Let’s Get Pacific with Savings up to 53% to Tempting Tahiti

November 2022

Marlon Brando had it right, but now you can go to Tahiti without paying crazy Hollywood prices

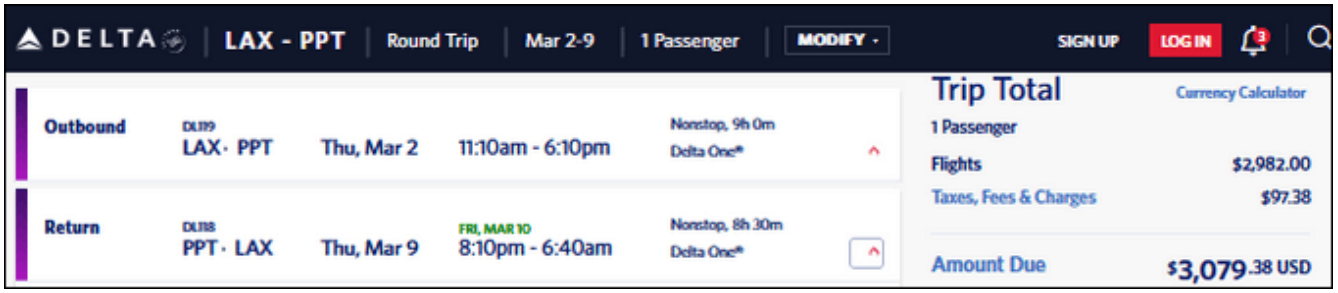
As many travelers continue breaking out from their Lockdown Funk and the weather starts to cool off, perhaps it’s time to think about something warm and tropical. Many warm weather travelers love to replay the Hawaiian option, time and time again. But farther afield than the usual holiday haunt there’s the shining jewel of the Pacific, Tahiti. Ever considered it? While many have quickly been put off by price, now might be the time.

THE PINEAPPLE BOWL: HAWAII VS TAHITI

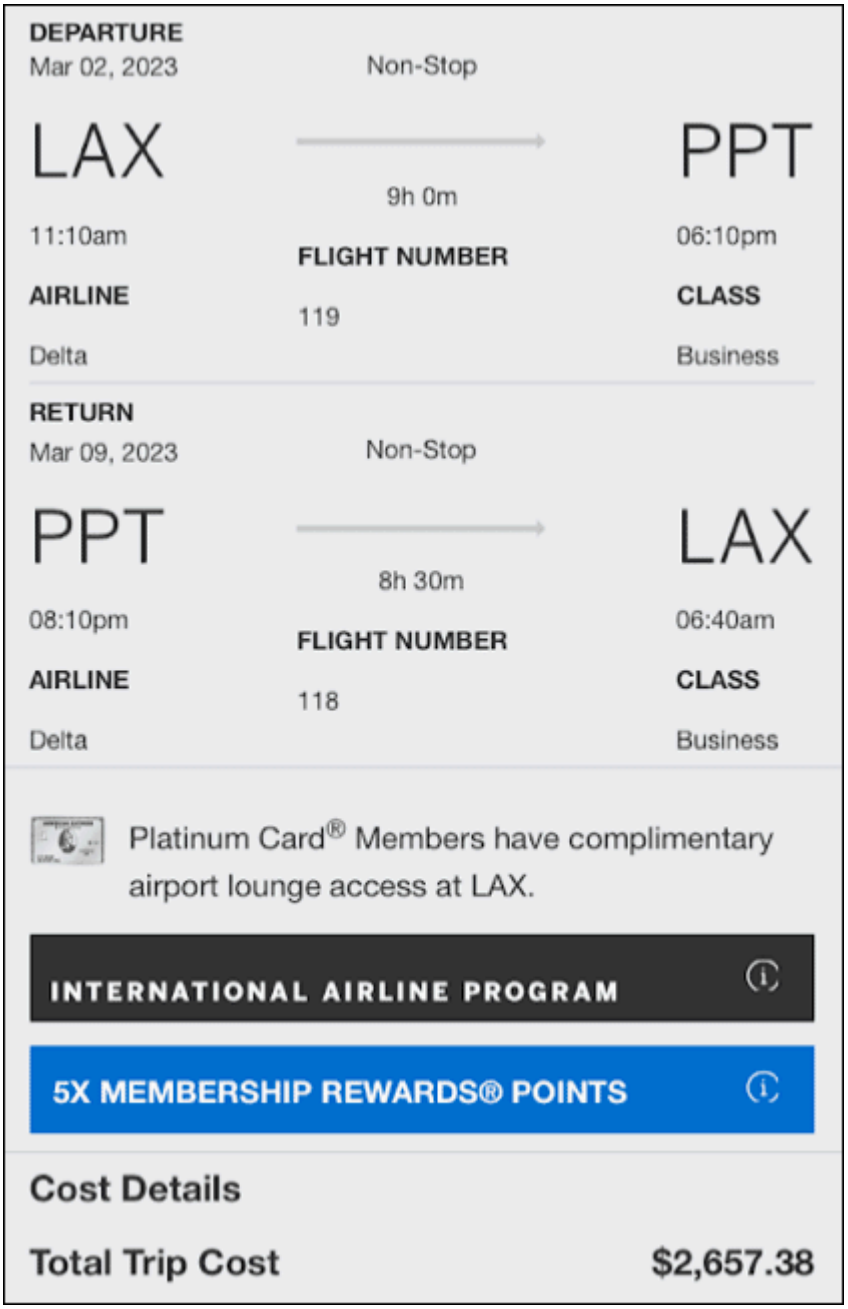
Hawaii fares in Business Class generally range from about $1,000 to $2,250 from Los Angeles and $1,800 to $3,035 from New York, for example.

The Pacific, however, is one big ocean with plenty to explore. Just ask the early Polynesian seafarers who sailed many thousands of miles in their double-hull canoes, navigating by the stars. Delta has a handful of dates with low fares on their new nonstop from Los Angeles to Papeete in Business Class for $3,079, or $2,657 if you are an Amex Platinum or Centurion cardholder, thanks to Amex's International Airline Program (IAP), as you can see below. New Yorkers can also fly via Los Angeles to Papeete for $4,689 or $4,161 with the IAP discount.

