

Why travelers are leaving their luggage behind

By Christopher Elliott

If you want to understand why luggage is being abandoned at the airport, then join me on a recent flight from Kuala Lumpur to Johor Bahru.

Just before I boarded the short domestic flight in Malaysia, a gate agent with a broad smile pulled me aside. My carry-on bag was too big, he cheerfully announced.

The penalty? A \$35 “extra baggage” fee.

As I reluctantly forked over my credit card, I glanced at my 24-year-old son, who was traveling with me.

He’d already unzipped his slightly overpacked carry-on and was dumping items into a nearby garbage can to reduce the weight and size. Granola bars, apples, a half-eaten bag of cereal — gone before the agent could say a word.

The math was easy: pay \$35 or trash \$10 worth of food.

He chose the trash can.

How many other travelers make this same calculation every day? In the United States, where the cost of flying a bag now can exceed the price of a ticket, it’s becoming more of an option. In Japan, they’re not simply lightening their load. They’re leaving the entire bag.

Why are people abandoning luggage in Japan?

Walk into a hotel in Osaka or Tokyo and you’ll see warning signs that would’ve seemed absurd five years ago: “Abandon your luggage and you will be charged.” Luggage dumping has become so routine that hotels post warnings like “no smoking” signs.

“Travelers are treating luggage as disposable,” says Georgia Fowkes, a travel advisor for Altezza Travel who saw the problem firsthand on a recent visit to Japan. “And hotels are inheriting the

mess.”

Narita Airport in Tokyo reportedly stores dozens of unclaimed bags daily. Kansai Airport in Osaka and Chubu Airport in Nagoya report similar pile-ups. Some hotels have started giving bags away or repurposing them as planters just to cope with the deluge of luggage.

The situation in Japan may be unique. Many people visit Japan to go shopping.

They buy cheap rolling luggage to roll around the mall and then leave it at the hotel or train station before they fly home.

But that’s not the only reason luggage is being left behind. Asian air carriers are notorious for charging extra fees for luggage, so part of the reason may also be that passengers are trying to avoid an additional charge.

There are fears that this luggage abandonment could

spread.

The math

Airlines have turned baggage into a profit center. Checked bag fees, carry-on charges, and overweight penalties all add up. When your beaten-up roller bag costs more to check than it’s worth, walking away becomes logical.

“The abandoned luggage issue isn’t just about saving a few bucks on a checked bag,” says Zackaria Saadioui, founder of Pkred, a peer-to-peer airport parking marketplace.

“It’s a sign of fee fatigue. Travelers are being nickel-and-dimed at every turn.”

Ernie Garcia, a frequent traveler who works for a marketing agency in New York, routinely abandons his belongings at the airport.

“Sometimes, I’ve abandoned so many clothes that

I no longer need a checked bag,” he says.

If a bag starts to get worn out, it also gets left behind.

“The last roller suitcase I abandoned had a wonky handle that was difficult to extend and retract,” he recalls. “I left it in the hotel in Croatia.”

So far, the evidence of the abandoned luggage trend is mostly anecdotal. It’s an airport here, a hotel there — and plenty of travelers like Garcia or my son who are filling the garbage cans at the airport.

There are no comprehensive surveys that show travelers are dropping their luggage en masse before departure. But experts say it could happen soon. Increasingly strict airline policies are pressuring passengers to make a difficult decision.

“Airlines have steadily pushed up checked and even carry-on fees,” says Lucinda Fauchaux, co-founder of Travel Support Circle, a travel agency. “So you can imagine a traveler weighing up the cost of paying another fee versus just walking away from an old case.”

Some airports now warn travelers about disposal timelines for unclaimed items. They typically hold bags for 30 to 90 days before auctioning, donating, or destroying them. Hotels store items for a few weeks, but dispose of the items promptly if they can’t find the owner. All of this because the airlines want to make more money.

Christopher Elliott founded Elliott Advocacy, a nonprofit organization that helps solve consumer problems.

Hunt

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ages housing properties in Lawrence, Parsons, Fort Scott and Kansas City, Mo. Muruato said the developer is planning on investing \$12 million in upgrades into the hotel. Some of the upgrades Muruato shared are refurbishing the main lobby for a look more historically accurate to when former president Dwight Eisenhower was in office and adding a laundry room on the seventh floor. After the upgrades, Flint Hills Holdings plan is to have a total of 42 units in the hotel with a mix of market-rate and income-based rent.

Sister City activity

Jennie Hiatt, member of the Sister City Advisory Committee, presented the commission with a clock gifted from the people of Omitama, Japan. Members of the committee and community members visited Omitama to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Omitama. According to the Sister’s City’s webpage on the city’s website, Omitama was created in 2006 after the merging of three small villages, Ogawa, Minori and Tamari. The committee gifted Omitama an original painting painted by Abilene native Heather Katrina Barclay. In return, Omitama gifted Abilene a clock with cherry-blossom tree designs.

