

First Class Trend Watch: The Latest Deals for Last-Minute Travelers and Relentless Upgraders Who Already Bought Tickets

August 2023

Plus, how and why to leverage one-way award tickets on American and Emirates.

UPGRADING NEVER SLEEPS

One thing I've learned over the years is that it's never too late to upgrade. Time and time again, this is made clear with a [last-minute upgrade touchdown](#). So a golden rule of travel is never give up, especially when you're approaching your flight's departure time and you're holding a ticket for a seat that will make you miserable—because of the comfort or what it cost.

Thinking with a one-way mindset, as opposed to a default round-trip mindset, can help you upgrade your trip. It opens up the opportunity to make last-minute upgrades if or as they arise.

Think of your departure, for instance. If you're going on a vacation, why not start off on the right foot in First Class? A close-in upgrade can make it happen.

Similarly, an upgraded return flight can be the icing on the cake. It brings you home refreshed and with great memories of the trip you had! Again, First Class is just the ticket.

To that end, we continue with our goal of continually iterating to improve, or what the Japanese call *kaizen*. Below, we show you how to leverage this strategy with **one-way tickets** to dial up your kaizen hit rate, and we look at the **current award availability trends** that our research team have been busy uncovering.

LEVERAGING TWO SEPARATE ONE-WAY AWARD TICKETS

The strategy is simple and it works wherever you're going (I can't remember the last time I booked a round-trip.) Just divide your itinerary in two and search for the best deal on each leg. One-way tickets increase your chances of getting a First Class seat or a seat at a lower award-cost level. See below for some one-way ticket scenarios.



SMART PLAYS WITH ONE-WAYS

Upgrade Your Departure

If you booked two one-way Premium Economy or Business Class tickets months in advance, spend three minutes a day to check flights as you get close to your departure date for available seats in a higher class of service—or the same ones going for a lower price!

If cheap First Class seats open up but only for your outbound flight, you can grab it like a free donut. And your other one-way ticket isn't compromised.

Maybe you splurged on a one-way Business Class seat at a high mileage cost on your outbound flight because, hey it's better than coach, and you got a one-way First Class seat at the Saver rate for your return. Check flights daily for available close-in First and Business Class seats at a lower cost than you originally paid for that high-priced seat — that's a nice trip upgrade.

Upgrade From Your Destination

Cabin value: Get smart about the value of your cabin choices. For example, First Class was only available at the Saver rate outbound, and rather than paying the high cost of an unrestricted award in First on the return, get a separate ticket to fly Business Class. This gives you an opportunity to upgrade later, even when you're already at your destination because the best First Class seats can become available close in at lower pricing than ever.

Set aside a few minutes to check flights daily for available close-in First Class seats, or have your personal assistant or kids do that lifting for you.

BE FLEXIBLE

Finding a First Class seat close in might mean you need to be flexible. Maybe you'd stay in Tokyo an extra day. In that case, head down to Fuji on a day trip or check out the famous fish markets (the sushi there is next level). Every city has that **“if only I had one more day”** factor.

FCF'S CLOSE-IN FIRST CLASS AWARD AVAILABILITY TREND SURVEY

Our team recently studied First Class availability within eight days of departure for one to four seats. While these trends often change, be sure to check in advance to see how things are trending.

Let's **start with routes that are trending with round-trip availability.**

**ROUND-TRIP TREND #1:
TO/FROM SYDNEY AND LOS ANGELES ON AMERICAN
WITH AMERICAN MILES**

See below for the frequency (%) of days with low-cost First Class awards available close in we have recently seen.

Route	1+ Seat	2+ Seats	4+ Seats
Los Angeles-Sydney	44%	32%	8%
Sydney-Los Angeles	43%	26%	17%

**ROUND-TRIP TREND #2:
TO/FROM SAO PAULO AND MIAMI ON AMERICAN
WITH AMERICAN MILES**

See below for the frequency (%) of days with low-cost First Class awards available close in we have recently seen.

Route	1+ Seat	2+ Seats	4+ Seats
Miami-Sao Paulo	14%	6%	0%
Sao Paulo-Miami	19%	10%	3%

**ROUND-TRIP TREND #3:
TO/FROM LONDON AND DALLAS ON AMERICAN
WITH AMERICAN MILES**

See below for the frequency (%) of days with low-cost First Class awards available close in we have recently seen.

Route	1+ Seat	2+ Seats	4+ Seats
Dallas-London	3%	3%	0%
London-Dallas	19%	9%	

ROUND-TRIP TREND #4: TO/FROM NEW YORK AND MILAN WITH EMIRATES MILES

On occasion we see one seat on both the outbound and return; try [EK's waitlist strategy](#).

ROUND-TRIP TREND #5: TO/FROM NEWARK AND ATHENS WITH EMIRATES MILES

We are frequently seeing at least one seat in both directions; again try [EK's waitlist strategy](#).

ROUND-TRIP TREND #6: TO/FROM ABU DHABI AND WASHINGTON, DC, ON ETIHAD |WITH AMERICAN MILES

Etihad's Washington, DC-Abu Dhabi route is showing First Class award seats within 30 days of departure on the outbound leg with up to two seats close in. You can find up to two seats on the return leg from October to June at time of research. This route is unusually ever changing.

One-Way ONLY Routes
(routes with availability either from or to the U.S.)

ONE-WAY TREND #1: FROM LONDON TO LOS ANGELES ON AMERICAN WITH AMERICAN MILES

See below for the frequency (%) of days with low-cost First Class awards available close in we have recently seen.

Route	1+ Seat	2+ Seats	4+ Seats
London-Los Angeles	13%	11%	2%

ONE-WAY TREND #2: FROM LONDON TO NEW YORK ON AMERICAN WITH AMERICAN MILES

See below for the frequency (%) of days with low-cost First Class awards available close in we have recently seen.

Route	1+ Seat	2+ Seats	4+ Seats
London-New York	49%	48%	35%

ONE-WAY TREND #3: FROM NEW YORK TO FRANKFURT WITH SINGAPORE MILES

We found one and two seat availability outbound on one of the eight days we checked. Nothing found on the return flight.