Los Angeles to Papeete $3,079



Amex's International Airline Program (IAP) Fare $2,657



FYI: these flights are only three hours longer than those to Hawaii.

That, plus opportunities to use your miles with discount award availability to the Island, mean it is time for us to give Tahiti more serious consideration. Twist our arm!

TAHITI ON MILES

While the FCF team were dreamily looking at beachy pics of Tahiti, they spotted some nice discount award availability on many dates for up to four travelers, as you can see here on Air Tahiti Nui And United Airlines:

Operating Carrier	To Papeete From	Partner Mileage Program	Round-trip Business Class Mileage	Outbound			Outbound		
				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
Air Tahiti Nui	Los Angeles	American	160,000	Dec., March, May, Sept.			Jan., Sept.		
	Seattle			March, Sept.			Dec., Jan., Sept.		
United	San Francisco	United	140,000	Dec.			Jan., Feb.		Dec.

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...

***United Upgrades:** Note that United has similar space available for mileage upgrades (earn elite credit) as it does for award tickets on the San Francisco-Papeete route.

NO MILES? NO PROBLEM.

Just transfer points or buy them to fly Business Class. The transfer options first:

Operating Carrier	To Papeete From	Loyalty Miles to Use	Mileage Cost R/T	Transfer Points From
Air Tahiti Nui	Los Angeles and Seattle	American	160,000	Citi
United	San Francisco	Air Canada	110,000	Amex, Capital One, Chase
		All Nippon	120,000	Amex
		LifeMiles	160,000	Amex, Capital One, Citi
		United	140,000	Chase

OR BUY ‘EM VIA AMEX

Amex sells points at 2.5 cents each that transfer into All Nippon miles.

Operating Carrier	To Papeete From	Transfer Amex Miles to	Mileage Cost	Cost To Buy Miles at 2.5 Cents Each	Normal Published Fare	Savings	
United	San Francisco	All Nippon	120,000	$3,000	$5,316	$2,316	44%

BUY 'EM DIRECT FROM THE AIRLINES

Buy miles from American or United when they're on sale at about 1.8 cents each. That equates to some serious savings as the chart below shows–**up to $3,056 / 53% off.**

Operating Carrier	To Papeete From	Buy Miles From	Mileage Cost	Cost To Buy Miles When on Sale at 1.8 Cents Each	Normal Published Fare	Savings	
Air Tahiti Nui	Los Angeles	American	160,000	$2,880	$5,936	$3,056	51%
	Seattle				$5,612	$2,732	49%
United	San Francisco	United	140,000	$2,520	$5,316	$2,796	53%

TAHITI FUN FACTS

? Want some peace and quiet? Tahiti gets fewer tourists in a year than Hawaii gets in a day.

? Overwater bungalows were first introduced in Tahiti.

? There are no poisonous snakes or insects in Tahiti.

? The Tahitian alphabet only has 13 letters.

? Marlon Brando owned an island near Tahiti called Tetiaroa.

? Tahiti and its islands span an area as large as Europe.

November’s Top 24 Discount Award Greatest Hits

November 2022

November? No worries for big time fare and discount award finds

We locked our team away for the last few weeks with nothing but Cheetohs so they could concentrate on finding discount award delicacies for readers.

And did they what! Their orange-mouthed efforts will have your friends turn green with envy when you humble brag about your next trip.

As we always say, gobble up these deals quick because some will disappear fast, and may even have by the time you read them.

Burn Miles Easy & Cheaply

ASIA

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

Single Seat Close-In Japan Airlines *First Class* Opportunities to Tokyo from New York and Many Other U.S. Cities

Handful of Japan Airlines *First Class* Opportunities Chicago to Tokyo

Single Seat Far-Out Japan Airlines *First Class* Opportunities to Tokyo from San Francisco and Many Other U.S. Cities

Singapore Airlines Business Class Award Seats from Los Angeles and Many Other U.S. Cities to Tokyo and Beyond

Singapore Airlines Business Class Award Seats from San Francisco and Many Other U.S. Cities to Singapore and Beyond

Singapore Airlines Business Class Opportunities from Vancouver to Singapore, 4+ Seats

Japan Airlines Business Class Opportunities to Tokyo from New York and Many Other U.S. Cities with Miles & Points

Handful of Close-in Single Seat All Nippon Airways Business Class Opportunities from Chicago to Tokyo

EUROPE

London: Handful of American *First Class* Discount Award Opportunities from Dallas and Many Other U.S. Cities

Handful of American Business Class Opportunities from New York and Many Other Cities to Milan

Single seat Availability Chicago > Europe for 85,000 Miles / Points R/T in Business Class

Single Seat Availability Miami > Madrid for 85,000 Miles / Points R/T in Business Class

Europe Cheap Single Seat Business Class R/Ts from 68,000 Amex or Chase Points from Washington, DC to Madrid

Emirates Europe *First Class* Single-Seat Discount Award Seats from Newark to Athens Early 2023

Handful of Cheap Delta Airlines Business Class Dates from New York to Iceland With Miles / Points, 4+ Seats

Scads of 4+ Seat Discount Availability to Germany on Singapore Airlines Business Class from New York with Your Miles / Points

THE MIDDLE EAST

Emirates *First Class* Single Seat Discount Opportunities from Chicago to Dubai & Beyond

Good Emirates *First Class* Single-Seat Discount Availability from Houston to Dubai and Beyond

Emirates A380 First Class Shower

SOUTH AMERICA

Brazil: Lots of American *First Class* 4+ Seat Discount Award Opportunities from New York and Many Other U.S. Cities

SOUTH PACIFIC

Business Class Opportunities from Seattle to Tahiti

Close-in United Business Class Opportunities from San Francisco to Tahiti / 4+ Seats

Tahiti Business Class Opportunities with Miles & Points

Handful of Rare Fiji Business Class Opportunities with Miles and Points

Cross to Bear: High Transcon Prices And How To Get Over ‘Em

November 2022

You snooze you lose on transcon flights... if you don’t want to wake up at 4 a.m., or take a red-eye to arrive at 5 or 6 a.m., then read on

How do you solve a problem like the high transcon (NYC-LAX/SFO) Business Class fare? And I’m not just talking about cash fares. Mile costs are high too nowadays, making this a particularly tough cross-country nut to crack.

