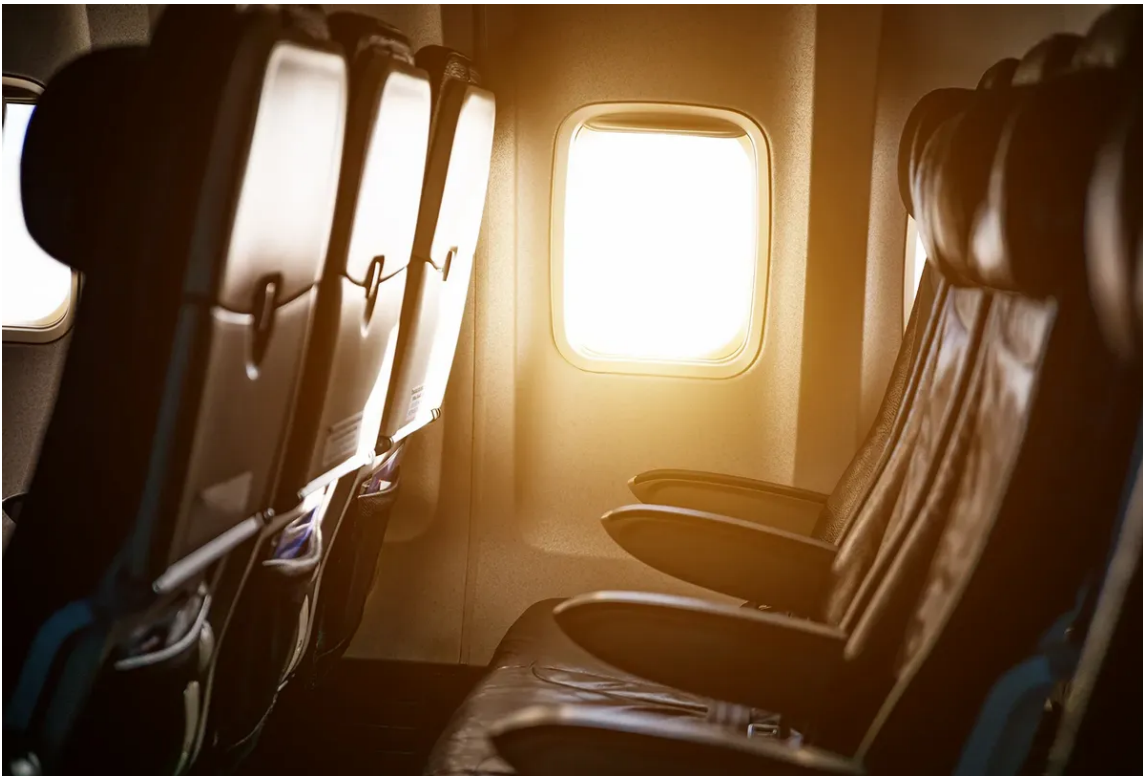


A new guide to traveling — and traveling to eat — while fat

Travelers of all sizes deserve adventure and comfort. Here are some of my favorite places to find both

By **CHAYA MILCHTEIN** PUBLISHED APRIL 22, 2022 5:00PM (EDT)



Empty airplane seats in the cabin in sunset light (Getty Images / Anton Petrus)

"A Fatty's Guide to Traveling and Eating the World" is a monthly travel and food column here at Salon that's dedicated to helping travelers of all sizes find adventure

Have you ever walked into a restaurant and realized that the chairs were just too small for you? Ever asked for a seat belt extender the moment you walked onto an airplane, because you just knew that the seat belt wouldn't fit?

Me too.

I'm Chaya Milchtein. I am a fat, queer woman, **an automotive educator**, a journalist covering cars and travel, and **an influencer** who takes up space.

Like most fat people, traveling and adventuring comes with its own **unique challenges** and considerations (and a whole heck of a lot of planning), like digging for weight limits and having to call when aren't listed on typical and nontraditional vacation activities, like helicopter rides, scuba diving, Segways tours and even ATV rentals.

As an aside, I find it interesting that helicopters are used in emergency situations to carry tons of equipment, medical staff and numerous patients — but somehow can't be used to carry my wife and I. Also, why can't hotels have large plush towels, instead of the tiniest little pieces of fabric I've ever seen?

I'm not alone.

Approximately, **67% of women in the United States are above a size 14** — though, it should be noted that statistic comes from an over ten-year-old study, so that number is likely higher and larger.

Nobody said that traveling while fat is easy, but goddamn, I'm making it happen, and I want to help you do it too. That's why I'm compiling "A Fatty's Guide to Traveling and Eating the World," a travel and food column here at Salon that's dedicated to helping travelers of all sizes find adventure

After all, the market is there. **Plus size women's apparel is a \$24 billion enterprise** in the United States alone. However, just as we remain an underserved market in fashion, we certainly are nearly invisible in the realm of mainstream travel media — something I'm looking to change.

While there is much travel ahead, for a moment, let's look back at some of my very best hotels, restaurants, and experiences around the world to add to your bucket list.

Food

The Super Expensive Food Tour - Paris, France

The Super Expensive Food Tour (for what it's worth, it comes in at a little over \$325) was the very first traditional food tour my wife and I took, and it transformed the way we travel. I was worried that the walking might be too much, but the stops at a variety of local restaurants were well-timed. We had a blind caviar tasting — complete with a thorough education on all the varieties and intricacies — drank delicious cocktails and champagne, and ended an impeccable evening with a delicately fluffy soufflé.

Bruna - Guadalajara, México

First of all, make sure to order a cocktail if you drink. It's a spectacular tableside experience, complete with spun sugar, smoke and other intricate details that leave you mesmerized. The food certainly doesn't play second fiddle. The mole sampler is incredible, but there wasn't a single bite of the entire meal that didn't delight the senses. The chairs *were* too small, but I grabbed a different one that worked perfectly without issue.



Mezzanotte - Seattle, Washington

I have to admit, I'm picky. Especially when it comes to pasta. The texture has to be right, the sauce just right, and the balance of flavors should be sinfully good. Mezzanotte nails every single kind of pasta I had the pleasure of trying there. Add in the chewy focaccia, rich burrata, and dessert and you'll leave after a meal that you'll be talking about for a long time.

Weinkeller - Niagara Falls, Canada

Five years ago, on a visit to Niagara Falls, my wife and I stumbled onto a restaurant that I can still remember like yesterday.

We were inexperienced travelers, and this was our first big trip. Our entire trip was a bust as far as food was concerned. Every meal fell short until we stumbled across Weinkeller. Not only is the food locally-sourced, Weinkeller makes their own wine and it's available on tap. The menu is available in a three- or five-course format, and each dish is scratch-made daily. Pure heaven!

Ardent - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

I love food in all kinds of different presentations, but there's just something really special about chef's choice tasting menus. There's no stress about picking the perfect dishes, and the multitude of small-format courses mean that even if something isn't quite up to your taste, there's more coming. And Ardent, in my hometown, truly nails the tasting menu, with finesse and next-level skill going into every bite.