



Little-known Loophole Adds a Free or Low-cost Side Trip — And it Might Even Lower Your Fare

August 2022

FCF's side hustle delivers the goods – even during the post-lockdown, high-fare, fewer-deals era.

We haven't discussed our Stopover Loophole Strategy (SLS) since Before Lockdown (BL) when we were combining Europe and Africa, including Cairo, Casablanca, Cape Town, Johannesburg, Lagos, and Marrakesh. But now it's time to bring it back. We found some great SLS fares that travelers should consider jumping on right now.

SLS CRASH COURSE

What is the Stopover Loophole Strategy again? Here's a quick refresher on how it works. A stopover is a planned stop of more than four hours (domestic) or 24 hours (international) between flight segments on a trip. But longer stopovers are sometimes allowed for free (or a very small fee) – i.e. these allow you to enjoy a "second destination" for several days or much longer – most often in the applicable airline's hub city. **This presents an interesting opportunity for business travelers and/or those wanting to add a little extra pleasure to an upcoming trip.**

That's because the stopover can be turned into a vacation if you're on a business trip or a second vacation if you're already traveling for pleasure. So the SLS strategy allows you to add a bucket list destination for a fraction of the normal price, or even free in many cases! And on top of that, the flight to your original destination can even be less. See some examples of this below.

SAVINGS THAT SCREAM "WHY DIDN'T I KNOW ABOUT THIS?!"

The following SLS options combine Europe and Africa. Here are two scenarios that demonstrate this opportunity:

Scenario #1: You are going to Africa, and you'd take a side trip in Europe if it were free or cheap, or actually lowered your fare to Africa.

Scenario #2: You are going to Europe, and you'd take a side trip in Africa if it were free or cheap, or actually lowered your fare to Europe.

Either way, the SLS works hard to get you the most **bang for your buck**.

NELSON'S PYRAMID SCHEME

Nelson from New York has always dreamt of seeing the many wonders of Egypt. If he pays a regular round-trip fare in Business Class on Lufthansa to Cairo, he'd have to dish out \$3,121. On the other hand, if he goes to Cairo via a stop in Munich, he's looking at \$2,819 – a savings of \$302. **That's more for less for an awesome trip.** That's the kind of deal we love to see.

The chart below shows a lot of other options. Many of them allow you to add a city for less, about the same, or only a bit more. In all cases, it's definitely something worth considering for your next trip.

GREAT DEALS ON LOOP(HOLE) FOR TRAVELERS TO AFRICA TO ADD EUROPE DESTINATION

Airline	U.S. Origin	Africa Destination	Africa R/T Fare	Europe Add-on	Two-Stop Fare	Cost For Adding Europe Stop
Lufthansa	New York	Cairo	\$3,121	Munich	\$2,819	-\$302
British Airways	Chicago	Johannesburg	\$3,860	London	\$3,740	-\$120
United	Chicago	Lagos	\$3,512	Vienna	\$3,399	-\$113
United	New York	Lagos	\$3,558	Munich	\$3,457	-\$101
SWISS	New York	Marrakesh	\$2,837	Vienna	\$2,935	-\$98
United	Washington, DC	Dakar	\$3,545	Brussels	\$3,529	\$16
United	Los Angeles	Lagos	\$3,801	Zurich	\$3,825	\$24
American	Seattle	Cairo	\$3,887	London	\$3,848	\$39
United	New York	Dakar	\$3,512	Brussels	\$3,569	\$57
British Airways	Dallas	Johannesburg	\$3,857	London	\$3,940	\$83
TAP	Boston	Casablanca	\$2,593	Lisbon	\$3,049	\$456

*Fares valid at time of publication and are likely to change; use data as a general guide and experiment with your dates to find lowest fares.

As you can see, you either pay up to just \$456 more for a whole extra city OR you pay up to \$302 less, in the examples provided. In those cases you're essentially being paid for the privilege of visiting another city. You also have the choice of spending a short or long layover in the European city on the way to Africa. Make it a vacation in itself – it's entirely up to you.

GREAT DEALS ON LOOP(HOLE) FOR TRAVELERS TO EUROPE TO ADD AFRICAN DESTINATION

Airline	U.S. Origin	Europe Destination	Europe R/T Fare	Africa Add-on	Two-Stop Fare	Cost For Adding Africa Stop
Lufthansa	New York	Munich	\$3,910	Cairo	\$2,819	-\$1,091
American	Seattle	London	\$4,858	Cairo	\$3,848	-\$1,010
United	Chicago	Vienna	\$4,224	Lagos	\$3,399	-\$825
TAP	Boston	Lisbon	\$2,336	Casablanca	\$3,049	-\$713

Airline	U.S. Origin	Europe Destination	Europe R/T Fare	Africa Add-on	Two-Stop Fare	Cost For Adding Africa Stop
United	Washington, DC	Brussels	\$4,154	Dakar	\$3,529	-\$625
United	Los Angeles	Zurich	\$4,304	Lagos	\$3,825	-\$479
United	New York	Munich	\$3,910	Lagos	\$3,457	-\$453
British Airways	Dallas	London	\$4,292	Johannesburg	\$3,940	-\$352
United	New York	Brussels	\$3,854	Dakar	\$3,569	-\$285
British Airways	Chicago	London	\$4,278	Johannesburg	\$3,740	-\$120
SWISS	New York	Vienna	\$2,837	Marrakesh	\$2,935	\$98

*Fares valid at time of publication and are likely to change; use data as a general guide and experiment with your dates to find lowest fares.

As you can see, you either pay up to just \$98 more for a whole extra city OR you pay up to \$1,091 less, in the examples provided. In those cases you're essentially being paid for the privilege of visiting another city. You also have the choice of spending a short or long layover in the European city and add-on Africa. Make it a vacation in itself – it's entirely up to you.