Harmon Geissinger, 10th grader at Abilene High School, shared that he was selected to be the Kansas representative at the Sister City International Youth Leadership Summit at Washington D.C. He is one of 50 students globally to be chosen. His trip expenses are sponsored

by the Sister City Advisory Committee, Hiatt said.

“Some of the things it entails are cultural events – like discussing those – diplomacy simulations, training seminars – that’s training how to be a leader and all that – and then experience university life at a university, which is also in Washington D.C.,” Geissinger said.

Executive session

The commission entered into executive session for 15 minutes. The reason was to discuss the lawsuit John Kollhoff, commissioner, filed against the city with legal counsel. Kollhoff recused himself from the executive session. The commission took no action.

Other items

The commission approved a bid for maintenance of several streets. This maintenance is all of the micro-surfacing Brad Anderson, Public Works director, has planned for 2026. The bid is from Vance Brothers for \$213,550.90. The project is paid for by the streets maintenance sales tax.

Micro-surfacing is planned for these streets:

- SW Sixth Street from Buckeye Avenue to Cedar Street
- SE Fifth Street from Buckeye to Campbell
- SW Third Street from Buckeye to Cedar Street
- SW Fourth Street from Buckeye to Cedar Street
- NW Third Street from Buckeye to Mulberry
- NW Third Street from Mulberry to Mud Creek
- Rogers Street from Third Street to First Street
- St. Michaels Drive from Vine Street to the dike
- Poplar Street from Third

Street to the front of the swimming pool

- Poplar Street around the swimming pool
- Poplar Street from north of the swimming pool to Eighth Street
- NW 15th Street from Buckeye to Cedar Street
- NW 17th Street from Mulberry to Cedar Street
- Cedar Street from NW 14th to NW 17th
- N Kuney Street from NW 14th to Charles Road
- Park Avenue to Charles Road
- N Olive Street from NW 14th to Charles Road

Anderson then updated the commission on the 2025/2026 Buckeye Avenue City Connecting Link Improvement Program project. The city only received one bid from APAC-KS, Inc.

Olsson Engineering recommends the city approve the bid, and the Kansas Department of Transportation has given the city their approval to award the project to APAC-KS. Construction is estimated to begin in the summer and finish before the end of 2026.

Jon Quinday, interim city manager, said city staff plans on meeting with business owners who will be affected by the project to discuss how the sidewalks will be managed during construction. The commission will probably consider to approve the bid from APAC-KS in their next regular meeting.

The commission then approved an update to the city’s fee schedule. The only change is an increase to the t-hanger monthly rental fee from \$90 to \$173.

The commission approved an update to a memorandum of understanding with Dickinson County. The memo-

randum lists an agreement between the county and city, where the county allows the city to fuel their vehicles at county fill-stations and the city in turn pays for the fuel and an administration fee. The county purchases fuel by bulk, which yields some savings compared to fueling at commercial gas stations.

This update allows the city to fuel all of their vehicles at the station. Abilene Fire Chief Kale Strunk estimated the city will save roughly between 10 to 20 cents per gallon.

Proclamations

Rein presented two proclamations. The first was for National Treatment Court Month.

“Whereas, treatment courts provide a range of economic benefits to a community, such as reduced costs in court and prison expenditures, increased tax revenues, lowered foster care expenses, and decreased costs related to victimization,” Rein read.

The second proclamation was for Poppy Day. The poppy flower is the memorial flower of the American Legion for living and dead veterans.

“Further, I urge all citizens to wear a Poppy on Memorial Day, May 25th, as mute evidence of your gratitude for the women and men of this country who risk life and limb in defense of the freedoms which all of us as American citizens are able to enjoy each and every day,” Rein read.

The Abilene City Commission will meet for the next regular meeting at 4 p.m. Tuesday, May 26 in the Abilene Public Library.



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ADM	Friday	Change
Apple	80.40	-1.01
AT&T	300.23	+2.02
Bank of Am.	24.03	-0.62
Bayer	49.77	-0.08
Boeing	10.90	-0.13
BP	220.49	-8.72
Caterpillar	44.35	+0.23
Coca-Cola	888.31	-31.91
ConocoPhillips	80.82	+0.37
Deere	122.41	+3.44
Deere	561.83	-12.81
Every	80.50	-2.23
Exxon Mobil	157.92	+5.14
Ford Motor	13.40	-1.08
Harley-David	25.19	-0.46
Home Depot	297.51	-6.84
IBM	219.30	+0.93
Johnson & Jo.	226.71	-4.09
McDonald's	276.39	+1.42

Microsoft	421.92	+12.49
Pepsico	149.12	+0.45
Pfizer	25.33	-0.42
Union Pacific	270.56	+1.22
UPS	98.93	+0.5
Wal-Mart	131.45	-1.01

Grains

Grain prices for 4 pm May 17

Wheat	\$6.53
Change	-0.12
Corn	\$4.01
Change	-0.12
Soybeans	\$10.91
Change	-0.13
Milo	3.66
Change	-0.12



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Rein

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families. This campaign will focus on bringing people together to protect our conservative values, strengthen our local communities, and create opportunities so the next generation can continue building their future right here at home.

