

A passenger in a Cathay Pacific First Class cabin is seated at a table, enjoying a meal. The cabin interior is visible, showing the overhead storage bins and the window. The text is overlaid on the image.

# FCF's Asia 2025 Premium Trend Watch: Save 88% on First Class and 72% on Business Class with Cathay Pacific - 50+ Dates

December 2024

## How and when to avoid \$30,127 fares - for up to TWO travelers in First Class to Hong Kong and beyond

Imagine you've been navigating the maze of airline awards, searching for that one perfect opportunity — like a prospector panning for gold in a fast-moving stream. Then, just when you're about to set the search aside, it appears: Cathay Pacific First Class seats for TWO travelers between Los Angeles or New York and Hong Kong. It's a moment of triumph, like stumbling upon a secret passage in a treasure hunt.

If you strike gold on just [one leg of the journey](#), simply pair it with a Business Class seat for the other direction. After all, those who treat travel like an evolving puzzle — [always tweaking and refining their itineraries](#) — have the greatest success in [elevating their experience](#).

This isn't just a booking though — it's a race to the finish line. After all, First Class tickets can top \$30,127, and Business Class might set you back \$9,441 per person for a round-trip. So, snagging an award seat at a fraction of the price is like taking home a gold medal without even breaking a sweat.

And if Hong Kong isn't on your radar - or you don't live in Los Angeles or New York? No problem. A [positioning flight](#) can put you right where the action is.

## Sample connecting flights from Hong Kong to all over Asia



## HERE'S A LOOK AT CATHAY PACIFIC'S FIRST CLASS TWO-SEAT AVAILABILITY:

To/From Hong Kong	Outbound			Return		
	4 to 8 Days per Month	9 to 12 Days per Month	13+ Days per Month	4 to 8 Days per Month	9 to 12 Days per Month	13+ Days per Month
New York	July, Sept.	July	Aug., Sept.	June, July, Sept., Oct.	June, July, Oct.	
Los Angeles	April, Oct.		July to Sept.	May		May, June, July, Oct.

Months in black have at least one seat available; in blue, at least two seats. Remember to use the data as a guide since availability can be volatile...

### Here's a look at Cathay Pacific's Business Class availability:

To/From Hong Kong	Outbound			Return		
	4 to 8 Days per Month	9 to 12 Days per Month	13+ Days per Month	4 to 8 Days per Month	9 to 12 Days per Month	13+ Days per Month
Boston	July, Oct., Dec.	Aug.	Aug., Sept., Nov.	July, Sept., Dec.	June, Sept.	Oct., Nov.
Toronto	July, Sept., Dec.	July, Aug., Nov.	Aug., Sept.	Dec.	June, Sept.	Oct., Nov.
New York	Aug., Dec.	Aug., Sept.	Nov.	Sept., Dec.		Oct., Nov.
Los Angeles	July, Dec.	Oct.	Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov.	June, Dec.		Oct., Nov.
Chicago	July, Oct., Dec.	July, Aug.	Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov.	June, Sept., Dec.	Sept.	July, Oct., Nov.
San Francisco	July, Oct., Dec.	Oct.	Aug., Sept., Nov.	May, June, Dec.		Oct., Nov.
Vancouver	Sept., Dec.	Oct.	Sept., Nov.	Sept., Dec.		Oct., Nov.

Months in black have at least one seat available; in blue, at least two seats. Remember to use the data as a guide since availability can be volatile...

## NO MILES? NO PROBLEM

Cathay Pacific's New York-Hong Kong route goes for 160,000 miles in First Class or 84,000 miles in Business Class from the West Coast and 110,000 miles from the East Coast, plus \$80 in taxes each way. Cathay

Pacific is a points-to-miles transfer partner with Amex, Capital One, and Citi. You can [buy up to 500,000 points annually from Amex](#) for 2.5 cents each and transfer them to Cathay Pacific.

New York-Hong Kong First Class fares go for \$30,127+ which means you save up to \$21,967, or 73%, with miles. Business Class fares go for \$9,441+ for a savings with miles of up to \$6,611, or 70%.

**Buy Cathay partner American Airlines miles when on sale:** On Cathay's New York-Hong Kong route, the First Class baseline fare goes for \$30,127. You can buy up to 150,000 American Airlines miles if you need to top-off for about \$3,668 when they're on sale for about 2.4 cents each, and save up to \$26,485, or 88%, on your next trip to Hong Kong. Note that taxes with the American Airlines loyalty program generally cost \$67.

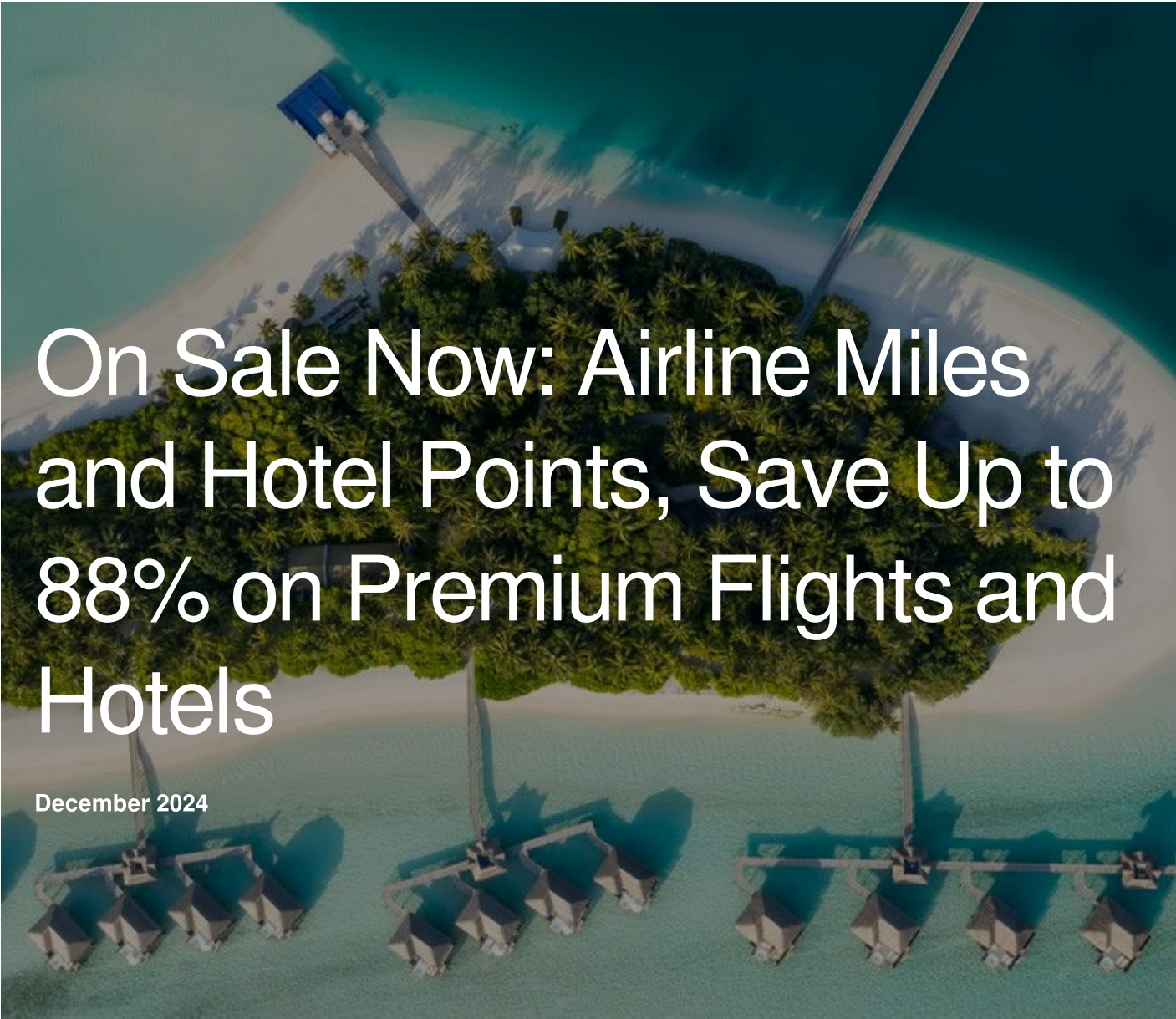
Or you can buy 110,000 miles for about \$2,690, and save about \$6,751, or 72% for Business Class.