CURRENT FARE TREND

These days, transcon fares range from $1,698 to $3,898 in Business Class round-trip. That's a Grand Canyon of a chasm. **Flights are averaging around $3,400, at a minimum.**

Here are the hard facts:

- Typical fares for transcon flights, New York to Los Angeles in Business Class, round-trip:
  - American
    - Within 30 days $2,298-$3,048
    - 31-119 days out $1,798-$2,498
    - 120+ days out $1,698-$1,898
  - Delta
    - Within 21 days $1,838-$3,298
    - 22-45 days out $1,448-$2,198
    - 46 days out $1,848-$2,148
  - JetBlue
    - Within 21 days $1,547-$2,236
    - 22-45 days out $1,198-$2,398
    - 46+ days out $2,398-$3,298
  - United
    - Within 45 days $1,448-$2,398
    - 46+ days out $1,848-$3,438

Typical fares for New York to Los Angeles in Business Class, round-trip:

Travel Month/s	American	Delta	United	JetBlue
Through December	$2,098-$4,164	$2,758-$3,558	$2,898-$3,678	$2,066-$2,797
January - February	$1,798-$2,498	$2,198-$2,788	$1,598-$2,398	$2,096-$2,496
March - October	$1,748-$2,158	$2,198-$2,788	$2,898-$3,798	$2,896-$4,096

Typical fares for New York to San Francisco in Business Class, round-trip:

Travel Month/s	American	Delta	United	JetBlue
Through December	$2,598-$3,192	$2,098-$2,608	$2,398-$2,978	$2,598-$3,028
January - February	$2,198-$2,697	$1,898-$2,408	$1,898-$2,998	$2,048-$2,198
March - October	$1,848-$2,038	$1,898-$2,038	$2,398-$4,878	$2,848-$3,898

IS THIS A DOMESTIC OR INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT?!

Given the cost, why do I feel that when I buy a transcon ticket, I should be going to Europe or South America and not another U.S. state?

Oh wait, that's because I could fly in Business Class round-trip from:

- New York to Maui for $1,537
- New York to Casablanca for $2,061
- New York to Tel Aviv for $2,999
- New York to *Johannesburg* for $3,493
- Many destinations in Europe including Athens for $3,100, Barcelona for $2,987, Frankfurt for $2,088, London for $2,506, Milan for $3,191
- New York to Santiago for $2,932, or Sao Paulo for $3,199

Out west, you can fly from Los Angeles to Tokyo, round-trip in Business Class on ZipAir for $1,569, Sao Paulo for $2,792 to Hawaii from $1,099 and to Papeete on Delta nonstop for $2,862, for example.

Or you could fly across our own vast country and pay *more*. Crazy. It's more cost-to-cost than coast-to-coast.

WAYS TO BEAT THE TRANSCON RIGHT NOW

Like I said, I'm not a fan of early morning or red eye flights. So what to do? I used to get strategic to beat these price gouges. For example, to score a nice nonstop flight on a widebody aircraft I'd drive an extra hour on the front end (Philly to Newark). But doing that now on top of a $3,400 round-trip fare makes me feel cross.

THINK CONNECTIONS

Fares for flights that have connections can cost much less. On my last flight, for example, I just made a connection on a $600 one-way First Class fare rather than drive an extra hour for the $1,700 nonstop. In other words, I saved $800 and an extra hour in the car, in exchange for having to make a connection. In some ways it was more convenient.

WHAT ABOUT MILES?

When should you think about using your miles for a transcon journey? Domestic Business Class mileage redemption rates have historically been around 25,000 one-way, then they went up to 50,000. Now, they're typically 60,000 to 70,000 miles each way.

Without a lot of options, is it time to consider paying 120,000 to 140,000 miles for a domestic Business Class round-trip? If you don't already have the miles and the fare is $3,400+, as it often is, and you can buy American and United miles for around 1.8 cents each when on sale, the total cost comes to about $2,160. That means you're still saving $1,240 off many fares.

BUY MILES FROM AMERICAN OR UNITED

Operating Airline	Buy Miles From	Typical Mileage Cost Round-Trip	Cost To Buy Miles When on Sale at 1.8 Cents Each	Normal Published Fare	Savings	
American	American	125,000	$2,250	$3,400	$1,150	34%
JetBlue		80,000	$1,440		$1,960	58%
United	United	125,000	$2,250		$1,150	34%

If you already have the miles, you're looking at getting in the neighborhood of 2.7 cents a mile in value, which is more than many people enjoy.

USING AMEX, CAPITAL ONE, CHASE, OR CITI POINTS

Amex, Capital One, Chase and Citi cardholders can transfer to points to miles, as seen in the chart below.

Operating Airline	Transfer Points From	Points Transfer To	Mileage Cost R/T
American	Citi	American	125,000
	Amex, Capital One, Chase	British Airways	77,500
	Amex, Capital One, Citi	Cathay Pacific	60,000
Delta	Amex	Delta	125,000
JetBlue	Amex, Capital One, Chase	British Airways	90,000
	Amex, Capital One, Citi	Cathay Pacific	80,000
United	Chase	United	125,000
	Amex, Capital One, Chase	Air Canada	50,000
	Amex	All Nippon	55,000

BUY VIA AMEX

Amex sells points at 2.5 cents each that transfer into All Nippon, Air Canada, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Delta and JetBlue.

Operating Airline	Amex Points Transfer Partner	Mileage Cost R/T	Cost To Buy Amex Points at 2.5 Cents Each	Normal Published Fare	Savings	
American	British Airways	77,500	$1,938	$3,400	$1,463	43%
	Cathay Pacific	60,000	$1,500		$1,900	56%
Delta	Delta	125,000	$3,125		$275	8%
JetBlue	JetBlue	90,000	$2,250		$1,150	34%
United	Air Canada	50,000	$1,250		$2,150	63%
	All Nippon	55,000	$1,375		$2,025	60%

LA CROSS PRO TIP

Counterintuitively, Hawaii can take the pain out of transcon prices too. Check out FCF's Hula Loophole to reimagine upgrading.

