

## Trip Report, FW 201 / 05DEC JFKJNB Business Class, FW-ZLL

FW now has a permanent sign at JFK, but the coloring is clearly wrong. The blue is far too green, and the yellow is so light it disappears against the white. FW should be VIGILANT about making sure anything that has the FW logo follows the correct RGB code. Each time I see AIR FRANCE, the blue is the same; each time I see ALITALIA, the green is the same. Why does the blue on FW keep changing? All stations should be advised that headquarters will provide the template for signage.

FW's position at the airport is better because it is easier to form a line.

The lane ropes are still a problem, and they use the old logo. Passengers are still processed very poorly at JFK. The lane ropes used for business passengers looked incredibly worn and old.

The economy class lines said FIRST CLASS on the signs above, and the business class line said ECONOMY CLASS. Why the poor attention to detail? Doesn't anyone stand in front of the counter before passengers arrive to make sure everything looks right?

The boarding card still has LUFTHANSA printed on it.

The logo on the departure board at JFK for FW is not the new logo.

The business-class lounge is still excellent. The staff at the lounge again didn't know boarding time for FW flight, but at least knew the gate this time.

At the departure gate (D23), there was a sign for Alaska and a sign for BWIA, but the sign for FW was nowhere to be seen.

The computer system at gate D23 doesn't work, so the gate agents have to run back and forth to gate D30. This is a tremendous waste of time.



Boarding started way too late, and was excruciatingly slow. FW desperately needs to employ some massive ex-rugby players to enforce baggage limitations. Except for the manager, there is no one taller than 5'8" at JFK on your staff, and passengers just laugh off the girls who say passengers cannot bring big bags to their seats. Staff at JFK is far too small – in number and in stature – to handle 177 passengers with a sea of carry-ons. All this does is push the problem to the flight attendants, and there is far too much stress on the flight attendants already.

Despite scheduled departure time at 2100, there were no announcements of any kind from 2115 to 2200. This shows an utter lack of respect for the passenger and is completely inexcusable. At the very least there should have been an announcement that said:

*"Ladies and Gentlemen, this is your Captain speaking. As you can tell the weather situation is a bit precarious outside, and we are waiting for passengers from delayed flights into New York. Before takeoff, the aircraft will have to be de-iced. Although we do not have a scheduled departure time as of yet, we will advise you as soon as we know anything more. We apologize for the delay."*

This would have taken zero effort and zero investment. You will never attract passengers from the competition unless you treat the passenger with more respect.

Appetizer is very good, but I worry about the cost; the shrimp, asparagus and smoked salmon must cost a mint. Salad looked very nice.

Sea bass entrée was very overcooked – there was no structure at all, more like eating pudding. Please instruct all caterers to permanently remove spinach and broccoli from the menu.

Flight landed at 1045 at ABJ. Passengers were informed that ground time would be 45 minutes.

No request was made to remove seat belts during refueling.

At 1130 – 45 minutes after arrival and when the flight was supposed to depart – cleaners were vacuuming the aisles. Why does FW pay the cleaning service to vacuum the aisles when no passengers board or deplane at ABJ?

At 1145 I asked the flight attendant why we had been waiting on the ground for an hour when it had been advised that we would be in ABJ for only 45 minutes.

At 1151 the pilot announced that the flight was delayed (really?), but that because of favorable tail winds we would be arriving at JNB nearly on schedule. We were 90 minutes late from JFK and now 20 minutes late (and counting) from ABJ. Only a favorable hurricane could get us to JNB at 2200 local. Passengers are not fools, and should not be treated as such. Either the schedule has far too much time built in (giving no incentive for FW to depart on time), or the cockpit is lying to us.

Flight departed at noon, 75 minutes after arrival.

Flight attendant cleared area at the feet of passengers. Excellent.

Catering much better out of ABJ. The veal is actually good, not just edible. The veal is clearly the best thing on any menu I have seen on FW.

The taped barf-bag in the lavatory still looks terrible. Other airlines have permanent "cages" or even screw-in perfumes and soft-soaps.

No one uses cake soap anymore – too messy. By the end of the trip there is soap scum all over the place.



Sink doesn't drain well. In fact, the sink doesn't drain well on most FW planes. Can FW change the sinks so that there is no way to hold water? I can't imagine many passengers need a sink full of water – the sink should drain automatically.

As I mentioned previously, I would gladly bring 10,000 Dixie cups for the lavatories on my next trip if you would like. Passengers in business class shouldn't have to cup water in their hands just to rinse out after brushing.

Flight arrived at 2237, only 37 minutes late. How can this possibly be? We left 90 minutes late from JFK.

Outbound connections should be announced as advertising. This is free and every airline does it. A passenger flying JFKJNB may not know you have connections to other points.

*"Ladies and Gentlemen, we will soon be arriving at Johannesburg. Please note the following connecting flights and their scheduled time of departure: Maputo 2300; Luanda 2320; Lusaka 2330; Gabaronne 2350; and Harare 2350. For gate information, please check the departure board once inside the transit hall. Thank you for choosing French West African Airlines"*

Announcements in English were not clear at all. Whoever has the strongest English skills should make the announcements. I wouldn't be surprised if this were delegated by seniority, but some flight attendants speak English very well, and others do not.

Again, flight attendants had no control over passengers. People were up collecting baggage while taxiing. I find this inexcusable after so many trips on FW. The flight attendants constantly look *surprised* that passengers are out of their seats on the taxi-way.

It is better to exit out first door than second as it gives priority to business class passengers, and makes economy class passengers walk past business – good marketing. Again, the flight attendants look bewildered when we arrive at JNB that the jetway will go to the second door, as they have already closed the curtains behind business class. Flight attendants need to anticipate problems before they start.

We arrived at Gate 5. Signage is comically bad at JNB. Passengers were wandering all over the place trying to figure out where to go.

Immigration was poorly organized. There was only one sign that said FOREIGNERS, but there were no agents working there.

Baggage collection was crazy. The belt is not long enough, so bags go around and around and around and there is no room for more bags, because most passengers are stuck at immigration. Bags should be placed on two belts, with passengers checking in at JFK at one and those checking in at offline stations at another. This information should be announced on the flight, and the baggage belts should be NUMBERED. I'm sure JFK loads local baggage into one set of containers and baggage arriving from other points in the US into a different set of containers.

*"Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to Johannesburg. For those passengers with connecting flights to destinations outside South Africa, kindly follow the signs to TRANSIT. For those passengers whose final*



*destination is South Africa, kindly follow the signs to BAGGAGE. If you checked in your bag in at JFK, your bags will be available on carousel number one. If you checked your bag at any other station in North America and connected through JFK, your bags will be available on carousel number two. Thank you for choosing French West African Airlines.”*

Johannesburg may be the only airport in the world where “guests” are able to get into the arrivals hall. This is unacceptable. Worse, each person seems to have a “purple man” helping find luggage, and each one of these purple men look at every single bag because they don’t know what they are looking for. Thus, instead of one person looking for each identical black bag, there are two people looking for each identical black bag. There were far too many people around the baggage carousel.