We recommend that you only buy miles if you are confident there is availability that works for you unless you fly frequently and know you will use the miles eventually. Should availability shift, you can use those miles on a future trip.

And the best part? You didn't pay a fortune for them. By transferring your Amex points to Cathay Pacific, you've unlocked a luxurious experience at a fraction of the price. Remember, sometimes all it takes is one day with available award seats. When opportunity knocks in the form of open award seats, be ready to jump.

[Don't book backwards](#), and I'll see you up front.





# On Sale Now: Airline Miles and Hotel Points, Save Up to 88% on Premium Flights and Hotels

December 2024

**HILTON POINTS: 50% OFF**  
(ENDS 5/29)

**Related Special Reports:**

[How to Save Up to 75% at Hilton and Hyatt On Peak Dates Like the Formula 1 in Austin](#)

[Save Up to 80%: Unleashing the Potential of Your Trip to Bali, the Maldives and the Seychelles with the Power of Buying Hilton Points](#)

**AIR FRANCE:**  
**U  
P**

**TO 45% BONUS**  
**(ENDS 5/21)**

**Related Special Reports:**

[213 Secret Cheap Routes to Europe in Business Class with Your Miles or Points – Enough to Take the Baseball Team](#)

**ALASKA MILES:**  
**UP**  
**TO 60% BONUS**  
**(ENDS 5/21)**

**Related Special Reports:**

[Making the Most of Alaska Airlines New Award Chart – Huge Savings Still Available on Many Top Airlines](#)

[The Cheapest Business Class Round-Trip I Ever Found to Australia? Maybe This \\$2,232 One](#)

[How Alaska Is Letting You Skate Around High Premium Prices to Destinations All Over the World](#)

[Buy Frozen Alaska Miles, Then Thaw with a Range of Partners for Up to 87% Off First & Business Class](#)

**AMERICAN MILES:**  
**SAVE UP TO 35%**  
**(NO PUBLISHED END DATE)**

**Related Special Reports:**

[How Secret \(Last-Minute\) Cheap Seats Can Vastly Improve Your \(Already-Booked\) Flight: The Iterative Upgrade Mindset, Part I](#)

**LIFEMILES (STAR ALLIANCE): UP TO 155% BONUS**  
**MILES**  
**(ENDS 4/30)**

**Related Special Reports:**

[23 Secret Routes with Business Class for \\$1,453 to \\$1,912 R/T to Europe, Part I](#)

[Tap into a \\$1,224 Business Class Flight to Europe R/T](#)

[FCF's Forethought Formula for Worldwide First Class Discounts Up to 88% Off with Star Alliance and 28 LifeMiles Partners](#)

[Top First Class Close-In Upgrade Strategy to Europe Comes Out of the Lockdown Closet](#)

## **MORE FCF BUY MILES TO FLY IN STYLE RELATED REPORTS:**

[Beginner's Guide: How to Play the "Buy Miles to Fly In Style" Strategy to Net Up to 86% Off Premium Travel](#)

[How to Get Around Buying Miles Maximum Limits](#)

[How to Buy American Express Membership Rewards Points](#)

[Part II-The Golden Key to Unlocking Lucrative Miles & Points: How to Use FCF's Sweet Redeems to Save Up to 92% on First Class Flights \(When You Don't Have Any or Enough Miles or Points\)](#)

A photograph of two young women with long hair, one with dark hair and one with light brown hair, both wearing denim shirts. They are leaning in and whispering to each other, with their hands near their mouths. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting with greenery.

# 77 Secret Routes to Europe That Offer Two or Three Business Class Tickets for the Price of One with American Miles - Up to 4+ Seats

December 2024

## **How Perfection Blindness is Robbing You of Great Award Deals – From the East Coast to the West – For the Whole Family**

I believe that perfectionism and travel don't mix.

Yes, there are exceptions. The planets occasionally align and you can get an amazing deal for the price you want, on the day you want, on a nonstop flight, at the right time of day (and it's sunny), on the airline you want, in the seat you want, with the brand of champagne you want, sitting next to Margot Robbie (or whoever you may want to sit next to).

But ask any mathematician how often you'll get all those details to work out for you if you want to use miles.



About as often as Ken outshines Barbie.

This special report is about the notion that [travel perfectionism is likely holding you back](#) and that your miles, in particular, are taking a big hit. We have solid proof with a range of examples, focusing on one of the world's biggest carriers: American Airlines. And we have a strategy for it that is surely going to change the way many of you approach your next trip.



Imperfection can still taste great. It's cheaper too.

Let's start with what most travelers would naturally want when heading to Europe: a nonstop flight in Business Class with low-cost-award seat availability.

Simple, right?

