchester. KL - London with Malaysia Airlines (MAS) requires an in-the-air time of around 12 hours. AirAsia-X plans to make the same journey with a one-third journey time saving. That's not good, it's incredible.

In fact, it seems too good to be true. Can we try, please? Oh, but only if we can have a confirmed seat reservation and someone to turf squatters out of our seats?