



The Charlotte- or Miami-St. Croix Tag Team

September 2021

How to add the Caribbean jewel to a trip to Charlotte or South Florida and pay up to \$281 less.

It's easy to remember how to pronounce St. Croix – it rhymes with joy.

Given the times, how much joy would a tropical isle getaway bring you right now?

Roll out the hammock because oh boy, St. Croix is back on the map. It's one of the hidden gems of the Caribbean, located on 84 square miles of volcanic paradise.



But it's OK to feed the humans.

GOING LOOPY FOR THE CARIBBEAN

So, on to the more important details: i.e., how to get there, *smartly*. FCF readers know we love the Stopover Loophole Strategy (SLS). That's how we maximize what airlines call a "stopover allowance" time and time again.

A stopover is a planned stop between flight segments on a trip. For international trips, a stop of 24 hours or less is usually allowed for free, but on domestic flights like those discussed here, it's usually just four hours.

We recently alerted you to [a stopover treat in San Juan](#), Puerto Rico, and [St. Thomas](#), another gem of the U.S. Virgin Islands. We were just getting warmed up.

In a nutshell, the loophole strategy works like this. Longer stops are sometimes *allowed for free*, or for a minimal fee. And **sometimes, adding a longer stop to your trip can actually *lower* your original fare.**

For example, you'd normally pay \$1,219 for a Business Class round trip between Denver and Miami. But with FCF's Stopover Loophole Strategy, you could sneak in a relaxing few days (or longer) in the Caribbean on the way home. I mean, why not do that? For example, you can add St. Croix to your ticket at current fares for \$281 *less* (savings of other examples are in the table below). That's right, add beautiful St. Croix to your itinerary, and actually pay less overall to do so. One more pineapple juice please, with a straw!

The St. Croix SLS Connection: Costs From Various U.S. Cities

Normal Trip	Normal Premium Fare R/T (without St. Croix)	Premium Fare With St. Croix Bonus	St. Croix Bonus Savings
Austin - Charlotte	\$1,034	\$1,023	-\$11
Phoenix - Charlotte	\$1,136	\$1,084	-\$52
San Francisco - Charlotte	\$1,389	\$1,477	+\$88
Seattle - Charlotte	\$1,287	\$1,214	-\$73
Denver - Miami	\$1,219	\$938	-\$281
Los Angeles - Miami	\$1,417	\$1,316	-\$101
Phoenix - Miami	\$1,595	\$1,373	-\$222
Seattle - Miami	\$1,273	\$1,097	-\$176

ELEVATOR PITCH FOR SAINT CROIX

Imagine warm turquoise water with soft white sand. Great eating (try the conch fritters, fried kingfish steaks, and decadent rum cake — yum). Charming, historic towns – Christiansted and Frederiksted – founded in the 1700s. Three golf courses including the Carambola course that *Golf* magazine rates as one of the best in the world. Awesome scuba diving with abundant marine life and lots of shipwrecks to explore. Duty-free shopping, delicious rum, and a low-key, laid-back tropical vibe. Just writing this makes me want to get out of this elevator and go.



Cane Beach, Saint Croix

TRAVEL ADVISORY FOR SAINT CROIX

Regardless of vaccine status, all passengers flying into St. Croix will need to provide proof of a negative Covid test received no more than five days prior to boarding their flight. No Covid test is required to return to the U.S. mainland. More on that [here](#). U.S. citizens don't require a passport to visit



Amex Apex: Asia First Class for \$2,125, Biz Class \$1,750; Europe Biz Class \$1,225 R/T + More

September 2021

**Through Sept. 30, leverage Amex points-transfer
bonuses—together with [buying points strategies](#)—like
never before**

It's not every day that you see lucrative transfer bonus deals on 11 airline mileage programs for access to 64 airlines from a credit card points program. Usually they roll out randomly, one at a time.

But these are unprecedented times with unprecedented deals.

If you're thinking at all about First Class on Lufthansa or a super cheap Business Class flight to Europe, but dismissing it because you don't have many points, this is your time to shine.

Even if you're typically a short-haul domestic traveler.

HOW GOOD ARE THE DEALS?

With Iberia's 40% transfer bonus right now, you can get that [68,000-mile Iberia deal](#) to Europe for just 49,000 miles—or **\$1,250**—check out our most recent alerts [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). Or an [American domestic deal](#) and 11 of other enticing deals.

With the Virgin Atlantic 30% transfer bonus, you can get incredibly cheap deals with All Nippon Airways in First Class to Japan. What was 110,000 miles is now just 85,000—or **\$2,125 / 89% off**—for Los Angeles and San Francisco round-trip to Tokyo. What was 120,000 miles is now just 93,000 for New York, Chicago, and Washington, DC, round-trip to Tokyo. Check out our most recent alerts [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Or, you can fly Delta, through Virgin Atlantic, for 100,000 miles round-trip to Europe in Business Class. Delta is notorious for high-cost awards that are often at least 240,000 round-trip. But with Virgin and the current Amex bonus, you can [pay just 77,000 miles](#). Check out our most recent alerts [here](#) and [here](#).