Routes With No First Class Award Space for spontaneous travelers or relentless upgraders – Zip, Zero, Virtually Zilch. In other words, save your time don't bother thinking or dreaming about it for now.

All Nippon Flights–Using All Nippon Miles: All Nippon does not offer award space for departures within 96 hours. Between five and 15 days from departure, there were no award seats found in either direction to/from Chicago, New York, and San Francisco (operates through October 28, 2023) to Tokyo.

American Flights–Using American Airline Miles: We **did not** find American seats outbound from Los Angeles and New York to London; Miami to London, both directions; Miami to Buenos Aires (operates October 28, 2023 to March 30, 2024); New York to Delhi, both directions; and New York to Doha, both directions.

Cathay Pacific Flights Using Cathay Miles: We found no seats in either direction on their Los Angeles- or San Francisco-Hong Kong routes.

Japan Airlines Flights Using American Airline Miles: We have NOT recently seen seats on any of Japan's four First Class routes. Although we are looking for this to change back to historically reliable last-minute availability.

Qantas Flights Using American Airlines Miles: From Los Angeles to Sydney, we found no seats on the outbound flight, and just one on the return flight on one day.

Singapore Flights Using Singapore Airlines Miles: On the Los Angeles-Tokyo route, we found no seats in either direction.

Follow the trends we're seeing above, and I'll see you in First Class.



Transcon Update: New Premium Airfare and Miles Trends

August 2023

Counter-intuitive ways to find the latest (and sharpest) needles in the domestic premium travel haystack

Nothing quite gets my blood boiling like transcon costs, considering how prices skyrocketed back when the lockdowns were winding up. I fly this route often and have enjoyed \$1,200 round-trip Business Class fares for years. So when fares got up to the **\$2,500-\$4,500 price tag for non-red-eye and 6 a.m. flights**, I started getting my blood pressure tested regularly because award space was ridiculously high as well.

As we suggested in our [Annual Crystal Ball Report](#), the scene is starting to change for the better.

BAD NEWS RECAP

In June last year [New York-Los Angeles fares jumped](#) from the \$1,078-\$2,296 range to the \$1,848-\$3,426 range. Then [in March, fares started to drop a bit to the \\$1,798 to \\$3,408 range](#).

SOME CHANGES FOR THE GOOD AMERICAN AIRLINES

New York to/from Los Angeles — has dropped up to 33%: Typically, fares through the end of April start in the \$1,898 range, with a handful of days as low as \$1,489 (down from \$1,798) and as high as \$2,298 (down from \$3,426).

New York to/from San Francisco — has dropped up to 34%: Typical fares are in the \$1,698 to \$2,398 range, with a handful of days as low as \$1,498 next January and February.

UNITED AIRLINES

New York to/from Los Angeles — has dropped up to 30%: United has the lowest fares overall with a couple of days at \$1,298 as far out as you can book. Their highest fares range from \$2,248 to \$4,011 for close in travel, and beyond that, fares range from \$1,498 to \$2,347.

New York to/from San Francisco — largely unchanged: Currently the lowest fares are about \$1,798 on a bunch of random days as far out as you can book for travel mostly on Saturdays. Otherwise, fares range from \$2,206 to \$3,304.

THE BAD NEWS

DELTA AIR LINES

New York to/from Los Angeles — largely unchanged: This route has a couple of days in the \$1,798 range for travel departing November through April, with the highest fares in the \$2,398 to \$2,898 range for close in travel. Otherwise fares range from \$1,898 to \$2,498.

New York to/from San Francisco — largely unchanged: Current fares as far out as you can book are in the \$1,798 to \$2,398 range and as high as \$2,418.

Route	American			Delta			United		
May-22	Jun-23	Current	May-22	Jun-23	Current	May-22	Jun-23	Current	
To/From New York-Los Angeles	\$1,078 to \$2,296	\$1,848 to \$3,426	\$1,498 to \$2,298	\$1,738 to \$3,898	\$1,998 to \$2,598	\$1,798 to \$2,898	\$1,180 and \$2,192	\$1,845 to \$4,196	N/A

Route	American			Delta			United		
To/From New York-San Francisco	\$1,098 to \$2,058	\$2,298 to \$3,548	\$1,498 to \$3,164	\$1,739 to \$3,198	\$1,908 to \$2,418	\$1,798 to \$2,898	\$1,180 and \$2,192	\$1,845 to \$3,352	
To/From Newark-Los Angeles							\$1,180 and \$2,192	\$1,845 to \$2,292	\$1,298 to \$4,011
To/From Newark-San Francisco	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$1,180 and \$2,192	\$1,848 to \$3,426	\$1,798 to \$3,304

INTERESTING FARE TRENDS

We noticed there are more **low-fare days when traveling West to East than East to West** for close in travel on Delta. That's also the case on American Airlines through February, and on United as far out as you can book.

The lowest fares on United are mostly for Saturday departures and Delta is typically the lowest on Fridays and Saturdays.

That's fares, now let's talk...

MILES

Domestic Business Class low-cost mileage rates have [historically been around 20,000 miles](#) one-way. In May 2021 they [went up to 52,500](#), then [they rose to between 60,000 and 70,000 miles](#) each way in February 2022.

Now we're starting to see lower mileage costs on American in the 26,500 to 35,000 range one-way – while United is at 73,000 and Delta is at a ridiculous 90,000.

NEW AMERICAN AIRLINES TRENDS

- Presently, American Airlines is offering more low-cost transcon awards than we have recently seen over the last year, ranging from 26,500 to 35,000 each way to/from New York-Los Angeles and 29,500 to 34,000 each way to/from New York-San Francisco.
- We have seen a trend where American releases low-cost **close in** award space as low as 31,000 each way to/from New York-Los Angeles and 33,000 each way to/from New York-San Francisco.
- **Presently, New York to/from Los Angeles there are more days with lower-cost award seats when traveling East to West versus West to East.** More on the takeaway in a moment.
- Traveling to/from New York-San Francisco typically offers more days with lower cost award seats when compared with traveling to/from New York-Los Angeles.