Fare Fables. Low and Far to Kickstart Your Next Big Story

November 2022

When’s the best time to buy an airline ticket? When fares are low! Given inflation, here are the value buys that are as good as it gets right now...

It’s been said that people don’t buy stuff, they buy stories.

Well, I have an intriguing one to tell you today.

Carlos turned his whole travel perspective upside down (literally) with one very simple idea.

He was sick of never finding good fares on flights that met his comfort requirements to the places he wanted to go. So he figured it was time to flip the script.

He went to Google, searched for a map of the world, and printed it out. The map featured outlines of countries in black and white, which made it easy to write notes on top. Curiously, though, he turned it upside down to give himself a fresh perspective on something that's so familiar to us all. In a way, he was seeing the world for the first time.

He creatively called it the *"*Map Less Traveled.*"*

Carlos then set himself on a mission to learn about places he'd not considered before. It wasn't long before he'd covered the map with dots, circles, names, and notes on little intriguing facts that begged for some deeper investigation.

So now, when FCF shows low fares to places all round the world, they're not just numbers to Carlos – they're stories waiting to be learned and told. After all, travel is a distilled timeframe of experience where we set out to create our own stories. What will your next one be about?

"Peculiar travel suggestions are dancing lessons from God"

Kurt Vonnegut

LOW-FARE STORY STARTERS

The list of low fares below were found by FCF's *storied* team of researchers. It hasn't been a great time for low fares lately, so the digging had to go deep. But as usual, they've come up with lots of happy endings.

These charts are proof you can get where you want for less, and in premium cabin comfort, to boot. From there, the rest of the story is up to you.

Best Values By Region

Lowest Business Class Routes to Africa
(Typically $5,000 to $7,000+)

Sample Airline/s	Sample Route/s		Flash Fare/s Seen	Travel Month/s with Best Deals
American, British Airways, Iberia	Boston	Cape Town	$3,493	Dec., May, Sept., Oct.
British Airways	Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco	Johannesburg	$3,493-$3,893	Dec. through Oct.
Delta, KLM	Boston, Chicago, Miami	Johannesburg	$3,301-$3,922	Jan. through April, July, Aug.
Air France, Delta, KLM	Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Portland, San Francisco, Seattle	Nairobi	$3,667-$3,708	Jan. through Oct.

Lowest Business Class Routes to Asia
(Typically $5,000 to $9,000+)

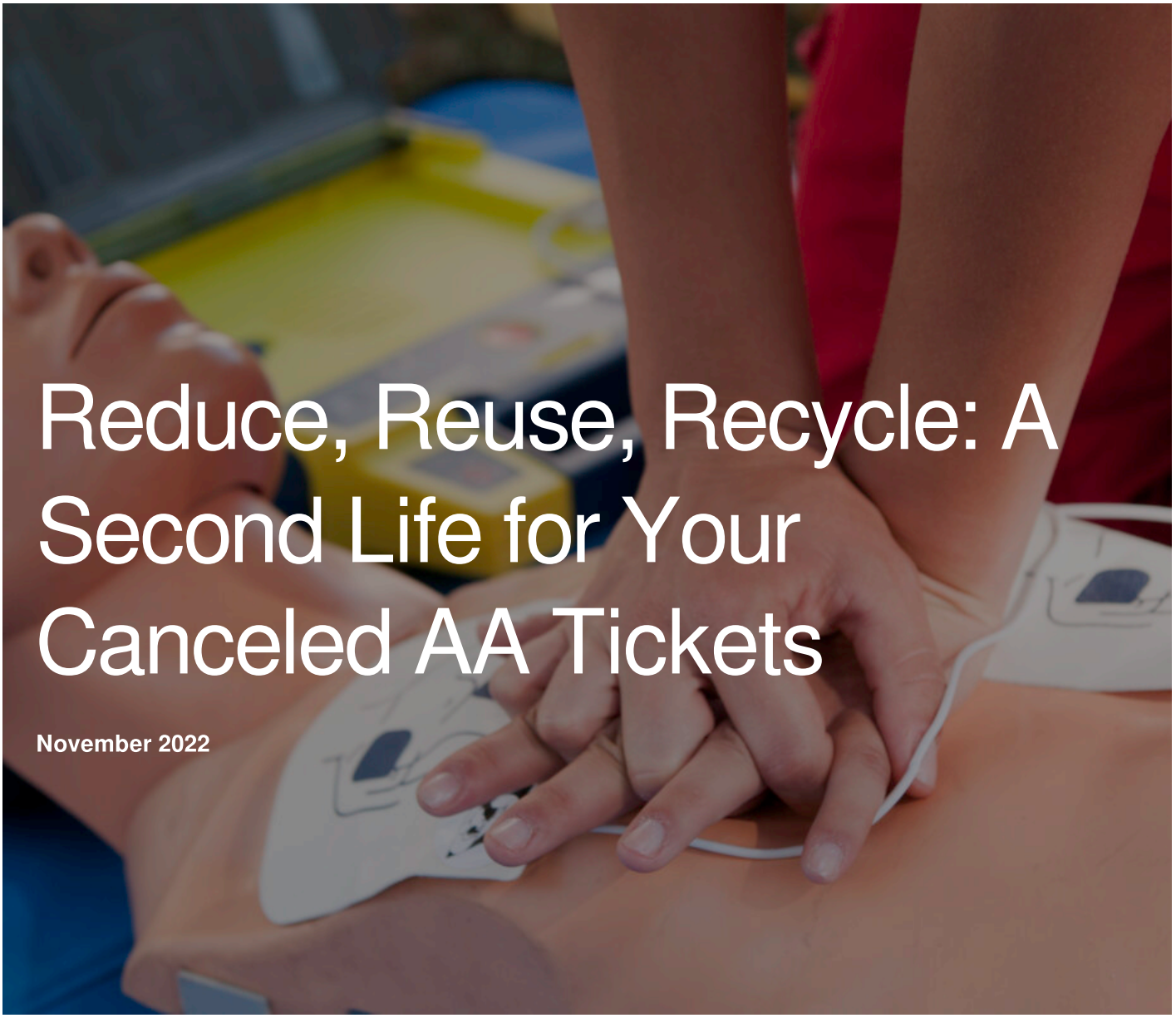
Sample Airline/s	Sample Route/s		Flash Fare/s Seen	Travel Month/s with Best Deals
Air Canada	Boston, Chicago, Las Vegas, Seattle, Washington, DC	Seoul	$3,895-$4,063	Dec., Feb. through Oct.
Air Canada, All Nippon, United	Los Angeles	Saigon, Seoul, Singapore, Tokyo	$3,386-$4,159	Jan. through Oct.
Air Canada, Singapore	New York	Bali, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Phuket, Seoul	$3,679-$3,733	Feb. through Oct.
Korean		Bangkok	$4,065	
	Portland		$3,351-$3,916	Dec. through Oct.

