

NZDJA

Tips and Tricks for the International Judge

An interview with All Breeds Judge Kathleen Harwick

As we progress through our judging career, sometimes we are lucky enough to be invited to judge in foreign countries. Whilst this sounds very glamorous, it is not without its challenges. Preparation before you leave home and some knowledge of what to expect when you get there can help make the appointment a more enjoyable experience. We asked Kathleen for some advice.

What countries have you travelled to?

I have judged in Australia, UK, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, USA, Canada, Malaysia and China.

Any very challenging destinations and why?

I would have to say China. Very exotic, exciting and sometimes a little daunting especially as very little English is spoken in the outer areas and even in Beijing. I have experienced long, unexplained delays at airports, which can be very challenging with the announcements not always being in English. There can also be a sudden gate change, which means a quick sprint to another part of the airport.

What items are a must carry in your hand luggage?

Things happen when you travel, missing luggage, delays etc. I always carry a change of clothing, shoes, small containers (max 100ml) of essential toiletry items, wet wipes and hand sanitizer. Any medication and a copy of the prescription from the Doctor. Battery power pack, tablet or i-pad with plenty of books loaded. I also carry protein snack bars and some chocolate plus a small amount of cash in the currency of the country for use in vending machines. I always wear comfortable, neat casual clothing, but tidy enough to judge in if necessary if my luggage goes astray.

Often there are delays in airports. This must be especially difficult in a foreign language country. What advice would you give?

Having a means of communication is invaluable when confronted with a major delay. On a recent trip to China the delays were up to 10 hours. The airline didn't give a reason for this citing "Air Traffic Control". I had to stay close to the departure gate as I had no idea how long before my boarding call and after a 13hr long haul flight, this was challenging. Fortunately, I was able to communicate with the ladies from the China Kennel Union and keep them informed of events. Advice? Make sure you have international roaming on your phone, download a translation app before you leave home, keep an eye on proceedings, get a bottle of water and read one of the many books on your tablet. The hardest but most important advice – stay calm, (even if you are having a complete internal melt down) and if at all possible, find someone who speaks English.

How do you cope with the change in climate?

Do some research before you leave home as this will give you a good indication of climate (temperature, humidity, rainfall), which will then assist you with packing appropriate weight clothing. Always add a jacket and a light raincoat (you just never know).

What about jet lag?

I am one of the lucky ones who do not suffer Jet Lag and manage to be asleep pretty much before the plane leaves the gate. I usually have a snack before boarding and don't partake of the main meal. Limit alcohol to maybe one glass and drink plenty of water. Use a moisturizer on face and lips, and a saline nasal spray to assist with hydration.

Any advice for the ladies on judging attire when overseas?

Take care when selecting fabrics, high humidity can mean hot and sticky and some fabrics will cling in all the wrong places! Always be mindful and respectful of the culture of the country you are visiting. Do your research before you leave New Zealand.

Any other advice you can offer?

I always carry electrolyte replacement sachets, anti-diarrhoea tablets, insect repellent and anti-histamine cream, along with an anti-biotic ointment, some band aids and hand sanitizer. Never drink tap water (bottled only) plus take a copy of your passport, ticket & Itinerary and most important make sure you have adequate Travel Insurance (read the small print).

Enjoy the experience and remember you are representing New Zealand and all New Zealand Judges. Oh, and one last thing – don't accept all the social media 'friend' requests until after you have finished judging.

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