Check out our most recent Lufthansa First Class deals via Amex/Air Canada [here](#), and [here](#).

With this promotion, even [domestic short-haul first class awards on American Airlines](#) are now just 32,000 Amex points.

BONUSES AT A GLANCE

Program	Program Partners	Bonus
Aer Lingus AerClub	British Airways, United	40%
Aeromexico Club Premier	18 SkyTeam partner airline programs	25%
Air Canada Aeroplan	26 Star Alliance partner airline programs plus Etihad	20%
Air France- KLM Flying Blue	18 SkyTeam partner airline programs plus Etihad, Finnair, Singapore, Virgin Atlantic, Qantas	25%
Avianca LifeMiles	26 Star Alliance partner airline programs	15%

Program	Program Partners	Bonus
British Airways Executive Club	14 oneworld partner airline programs plus Aer Lingus	40%
Hawaiian Airlines	Japan, JetBlue, Korean, Virgin Atlantic, Virgin Australia	25%
Iberia Plus	14 oneworld partner airline programs	40%
Qantas Frequent Flyer	14 oneworld partner airline programs plus Air France, KLM	20%
Virgin Atlantic Flying Club	Air France, KLM, Delta, All Nippon	30%
Hilton Honors	No airline partners	30%
Marriott Bonvoy (3 points to an airline mile, not great)	AEGEAN, Aer Lingus AerClub, Aeroflot Bonus, Aeromexico ClubPremier, Air Canada Aeroplan, Air France-KLM Flying Blue, Air New Zealand Airpoints, Alaska Airlines Mileage Plan, American Airlines AAdvantage, ANA Mileage Club, Asiana Airlines Asiana Club, Avianca LifeMiles, British Airways Executive Club, Cathay Pacific Asia Miles, Copa Airlines ConnectMiles, Delta SkyMiles, Emirates Skywards, Etihad Guest, FRONTIER Miles, Hainan Airlines Fortune Wings Club, Hawaiian Airlines HawaiianMiles, Iberia Plus, Japan Airlines JAL Mileage Bank, Korean Air SKYPASS, LATAM Airlines LATAM Pass, Qantas Frequent Flyer, Qatar Airways Privilege Club, Singapore Airlines KrisFlyer, Southwest Rapid Rewards, TAP Air Portugal Miles&Go, Thai Airways Royal Orchid Plus, Turkish Airlines Miles&Smiles, United MileagePlus, Virgin Atlantic Flying Club, Virgin Australia Velocity Frequent Flyer, Vueling Club	30%

THE BEST OF THE BEST

While half of the aforementioned Amex partners aren't very interesting, the following are FCF's cherry picks for you.

Route / Class	Operating Airline	Amex Transfer Partner	Normal Cost R/T	Net Cost With Bonus R/T
Los Angeles, San Francisco - Tokyo / First Class	All Nippon	Virgin Atlantic	110,000	85,000
Chicago, New York, Washington, DC - Tokyo / First Class			120,000	93,000
Los Angeles, San Francisco - Tokyo / Business Class			90,000	70,000
Chicago, New York, Washington, DC - Tokyo / Business Class			95,000	74,000
U.S. to Europe / Business Class	Delta	Iberia	100,000	77,000
New York, Boston, Washington, DC to Europe / Business Class*	Iberia		68,000	49,000

Route / Class	Operating Airline	Amex Transfer Partner	Normal Cost R/T	Net Cost With Bonus R/T
Chicago, Miami - Madrid / Business Class*			85,000	61,000
Los Angeles, San Francisco - Madrid / Business Class*			102,000	73,000
Short-haul within North America**	American	British Airways	44,000	32,000
Transcon / Business Class			77,500	56,000
Transcon / First Class			103,000	74,000
Los Angeles to Maui / Business Class			77,500	56,000
U.S. to Europe / Business Class	United	Air Canada	120,000-140,000	100,000-117,000
U.S. to Frankfurt / First Class	Lufthansa		200,000	167,000
New York to Johannesburg via Paris / Business Class	Air France	Air France	170,000	136,000
New York to Nairobi via Amsterdam / Business Class	KLM	KLM	170,000	136,000

*Based on off-peak / ** Up to 4,000 miles R/T

SAMPLE MATH WHEN [BUYING AMEX POINTS](#)

