

From Ryanair to Emirates & Etihad

The Complete Assessment Day Guide — from a Romanian who wore the Ryanair, Emirates and Etihad uniforms

BY MANUELA · WINGS OF WANDERLUST

PART I — The Dream



RYANAIR



EMIRATES



ETIHAD

Ryanair · Emirates · Etihad

✈ **Close your eyes for a second.**

It's 5 a.m. and the city below you is still asleep. You're at 36,000 feet, above clouds painted gold by a sunrise very few people ever get to see from this angle. In your pocket, a passport stamped in Dubai, Bangkok, New York, Cape Town. Last night you had dinner at a rooftop in Abu Dhabi with colleagues from seven different countries. Next week — Tokyo, for the first time.

It's not a holiday. It's your **ordinary Tuesday**. And you're getting paid for it.

I remember the exact moment I understood I was living what I had dreamed. My first long layover with Emirates: I woke up before the alarm, pulled back the hotel curtain, and below me Dubai was lighting up — towers in a golden haze, the call to prayer blending with the sounds of a city that never sleeps. I stood there, in the uniform I had ironed the night before, holding the badge with my name on it — and I thought of the girl who used to fall asleep dreaming about this. She would

have cried with joy. I smiled, drank my coffee, and went to briefing. **The dream had simply become my everyday life.**

The world is full of girls dreaming about this. Few get to live it. Why?

Not because they aren't beautiful enough, smart enough or capable enough. I've met hundreds of extraordinary girls who failed — and ordinary girls, like me at the beginning, who made it.

The difference isn't talent. **The difference is that nobody tells you the unwritten rules of the game.** Airlines aren't looking for magazine models. They're looking for warm, calm, prepared people — and they have a very precise system for recognizing them in the assessment room. Those who know the system pass. Those who walk in unprepared go home with a polite "thank you for coming".

I know this because I started from the very bottom. I left **Târnăveni, a small town in Transylvania, Romania**, with one suitcase and a dream few people took seriously. My first contract was with Ryanair, in **Marseille** — and nobody tells you that part of the story: the starting salary at a low-cost airline, out of which you pay your own rent, bills and food, in a foreign city, in a language you're still learning. There were months when I counted every euro. But every take-off reminded me why I was there. Ryanair toughened me up. **Emirates and Etihad taught me the gold standard.** And that road — from Târnăveni to Dubai — is exactly the map I'm giving you below.

This guide is what I wish someone had given me back then.

In the pages that follow, you'll get the complete map of an Assessment Day — stage by stage, with what is REALLY being evaluated at every step, the mistakes that eliminate you instantly, and the checklist for the big day.

The dream is yours. From today, so is the map. 

PART II — The Map: the Assessment Day, stage by stage

Stage 0 — Before you even leave home

Your CV and photos decide more than you think. Recruiters see thousands of applications; yours must be flawless:

- **A one-page CV**, in English, zero mistakes — with your customer service experience front and center (anything counts: waitressing, reception, sales — if it's told the right way)
- **A formal photo + a full-length casual photo**, plain background, natural smile — NO selfies, NO filters
- **Visible standards**: impeccable hair (a bun for long hair), natural but present make-up, well-groomed nails

The #1 mistake I constantly see in photos: pictures taken with a phone — in the mirror, on holiday, at a café — instead of professional studio photographs. A recruiter recognizes at a glance a candidate who didn't take her application seriously. And even the "arranged" photos often fail on the same point: **they don't respect grooming standards** — hair left loose, make-up absent or overdone, careless posture. Your photo is your first interview — before you ever open your mouth.

Stage 1 — CV Drop: the first impression takes seconds

The recruiter looks at: your outfit (business attire — suit, sober colors), your smile, your greeting, your posture while you wait.

The golden rule: you are being evaluated from the moment you walk into the building. Girls who sit on their phones in the queue, roll their eyes or gossip — get noted. Yes, the breaks count too.

Stage 2 — The English Test

A written test (grammar, vocabulary, comprehension). Required level: **minimum B2, ideally C1**. How to prepare: read out loud in English every day, practice past tenses and conditionals, and get used to telling stories: "Tell me about a time when..."