GOT ANOTHER PLACE IN MIND?

If the cities featured aren't the ones you have in mind, remember that travel within Europe is inexpensive and there are many options for you to get around. For example, Berlin is just a one-hour flight from Frankfurt, and it's about the same distance to Vienna. Also, play around with dates and itinerary combinations for many other opportunities we haven't highlighted.



How Alaska Is Letting You Skate Around High Premium Prices to Destinations All Over the World

August 2022

How to get to Asia in Business Class for \$1,850 or First Class for \$2,590 (versus \$30,000+); and to Europe in Business Class for \$1,850 or First Class for \$3,145

You might think that Alaska Airlines doesn't fly to the places you want to go, but *freeze* that thought for a moment, because this little airline holds the key to a glacier-sized opportunity for travelers who [don't book backwards](#). The airline is discounting miles right now to 1.85 cents through August 21.

BUY ALASKA MILES, NOT FLIGHTS

The idea is not to use your cheaply bought miles on Alaska Airlines' limited flight options, but instead to redeem them for flights on **Alaska's partners: Iberia, Japan Airlines, Qatar Airways, and 23 other carriers.**

For Business and First Class flights, you could net savings of up to 91%. Your miles can also be used for itineraries that don't originate in the U.S., **and** for amazing round-the-world deals. More on that later.



Alaska Airlines. It's all about the partnerships.

If you don't fly often and are looking to buy miles for a specific trip with firm dates, make sure there's availability **BEFORE** you purchase miles.

SAVE UP TO 91% OFF PREMIUM FLIGHTS

Alaska Airlines loves a miles sale, and you can typically save 50% to 60% during these sale periods, which occur every couple of months or so.

You can't buy Japan Airlines miles, but with Alaska's buy-miles deal you can get Japan Airlines First Class seats from New York to Tokyo for 140,000 miles round-trip, or \$2,590. When you compare that to a **\$20,900** published New York-Tokyo fare, you're looking at a savings of **\$18,310/88%**. Or you can get a Business Class fare for 120,000 miles, which costs just \$2,220 compared to the regular published fare of \$8,264, a **73% savings**.

Insider tip: Alaska Airlines often offers close-in First Class availability for Japan Airlines flights. We've seen as many as five First Class seats available for a handful of days in August using Alaska miles. It's easy to book online with Alaska Airlines and if you're looking to book close in, you can score big.

So, if you're already heading to Asia soon, consider canceling your ticket and using Alaska miles instead, using [FCF's two-step strategy](#).

COMPARING NORMAL FIRST CLASS FARES TO ASIA WITH THE ALASKA STRATEGY

Airline	Route	Alaska Miles Required Round-Trip	Typical Fare	Cost of Miles	Savings
*Cathay Pacific	New York-Hong Kong	140,000	\$20,000 to \$30,000	\$2,590	\$17,410-\$27,410 / 87%-91%
Singapore	Los Angeles-Tokyo	220,000	\$12,400	\$4,070	\$8,330 / 67%
**Japan Airlines	New York-Tokyo	140,000	\$20,900	\$2,590	\$18,310 / 88%

*First Class service not available at the moment from the U.S. **Lowest pricing shown.

SAMPLE FIRST CLASS SAVINGS TO EUROPE

Airline	Route	Alaska Miles Required Round-Trip	Typical Fare	Cost of Miles	Savings
American	New York-London	170,000	\$5,056	\$3,145	\$1,911 / 38%

SAMPLE FIRST CLASS SAVINGS TO BRAZIL

Airline	Route	Alaska Miles Required Round-Trip	Typical Fare	Cost of Miles	Savings
*American	Miami-Sao Paulo	170,000	\$15,600	\$3,145	\$12,455 / 80%

*No awards found to be available at this time.

SAMPLE FIRST CLASS SAVINGS TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC

Airline	Route	Alaska Miles Required Round-Trip	Typical Fare	Cost of Miles	Savings
*Qantas	Los Angeles-Sydney	140,000	\$17,000	\$2,590	\$14,410 / 85%

*Keep this strategy top of mind when booking later this year as currently availability is hard to find.

COMPARING NORMAL BUSINESS CLASS FARES WITH THE ALASKA STRATEGY TO ASIA

With Alaska's buy-miles deal you can get a Cathay Pacific Business Class fare for 100,000 miles round-trip. At 1.85 cents each, the cost is \$1,850 versus \$6,074, which amounts to about 70% off.

Airline	Route	Alaska Miles Required Round-Trip	Typical Fare	Cost of Miles	Savings
Cathay Pacific	Los Angeles-Hong Kong	100,000	\$6,074	\$1,850	\$4,224 / 70%
Singapore	Los Angeles-Tokyo	160,000	\$4,681-\$6,570	\$2,960	\$1,721-\$3,670 / 37%-55%
	Los Angeles-Singapore		\$4,670-\$8,505		\$970-\$4,808 / 21%-57%
	Vancouver-Singapore	200,000	\$5,112	\$3,700	
	New York-Singapore		\$4,940-\$8,570		\$1,240-\$4,870 / 25%-57%
*Japan Airlines	New York-Tokyo	120,000	\$8,264	\$2,220	\$6,044 / 73%

*Lowest cost shown

UP TO 52% SAVINGS TO EUROPE IN BUSINESS CLASS

With Alaska's buy-miles deal you can get Air Tahiti Nui's Business Class for 120,000 miles round-trip. At 1.85 cents each, the cost is \$2,220, or 52% off.