- Typically the lowest cost award seats can be found on the first and last flight of the day (i.e. red-eyes and 6 a.m. flights).
- New York to San Francisco typically offers award seats available for travel on Friday through Sunday and Tuesdays and from San Francisco to New York on Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday.
- We have seen mileage costs as low as 20,500 when flying into John Wayne (SNA) versus Los Angeles (LAX).
- October through December are the highest cost travel times, ranging from 87,00 to 100,000 miles each way.

DELTA AIR LINES

Forget about flying Delta with miles! They don't have anything reasonable. Mileage fares start in the 90,000 to 110,000 range one-way, which is around 1 cent a mile in value. As we always say, find another hobby rather than collecting SkyMiles. Stamps, beer cans, vinyl records...they're all more lucrative.

At this rate, you can get three American one-way transcon tickets for close in travel for the price of one Delta one-way ticket.

UNITED AIRLINES

You can also forget about flying United with miles. They start at around 73,000. Typically, the lowest cost awards can be found for 80,000 miles one-way. Again, you can get two low-cost American tickets for the cost of one United ticket.

TAKEAWAYS

- Consider checking availability on American Airlines close in if you hold a \$2,000+ ticket, as explained in the [iterative upgrade mindset](#).
- Divide your round-trip itinerary into two one-way tickets. This actually increases your odds of finding lower-cost award seats when using miles. (I can't remember the last time I booked a round-trip.)
- Consider using miles for a one-way ticket when they are pricing low and paying cash for the other. In other words, mixed-currency trips are often the way to go.

In the meantime, here are some FCF midsummer value helpers for transcon tragics:

- [Nine Stabs in the Dark to Beat High Transcon Prices](#)
- Adding Hawaii using the ["Hula Loophole"](#)
- [Domestic in-class upgrades](#) for other domestic routes.
- Book a 2nd ticket and have [a back-up plan](#)
- [Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: A Second Life for Your Canceled AA Tickets](#)



FCF goes cross-country bargain hunting

SAN FRANCISCO

1

2

3

4

How Bob Scored a 72%
Savings in Business Class to
the South Pacific

1 + 2 + 3 + 4

All 4 legs—on one ticket

FCF's Leg Stretch Strategy

August 2023

FCF's Leg Stretch Strategy combines end-of-the-earth locations with world-beating savings

I recently ran into Bob, a long-term FCF subscriber from Marin County, California. We got to talking about his upcoming trip to the South Pacific, which included a cruise out of Auckland. He told me he had trouble finding a premium cabin ticket for the right price.

“Right price,” that’s a good one. Getting to the South Pacific nowadays is a coconut-sized pain in the hammock with Business Class round-trip fares going for \$7,000+ from Los Angeles and \$10,000+ from the East Coast.

No First Class Flyer subscriber is going to pay anywhere near those prices on my watch! Bob's like me – he's the kind of guy who won't fly coach, *or pay* the asking price for Business or First Class. Love you, Bob.

The solution for his current predicament was FCF's Leg Stretch Strategy. The idea is simply to book those South Pacific flights in conjunction with another trip you're already planning this year; in this case, Bob also has an upcoming trip to Milan. Bingo! Combining a trip to Europe with a trip to the South Pacific goes together better than papaya and lime.

HOW FCF'S LEG STRETCH STRATEGY WORKS FOR A SFO TRAVELER FLYING TO ITALY AND NEW ZEALAND ON TWO SEPARATE TRIPS

When I told Bob that on a single ticket he could combine a trip to Europe (Milan, Italy) and the South Pacific (Auckland, New Zealand) and save \$9,000 versus doing those trips separately, he just about cored his pineapple.

That's the FCF Leg Stretch Strategy in a coconut shell. It's a rather unconventional one-ticket-wonder that offers **astounding savings** if your palm trees align, like they did for Bob.

Why did the strategy work for him?

Bob's Sweet Spot for a Leg Stretch Strategy

- In a 12-month period, he was visiting two continents
- He'll visit one of those continents twice (Europe), forming the start and end of the Leg Stretch
- After visiting the first continent, he'll return to the U.S.
- After visiting the second continent, he'll return to the U.S.
- He can stretch this out over 12 months

Let's look at a specific (Pacific) example.

THE SAN FRANCISCO > MILAN > AUCKLAND LEG STRETCH

The thing about the Leg Stretch Strategy is that the ticket starts and ends *outside* of the U.S. Now, before you click away, consider that the savings are so great that they more than compensate for the cost of getting to and from those places.

Let's get to it.

First, Bob flies to Milan on a one-way flight (or a round-trip of which the return flight is completed at the end of the Leg Stretch).

Then the Leg Stretch starts:

1. Milan to San Francisco (stop at home for a while)
2. San Francisco to Auckland (enjoy a great city that's a gateway to the South Pacific — including Australia — and of course, amazing New Zealand)
3. Auckland to San Francisco (stop at home for a while)
4. San Francisco to Milan or another European city (enjoy the continent again)

This entire four-leg journey costs **\$3,473 in Business Class**. Amazingly, for such disparate locations, it's all on one ticket.



The screenshot below is from Google Flights, the easiest tool to search for dates with unusually low fares for multi-city tickets.

Multi-city trip				\$3,473.10
Business Class · 1 passenger		Lowest total price		
	Tue, Sep 5 · 11:05 AM – 4:05 PM Lufthansa, United	14 hr MXP-SFO	1 stop 1 hr 10 min FRA	▼
	Wed, Feb 7 · 7:45 PM – 5:50 AM ⁺² Air New Zealand - United	13 hr 5 min SFO-AKL	Nonstop	▼
	Tue, Feb 27 · 7:55 PM – 11:05 AM Air New Zealand - United	12 hr 10 min AKL-SFO	Nonstop	▼
	Wed, May 1 · 7:50 PM – 6:25 PM ⁺¹ SWISS - United	13 hr 35 min SFO-MXP	1 stop 1 hr 50 min ZRH	▼

Here's a screenshot from Orbitz.com, an online travel agency, that shows the price.