Then you crunch the numbers with American Airlines, as our team has recently. We looked at **50 nonstop routes** to Europe for low-cost (under 100,000 miles one-way) free award seats. For days with available award seats, these are the prices we found, one-way:

## PERCENTAGE OF TIME ONE-WAY AWARDS WERE AVAILABLE NON-STOP BY PRICE RANGE: THE SUMMARY

Days Available with Awards Under 100,000 Miles	Days Available with Awards 101,000 - 200,000 Miles	Days Available with Awards 201,000 - 300,000 Miles	Days Available with Awards 301,000 - 400,000+ Miles
5.9%	24.4%	30.8%	38.5%

## RECENT SURVEY OF PRICING BY ROUTE

From	To	Under 100,000 Miles	101,000 - 200,000 Miles	201,000 - 300,000 Miles	301,000 - 400,000+ Miles
Charlotte	Dublin	3%	21%	45%	31%
	Frankfurt	16%	26%	33%	25%
	London	6%	50%	30%	15%
	Madrid	6%	23%	29%	41%
	Munich	12%	18%	34%	36%
	Paris	2%	11%	52%	35%
	Rome	1%	5%	28%	66%
Chicago	Athens	0%	2%	21%	77%
	Barcelona	1%	24%	51%	24%
	Dublin	1%	36%	50%	12%
	London	29%	65%	4%	2%
	Paris	4%	21%	40%	34%
	Rome	0%	24%	33%	42%
	Venice	4%	1%	35%	61%
Dallas	Amsterdam	0%	2%	46%	52%
	Barcelona	2%	6%	38%	53%
	Dublin	1%	9%	52%	38%
	Frankfurt	5%	19%	45%	31%
	London	19%	58%	20%	3%
	Madrid	4%	8%	45%	43%

From	To	Under 100,000 Miles	101,000 - 200,000 Miles	201,000 - 300,000 Miles	301,000 - 400,000+ Miles
	Paris	0%	24%	31%	45%
	Rome	2%	13%	30%	56%
Los Angeles	London	12%	63%	19%	6%
Miami	Barcelona	1%	13%	26%	60%
	London	2%	22%	55%	21%
	Madrid	2%	31%	25%	42%
	Paris	0%	40%	27%	32%
New York	Athens	3%	4%	30%	63%
	Barcelona	11%	37%	37%	15%
	London	34%	63%	2%	1%
	Madrid	11%	50%	32%	7%
	Milan	6%	18%	34%	42%
	Paris	4%	33%	38%	24%
	Rome	8%	60%	32%	0%
Philadelphia	Amsterdam	2%	4%	19%	76%
	Athens	0%	3%	25%	72%
	Barcelona	2%	19%	22%	57%
	Copenhagen	2%	1%	48%	49%
	Dublin	1%	19%	33%	47%
	Lisbon	1%	11%	28%	59%
	London	3%	40%	34%	23%
	Madrid	13%	33%	24%	30%
	Naples	2%	3%	15%	80%
	Nice	3%	5%	19%	72%
	Paris	3%	6%	22%	69%
	Rome	4%	7%	23%	65%
	Venice	1%	8%	29%	62%

From	To	Under 100,000 Miles	101,000 - 200,000 Miles	201,000 - 300,000 Miles	301,000 - 400,000+ Miles
	Zurich	1%	2%	15%	82%
Phoenix	London	1%	8%	47%	45%
Raleigh	London	4%	47%	23%	26%

Many travelers with a perfectionist mindset will stop right there and say, “I’m done. Darn airlines — there’s never anything for me to use my &^%\$ miles on at a reasonable price.”

But they’re missing a golden opportunity that will quench their thirst.

## ARC: PERFECTING THE ART OF BEING IMPERFECT

We call it the **ARC** Strategy, for **All the Right Connections**. The idea is to use two very effective but yet little-used tools in your travel toolkit: connecting flights and partner airlines. As you’ll discover, they are bottle openers for mile meisters. Hear that sound? Schweppervescence? In this case, it’s Milervescence! Drink it in.

## HOW MICHAEL ARCED UP AND MILKED MAXIMUM MILEAGE

Dallas native Michael is flying to London.

His perfectionist default mindset (like most of us) has him looking at nonstops on either American Airlines or British Airways using his American miles. His choices are not the best.

1. He could fly on AA50 for 104,500 miles + \$6 in taxes, one-way: ouch!

2. He could fly on BA192 for 57,500 miles + \$733 in taxes, one-way: ouch!

Yes, that’s a big mileage hit on American Airlines. And yes, a huge IRS-style tax hit on British Airways. Surely there’s a better way. Hello, ARC strategy!

## DALLAS TO LONDON NONSTOP ON AMERICAN USING AMERICAN MILES

**Business**  
One way (per person)  
**104,500** miles  
+ \$5.60  
**Total (all passengers)**  
104,500 miles + \$5.60

**DEPART**  
Dallas/Fort Worth, TX to London, United Kingdom  
Monday, March 25, 2024  
5:15 PM → 7:20 AM<sup>+1</sup> 9h 5m Nonstop Business  
= AA50 = 77W-Boeing 777



## DALLAS TO LONDON NONSTOP ON BRITISH AIRWAYS USING AMERICAN MILES

<b>Business</b> One way (per person) <b>57,500</b> miles <b>+ \$732.30</b> Total (all passengers) 57,500 miles + \$732.30	<b>DEPART</b> Dallas/Fort Worth, TX to London, United Kingdom Monday, March 25, 2024 7:50 PM → 9:45 AM <sup>+1</sup> 8h 55m Nonstop Business BA192 388-Airbus A380 Operated by British Airways
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Michael's brother Max decides to join him. Max lives in Rapid City.

Max finds that he can fly from Rapid City to Dallas, connect with Michael's flight to London on American for 89,500 (15,000 less miles than Michael's 104,500), or on British Airways for the same 57,500 miles and pay \$737 in taxes.

## RAPID CITY > DALLAS > LONDON ON AMERICAN USING AMERICAN MILES

<b>Business</b> One way (per person) <b>89,500</b> miles <b>+ \$5.60</b> Total (all passengers) 89,500 miles + \$5.60	<b>DEPART</b> Rapid City, SD to London, United Kingdom Monday, March 25, 2024 12:27 PM → 7:20 AM <sup>+1</sup> 12h 53m 1 stop Business RAP - DFW AA3649 E75-Embraer 175 Operated by Envoy Air as American Eagle DFW - LHR AA50 77W-Boeing 777
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## RAPID CITY > DALLAS > LONDON ON AMERICAN AND BRITISH AIRWAYS

<b>Business</b> One way (per person) <b>57,500</b> miles <b>+ \$736.80</b> Total (all passengers) 57,500 miles + \$736.80	<b>DEPART</b> Rapid City, SD to London, United Kingdom Monday, March 25, 2024 12:27 PM → 9:45 AM <sup>+1</sup> 15h 18m 1 stop Business RAP - DFW AA3649 E75-Embraer 175 Operated by Envoy Air as American Eagle DFW - LHR BA192 388-Airbus A380 Operated by British Airways
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Max is thinking that's a lot of miles. For that many miles, Max suggests traveling to Milan instead of London. Michael's up for it.

Now, over in Europe, it gets interesting — and even better.

Michael can now fly from Dallas to London and then to Milan. If he flies through London on American connecting with British Airways, he will pay 57,500 miles and \$23 in taxes. That’s 47,000 miles less than Michael’s original nonstop Dallas-London itinerary on American or the same number of miles (57,500) and \$750 in taxes if he flies on BA through London. That’s a no-brainer decision.

