

Act Fast: Hidden Round-the-World Anomaly Fares Starting at \$3,373 in Business Class

December 2022

Use low-fare departure cities and routes to get Round-the-World Business Class flights for 1.4 cents-per-mile flown

Don't ask me how or why this began, but now is the time to take advantage of huge savings on Round-the-World (RTW) tickets that originate overseas. That's right. If you buy your ticket for departure *from* a foreign destination you can land planet-size savings on worldwide trips.

NO TELLING HOW SOME FARE ANOMALIES COME TO BE

I'd love to pretend that I knew the genesis of this fare sale, but all I can say is that certain cities, like Cairo or Colombo, Sri Lanka, for example, sometimes offer far cheaper premium cabin fares when originating from their airports.

That's great news if you happen to live in one of those places, but why should you care if you don't live across the pond? Well, if you get creative and buy (or use miles for) a "[positioning flight](#)" from your home to one of these international departure points, and perhaps stay there a few days as the first stop on a grand escapade, you could save a bundle.

Here's the thing: The way that **airlines structure airfare is based on numerous factors including local demand** as well as competition between two points. If an airline thinks there is enough demand between two destinations that people will pay a higher fare, they'll price tickets that way. It's the good-old fashioned law of supply-and-demand.

On the other hand, if local economies are only willing to withstand a certain price point, airlines will have to lower the fare to stimulate demand. Add in the dollar's strong exchange rate at the moment, and here's where this creativity comes into play.

What's strange about this deal is that the *lowest* fares are from Italy, not Cairo, and only with Star Alliance, leaving me to think that this is a Star Alliance-battles-SkyTeam thing. But so what, their fares are worth grabbing no matter how they came about.

WHAT KIND OF SAVINGS ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?





You can actually fly around the world starting and ending in Europe with stops in the United States (chill at home for a while before picking up your next trip), and trips to New Zealand and South Korea for around \$3,373, **in Business Class**. Take a look...

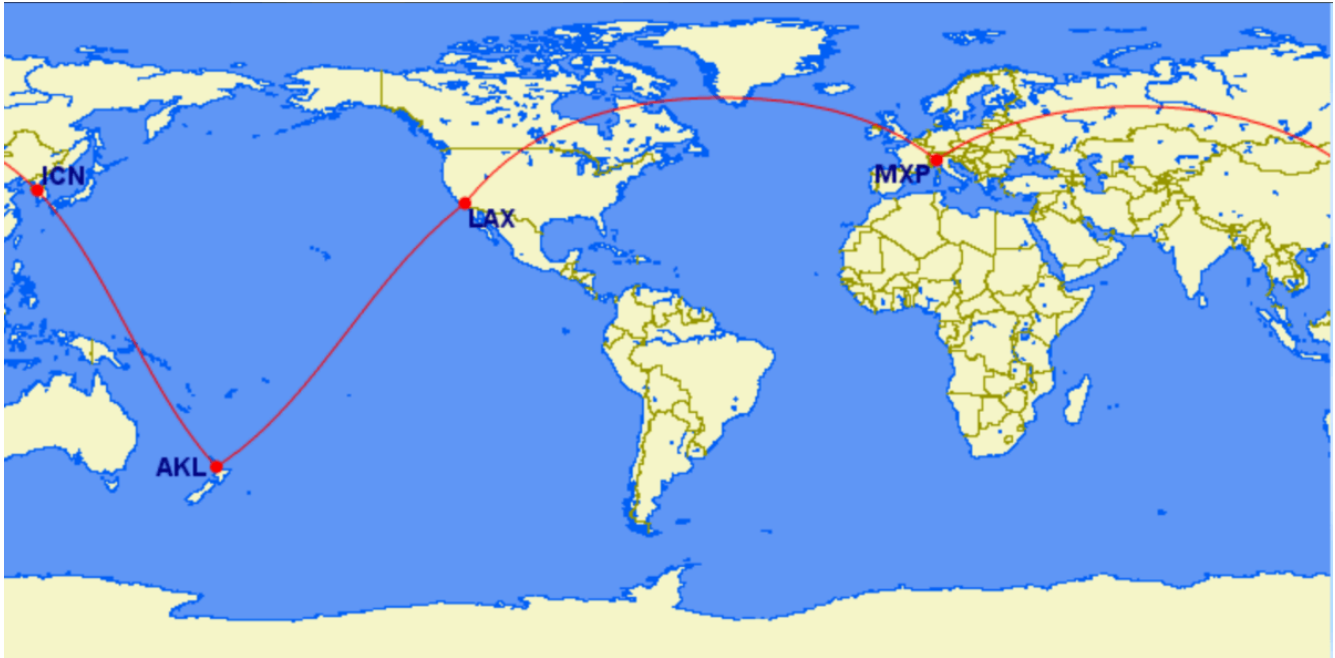
Business Class · 1 passenger

Total price from
\$3,373

Multi-city trip

Selected flights [Track prices](#)

	Wed, Mar 1 · 8:00 AM – 1:05 PM Lufthansa · United	14 hr 5 min MXP–LAX	1 stop 1 hr 5 min FRA	2,408 kg CO₂ Avg emissions ⓘ	▼
	Mon, Mar 13 · 1:25 PM – 6:00 AM^{1,2} United, Air New Zealand	20 hr 35 min LAX–AKL	1 stop 5 hr 57 min SFO	3,073 kg CO₂ Avg emissions ⓘ	▼
	Mon, Mar 27 · 12:00 PM – 7:55 PM Air New Zealand · Asiana	11 hr 55 min AKL–ICN	Nonstop	2,288 kg CO₂ -9% emissions ⓘ	▼
	Tue, May 2 · 11:25 AM – 11:20 PM Lufthansa · Operated by Lufthansa CityLine	18 hr 55 min ICN–MXP	1 stop 4 hr 40 min MUC	1,712 kg CO₂ -6% emissions ⓘ	▼



With Google Flights' "multi-city" feature, it's easy to play around with different dates, cities, and airlines to find similar deals that may be quite surprising.

It may seem impractical to start a RTW trip in a foreign destination like Milan, just to save money, but sometimes it can make sense — especially if you have always wanted to visit Italy, too. Milan is amazing for many reasons. If you haven't been, now's your excuse. If you have been to Milan, take the opportunity to visit again or go first to Bologna, Florence, Lake Como, Verona, or Venice and hop a quick train to catch your flight from Milan.

