



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

July 2023

**FCF's Sweet Redemptions and Avianca's LifeMiles give you
a Business Class experience for less than the price of
Premium Economy – for both U.S. and European
residents – for up to six travelers on the same flight**

Late-night TV infomercial voice:

Are you sick of airlines like SWISS and Lufthansa that have no points-transfer partners?

Are you tired of airlines that charge high mileage amounts for flights?

Are you well and truly OVER airlines that charge high taxes?

Or those that don't offer award space availability?

FCF's Sweet Redemptions are here to the rescue!

Customer: "Oh my gosh, I went from being a flying flop to an upgrade genius!"

Call 1-800-Sweet Redemptions now! (JK)



The One-Two Punch

Avianca's LifeMiles offers frequent discounts when you buy its miles. And FCF's [Sweet Redemptions](#) is the greatest place on the internet for knowing the secret routes where LifeMiles can be redeemed cheaply.

Cheap, as in \$1,453 round-trip for Business Class from the U.S to Europe.

Or from Europe TO the U.S.!

Already have a zillion points with Amex, Capital One, or Citi points programs? If so, you don't need to buy miles. You simply need to transfer points from those programs to Avianca LifeMiles and use FCF's Sweet Redemptions to know when they can be used. Actually, read the redemption reports first and validate your particular dates with the airline **BEFORE you transfer any points.**

No Points? No Problem!

You can purchase LifeMiles for as low as 1.37¢ per mile during the current sale through July 26, and you can buy up to 200,000 miles (pre-bonus) annually. Need more than 200,000 miles a year? [With FCF's strategy, no problem.](#)

Note that LifeMiles bonus deals only apply to existing LifeMiles members. If you're not a current member, no problem. [Become a LifeMiles member now so you are ready for the next sale](#), because they come up regularly.

FYI: The sales usually run in the middle of the month, so we're writing this special report for:

A) Those of you who've taken our advice in the past and have a fist full of LifeMiles you can take advantage of the secret 23 routes NOW, and

B) Those of you who will see a sale next month, will understand how lucrative it can be — and will join LifeMiles now so you're able to buy when the next sale hits.

HOW BUDGET PREMIUM TRAVELERS CAN FLY BUSINESS CLASS FOR \$1,453

LifeMiles charges different rates at different times, ranging from 98,000 to 129,500 miles for Business Class to Europe round-trip. For example, on the New York-Lisbon route, LifeMiles normally charges 126,000 miles round-trip in Business Class, but with the current special price, the rate is 98,000 LifeMiles round-trip on partner TAP.

You can buy miles to cover this rate when they're on sale, bringing the cost to **\$1,453** for the round-trip flight (includes about \$100 in award tax). In 2023, that's a pretty great R/T fare to Europe in Business Class.

It only starts with TAP; stick with me a moment and you'll discover deals on Austrian Airlines (\$1,735), Brussels Airlines (\$1,841), LOT (\$1,819), Lufthansa (\$1,827), and SWISS (\$1,645) round-trip, taxes included.

FCF's [Sweet Redemptions](#) will show you what routes have award space available by month, so you can get your trip planning started with the ranges in which you can get the best deals in the universe. Sweet, right?

MORE REASONS TO BUY MILES THROUGH LIFEMILES

#1 You can search for availability using LifeMiles online

You just log in to [your account](#), which only takes a few minutes to open.

#2 Low award costs for LifeMiles partner flights

United's dynamic pricing for that same TAP ticket would charge 88,000 one-way versus LifeMiles at 98,000 round-trip.

#3 LifeMiles + Money

The LifeMiles "[Miles + Money](#)" option allows you to bring down the price for an award ticket — in miles — by paying more in cash when booking an award ticket.

#4 Low taxes for LifeMiles partner flights

Lufthansa and SWISS can charge as much as **\$1,973 or more in taxes alone** on Business Class flights to Europe. They call them "fuel surcharges." So much for a "free" award seat.

LifeMiles and most U.S. airlines typically don't hit you with taxes that high (generally, they're around \$100 to \$375).

#5 Miles will not expire as long as you have qualifying earning activity every 12 months, which can include purchasing LifeMiles (for a little as 20 bucks). You can do that.

LIFEMILES BUSINESS CLASS PARTNER COSTS AND AVAILABILITY

Europe in Business Class for \$1,735 to \$1,873 R/T (up to 68% off) on Austrian Airlines

LifeMiles charges between 116,000 and 126,000 miles round-trip in Business Class from the continental U.S. to Europe on partner Austrian Airlines. On sale, you can buy those miles for as little as 1.37 cents each, making the ticket from New York to Vienna \$1,735, \$1,827 from Montreal, and \$1,873 from Chicago and Washington, DC, round-trip (which includes about \$140 for an award tax). Compare that to flying from Chicago to Vienna in Business Class in August for \$5,782. That's a 68% savings of \$3,910.

Heck, Premium Economy on Lufthansa will cost you \$1,723!

SAMPLE SAVINGS ON AUSTRIAN AIRLINES

| To Vienna From | Regular Published Fare | Mileage Cost R/T | Cost to buy miles @ 1.3 cents each including taxes | Savings |
|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|---|------------------|
| Chicago | \$5,782 | 126,000 | \$1,873 | \$3,910 / 68% |
| New York | \$3,725 | 116,000 | \$1,735 | \$1,990 / 53% |
| Montreal | \$3,567 | 126,000 | \$1,827 | \$1,741 / 49% |
| Washington, DC | \$4,738 | | \$1,873 | \$2,866 / 60% |

SAMPLE AVAILABILITY ON AUSTRIAN AIRLINES (WHEN THIS STRATEGY ACTUALLY WORKS!)

At time of research, LifeMiles had availability on partner Austrian Airlines in Business Class for up to four seats for travel in January and February both directions on these routes:

| To Vienna From | 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 |
| Chicago | July, Dec., March | Jan., Feb. | Jan., Feb. | July, Aug., Nov., Dec. | Dec. | Dec., Jan. to March |
| New York | July, Jan., Feb. | Jan. | | Nov. to Jan., March | | Feb. |
| Montreal | July, Aug., March | Jan., Feb. | | Sept., Nov., Dec., Jan. | Jan., Feb., March | |
| Washington, DC | Jan., Feb. | Jan. | Jan. | July, Aug., Dec., March | | Jan., Feb. |

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...

EUROPE IN BUSINESS CLASS FROM \$1,841 R/T (OR UP TO 56% OFF) ON BRUSSELS AIRLINES

LifeMiles charges 126,000 miles round-trip in Business Class from the continental U.S. to Europe on partner Brussels Airlines. On sale, you can buy those miles for as little as 1.37 cents each, making the ticket from New York to Brussels \$1,841 round-trip (which includes about \$100 for an award tax). Compare that to flying Washington, DC, to Brussels in Business Class in February for \$4,236. That's a 56% savings of \$2,386.

Heck, Premium Economy on United will cost you \$1,663!

SAMPLE SAVINGS ON BRUSSELS AIRLINES

| To Brussels From | Regular Published Fare | Mileage Cost R/T | Cost to buy miles @ 1.3 cents each including taxes | Savings |
|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|---|------------------|
| New York | \$3,021 | 126,000 | \$1,841 | \$1,181 / 39% |
| Washington, DC | \$4,236 | | \$1,851 | \$2,386 / 56% |

SAMPLE AVAILABILITY ON BRUSSELS AIRLINES (WHEN THIS ACTUALLY WORKS!)

LifeMiles has availability on partner Brussels Airlines in Business Class from New York to Brussels for up to two seats for travel in January through June, both directions.

Washington, DC, to Brussels has availability for up to four seats for travel in April, May, and June, both directions. And up to six seats in June, both directions.

| To Brussels From | 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 | Jan., June | Jan., March, April | Feb., May | Nov., Dec., Jan. | Jan. | Jan., Feb. to May |
| Washington, DC | July, Aug., May, June | April | April, May | Aug., Sept., June | | April, May |

*June, 2024. 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...

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Heck, Premium Economy on United will cost you \$1,663!

SAMPLE SAVINGS ON BRUSSELS AIRLINES

| To Warsaw From | Regular Published Fare | Mileage Cost R/T | Cost to buy miles @ 1.3 cents each including taxes | Savings |
|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|---|------------------|
| Chicago | \$4,002 | | \$1,828 | \$2,175 / 54% |
| Miami | \$4,001 | 126,000 | | \$2,183 / 55% |
| New York | \$3,501 | | \$1,819 | \$1,683 / 48% |

SAMPLE AVAILABILITY ON LOT POLISH AIRLINES (WHEN THIS ACTUALLY WORKS!)

LifeMiles has availability on partner LOT in Business Class from Chicago and New York to Warsaw for up to two seats for travel in January through April and beyond, both directions.

Miami to Warsaw has a handful of scattered availability for one seat. [Learn about getting free connecting flights](#) and using [positioning flights](#).

| To Warsaw From | 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 |
| Chicago | Oct., April | March., April | Jan., Feb., March | Nov., Dec., April, June | Jan., March | Jan., Feb., March, May |
| Miami | Oct. | | | April | | May |
| New York | Aug., Oct., April, May | Feb., April, May | Jan., Feb., March | July, Aug., Sept., Oct., June | Nov., Dec. | Sept., Nov., Dec., Jan. to May |

*June, 2024. 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...

EUROPE IN BUSINESS CLASS FROM \$1,897 R/T (OR UP TO 61% OFF) ON LUFTHANSA

LifeMiles charges 126,000 miles round-trip in Business Class from the continental U.S. to Europe on partner Lufthansa Airlines. On sale, you can buy those miles for as little as 1.37 cents each, bringing this ticket to \$1,898 round-trip (which includes about \$160 for an award tax). Compare that to flying from Chicago to Munich in Business Class in February for \$4,903. That's a 61% savings of \$3,006.

Heck, Premium Economy on United will cost you \$1,741!

SAMPLE SAVINGS ON LUFTHANSA

| From / To | Regular Published Fare | Mileage Cost R/T | Cost to buy miles @ 1.3 cents each including taxes | Savings |
|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------|--|---------------|
| Washington, DC-Frankfurt | \$4,308 | | \$1,912 | \$2,397 / 56% |
| Boston-Munich | \$4,579 | | \$1,898 | \$2,682 / 59% |
| Chicago-Munich | \$4,903 | 126,000 | \$1,898 | \$3,006 / 61% |
| New York-Munich | \$4,582 | | | \$2,686 / 59% |
| Washington, DC-Munich | \$4,292 | | \$1,897 | \$2,396 / 56% |

SAMPLE AVAILABILITY ON LUFTHANSA AIRLINES (WHEN THIS ACTUALLY WORKS!)

LifeMiles has availability on partner Lufthansa in Business Class for up to four seats for close in travel on these routes:

| From / 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 |
| Washington, DC-Frankfurt | Aug. | Aug. | July | Aug. | | |
| Boston-Munich | | | July, Aug. | July, Aug. | | |
| Chicago-Munich | July, Aug. | | | | | |
| New York-Munich | Aug. | July | July | | | |
| Washington, DC-Munich | | | July, Aug. | 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...