Airline	Route	Alaska Miles Required Round-Trip	Typical Fare	Cost of Miles	Savings
Iberia	New York-Madrid	150,000	\$5,392	\$2,775	\$2,617 / 49%
Finnair	New York-Helsinki	140,000	\$4,247	\$2,590	\$1,657 / 39%
*American	New York-London	115,000	\$3,556	\$2,128	\$1,429 / 40%
**Air Tahiti Nui	New York-Paris	120,000	\$4,652	\$2,220	\$2,432 / 52%
*Aer Lingus	Chicago-Dublin	120,000	\$2,344	\$2,220	\$124 / 5%
Iceland Air	New York-Iceland	100,000	\$1,733	\$1,850	-\$117 / 7%

*No awards found to be available at this time. **Lowest cost shown

UP TO 65% SAVINGS TO MIDDLE EAST IN BUSINESS CLASS

Airline	Route	Alaska Miles Required Round-Trip	Typical Fare	Cost of Miles	Savings
*Qatar	New York-Doha	170,000	\$9,047	\$3,145	\$5,902 / 65%
Royal Jordanian	Chicago-Amman	170,000	\$4,553	\$3,145	\$1,408 / 31%

*Lowest cost shown

UP TO 36% SAVINGS TO SOUTH AMERICA IN BUSINESS CLASS

Airline	Route	Alaska Miles Required Round-Trip	Typical Fare	Cost of Miles	Savings
*American	Miami-Sao Paulo	115,000	\$3,330	\$2,128	\$1,203 / 36%

*No awards found to be available at this time.

UP TO 77% SAVINGS TO SOUTH PACIFIC IN BUSINESS CLASS

With Alaska's buy-miles deal you can get a Qantas Business Class fare for 110,000 miles round-trip. At 1.85 cents each, the cost is \$2,035, or 77% off.

Airline	Route	Alaska Miles Required Round-Trip	Typical Fare	Cost of Miles	Savings
*American	Los Angeles-Sydney	160,000	\$8,944	\$2,960	\$5,984 / 67%
*Qantas	Los Angeles-Sydney	110,000	\$8,944	\$2,035	\$6,909 / 77%
**Air Tahiti Nui	Los Angeles-Papeete	120,000	\$4,944	\$2,220	\$2,724 / 55%

*No awards found to be available at this time. **Lowest cost shown

WHEN TO BUY MILES

Buy miles when normal fares are on the higher side, for example, at \$3,500+ for long-haul Business Class flights and \$5,500+ for First Class. Fares are often highest when they're booked on short notice — the perfect time to use miles.

If you don't fly often and are looking to buy miles for a specific trip with firm dates, make sure there's availability BEFORE you purchase miles.

GETTING THE MILES

Alaska is offering a bonus of up to 60% on mile purchases, which is as good as it gets with this program. [The current promo](#) brings the cost down to just 1.85¢ per mile, including taxes. The maximum purchase per transaction is 100,000 miles, but there's no limit on the number of transactions you can make. The annual purchase limit for non-elite members is 150,000 miles per calendar year, which includes miles gifted to you, while elite members can purchase as many miles as they want.

If you need more miles and [need to get around mileage-purchase limits](#), most airlines allow you to redeem miles from your account for *someone else's travel*— such as your mom, your sister, your golf partners, your call. (With the availability on the JAL flight, maybe you can *all* go.)

ALASKAN GOLD DOESN'T STOP THERE

Alaska boasts a generous stopover rule for its partner awards, allowing a free stopover in their partner airline's hub city. Most other carriers don't allow stopovers at all with mileage awards. And it gets better, as you get one stopover for a one-way ticket and two stopovers on a round-trip. Ka-ching.

You can also use this opportunity to [book round-the-world tickets cheaply](#).

GOOD-TO-KNOWS ABOUT ALASKA'S MILEAGEPLAN

- Although Alaska's award chart shows dynamic pricing for Air Tahiti Nui and Japan Airlines, we haven't seen awards at an increased rate, yet.
- Alaska's award chart shows dynamic pricing for Qatar Airways starting at 85,000 one way. We've also seen awards available (at times) at a rate of 170,000 miles one way.
- Iberia taxes are low using Alaska Airlines. New York to Madrid is \$19 outbound and \$55 return, versus using American and British Airways miles at \$111 outbound and \$142, return, and Iberia miles at \$109 outbound and \$140, return.
- One caveat is that you can't book Cathay online with Alaska. But you can go to British Airways' website, find availability (which is typically similar), then call Alaska to book.
- Don't spend Alaska miles for British Airways flights as taxes are high to London and beyond. Even at \$200 less than BA charges, taxes still come in at \$1,776 using Alaska. Instead, opt for American's New York-London route in First Class where taxes are much less than British Airways' at just \$325 round-trip using Alaska.
- Alaska Allows booking awards 330 days out.

FCF'S FIRST CLASS TREASURE MAP WHEN YOU CAN SAVE

Airline	To Tokyo From	One-way Mileage	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
Japan	Chicago	70,000	Aug.	Aug.		Aug.		
	Los Angeles		Aug.			Aug.		
	New York		Aug.					
	San Francisco		Aug.			Aug., Oct.		

*Months in black at least one seat available; in blue at least two seats; in green at least four seats.

