

Trip to Chile

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-But, how can that be? How can it be! -exclaimed the lady sitting next to me, raising her voice, her short, dyed blonde hair ruffled with the horror she felt and that had made her jump like a spring from her seat-. This is simply not acceptable -she kept saying very angrily-. This is the last straw, it's disrespectful -she stated as she turned on her own axis without knowing whether to take down her belongings from the luggage bin, looking at me from time to time with fulminant eyes. -And you, move!- she yelled at me, eventually. And I, of course, was very confused, because I did not understand what the fuss was all about, so I also got up from my seat.

The flight attendant came and people in their seats were already beginning to murmur and look in our direction. -Any problem? -asked the stewardess reluctantly, probably already tired of her workday and not in the mood to deal with rowdy passengers. -Yes, miss ... -replied the dyed lady who was wearing a beige tailored skirt and bracelets on her wrists- How on earth can you make me sit next to this chola (indigenous woman)? -she said, pointing at me with an open hand- And what's more, why on earth would you let cholos fly in a plane? This is unacceptable, miss! -she stressed. I waited for the stewardess's response because I still failed to understand how we had gotten to this point.

-Madam -the stewardess replied in a monotonous voice- the seats are randomly assigned when you check in at the airport desk. -But it is disrespectful, I am not going to travel like this, I will get off the plane immediately. Either she travels, or I travel! -the lady yelled.

-I could change you to another seat... -the stewardess began to say. -The thing is that it is impossible to put up with these cholos with their skirts and their smell of chola, I don't get why they are allowed to travel by plane ... -the lady continued,

in her outburst, starting to get down her things from the luggage bin to change seats. Then the people I worked for who were sitting in their seats two rows ahead turned around and said, I don't know whether addressing the flight attendant or the hysterical lady. -She is traveling with us. She is our children's nanny -and they pointed to two children seated in the row ahead of them.

We were traveling to Chile, to spend the carnival holidays. It was 1998 and that day there was a tremendous discussion on the plane before taking off from the El Alto airport, because, although they finally changed that crazy lady to another seat, all passengers began to share their opinions: that I should have been given a seat with the family I was traveling with, that the lady should have kept quiet and not make such a fuss over nothing, that there were more people who would not have wanted to sit next to me; so much ignorance. And I traveled, looking out the window at the blue, dark blue ocean. We were going to the beach and I would see the sea for the first time.

