



I was walking up the ramp on that cool January in 1987 to enter the plane with 80 other people. Every one was dressed. The men had on jackets and ties. The women had on dresses. All were excited. We took our seats. Even though we were all strangers at the Oakland Airport we had something in common. We opted for an adventure - the Flight to Nowhere.



I took a window seat just over the great delta wing and buckled up. The air hostess was busy making sure that everyone was comfortable and buckled in securely. This wasn't going to be an ordinary flight.

The engines one by one were fired up. The low whine grew louder substantially as the four engines revved up. The captain announced that it was time to go.

The great plane taxied down the tarmac and reached its position for take-off. I could see the pointed nose of the sleek aircraft. She looked like a great bird that was ready to fly -- fly faster and higher than any commercial plane before her. It was as if you were going to ride with the Valkyrie's.

The engines roared with life and the aircraft flew down the runway and lifted off heading out over the great Pacific Ocean towards Hawaii. In several minutes we were up 60,000 feet. I could see the curvature of the earth. The sky above was a deep, deep blue, almost black. The sign came on that it was okay to unbuckle and move about the cabin. The air hostess started to pour Mumm's champagne and serve caviar to all the passengers.





We were on the Concorde on the Flight to Nowhere. The cabin altimeter read 60,000 ft. but the gauge everyone watched was the speedometer. And then we all toasted each other as the readout hit Mach 2.1 -- close to 1400 miles per hour. The ride was silky smooth, the champagne and caviar excellent. We traveled half way to Hawaii in one hour and slowly

turned to head back to the mainland. *It was the Flight to Nowhere.* It was the Flight to Remember. -- *Drake Regent*

CNN World

Concorde: Speed & Luxury

The Concorde Jet was the fastest commercial airliner ever built. It was a turbojet-powered supersonic passenger airliner able to fly from New York to London in about 3 hours. This was a terrestrial spaceship. Designed and built by a British-French consortium, the Concorde first flew commercially in 1976. Twenty aircraft were built and flew to many world-wide destinations, including London and Paris to New York and Washington, profitably flying these routes at record speeds, in less than half the time of other airliners.

Traveling at nearly twice the speed of sound, this aircraft was in service for 27 years. After a fatal crash caused by debris on the runway, the Concorde was retired in 2003 and many are now housed in Museums around the world (In Europe: Filton Airbus Museum in Bristol, Manchester Airport, Museum of Flight in Edinburgh and at Heathrow Airport. In the Northern Hemisphere: The Museum of Flight in Seattle, The Intrepid Air and Space Museum in New York and Grantley Adams Airport in Bridgetown, Barbados).

A ticket from Paris or London to New York cost about \$10,000 -- roughly 25 percent more than first class on other planes. It is said that Air France and British Airways, the only two companies that flew the Concorde aircraft, needed to fill just half of each of the aircraft's 100 seats for a flight to break even.

The Concorde was 200 feet long, had an 84 feet wing span and a height of 40 feet. Designed with a delta-wing and four turbojet engines like those used in supersonic military bombers, the Concorde was capable of a flight speed near 1400 mile per hour (speed of sound = about 750 miles per hour) and had a range of nearly 5000 miles without refueling. It could climb to 60,000 feet in 12 minutes. Concorde's most obvious design feature, its drooping nose, enabled the aircraft to switch between being streamlined to reduce drag and achieve optimum aerodynamic efficiency, and not obstructing the pilot's view during taxi, takeoff, and landing operations.



It was a symbol of national pride for both England and France and a favorite with international celebrities and royalty. Despite Richard Branson attempts to purchase the retired planes for use in his Virgin Airlines fleet, it proved to be too costly and they can now only be seen in museums.