Sample Airline/s	Sample Route/s		Flash Fare/s Seen	Travel Month/s with Best Deals
Air Canada	San Francisco	Bangkok, Seoul, Tokyo	$3,282-$4,117	Jan. through Oct.

Lowest Business Class Routes to Europe(Typically $3,500 to $5,000+)

Sample Airline/s	Sample Route/s		Flash Fare Range Seen	Travel Month/s with Best Deals
American, British Airways	Boston	London	$2,222	Mar. through Oct.
Aer Lingus, LOT, Lufthansa, SAS, SWISS, Turkish, United	Boston	Amsterdam, Barcelona, Belgrade, Berlin, Birmingham, Bologna, Bordeaux, Bristol, Budapest, Dubrovnik, Florence, Frankfurt, Geneva, Hamburg, London, Lyon, Manchester, Marseille, Milan, Munich, Naples, Nice, Paris, Pisa, Prague, Rome, Venice, Verona, Vienna, Warsaw, Zagreb, Zürich	$2,454-$3,165	Dec. through Oct.
American, British Airways, JetBlue	Chicago	London, Verona	$2,686-$3,236	Nov. through Oct.
Aer Lingus, LOT, Lufthansa, SAS, SWISS, Turkish, United	Chicago	Amsterdam, Barcelona, Belgrade, Berlin, Bologna, Bordeaux, Budapest, Cologne, Dubrovnik, Florence, Frankfurt, Geneva, Hamburg, Kraków, Lyon, Manchester, Marseille, Milan, Munich, Naples, Nice, Paris, Prague, Rome, Salzburg, Venice, Vienna, Warsaw, Zagreb, Zürich	$2,573-$3,218	Nov. through Oct.
American, British Airways, JetBlue	Dallas	London, Marseille, Paris	$2,684-$3,129	Dec. through Feb.
Aer Lingus, Air Canada, LOT, Lufthansa, SAS, SWISS, Turkish, United	Dallas	Amsterdam, Dubrovnik, Frankfurt, Lyon, Milan, Venice	$2,906-$3,266	Jan. through Oct.
American, British Airways, JetBlue	Houston	London, Paris	$2,933-$3,200	Dec., Feb., March

Sample Airline/s	Sample Route/s		Flash Fare Range Seen	Travel Month/s with Best Deals
Aer Lingus, Air Canada, LOT, Lufthansa, SAS, SWISS, Turkish, United		Amsterdam, Barcelona, Frankfurt, Milan, Venice	$2,606-$3,070	Jan., March, April, Sept., Oct.
American, British Airways	Los Angeles	Amsterdam, Paris	$3,178-$3,215	Nov., Dec.
LOT, Lufthansa, SAS, SWISS, Turkish, United		Barcelona, Bologna, Dubrovnik, Frankfurt, Geneva, London, Milan, Munich, Rome, Vienna, Zagreb, Zürich	$2,791-$3,277	Dec. through April., Aug. through Oct.
American, British Airways	Miami	Milan, Paris,	$2,579-$3,185	Nov. through Oct.
Delta, ITA		Basel, Brussels, Genoa, Turin	$3,149-$3,171	Nov. through Oct.
Aer Lingus, LOT, Lufthansa, SAS, SWISS, Turkish, United		Frankfurt, Geneva, Lyon, Stuttgart, Zürich	$2,687-$3,229	Dec. through Oct.
British Airways	New York	Bucharest, Malta	$2,684-$2,898	Dec. through Oct.
LOT		Barcelona, Berlin, Hamburg, Madrid, Munich, Oslo, Stuttgart	$2,554-$2,883	Jan. through Oct.
Singapore		Amsterdam, Belgrade, Frankfurt, Geneva, Hanover, Krakow, Luxembourg, Milan, Prague, Venice, Zagreb, Zurich	$2,243-$2,592	Jan. through May., July through Oct.
United		London, Porto	$2,541-$2,598	April through Oct.
Aer Lingus, LOT, Lufthansa, SAS, SWISS, Turkish, United	Washington, DC	Amsterdam, Barcelona, Belgrade, Berlin, Birmingham, Bologna, Bristol, Budapest, Frankfurt, Geneva, Hamburg, Kraków, Lyon, Manchester, Marseille, Milan, Munich, Naples, Nice, Paris, Prague, Rome, Salzburg, Venice, Vienna, Warsaw, Zagreb, Zürich	$2,433-$3,169	Nov. through Oct.



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: A Second Life for Your Canceled AA Tickets

November 2022

How to turn your unused or canceled AA tickets into cash

I make a lot of flight bookings.

Well, since I'm constantly talking about being an "Opportunity Traveler" I have to put my cash and miles where my mouth is, right? Part of that is chasing opportunities and being adventurous with my ticket buying.

And thanks to the Lockdown, now is the golden time to snag opportunities because most big carriers, including American, Delta, and United, *don't charge change fees.*

Which brings me to cars that travel 230 miles per hour.

One of those “opportunities” for me was the Mexico City Formula One Grand Prix in late October — an event that I would have loved to attend. So I booked a flight, even though I knew there was only a 25% chance I’d make it in the end, given work and other commitments. But the water does sometimes part.

So if I ended up canceling the trip, I would lose nothing except a bit of time. But it doesn’t take long to book and I love the process–fantasizing about exotic experiences can be as good as being there (fantasy often exceeds reality)–so frankly, I don’t see it as losing anything. I’ll just need to rebook within 12 months if I don’t use the ticket. Which leads me to the topic of this report.