Milan to San Francisco

11:05am - 4:05pm (14h, 1 stop)

Lufthansa • Tue, Sep 5

Business Saver

San Francisco to Auckland

7:45pm - 5:50am (13h 5m, nonstop)

Air New Zealand • Wed, Feb 7

Business Saver

Auckland to San Francisco

7:55pm - 11:05am (12h 10m, nonstop)

Air New Zealand • Tue, Feb 27

Business Saver

San Francisco to Milan

7:50pm - 6:25pm (13h 35m, 1 stop)

Swiss International Air Lines • Wed, May 1

Business Saver

Price summary

Traveler 1: Adult	\$3,473.10
Flight	\$2,658.00
Taxes and fees <small>(i)</small>	\$815.10

Trip total **\$3,473.10**

Note that you can substitute Sydney or Melbourne, in Australia, for Auckland, often for a similar price or a bit more, but often at a substantial savings.

As mentioned, Northern California resident Bob can hang out at home after segment 1 and segment 3. He has 12 months to complete the entire Leg Stretch.

While San Francisco had the best fares we found, other U.S. cities can still save you well over 60% via the Leg Stretch.



SEAL THE DEAL, BENNETT: SHOW ME THE MATH

Let's compare this to a Business Class trip with flights to Milan and Auckland bought as two separate round-trip tickets. In Business Class, it would cost around \$12,599 at the time of publication. Again, combining them into one Leg Stretch Business Class ticket costs \$3,473. That's a **savings of \$9,126, or 72%**.

Now, Bob had a cruise ship rendezvous, but you could parlay some of those savings into a New Zealand adventure. The South Island of New Zealand offers spectacular mountain scenery, glaciers, and turquoise lakes. No wonder they shoot lots of films there including *Lord of the Rings*. One of the mountain ranges is called The Remarkables, and you can see why.

Here are some examples of other Leg Stretch options that start in Europe, and the Pacific-sized savings they give you Down Under that we found in our research this month.

Airline	Start Your LSS Ticket In:	Your U.S. Stop (Both Coming and Going), Perhaps your Home or Nearby Airport	Your Down Under Destination:	Fare for Four Legs (in Effect, Two Round-Trips)	Total Two Normal Round-Trips in Business Class	FCF Strategy Savings
United	Milan	San Francisco	Auckland	\$3,473	\$12,599	\$9,126 / 72%
United	Rome	Atlanta	Auckland	\$3,611	\$12,922	\$9,311 / 72%

Airline	Start Your LSS Ticket In:	Your U.S. Stop (Both Coming and Going), Perhaps your Home or Nearby Airport	Your Down Under Destination:	Fare for Four Legs (in Effect, Two Round-Trips)	Total Two Normal Round-Trips in Business Class	FCF Strategy Savings
United	Amsterdam	Atlanta	Auckland	\$4,335	\$13,249	\$8,914 / 67%
United	Rome	Houston	Auckland	\$4,365	\$13,525	\$9,160 / 68%
United	Venice	Philadelphia	Auckland	\$4,368	\$14,069	\$9,701 / 69%
American	Zurich	Dallas	Melbourne	\$5,077	\$13,602	\$8,525 / 63%
American	Zurich	Dallas	Sydney	\$5,098	\$13,608	\$8,510 / 63%
American	Frankfurt	Los Angeles	Auckland	\$5,383	\$12,882	\$7,499 / 58%

As mentioned, the LSS finishes away from the U.S. – in this case, Europe. So what should you do at that point? You have two options. You can start ANOTHER Leg Stretch ticket (Option 1) or simply get a ticket that takes you back home (Option 2).

Option #1: Book another LSS Ticket. Since you're in Europe, why not start another Leg Stretch? As you can control the timing of that final flight to the U.S. to complete an LSS, you can link it into your next multi-continent ticket. The savings you'd net over more trips like this are *fantastico*.

Option #2: Head Home. If you're happy to finish your Leg Stretch, you can buy a round-trip ticket to/from the starting point and return destination, or two one-way tickets.

Think about using your miles to kickstart your Leg Stretch too.

FCF has examined a whole bunch of Leg Stretch itineraries over the years to destinations including [Asia](#), [the Middle East](#), and [South America](#).

See you up front, every time.



Hunting Season for Miles / Points: Get Business Class to Europe for 53,000 R/T or Just \$1,567 in Cash

August 2023

How anyone can get a Business Class ticket to Europe for about the price of Premium Economy

Not everyone has a Scrooge McDuck vault full of miles and points stashed in their various accounts. That means you must use yours carefully to get as many premium class tickets as possible for the finite number of miles and points you have. Sounds obvious, but it's rarely an easy task.

Until now.

For a short time — through August 31 — Amex is offering a transfer bonus with Iberia, the national airline of Spain. It means Iberia Plus members (anyone can join in minutes) can get a 30% bonus on the transfer. Yes, we've seen 40% and 50% transfer bonuses in the past, but if you're considering booking anytime soon, a duck in hand is worth two in the pond.

WHERE THE BIRDING IS GOOD

Use our handy FCF availability treasure map towards the bottom of this report to fish with. Availability at the time of publication is decent. [Validate with Iberia for your particular dates](#) before transferring miles in case things change, as they often can.



Get your miles ducks in a row with Amex's Iberia transfer bonus

BUSINESS CLASS COST IN MILES

Iberia operates a flight-distance award chart, so the miles required are based on the length of the flight.

53,000 low season / 77,000 high season round-trip:
(Normally 68,000 / 100,000)

Madrid to/from Boston, Chicago, New York, and Washington, DC

66,000 low season / 97,000 high season round-trip:
(Normally 85,000 / 125,000)
Madrid to/from Dallas and Miami

79,000 low season / 116,000 high season round-trip:
(Normally 102,000 / 150,000)
Madrid to/from Los Angeles and San Francisco

More information on round-trip Business Class flights between the U.S. and Madrid [for low-season and high-season dates](#).

