

# When traveling, first class is so fly

**Austin Gonzalez**

OPINION EDITOR

Over the break, my family had the opportunity to fly first class. It was one of the most ridiculous experiences of my life. If you've ever wondered what happens beyond the impregnable curtain barrier that separates you and those who can't be bothered to even see you in their peripheral vision, prepare to finally learn the darkest secrets of the First Class.

Imagine that it's Christmas morning (and by that I mean 12:10 a.m.), and you and your family are ready to make the 15-hour trip from Cuenca, Ecuador back to the always lovely Chicago only to be told that your flight has just been delayed, as per usual, until two in the morning. Turns out, if it's 2 a.m. and you look old and professional with the right words and a furious glint in your eyes, it's not too hard to convince airline counter friends to assist you in any way they can.

The holiday spirit spurred the airline to give my family a little present of upgraded seats (it probably also helped that my dad flies over 100 times per year for his work). I had never noticed before, but the first class

check-in had two counters open for five parties, whereas there was one lonely man trying to rush through the line of regular folks who wanted to check-in that seemed to snake back and forth for eternity. Security was also a bit easier, considering that if you buy a more expensive ticket, you are clearly a safer passenger. One security person is there to ensure that you get checked quickly and promptly. Getting to the terminal isn't as bad when you can ignore almost everyone else in the airport because of your magical privileged ticket.

The first time you board the plane with your new ticket is something of a story all on its own. Normally, you would wait patiently for your boarding zone to be called (Zone 4 of 5 if you're lucky) before joining the sad excuse for a line that is the mob rushing the gate as if there aren't enough seats and this is the last plane out of the country. Saying "excuse me," as you pass through the mass of bodies because you have permission to board the plane with four other people while everyone else who paid to get on the same plane stand there for 15 more minutes, might be a bit uncomfortable at first. Your nerves should subside, however, once you're seated and they again stop the boarding process to offer you a preflight beverage.

Champagne is their usual offering (even at two in the morning on Christmas day), but if you ask nicely, they will gladly fetch you a Diet Coke. They actually hold the line for a few minutes so the first class can get some drinks before you've even left the terminal.

The next part, where all those people you passed getting on the plane now walk by you while you sit in your throne of luxury, can also be a bit uncomfortable. But! First class seats will never let you down. The six levels of adjustment should be entertaining enough to distract you. Don't forget, you can also drown out the moaning masses with the complementary Bose noise-canceling headset and Galaxy tablet.

Now that we're ready to take off, let's talk about the amenities of the first class flight. First, let's stave off that rumble in your tummy with some warm nuts. Of course, there is also a warm towel so that you can perhaps forget, for a moment, that you are in a flying metal tube and think that you are, instead, relaxing at a spa. I hope you're hungry, because every flight in first class offers you a meal. Did I have a quiche and rustic potatoes at 35,000 feet above the Gulf at 3:24 a.m. on Christmas day? Everyone in first class did. The only other option was

Steel Cut oatmeal with fruit salad. Sometime after that, the flight attendants remember that there would normally be several hundred other people who might appreciate a Coke on the plane and bring out the beverage cart.

I always thought there were only two attendants on any flight. It turns out there are three! One is dedicated to ensuring that the few people flying first class have everything they could ever desire. In all seriousness, first class is not about getting from point A to B, but the experience and treatment you want while you get there. Everything that is normally optional for a cost in coach is provided for you without hesitation. You are received with the utmost respect and your requests are processed with timeliness. Every step of the process is set up so that you are not inconvenienced in even the slightest way. It's almost as if the employees' jobs are dependent on people who spend obscene amounts of money on amenities that are entirely superfluous. The curtain that separates the cabin is actually a chasm of ridiculousness. If you ever have the thought, "I love traveling, but I really wish it was 10 times more expensive," well then, first class just couldn't get any better.

# Sodexo: they who cannot be named

**Shireen Gul**

COPY EDITOR

Illinois Tech is a place where many dreams have come true. Yes, I mean it when I say it because I personally have gained a lot here. This is my fourth semester at IIT and many things have changed for the better, but there has always been one thing that has constantly changed for the worse. You guessed it right, but guess what? Their name cannot be mentioned, as the university exempts them from criticism. Allow me to address the company as "they who cannot be named."