Want to depart from Stockholm, Paris, or Bucharest instead? No problem. The price for these RTW tickets in Business Class originating in Europe may be cheaper than the price of a simple round-trip Business Class ticket between the U.S. and Europe. Now *that's* a hard deal to pass up.

10 SAMPLE ITINERARIES WITH STAR ALLIANCE ANOMALY FARES

**Valid at time of publishing and sure to change over time.*

Ticketing Airline	Start Your RTW Ticket In:	1st Stop	2nd Stop	3rd Stop	4th Stop	Fare For Entire RTW Ticket:
United	Milan	Los Angeles	Auckland	Seoul	Milan	\$3,373
United	Milan	San Francisco	Auckland	Seoul	Milan	\$3,423
United	Milan	Denver	Auckland	Seoul	Milan	\$3,538
United	Milan	Chicago	Auckland	Seoul	Milan	\$3,547
United	Milan	Houston	Auckland	Seoul	Milan	\$3,605

Ticketing Airline	Start Your RTW Ticket In:	1st Stop	2nd Stop	3rd Stop	4th Stop	Fare For Entire RTW Ticket:
United	Rome	Houston	Auckland	Seoul	Rome	\$3,605
United	Venice	Houston	Auckland	Seoul	Venice	\$3,613
United	Amsterdam	Houston	Auckland	Seoul	Amsterdam	\$4,055
United	Warsaw	New York	Auckland	Tokyo	Warsaw	\$4,444
SWISS	Amsterdam	Los Angeles	Auckland	Hong Kong	Amsterdam	\$4,889

So if you're a bang-for-your-buck traveler, consider that you're getting Business Class for just 1.4 cents-per-mile flown. Now compare this to the typical cost of a Los Angeles-New York route, at 4,908 flight miles round-trip (at around \$2,498), which costs about 5 cents-per-mile flown.

Grab this deal while it lasts, and I'll see you up front.



December's Top 31 Mileage Awards & Special Fares Greatest Hits (Still Available)

December 2022

December? No worries for special fare and discount award finds

FCF's Christmas sleigh is so weighed down with fare and award mile gifts, we're sending our elves to Cancun to recover (from just \$629 round trip mind you). You can find them all below – happy holidays from all of us here at FCF.

Special Published Fares

AFRICA

[South Africa Biz Class from \\$3,301 R/T](#)

[Kenya Biz Class from \\$3,313 to \\$3,710 R/T](#)

[Casablanca Biz Class from Canada from \\$2,830 CAD](#)



ASIA

[South Korea Biz Class from Canada from \\$3,560 CAD R/T](#)

CARIBBEAN

[U.S. Virgin Islands Biz Class from \\$793 to \\$1,178 R/T](#)

[Turks and Caicos Biz Class from \\$799 to \\$1,176 R/T](#)

[U.S. Virgin Islands Biz Class from \\$837 to \\$1,172 R/T](#)

[Dominican Republic Biz Class from \\$653 R/T](#)

CENTRAL AMERICA

[Costa Rica Biz Class from \\$812 to \\$921 R/T](#)



EUROPE

[London Biz Class from \\$2,205](#)

[Frankfurt Biz Class from \\$2,249 to \\$3,189 R/T](#)

HAWAII

[Hawaii Business Class Fares from \\$1,077 R/T](#)

[Honolulu Biz Class from \\$1,098 to \\$1,517 R/T](#)

MEXICO

[Cozumel Biz Class from \\$610 from \\$879 R/T](#)

[Cancun Biz Class from \\$629 to \\$925 R/T](#)

MIDDLE EAST

[Abu Dhabi Biz Class from \\$3,259 to \\$3,900 R/T](#)

[Dubai Biz Class from \\$2,865 to \\$3,705 R/T](#)

SOUTH AMERICA

[Rio de Janeiro Biz Class from \\$2,590 to \\$2,993 R/T](#)

[Buenos Aires Biz Class from \\$2,571 to \\$3,220 R/T](#)

[Chile Biz Class from \\$2,391 to \\$3,077 R/T](#)



Burn Miles Easy & Cheaply

ASIA

[Singapore Airlines Business Class Award Seats from New York and Many Other U.S. Cities to Singapore and Beyond](#)

[Single Seat Close-In Japan Airlines *First Class* Opportunities to Tokyo from Los Angeles and Many Other U.S. Cities](#)



Japan Airlines First Class Suite

DOMESTIC

[Handful of Discount Transcon Business Class Award Availability Between New York and Los Angeles With American Airlines](#)

EUROPE

[Lufthansa First Class from Chicago to Frankfurt and Munich, 4+ Seats with Miles \(or 70% Off with Cash\)](#)

[Scads of First Class Lufthansa Awards from Boston and New York to Munich & Beyond / 4+ Seats](#)

[Cheap Madrid Business Class Single Seat Opportunities from Washington, DC Scattered Throughout the Year](#)

[Cheap Iberia Business Class Single Seat Opportunities from Dallas to Madrid Scattered Throughout the Year](#)

[Handful of Cheap Delta Business Class Seats \(70%+ Off\) from New York to Reykjavik and Venice with Miles and Points](#)

HAWAII

[Maui: Handful of American Business Class Seats from Phoenix and Many Other Cities with Miles and Points](#)



MIDDLE EAST

[Emirates *First Class* Single Seat Discount Opportunities from Chicago to Dubai & Beyond](#)

MID-SOUTH PACIFIC

[More Close-in Tahiti Business Class Opportunities with Miles & Points](#)

A photograph of a Lufthansa First Class cabin interior, showing a wide, comfortable seat with a large window and overhead storage bins.

New Lufthansa First Class Ticketing Strategy to Europe from \$1,722 Each Way

December 2022

If nothing else, this is THE hot ticket for your overnight flight between the U.S. and Europe for \$2,235

There are several problems with flying First Class right now. First of all, there aren't many First Class cabins in the sky, and they're only getting rarer. Of the big three U.S. carriers, only American Airlines has a First Class cabin, and that's going away soon.

Second, First Class fares to Europe are pie-in-the-sky high. They can easily hit \$8,000 to \$16,000.

And First Class deals? They're extremely rare. Aside from British Airways (whose First Class product is often not that great), there are **almost never any special deals to Europe**. The other go-to First Class carriers to Europe now are **Air France** (but you have to be a top-tier elite to use miles) and **SWISS** (which has low availability), so forget those.

WHAT ABOUT LUFTHANSA?