FCF'S BUSINESS CLASS TREASURE MAP WHEN YOU CAN SAVE

Airline	Route	One-way Mileage	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
Air Tahiti Nui	Los Angeles- Papeete	60,000	Feb., March	Jan.				
American	Los Angeles- Maui	40,000	Dec.			Dec.		
Cathay Pacific	Los Angeles- Hong Kong	50,000	June					
Finnair	Chicago- Helsinki	70,000	Jan.	Feb., March	April to June	Jan., Feb.	March	April to June
	Dallas-Helsinki		April to June					
	Los Angeles- Helsinki		March					
	Miami-Helsinki		March					
	New York- Helsinki		Jan.	Feb.	March to May	Dec., June	Jan.	Feb. to May

Airline	Route	One-way Mileage	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
Iberia	Boston-Madrid	75,000	June	Jan. to April, May June	March	Dec., Jan., May	Feb., March., May, June	March, April
	Chicago-Madrid		Dec., Jan., Feb., April	Feb.		Dec., Jan., Feb., April, May, June	March	March
	Dallas-Madrid		Nov., Jan. to March	Feb.		Dec. to March, April, May	Feb.	
	Miami-Madrid		March, April, June	June	Jan., Feb., March	Dec.	Jan., March, May, June	Jan., Feb., March, April, June
	Washington, DC-Madrid		April, June					
Japan	Boston-Tokyo	60,000	Aug., Feb., April., May, June	April			Feb., June	May
	Chicago-Tokyo		Jan., Feb.	April		Feb., March, May, June	May	
	Dallas-Tokyo		Jan., Feb.					
	Los Angeles-Tokyo		Aug., Sept., Jan., April, June	May				
	New York-Tokyo		Jan., Feb., April, May, June			June	Feb., May	
	San Diego-Tokyo		Aug., April, June		April, May	June	May	June
	Seattle-Tokyo		Aug., Feb., April., May, June	May		Feb., April, May	May, June	
Qatar	Boston-Doha	85,000		June	Aug. to May	Dec., June	Aug., June	Aug., Sept. to Nov., Jan. to March
	Chicago-Doha		June	June	Aug. to May	Nov., Dec.	Aug. to Oct., June	Aug., Sept., Oct., Jan. to May, June

Airline	Route	One-way Mileage	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
Qatar	Houston-Doha	100,000			Aug. to May	Dec.		Aug. to Nov., Jan. to May
	Miami-Doha		June					
	New York- Doha		June	June	Aug. to May	Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., March, April, June	Jan., Feb., March, May	Jan., Feb., June
	San Francisco- Doha		Nov.		Aug., Sept., Dec. to May	Jan.		Aug., Sept., Feb. to May
	Seattle-Doha		May, June					
	Washington, DC-Doha		Sept., Oct to Dec.	Aug., Sept., Oct. to Dec.	Jan. to May	Aug., Dec.	Nov.	Sept., Oct., Jan. to May
	Los Angeles- Singapore		Jan.		Feb., March	Jan. to March	Jan.	Feb., March
Singapore	Los Angeles- Tokyo	100,000	Aug., Sept. to Nov., March	Jan., April, June	Aug., Feb., May	Sept. to Nov., Jan. to March, May, June		
	New York- Singapore		Aug., Jan., Feb., March	Feb., March			March	Jan., Feb.
	Vancouver- Singapore		Jan., Feb.	Feb., March		Jan., Feb.	March	

*Months in black at least one seat available; in blue at least two seats; in green at least four seats.

Related Reads:

[Beginner's Guide to Playing the “Buy Miles to Fly In Style” Strategy](#)

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



Are American AAdvantage Miles Worthless for Premium Travel?

August 2022

With flights full and award inflation through the roof, FCF found a few ‘needles’ in the otherwise worthless AA miles ‘haystack’...

Our research team has been playing “needle in a haystack” with low-cost award space availability on American. It’s a very big haystack, with very few needles. But if you’re planning on booking a trip soon, and have a bunch of AA miles, or points you’re considering transferring to AA miles, in your pocket, **it’s good to know exactly where you stand**. So we decided to do a deep dive survey into where American is hiding a few lower-cost award seats, so you **don’t waste your time in fantasy land**.

In other words, if you're not careful or not reading FCF's special reports, you'd have to plan on paying around 180,000 miles for Business Class one way to Europe, and 175,000 one-way to Asia. However, with Oneworld Alliance partner airlines, FCF's team found award space for as low as 57,500 American miles one way to Europe, saving you ~68%, 60,000 to Asia — also saving you ~66%, get the Middle East for as low as 70,000 one-way and the South Pacific for as low as 80,000 one-way. See FCF's cheat sheet below:

FCF'S AMERICAN & PARTNER DISCOUNT AWARD SURVEY

American: We checked 81 long-haul routes for Business Class award space at the following one-way rates, which we consider relatively reasonable: Asia up to 80,000; Europe, 78,000 (nothing's cheaper); Hawaii up to 28,000; South America up to 60,000; and South Pacific up to 90,000.

We also checked eight American partners' availability at the normal pricing level using American miles.

Breadth of FCF's Survey:

Airline	# of Routes Surveyed	# of Routes with Low-Cost Availability
American	81	7
Air Tahiti Nui	2	1
Cathay Pacific	5	0
Fiji Airways	1	1
Finnair	6	4
Iberia	8	6
Japan	8	7
Qantas	6	0
Qatar	10	8

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ON AMERICAN IN BUSINESS CLASS

Here's a snapshot of what we found:

Europe: 6 out of 43 routes with any availability to speak of:

- Three routes with four seats, two months or more of availability, in both directions
- Three routes with four seats, one-two months one way (outbound only)

Asia: 1 route out of 6 available, with up to four seats (outbound only)

South America: Zip-zero-zilch

Hawaii and the South Pacific: It seems like those palm trees will have to wait.

FCF includes the bad news, too, i.e. it's obvious where not to fish, so:

- You don't waste time fishing in a fishless pond if you have a trip already planned to a place AA miles won't take you
- For those of you in the destination-deciding phase who want to use your miles, you can know sooner than later what ponds to avoid, so to speak.

Remember [not to book backwards](#), in other words.



One of only a few finds

AMERICAN ROUTES WITH ROUND-TRIP BUSINESS CLASS AVAILABILITY

Our survey below shows results for routes with availability of two or more seats in both directions, for two or more months, **at the time of research. Use this as a guide since availability can be volatile.**

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
Charlotte-Frankfurt	Nov.			Jan. to April	June	Nov., Feb., April
Charlotte-Munich	Aug., Oct., Nov., Jan., Feb.	Jan., Feb., April	Jan., March, April	Aug., Jan., April, May	Feb.	Feb., March

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-London	Oct.	Nov., Dec.		Sept., Dec., June		

*Months in black at least one seat available; in blue at least two seats; in green at least four seats.