On Monday, January 26, Shreeyeh Rajan—a fourth-year business student—went to Center Court to get her dinner. She was super excited to get her favorite chicken burger but this time she wanted to try a pretzel bun. Everyone likes change, you see, but who knew she would remember this dinner forever.

While waiting for her favorite TV show to upload, she examined the burger, and guess what she found? A beautiful fungus waiting on the bun to say hello to her. At 7:30 p.m. when you are starving to death, if you got food like that, how would you react? I suppose not by being cool and calm. Being a student leader and a Resident Advisor, her very first concern was other students, so she posted a picture of the bun on Facebook with the caption, "Where do I report this? I ordered a burger at Center Court and found fungus on it. (Make sure to check your food before you eat it. There has been food poisoning issues going around IIT.)" to warn the students who were about to go to Center Court to order food.

She also didn't know where to report this issue because many of us did find problems with food but never complained. Unfortunately, her post was not taken positively by IIT administration. She had to answer to several people about why she chose social media as the platform to discuss such an issue. Other students were angry about the fact that they have been experiencing issues with food for a long time, but no action has been taken.

Thankfully, Katherine Stetz, Dean of Students, was ready to talk to Rajan and gave her an appointment for Thursday, January 29, to sit down and discuss this issue.

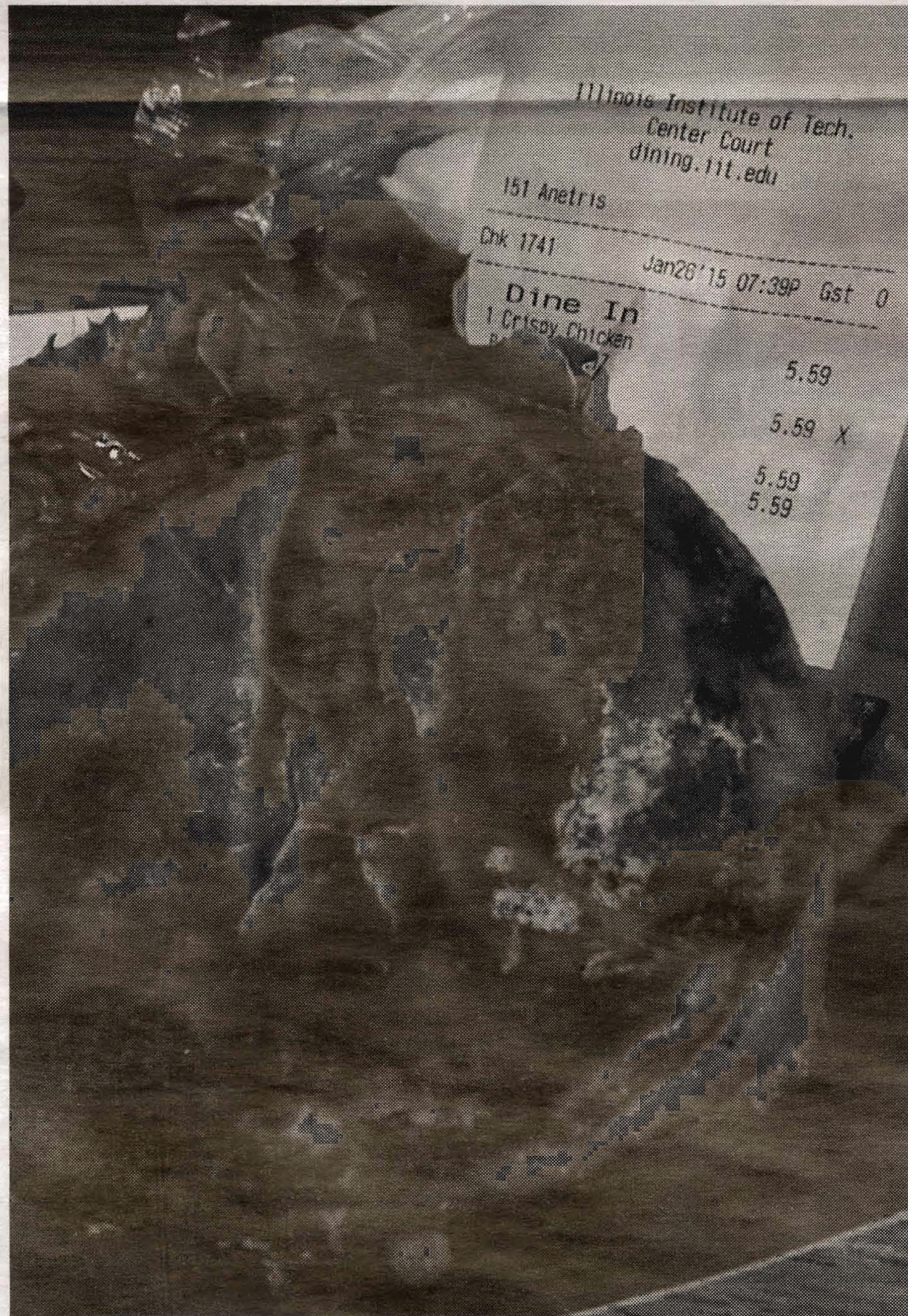
As per the Facebook post, Rajan and two of her friends had to wait for 20 minutes to get in, even though they had an appointment and were on time. "We did ask if we could record the meeting to get a transcript of the conversation but we were not permitted to," said Rajan. She added, "Since we didn't have the actual bun present, the school administration couldn't take any actions in particular regard-