While it offers an above average First Class seat and experience, Lufthansa:

- Has no major credit card transfer partners to its Miles & More loyalty program
- Hasn't historically sold miles directly to travelers
- Limits partner bookings (with Air Canada and United miles, for example) to only within 14 days of departure for First Class, which we love for [bags-packed](#) and [upgrade-till-the-end](#) travelers, and have covered many times [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

Now, in these circumstances, most folks will turn their weary eyes to Business Class, but when you're called "First Class Flyer," you don't just stand there and take it! You work twice as hard to find some First Class joy. And we have, in the blue and yellow livery of Germany's Lufthansa. And speaking of Business Class — that's the kind of price we're finding for a First Class seat. Keep reading to learn more.

LUFTHANSA'S NEW MILES & MORE BUNDLE&GO OFFER

Lufthansa's Miles & More loyalty program has introduced the opportunity to purchase miles, and through January 31, with a 30% bonus, on max purchases of 100,000 miles per transaction, up to 250,000 miles can be purchased through Bundle&GO in a calendar year. (Although you know you can always use [FCF's unlimited buy-miles strategy](#).)

[Lufthansa's Bundle&Go](#) deal lets you purchase award miles in three increments of 10,000, 50,000, and 100,000, with the 30% bonus coming on top of that. Members can purchase one bundle per transaction and bonus miles do not count towards the annual limit. If you max out one account, you can get 325,000 miles for \$4,680, or about 1.44 cents a mile.

FYI: Their [fine print](#) indicates it could take up to five days for the miles to post, however when we bought miles through this promo, they were credited almost instantly. Maybe we got lucky, maybe we didn't, but it's something to keep in mind.

Save Up to \$5,828+ / 60%+
~ And a Secret Way to Save an Extra \$636 In Taxes ~

The round-trip cost of First Class between the U.S. and Europe on Lufthansa is 182,000 miles (91,000 each way), so the cost of buying those miles with this deal is \$2,621 round-trip. Taxes on tickets between the U.S. and Europe are about \$1,973, if you book round-trips.

One-way taxes are about \$925 on the outbound and \$412 on the return. That means you want to book two one-ways and you'll **save an additional \$636**. Love that!

Considering that published First Class fares to Europe are generally between \$8,000 and \$16,000, **your savings can range anywhere from 52% to 60%+.**

SAMPLE SAVINGS BREAKDOWN

First Class Route	Regular Published Fare	Mileage Cost R/T	Cost to Buy Miles	Approximate Taxes For Two One-ways (USD)	Total Cost Including Taxes	Savings	
Chicago-Frankfurt	\$9,069	182,000	\$2,621	\$1,337	\$3,958	\$5,111	56%
Washington, DC-Frankfurt	\$9,786					\$5,828	60%
Boston-Munich	\$9,193			\$1,324	\$3,945	\$5,248	57%
Chicago-Munich	\$8,374					\$4,429	53%
Miami-Munich	\$9,568					\$5,623	59%
New York-Munich	\$8,292					\$4,347	52%

WHAT ROUTES DOES LUFTHANSA FLY FIRST CLASS U.S.-EUROPE?

To Frankfurt from:

Chicago
Houston
Los Angeles
Miami
New York
Newark
San Francisco
Washington, DC

To Munich from:

Boston
Chicago
Miami
New York
Washington, DC

*See FCF Sweet Redeem chart below for the six routes with availability right now.

FLY ANYWHERE IN EUROPE FOR THE SAME PRICE

Lufthansa's mileage award pricing chart is the same no matter what route you choose between the U.S. and Europe, so feel free to tack on the following destinations provided they are available. Worst case: [buy a positioning flight](#).

Sample Frankfurt Connections: Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Bordeaux, Budapest, Copenhagen, Dublin, Dubrovnik, Edinburgh, Florence, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Malta, Milan, Munich, Mykonos, Naples, Nice, Paris, Rome, Santorini, Stockholm, Venice, Vienna, and Zürich.

Sample Munich Connections: Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Budapest, Copenhagen, Dubrovnik, Edinburgh, Florence, Lisbon, London, Milan, Mykonos, Naples, Paris, Rome, Santorini, Venice, Vienna, and Zürich.

BEST LONG-HAUL ROUTES TO FIND FIRST CLASS AWARD AVAILABILITY

These are the best at the time of writing, but they will certainly change with time:

- Best availability: Is generally to/from Munich.
- Take the Family: Boston, Chicago, and New York are the best for booking four or more seats, both directions, in April, May, and June.
- Slimmer Pickings: Chicago and Washington, DC, to Frankfurt have less availability with only one seat in both directions. These are best for [close-in departures](#).

Route	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-Frankfurt	Dec., Jan., April, Nov.			Dec.		
Washington, DC-Frankfurt	Dec., Jan.	Jan.		Dec., Jan.		
Boston-Munich	Dec., March, July, Aug.	Jan.	Jan., March, April to June	Aug., March		Jan., March, April to June
Chicago-Munich	March, July, Oct.	Aug.	April to June	March		April to June

Route	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-Munich	Dec., March			Jan., March, April	March	March
New York-Munich	Jan., Feb., March, Sept.	March, Sept., Oct.	April to June, July, Aug.	Jan., March	Feb., March, July, Sept., Oct.	March, April to June, July, Aug., Sept.

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...

Reimagine upgrading your travel life, and I'll see you up front.



Opportunity Travel: How to Stretch Your Budget Into a Higher Class of Service

December 2022

The first question to ask yourself before planning every trip — and the cost if you don't

If I could only pass one piece of advice to travelers looking for more comfort in the air, without having to pay retail, I would say to ask yourself: **How flexible can I be?**