**DALLAS > LONDON > MILAN ON AMERICAN AND BRITISH AIRWAYS USING AMERICAN MILES**

Business

One way (per person)

57,500 miles

+\$22.90

Total (all passengers)  
57,500 miles + \$22.90

DEPART

Dallas/Fort Worth, TX to Milan, Italy

Monday, March 25, 2024

5:15 PM → 12:20 PM<sup>+1</sup> 13h 5m 1 stop Business

DFW - LHR = AA50 = 77W-Boeing 777

LHR - MXP = BA576 = 32A-Airbus A320

Operated by British Airways

**DALLAS > LONDON > MILAN ON BRITISH AIRWAYS USING AMERICAN MILES**

Business

One way (per person)

57,500 miles

+\$749.60

Total (all passengers)  
57,500 miles + \$749.60

DEPART

Dallas/Fort Worth, TX to Milan, Italy

Monday, March 25, 2024

7:50 PM → 2:40 PM<sup>+1</sup> 12h 50m 1 stop Business

DFW - LHR = BA192 = 388-Airbus A380

Operated by British Airways

LHR - MXP = BA590 = 32A-Airbus A320

Operated by British Airways

Now it’s Max’s turn. He is excited to see that he can fly all the way from Rapid City to Milan for the same 57,500 miles and \$23 in taxes, and on the same flights as Michael. That’s 32,000 miles less than Max’s original Rapid City-Dallas-London itinerary on American.

## RAPID CITY > DALLAS > LONDON > MILAN ON AMERICAN USING AMERICAN MILES

**Business**  
 One way (per person)  
**57,500** miles  
**+ \$22.90**  
**Total** (all passengers)  
 57,500 miles + \$22.90

**DEPART**  
 Rapid City, SD to Milan, Italy  
 Monday, March 25, 2024  
 12:27 PM → 12:20 PM<sup>+</sup> 16h 53m 2 stops Business  
 RAP - DFW = AA3649 = E75-Embraer 175  
 LHR - MXP = BA576 = 32A-Airbus A320  
 Operated by Envoy Air as American Eagle  
 Operated by British Airways

What a deal! The brothers collectively saved 158,000 miles.

**That's like a two-for-one to Europe.**

Or like getting a free Upgrade to Business for the price of Premium Economy.

No matter how you look at it, you win. Bingo!

Big picture, the ARC strategy acknowledges that the airlines are rewarding you for flying farther, which is very carrier-counterintuitive. Also, rather than a somewhat limiting direct flight, connections make it possible to divide and conquer the journey for better value.

Here's all that in a table.

Connection	Route	Airline	Cost	Flight Number	Taxes
None/Non-Stop	Dallas-London	AA*	104,500	AA50	\$6
		BA	57,500	BA192	\$732
U.S. Connection	Rapid City-Dallas-London	AA/AA*	89,500	AA3649 / AA50	\$6
		AA*/BA	57,500	AA3649 / BA192	\$737

Connection	Route	Airline	Cost	Flight Number	Taxes
Europe Connection	Dallas-London-Milan			AA50 / BA576	\$23
		BA/BA		BA192 / BA590	\$750
U.S. Connection and Europe Connection	Rapid City-Dallas-London-Milan	AA/AA*/BA		AA3649 / AA50 / BA576	\$23
		AA/BA/BA		AA3649 / BA192 / BA590	\$754

\*AA over the water.

### More Ways ARC Lands Big Value

Don't want to connect with BA through London?

## CHARLOTTE > MUNICH > HELSINKI AMERICAN AND FINNAIR USING AMERICAN MILES

Now, you may not live in Charlotte, or maybe you weren't planning to include Helsinki. But the ARC strategy gives you low-cost, low-tax options to consider. It could be a cheap connection from your home to Charlotte. At the other end, you can add Helsinki, the beautiful "Pearl of the Baltic," to your ever-expanding bucket list. Or you can typically add on a connecting flight, when available, for no additional cost to any Oneworld city.

**Business**  
One way (per person)  
**57,500** miles  
+ **\$24.70**  
**Total** (all passengers)  
57,500 miles + \$24.70  
Includes taxes and carrier-imposed fees  
[Price and tax information](#)

**DEPART**  
Charlotte, NC to Helsinki, Finland  
Tuesday, August 6, 2024  
4:30 PM → 3:35 PM<sup>\*1</sup> 16h 5m 1stop Business  
CLT - MUC = AA716 = 772-Boeing 777  
MUC - HEL = AY1402 = 359-Airbus A350  
Operated by Finnair

## AA'S ONE-STOP LOW-COST LOW-TAX FREE AWARD SEAT AVAILABILITY

Because I often hear people say that they can't find award space to Europe these days, our team checked hundreds of one-stop low-cost, low-tax routes to Europe in Business Class, so you wouldn't have to. Here's what we found.



Keep in mind that I have included routes that offer availability only in one direction, because you can pair them up with a route that offers these super-cheap flights in the other direction, easily!

## ONE-STOP LOW-COST LOW-TAX FREE AWARD SEAT AVAILABILITY TRENDS FROM NEW YORK

To	Outbound			Return		
	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month
Vienna	April, July	Jan., March, April, July, Aug.	Jan., Feb., March	Dec., June, Aug., Oct.	April, May, June, Aug., Oct.	Jan. to March, May, June, July
Frankfurt	April	Jan., April, July, Aug.	Feb., March, July, Aug.			
Geneva	Jan., April, Aug.	Jan., Feb., March, Aug.	Feb., March, Aug.		Dec.	Dec.
Bilbao	Jan.	Jan.		March	Jan.	Jan.
Sofia	May			Dec.		
Amsterdam	Jan., April, Aug.	Jan., Feb., March, April	Feb., March, Aug.			
Venice	Jan., April, July	Jan., Feb., March, Aug.	March, Aug.	Jan., March, April, May	Dec., Jan., March	Dec.
Prague	Jan. to March, April	Jan., Feb., March, July, Aug.	July, Aug.	Dec.	Dec.	
Pisa	Feb. to April, Aug.	Aug.	April, Aug.			
Budapest	Jan. to March, July	Jan. to March, April, Aug.	March, Aug.		Dec.	
Rome	March, April	Jan., Feb., March	Aug.	June, Aug., Oct.	Dec., April, June, July, Aug.	Jan. to March, April, May, June, July