NO AMEX POINTS? DUCK BELOW AND GET SOME

If you don't have many or any Amex points, you can buy them for 2.5 cents each. The 30% transfer bonus brings that down to 1.9 cents. Let's get the calculator out: It means you can buy that ticket to Madrid from Boston, Chicago, New York, or Washington, DC, for just \$1,567, including taxes, round-trip.

Now, if [you don't live in one of the airline's U.S. hub cities](#) — Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, San Francisco, or Washington, DC — you can travel from, or get a stopover in, the U.S. hub city coming and/or going [for a few more miles](#) from any of Oneworld's (American or Alaska) [U.S. departure cities based on availability](#). If you don't live in a Oneworld hub, consider [positioning flights](#).

TAKE IBERIA'S DEAL EVEN FURTHER

Keen to [go beyond Madrid](#) on the other side of the pond? You can also get a free stopover in Madrid.

Travel Beyond Madrid: For 9,000 off-peak (10,000 peak) miles one-way or 18,000 off-peak (20,000 peak) miles round-trip, you can explore other awesome cities near Madrid like Barcelona, Bilbao, Geneva, Ibiza, Lisbon, Lyon, Malaga, Marseilles, Nice, Palma de Mallorca, Seville, Valencia, and many others.

Travel Far Beyond Madrid: For 15,000 off-peak (16,500 peak) miles one-way or 30,000 (33,000 peak) miles round-trip, you can add on Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels, Dublin, Dubrovnik, Florence, Frankfurt, Genoa, Glasgow, Hamburg, London, Malta, Manchester, Milan, Munich, Naples, Palermo, Paris, Prague, Rome, Strasbourg, Tenerife, Turin, Venice, Vienna, Zagreb, Zurich, and more.

THE MATH FOR \$1,567 BUSINESS CLASS ROUND-TRIPS TO EUROPE INCLUDING TAXES – AND OTHER GREAT EXAMPLES

To Madrid From	Normal Business Class Cost R/T	Cost When Transferring During 30% Bonus	Cost to Buy Amex Points (at 2.5 Cents Each)	Total Cost Including Award Ticket Taxes	Typical Published Fare	Savings With This Strategy
Boston	68,000	53,000	\$1,325	\$1,567	\$3,751	\$2,184 58%
Chicago	68,000	53,000	\$1,325	\$1,567	\$3,801	\$2,234 59%
Dallas	85,000	66,000	\$1,650	\$1,892	\$4,201	\$2,309 55%
Los Angeles	102,000	79,000	\$1,975	\$2,217	\$4,201	\$1,984 47%
Miami	85,000	66,000	\$1,650	\$1,892	\$3,801	\$1,909 50%
New York	68,000	53,000	\$1,325	\$1,567	\$3,301	\$1,734 53%

To Madrid From	Normal Business Class Cost R/T	Cost When Transferring During 30% Bonus	Cost to Buy Amex Points (at 2.5 Cents Each)	Total Cost Including Award Ticket Taxes	Typical Published Fare	Savings With This Strategy
San Francisco	102,000	79,000	\$1,975	\$2,217	\$4,501	\$2,284 51%
Washington, DC	68,000	53,000	\$1,325	\$1,567	\$3,601	\$2,034 56%

FCF'S IBERIA TREASURE MAP

The availability shown below is at the time of research. Make sure to [validate with Iberia for your particular dates](#) before transferring miles.

Boston has up to four seats close in for travel in August both on the outbound and on the return, while September has just a handful of days with four seats on the return. And two-seat availability for travel in January, with just a handful of seats for one traveler in February and March.

Chicago outbound has a handful of days with one seat availability in January and March while the return has a handful of days with up to four seats in August and September as well as two seats from December to February.

Miami has a handful of days with two seat availability outbound in January and February while the return has many days with two seat availability from January to May.

New York has a handful of days with four seats for travel both directions in August (close in) while the outbound has a handful of days with one seat availability January to March. The return has a handful of days with two seat availability in December and February through June.

	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	Feb., March	Aug., Jan.		Sept., Nov., Dec. to Feb., March, April, May	Sept., Dec., Jan., May	Aug.
Chicago	Jan., March			Aug., Sept., Dec. to Feb., March to May	Dec.	Jan., Feb.
Miami	Jan., Feb., March, April	Jan., Feb.		April, May, June	Jan., March, April	Feb., Jan.

	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	Aug., Jan. to March	Aug.		Aug., Dec., Jan., Feb. to June	Aug., April to June	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...

You can use this Iberia play to launch a spectacular low-cost deal we call [The Leg Stretch Strategy](#). If you're planning to visit Europe and South America in a 12-month window, you'll take to these Iberia one-ways like a duck to water.



Three ways to use the mixed-cabin strategy...