FIRST A COUPLE OF AMERICAN AIRLINES DEFINITIONS:

Flight Credit: A “Flight Credit” is issued when a customer cancels their flight. These are valid for one year from the date of purchase and **t**he new booking also **has to be in the same name as that of the Flight Credit.**

Trip Credit: A “Trip Credit” is any residual value that isn’t used from a Flight Credit. **It *is* transferable, meaning you can use that trip credit for anyone.**

A TICKET THAT’S AS GOOD AS CASH

Given that my name is on the ticket, I have to be the one who takes the make-up flight. This is the one called a “**Flight Credit.**” For someone like me, it’s no big deal because I’m flying all the time if not making fantasy bookings. But what if you only take one or two flights a year? Or you fly a lot like me and are booking for friends or family that don’t fly as much. Maybe your job makes it hard to take a lot of trips. In those scenarios, wouldn’t it be great to make these unused tickets available to your spouse, a family member, or a friend?

Lean in, dear reader… I’m about to show you how you can turn a **Flight Credit** into a ticket that *anyone* can use — which is basically like turning it into cash.

CONVERT YOUR UNUSED FLIGHT TO CASH

It’s quite simple.

You take your AA Flight Credit and exchange it for the **cheapest ticket you can find, in the name of the original traveler**. The amount left over becomes a Trip Credit (more commonly called a “travel voucher”), which is valid for a future booking — **for anybody**.

For example, let’s say you have a $1,000 ticket. You cancel it, and now have $1,000 value in the form of an AA Flight Credit. You exchange the AA Flight Credit for (let’s say) a $49 one-way coach ticket from Orlando to Austin, leaving you a remaining value of $951, which is now in the form of a trip credit (an AA voucher). That $951 **trip credit is now valid for anyone to use**. “Here you go, hon, visit your cousin in Omaha!”

We found a $49 flight, but you might be able to do better. Either way, you’re essentially turning your unused ticket into a usable ticket for someone else. It’s like converting it to cold hard cash. I know of no rule that says you must use the $49 ticket. So, do you have any tickets lying around waiting for a cash conversion? You know what to do.

How I Scored (Now Hard-to-Get) Cheap First Class Caviar & Shower Flights to Europe Using a Little-Known Waitlist Strategy

November 2022

Some award seats never show up online. Here's how to find 'em

If you are a bags-packed dream-trip opportunist, or a willing-to-upgrade-till-the-end maestro, fasten your seatbelt. I have a secret strategy that can open up discount award space for $27,000 tickets you won't be able to snag any other way.

What's a Waitlist?

Waitlisting is where you're put on a list for seats that aren't currently available in the *booking category* you desire. Airlines have historically used waitlists as an *insurance policy* when they don't sell all their seats, in

that excess inventory is released to those on the waitlist. In this case today, we'll examine Emirates' liberal release of their premium seats for discount miles redemption close to departure.

(Similar to Lufthansas's lucrative First Class close-in opportunity.)

Enter Emirates Waitlist

When it comes to award waitlisting, there are good waitlists and bad ones.

Bad Waitlists: One bad example is United mileage upgrade waitlists, which seldom clear. One reason is because anyone can do it online, so everyone does.

Good Waitlists: Emirates is a great example of a good waitlist. Why? You *can't* do it online. And almost nobody knows about it. That means the **waitlist line is relatively short so you're more likely to win the waitlist lottery.** Many travelers (especially younger ones) refuse to speak to anyone over the phone. They actually do everything on their phone; they just don't use it to speak to anyone. This hang-up equals more opportunities for you.

HOW TO GET THE GOODS THAT NEVER MAKE IT TO THE MARKET SHELVES

With Emirates waitlisting, you not only get access to seats you wouldn't otherwise, but you essentially beat your travel competitors to the draw as they will never see these seats on the airline's website.

Think of it like a grocery store. When people go to the store and see no tomatoes there, they either give up and move on to the next thing on their shopping list — ***OR*** they ask a store employee if there are any tomatoes *in the back*. That's kind of like what waitlisting is – access to the stuff that never actually makes it to the shelf. It's like you're going straight from the warehouse to your cart.

There are many people who just keep checking seat availability online (the grocery store shelf) every day. And there are other people who tell the "back room guy" to notify them when a box comes in — bypassing the shelf and going straight to their basket.

We found this tasty one out back

WAITLISTING AWARDS WITH EMIRATES IS A MANUAL (OVER THE PHONE) TASK BUT NOTIFICATIONS ARE AUTOMATIC

Once you've waitlisted an award flight, you'll be emailed when a seat becomes available, before it's even displayed on the website. **A secret seat,** if you will. That's huge. There's a whole stash of inventory that never makes it to the market shelf, but you can still park your patootie on it.

The Two Waitlist Winners

Somewhat similar to Lufthansa's close-in release of First Class seats, Emirates generally releases seats three days prior to departure. Moreover, I've noticed that the odds of them releasing the seats are 50% or better.

So who can benefit from this?

Winner #1: The Bags-Packed Opportunist

You always have your bags packed and ready at the door, so to speak, so you can pounce when that world-class First Class bucket-list opportunity comes knocking. Perhaps you're retired, a business owner who makes your own schedule, or maybe you're a digital nomad.

Either way, for you the opportunity is inevitable. It just comes down to when.

Winner #2: The Upgrader Till the End

You've already booked a ticket, but it could use improvement either because:

A) It cost more than you wanted to pay (in miles or cash), and/or

B) It's in a lesser class of service than you want (say Premium Economy or Business, and/or

C) It's not on your ideal airline (has average seats or for whatever reason), and/or

D) It could be more convenient (number of stops, routing, airports, connections times, dates, etc.),

AND

E) You're open to upgrade opportunities after you've already bought a ticket. (One of my favorite things to do.)

This happened to me recently while traveling through the Baltics. I was wandering around the area when something came up that required me to return home. My first thought was to book what was most convenient and that was a LOT Polish Airlines flight. But my first thought isn't always my best one.

Then I thought to myself, hmmm…

1. What's the best flight I could take home from the region? (Emirates was high on that list.)
2. Italy (one of my favorite countries) has an Emirates A380 flight from Milan back to the U.S.
3. I'm always down for Milan.
4. But there's seldom any discount award availability in First Class on Emirates.

