

Vito of Menifee, CA on Oct. 11, 2012

I wanted to take my family on a vacation to the land of my birth. So I took them to Italy on June 4, 2012 on Alitalia flight # AZ 0629 departing from Chicago O'Hare airport to Rome FCO. We returned on June 18, 2012 on Alitalia flight # AZ 0628 from FCO back to O'Hare airport. Our group consisted of my wife, my daughter, son-in-law and two grandsons, ages 5 and 7 and me. We purchased our tickets three months in advance and we had preassigned seating going and coming back. We were all very excited about our trip and were really looking forward to it. We arrived at the airport more than three hours before departure. There was an old, run-down, unidentified aircraft (not the Alitalia aircraft we were expecting) sitting at the gate from which we were to depart. It did not have the Alitalia logo on it. We assumed that at some point, this plane would be removed and an actual Alitalia aircraft (Airbus A332 jet as stated on our reservations) would replace it. That did not happen. This plane was old, dirty, and run-down with ripped, stained seats. The material from the seat in front of us was ripped and falling onto our open tray tables while we were eating, disgusting! This plane was so old it had ashtrays in the arm rests! We boarded this plane and expected to at least get our reserved seats from three months earlier. That was not the case. We were told that there had been a "last minute" aircraft change and that this plane had a different configuration than the one we were to take originally and we could not get our reserved seats. They couldn't (or wouldn't) tell us why there was a change of aircraft. One crew member said there may be a shortage of planes because of the NATO summit being held in Chicago. The only

problem with this explanation was that the summit was held in May and was already over. Our preassigned seating was toward the front of the aircraft as we requested. They put us in the far back of the plane, almost in the last row! If we had to change seats, why didn't they at least put us in the same area we requested three months prior? And how could this have been a "last minute" change of aircraft when that old plane had been parked at the gate before we even arrived at the airport? No one seemed to care about what was happening to us and did nothing to help us. Their attitude was one of 'that's too bad, deal with it'. The crew was the rudest, most impersonal, disrespectful and unprofessional crew I have ever had the misfortune of flying with! They were very unfriendly and acted as if the passengers were a bother to them. They seemed annoyed when I asked them for a glass of orange juice for my grandson. It took them 15 minutes or longer for the flight attendant to bring the juice, with no apology for taking so long. She actually set the glass on my tray table without looking at me or talking to me as she was too busy talking to someone else with her head turned away from me. After the regular food service, not one flight attendant walked through the cabin asking if anyone wanted anything else to eat or drink. We were told that we could get our own snacks at the back of the plane. I am guessing we were told that because all of the attendants were going to go to sleep in an area reserved for them. I have never in all the years I have flown, been told to get my own snacks! The crew always came around at least once to see if they could get anything for the passengers, not Alitalia! We hoped that we would have a better experience on our return flight. No way! We were once again put on another old,

unidentified plane (or perhaps the same one) with the same dirty, stained, ripped seats. And even worse, we were once again denied our preassigned seats and this time we were put all the way in the back in the very last two rows of the plane. We experienced turbulence and my wife, daughter and grandsons got sick. If they had honored our seat assignments, this would not have happened. This is very poor customer service, lacking any genuine concern for the passengers. Upon our return home, I wrote a letter to the Vice President/Regional Manager of our area and explained what a horrible experience we had on Alitalia. A claim was filed. Someone from Customer Relations called us. He apologized for our bad experience and offered a settlement of two electronic travel vouchers for 150.00 Euros each for my wife and me to be used at a future date. We told them we did not want vouchers, we wanted a monetary settlement. There was no mention of any compensation for my daughter and her family. We asked why they were not included in their offer, and we asked for compensation for them also. The Customer Relations rep said he would check on this and get back to us. He never did. We tried reaching him in the Customer Relations Department but no one seemed to know who he was, no one even recognized his name! Some time passed with no word from Alitalia. We finally called the VP/Regional Manager in New York and spoke to her assistant, who said someone from Customer Relations would contact us by phone. The next day we received an email (not a phone call) from Customer Relations in New York saying that she was sorry but they were not able to offer additional vouchers, therefore they were denying our request. The people in their Customer Relations Department are just as inept and rude as the

flight crew. They contact you once, then you don't hear from them for a period of time. When you call them, no one seems to know anything about anything and can't give you any satisfaction at all. They don't seem to want to help you at all. We had a contract with Alitalia Airlines. We paid them \$7738 for this trip in exchange for a pleasant flight on an actual Alitalia Airlines aircraft (not some old, broken down hunk of junk) with a professional, friendly crew taking care of the passengers. We honored our part of the contract, but Alitalia Airlines sorely failed to fulfill their part. We did not receive the service we paid for. We did not choose a discount airlines with cheap seats for this trip. We paid a good amount of money but did not receive the quality of service for the sum of money we paid. The ancient aircraft we traveled in on both legs of our trip, the rude crew, the incompetent Customer Relations personnel and the overall experience we had with Alitalia Airlines was definitely not worth the money we paid. We definitely did not get what we paid for. My wife and I will most certainly be returning to Italy. One thing is for sure, we will not be using Alitalia Airlines. In fact, we will never travel with Alitalia Airlines ever again!