EUROPE IN BUSINESS CLASS FOR \$1,645 R/T (OR UP TO 62% OFF) ON SWISS

LifeMiles charges 112,000 miles round-trip in Business Class from New York to Zurich, 126,000 from New York to Geneva, and from Boston and Chicago to Europe on partner SWISS Airlines.

On SWISS' New York-to-Zurich route, on sale, you can buy those miles for as little as 1.37 cents each, making this ticket \$1,645 round-trip (which includes about \$100 for an award tax). Compare that to flying from New York to Zurich in Business Class in February, which goes for \$3,017. That's a savings of \$1,372 / 45%.

Heck, Premium Economy on United will cost you \$1,779!

SAMPLE SAVINGS ON SWISS AIRLINES

| From / To | Regular Published Fare | Mileage Cost R/T | Cost to buy miles @ 1.3 cents each including taxes | Savings |
|-----------------|------------------------|------------------|--|---------------|
| New York-Geneva | \$3,013 | | | \$1,176 / 39% |
| Boston-Zurich | \$4,518 | 126,000 | \$1,838 | \$2,681 / 59% |
| Chicago-Zurich | \$4,842 | | | \$3,005 / 62% |
| New York-Zurich | \$3,017 | 112,000 | \$1,645 | \$1,372 / 45% |

SAMPLE AVAILABILITY ON SWISS AIRLINES (WHEN THIS ACTUALLY WORKS!)

LifeMiles has availability on partner SWISS in Business Class for up to four seats for travel in both directions on their New York-to-Geneva, and Boston- and New York-to-Zurich routes.

Chicago to Zurich has just a handful of seats in both directions. [Learn about getting free connecting flights](#) and using [positioning flights](#).

| From / 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 |
| New York-Geneva | July, Aug., Dec., April | April | Nov., Jan. to March | Sept., Oct., April | Aug. | Nov. to March |
| Boston-Zurich | July, Jan., Feb., March | | | Jan. to March | Jan. | |
| Chicago-Zurich | July | Oct. | | Sept., Oct. | | |
| New York-Zurich | Jan., July | March | Jan., Feb. | Dec., April | Nov. | Nov., 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...

EUROPE IN BUSINESS CLASS FROM \$1,453 R/T (OR UP TO 58% OFF) ON TAP PORTUGAL

LifeMiles charges 98,000 miles round-trip in Business Class from New York, 126,000 from Boston, Miami, and San Francisco, and 129,500 from Washington, DC, to Europe on partner TAP Airlines. On sale, you can buy those miles for as little as 1.37 cents each, bringing this ticket to \$1,453 round-trip (which includes about \$100 for an award tax). Compare that to flying from San Francisco to Lisbon in Business Class in February for \$4,324. That's a 57% savings of \$1,908.

Heck, Premium Economy on United will cost you \$1,356!

SAMPLE SAVINGS ON TAP PORTUGAL AIRLINES

| To Lisbon From | Regular Published Fare | Mileage Cost R/T | Cost to buy miles @ 1.3 cents each including taxes | Savings |
|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|---|------------------|
| Boston | \$3,136 | 126,000 | \$1,830 | \$1,307 / 42% |
| Miami | \$4,225 | | \$1,836 | \$2,390 / 57% |
| New York | \$3,360 | 98,000 | \$1,453 | \$1,908 / 57% |
| San Francisco | \$4,324 | 126,000 | \$1,838 | \$2,487 / 58% |
| Washington, DC | \$4,360 | 129,500 | \$1,887 | \$2,473 / 57% |

SAMPLE AVAILABILITY ON TAP PORTUGAL AIRLINES (WHEN THIS ACTUALLY WORKS!)

LifeMiles has availability on partner TAP in Business Class for up to four seats for travel January through May, both directions on their Boston-, Miami-, and Washington, DC-to-Lisbon routes, as well as up to six seats both outbound and return from Boston in May, Miami in April and May, and Washington, DC in April.

New York and San Francisco have just a handful of seats for up to four travelers in both directions. [Learn about getting free connecting flights](#) and using [positioning flights](#).

| To Lisbon From | 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 | Nov., Dec. | May | Jan. to April | | | Dec. to May |
| Miami | May | May | Jan. to April | Dec. | Jan., March, April | Feb., May |
| New York | Jan. | Feb. | | Jan., Feb., May | Jan., Feb., April | |
| San Francisco | | Jan., Feb. | | Jan., March | | Feb. |
| Washington, DC | July, May | March | Jan., Feb., April | Dec. | Jan., April | Feb., March, 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...

***Note that we didn't find any availability on partners United and SAS using LifeMiles.**

HOW TO BOOK LIFEMILES (AVIANCA)

You need to [log in](#) before searching for award space. Then click on "Fly." At this point you can search by all airlines using "Smart Search," by "Star Alliance," or by a certain airline. Simply put in your data and hit enter.

See you up front.

FCF's Three U-Turn Strategies That Can Net Biz Class to Europe for Less than Premium Economy

July 2023

Flip the script and save big

In Betty Edwards' best-selling book, "Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain," a drawing tip for newbies is to turn the object that you're drawing upside down. That way you won't draw your preconceived notions of, say, a piece of fruit. Instead, you see the actual shape and size relationship between things. You simply draw what you actually see.

Today, we're drawing on a similar idea: but instead of flipping something upside down, we're turning it around. Makes me want to sing...

Turn around. Every now and then I get a little bit tired of listening to the sound of my tears.

~ "Total Eclipse of the Heart" by Bonnie Tyler

TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE FARE

So many tears have been shed over high premium fares to Europe. And yet there's one solution that's staring us all right in the face nowadays – especially if you go to Europe more than once in a 12-month period, or would go if the price were right.

The idea is to buy a round-trip Business Class ticket TO the U.S. FROM Europe. That's because the fares are often much cheaper. This is another quirk of airline pricing that's best understood by bugging the airline's boardrooms (we're working on it), but simply knowing about it is a good start.



"WHAT did you guys pay?!"

This approach makes a lot of sense if you're flying across the pond more than once in a year. Because all it means is that you're starting a round-trip from Europe. Then you can **bookend that round-trip ticket with one-way flights (or other roundtrips)** to save quite a bit as a result. We'll expand more on this in a minute.

WHICH WAY WILL YOU GO?

To give you an example, fares are up to 66% less round-trip when you travel **from Europe to the U.S.** versus the U.S. to Europe. It's like paying double for gas if you drove from New York to L.A. and back, versus going from L.A. to New York and back. But hey, this is flying, ladies and gentlemen.

Here are some **sample fares from Europe to the U.S.** It makes me want to live on the continent. *Café et croissant s'il vous plaît, serveur!*

| Home Airport | Europe Destination | Airline | U.S. to Europe Biz Class | Europe to U.S. Biz Class | Savings | |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------|-----|
| Atlanta | Dublin | Delta | \$3,910 | \$1,757 | \$2,153 | 55% |
| | London | | \$3,642 | \$2,166 | \$1,476 | 41% |
| | Lisbon | | \$3,705 | \$1,982 | \$1,723 | 47% |
| Boston | Madrid | TAP | \$3,594 | \$1,517 | \$2,077 | 58% |
| | London | Virgin Atlantic | \$2,584 | \$1,934 | \$650 | 25% |
| | Paris | JetBlue | \$3,578 | \$2,161 | \$1,417 | 40% |
| | Munich | Air France | \$5,148 | \$2,187 | \$2,961 | 58% |
| Charlotte | Dublin | American | \$3,789 | \$1,954 | \$1,835 | 48% |
| Chicago | Lisbon | Air France | \$4,025 | \$1,840 | \$2,185 | 54% |
| | London | United | \$3,911 | \$1,917 | \$1,994 | 51% |
| | Milan | LOT | \$3,498 | \$1,991 | \$1,507 | 43% |
| Dallas | Madrid | American | \$3,996 | \$1,695 | \$2,301 | 58% |
| | Frankfurt | Delta | \$3,600 | \$1,928 | \$1,672 | 46% |
| | | | \$5,700 | \$1,928 | \$3,772 | 66% |
| Houston | Munich | Delta | \$5,698 | \$1,952 | \$3,746 | 66% |
| | Lisbon | | \$3,345 | \$2,280 | \$1,065 | 32% |
| Los Angeles | Frankfurt | Delta | \$5,600 | \$2,331 | \$3,269 | 58% |
| | Madrid | Iberia | \$3,800 | \$1,750 | \$2,050 | 54% |
| Miami | Lisbon | TAP | \$3,673 | \$1,816 | \$1,857 | 51% |

| Home Airport | Europe Destination | Airline | U.S. to Europe Biz Class | Europe to U.S. Biz Class | Savings | |
|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------|-----|
| | Dublin | American | \$3,403 | \$2,074 | \$1,329 | 39% |
| | Munich | | \$5,232 | \$2,108 | \$3,124 | 60% |
| New York | Barcelona | Delta | \$2,892 | \$1,502 | \$1,390 | 48% |
| | Stockholm | Finnair | \$3,288 | \$1,715 | \$1,573 | 48% |
| | London | Delta | \$2,837 | \$1,829 | \$1,008 | 36% |
| | Lisbon | TAP | \$3,360 | \$1,866 | \$1,494 | 44% |
| | Paris | JetBlue | \$3,295 | \$1,890 | \$1,405 | 43% |
| Philadelphia | Lisbon | Delta | \$4,125 | \$1,920 | \$2,205 | 53% |
| San Francisco | Dublin | British Airways | \$4,303 | \$1,857 | \$2,446 | 57% |
| | Frankfurt | Delta | \$5,700 | \$2,190 | \$3,510 | 62% |
| | Munich | Air France | \$5,685 | \$2,222 | \$3,463 | 61% |
| Seattle | Madrid | American | \$3,458 | \$1,691 | \$1,767 | 51% |
| | Munich | Delta | \$4,185 | \$1,860 | \$2,325 | 56% |
| | Lisbon | | \$4,125 | \$1,995 | \$2,130 | 52% |
| Washington, DC | London | TAP | \$2,647 | \$1,417 | \$1,230 | 46% |
| | Lisbon | Air France | \$5,389 | \$1,826 | \$3,563 | 66% |
| | Frankfurt | Delta | \$5,450 | \$2,146 | \$3,304 | 61% |