What surprised me most in the tests I went through: it's not general English that eliminates girls — it's **aviation vocabulary**. Many speak decent conversational English but freeze at the words of the trade: boarding, layover, turnaround, galley, jump seat, safety procedures. Recruiters use them naturally, and the girl who doesn't recognize them has exposed herself: she didn't prepare for this profession, just for "a job". Learn the language of aviation before you walk into that room.

And a secret: **the real English test is the hallway conversation** — the small talk with recruiters and other candidates, not just the paper.

Stage 3 — The Group Exercise (where most girls fail!)

You're placed in a team with other candidates and given a common task. **The secret very few know: the solution is NOT what's being evaluated. HOW you work with people is.**

-  You speak, but you also **listen** — once you propose, once you support someone else's idea
-  You include the quiet girl in the group ("What do you think, Maria?") — GOLD in recruiters' eyes
-  You smile and stay calm even when the team goes the wrong way
-  Dominating the conversation = eliminated. Staying silent = eliminated. **Balance wins.**

A scene I will never forget: at one of my assessments, our group had a girl who seemed like the perfect candidate — tall, flawless English, a magazine smile. In the group exercise, the team had to agree on five objects to take to a desert island. She took control from the first second: talking over everyone, rejecting every idea that wasn't hers, and in the end she presented "the team's solution" alone. It was probably the best solution in the room. **She was eliminated at the next break.** The recruiters weren't looking for who was right — they were looking for who makes a team work at 36,000 feet, in a space of a few square meters, under stress. Remember that scene when you walk into that room.

Stage 4 — The Final Interview (1-on-1)

Behavioral questions using the **STAR** model (Situation → Task → Action → Result):

- "Tell me about a time you dealt with a difficult customer."
- "Describe a situation where you worked under pressure."
- "Why Emirates? Why now?"

Prepare **5 real stories** (a conflict you solved, a difficult customer, teamwork, pressure, initiative) and practice them out loud until they flow naturally. For "Why Emirates?" — never "because I want to travel". Talk about service, people, standards.

The question most girls fail — and the one I was asked too: "Why did you leave your previous job?" It sounds harmless. It's a trap. Most girls answer by criticizing their former employer: the schedule, the salary, the bosses, the colleagues. **It's the biggest possible mistake** — the recruiter doesn't hear your complaints, they hear how you'll talk about THEM in two years. The right answer is always growth-oriented, never against anyone: *"I'm grateful for everything I learned there — it shaped me. Now I'm ready for a new standard, and this is where I want to grow."* Gratitude for the past, ambition for the future. That's it.

Top 5 mistakes that eliminate you instantly

1. Careless outfit or grooming — there's no second first impression
2. Shaky English in small talk — the hallway is the real test
3. Dominating or staying silent in the group exercise
4. Robotic, memorized answers — they show from the first sentence
5. Negativity about previous jobs or employers — never, about anyone

Your checklist for the big day

- CV printed in 3 copies + photos according to requirements
- Business outfit ironed, mid-heel shoes, clean
- Full grooming: hair, natural make-up, nails
- 5 STAR stories practiced out loud
- 8 hours of sleep — tiredness shows on your face and in your patience
- Your smile: from the building's front door until you leave

PART III — The dream needs a coach

Now you have the map. But you don't walk into the assessment room holding a map — you walk in with trained reflexes.

That's exactly what we do together in the **Zero to Cabin Crew** program: we simulate the interview and the group exercise until they become natural, build your STAR stories, polish your CV, photos and grooming — 1-on-1, with someone who walked the whole road: from Târnăveni to Dubai, from the first low-cost salary in Marseille to the Emirates uniform.

What makes my program truly unique:

-  **I help you answer every single question** of the final interview — we go through the assessment questions one by one and build YOUR personal answer to each, until not a single one can catch you off guard.
-  **I teach you techniques I designed myself** — my own tested methods for every stage of the recruitment process: from the CV Drop and the English test to the group exercise and the 1-on-1 interview. Not generic internet advice, but a step-by-step system that actually works.

One year from now, there will be two versions of this moment: the guide left in a folder... or your photo in uniform, sent to your mom from your first layover.

👉 Let's talk for 30 minutes, free — you tell me where you are, I'll tell you honestly what you're missing: <https://cal.com/wingsofwanderlust/free-consultation>

See you in the air! ✈️ Manuela — *Wings of Wanderlust*

© Wings of Wanderlust — wingsofwanderlust.it