ing this situation."

Are you kidding me? Why would someone keep a mold-covered bun? Plus, if you live in MSV, where not everyone owns a refrigerator, how can you preserve a mold-covered bun just to prove yourself right? However, the Chicago Public Health Department did

that day.

Stetz also mentioned that she spoke with the food distributors and they think that it would have been flour rather than mold, although Rajan tried to rub it off but it was soft and soggy, which proves otherwise. But again, since she didn't have the bun, she couldn't be



visit IIT and according to Stetz, they scored the food to be 99/100 with one sneezing issue in the Commons, which still amazes me. How is this possible? Anyway, if that was the case, then I might have missed the awesome food

helped.

It's so sad to see that we live on a campus where we have to keep evidence even if you are a student leader and everyone knows that you won't lie because you represent your

students.

Niveta Chandrasekar, a third-year communications student, was also not really happy with the meeting and said, "I was there at the meeting. Unfortunately, I did not feel like the issue was handled well. Although Dean Stetz was very polite and very open to hearing our side of the story, I felt like I was talking to a very defensive lawyer for IIT, which was not at all our intention." She also added, "During the meeting, things such as completely unrelated examples of grocery store shopping and finding moldy cakes due to not looking at the expiration date and what would you do if there was a rat in the meal you buy from McDonalds (where the solution was to return the food at the counter and get a new one or ask for money back instead of posting it on social media and creating such angst), were the things that she seemed to keep bringing up," and continued, "My argument that we are not expected to dig through our food to find out if it's spoiled and we assume that the food is not going to be toxic was met with something close to a buyer beware type comment. Her main argument was that since there was no proof of mold, and since she had not heard any complaints before about Sodexo (with proof), there is nothing that can be done."

The good thing in the entire meeting was that Dean Stetz took notes and was receptive but, according to Chandrasekar, "I felt like the entire meeting went the wrong way. I felt like Dean Stetz took this as a very personal attack and I want to apologize if it felt that way, but I also want to emphasize that we are NOT identifying Sodexo with IIT as a whole and that there was really no need to get as defensive as she had been."

"Once again, I want to say that I am merely stating how I felt about the meeting. The intention of Dean Stetz could have been something completely different and I could have misunderstood it, but this is what I felt. I do, however, want to thank her for allowing us to stay at the meeting as from the way she reacted, I assume she was not aware that more than one person was going to be there. We probably should have informed her of that earlier, and my apologies to her for that," concluded Chandrasekar.

Before I end this article, I request that if you see something, say something immediately with the actual evidence to IIT's Dining Services, Residence and Greek Life, and/or Public Safety so that we can get over such issues as soon as possible. Your health always comes first, and that is not possible until we have good and hygienic food.