THREE WAYS TO PLAY THE U-TURN STRATEGY

FCF'S U-TURN STRATEGY #1

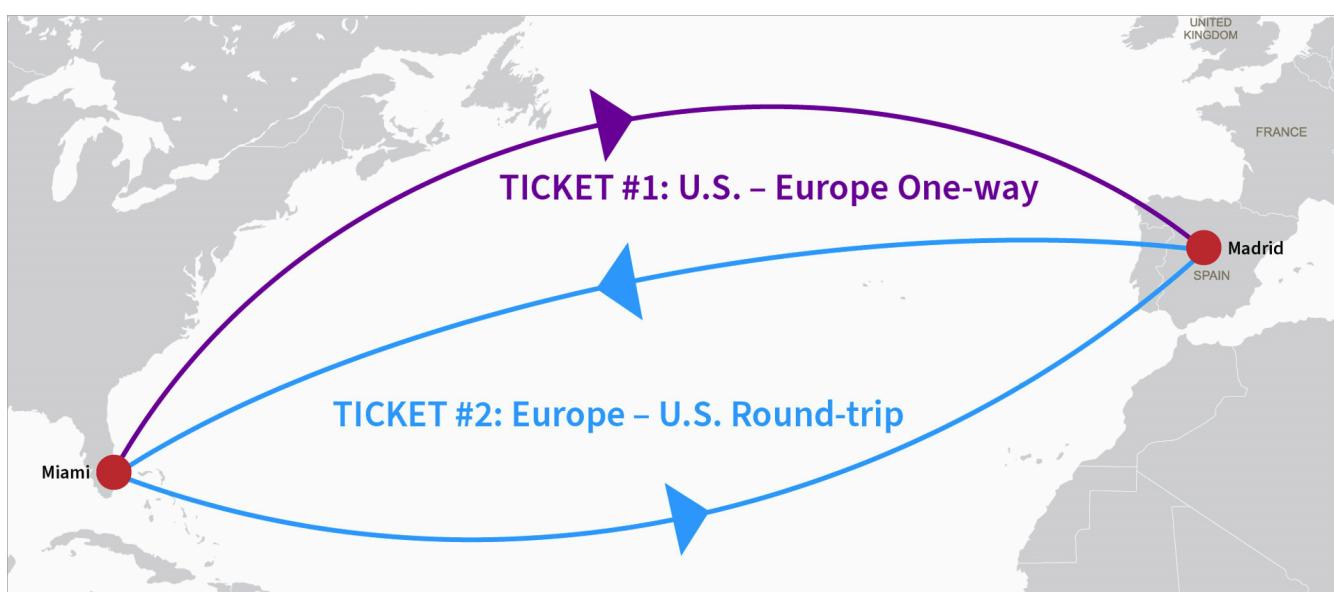
**START A ONE-WAY TICKET TO EUROPE (PROBABLY WITH MILES) AND
THEN BOOK YOUR ROUND-TRIP FARES ORIGINATING IN EUROPE.**

THE KEEP-IT-GOING STRATEGY

If you want to avoid high Biz Class fares starting in the U.S., book a lower-fare round-trip from Europe to the U.S. Remember that since your fare starts in Europe, you'll have to get yourself there first. You can start this strategy with a one-way flight ([paying in miles is often best for one-ways](#)).

Then you can keep your trip going by buying another round-trip ticket from Europe to the U.S. as many times as you like, and you'll end up saving quite a bit as a result. Airline alliance makes no difference with this strategy (more on this in a moment).

Here's what it looks like:



Here's what it looks like:

Real-Life Example

Ticket #1: A one-way award ticket using 57,500 American miles to begin the trip in Business Class from Miami to Madrid



Business

One way (per person)

57,500 miles
+ \$128.30

Total (all passengers)
57,500 miles + \$128.30

DEPART

Miami, FL to Madrid, Spain

Monday, January 22, 2024

10:05 PM → 12:35 PM 8h 30m Nonstop Business

= IB6118 = 330-Airbus A330



Operated by Iberia

Ticket #2: \$1,809 USD for travel in Business Class from Madrid to Miami round-trip.



Price

Itinerary

TOTAL

1,662.05 EUR

Total price (including taxes and fees)

1 adult

1,074.00 EUR

taxes and fees

588.05 EUR

Taxes and fees

588.05 EUR

✈ Madrid - Miami

Monday 29 January 2024

16:10

20:20

Business

Madrid

Miami

Adolfo Suarez Barajas
(MAD)

Miami International
(MIA)

✈ Miami - Madrid

Monday 25 March 2024

22:55

12:25 +1 day

Business

Miami

Madrid

Miami International
(MIA)

Adolfo Suarez Barajas
(MAD)

Ticket #3: Where to next? Keep your journey going with a round-trip from Europe to the U.S.

WHO IS FCF'S U-TURN STRATEGY #1 FOR?

Budget Business Class travelers.

This is great if you won't go if you must fly coach – that's actually a lot of people – and you won't pay rack rates for Business Class (ditto), and if you're willing to be flexible on the routes and dates that offer deals.

Travelers who know their dates in advance.

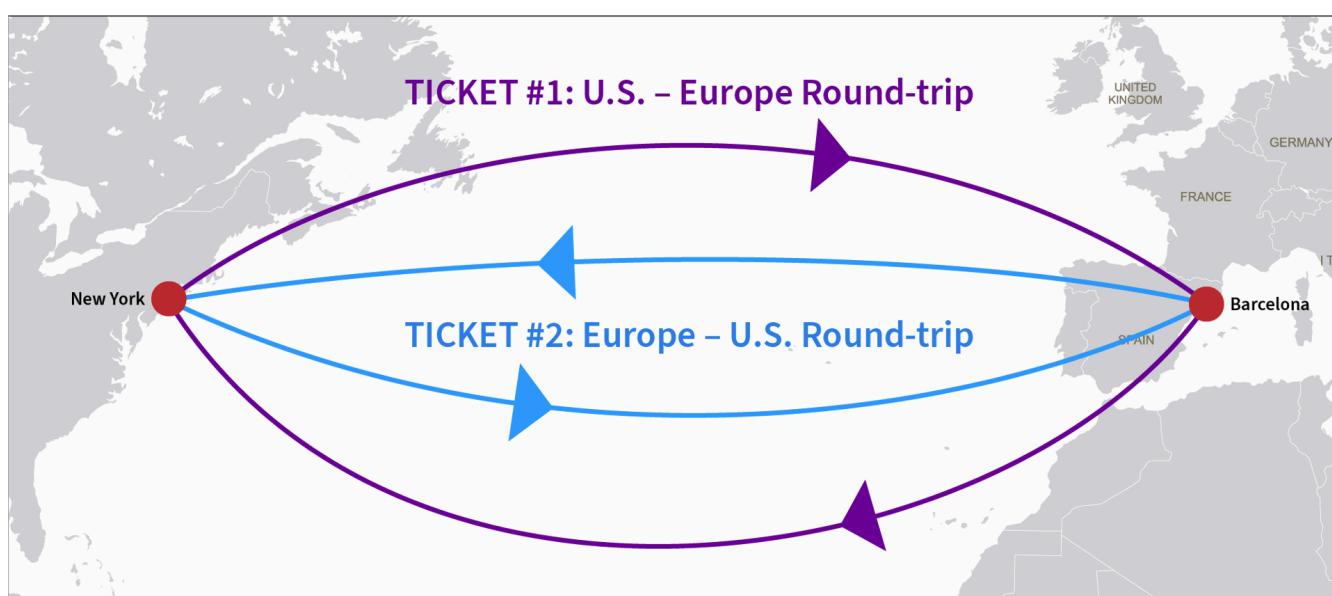
The outbound EU>US flights are most important, because you can generally change the return flight (US>EU) on a published fare for little or no cost (check the fare rules!). But if you're taking your daughter to school, and then going back for the holidays, or you know half of your dates in advance, no problem.

FCF'S U-TURN STRATEGY #2: MIXED-ALLIANCE BACK-TO-BACK PUBLISHED FARES

If you book multiple trips with one airline, and fly the segments out of sequence, many airlines will think you're trying to do "back-to-back ticketing." This can cause them to cancel one of your trips without notice, because this is **against their rules**.

However, you're fine if you book multiple trips on different airlines. So... consider booking one round-trip starting in the U.S. on Airline Alliance A airline (say Delta) and another round-trip starting in Europe from Alliance B airline (say United).

Here's what it looks like:



Here's what it looks like:

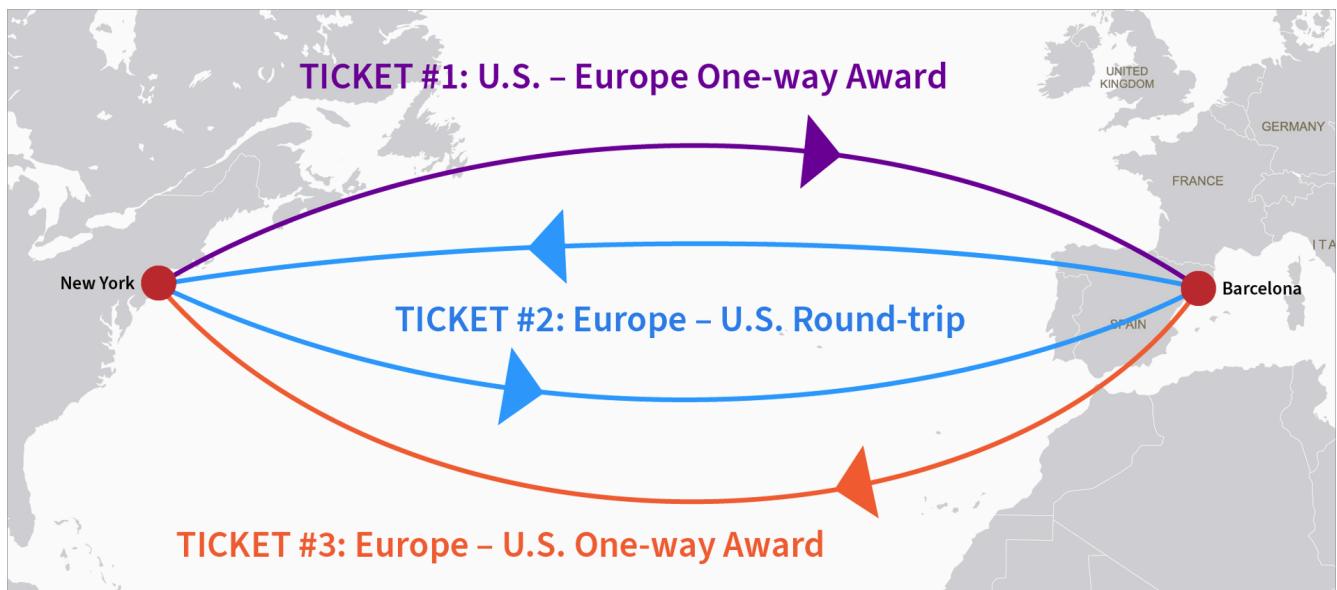
Use different airline alliances because there's no telling how much inter-alliance airlines communicate, and they might consider this a back-to-back ticketing situation. If you need a primer on why not to go all in with one airline, read this report on [Loyalty Free Agency](#).

WHO IS U-TURN STRATEGY #2 FOR?

The Frequent European Traveler: Because the U.S. fare is much higher, you **take many trips in the middle of your first and last segment on the U.S.-originating flights** to yield big savings.