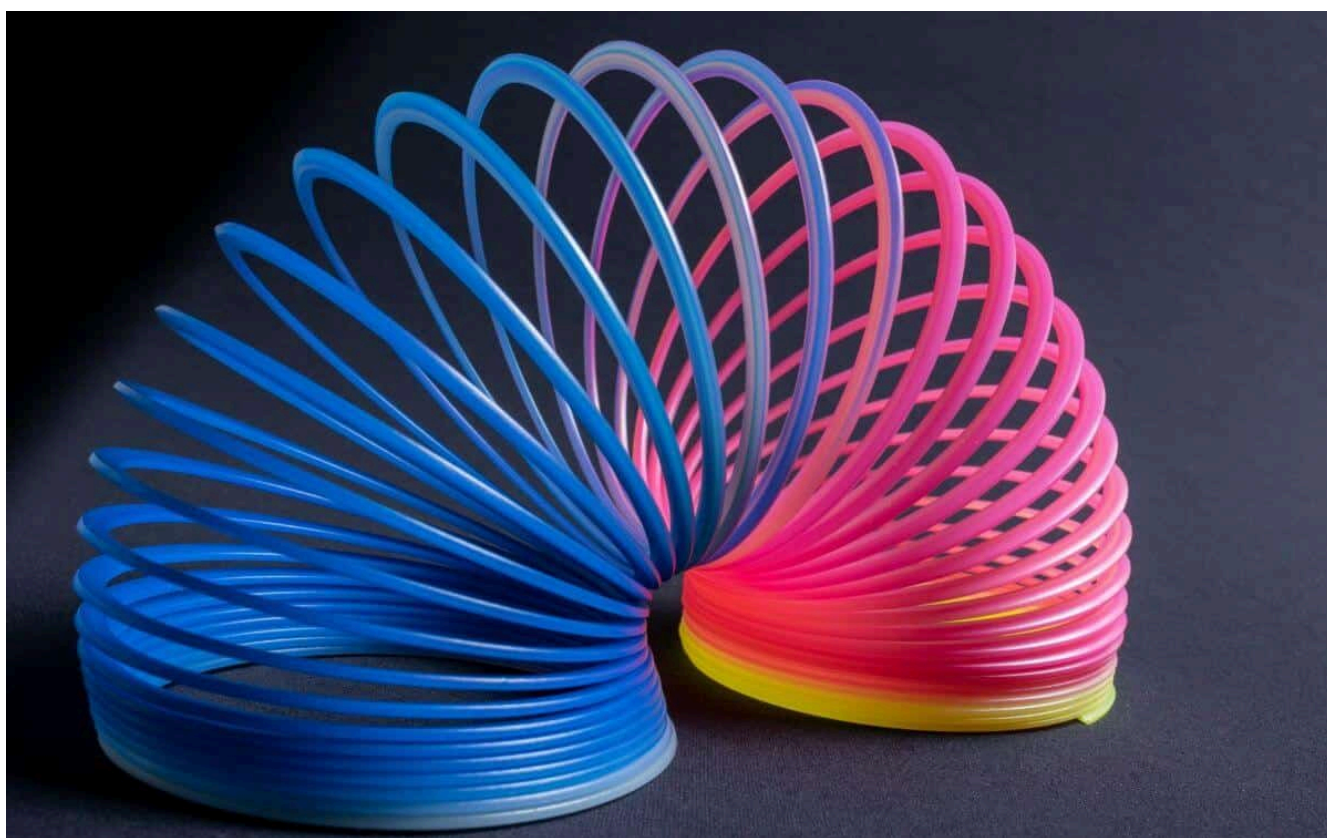
I've written about the opportunities that come with being flexible for four decades now, but I'm not sure many flyers fully realize the importance of this, or how extensive the savings can be to **stretch your budget into a higher class of service.**

If you're not flexible, you're playing right into the airline's hands, like the person going to a car lot who pays full retail if he wants his car made to order. You might get lucky, if the planets align, that the car lot has a vehicle with the color, moonroof, stereo, engine, interior, and exact bells and whistles you want, but it's unlikely to happen.

So, here's the first question you should ask yourself **before every flight you book**:

HOW FLEXIBLE AM I?

This is vitally important because it sets you on the right course to get a great deal. And let's be clear, flexibility means a lot more than simply shifting dates, although that factor alone can save thousands on a premium flight.



FLEX YOUR OPPORTUNITY MIND MUSCLES

Let's limber up your mind. All it takes is a few reps and you'll be on your way, flex-flying like the savviest FCF travelers.

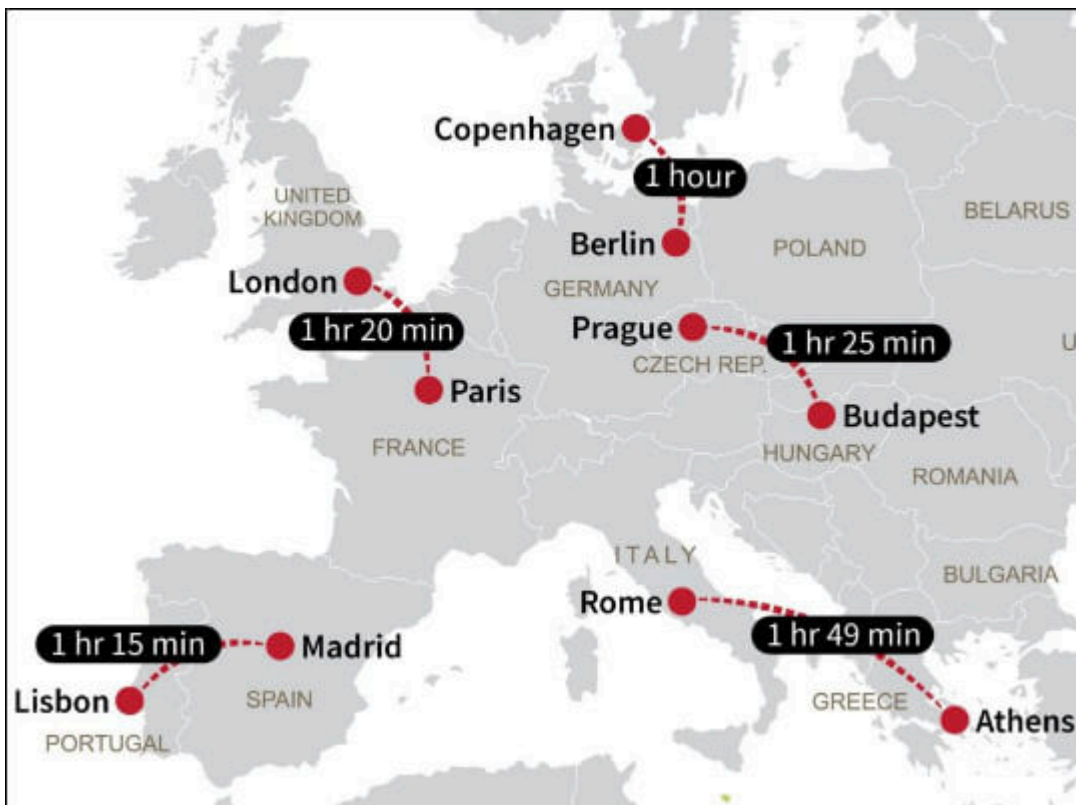
FLEXERCISE ONE: CONSIDER A MIXED-CLASS BOOKING

If you're cutting it close on your budget, ask yourself if you really need a lie-flat seat on that return day flight from Europe, when you'll be awake most of the time watching a movie or on your laptop. Forgoing Business Class on that flight (say in favor of a decent Premium Economy) could be just the savings to make the fare comfortable on your wallet too. FCF's [Horses for Courses Strategy](#) is one of my favorites when fares are high or your budget could get more ROI elsewhere.