Operating Airline	Route	Class	Best Amex Transfer Partner	Mileage Cost With Transfer Bonus	Cash Cost at 2.5 Cents Per Amex Point	Regular Published Fare	Savings \$	Savings %
All Nippon	San Francisco - Tokyo	First	All Nippon	85,000	\$2,125	\$20,128	\$18,003	89%
Delta	Atlanta - Paris	Business	Virgin Atlantic	77,000	\$1,925	\$4,349	\$2,424	56%
Iberia	New York - Madrid	Business	Iberia	49,000	\$1,225	\$3,095	\$1,870	60%

FCF OPPORTUNITY TREASURE MAPS

To/From	Airline/Class	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-Tokyo	All Nippon Using Virgin Atlantic/First Class	Dec., June	Jan., Feb., April	July, Aug.	Feb., March, June, Aug.	Dec.	July, Aug.
Los Angeles-Tokyo		Jan.	Aug.	Feb., June, July	Oct. to Dec., March, May, Aug.	Jan.	Feb., June, July
New York-Tokyo		Oct.	Aug.		Oct.	Aug.	
San Francisco-Tokyo		Jan., April, June		July, Aug.	Dec.	Feb., July	Aug.
Atlanta-Paris	Delta Using Virgin Atlantic/Business Class	Jan., Feb.			Feb.		
Boston-Amsterdam		Dec. to Feb., Mar.	Nov.		Jan., Feb.	Nov.	Dec.
New York-Frankfurt			March	Dec. to Feb.		Dec., March	Jan., Feb.
New York-Milan		Nov. Feb.	Dec., Jan.		Jan.	Dec., Feb.	Dec.
Minneapolis-Paris		Nov., Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Nov., Dec., Jan.		Feb.
Boston-Madrid	Iberia/Business Class	Nov., Dec., Jan., May, Sept.	Nov., Feb., March, June	April, July, Aug.	Nov. to Feb., Sept., Nov.	Jan., March, June	April, May, July, Aug.
Los Angeles-Madrid		Jan., Feb., April, July, Aug.			Jan., March, April, July, Aug.	Feb., March, July	
New York-Madrid		Oct., Dec., May, June, Aug.	Nov., May, June	Nov., Jan. to April, July	Oct., Dec., Aug.	Nov., May, June	Jan., to May, June, July
Miami-Madrid		May, June	April, June	Nov. to March, July		April to June	Nov. to March, April, May, July

*Months in [black](#) at least one seat available; in [blue](#) at least two seats; in [green](#) at least four seats.

* The Amex transfer bonuses are valid until September 30, 2021. The general [FCF strategies](#) are timeless.





A look at published fare trends, miles vs. points, package deals, and what flights/aircraft to get the most comfort.

Jabbed or not, any reason to go to Hawaii is a good one, so let's find ways to get there *for less*, and as soon as next month.

HAWAII: A MILLION REASONS TO GO, 4 WAYS TO CONSIDER

In this special report, we're going to look at getting to Hawaii via:

- Published fares
- Miles or points
- Packages
- Wide-body aircraft



Captivating Kauai and the Napali Coast

LET'S LOOK AT THE FARE LANDSCAPE

American's Los Angeles-Honolulu nonstop Business Class fares are like riding a roller coaster lately, with fares recently falling into the \$1,107 range for non-holiday travel through February and fares in the 1,300-\$1,500 range February through May 2022. For reference, Los Angeles to Honolulu has run as high as \$4,053 and \$5,448 to Maui during Thanksgiving and Christmas for Business Class travel.

Nonstop fares are still relatively high on American's many other routes including from Dallas. Right now, they're ranging from \$2,500 to \$3,000. Meanwhile, Charlotte is in the \$2,300 range round-trip, and Phoenix ranges from \$1,200 to Honolulu and \$1,600 to Kona, to \$2,100 to Maui and \$1,800-\$2,500+ to Kauai.

Delta's Los Angeles-Honolulu nonstop route has a handful of dates for \$968 with non-holiday fares ranging from \$1,108 to \$1,528. Those prices make the handful of dates at 84,000 miles round-trip not worth it for value at 1.2 cents a mile.

United's nonstops from Los Angeles to Honolulu have a bunch of non-holiday dates at \$1,138, and many fares in the \$1,300 range. However, given that we found one day at 40,000 miles one-way, a handful of dates for 42,500, and the rest in the 60,500-80,000-range one-way (although we've seen as high as 143,100 one-way), it's not a great return on your miles.

Keep in mind that nonstop fares on United are still high. Their New York-Honolulu route is averaging around \$2,700, while Houston and Denver are in the \$2,100 range for round-trip tickets.

SAVE MONEY BY CHANGING YOUR DESTINATION

If Maui's on your list but you don't see a deal to Maui in the FCF newsroom, consider flying to Honolulu or connecting there. In other words, don't be set on one destination when planning your next trip. American's nonstop route from Phoenix to Honolulu is \$1,289 while Phoenix to Maui is \$2,189.