FCF'S U-TURN STRATEGY #3: THE MIXED-ALLIANCE: BOOKENDS WITH MILEAGE-AWARD/S + LOW PUBLISHED FARE EU>US>EU

You get the idea by now. Check out the diagram below to see what makes this one different.



WHO IS FCF'S U-TURN STRATEGY #3 FOR?

The Sometimes-Flexible Business Class Budget Traveler: There's only one way to get a round-trip mileage award ticket to Europe nowadays. That's if you're flexible! In which case, you can use miles in this strategy to easily get to Europe and return to Europe. No problems there.

That said, your flight originating from Europe in the middle is a published fare, so you can be much choicer on your dates. In other words, you only need to be flexible on the award ticket portion of your trip.

See you up front.



Nine Secret American Airlines Routes Made for Relentless Upgraders and Spontaneous Travelers, Part III

July 2023

Here's where you can get the best Business Class deals in the universe – to Australia, Europe, and South America – whether you've already bought, or not

Once again, **bags-packed-and-ready-to-roll flyers** can score big. This time in Business Class. We call it Opportunity Travel, and we've written about this mindset and the opportunities often, most recently here with our [Iterative Upgrade Mindset](#) report.

Happily for us, it **also** covers those who **have already purchased their ticket**.

Last month we looked at the pointy end of the plane in our report titled, “[Four First Class Routes with Cheap Premium Tickets for Spontaneous Flyers & Those Who've Already Bought](#)”.

Now, let's get down to *Business* (Class) with American Airlines.

FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHT TO PARLAY

As with First Class, airline executives would rather personally paint planes with toothbrushes than see flights take off with empty Business Class seats. Through gritted teeth they'll lower their prices just to fill up the plane. Well, sometimes anyway...

As flight day approaches “crunch time,” the more likely it is that **a mileage price drop will occur on some routes** based on “dynamic pricing,” nowadays, and the more diligent flyers need to be to parlay their flight into a big win.

SECRET AMERICAN BUSINESS CLASS OPPORTUNITY ROUTES

Our job is to find unique deals, but they're often slippery little suckers. Especially in this case when we're in the dynamic final days before takeoff. Below are the routes we've been seeing with close-in availability – ready for [Relentless Upgraders](#) and [Bags-Packed Travelers](#). But make sure to check the airline directly for up-to-date intel.

NB: If the city you see isn't your home city, learn about [getting free connecting flights](#) and [positioning flights](#).

Also: While close-in generally means to us a week or two before a flight's departure, with American, we're seeing prices slashed 30 to 60 days out in some cases. Take a look below.

SECRET AMERICAN MILES OPPORTUNITY ROUTE #1

Los Angeles – Sydney

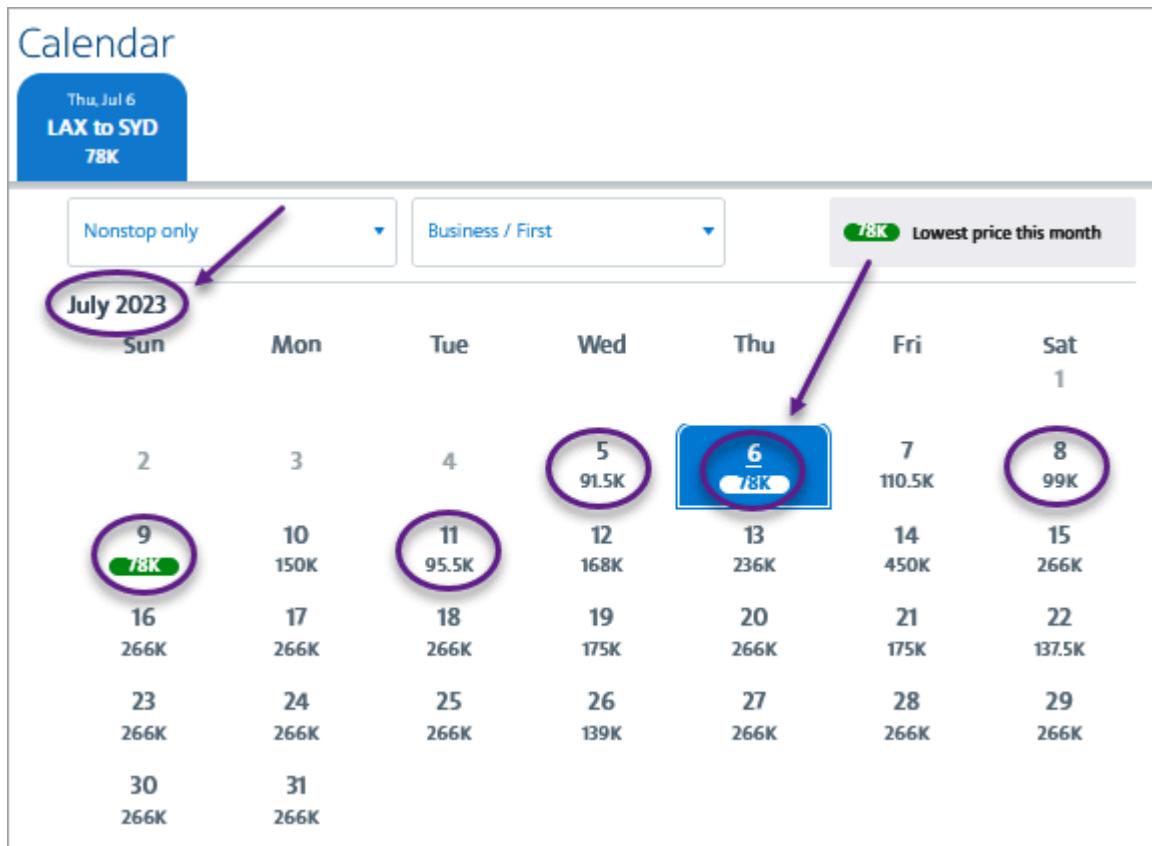
Business Class

The screenshots below are examples of recent close/r-in cheap opportunities on American Airlines' Los Angeles-Sydney route, starting at 72,000 to 78,000 miles each way—**for up to four travelers in both directions.**

For perspective: If you'd booked for upcoming travel in January 2024, **economy class flyers were seeing a flat 150,000-mile one-way** cost all month, while **Business Class flyers were seeing a flat 450,000-mile** cost all month each way. Compare that to AA's close/r-in, fill-the-seat pricing where prices are all over the place — **and up to 84% LESS!**

But, among some big hits, Business Class flyers can **score bargains for a couple days in August (a month or so out) for 72,000 miles each way.**

**AMERICAN AIRLINES' LAX-SYDNEY
BUSINESS CLASS 78,000-MILE ONE-WAY PRICING
WHEN BOOKING WITHIN 7 DAYS (ON JULY 5)**



**AMERICAN AIRLINES' LAX-SYDNEY
BUSINESS CLASS 72,000-MILE ONE-WAY PRICING
WHEN BOOKING 30 TO 60 DAYS OUT (ON JULY 5)**

Calendar

Fri, Jul 7
LAX to SYD
110.5K

Nonstop only Business / First **12K Lowest price this month**

August 2023

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------|------------|
| | | 1 266K | 2 266K | 3 266K | 4 266K | 5 266K |
| 6 266K | 7 266K | 8 266K | 9 266K | 10 266K | 11 12K | 12 266K |
| 13 266K | 14 266K | 15 450K | 16 266K | 17 110K | 18 266K | 19 266K |
| 20 266K | 21 266K | 22 266K | 23 266K | 24 266K | 25 12K | 26 266K |
| 27 266K | 28 266K | 29 266K | 30 266K | 31 266K | | |

**AMERICAN AIRLINES' LAX-SYDNEY
COACH CLASS 150,000-MILE ONE-WAY PRICING
WHEN BOOKING FAR OUT (ON JULY 5)**

Calendar

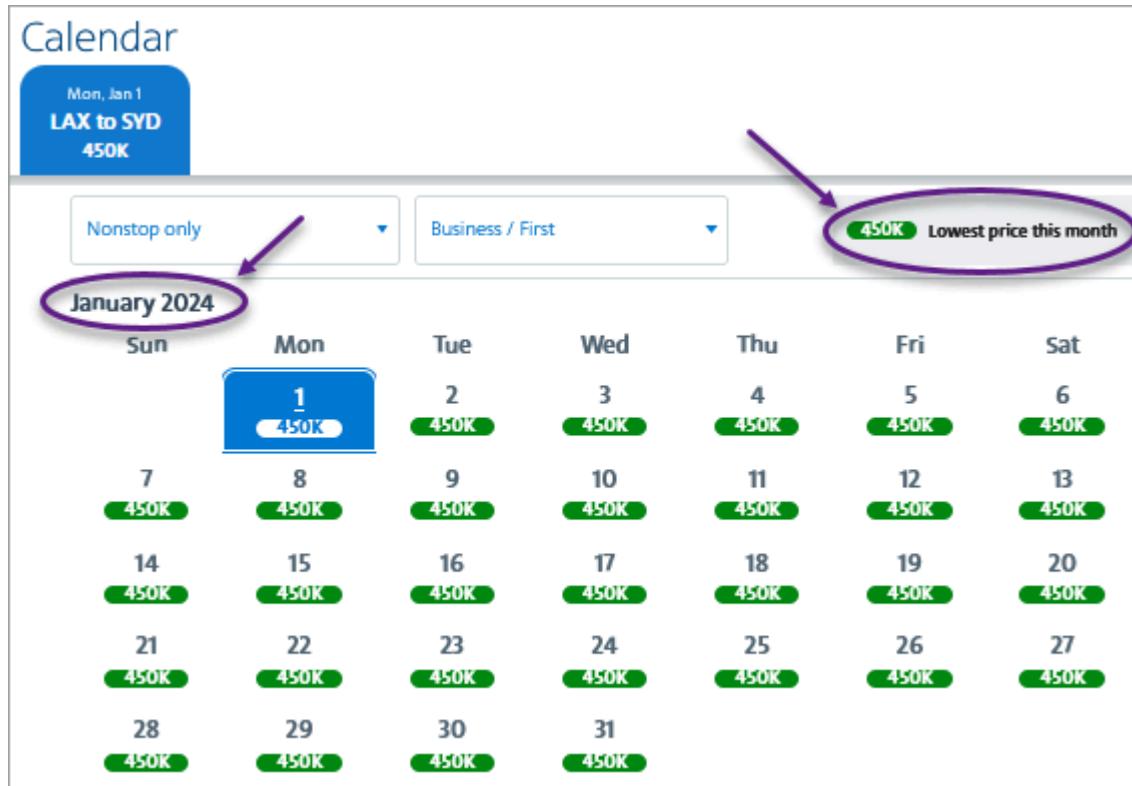
Mon, Jan 1
LAX to SYD
150K

Nonstop only Main Cabin **150K Lowest price this month**

January 2024

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|------------|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | 1 150K | 2 150K | 3 150K | 4 150K | 5 150K | 6 150K |
| 7 150K | 8 150K | 9 150K | 10 150K | 11 150K | 12 150K | 13 150K |
| 14 150K | 15 150K | 16 150K | 17 150K | 18 150K | 19 150K | 20 150K |
| 21 150K | 22 150K | 23 150K | 24 150K | 25 150K | 26 150K | 27 150K |
| 28 150K | 29 150K | 30 150K | 31 150K | | | |