“I am also proud to be a battle-tested conservative who has already earned the trust of voters locally through two successful elections. I understand our communi-

ties, our challenges, and the importance of showing up, listening, and working hard to deliver results.

“Over the coming months, I look forward to continuing to meet with voters across the district to hear your concerns and earn your support. I would be honored to have you join this campaign.

“Running a grassroots campaign takes all of us. If you feel led to support our efforts financially, please consider contributing through the methods below. Every contribution, no matter the amount, helps fund yard

signs, mailers, digital outreach, and voter engagement efforts across the district.”



785-200-8098

1305 NW 3rd St. • Abilene, KS 67410

Financing Available!

The Jeffcoat Studio Museum is trying to identify all of our photographs. If you can identify this photograph please contact us.



#273

Jeffcoat Studio Museum 321 N. Broadway, Abilene, KS

785-263-9882 | jeffcoatstudio@att.net

We are open
Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, 8:30 to 4:30 and
Thursday, 9:30 to 5:30.
Admission is free

Last week's image was not identified

Lottery

Powerball Drawing May 16 8, 37, 40, 44, 65, 18 Power Play = 3	Super Kansas Cash Drawing May 16 6, 15, 16, 23, 27, 10
Mega Millions Drawing May 15 17, 23, 25, 52, 61, 3	2by2 Kansas Drawing May 16 Red — 19 22 White — 5 25
Millionaire for Life Drawing May 16 7, 17, 24, 38, 45, 4	Pick 3 Drawing May 17 Midday — 7 0 5 Drawing May 16 Evening — 1 6 7

SUDOKU SOLUTION

9	7	4	1	3	8	5	6	2
8	1	3	6	5	2	4	7	9
2	5	6	4	9	7	1	8	3
6	8	2	9	7	5	3	4	1
5	9	1	3	6	4	7	2	8
3	4	7	8	2	1	9	5	6
1	2	8	5	4	3	6	9	7
7	6	5	2	1	9	8	3	4
4	3	9	7	8	6	2	1	5

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Community Calendar Sponsored by Black and Company Realtors



End of the Trail Quilters Guild, 2026 Meeting Schedule
Location: First United Methodist Church in Abilene, Fourth Tuesday of the Month at 7pm
No meeting in November, December TBD - either December 1 or December 8

Kids Bingo Night Saturdays 7:00 pm offered by Enterprise Rec Commission, Enterprise Community Building

7 PM every Monday, Boy Scout Troop 40 meets at VFW 3279 on Spruce

COMMUNITY MEALS will be served on the 2nd and 4th MONDAY of the Month at the Start Hall Fairgrounds 619 N. Rogers St.

Kiwanis Oub meetings the 4th Monday of each month: 6:30pm
@Watts Campground and Country Store, Exit 281/1-70 (Mink Rd) Kiwanis Board meetings the 3rd Monday of each month:NOON @ Pizza Hut

Sons American Revolution, every 4th Tuesday at 7pm, at VFW Bldg, 317 N Spruce St, Abilene, KS.

Every 2nd Tuesday at 2 PM. The American Legion Auxiliary-Unit 39 meets in the National Guard Armory-1009 NW 8th St.Abilene

3rd Tuesday of each month at 7 PM The American Legion Post #1969 meets at VFW Building - 317 N Spruce St

7 PM every Tuesday, Pack 240 in the Brethren in Christ Church 11th & Buckeye, Abilene, KS 67410

1st Tuesday at 7 PM VFW Post 3279 meets at 317 N Spruce St, Abilene, KS

3rd Wednesday of each month, 12:15pm, Herington Hilltop Community Center

Narcotics Anonymous Meeting 1005 N. Buckeye Ave, Abilene, Sun 7 PM Wed 7 PM Open meeting wheelchair accessed Eddie A 785-252-7074

7 PM every Tuesday, open AA Step meeting at St. John's Episcopal Church 6th & Buckeye, Abilene Ks 67410

1st Thursday at 8 PM The American Legion Son's, Squadron #39 meets at The National Guard Armory-1009 NW 8th St. Abilene, KS 67410

1st Thursday at 7 PM The American Legion Riders, Chapter #39, meets at The National Guard Armory-1009 NW 8th St. Abilene, KS 67410

3rd Thursday at 7 PM The American Legion Post #39 meets at The National Guard Armory-1009 NW 8th St. Abilene, KS 67410

7 PM every Thursday, open A.A. meets at St. John's Episcopal Church, 6th & Buckeye, Abilene, KS 67410

7 PM every Saturday, open A.A. meets at St. John's Episcopal Church, 6th & Buckeye, Abilene, KS 67410

8 PM every Sunday, open A.A. meets at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church Parish Hall, 3599 North Field, Solomon, KS 67480

Biblical Citizenship in Modern America Class Starts on Sunday, November 5, 2023, 5:00 p.m. Countryside Bible Fellowship (2189 Broughton Rd, Clay Center, KS) www.CountrysideBibleFellowship.com for more information