To	Outbound			Return		
	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month
Marseille	Jan., Feb., April, July, Aug.	Jan., March, Aug.	March, Aug.	Feb., June	Dec., Jan., March, April, June, July	Dec., Jan., April
Paris	April	Jan., July, Aug.	Jan., Feb., March	Oct.	Dec., Jan., July, Aug., Oct.	Dec., Jan., Feb. to May, June, July
Florence	April, July	April, July, Aug.	April, Aug.	Jan., Feb., March to May, June, July, Aug.	April, July	
Naples	April, Aug.	April, Aug.	Aug.			
Lisbon	Feb., July, Aug.			March, June, Oct.	Jan., April, May, June, Aug.	Dec., Jan., Feb., March to May, July, Aug.
Bologna	April, July	Jan. to March, Aug.	Aug.	Aug., Oct.	Dec., Jan., March, May to July, Aug., Oct.	Jan., Feb., March, April, May, June, July
Athens	Feb., March, Aug.	Jan., Feb., March, Aug.	Jan.	June	Dec., Jan., March, May, June, July	Dec., Jan., Feb., March, June, July
Palma	Aug.			April, Aug.	April	
Stuttgart	Jan. to April	Jan., Feb., March, Aug.		April, Aug.	March, June, Oct.	Jan. to March, July
Valencia	Jan., Feb.	Aug.	Aug.	Dec. to Feb., March, April to July, Oct.	Dec., Feb., May, June, July	
Zürich	April, July	Jan., Feb., Aug.	Jan., Feb., March, Aug.	Aug., Oct.	May, June, Oct.	Dec. to April, Aug.
Copenhagen	April, July	Jan., July, Aug.	Jan., Feb., March, Aug.	Dec., June, Aug., Oct.	Feb.	Jan., March to May, June, July
Split	Aug.	Aug.		June		
Dubrovnik	July	Aug.		June, July		
Berlin	April	Jan. to March, April, July	Jan. to March, Aug.	Dec., June, Oct.	June, Aug., Oct.	Jan. to May, July
Zagreb	Feb., July, Aug.	Aug.		March, June	April, July	July

To	Outbound			Return		
	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month
Corfu	Aug.	Aug.		April to July	July	
Basel	July	Jan., Feb.	Jan., Feb., March, Aug.	April, June, Oct.	Dec., May, June, July, Aug., Oct.	Dec., Jan. to March, May, July
Nice	April, Aug.	Jan. to March	Jan, Feb., Aug.	Feb., May, June, July, Oct.	Dec., July, Oct.	Jan. to April
Oslo	April, July	Jan., Aug.	Feb., March	Dec., Oct.	June, Oct.	Jan. to May, June, July, Aug., Oct.
Stockholm	Jan., April, July	Jan., Feb., July	Feb., March, Aug.	Dec., May, June, Oct.	April, May, June, Oct.	Jan. to March, July, Aug.

Months in black at least one seat available; in [blue](#), at least two seats; in [green](#), at least four seats. Remember to use the data as a guide since availability can be volatile...

## ONE-STOP LOW-COST LOW-TAX FREE AWARD SEAT AVAILABILITY TRENDS FROM CHARLOTTE

To	Outbound			Return		
	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month
Prague	Jan., Feb.	Feb.				
Lisbon	Jan., Feb.	Feb.		Dec., Jan., March	Feb.	
Oslo		Feb.				
Zürich	Jan.	Feb.				
Athens	Jan., Feb.					
Basel		Feb.				
Copenhagen	Feb.			April		
Vienna	Jan.	Feb.	Feb.	Dec., Jan.		Feb., March

To	Outbound			Return		
	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month
Amsterdam			Feb.	Dec.	Dec.	Jan. to March

Months in black at least one seat available; in [blue](#), at least two seats; in [green](#), at least four seats. Remember to use the data as a guide since availability can be volatile...

## ONE-STOP LOW-COST LOW-TAX FREE AWARD SEAT AVAILABILITY TRENDS FROM CHICAGO

To	Outbound	Return
	4 to 8 Days Per Month	4 to 8 Days Per Month
Pisa	<a href="#">April.</a>	<a href="#">April.</a>

Months in black at least one seat available; in [blue](#), at least two seats; in [green](#), at least four seats. Remember to use the data as a guide since availability can be volatile...

## ONE-STOP LOW-COST LOW-TAX FREE AWARD SEAT AVAILABILITY TRENDS FROM DALLAS

To	Outbound			Return		
	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month
Oslo	<a href="#">Feb.</a>	<a href="#">Feb.</a>		May, Oct.		
Copenhagen	<a href="#">Feb.</a>	Feb.				
Stuttgart	<a href="#">Feb.</a>	Feb.				
Vienna	<a href="#">Feb.</a>					



To	Outbound			Return		
	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month
Prague	Feb.					
Nice	Feb.					
Amsterdam	Oct.	Feb.				
Paris	Jan., Feb.	Feb.				
Basel		Feb.	Feb.	Feb.	Jan., Feb.	Jan., March

Months in black at least one seat available; in [blue](#), at least two seats; in [green](#), at least four seats. Remember to use the data as a guide since availability can be volatile...

## ONE-STOP LOW-COST LOW-TAX FREE AWARD SEAT AVAILABILITY TRENDS FROM LOS ANGELES

To	Outbound	Return		
	4 to 8 Days Per Month	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month
Vienna	Jan., Feb.			
Prague	Jan.			
Basel	Jan., Feb.			
Oslo	Jan., Feb.			
Copenhagen	Jan., Feb.			
Athens	Jan., Feb.			
Nice	Feb.	Jan.	Feb.	Feb., March

Months in black at least one seat available; in [blue](#), at least two seats; in [green](#), at least four seats. Remember to use the data as a guide since availability can be volatile...

## ONE-STOP LOW-COST LOW-TAX FREE AWARD SEAT AVAILABILITY TRENDS FROM MIAMI

To	Outbound	Return		
	4 to 8 Days Per Month	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month
Madrid	Jan., Feb., March	Dec., Feb., March	Jan.	Feb.
Amsterdam	March			
Paris	March			
Frankfurt	March			
Prague	March			
Copenhagen	March			
Vienna	March			

Months in black at least one seat available; in [blue](#), at least two seats; in [green](#), at least four seats. Remember to use the data as a guide since availability can be volatile...