**AMERICAN AIRLINES' LAX-SYDNEY
BUSINESS CLASS 450,000-MILE ONE-WAY PRICING
WHEN BOOKING FAR OUT (ON JULY 5)**



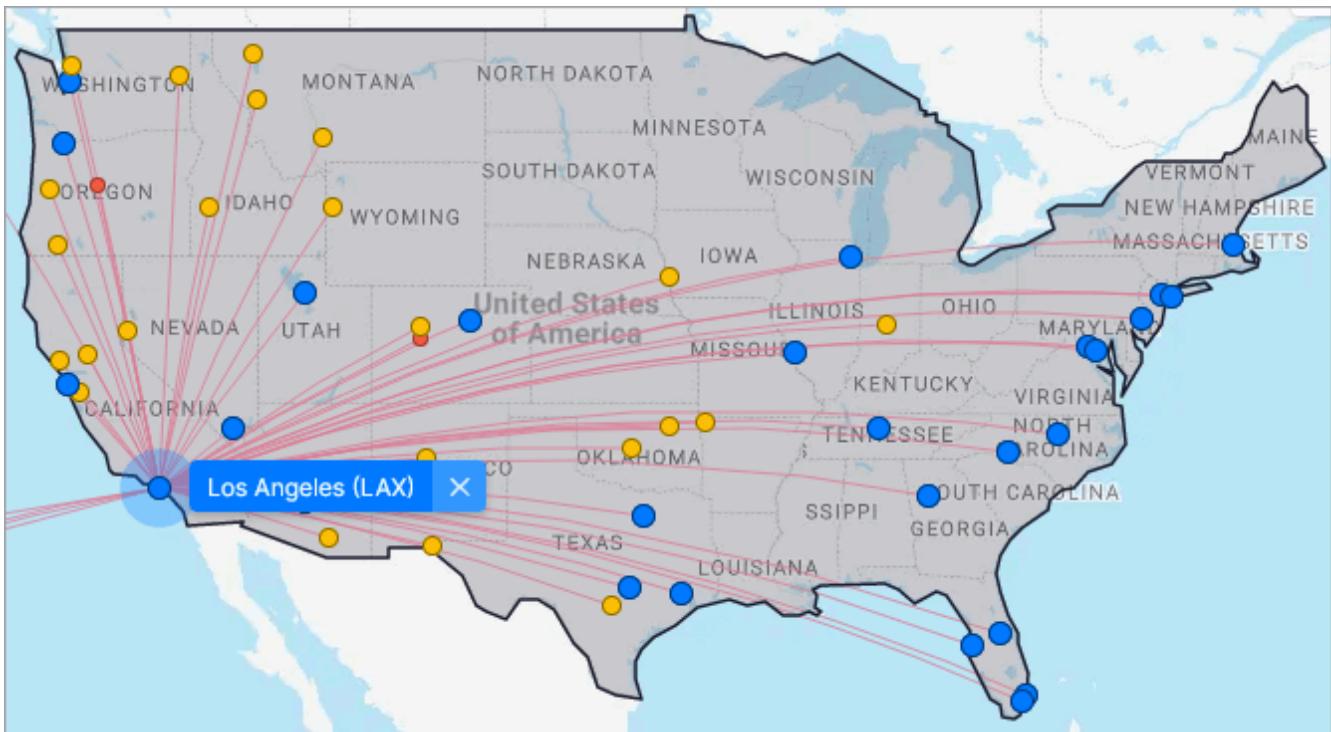
RECAP:

| Route | Class | Close-In Cost One Way | Far-Out Cost One Way |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Los Angeles to Sydney | Coach | 40,000 | 150,000 |
| | Business | 72,000 to 78,000 | 450,000 |

NOT FLYING FROM LOS ANGELES AND/OR TO SYDNEY?

Learn about [getting free connecting flights](#) and using [positioning flights](#). You can also use [Flight Connections.com](#) to see connecting flights as you can see below.

American Airlines Routes to/from Los Angeles Screenshot from FlightConnections.com



Fly from Sydney to many destinations all over the South Pacific with oneworld partner Qantas.

SECRET AMERICAN MILES OPPORTUNITY ROUTE #2

Los Angeles - Papeete (Flying Air Tahiti / Using American Miles) Business Class

Cost: Close-in, the lowest cost in Biz Class is 80,000 miles each way. This route has recently had award space for up to four people, and sometimes 30 to 60 days from departure date, and within 30 days of the return flight.

NOT FLYING FROM LOS ANGELES?

[Learn about getting free connecting flights](#) and using [positioning flights](#). You can also use [Flight Connections.com](#) to see connecting flights; see American's route map above from Los Angeles.

SECRET AMERICAN MILES OPPORTUNITY ROUTE #3

Seattle - Papeete (Flying Air Tahiti / Using American Miles) Business Class

Cost: Close in, the lowest cost in Biz Class is 80,000 each way. This has recently had award space for up to four people both outbound and the return within three weeks of departure.

NOT FLYING TO/FROM SEATTLE?

[Learn about getting free connecting flights](#) and using [positioning flights](#). You can also use [Flight Connections.com](#) to see connecting flights.

SECRET AMERICAN MILES OPPORTUNITY ROUTE #4

Philadelphia - London Business Class

Cost: Close in, the lowest cost in Biz Class ranges from 72,000 to 78,000 each way. American typically charges 121,000 to 301,500 each way booking further out.

Award Availability: This route has recently had award space for up to four people, outbound within three weeks of departure, and inbound three to six weeks of departure.

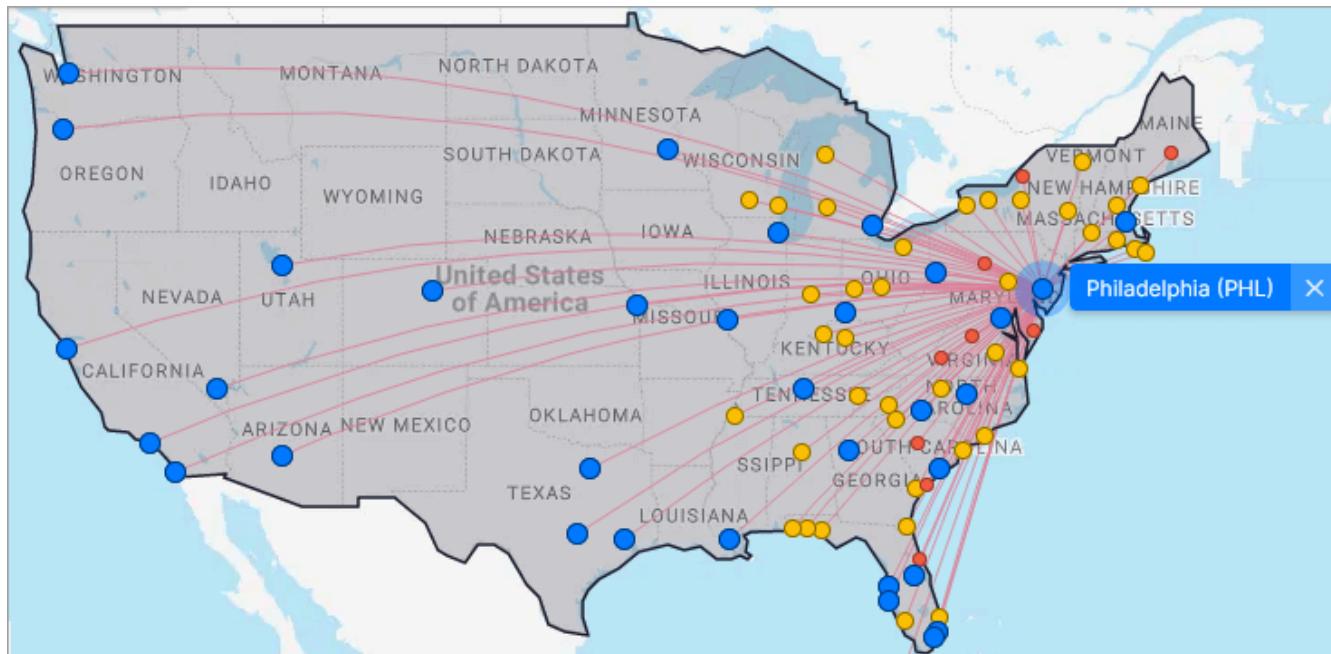
RECAP:

| Route | Class | Close-In Cost One Way | Far-Out Cost One Way |
|------------------------|----------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Philadelphia to London | Business | 72,000 to 78,000 | 121,000 to 301,500 |

NOT FLYING FROM PHILADELPHIA AND/OR TO LONDON?

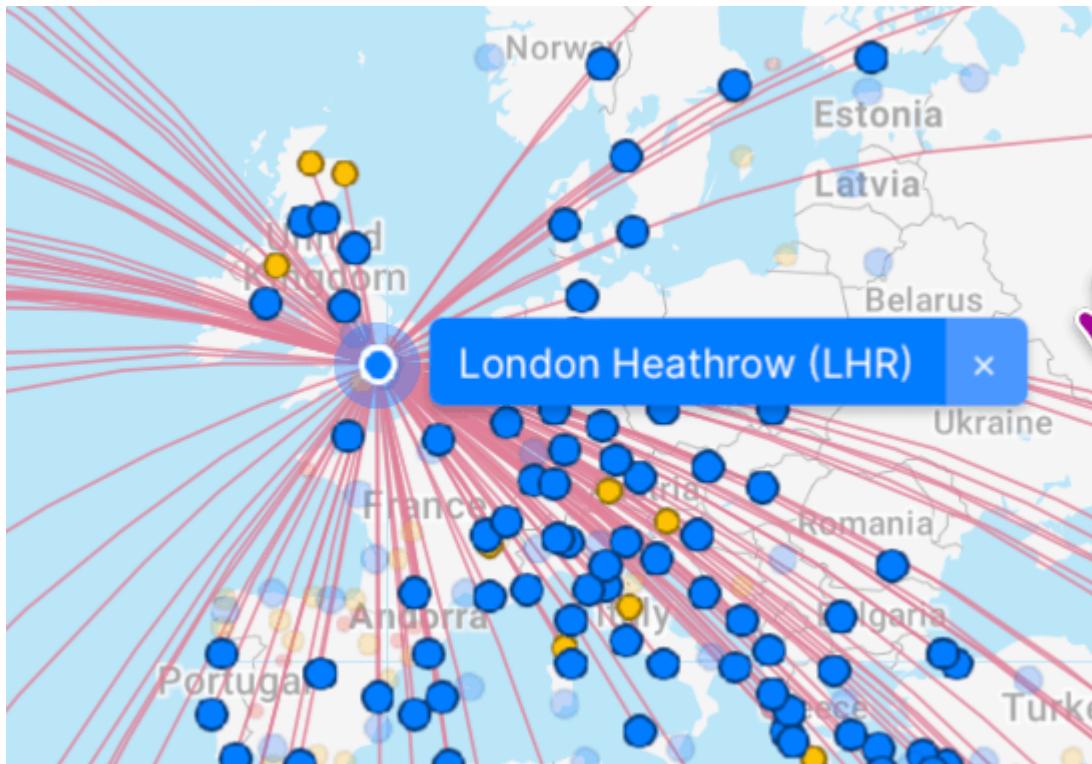
Learn about [getting free connecting flights](#) and using [positioning flights](#). You can use [Flight Connections.com](#) to see connecting flights to Philadelphia as shown in the screenshot below.