AMERICAN ROUTES WITH ONE-WAY BUSINESS CLASS AVAILABILITY (MIX & MATCH FOR OPEN-JAWS)

- Los Angeles to Tokyo has a handful of days with four seats outbound in April, 2023.
- Dallas to London has a handful of days one way outbound in November and December with four seats.
- Los Angeles to London had a few dates one way outbound in November and December.
- New York to London also had dates one way outbound in October, November, and December.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ON AMERICAN'S PARTNERS IN BUSINESS CLASS

**Remember to use the following data as a guide since availability can be volatile...*

ASIA

Japan Airlines: Five out of eight long-haul routes we checked have a handful of days with two seats, in both directions for booking 10 to 12 months out; and a single seat in both directions two months or more for Spring 2023 travel.

EUROPE

Finnair: Chicago to Helsinki has plenty of days with one seat April to June, 2023 outbound and March through June on the return; a handful of days both directions January to March outbound and January, February on the return.

Dallas to Helsinki has a handful of days with one seat February to June, 2023 in both directions.

Los Angeles and Miami show one seat a handful of days in March, 2023 outbound travel only.

Iberia Airlines: To Madrid from Boston, Dallas, Miami, New York and Washington, DC have two-seat availability for two or more months in both directions; from Chicago two seats a handful of days in February

and July, 2023 outbound and a handful of days with one seat both directions December to February.

MIDDLE EAST

Qatar: Three out of seven long-haul routes we checked have a handful of days with two seats in both directions for booking 10 to 12 months out; five routes have two seats in June, 2023 for outbound travel only.

SOUTH PACIFIC

Air Tahiti Nui: Los Angeles-Papeete has four seats outbound in August; two seats on the return in June, 2023.

Fiji Air: San Francisco-Nadi has a handful of days with one seat September and May, 2023 on the return flight only.

AA PARTNER TREASURE MAP OF LOW-PRICED BUSINESS CLASS SEATS

Destination	Fly On	Route	Cost One Way with American Miles	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
Asia	Japan Airlines	Boston-Tokyo	60,000	Aug. , Feb. , April to June , July			Feb. , May , July		June
		Chicago-Tokyo		Jan. , Feb. , April , June			June		
		Dallas-Tokyo		Oct. , Jan. , Feb. , June , July					
		Los Angeles-Tokyo		Sept. , Oct. , April , July			Sept. , Oct. , July		
		New York-Tokyo		Jan. , July		June	June , July		
		San Diego-Tokyo		Aug. , June , July	April to June		June , July		June

Destination	Fly On	Route	Cost One Way with American Miles	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
		Seattle-Tokyo		Aug., April, July	May, June		Oct., Jan., May, June, July	Oct., May	June
		Chicago-Helsinki		Jan.	Feb., March	April to June	Jan., Feb.		March to June
Europe	Finnair	Dallas-Helsinki	57,500	Feb. to June			Feb. to April	May, June	
		Los Angeles-Helsinki		March					
		Miami-Helsinki		March					
		Boston-Madrid		Jan. to March, May, June, July	Feb., March, April, June		Jan., July	Feb., March, June	March, April
	Iberia	Chicago-Madrid		Aug., Dec., Jan., Feb., July	Feb.		Dec., Feb.	Jan.	
		Dallas-Madrid		Jan., Feb.	Jan.		Jan., Feb.		
		Miami-Madrid		March, April, July	Jan., Feb., June	Jan. to March, June		Jan., March	Jan., Feb., March, April, June
		New York-Madrid	70,000	March, April, June., July	Jan., March	Jan., Feb.	Jan., July	Jan., March	Feb., March, April, June
		Washington, DC-Madrid		April, June, July			April, June	April	
Middle East	Qatar	Boston-Doha	70,000		May, June	May	April, June		May

Destination	Fly On	Route	Cost One Way with American Miles	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-Doha		May, June	June		April to June	May	
		Dallas-Doha		May, June					
		Houston-Doha		June					
		Miami-Doha		June	June				
		New York-Doha		April, May, June	June				
		Seattle-Doha		May, June					
		Washington, DC-Doha		March, May, June, July	June		April		May, June
South Pacific	Air Tahiti Nui	San Francisco-Nadi	80,000		Aug.	Aug.	June		
	Fiji Airways	Los Angeles-Papeete		Sept., May					

*Months in black at least one seat available; in blue at least two seats; in green at least four seats.

So don't give up on using your American miles for international Business Class seats just yet. Consider these valuable 'haystack needles' we've found for low-cost award space, instead.



FCF Uncovers Low-Hanging Inflation-Fighting Fare Fruit

August 2022

Find out what international long-haul routes are trending below \$2,500 R/T for Business Class.

With inflation ramping up, the value of your money is slippery-dipping down. Fares are higher than they've been in the last several years on most major airlines. American, Air France, British Airways, Delta, Emirates, Iberia, KLM, Lufthansa, SAS, Singapore, SWISS, United, and Virgin Atlantic are all trending up to most destinations.

Happy days these are not.

Case in point, check out these Business Class round-trip fares: Los Angeles to Shanghai: \$5,091 or Tokyo for \$4,182; Chicago to Athens: \$5,218; Dallas to Venice: \$4,777; Los Angeles to Split: \$7,158; Houston to Genoa: \$7,837; New York to Prague: \$4,205; Miami to Copenhagen: \$4,979.