## ONE-STOP LOW-COST LOW-TAX FREE AWARD SEAT AVAILABILITY TRENDS FROM RALEIGH-DURHAM

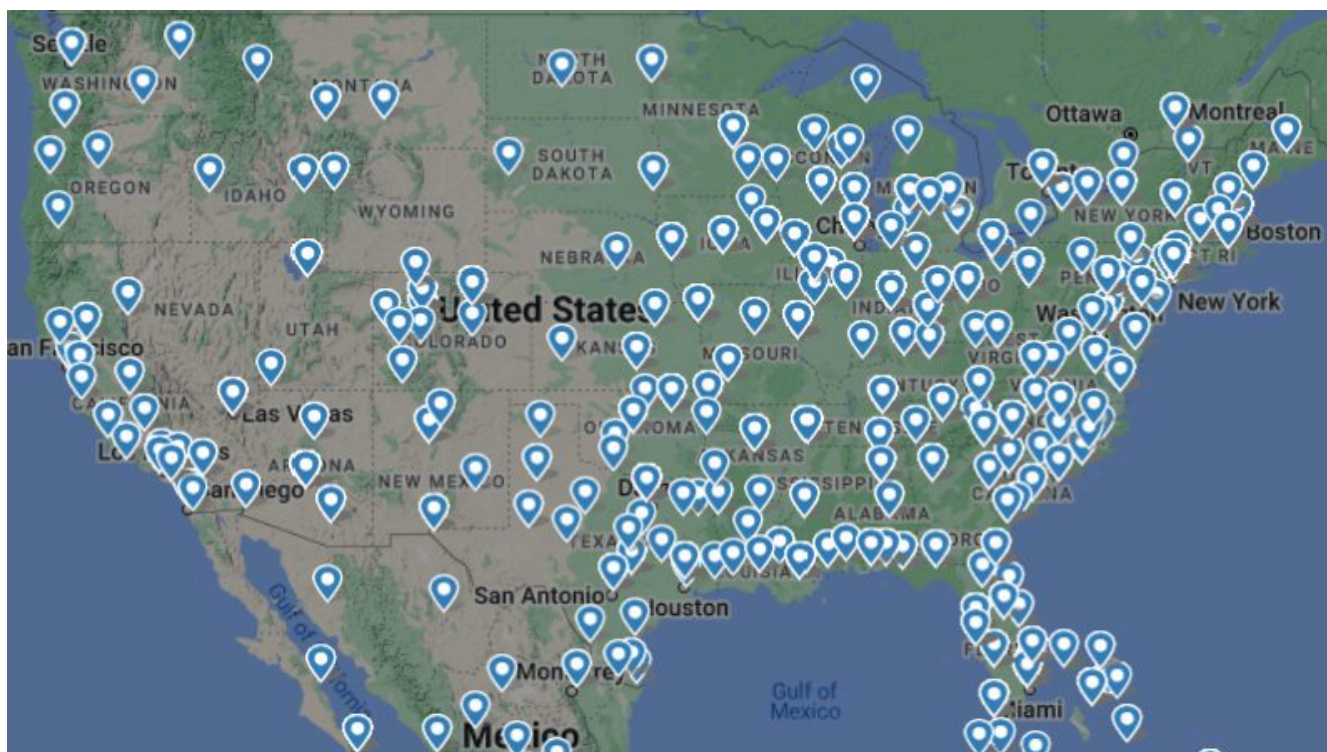
To	Outbound			Return		
	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month
Venice		Jan.	Feb.	Dec.		
Nice	Jan.	March	Feb.			
Frankfurt		Jan., March	Feb.			
Stuttgart	Jan.	March	Feb.			
Athens	March	Jan., Feb.	Feb.			
Oslo	Jan.	March	Feb., March			

To	Outbound			Return		
	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month
Paris		Jan., March	Feb.			
Copenhagen		Jan., March	Feb.			
Zürich	Jan.		Feb., March	July, Aug.	May	Jan. to April., May
Marseille	Jan., Feb.	Feb., March		Jan., Feb., March, July	Feb., March, May, July	April, May
Vienna		Jan.	Feb., March	June, July	July, Aug.	Jan. to May, Aug.
Prague		Jan., March	Feb.	Dec., July, Aug.	Jan., April, July	Jan., Feb., March, April, May

Months in black at least one seat available; in [blue](#), at least two seats; in [green](#), at least four seats. Remember to use the data as a guide since availability can be volatile...

You can typically add on a U.S. connecting flight for no additional cost, when available from any of Oneworld's U.S. departure cities, such as:

## AA U.S. ROUTE MAP



Our research found a lot of routes with free awards for 57,500 miles each way and low taxes. In any case, FCF always recommends grabbing your ticket when you come across a good deal or [something you can live with](#) — and if it's not perfect, [upgrade later](#). And of course don't [book backwards](#).



A man with grey hair, wearing a dark blue shirt and a gold watch, is reclining in a wide airplane seat. He is looking down at a smartphone in his hands. A laptop is open on the table in front of him, and a tray with food and a glass of juice is also on the table. The airplane cabin interior is visible, including the window and overhead storage bins.

# December's Top 75 Mileage Awards & Special Fares Greatest Hits (Still Available)

December 2024

## Cool Winter Deals

There are lots of oohs and ahhs this month that can save you a load of miles, points, and dollars. As we always say, however, don't delay, because some will be out-of-date fast!

## Sweet Redeems

### ASIA

[First Class > Cash OR Miles > Handful of 2 Seats Opportunities > Cathay Pacific > Los Angeles to Hong Kong](#)

[Handful of Single Seat All Nippon Airways Business Class Opportunities from Chicago to Tokyo](#)

[Cash OR Miles > \\*First Class\\* > Cathay Pacific > New York and Many Other Cities to Hong Kong & Beyond > 2+ Travelers](#)

## EUROPE



[\\*First Class\\* With Cash OR Miles > Lufthansa > Washington to Munich > 2+ Travelers](#)

[Miles / Points > First Class > Single Seat > Emirates > Newark to Athens](#)

[115K AA Miles R/T + Low-taxes > 4+ Seats > Biz Class from New York to Geneva](#)

[Air France > Discount Premium Economy > 4+ Seats > for Less Miles than Coach > from Atlanta to Paris > Easy to Book Now](#)

[Discount SWISS Business Class with Miles/Points Availability from Chicago to Zurich and Beyond > 4+ Travelers](#)

[Cash OR Miles > Premium Economy > Air France > Toronto to Paris & Beyond > 4+ Travelers](#)

[58,000 Miles / Points R/T > Biz Class > 4+ Travelers > Virgin Atlantic > New York to London > 2025 Travel](#)

[Air France > Discount Premium Economy > 4+ Seats > for Less Miles than Coach > from Washington to Paris > Easy to Book Now](#)

[115K AA Miles R/T + Low-taxes > 4+ Seats > Biz Class from New York to Stuttgart](#)

[\\*First Class\\* With Cash OR Miles > Lufthansa > Houston to Frankfurt & Beyond > 2+ Travelers](#)

[115K AA Miles R/T + Low-taxes > 4+ Seats > Biz Class from Miami to Madrid](#)

[Cash OR Miles > Premium Economy > Air France > New York to Paris & Beyond > 4+ Travelers](#)

## **MIDDLE EAST**

[Emirates First Class Opportunities from Seattle to Dubai with Miles / Points](#)

[Scads of Emirates Single Seat First Class Availability from Chicago to Dubai with Miles / Points](#)

[Miles > All Year > First Class > Scads of Single Seat Emirates Opportunities from Dallas to Dubai](#)

[Miles > First Class > Emirates \(Amex Partner\) Opportunities from Washington, DC to Dubai > Handful of 1 Seat Availability](#)

[Single Seat Emirates First Class Opportunities from the Boston to Dubai with Miles / Points](#)