American Airlines Routes to/from Philadelphia Screenshot from FlightConnections.com



NOT GOING TO LONDON?

Fly from London to many destinations all over Europe with oneworld airlines. Here's a snapshot of the options with American oneworld partners throughout Europe...



SECRET AMERICAN MILES OPPORTUNITY ROUTE #5

New York - São Paulo Business Class

More proof of last-minute opportunity is demonstrated below. When booking beyond September 2023, American Airlines Business Class flyers looking at New York-São Paulo, Brazil will find a range of prices from 112,500 miles right up to 344,000 miles. But look at the screenshot below for this past July.

Award Availability: This route typically has a handful of award space for up to two people outbound within 60 days of departure. You can sometimes find random dates with lower cost award space throughout the year to South America, but these are very few and far between.

**AMERICAN AIRLINES' NEW YORK-SÃO PAULO
BUSINESS CLASS 55,000-MILE ONE-WAY PRICING
WHEN BOOKING WITHIN 7 DAYS OUT (ON JULY 5)**

Calendar

Wed, Jul 5
NYC to GRU
55K

Nonstop only Business / First

July 2023

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 55K | 6 55K | 7 55K | 8 55K |
| 9 238K | 10 55K | 11 238K | 12 331.5K | 13 110K | 14 57.5K | 15 178K |
| 16 269.5K | 17 112.5K | 18 69.5K | 19 72K | 20 238K | 21 295K | 22 342.5K |
| 23 325.5K | 24 238K | 25 238K | 26 319.5K | 27 295K | 28 313.5K | 29 331.5K |
| 30 344K | 31 307.5K | | | | | |

**AMERICAN AIRLINES' NEW YORK-SÃO PAULO
BUSINESS CLASS 50,000-MILE ONE-WAY PRICING
WHEN BOOKING 30-60 DAYS OUT (ON JULY 5)**

Calendar

Wed, Jul 5
NYC to GRU
55K

Nonstop only Business / First

August 2023

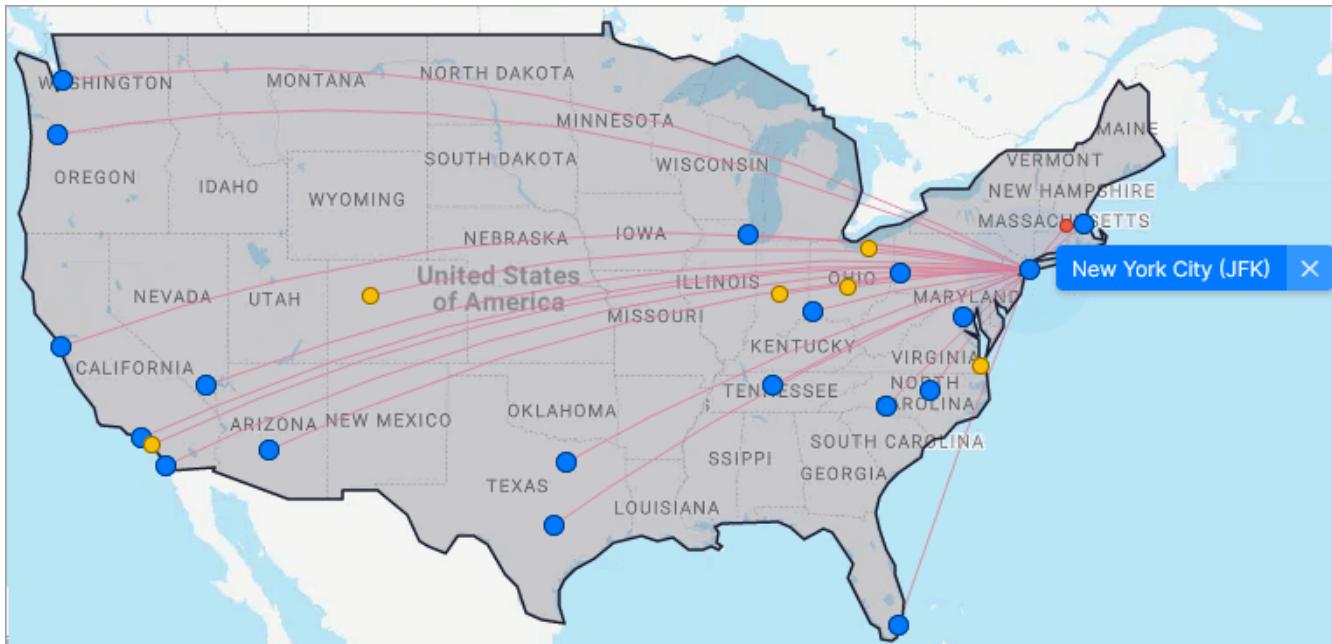
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|------------|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | 1 238K | 2 190K | 3 295K | 4 207.5K | 5 289K |
| 6 300K | 7 238K | 8 69.5K | 9 128K | 10 238K | 11 313.5K | 12 277K |
| 13 238K | 14 101.5K | 15 52K | 16 50K | 17 238K | 18 127K | 19 216.5K |
| 20 201K | 21 122.5K | 22 50K | 23 50K | 24 238K | 25 50K | 26 230K |
| 27 256K | 28 51.5K | 29 50K | 30 50K | 31 238K | | |

RECAP:

| Route | Class | Close-In Cost One Way | Far-Out Cost One Way |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| New York to São Paulo | Business | 50,000 | 112,500 to 344,000 |

NOT FLYING FROM NEW YORK?

American Airlines Routes to/from New York Screenshot from FlightConnections.com



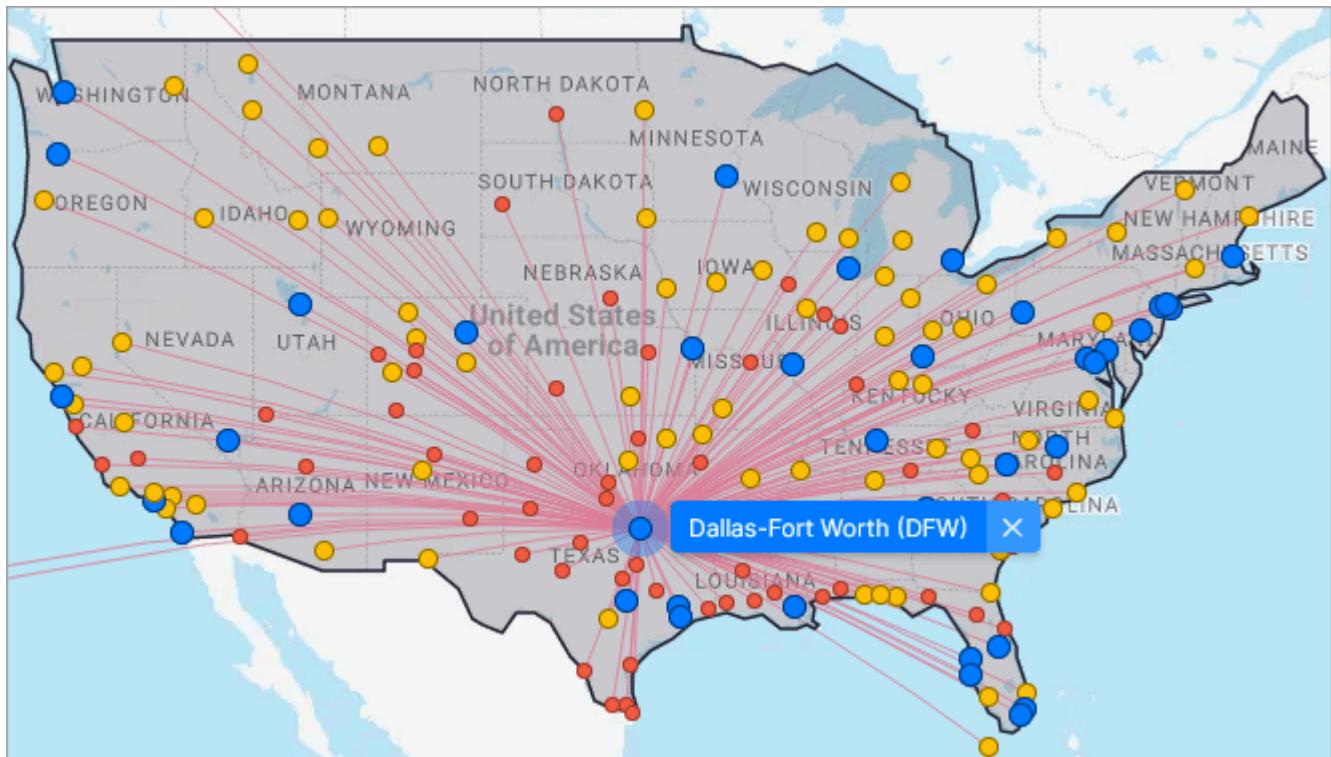
SECRET AMERICAN MILES OPPORTUNITY ROUTE #6

Dallas - Santiago Business Class

| Route | Class | Close-In Cost One Way | Far-Out Cost One Way |
|--------------------|----------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Dallas to Santiago | Business | 55,000 | 134,000 to 350,000 |

NOT FLYING FROM DALLAS?