FCF SMASHES THE INFLATION PIÑATA

While the best fares are typically found on a [flash or semi-flash basis](#), let's get inflation-fighting with some of the low-hanging fare fruit we've found trending around the globe. Use this data about recent and current deals to prepare yourself to jump on these fares [when they inevitably dip](#). Keep in mind the [fare freeze strategy](#) to eliminate booking stress.

AFRICA SAMPLES

This continent intermittently offers a number of sub-\$2,500 routes from the U.S., including Accra, Cairo, Dakar, Nairobi, and Nigeria, among others. Here are some examples of recent fares we've seen that may vanish as quickly as they appeared:

Accra: Dallas to Accra on Delta for \$2,352, compared to typical published fares of \$4,670+.

Cairo: Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Washington, DC, to Cairo on Lufthansa/SWISS or United for \$2,201 to \$2,450, compared to typical published fares starting at \$3,000+.

Dakar: New York nonstop and Baltimore or Washington, DC, to Dakar on Delta for \$2,461, compared to typical published fares of \$6,200+.

Nairobi: New York or Washington, DC, to Nairobi on Lufthansa or United for \$2,214 to \$2,468, compared to normal published fares up to \$6,384+.

Nigeria: Washington, DC, to Nigeria (Abuja) on Lufthansa for \$2,500, compared to typical published fares of \$3,577+.

Sample Airline/s	Sample Route/s	Flash Fare/s Seen	Travel Month/s with Best Deals
Delta	Dallas-Accra	\$2,352	August to March
Lufthansa, SWISS, United	Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Washington, DC to Cairo	\$2,201-\$2,450	March to June
Delta	Baltimore, New York, Washington, DC to Dakar	\$2,461	September to December
Lufthansa, United	New York, Washington, DC to Nairobi	\$2,214-\$2,468	January to May
Lufthansa	Washington, DC to Nigeria (Abuja)	\$2,500	October, November, January to May

ASIA SAMPLES

ZIPAIR, which is owned by Japan Airlines, is offering nonstop Los Angeles-Tokyo flights starting at \$1,628 round-trip. Both outbound and return flights are running daily through March 18, 2023. We already told you about the pros and cons of ZIPAIR [here](#).

With typical Business Class fares to Asia usually in the \$5,000+ range, we've been able to find some gems under \$3,000. For example, fares to [Jakarta, Indonesia, from New York are going for \\$2,618](#) on American or Japan Airlines.

EUROPE SAMPLES

Here are some recent flash and tactical fares that may still be available. But these fares won't last, so the time to book is now.

Rome: On Delta from San Francisco we have recently seen fares as low as \$2,291. That's a steal for a flight from the West Coast, considering New York departures typically start at \$4,100+.

Santorini: Iberia from Washington, DC, goes for \$2,432 for travel August to October and April to June. Compare to regular published fares typically starting at \$3,400+.

London: Fares from Baltimore, Boston, Buffalo, Detroit, New York, Pittsburgh-London to Heathrow and Gatwick airports have recently been in the \$1,849 to \$2,475 range for travel December to June on Air France, American, British Airways, Iberia, TAP, JetBlue, and KLM. Compare that to \$4,696+ from Detroit and Pittsburgh on Delta and United.

Frankfurt: Singapore Airlines Business Class fares from New York nonstop to Frankfurt go for \$2,244 for travel November through June departing Mondays through Thursdays. Otherwise, you're looking at \$2,700 to \$3,200. Also, there are many connecting routes with Star Alliance partners for under \$3,000.

Lisbon: We've seen low fares on TAP in Business Class from Boston to Lisbon around \$2,337 for travel September to June, otherwise fares range from \$3,100 to \$3,600.

Frankfurt or Copenhagen: Fares from Boston on TAP can be had for about \$2,100 to \$2,200 for travel October to June, otherwise regular published fares are in the \$3,000+ range.

Paris: Fares from Chicago or Washington, DC, on TAP go for \$2,266 for travel October to June.

Madrid: TAP from New York to Madrid goes for \$2,441 for travel October to June versus \$3,800+ on Air France, American, British Airways, Iberia, and United.

Berlin: LOT from Chicago to Berlin goes for \$2,406 for travel October to June versus \$4,280+ on Air France, Lufthansa and United.

Amsterdam: United from Charlotte to Amsterdam goes for \$2,470 for travel November to June versus \$3,900+ on Air France, American, British Airways and Iberia.

Airline	Sample Route	Flash Fares Seen	Travel Months with Best Deals
TAP	Washington, DC-Berlin, Frankfurt, Milan	\$1,825-\$1,935	November to May
TAP	New York-Nice, Vienna, Zurich	\$1,951-\$1,983	November to May
TAP	Boston-Lisbon	\$2,337	September to June
Air France, Delta, KLM	San Francisco-Rome	\$2,291	October to April
TAP	Boston-Copenhagen	\$2,196	October to June
Singapore	New York-Frankfurt	\$2,244	November to June
TAP	Chicago, Washington, DC-Paris	\$2,266	October to June
LOT	Chicago-Berlin	\$2,406	October to June
Air France, American, British Airways, Iberia, Iceland Air, TAP, JetBlue, KLM	Baltimore, Boston, Buffalo, Detroit, New York, Pittsburgh-London	\$1,849-\$2,475	December to June
Iberia	Washington, DC-Santorini	\$2,432	August to October, April to June
TAP	New York-Madrid	\$2,441	October to June

Airline	Sample Route	Flash Fares Seen	Travel Months with Best Deals
United	Charlotte-Amsterdam	\$2,470	November to June

MIDDLE EAST SAMPLES

The best fares to this region have been to Dubai, as low as \$2,223. Istanbul has also been as low as \$2,139.

Dubai: Fares on Air Canada, Lufthansa, SWISS, and United from Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Washington, DC, go for \$2,223 to \$2,447 versus \$4,386 on Air France, American, and British Airways.

