

Land of the Free, Home of the Spork



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Changing planes between here and there the other day, I had just enough time to indulge in another American fast food treat unavailable in Germany, Cinnabon. Conveniently positioned directly in front of my gate, the delicious scent beckoned to me as I made my way up the jetway to the terminal. Rich, gooey cinnamon and frosting smeared over a bread-like delivery device is always good for a quick snarf and a well timed carbo-crash on the next leg of your journey.

Initially I was surprised to find a dramatic alteration in the menu. This particular Cinnabon outlet had phased out the Minibon! As a smaller version of the original roll, the Minibon is designed for those of us who can't stomach the idea of eating an entire full size serving, or toting the sticky remnants in our already overstuffed carry-on bag. It was going to be all or nothing for me, so I bravely opted for all.

The only safe way to eat one of these sloppy suckers is with a knife and fork. To begin ripping in with your fingers only spells trouble for your hands, manicure and whatever you might be wearing. It's particularly problematic when time is limited and there's the potential that a hurried cleanup in the restroom is out of the question. So I headed for the condiment counter that also serviced the other fast restaurants in the culinary strip mall, lining the wall opposite the gates. But, to my dismay, there were no plastic knives to be found amid the spoons and forks neatly sorted in their two lonely bins. Where did they go? There wasn't even an odd bin to prove that knives used to be part of the equation. Like Snap and Crackle without the Pop I was bewildered at the absence and saddened that we were no longer playing with a full deck. Still, it came as little surprise in the ever-escalating security saga of post 9-11 travel.

Originally I had only been bemused when I was provided a plastic knife with my other metal utensils to eat earlier in-flight meals - a sign of the times. This new knifeless

development, however, felt a little extreme in the land of the free and the home of the brave. Besides, what was I to do about cutting up my quickly cooling Cinnabon?

Thinking laterally I grabbed two forks and parked myself at a purple table nearby. Surprisingly, I found it just as easy to stab and rip the cinnamon roll into bite-sized bits with this method. The ravenous brutality of the experience got me thinking. If I can shred a cold, tough, gummy cinnamon roll with this feeble tool, what could it do to flesh? It occurred to me that these forks' four sharp prongs were awfully long, posing just as much threat as a gently serrated plastic knife. How long before plastic forks will be outlawed too? Then it struck me... How long will it be before our country's airlines and airports are reduced to one all-purpose utensil, the Spork? With shallow prongs and gently fragile, spoon-like bowl it seems the perfect solution for all our modern day security needs.

Though you could eat your soup or salad with one, it would certainly be more challenging to carve a Cinnabon with a Spork. Without the depth a generously pronged fork provides the effort would all be for naught, merely creating a greater mess than going at it with fingers and jaw. Deep in thought, I devoured my cinnamon treat and headed to my plane. All the while I mused to myself about the security dangers of the human anatomy, the terrible gnashing and tearing we can achieve without the aid of extra tools. I imagined a world where we would all have to deposit our teeth and fingernails at the baggage check-in, picking them up on a small "tooth and nail" conveyor belt at our respective destinations. Happy we haven't quite come to that, I took my seat and buckled up. Soon the plane was barreling down the runway, aimed for the Seattle and I was starting my rapid carbohydrate crash into the netherworld of low blood sugar land.