American Airlines Routes to/from Dallas Screenshot from FlightConnections.com



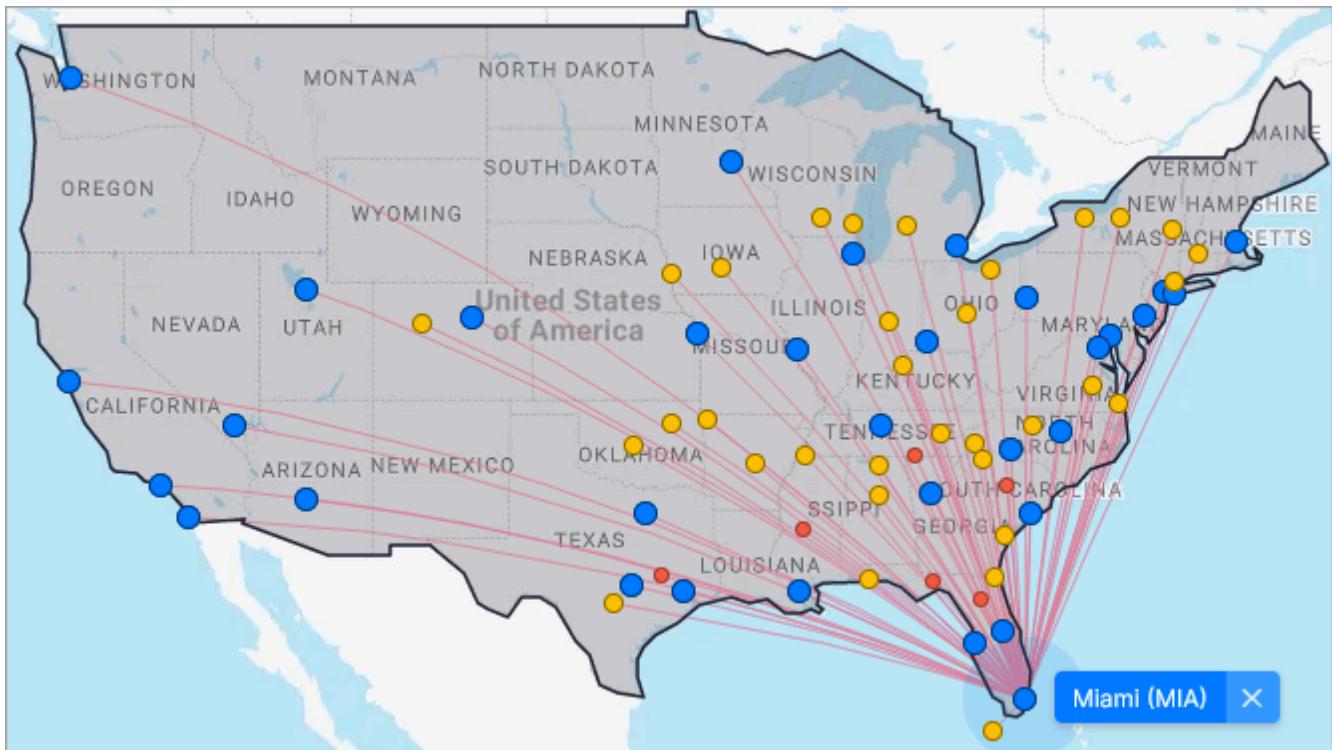
SECRET AMERICAN MILES OPPORTUNITY ROUTE #7

Miami - Santiago Business Class

| Route | Class | Close-In Cost One Way | Far-Out Cost One Way |
|-------------------|----------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Miami to Santiago | Business | 52,000 to 53,500 | 134,000 to 350,000 |

NOT FLYING FROM MIAMI?

American Airlines Routes to/from Miami Screenshot from FlightConnections.com



SECRET AMERICAN MILES OPPORTUNITY ROUTE #8

Miami - São Paulo Business Class

| Route | Class | Close-In Cost One Way | Far-Out Cost One Way |
|--------------------|----------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Miami to São Paulo | Business | 50,000 to 57,000 | 104,000 to 350,000 |

SECRET AMERICAN MILES OPPORTUNITY ROUTE #9

New York - Buenos Aires Business Class

| Route | Class | Close-In Cost One Way | Far-Out Cost One Way |
|--------------------------|----------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| New York to Buenos Aires | Business | 50,000 | 123,500 to 350,000 |

The moral of this story is: **Keep your bags packed** and ready to roll to take advantage of the best last-minute Business Class mileage flights to Europe, South America and the South Pacific—and if you’re already purchased your ticket at a not-low price, **keep the Iterative Upgrade Mindset close.**



Upgrade Economics 101, Part 7

July 2023

The rare (if you don't read FCF) "Cheaper + Better Upgrade" perspective

Okay class, please take your seats. Conchita, please close your Google Earth app; there'll be plenty of time for you to study the world *in person* after today's lesson – especially in Brazil, Munich, and Madrid, as you'll see very soon.

We'll be looking at those destinations in the context of the famed Cheaper + Better Upgrade perspective which is the travel version of winning the state lottery.

A Cheaper + Better Upgrade is where you travel in a better cabin (in the examples below, First Class) AND pay less than you would have in a lesser cabin (in these examples, Business Class).



A Cheaper + Better Upgrade, Herman?

JULY'S UPGRADE ECONOMICS 101 EXAMPLE #1 FLY AMERICAN AIRLINES FIRST CLASS TO SOUTH AMERICA FOR LESS THAN UNITED IN BUSINESS CLASS

In our first example, the regular published September fare for United Airlines' Miami-São Paulo route in Business Class is \$3,274, and the First Class fare is \$8,821 on American. However, you can easily buy the First Class miles required for this trip: 110,000 miles round-trip when they're on sale, for just \$2,725 including taxes. That's amazing for two reasons:

1. It's a better cabin: First Class.
2. It's \$549 *less* than Business Class.

| Operating Airline | Sample Route | Class | Cost R/T | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----------|--|---------|
| United | | Business | Regular Published Fare in September | \$3,274 |
| American | Miami - São Paulo | First | Cost to Buy 110,000 AAdvantage Miles (Including Taxes, When on Sale) | \$2,725 |
| | | | Regular Published Fare in September | \$8,821 |
| How much better? | | | One Class Upgrade | |

| Operating Airline | Sample Route | Class | Cost R/T |
|-------------------|--------------|-------|----------|
| How much cheaper? | | | \$549 |

BTW: American Airlines First Class Availability Treasure Map

| From / 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 |
| Miami-São Paulo | June to Aug., Dec., March, April | Sept. | | June, July to Sept. | Feb. | March, April |

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...

JULY'S UPGRADE ECONOMICS 101 EXAMPLE #2 FLY LUFTHANSA FIRST CLASS TO MUNICH FOR LESS THAN BRITISH AIRWAYS BUSINESS CLASS

Now let's head to Munich with this double treat. The regular published Business Class fare is \$5,197 on British Airways, while the First Class fare is usually \$9,720 on Lufthansa. But since you're an FCF reader, [you'd opt to buy the 230,000 First Class miles required on Lufthansa for just \\$3,629](#). So again, you're a genius because:

1. You paid \$1,568 *less* to fly in First than Business (not to mention spending \$6,091 *less* than the First Class published fare)
2. You're in First Class, eating caviar.

| Operating Airline | Sample Route | Class | Cost R/T | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|---|---------|--|
| British Airways | New York - Munich | Business | Regular Published Fare in January | \$5,197 | |
| Lufthansa | | First | Cost to Buy 230,000 Lufthansa Miles (Including Taxes, When on Sale) | \$3,629 | |
| | | | Regular Published Fare in January | \$9,720 | |
| How much better? | | One Class Upgrade | | | |
| How much cheaper? | | \$1,568 | | | |

BTW: Lufthansa First Class Availability Treasure Map

| From / 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 |
| New York-Munich | July to Nov. | July, Aug., Oct.. to Dec., Jan. to Feb. | Dec., Jan to March | June, Nov., Dec. | Nov., Dec., March | Nov., Dec., Jan., 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...

JULY'S UPGRADE ECONOMICS 101 EXAMPLE #3 FLY IBERIA BUSINESS CLASS TO MADRID FOR LESS THAN DELTA PREMIUM ECONOMY

And finally, class, it's time to head to Madrid for some tapas and low costs. On Delta, the regular Premium Economy fare for Miami-Madrid is \$2,394, and the Business Class fare on Iberia is \$3,797. But brilliantly, you read this report and paid just \$1,807 for that same Business Class ticket because [you bought and transferred 85,000 miles from Iberia for 1.8 cents each when on sale](#). That's awesome for two reasons:

1. You're now in an Iberia Airlines Business Class cabin.
2. You paid \$587 LESS to be in Business Class than Premium Economy on Delta.

| Operating Airline | Sample Route | Class | Cost R/T | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|---|---------|--|
| Delta | | Premium Economy | Regular Published Fare in April | \$2,394 | |
| Iberia | Miami - Madrid | Business | Cost to Buy 85,000 Iberia Miles (Including Taxes) when on sale. | \$1,807 | |
| | | | Regular Published Fare in April | \$3,797 | |
| How much better? | | One Class Upgrade | | | |
| How much cheaper? | | \$587 | | | |

BTW: Iberia Airlines Business Class Availability Treasure Map

| From / 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 |
| Miami-Madrid | Jan., March | Feb., March, May, June | Jan., Feb., April., May, June | Dec. | Jan. | Jan., Feb. to June |

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

Upgrading your travel life can be simple.

See you up front.

United Mileage Upgrades: The Last Refuge After the Latest MileagePlus Devaluation Still Saves Up to 69%

July 2023

Here's how to turn lemons into a bit of United lemonade...

I think you should value your miles and points at a minimum of two cents each. Although I value mine at much more. At this rate, and if long-haul Business Class fares to Europe are generally around \$2,500 to \$4,500, the most you'd really want to spend on a round-trip ticket with miles is around 200,000 max (and I'd not even pay that). In other words, consider paying cash for anything more than 200,000 miles for a Business Class ticket to Europe, generally speaking. I might use more miles for First Class, but not for Business Class.

So that means United miles are absolutely worthless to places like Europe now because United devalued its miles again. If you're extremely lucky or flexible, you can find some dates for 160,000 miles round-trip to Europe, since the airline increased its lowest dynamic Business Class award costs from 60,000

to 80,000 each way — though **most days are in the 155,000 range each way**. If you're unlucky, you may find awards as high as 297,000 each way. United also increased its lowest partner awards in Business Class by 12%, from 77,000 to 88,000 each way.

So, if you're a Business Class traveler to Europe and a United mileage collector, you are out of luck.

WHY DO YOU EVEN HAVE UNITED MILES?

You should only be collecting United miles if you're a MileagePlus Elite status freak. In other words, **there's no reason to have a United credit card unless you're trying to earn elite credit**.

And if you're a United elite status traveler who has a United credit card to scrounge for every last elite point you can get, the last thing you want to do is fly on a free award ticket – especially at 300,000 miles (which is the going rate nowadays) because you'll earn no elite credit for flying on an award ticket.

SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

We are fans of using miles to upgrade from coach to Business on United, RATHER THAN using miles to get free award seats.

Why do we like using miles to upgrade?

Most folks don't even consider it. They build up their treasure chest of miles and blow it on free flights in economy or non-discounted premium seats. I say "blow it" because that's generally not where the best value is in air travel. In fact, far from it.

Here's how to get true value, especially for the elite status-focused traveler: Buy the coach ticket that is upgradable to Business Class with your miles at the time of ticketing. That's when you start winning the game, especially when you can't find any low-cost free award seat availability and fares are high.