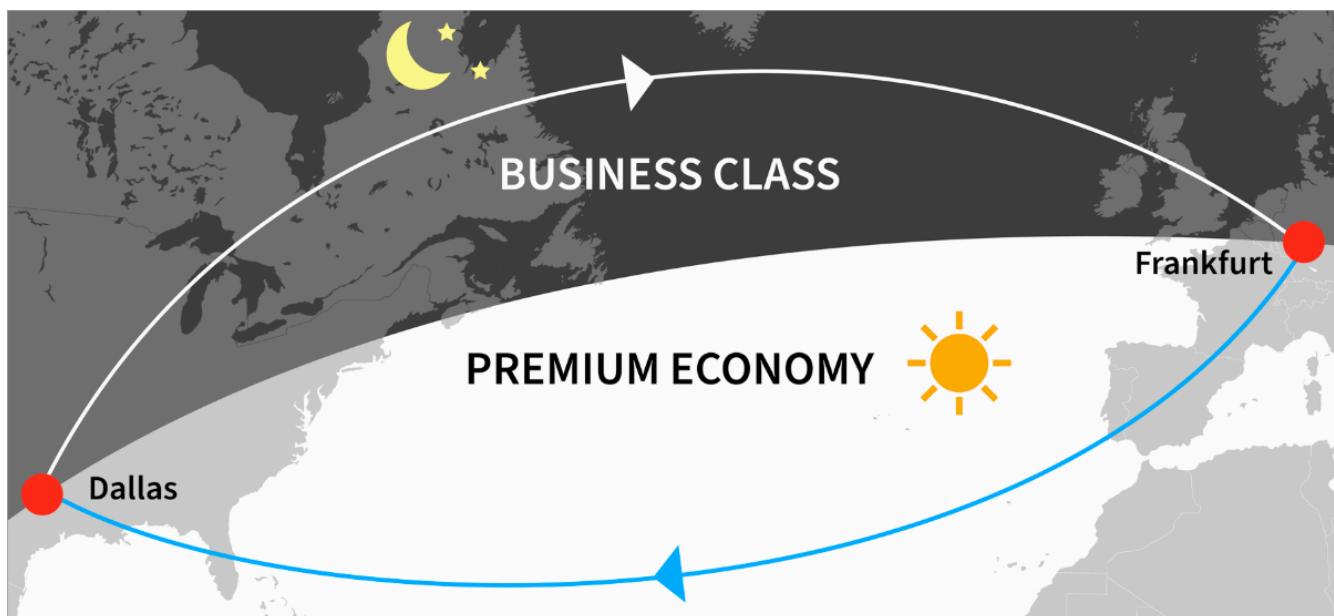
Most flyers simply pick the cabin they want (or can afford) and book a round-trip ticket. We say, don't book so fast. A little "cabin flip" might be the smart play, and a smart way to save, as you'll see in the three examples we share below. A cabin flip is simply departing in one cabin and returning in another. For example, you might fly out in Business Class and return in Premium Economy, or vice versa. Let's get specific about the details.

CABIN FLIP EXAMPLE #1: DALLAS <> FRANKFURT

A Dallas-Frankfurt nonstop round-trip, ticket in Business Class goes for around \$3,689 on American. But if you fly in Business Class to Frankfurt and return in *Premium Economy*, the total cost is \$2,674, a savings of \$1,015.

Now you might say, “Bennett, *of course* it’s going to cost less – it’s Premium Economy and not Business Class on the way home.” To that I say, have a look at those flight times in the screenshot below. The flight to Frankfurt is overnight, the perfect time to fly in a lie-flat seat because you’re much more likely to get a restful sleep.

But coming home, the flight is in the daytime when you’ll likely be binging on movies or doing some work on your laptop. For that purpose, the cabins “even up.” The savings of over \$1,000 is a great move if you’re on a budget, but of course it’s a personal decision. A value trade-off.



**AMERICAN DALLAS <>> FRANKFURT
BUSINESS CLASS / BUSINESS CLASS \$3,689**



Flagship® Business

Round trip (Non-refundable)

\$3,689 per person

Total \$3,688.25 (all passengers)

DEPART

Dallas/Fort Worth, TX to Frankfurt, Germany

Wednesday, November 1, 2023

4:10 PM → 7:55 AM 9h 45m Nonstop Flagship® Business

= AA70 = 789-Boeing 787

RETURN

Frankfurt, Germany to Dallas/Fort Worth, TX

Wednesday, November 8, 2023

10:55 AM → 3:00 PM 11h 5m Nonstop Flagship® Business

= AA71 = 789-Boeing 787

**AMERICAN DALLAS <>> FRANKFURT
BUSINESS CLASS / PREMIUM ECONOMY \$2,674**



Flagship® Business / Premium

Economy

Round trip (Non-refundable)

\$2,674 per person

DEPART

Dallas/Fort Worth, TX to Frankfurt, Germany

Wednesday, November 1, 2023

4:10 PM → 7:55 AM 9h 45m Nonstop Flagship® Business

= AA70 = 789-Boeing 787

RETURN

Frankfurt, Germany to Dallas/Fort Worth, TX

Wednesday, November 8, 2023

10:55 AM → 3:00 PM 11h 5m Nonstop Premium Economy

= AA71 = 789-Boeing 787

**CABIN FLIP EXAMPLE #2:
UPGRADE A PREMIUM ECONOMY ROUND-TRIP
TO BUSINESS ONE WAY FOR JUST \$33 / HOUR**

In the previous example, we went down a cabin. For this route we're going up. Why not *upgrade* from a standard Premium Economy round-trip flight to Europe, to a mixed-cabin strategy (get Business Class to Europe on the overnight leg, Premium Economy during the day flight) for just \$33 per flight hour? What price would you pay for a comfortable sleep on your flight across the pond? It's way more than \$33 an hour if you ask me, I mean sleep therapists must get \$150 per hour, right? Now, let's see it in action.

As the screenshots below show, Philadelphia-Venice is a high-fare route, with Premium Economy round-trips typically going for \$3,059, while Business Class is at \$5,600 to \$7,000+. However, if you were to exit the plane after a comfy *Business Class* experience at 9:15 a.m. in Venice, you're much more likely to head to the

nearest gondola and start enjoying yourself than you would if you just pried yourself out of an overnight Premium Economy seat. In that case, you wouldn't be looking for a gondola, you'd be looking for a bed, and hopefully not sleepily slipping into a canal on the way.

However, after your Venetian vacation, you can head back to Philly on a mixed-cabin ticket for just \$3,325, or only \$266 (*\$33 per flight hour*) more, to get that Business Class overnight flight on the outbound.

AMERICAN PHILADELPHIA <> VENICE PREMIUM ECONOMY R/T \$3,059

American Airlines

Premium Economy	DEPART	Philadelphia, PA to Venice, Italy
Round trip (Non-refundable)		Monday, August 7, 2023
\$3,059 per person		7:24 PM → 9:25 AM 8h 1m Nonstop Premium Economy
Total \$3,058.85 (all passengers)		= AA714 = 788-Boeing 787
	RETURN	Venice, Italy to Philadelphia, PA
		Monday, August 14, 2023
		12:15 PM → 3:28 PM 9h 13m Nonstop Premium Economy
		= AA715 = 788-Boeing 787

AMERICAN'S PHILADELPHIA TO VENICE BUSINESS CLASS / PREMIUM ECONOMY \$3,325

American Airlines

Flagship® Business / Premium Economy	DEPART	Philadelphia, PA to Venice, Italy
Round trip (Non-refundable)		Monday, August 7, 2023
\$3,325 per person		7:24 PM → 9:25 AM 8h 1m Nonstop Flagship® Business
		= AA714 = 788-Boeing 787
	RETURN	Venice, Italy to Philadelphia, PA
		Monday, August 14, 2023
		12:15 PM → 3:28 PM 9h 13m Nonstop Premium Economy
		= AA715 = 788-Boeing 787

CABIN FLIP EXAMPLE #3: LIVE ROYALLY FOR JUST \$700?