FLEXERCISE TWO: WIDEN YOUR CIRCLE

You know that song they sing at Disneyland, “It’s a Small World (After All)”? It’s the one that annoyingly stays in your head for months. Well, apologies for putting it in there again. But it’s true. It’s easy to have blinders on when choosing a destination, when another great city that’s way more affordable is on sale nearby.

Look at Europe, for example. So many great cities are close to each other. Could an alternative city provide a much better price, cabin, or schedule? What if you could fly First Class to Milan for the price of Business to Venice? Or just pay half as much for Business by flying into a city that’s just 167 miles away from your desired destination? *It’s a small, small, world.*

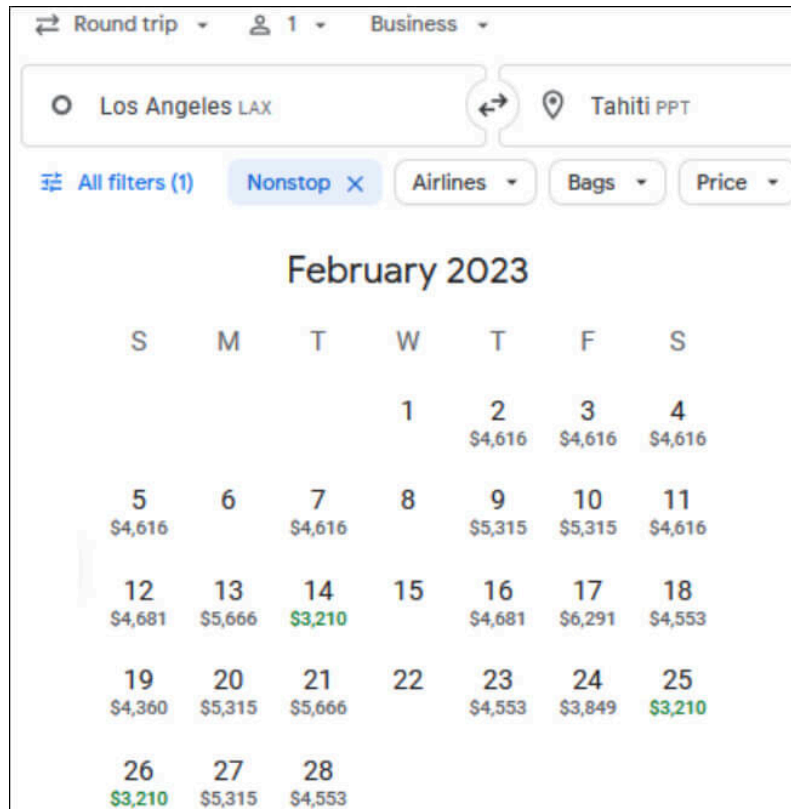




FLEXERCISE THREE: BE ADAPTABLE WITH YOUR DATES OR AIRLINE

Is there a fare available a day or two before (or a week or month or two for that matter) or after your initial travel date that would **save you 39%**? Or a **better cabin or flight schedule**? Maybe it's a direct flight instead of a connection? Consider shifting times to grab yourself a better buy. In travel, [if you're flexible](#), you can [make amazing things happen](#).

While this one seems obvious, look closely at this Google Flights screengrab below, and you'll notice a few almost-hidden dates in the month that save up to \$2,456.



A couple years back, a friend of mine, Sal, was flying to Europe. She said the dates were “non-negotiable” and the best fare she could find in Business Class was \$4,000. She asked if I could do better. I came back with a \$2,500 option, BUT it was the day before she had planned to go. Well there’s nothing like a \$1,500 savings to test how flexible you can be! In a heartbeat, Sal moved the booking to a day earlier, spent an extra day in the arrival city, and was very happy with the outcome.

In other words, if I had a nickel for every time I heard someone say that they had no flexibility, but later changed their tune when I came back with a deal that had different parameters, I could buy a First Class ticket to the moon and back. In other words, **travelers often don’t want to pay the price of their inflexibility.**

FLEXERCISE FOUR: BUY THE DIPS

Trade up your flying experience by taking advantage of fare volatility or dips. It’s super dynamic out there with an estimated *million fare changes a day* on flights around the world. This can even happen on the same flight. You could, for example, “trade up” your cabin by finding a new sale fare in Premium Economy to exchange for your coach ticket; a new Business fare that’s a little more than the Premium Economy ticket you bought; or a First Class fare you can trade up from that no-deal Business Class fare you bought. [Buy the Dip, Upgrade Your Trip.](#)

Check out this flash fare to Brazil in Business Class for just \$1,151

MileagePlus: Sign in or join

Roundtrip (1 traveler)

Edit search

Wed, Feb 16, 2022

ATL - GRU 3:45 pm - 7:15 am

Wed, Feb 23, 2022

GRU - ATL 10:35 pm - 10:36 am

Fare

\$1,060.00

Taxes and fees

\$91.27

TOTAL

\$1,151.27

or

starting from \$103/month ?

2 tickets left at this price

FLEXERCISE FIVE: FORGET ABOUT BEING AN ELITE, IT'S HOLDING YOU BACK

Simply put: It's better to be a [loyalty-free agent](#) and not get locked into flying with just one airline. Believe me, this is big — especially now that elite value is increasingly squeezed right out of the orange. These days, American, Delta, and United, seem to all be devaluing their loyalty programs by the month. It's best to book trip by trip and go with the best value, best schedule, or both. It opens-up way more opportunities than you'll find by being locked into one airline. Don't get hosed!

As you can see in the screenshot below, Atlanta travelers locked into Delta *loyalty* will have to pay \$2,525 (57% more) more than Atlanta free-agents. Don't get hosed by Delta.

Round trip

1

Business

Atlanta ATL

London

Wed, Nov 23

Wed, Nov 30

All filters (1)

Nonstop

Airlines

Bags

Price

Times

Emissions

Connecting airports

Duration

9:40 PM – 10:35 AM^{*1}

British Airways · American, Finnair, Iberia

7 hr 55 min

ATL–LHR

Nonstop

1,866 kg CO₂

+22% emissions ⓘ

\$3,352

round trip

5:35 PM – 6:20 AM^{*1}

Virgin Atlantic · Air France, Delta, KLM

7 hr 45 min

ATL–LHR

Nonstop

1,329 kg CO₂

-12% emissions ⓘ

\$5,877

round trip

6:15 PM – 7:15 AM^{*1}

Delta · Virgin Atlantic

8 hr

ATL–LHR

Nonstop

1,464 kg CO₂

Avg emissions ⓘ

\$5,877

round trip

This next screenshot shows how you can get a First Class ticket from Atlanta to London on British Airways for about the same price as the Delta fare (above). Don't get hosed by Delta.