Example: Let's say you're traveling from Newark to London. The lowest United upgradable economy fare is currently \$973 inclusive for travel in February, while the average lowest Business Class fare is \$3,576. So even with a \$1,100 co-pay, you can save \$1,503 (42%) off the published fare by using just 40,000 miles. Summer travel saves a bit less as economy fares are higher.

That's not a bad value at 3.75 cents per mile. As you often hear me say, flying in a premium class cabin means that a good travel experience (maybe it's your vacation) starts when you get *on* the plane, not when you get off it. See below for more sample savings.

UNITED AIRLINES UPGRADE TO BUSINESS CLASS EXAMPLE



UNITED

| Your trip to: | 6:00 PM | 6:20 AM | Tue, Feb 6 |
|--|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| London, GB (LHR) | EWR ----- 7H, 20M ----- LHR | | United Polaris business (PZ) |
| Your trip to: | 9:10 AM | 12:40 PM | Tue, Feb 13 |
| New York/Newark, NJ, US (EWR) | LHR ----- 8H, 30M ----- EWR | | United Polaris business (PZ) |
| Tue, Feb 6, 2024 | | | |
| New York/Newark EWR to London LHR | 20,000 miles | | |
| EWR - LHR | United Polaris business | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Upgrade available | |
| Tue, Feb 13, 2024 | | | |
| London LHR to New York/Newark EWR | 20,000 miles | | |
| LHR - EWR | United Polaris business | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Upgrade available | |
| Fare | \$601.00 | | |
| Taxes and fees | \$247.15 | | |
| Service fees | \$1,100.00 | | |
| Upgrades | 40,000 miles | | |
| Airport passenger duty | \$125.00 | | |
| Total due | \$2,073.15 | | |
| | + 40,000 miles | | |

WHAT TO DO WHEN AN UPGRADE IS ONLY AVAILABLE ONE WAY?

Upgrade space isn't always available in both directions. United lets you combine economy and Business Class fares. That means you can upgrade the flight segment with upgrade space available and book the other leg in Business Class. On the Newark-London route, the combined coach-Business Class fare is \$2,273, while a round-trip ticket in Business Class is often \$3,576. So, even with the \$550 one-way co-pay to upgrade from coach to Business Class, you can still save \$753 (21%) using [the mixed cabin strategy](#).

ADD CONNECTING FLIGHTS TO THE LONG-HAUL INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT

Upgrading can often be better for connecting flights. With free mileage award tickets, when you can find the long-haul flight segment available in a premium class (perhaps via FCF's multitude of [Sweet Redemptions alerts](#)), you often can't get free connecting flights to the long-haul flight segment's departure city – or beyond its destination city.

However, when you buy an economy class ticket with mileage upgrade awards from your departure city to your final destination, it's easier to get all the segments on one ticket, even if the short ones are not upgradeable.

LAST-MINUTE OPPORTUNITIES

Last-minute Business Class fares can be high, so an upgrade can offer great savings.

Example: Let's say you're traveling from Chicago to London. The 14-day advance purchase upgradeable economy fare is currently \$2,389 for travel in July, while the average Business Class fare is \$9,034. So, even with the co-pay, you can save \$6,645 (74%) off the published fare by using just 40,000 miles. That's not a bad value!

MILE MISERS RISE UP

If you don't have many miles on hand, upgrades are the way to go because they require fewer miles than an award ticket, and United typically offers a bit more upgrade space than free award space. In other words, the upgrade doesn't drain your mileage account so drastically. That leaves more miles in your knapsack for your next trip. There's an easy fix if you don't have enough (or any) United miles. Just buy 'em.

WHEN NOT TO USE MILES FOR AN UPGRADE ON UNITED

Don't use your miles when published Business Class fares are low. For example, say you're traveling from Newark to Brussels to visit your old work partner and racquetball adversary, João. Business Class fares have been somewhat low — \$2,528. The lowest United upgradeable economy fare is currently \$1,159. Add the \$1,100 co-pay (plus 40,000 miles), and you end up with \$2,259. That's only a savings of \$269, and you would have to use 40,000 of your hard-earned miles. That's not a great value. João would be disappointed; he knows you're more competitive than that.

TOP 15 HIDDEN ROUTES WITH RECENT MILEAGE UPGRADE SPACE

Upgrade space can often be found:

- To/from **London** and: Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Newark, San Francisco, and Washington, DC
- To/from **Frankfurt** and: Chicago, Newark, San Francisco, and Washington, DC
- To/from **Munich** and: Chicago, and Denver
- To/from **Geneva** and: Newark
- To/from **Milan** and: Newark



All-Star Deals Out of the Dugout

It's bats, balls and bargains in July thanks to our research team's long hours of practice. Check out our big hitting fare and mileage availability finds below.

Special Published Fares

AFRICA

[Morocco: Biz Class from \\$2,677 to \\$3,121 R/T](#)

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

[Lagos Biz Class from \\$3,204 to \\$3,995 R/T](#)

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

[Cairo Biz Class from \\$2,747 to \\$3,149 R/T](#)

[Johannesburg Biz Class from \\$3,504 to \\$4,005 R/T](#)

[Casablanca Biz Class from Montreal and Toronto from \\$2,254 to \\$3,167 USD R/T](#)

[Marrakesh Biz Class from \\$2,673 to \\$3,109 R/T](#)

ASIA

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

[Philippines Biz Class from Los Angeles, New York, and Miami \\$1,000 to \\$3,000+ Off](#)

[Malaysia and Singapore Biz Class 30%+ Off](#)

[Bangkok Biz Class from \\$3,749 to \\$3,871 R/T](#)

CARIBBEAN

[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](#)

[St. Lucia Biz Class from \\$912 to \\$1,188 R/T](#)

[St. Croix Biz Class from \\$1,009 to \\$1,139 R/T](#)

EUROPE

[From Canada: France Biz Class \\$2,236 R/T](#)

[Mallorca Biz Class from \\$2,622 to \\$3,062 R/T](#)

[Malaga Biz Class from \\$2,527 to \\$3,017 R/T](#)

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

[Madrid Biz Class \\$2,507 to \\$3,211 R/T](#)

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

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

[London Biz Class with JetBlue from \\$2,233 to \\$2,696 R/T](#)

[Amsterdam Biz Class from \\$2,551 to \\$2,957 R/T](#)

[Biz Class **from Europe** to U.S. from \\$1,546 to \\$1,847 R/T](#)

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

[Austria Biz Class from \\$2,727 to \\$3,118 R/T](#)

[Summer + 2024: Barcelona Biz Class from \\$2,506 to \\$3,213 R/T](#)

[2024: Bordeaux Biz Class from \\$2,720 to \\$3,111 R/T](#)

[Summer: Milan Biz Class from \\$2,510 to \\$3,109 R/T](#)

[Valencia Biz Class from \\$2,525 to \\$3,124 R/T](#)

[Geneva Biz Class from \\$2,515 to \\$2,935 R/T](#)

[Norway Biz Class from \\$2,559 to \\$3,155 R/T](#)

[Summer & Fall Deals: Florence Biz Class from \\$2,536 to \\$3,137 R/T](#)

[Summer & Fall Deals: Prague Biz Class from \\$2,512 to \\$3,213 R/T](#)

[Summer: Milan Biz Class from \\$2,510 to \\$3,109 R/T](#)

[Scotland Biz Class from \\$2,678 to \\$3,071 R/T](#)

[Rome Biz Class from \\$2,528 to \\$3,128 R/T](#)

[Dublin Biz Class from \\$2,439 to \\$3,145 R/T](#)

[Lisbon Biz Class from \\$2,524 to \\$3,163 R/T](#)

[Seville Biz Class from New York and Boston from \\$2,605 R/T](#)

[Nice Biz Class from \\$2,607 to \\$3,143 R/T](#)

[Manchester UK Biz Class from \\$2,682 to \\$3,075 R/T](#)

[Munich Biz Class from \\$2,571 to \\$3,164 R/T](#)

[Vienna Biz Class from \\$2,541 to \\$3,190 R/T](#)

[Frankfurt Biz Class from \\$2,257 to \\$3,172 R/T](#)

HAWAII

[Hawaii: Biz Class from \\$1,036 to \\$1,595 R/T](#)

[Kauai Biz Class from \\$946 to \\$1,530 R/T](#)

[Tahiti Biz Class from \\$2,880 to \\$4,373 R/T](#)

MEXICO

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

[Acapulco Biz Class from \\$710 to \\$913 R/T](#)

[Cabo San Lucas Biz Class from \\$738 to \\$921 R/T](#)

MIDDLE EAST

[All Year: Istanbul Biz Class from \\$2,547 to \\$3,083 R/T](#)

SOUTH AMERICA

[Lima Biz Class from \\$1,216 to \\$1,557 R/T](#)

[Brazil Biz Class from \\$2,500 to \\$3,120 R/T](#)

[Santiago / Chile Biz Class from \\$1,294 to \\$3,016 R/T](#)

Sweet Redeems

EUROPE

[United Business Class Mileage Upgrades to Europe from New York and Many Other Cities - 4+ Seats](#)

[United Business Class Mileage Upgrades to Frankfurt from Washington, DC and Many Other Cities](#)

[Spain With Points: Where to Find the Few Cheap Business Class Seats from New York for 68,000 Amex Points R/T](#)

[London Easy With Miles: American Business Class Opportunities from New York and Many Other Cities / 4+ Seats](#)

[Ireland With Miles: Handful of American Business Class Opportunities from Philadelphia and Many Other U.S. Cities / 4+ Seats](#)

[Italy With Miles: American Business Class Opportunities from New York and Many Other Cities / 4+ Seats](#)

[First Class Winter: LOTS of Lufthansa Availability from Los Angeles and Many Other Cities to Munich and Beyond with Miles or \\$ / 4+ Seats](#)

[Spain With Miles: Scads of Business Class Opportunities from Miami](#)

[All Year: LOTS of Lufthansa First Class Availability from Chicago and Many Other Cities to Frankfurt and Beyond with Miles or \\$](#)

[All Year: LOTS of Lufthansa First Class Availability from Los Angeles and Many Other Cities to Munich and Beyond with Miles or \\$](#)

[Close In Lufthansa First Class Availability from San Francisco and Many Other Cities to Frankfurt and Beyond with Miles or \\$](#)

[London: American First Class Opportunities from New York and Many Other Cities with Miles / Points – Up to Four Seats](#)

NORTH AMERICA

[Transcon: New American Airlines Business Class Miles Awards from New York to San Francisco](#)

OCEANIA

[Australia for Spontaneous Travelers and/or Relentless Upgraders on United from San Francisco and Many Other Cities](#)

[Tahiti for Spontaneous Travelers and/or Relentless Upgraders – 4+ Seats with United Miles](#)

SOUTH AMERICA

[Brazil: American *First Class* 2+ Seat Discount Award Opportunities from Miami and Many Other U.S. Cities](#)

[Chile for Spontaneous Travelers + Relentless Upgraders: Close In United Business Class Mileage Upgrades from Houston and Many Other Cities](#)