Istanbul: Depart from Washington, DC, for \$2,139 versus the typical published fare of \$2,955+.

KICK THOSE HIGH FARES TO THE CURB

Inflation (and the airlines) are keeping fares sky high. But here are some strategies to kick those high fares to the curb — if you act quickly to lock in-today, gone-tomorrow deals.

1. [FCF's flash fares](#) are where you start, and hopefully finish. There's plenty of gold there.
2. The ability to upgrade continues even after you've bought a ticket, as reported [here](#) and [here](#). First Class *airficionados* can reap the benefits too, as seen [here](#) and [here](#).
3. A "fare hold" means you can freeze a good deal long enough to see if the dates work out for a trip. You can buy and hold tickets on different days with different airlines to see what works best, without the worry of cancellation fees. More here: [Hold Your Fare, Not Your Breath: A Look at 2022 Fare Lock-In Policies](#)
4. Some airlines offer "travel fee waivers," including for award flights. That means it won't cost you anything to cancel or change your ticket. Read more about it [here](#).
5. When booking, check for refundable fares for the same cost or just a little more. It means you can make a change later. We've written more on that [here](#) and [here](#).
6. Thanks to Amex's International Airline Program (IAP), you can save [hundreds of dollars \(and sometimes even thousands\)](#) on premium fares on 26 airlines.
7. A Star Alliance strategy we call the [Destination Double Down](#) works for those traveling to Asia who'd like to visit Europe for free or even less than free. Or, for those heading to Europe who would like to visit Asia for free. It's the play that gets you to an extra world-class destination for barely any additional cost. Read about it [here](#).
8. If you're on a budget, why pay for a lie-flat seat when you'll be working on your laptop? You can fly Premium Economy one way, and Business Class the other (when you do need to sleep). FCF has covered this strategy using normal published fares, [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#), and found opportunities by mixing cabins with American, Delta, and United to Europe [here](#).

9. If you dream, *then* plan, *then* buy your ticket, you're going about it the wrong way! See how opportunity opens up when you flip your thinking, as evidenced [right here in this special report](#).
10. Travelers often go for the easy option, or the one they've done so many times before, but that can hold you back. Our philosophy is to be an "opportunity traveler." We show you why and how [right here](#).
11. FCF's [Fishing for Fares](#) special report shows you how to reel in super fresh Business Class fares.



August 2022

How to avoid high-end hotel holiday gouging with fast and easy savings up to 53% off at Ritz-Carlton, Four Seasons, Rosewood and other luxury hotels

Inflation is affecting more than milk and gas. For example, high-end hotel prices have shot up faster than an elevator to the presidential suite. You've noticed, I get it. But during the holidays, prices skyrocket even further.

FCF'S HIGH-END HOTEL HOLIDAY HACK

Don't worry, there might be something you can do about it — thanks to a tried-and-true FCF strategy, the **American Bar Association (ABA) discount**. I think you're going to be flabbergasted by how much it can save you, particularly during holiday times.

Sometimes, those great deals simply aren't available. So it's on a, er, case-by-case basis. But landing just one great deal can cover your ABA membership cost for years. The chart below shows one in particular, a savings at The Ritz Carlton NoMad in New York of over \$7,000. Like I said, given holiday price hikes at these high-end hotels, you'll want to whack yourself with a gavel if you miss out on some of the savings. Also, don't expect your membership to lower the price at *every* luxury hotel. We've found that this strategy works primarily at higher-end properties.

The chart below shows sample savings for seven-day stays: \$3,600 in Los Angeles, \$3,700 in Dallas, \$5,000 in Boston. If this were on a late-night TV ad, they'd be yelling "crazy prices"!

Sample ABA Holiday Savings: 7 Nights During Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's

Hotel	Room Type	Dates	Normal Cost	ABA Member Cost	Savings
Ritz Carlton, Boston	Executive Suite, King	December 28-January 4	\$9,545	\$4,442	\$5,103 / 53%
W, Miami	Wonderful, King	December 20-27	\$4,783	\$2,254	\$2,529 / 53%
Ritz Carlton, Dallas	Deluxe, King	November 22-29	\$7,302	\$3,565	\$3,737 / 51%
Four Seasons, Boston	Deluxe, King	December 28-January 4	\$7,010	\$3,511	\$3,499 / 50%
Ritz Carlton, Los Angeles	City View, King	November 22-29	\$7,668	\$4,062	\$3,606 / 47%
Ritz Carlton NoMad, New York	Manhattan Club Level, King	December 20-27	\$16,450	\$9,061	\$7,389 / 45%
St. Regis, Atlanta	Deluxe, King	December 28-January 4	\$5,548	\$3,044	\$2,504 / 45%
The Chatwal, New York	Deluxe, King	November 22-29	\$8,418	\$4,723	\$3,695 / 44%
Four Seasons, Houston	Deluxe, King	December 20-27	\$5,015	\$2,884	\$2,131 / 42%

Hotel	Room Type	Dates	Normal Cost	ABA Member Cost	Savings
Rosewood Carlyle, New York	Superior, King	December 28-January 4	\$10,397	\$6,048	\$4,349 / 42%
Phoenician, Scottsdale	Superior, King	December 20-27	\$6,200	\$3,782	\$2,418 / 39%
Four Seasons, Chicago	Lake View, King	December 28-January 4	\$4,930	\$3,270	\$1,660 / 34%
Four Seasons, Baltimore	City View, King	November 22-29	\$3,971	\$2,632	\$1,339 / 34%
Rosewood, Washington, DC	Superior, King	November 22-29	\$5,804	\$3,862	\$1,942 / 33%
Four Seasons, Dallas	Cottonwood, King	November 22-29	\$3,833	\$2,816	\$1,017 / 27%
Four Season, Philadelphia	Premier, King	November 22-29	\$6,301	\$5,040	\$1,261 / 20%
Four Seasons, San Francisco	Superior, King	December 20-27	\$4,884	\$3,904	\$980 / 20%
Rosewood, Menlo Park	Deluxe, King	November 22-29	\$8,955	\$7,282	\$980 / 20%
Rosewood, Vancouver	Junior Suite	December 28-January 4	\$5,806	\$4,936	\$870 / 15%