Let's make this interesting. I'll see your Business Class round-trip ticket to London *and raise it* to First Class on the departure leg. What better way to start a vacation in "the old dart" than to fly there royally in First?

According to fares at the time of publication, that kingly comfort upgrade will only cost you an extra \$700 if you're flying American Airlines this winter. Tally ho!

AMERICAN AIRLINES NEW YORK TO LONDON BUSINESS CLASS R/T \$2,893

American Airlines

Flagship® Business Round trip (Non-refundable) \$2,893 per person	DEPART New York, NY to London, United Kingdom Tuesday, January 2, 2024 6:55 PM → 7:00 AM 7h 5m Nonstop Flagship® Business ■ AA100 ■ 77W-Boeing 777
	RETURN London, United Kingdom to New York, NY Monday, January 8, 2024 10:35 AM → 1:45 PM 8h 10m Nonstop Flagship® Business ■ AA101 ■ 77W-Boeing 777

AMERICAN AIRLINES NEW YORK TO LONDON FIRST CLASS / BUSINESS CLASS \$3,593

American Airlines

Flagship® First / Flagship® Business Round trip (Non-refundable) \$3,593 per person Total \$3,592.35 (all passengers)	DEPART New York, NY to London, United Kingdom Tuesday, January 2, 2024 6:55 PM → 7:00 AM 7h 5m Nonstop Flagship® First ■ AA100 ■ 77W-Boeing 777
	RETURN London, United Kingdom to New York, NY Monday, January 8, 2024 10:35 AM → 1:45 PM 8h 10m Nonstop Flagship® Business ■ AA101 ■ 77W-Boeing 777

HOW TO FIND AND BOOK THE LOWEST MIXED-CABIN FARES

Step #1: Find dates with lowest round-trip Business Class fares (perhaps on Google Flights).

Step #2: Find dates with lowest round-trip Premium Economy Class fares (perhaps on Google Flights).

Step #3: Book the dates and class that pair with your itinerary on American.

So to wrap up, the cabin flip is one of those lesser-known FCF booking strategies that can net you some big savings. And hey, there's no better way to kick off your European vacation than with a sweet lie-flat seat in Business or First Class and a good night of sleep. Keep an eye on this strategy to save some money, optimize your comfort, and boost your travel experience.



August Top 90 Mileage Awards & Special Fares Greatest Hits (Still Available)

August 2023

Hot Summer Deals Baked Fresh

FCF's team has been working hard in the heat to cook up some delicious deals. Check out August's sizzling fare and mile offerings below, right off the cooker and onto your plate.

Special Published Fares

AFRICA

[All Year: Cairo Biz Class from \\$2,715 to \\$3,222 R/T](#)

[Winter: Casablanca Biz Class from \\$2,777 to \\$3,230 R/T](#)

[Summer/Winter: Johannesburg Biz Class from \\$3,407 to \\$4,053 R/T](#)

[Nairobi Biz Class from \\$3,359 to \\$3,914 R/T](#)

[Nairobi Biz Class from Canada from \\$2,872 to \\$3,953 USD R/T](#)

ASIA

[All Year: Manila Biz Class from Los Angeles, Miami, and Seattle from \\$3,634 to \\$3,925 R/T](#)

[All Year: Vietnam Biz Class from New York from \\$3,494 R/T](#)

[Summer Tokyo Biz Class from \\$3,628 to \\$4,155 R/T](#)

[Winter/Spring: Kuala Lumpur Biz Class from \\$3,658 to \\$3,686 R/T](#)

[Seoul Biz Class from Canada from \\$3,169 to \\$4,028 USD R/T](#)

CARIBBEAN

[All Year: Saint Kitts and Nevis Biz Class from \\$937 to \\$1,152 R/T](#)

[Winter + 2024: Acapulco Biz Class from \\$753 to \\$905 R/T](#)

[All Year: Virgin Islands Biz Class from \\$844 to \\$1,164 R/T](#)

[Aruba: Biz Class \\$938 to \\$1,188](#)

[Antigua Biz Class from \\$938 to \\$1,162 R/T](#)

[Providenciales Biz Class \\$910 to \\$1,165 R/T](#)

[Puerto Rico Biz Class \\$631 to \\$762 R/T](#)

EUROPE

[Winter: Palma De Mallorca Biz Class from New York and Boston from \\$2,722 R/T](#)

[Winter: Prague Biz Class from \\$2,680 to \\$3,215 R/T](#)

[All Year: Lisbon Biz Class from Edmonton and Montreal from \\$2,534 to \\$3,100 USD R/T](#)

[All Year: Baltics Biz Class from \\$2,762 to \\$3,191 R/T](#)

[Winter/Spring: Manchester UK Biz Class from \\$2,790 to \\$3,185 R/T](#)

[Winter: Zagreb Biz Class from \\$2,787 to \\$3,185 R/T](#)

[Winter: Bologna Biz Class from \\$2,632 to \\$3,072 R/T](#)

[All Year: Scotland Biz Class from \\$2,704 to \\$3,180 R/T](#)

[Winter: Naples Biz Class from Boston and Los Angeles from \\$2,646 to \\$3,040 R/T](#)

[All Year: First Class Berlin from \\$4,332 to \\$5,633 R/T](#)

[All Year: First Class Paris from \\$4,355 to \\$5,306 R/T](#)

[All Year: First Class Prague from \\$4,476 to \\$5,427 R/T](#)

[All Year: Amsterdam Biz Class from \\$2,227 to \\$3,153 R/T](#)

