WHEN TO PRAY: TRAVELER'S QUESTIONS

When To Pray: Traveler's Questions: Crossing from Day-Night or Night-Day

Always say the prayer service based on the day and time where you are at the moment you are ready to pray.

Flying West

SITUATION

You fly west and take off before sunrise.

WHAT TO DO

If the sun will rise while you are flying, you may say *shacharit* from the time of *alot ha'shachar* on the ground below where you are when you begin to pray.

SITUATION

You fly west, taking off during the daytime.

WHAT TO DO

Say *mincha* whenever the sun has gone at least 30 minutes past the local midday where you are at that time.

SITUATION

You fly west into the night.

WHAT TO DO

Say *ma'ariv*. once it is night on the ground below you.

NOTE On a long west-bound flight, you might not have to say any prayer services, since you might still be covered by whatever prayer service you said before you took off.

Flying East

SITUATION

You cross the international dateline passing through the night and are now back in the day you already experienced.

WHAT TO DO

You ignore the fact that you said the prayer service on that day and say it again.

SITUATION

You fly from Australia on Tuesday, departing during the daytime. You will fly into the night of Monday and continue on back into Tuesday.

WHAT TO DO

You disregard the fact that you already said *ma'ariv* for Monday and you say *ma'ariv* again. If your flight continues until sunrise, you will also say *shacharit* for Tuesday again.

SITUATION

You fly from Australia on Tuesday morning and cross the IDL during the daytime of Tuesday and are now back into Monday.

WHAT TO DO

You do not say any prayer service until your flight crosses into night, whether that happens in flight or after you have landed. You will need to say *mincha* at some time during the day.

SITUATION

You fly east but you do not cross the international dateline.

WHAT TO DO

If you cross into the night, you will say *ma'ariv* as you normally would do. If you took off at night and cross into daytime, you will say *shacharit*.

NOTE When flying east from night into day, there is a very brief time period when you may say *shema* of the morning, since you may not say *shema* until *alot ha'shachar* and must say *shema* by the end of the third hour of the local day. When flying east, instead of having about 4 hours during which to say *shema*, you might only have two or so hours.

NOTE Regarding saying the *shir shel yom* (psalm for the day of the week), follow the local day.

© Copyright 2026 Richard B. Aiken | www.practicalhalacha.com