↔ Round trip ▾

👤 1 ▾

First ▾

○ Atlanta ATL

↔

📍 London

📅 Tue, Nov 22 < >

Tue, Nov 29 < >

⚙ All filters (1)

Nonstop ✕

Airlines ▾

Bags ▾

Price ▾

Times ▾

Emissions ▾

Connecting airports ▾

Duration ▾

9:40 PM – 10:35 AM*¹

British Airways · American, Finnair

7 hr 55 min

ATL–LHR

Nonstop

2,332 kg CO₂

Avg emissions ⓘ

\$6,052

round trip

▾

FLEXERCISE SIX: STOP BOOKING BACKWARDS

Most people *dream* about a trip, then *plan* it, *then* book it. I call that booking backwards. Say what?! If you flip this thinking and instead concentrate on the deals first (even when the trip parameters seem locked in, say, for like a wedding), your travel experience can improve even while you're saving money too.

It's about flipping the funnel and not boxing yourself in with the [Stop Booking Backwards Mindset](#).

Don't hose yourself, and I'll see you up front.



How Anyone Can Get a \$25,100 Japan Airlines First Class Ticket to Asia for \$2,880 R/T

December 2022

FCF's handy toolshed makes the process so easy you'll wonder if the person next to you paid as little as you did (they probably didn't).

Most travelers realize that no two seats on the same flight are sold for the same price, be it in dollars or miles. When you're sitting in First Class, there's no telling who paid \$25,100, who used their miles, or how many miles they used to snag a mileage award ticket. The cabin staff likely doesn't know either, but *you* do if you got a steal.

Today we want to discuss how to get up to 89% off some of the world's most expensive First Class seats. Not many people have close to \$25,000 for an airline ticket, but many of you do have \$2,880 to spare, especially for those special occasion trips.

UP TO 89% OFF? HOW DOES IT WORK?

Let's talk about how you can use cash (via purchasing miles) on one airline for redemption on another airline. The technical term is known as a *partner award*.

Let's break it down.

Japan Airlines fares can change by the day or week, but here are what you typically see for First Class to Tokyo:

- Chicago: \$24,500
- Los Angeles: \$21,300
- New York: \$25,100
- San Francisco: \$22,400

Now what if I told you you could redeem 160,000 American Airlines miles to get one of these seats — and that you could buy those miles for just \$2,880? You'd say "hai!," right? That's "heck yeah" in Japanese.

While American Airlines doesn't offer First Class flights to Tokyo, its partner Japan Airlines does, and makes them available to American AAdvantage miles collectors. In other words, if you have American miles, you can fly First Class on Japan Airlines for just 160,000 round-trip – **to Tokyo and many other cities in Asia** — from all over the U.S.



BUY AMERICAN MILES TO FLY JAPAN AIRLINES FIRST CLASS

American usually has an everyday price of 2.8 cents per mile, however, AA frequently offers mileage purchase bonus and discount promotions for as low as 1.8 cents each up to 150,000 per year, plus any bonuses. **That amounts to a First Class flight to Tokyo at \$1,440 each way.** These are massive savings on the normal published fares as the chart below reveals.

Follow our strategy here for the [annual limit maximum workaround](#).

USE FCF'S TOOLSHED TO REALIZE THE SAVINGS ON FIRST CLASS USING AMERICAN MILES, WHICH ANYONE CAN BUY

Operating Carrier	To Tokyo From	Buy Miles From	Mileage Cost	Cost to Buy Miles When on Sale for 1.8 Cents Each	Normal Published Fare	Savings	
Japan	Chicago	American	160,000	\$2,880	\$24,500	\$21,620	88%
	Los Angeles				\$21,300	\$18,420	86%
	New York				\$25,100	\$22,220	89%
	San Francisco				\$22,400	\$19,520	87%

*Taxes are negligible at around \$50 round-trip.

WHAT ABOUT AMEX POINTS?

If you don't have enough points, you can also [buy points from Amex](#) and transfer them to its partner Cathay Pacific to redeem for that Japan Airlines First Class ticket. It costs a little more than if you go through American Airlines, but the savings are still spectacular. I'm talking 81% to 84% off the normal fare. See below.

FIRST CLASS SAVINGS ON JAPAN AIRLINES USING AMEX POINTS PARTNER, WHICH ANY AMEX CARDHOLDER CAN BUY

Operating Carrier	To Tokyo From	Lowest Cost Amex Partner	Amex Partner Cost	Cost To Buy Amex Points	Normal Published Fare	Savings	
Japan	Chicago	Cathay Pacific	160,000	\$4,000	\$24,500	\$20,500	84%
	Los Angeles				\$21,300	\$17,300	81%
	New York				\$25,100	\$21,100	84%
	San Francisco				\$22,400	\$18,400	82%

OH BY THE WAY

For the same price using American and Cathay Pacific miles – and therefore cash – you can fly to destinations such as Bali, Bangkok, Hanoi, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Osaka, Singapore, Taipei, and dozens of other cities in the region based on availability.

WHEN DOES THIS WORK?

Of course, airlines don't offer discount mileage award tickets for First Class seats every day that'll save you up to \$22,220. However, there are some routes and dates that are easier to book than others. At the moment, Japan is releasing one seat at a time and generally for travel 10 to 11 months out. This changes often. See more below.

This is where FCFs [Sweet Redeems Tool and Alerts](#) come into play. You can [learn all about how](#) to access [a golden key that unlocks tickets like this](#). We'll show you what months of the year you're likely to score seats for one, two, or four passengers.

This is one of many areas you can reimagine upgrading your travel life.

JAPAN AIRLINES FIRST CLASS WITH AMERICAN OR CATHAY MILES

Tokyo To / From	Outbound		Outbound	
	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month
Chicago		Dec.	Dec.	
Los Angeles		Dec.	Dec.	
New York		Nov.	Nov.	

Tokyo To / From	Outbound		Outbound	
	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month
San Francisco	Dec.		Dec.	

*November and December 2023. Months in black at least one seat available.

READY TO BOOK?