[Miles / Points > Scads of Single Seat > Emirates > \\*First Class\\* > Orlando to Dubai](#)

[Discount Opportunities with Qatar Qsuites from Houston to Doha and Beyond With Miles & Points](#)

[Discount Opportunities with Qatar Qsuites from Chicago to Doha and Beyond With Miles & Points](#)

## **Special Published Fares**

### **AFRICA**

[Money > Johannesburg and Cape Town > Fall > Biz Class > \\$3,486 to \\$4,027 R/T](#)

[Money > Nairobi > All Year > Biz Class > \\$3,284 to \\$4,002 R/T](#)

[Money > Morocco > All Year > Biz Class > from Canada from \\$1,880 to \\$3,098 USD R/T](#)



[Money > Cairo > All Year > Biz Class > \\$2,799 to \\$3,261 R/T](#)

[Money > Nairobi > All Year > Biz Class > from Canada from \\$2,446 to \\$3,806 USD R/T](#)

## **ASIA**

[Money > Seoul > Winter/Fall > Biz Class > from Seattle and Chicago from \\$3,631 to \\$4,285 R/T](#)

[Money > Japan > All Year > Biz Class > from Canada from \\$3,535 to \\$4,055 USD R/T](#)

[Money > Asia > All Year > Biz Class > \\$3,232 to \\$4,211 R/T](#)

[Money > Southeast Asia > All Year > Biz Class > from Canada from \\$3,112 to \\$3,422 USD R/T](#)



## **CARIBBEAN**

[Money > St. Thomas > All Year > Biz Class > \\$708 to \\$1,088 R/T](#)

[Money > Aruba > All Year > Biz Class > \\$760 to \\$1,179 R/T](#)

[Money > St. Lucia > All Year > Biz Class > \\$865 to \\$1,162 R/T](#)

[Money > Grand Cayman > All Year > Biz Class > \\$767 to \\$1,176 R/T](#)

[Money > Saint Kitts > All Year > Biz Class > \\$876 to \\$1,177 R/T](#)

[Money > Puerto Rico > All Year > Biz Class > \\$676 to \\$785 R/T](#)

[Money > St. Maarten > All Year > Biz Class > \\$796 to \\$1,187 R/T](#)

[Money > Nassau > All Year > Biz Class > \\$500 to \\$787 R/T](#)

## **EUROPE**

[Money > Porto > Winter > Biz Class > from Washington DC and Boston from \\$2,767 to \\$3,156 R/T](#)

[Money > Europe > All Year > Biz Class with TAP Portugal > \\$2,241 to \\$2,778 R/T](#)

[Money > Naples > Winter/Spring > Biz Class > \\$2,765 to \\$3,143 R/T](#)

[Money > Spain > First Class > \\$4,041 to \\$5,262 R/T](#)

[Money > Lisbon > All Year > Biz Class > \\$2,737 to \\$3,102 R/T](#)

[Money > Stockholm > Summer/Fall > Biz Class > \\$2,397 to \\$3,116 R/T](#)

[Money > Helsinki > Spring > Biz Class > \\$2,716 to \\$3,085 R/T](#)

[Money > Budapest > Fall > Biz Class > \\$2,766 to \\$3,085 R/T](#)

[Money > Copenhagen > Summer > Biz Class > \\$2,751 to \\$3,073 R/T](#)

[Money > Rome > Summer > Biz Class > \\$2,734 to \\$3,083 R/T](#)

[Money > Prague > Summer/Fall > Biz Class > \\$2,620 to \\$3,075 R/T](#)

[Money > Madrid > All Year > Biz Class > \\$2,723 to \\$2,993 R/T](#)

[Money > Barcelona > Summer/Fall > Biz Class > \\$2,760 to \\$3,159 R/T](#)

[Money > Paris > All Year > Biz Class > \\$2,195 to \\$3,091 R/T](#)

[Money > London > Winter/Spring > Biz Class > \\$2,568 to \\$3,214 R/T](#)

[Money > Frankfurt > All Year > Biz Class > \\$2,586 to \\$3,129 R/T](#)

[Money > Amsterdam > All Year > Biz Class > \\$2,710 to \\$3,043 R/T](#)

[Money > Amsterdam > Winter/Spring > First Class > \\$4,085 to \\$5,586 R/T](#)

## **HAWAII**

[Money > Kona > Spring/Summer > Biz Class > \\$1,142 to \\$1,548 R/T](#)

[Money > Honolulu > All Year > Biz Class > \\$855 to \\$1,490 R/T](#)

[Money > Kauai > Winter > Biz Class > \\$963 to \\$1,530 R/T](#)



## **INDIA**

[Money > Mumbai > All Year > Biz Class > \\$2,803 to \\$3,845 R/T](#)

[Money > New Delhi > All Year > Biz Class > \\$2,812 to \\$3,762 R/T](#)



## **MEXICO**

[Money > Cabo San Lucas > All Year > Biz Class > \\$670 to \\$897 R/T](#)

[Money > Puerto Vallarta > All Year > Biz Class > \\$612 to \\$899 R/T](#)

[Money > Cancun > All Year > Biz Class > \\$620 to \\$907 R/T](#)

## **MIDDLE EAST**

[Money > Middle East > All Year > Biz Class > from Canada from \\$2,476 to \\$3,300 USD R/T](#)

[Money > Dubai > All Year > Biz Class > \\$2,747 to \\$3,247 R/T](#)

## **NORTH AMERICA**

[Money > Domestic Transcon > All Year > Biz Class > \\$868 to \\$1,207 R/T](#)

## **SOUTH AMERICA**

[Money > Santiago > All Year > Biz Class > from Toronto and Montreal from \\$2,381 USD R/T](#)

[Money > Buenos Aires > All Year > Biz Class > from Miami and New York from \\$2,728 to \\$3,079 R/T](#)

[Money > Lima > All Year > Biz Class > \\$1,268 to \\$1,553 R/T](#)

[Money > Santiago > All Year > Biz Class > \\$1,912 to \\$3,598 R/T](#)

[Money > Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro > All Year > Biz Class > \\$2,511 to \\$3,203 R/T](#)

## **SOUTH PACIFIC**

[Money > New Zealand and Australia > All Year > Biz Class > from Vancouver from \\$4,227 to \\$4,520 USD  
R/T](#)



# Is FCF's Backup Booking Strategy a Must-Have for Holiday Travel?

December 2024

*I've included this special report initially published years ago. This serves as a friendly reminder about the importance of travel "insurance" and how to handle unexpected disruptions effectively.*

**Two tickets are better than one to guarantee the best seat on the right flights or to save your vacation altogether.**

Let me tell you about a recent airline experience I had and why I think you should book two tickets for your next trip.

I was flying from San Francisco to New York — and me being me — for that length of flight, I wanted the last, non-redeye flight with a wide-body aircraft that didn't only have seat 1A (not my favorite) available. For that privilege, I had to part with \$1,398 for a United Business Class one-way fare. Pain point #1.