THE ABA: THE SAVVY WAY TO LEGALLY SAVE A STACK

You'd expect to find lots of legal types on the ABA membership list. But if you look closely, you'll see lots of legal types AND canny FCF readers. Because here's the catch: You don't have to be a lawyer or judge to join. Just like an open-court hearing, everyone is welcome. Why would you join? Well, lots of great reading about law-related issues for starters, but more presciently, great discounts at good hotels. For just a \$150 annual ABA membership fee, you can say "sustained!" on big hotel discounts under [the ABA Preferred Rate Hotel Program](#). I've been a member for years without so much as being called up for jury duty.

The ABA program is able to offer hotel discounts because they've negotiated special rates with a number of luxury hotels around the world. Lawyers like those kinds of places. Who better than hard-nosed lawyers to negotiate low prices for the rest of us savvy travelers? I can see the hotels saying: "Oh no, here come the lawyers again." But at high-priced holiday times like these, you'll be glad to have the legal profession on your side.

EVIDENCE BEFORE THE COURT

The screenshot below shows prices for the Ritz-Carlton, Boston. Over New Year's, the average price per night is \$1,171 or \$9,545 for seven nights BEFORE the ABA discount, and just \$545 per night or \$4,442 for a

seven-night stay AFTER the discount is applied.

English  My Trips  MARRIOTT BONVOY

The Ritz-Carlton, Boston

10 Avery Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02111 USA  +1 617-574-7100  4.3 326 Reviews 

EXCLUSIVE AMENITIES     

Stay Dates: Wed, Dec 28, 2022 - Wed, Jan 4, 2023 Total for Stay: 9,545.42 USD  **CONTINUE**

Review Reservation Details



Executive Suite, 1 Bedroom Suite, 1 King, Sofa bed

ROOM DETAILS

Check in: Wednesday, December 28, 2022
Check out: Wednesday, January 4, 2023
Room(s): 1
Guest(s) per room: 2
[EDIT](#)

▼ Choose Room Features

▼ Room Accessibility & Bed Type

▼ Summary of Charges

1,171.00	+	1,348.41	9,545.42
USD Avg./Night		USD Taxes and fees	USD Subtotal

That's a savings of \$5,103 or 53%. Just think of applying that amount to an upgraded airline ticket.

English My Trips

The Ritz-Carlton, Boston

10 Avery Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02111 USA +1 617-574-7100 4.3 326 Reviews

EXCLUSIVE AMENITIES

Stay Dates: Wed, Dec 28, 2022 - Wed, Jan 4, 2023 Total for Stay: 4,442.58 USD

Review Reservation Details



Executive Suite, 1 Bedroom Suite, 1 King, Sofa bed

ROOM DETAILS

Check in: Wednesday, December 28, 2022
 Check out: Wednesday, January 4, 2023
 Room(s): 1
 Guest(s) per room: 2
[EDIT](#)

Choose Room Features

Room Accessibility & Bed Type

Please note Room 1: Identification required for rate eligibility upon check-in, Non-commissionable rate

Summary of Charges

545.00	+	627.58	4,442.58
USD Avg./night		USD Taxes and fees	USD Subtotal

I love to stay in nice hotels and resorts. I'm obviously not the Lone Ranger on this point, but there's also nothing quite like being in a gorgeous suite, overlooking a beach, and enjoying the facilities of a top-notch hotel or resort.

SUITE UPGRADE, FOR FREE

So the idea of a free suite upgrade kind of explains itself. If you don't have the magic American Bar Association promo code, you'd get a regular "Superior King" for \$1,440 at The Carlyle, A Rosewood Hotel (see screenshot below). Meanwhile, you can get a "Superior Suite with King" room for \$1,200 with the ABA membership. Do the math: That is a cheaper than free upgrade. We've called it a free suite upgrade. Sweet, huh?

ROSEWOOD

THE CARLYLE

NEW YORK

FIND RESERVATIONS •  +1 212-744-1600 • ENGLISH - US • US DOLLARS •

SUPERIOR KING

Daily Best Available Rate



\$1,440 Average per night, before taxes and fees

7 nights	\$10,080.00
<u>Nightly Rates</u>	
NYC Occupancy Tax	\$14.00
NYC Hotel Unit Fee	\$10.50
NYC Hotel Occupancy Tax (city tax)	\$592.23
NYS Sales Tax (state tax)	\$441.01
NYC Sales Tax	\$453.62
Total	\$11,591.36

ROSEWOOD

THE CARLYLE

NEW YORK

FIND RESERVATIONS •  +1 212-744-1600 • ENGLISH - US • US DOLLARS •

SUPERIOR SUITE

American Bar Association Preferred Rate



\$1,200 Average per night, before taxes and fees

7 nights	\$8,400.00
<u>Nightly Rates</u>	
NYC Occupancy Tax	\$14.00
NYC Hotel Unit Fee	\$10.50
NYC Hotel Occupancy Tax (city tax)	\$493.50
NYS Sales Tax (state tax)	\$367.50
NYC Sales Tax	\$378.00
Total	\$9,663.50

Holiday price gouging might be a reality this year, but it's still possible to snag some high-end travel accommodations without feeling humiliated. We can all thank the ABA for keeping their membership open to anyone and everyone savvy enough to know about it. Get out your courtroom wig, FCF reader, and score yourself a sweet discount with your ABA membership.