Did you know all of this is at your fingertips? Could you imagine saving so much research time and piles of miles on your next trip? Just go to FCF's [Sweet Redeems](#) deal page and/or follow our Sweet Redeems availability alerts on email to follow availability opportunities.

Want more? Inside our deal details page, you'll get instructions on how to book these \$25,100 tickets for just \$2,880 fast, like this:

Normal Everyday Price: 340,000 on American Airlines

140,000 Japan Airlines Miles (Operating Airline) [How to Book](#) [Summary](#) **59% OFF**

140,000 Alaska Airlines Miles [Summary](#) **59% OFF**

160,000 American Airlines Miles [How to Book](#) [Summary](#) **53% OFF**

How to Book online on American Airlines
 Estimated time: 3 to 7 minutes
 Save 26,933 to 54,545 miles per minute
 BOOK BY PHONE: 1-800-433-7300

- 1 Review FCF's Breakdown of Discounted Availability Closely (by Month and Seat Count) (5 to 15 seconds to 15 seconds) [More](#)
- 2 Check Availability for Your Specific Date with Airline Website (2 to 3 minutes to 3 minutes) [More](#)
- 3 Select Flights and Make Payment (2 to 3 minutes to 3 minutes) [More](#)

QUICK REVIEW

Here's how to use FCF's strategies and tools to get your \$25,100 ticket for \$2,880.

- **Step one:** Stay on top of FCF's Sweet Redeem alerts to know when clusters of availability are open and be ready to strike.
- **Step two:** Check availability for your specific dates on AA.com or CathayPacific.com. Have your mileage game plan figured out. If I know I can use the American Airlines miles at some point, I always

wait until they're at their lowest sale price, typically about 1.8 cents each. Even [now there is a sale](#) that can net a price at just 2.4¢ each.

If you're not sure that you can eventually use the miles, you should wait until your acceptable dates are available when you buy the miles. In that case, you'll pay whatever the going rate is for the miles at the time you're ready to book the ticket.

That isn't so bad because if you don't get them at the AA.com sale price of \$2,880, or the Amex everyday price of \$4,000, you can always get them for the retail price of under \$4,480. You're hedging if you buy miles in advance, but you're still saving about \$20,620+ either way.

- **Step three:** Simply book it on aa.com and try not to gloat too much on your flight so no one knows what you paid. It'll be our secret.

That's what we call reimagining upgrading your travel life.

See you up front.

RATE THIS REPORT

Help FCF help you.



Positioning Flights: FCF's Mindset on Getting Where the Getting is Good

December 2022

What to do when the best deals don't start from your doorstep

Here's a travel problem you may have encountered: the most lucrative (or, indeed, most interesting) flight opportunities often don't begin at your home airport. Nooo! Okay, relax... this special report was made just for you. We're talking about "**positioning flights.**"

A positioning flight is a shorter flight (usually) that gets you to where the deal is. It's the flying version of the Uber that gets you to the train.

A positioning flight is for someone who:

- Wants an epic flight experience, say a better seat, a better airline, or a better aircraft
- Doesn't want to miss out on a deal where the cost is so low you can't say "no"
- Can't find any great deals out of their hometown airport

Here are the three most common scenarios when the deal you want doesn't start at your home airport:

Scenario #1: When You Can Save a Wheelbarrow Full of Miles

You see a [Sweet Redeems](#) for a ticket that saves up to 80% when using your miles.

Example: You live in Tallahassee and Delta charges 360,000 miles to get to Madrid seamlessly via Atlanta in Business Class. BUT, Iberia Airlines — an Amex and Chase partner — flies to Madrid via Miami for just 68,000 miles round-trip. So you buy a separate ticket to Miami to catch the killer deal.

Scenario #2: When You Can Save a Ton of Cash

Similarly, there could be a premium [Flash Fare](#) from an airport just a short hop away, or to a destination not far from the Flash Fare destination.

Example: New York-Milan has a Business Class Flash Fare of \$1,900, but you're actually going to nearby Venice and those fares are \$2,900.

Scenario #3: When You Want a Top Comfort Flight or Experience

Example: You have a really big desire to fly Emirates' shower/champagne/caviar flight, but you don't live in one of Emirates A380 hubs: Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Seattle, or Washington, DC. So you book a separate positioning flight from your home airport to one of the A380 hub cities and fly like royalty.

AM I CRAZY ABOUT POSITIONING FLIGHTS?

Not really. But they can be one of the keys to a great travel experience, a "second-best ticket" if you like (see our "two out of three" idea [here](#) and [here](#)), and they can save tens of thousands of dollars, seriously.



A short hop can get you the win

IF YOU'RE RISK AVERSE

On paper, positioning flights are lovely. However, there are any number of things that could go wrong if you don't play your cards right. Depending on your tolerance for risk, you'll want to **consider same-day or next-day connections**.

I USUALLY DO NEXT-DAY CONNECTIONS

If you're nervous about missing a connection, give yourself a day's grace. Most international flights I take are in conjunction with a positioning flight. Why? Because I'm either flying First Class cheaply, or I'm flying in an exotic First Class seat. Those often require flexibility, so I arrive the day before in the departure city for the special flight opportunity to avoid any stress about making my connection. I don't like to be stressed when I travel. There's almost no risk with this approach.

HIDDEN OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER

Layover Bonuses: If my layover is in New York, for example, I can catch a world-class performance, show, or ball game I might not otherwise experience. So in conjunction with the big international flight I'm about to take the next day, I rationalize the layover by getting to snag a special event there.

If the deal is out of Los Angeles, I can visit friends in SoCal who I don't typically see at any other time these days, so it's a sweet bonus to get to see them when the deal is out of their city.

It's killing multiple birds with one stone. I seldom make a decision or choice that has only one benefit. I prefer options that give me multiple benefits. Think about taking positioning flights out of cities where you have family, friends, attractions you want to see, famous landmarks, sporting events, whatever. Some of the most interesting things I've experienced were during an overnight in cities I wouldn't otherwise visit if I didn't have multiple excuses, reasons, or rationales to do so.

SAME-DAY CONNECTIONS & RISKS TO CONSIDER

While many of you are daredevils, this is not for the faint of heart. I would want to ensure the following if I were **flying on two different tickets on the same day:**

- At least one buffer flight in between the positioning flight and the ultimate flight to give a bit of leeway if the flight is delayed or canceled.
- I wouldn't check bags, but I haven't checked bags in years anyway. That's just me.
- I wouldn't change airlines or terminals unless I had a comfortable buffer of at least three to four hours. I'll typically go to the lounge and catch up on email or phone calls so it really doesn't waste any time.