That was quickly followed by pain point #2 when at 10 o'clock the night before my flight, United sent me an email informing me of an equipment (aircraft) change. BUT, they couldn't tell me what my seat or aircraft would be for the next day's flight.

I paid \$1,398 flippin' dollars for a one-way domestic ticket and they couldn't tell me that?! As I'm sure you know, such flight changes and outright cancellations are rampant these days.

So now I'm thinking, are they going to throw me in someone else's favorite seat like 1A? We all have different seat and aircraft preferences, but I'm an aisle, second from the last row, middle section (no obstructed exit) on a 2-2-2 configuration kind of guy on domestic flights where I plan on getting work done, not a 1A kind of guy. I know I always say, "see you up front," but not THAT up front!

Now, if the ticket was \$600, that's a different story. But for \$1,398 for a one-way domestic flight, I want a nonstop, on a wide-body aircraft, at a convenient time, with a seat that suits me.

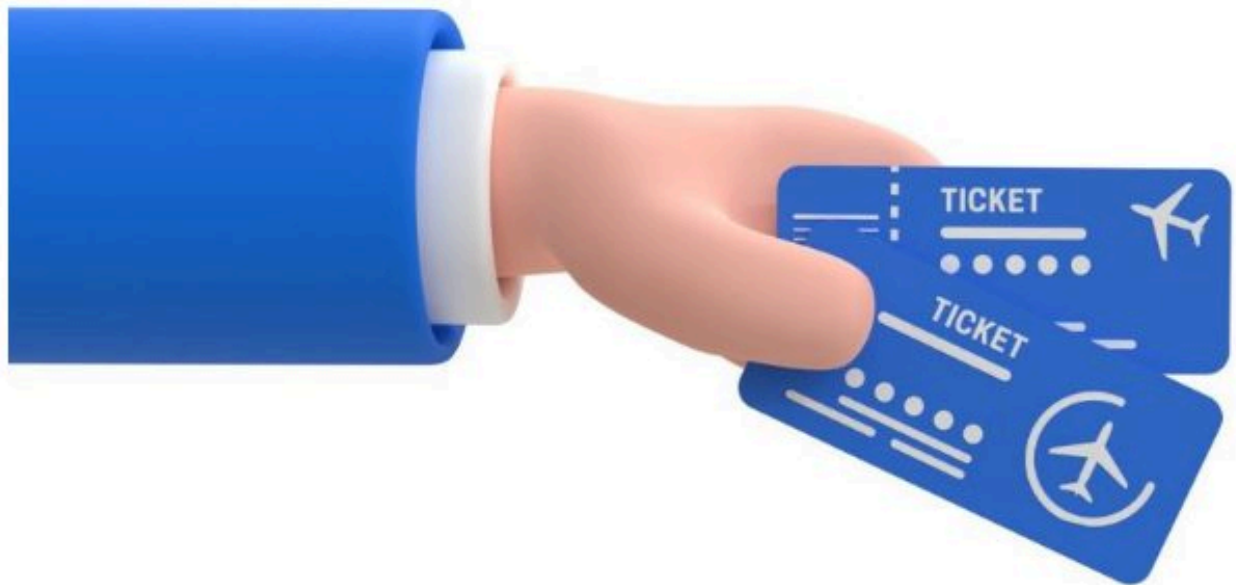
## **THE AIRLINE THREW ME A CURVE BALL, NOW WHAT?**

I try to practice what I preach. I did some quick research and spotted a one-way Delta ticket for \$999 from San Francisco to JFK, not my favorite New York airport, but it was a reasonable hit to take after United couldn't tell me anything about my flight the next day (into Newark). In other words, I considered the less desirable airport instead of the mystery aircraft and seat.

**So I bought the Backup Booking Strategy ticket on Delta for \$999 like any self-respecting buyer of a \$1,398 one-way domestic (mystery) ticket would do.**

At this point I was on my way to SFO with two tickets, when finally United informed me of my fate: They assigned me a seat I didn't want, 1A! The last premium seat I want. With no option to change! So I canceled the United ticket and flew Delta. With no cancellation fees, I can use the United credit within 12 months. (When an airline has an equipment change, the airline automatically re-books on an alternate aircraft. However, your seats could be very different, perhaps undesirable to you, as mine were in this example, and they could even be on a different type of aircraft. You can easily get downgraded to coach as well, by the way.)

That's my story. Let's break it down a little further.



## A TALE OF TWO TICKETS

I think the **Backup Booking Strategy** is a smart move right now given the turbulent nature of air travel these days **with a lot of flights being canceled**. Just because an airline chops and changes, doesn't mean you should miss out on that vacation or important business meeting. With the major U.S. airlines still not charging cancellation fees, you won't lose any money if you buy another ticket. But you will have to reschedule your original ticket within 12 months. Of course, if you shelled out for a refundable ticket, you could get a refund. (Delta offered me an upsell to a fully refundable fare for another \$250, but because I can re-use the ticket value in the next 12 months if I didn't use it, I passed. In fact, I re-used a previously unused Delta ticket for this one.

### IS FCF'S BACKUP BOOKING STRATEGY SIMPLY A "DOUBLE BOOKING"?

While this may appear to be a double booking, it's not. A double booking is a technical airline industry term that means you have **two tickets booked for the same trip**, on the same airline. It's usually against airline policy.

**FCF's Backup Booking Strategy**, on the other hand, is a second ticket for the same trip **on a different airline, so you're fine**. In other words, while Democrats and Republicans talk to each other about your taxes, Delta doesn't talk to United about your tickets.

### IS THIS RIGHT?

I realize that some might consider this strategy unethical, given that you're holding two tickets on two separate airlines for two different flights and potentially depriving an airline of revenue. But since I can't be in both seats at once, the other seat will become available for them to fill, for one.

Moreover, my rationale on the ethics is that the airlines are constantly trying to upsell me to a refundable ticket, which is essentially insurance. But, they can change the aircraft or cancel the flight altogether, often

without making you whole. That's lopsided to me.

While aircraft changes are one thing, flight cancellations nowadays are often caused by poor airline operations so I'm just trying to make the best of the situation (pilots are picketing right now for gosh sake). I don't feel bad for the airlines given that when I do cancel the ticket, they still have my money in credit for another flight later. Plus, they can fill it.

## **BACKUP BOOKING STRATEGY TIPS**

- If you are booking two tickets, do so on separate airlines, not within the same alliance. Otherwise you'll have a "double booking," which is not allowed by the airlines, and they might cancel one of them.
- This strategy works best for frequent or semi-frequent travelers – those who know they can easily use the credit within 12 months.
- Consider whether it's worth paying the extra \$250 or so for the airline-offered refundable ticket option if you don't fly much or don't envision using the credit of your unused Backup Booking Strategy ticket.