Enter Emirates Waitlist

I made like a tortoise, and waitlisted all the flights Emirates would let me: three. In my experience, this is almost a total guarantee, as long as you're flexible on dates. What an awesome ending to a trip. I get to hang out in Milan for a few days on my way back to the U.S. from a three-week trip to the Balkans and Baltics, where I hit country #108.

I'd go so far as to say, why not always return from Milan on any European trip? If not starting there?

Seriously.

Tortoise: winner by a long neck

Lake Como, Florence, Venice, Verona, and even the Alps are all an easy train ride away if you've exhausted Milan and want to expand your horizons.

By the way, as my trip was winding down, if the **Emirates First Class A380 from Milan** didn't open-up, I could always just fly home from **Vilnius, Lithuania, in Business Class on LOT Polish Airlines.**

Your Emirates itinerary - [redacted]

Emirates <do-not-reply@emirates.email>

To: [redacted]

Your waitlisted flights are confirmed

Hello Matthew,

Thanks for your booking – your flights are confirmed and your itinerary is below.

Please get in touch with us immediately to finalise your booking or the booking will get cancelled. You can also read our **conditions of contract**.

We're looking forward to welcoming you on board.

The Emirates team

Your Emirates itinerary - [redacted]

Emirates <do-not-reply@emirates.email>

To: [redacted]

Emirates

Your waitlisted flights are confirmed

Hello Matthew,

Thanks for your booking – your flights are confirmed and your itinerary is below.

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The Emirates team

This strategy is similar to FCF's Upgrade Two-Step Strategy.

How Does Emirates Waitlisting Work?

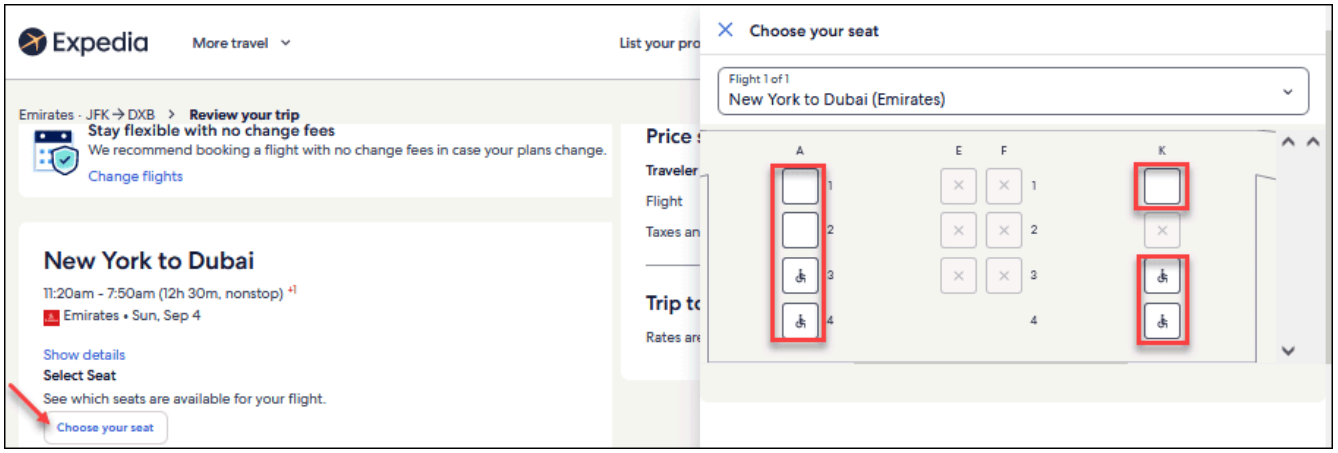
It's easy. All you have to do is pick up the phone, dial Emirates at 1-800-777-3999, and maybe wait on hold five minutes, if that. Put on your iPhone earbuds and enjoy some Barry Manilow or Beethoven, and make dinner or clear the dishes while you wait. Personally, I can be more productive while on hold with airlines than I am otherwise. A perfect distraction that allows me to focus. It's never been a big problem for me, and once you speak to a reservationist, they're happy to put you on the waitlist for up to three flights for your discount award. You just have to ask.

INCREASING YOUR ODDS

The more seats that are empty going in, the better the odds of your waitlist clearing, obviously.

How do you know what flights have the most empty seats?

One way is to go to Expedia and do a search on the route and date you're considering. Then in the search results, click on the exact flight you're looking at. Then click on "choose your seat" (see below). Then view the number of empty seats. While not always 100% accurate, it's indicative, and if there are no empty seats, that's a bad sign for sure.



In general, I'd guess if you're a week out from departure, and see four or so seats open (is the case much of the time), waitlisting is worth pursuing. With less than two seats, your odds are slim.

Also: Be aware that there are 14 seats in First Class on A380s (New York-Milan, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Washington, DC – Dubai, and beyond), and eight Seats on B777s (New York-Athens; Boston, Chicago, Dallas and Orlando – Dubai, and beyond). In general, the more seats on the plane, the more potential empty seats to open-up.

Related Emirates Reads...

