

# Qantas's Bizarre Complimentary Drinks Policy

*Shôn Ellerton, Jul 21, 2017*

*The most complicated and bizarre complimentary drinks policy revealed!*



For those that regularly travel with Qantas as I do, you may have stumbled across the odd occasion that you may have been requested to cough up \$5.60 for your wine or beer. This came as a small surprise to me when I was asked for payment when one of those little mini plastic bottles of wine was handed over to me on one of my flights back home from a business trip.

Now before I progress any further on the matter, I *would* like to comment that domestic travel in Australia is, generally, not bad and mirrors the experience of domestic travel in the U.S. more than 30 years ago. Since then, airports in the U.S., for example, have turned up their security scanners to the lowest possible tolerance (a pinhead would probably set it off) and have prohibited non-passengers going 'airside' (though this is the case in Europe as well). Most U.S.-based airlines have discontinued their free drinks services with some not offering any complimentary food or even water; just for the sake of saving a cent or two. Moreover, the recent incident with a passenger on a United Airlines flight who got hauled off by force is something many of us will probably never forget. I do remind myself from time to time that us Australians do sometimes take things for granted.

Anyway, back to the subject of being charged for the wine. Being a somewhat curious person, I enquired why I was being charged on this occasion and what the policy was.

Here is her explanation of the policy.

Alcoholic drinks are complimentary *if*:

- The flight *is scheduled to* depart at 4pm or after. A flight scheduled for departure at 3:55pm does not qualify even if the flight is delayed on the apron awaiting clearance to take off. However, this applies to *weekdays* only;
- However, the rule above is relaxed to *12pm* and after *if and only if* you are departing from Canberra;
- There are no complimentary drinks during the *weekends*; however, and this is a corker; *it is* complimentary if you are departing from Perth!

After listening to this, I thought that I was immersed in a live episode of Monty Python's Flying Circus wondering if this was for real or not. Others around who were listening in had some of their mouths open in astonishment and looked perplexed.

I hesitated for a moment if I should ask *why* as I was certain that she would have been asked the same question so many times from other passengers; however, someone else in my proximity did the deed instead. As I expected, she said she didn't know why and further explained that this policy was ridiculous in her opinion. She also highlighted that the additional **60 cents** over the \$5 price was a real inconvenience for everyone, especially when the majority of passengers were male businessmen with coin-unfriendly trousers where either the coins will fall out of the pockets ever to be lost or the coins will 'burn' a neat little hole in your trouser pockets in which they will eventually tumble through again, ever to be lost. Maybe this is the reason why the U.S. will never have a successful mainstream dollar coin.

Everybody started to speculate as to the reasons why this complicated policy was put in place. One suggested that the politicians from Canberra 'had their way' to have the rule relaxed from 12pm onwards instead of 4pm. Another jokingly said that, during weekends, the miners from Western Australia needed to be 'conked out' with wine and beer after their hard week in the mines. All in all, it turned out to be an engaging and amusing conversation and, funnily enough, she broke the rules and gave us all a free wine!

Has anyone else come across weird policies like this?

Thanks for reading!