Simply put: all it takes is a flight delay or cancellation and your whole scheme can be derailed. Here are a few booking options that **increase your risk** of something going wrong on same-day, two-ticket connections:

- Flying on two different airlines
- Flying on airlines from different alliances
- Big airports or having to change terminals
- Checking bags
- Tight connection times

SETTING THE TABLE FOR POSITIONING FLIGHT SUCCESS

- Remember: airlines don't take responsibility for a missed connection when it's on a separate ticket, this is why I usually arrive a day early and enjoy my layover city with friends or exotic events.
- Consider positioning flights in economy or Premium Economy when the flight is short. If the flight is only an hour or two, I don't always need First Class (which is not even offered within Europe usually). For example, connecting flights between Monterey and Los Angeles, and between Philadelphia and Washington, DC.
- For positioning flights near your destination, if you're going to take advantage of the stopover, consider that some cities have multiple airports. For example, you can arrive in London Heathrow and depart from London Gatwick.
- If you are connecting to a cruise, be prepared if your big awesome transoceanic flight gets delayed or canceled. Well, you've got to deal with that question regardless. On the handful of occasions that I've taken cruises, I planned to be in the departure city two days in advance. Or I'll arrive in the region a day in advance and take a train or Uber to the city where the cruise departs from.
- Check what terminal each airline is in. If they're in different terminals, research the best way to move between terminals and how long it takes. Airport websites and airline apps feature maps that will tell

you how long it takes to get from one place to another at an airport.

- Consider the seasons of each airport. If it's winter, airports in the north might have snow, which can cause delays.
- When arriving from an international destination, leave extra time to go through immigration and customs and collect your bags. Luggage coming from international flights might take significantly longer due to the large number of bags coming off of widebody aircraft.
- If checking bags, consider bag fees for both the positioning flight and your long-haul flight should there be any.

The more conscious you are of the opportunities that can come with utilizing positioning flights well, the more your eyes will open to deals on more-important long-haul flights you'd have otherwise not even considered.



FCF's Flash Deal-Ready Mindset: As Your Constraints Go, So Go Your Deal Options

December 2022

Plan your range of date flexibility for a specific destination is step one in snagging an excellent flash deal with FCF's Date & Deal Planner

In the 1973 film, *Magnum Force*, Detective Harry Callahan, better known as "Dirty Harry," utters this memorable line: "A man's gotta know his limitations."

It certainly applies to women as well. And, as we discuss today, it can also apply to travel.

Simply put, flash deals go to those ready to catch them.

Any Which Way You Can

I was talking to my friend Mike the other day, and he was telling me about the three trips he'd like to take next year: Ireland, Tokyo, and Vietnam. I told him the first thing to do is figure out the dates he's willing to travel to each destination. That puts the first constraint on the trips.

Then he casually dropped another one on me: "Bennett, I'm not going anywhere that's not at least 70 degrees!" Mike and his wife Vivian live in San Diego, so I wasn't surprised. That was his constraint No. 2.

Then Vivian raised a third constraint. "I'd rather not go anywhere in the high tourist season when it's full of people from your own country." Okay, that narrows the dates to low or "shoulder" tourist seasons. So I did a bit of research on dates, temperatures, and tourist seasons for the three countries.

For a Few Dollars More

Added to these limitations are very specific desires. Mike said, "Come to think of it, I've always wanted to go to the British Open. It's not a must-do, but if it fits, hey, why not!? It's relatively close to Ireland." Sometimes your constraints are further defined by a particular event, like going to Japan to see the cherry blossoms in spring, or the Chelsea Flower Show in London. In this case, Mike's British Open desire amounted to a potential bonus. So I plugged that into **FCF's Date & Deal Planner**. If it could work, it had the makings of a dream trip.

Let's say there's a special event on January 22, and you want to be in the area for two weeks. You could either start the trip around the 10th, and end on the 24th, or arrive on the 20th, and depart the second week of February. If you can book with that kind of flexibility, it provides much better options, and options = potential deals.

FCF's Dream Trip Deal-Ready Mindset

The bigger the haystack, the more needles you'll find.

1. Don't procrastinate in determining your constraints, so you can be ready to pounce on a flash deal when it surfaces.
2. The clearer your haystack constraints are at the outset, the quicker you'll be able to recognize a relevant deal.

"Sometimes, if you want to see a change for the better, you have to take things into your own hands."

Clint Eastwood

FCF's Date & Deal Planner

It is only after you have determined the dates you're willing to travel, that you are ready to have an eye out for [flash fare alerts](#), [flash award availability](#), and other opportunities that are date-dependent—and are ready to have your travel agent or administrative assistant keep an eye out for, too.

I laid the trips out like this, in FCF's Date & Deal Planner here:

Date Requirements Checklist	Destination A	Destination B	Destination C
Ireland	Tokyo	Vietnam	
Desired Length of Stay	14 days		
Weather	70 Degrees		
Season	Shoulder		
Off-Peak Tourist Season	Spring & Fall (March and May & September through November)	Spring & Fall (March through May & late September through November)	Spring (March, April)
Events to Consider	Ireland Events	Tokyo Events	Vietnam Events

Now you have an idea of how you might spread the trips out over the year.

Without laying it out in advance, you'd be shooting in the dark when flash deals arrive.

MAKE IT FUN

This forms a pretty handy travel tool. And it should be a fun process, too. You can make it a date night (or a flight night!) with your travel companion. Go out for a nice dinner and a glass of wine and chew over everything related to your trip. Check out destinations, learn about them, and get excited about planning it all. Travel is enjoyable, but planning travel can be too. And the research is clear on this: [having a trip to look forward to is good for you.](#)

ESCAPE FROM ALCATRAZ*

In other words, look at your travel planning through a mindset of fun, **rather than a high-pressure struggle when you see a flash deal** and then frantically race around to see if you can make it work. **Trip planning is a lovely hobby. Do this for all your top bucket list trips**, so you're always **ready for a deal**.

Escape the stress of all that. Instead, calmly take FCF's Date & Deal Planner out of your pocket or bag and see if it fits your needs. When the deal strikes – which is often route and date specific – you **won't become paralyzed by anxiety**. Instead, you just see if the deal aligns with your limitations — and book your dream trip if it does.

Better yet, give your date planner to your travel companion or assistant, and let them do the work for you.

**Keen spotters will see that some subheads today are Clint Eastwood films. Clint, an inspiration to FCF who lives in my hometown, turned 92 earlier this year.*