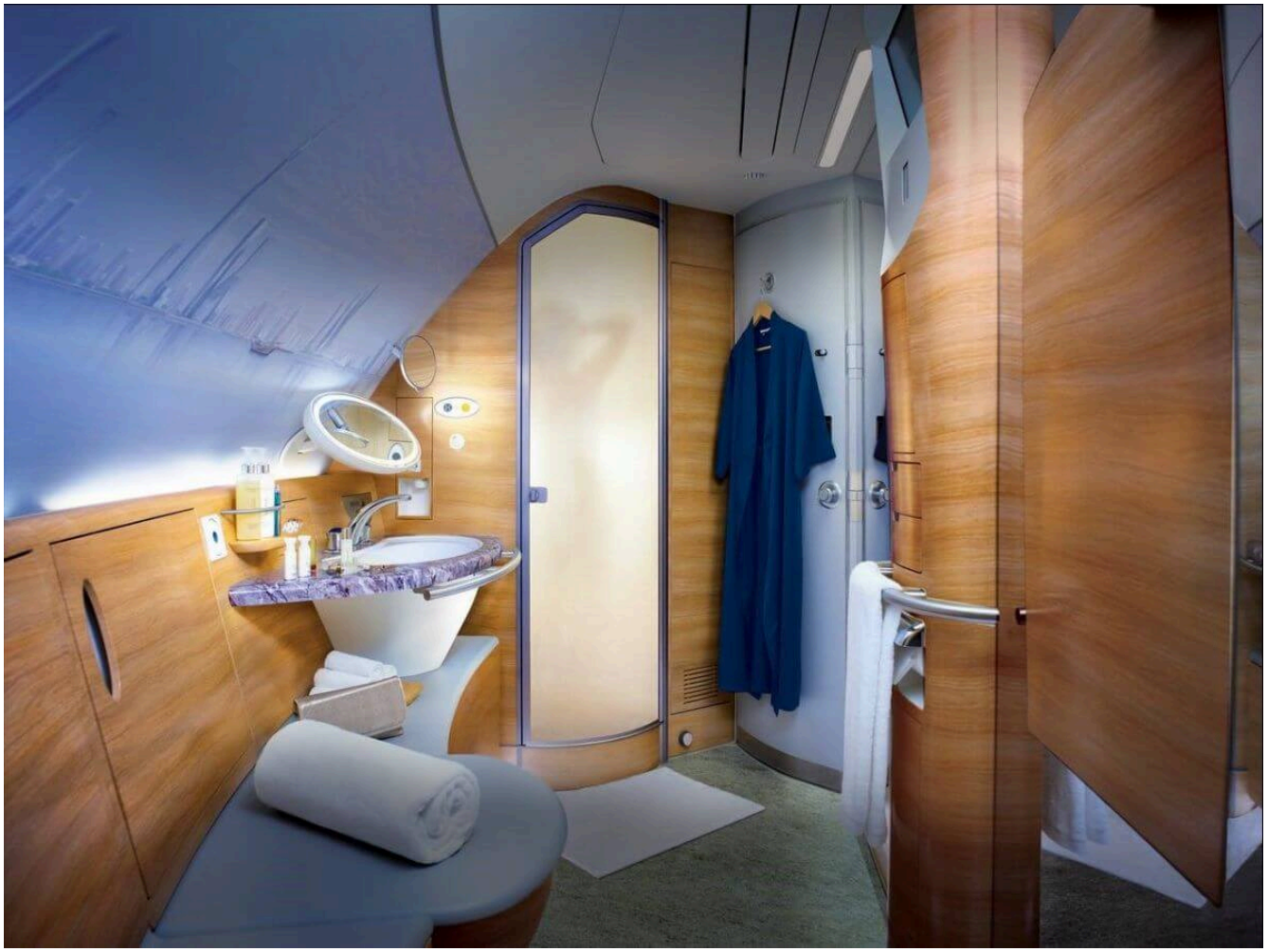
Bennett Bookings: How and Why I Scored Three First Class Tickets on the Same Trip

How to Make Emirates Playing Yo-Yo With Premium Award Travelers Work for You

Big in Every Way. The A380 Is Back.

FCF's Perspective On Emirates Award Changes and How You Can Still Save Up to $9,454 / 58%

Showered with Gifts: Why Emirates First Class Is a Bucket List Must and How You Can Get It Now For $19,713 Off



Pluck a Canuck Poaching Fare for Big Savings to Asia

November 2022

Canadian connections can now save you up to 54% in Business Class

Premium fares to Asia are high, and are only getting higher. If you don't want to pay $8,000+ and don't mind having two of the three C's: Cost, Comfort, and Convenience, keep reading.

Now that Canada has broken free from the Lockdown ice age, there are some hidden Business Class opportunities ***from*** the U.S. ***via*** Canada to a range of Asian cities on Air Canada, All Nippon, and Japan Airlines.

When you do a search for nonstop fares from Chicago to Tokyo or other Asian cities, Business Class is currently $8,000 to $10,000 on major U.S. and Asian carriers. However, we found that fares from many U.S. cities with connections through Canada can drop 50%+!

ASIA FARES FROM THE U.S. VERSUS VIA CANADA THAT SAVE UP TO 54%

The chart below shows the smarts of a Canuck detour. Look at that third example. Fly direct from San Francisco to Tokyo on JAL for $9,813 or go via Vancouver, Canada, and pay just $4,541 (54% less).

Airline	Route	Typical Non-stop Business Class Fare from the U.S.	Special One-stop Deals from the U.S. via Canada				
Deal Airline	Connect via	Fare	Savings				
Japan	San Francisco-Tokyo	$9,813	Japan	Vancouver	$4,541	$5,272	54%
Korean	Boston-Seoul	$8,622	Air Canada	Toronto	$4,186	$4,436	51%
Japan	Seattle-Tokyo	$7,702	Japan	Vancouver	$3,862	$3,840	50%
All Nippon	Chicago -Tokyo	$8,906	Air Canada	Toronto	$4,628	$4,278	48%
Japan	Boston-Tokyo	$10,300	Air Canada	Toronto	$5,903	$4,397	43%
Korean	Chicago - Seoul	$7,113	Air Canada	Toronto	$4,097	$3,016	42%
Japan	New York-Tokyo	$8,906	Air Canada	Toronto	$5,953	$2,953	33%
All Nippon, Japan, United	Los Angeles-Tokyo	$6,550	All Nippon	Vancouver	$4,441	$2,109	32%
Korean	New York-Seoul	$5,163	Air Canada	Toronto	$4,141	$1,022	20%

BONUS

If you happen to be flying *from* Canada – or from the U.S. and are willing to buy separate tickets – there are a handful of attractive fares to Asia. They're also great deals if you want to incorporate a stopover in Canada. If you haven't been to Vancouver, now's the time to visit the lovely city for crazy cheap on your way to Asia. If you are starting in the U.S. and want to explore two Canadian destinations, read FCF's Slapshot Slingshot report.

CHEAPEST NONSTOP ROUTES TO ASIA FROM CANADA IN BUSINESS CLASS

Airline	From / To	Low fares from Canada to Asia	Travel dates
Air Canada, Korean	Vancouver - Seoul	$2,638 to $2,943	February
Air Canada	Toronto - Seoul	$3,059	March
Air Canada	Vancouver - Bangkok	$3,593	December through April

Read more about buying your ticket now and changing it later to score the right deal *here*.