[Winter: Valencia Biz Class from \\$2,626 to \\$3,148 R/T](#)

[Fall/Winter: Nice Biz Class from \\$2,646 to \\$3,151 R/T](#)

[Winter: Venice Biz Class from \\$2,603 to \\$3,082 R/T](#)

[Fall/Winter: Budapest Biz Class from \\$2,764 to \\$3,187 R/T](#)

[All Year: First Class Rome from \\$4,280 to \\$5,181 R/T](#)

[All Year: First Class Geneva from \\$4,282 to \\$5,583 R/T](#)

[All Year: First Class Amsterdam from \\$3,915 to \\$5,716 R/T](#)

[Fall/Winter: Vienna Biz Class from \\$2,776 to \\$3,167 R/T](#)

[All Year: First Class Lisbon from \\$4,284 to \\$5,585 R/T](#)

[Summer: London Biz Class from Canada from \\$2,154 to \\$3,190 USD R/T](#)

[Spring/Summer: First Class Greece Islands from \\$4,469 to \\$5,570 R/T](#)

[All Year: First Class Vienna from \\$4,794 to \\$5,395 R/T](#)

[Summer + 2024: Rome Biz Class from \\$2,226 to \\$3,058 R/T](#)

[From Canada / Summer: Zurich Biz Class \\$1,942 USD R/T](#)

[All Year: Frankfurt Biz Class from \\$2,259 to \\$3,107 R/T](#)

[All Year: First Class Venice from \\$4,278 to \\$5,579 R/T](#)

[All Year: Barcelona First Class from \\$3,867 to \\$5,368 R/T](#)

[London Biz Class with JetBlue \\$1,986 to \\$2,745 R/T](#)

[Winter: Greece Biz Class from \\$2,684 to \\$3,684 R/T](#)

[All Year: First Class London from \\$4,089 to \\$5,640 R/T](#)

[Winter: Brussels Biz Class \\$2,523 to \\$2,933 R/T](#)

[Zurich Biz Class from \\$2,519 to \\$3,149 R/T](#)

[Paris Biz Class from \\$2,606 to \\$3,015 R/T](#)

[Copenhagen Biz Class from \\$2,544 to \\$3,160 R/T](#)

[Stockholm Biz Class from \\$2,423 to \\$3,157 R/T](#)

HAWAII

[Kona Biz Class from \\$859 to \\$1,543 R/T](#)

MEXICO

[All Year: Cabo San Lucas Biz Class from \\$762 to \\$923 R/T](#)

[Cozumel: Biz Class \\$712 to \\$910](#)

[Cancun Biz Class from \\$653 to \\$902 R/T](#)

MIDDLE EAST

[Winter: Istanbul Biz Class from \\$2,694 to \\$3,248 R/T](#)

NORTH AMERICA

[New Domestic Transcon Business Class Fares from \\$817](#)

SOUTH AMERICA

[All Year: Brazil Biz Class from Canada from \\$2,632 to \\$3,113 USD R/T](#)

[Winter/Spring: Rio de Janeiro Biz Class from Montreal and Toronto from \\$2,206 to \\$3,131 USD R/T](#)

[All Year: Sao Paulo Biz Class from \\$2,500 to \\$3,121 R/T](#)

[All Year: Chile Biz Class from \\$1,909 to \\$3,030 R/T](#)

SOUTH PACIFIC

[Spring/Summer: Tahiti Biz Class from Los Angeles and Las Vegas from \\$3,145 to \\$4,198 R/T](#)

Sweet Redeems

ASIA

[2+ Travelers: Singapore Airlines Business Class Award Seats from Seattle and Many Other U.S. Cities to Singapore and Beyond / Next Spring](#)

EUROPE

[Cash *OR* Miles > All Year > First Class > Cheap Lufthansa Seats from New York and Many Other Cities to Munich & Beyond / 4+ Seats](#)

[Miles > Europe > All Year > Wide-open Singapore Airlines Business Class from New York to Frankfurt / 4+ Seats](#)

[Miles > Europe > All Year > Scads of Singapore Business Class Opportunities from Houston to Manchester, UK / 2+ Seats](#)

[Cheap Business Class Seats from Chicago to Madrid for 53,000 Amex Points R/T](#)

[American Airlines Business Class from Los Angeles and Many Other U.S. Cities to London for Travel This Winter - 4+ Seats With Miles](#)

[Handful of Close In United Business Class from Newark to Amsterdam, 4+ Seats](#)

[Cheap Business Class Seats from Boston to Madrid for 53,000 Amex Points R/T](#)

[Cheap First Class Lufthansa Seats from New York and Many Other Cities to Munich & Beyond with Miles *OR* \\$](#)

[Finnair Business Class Single Seat Awards from New York to Helsinki with American Miles](#)

[Spain With Miles: Cheap Business Class Opportunities from Miami for 66,000 Miles / Points R/T for 2+ Travelers](#)

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

[Finnair Business Class Single Seat Awards from Dallas to Helsinki with American Miles](#)

[Handful of American Airlines Business Class Opportunities for Spring Travel to London / 4+ Seats](#)

[Handful of Close in United Business Class Upgrades from Washington, DC to Madrid](#)

[Handful of Close In United Business Class Mileage Upgrades to Europe from New York and Many Other Cities](#)

MIDDLE EAST

[Miles > All Year > First Class > Scads of Single Seat Emirates \(Amex Partner\) Opportunities from Washington, DC to Dubai](#)

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

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

[Close In First Class Seats from Abu Dhabi and Beyond with AA Miles / 2+ Seats](#)

NORTH AMERICA

[Miles > All Year > Domestic > New Transcon American Airlines Business Class New York to/from San Francisco Options / 4+ Seats](#)

[New American Airlines Business Class Miles Awards to/from New York and Los Angeles](#)

SOUTH AMERICA

[Brazil: American *First Class* 4+ Seat Discount Award Opportunities from Miami and Many Other U.S. Cities](#)

SOUTH PACIFIC

[Tahiti With Miles: Handful of Cheap Business Class Opportunities from Los Angeles to Papeete](#)