The charts show nonstop fares versus one-stop fares from a range of U.S. cities to four different island destinations.

To Honolulu From	Nonstop	1 Stop	Difference	
American				
Charlotte	\$2,358	\$1,994	-\$364	-15%
Chicago	-	\$1,678		
Dallas	\$2,556	\$1,620	-\$936	-37%
Los Angeles	\$1,077	\$1,077	\$0	0%
Phoenix	\$1,289	\$1,257	-\$32	-2%
Delta				
Atlanta	\$5,749	\$2,237	-\$3,512	-61%
Los Angeles	\$1,248	\$1,248	\$0	0%
Minneapolis	\$3,652	\$2,106	-\$1,546	-42%
Salt Lake City	\$2,525	\$1,497	-\$1,028	-41%
Seattle	\$1,069	\$1,069	\$0	0%
United				
Chicago	\$2,540	\$1,810	-\$730	-29%
Denver	\$1,770	\$1,527	-\$243	-14%
Houston	\$2,228	\$1,767	-\$461	-21%
Los Angeles	\$1,139	\$1,139	\$0	0%
New York	\$2,700	\$2,040	-\$660	-24%

To Kauai From	Nonstop	1 Stop	Difference	
American				
Charlotte	-	\$2,495		
Chicago	-	\$1,946		
Dallas	-	\$1,966		
Los Angeles	\$1,939	\$1,287	-\$652	-34%
Phoenix	\$1,800	\$1,469	-\$331	-18%

To Kauai From	Nonstop	1 Stop	Difference	
Delta				
Atlanta	-	\$2,828		
Los Angeles	\$2,262	\$2,029	-\$233	-10%
Minneapolis	-	\$2,678		
Salt Lake City	-	\$1,681		
Seattle	\$1,572	\$1,572	\$0	0%
United				
Chicago	-	\$2,117		
Denver	\$2,251	\$1,663	-\$588	-26%
Houston	-	\$2,079		
Los Angeles	\$2,038	\$1,367	-\$671	-33%
New York	-	\$2,267		

To Kona From	Nonstop	1 Stop	Difference	
American				
Charlotte	-	\$2,437		
Chicago	-	\$2,016		
Dallas	\$2,656	\$2,230	-\$426	-16%
Los Angeles	\$1,739	\$1,317	-\$422	-24%
Phoenix	\$1,598	\$1,469	-\$129	-8%
Delta				
Atlanta	-	\$2,548		
Los Angeles	\$2,122	\$2,122	\$0	0%
Minneapolis	-	\$2,128		
Salt Lake City	-	\$2,204		
Seattle	\$1,138	\$1,138	\$0	0%
United				
Chicago	-	\$2,186		

To Kona From	Nonstop	1 Stop	Difference	
Denver	-	\$1,669		
Houston	-	\$2,088		
Los Angeles	\$1,668	\$1,328	-\$340	-20%
New York	-	\$2,268		

To Maui From	Nonstop	1 Stop	Difference	
American				
Charlotte	-	\$2,530		
Chicago	-	\$2,286		
Dallas	\$3,056	\$2,420	-\$636	-21%
Los Angeles	\$1,949	\$1,287	-\$662	-34%
Phoenix	\$2,189	\$1,407	-\$782	-36%
Delta				
Atlanta	-	\$3,107		
Los Angeles	\$2,122	\$2,122	\$0	0%
Minneapolis	-	\$2,114		
Salt Lake City	\$3,177	\$2,694	-\$483	-15%
Seattle	\$2,112	\$1,651	-\$461	-22%
United				
Chicago	-	\$2,180		
Denver	\$2,831	\$2,094	-\$737	-26%
Houston	-	\$2,215		
Los Angeles	\$1,479	\$1,337	-\$142	-10%
New York	\$3,219	\$2,783	-\$436	-14%

WHAT ABOUT USING MILES?

If fares are high for your travel dates, check if American has award space. Even at 100,000 to 110,000 miles round-trip, you might be able to burn some miles without spending cash out of pocket. If fares are lower and

you're getting at least 2 cents per mile return on value, it's not great. But if you have more miles than you know what to do with, go right ahead.

American Nonstop Business Class From/To	R/T Mileage Cost	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
Dallas - Honolulu	100,000-110,000	Oct., Nov.			Oct.		
Los Angeles - Honolulu		Dec.		Oct., Nov., Jan., Feb., May	Dec.	Jan.	Oct., Nov., Jan., Feb., May
Los Angeles - Kauai			Nov.	Dec. to Feb., May	Oct., Nov.	Nov.	Dec. to Feb., May
Los Angeles - Kona		Oct., Nov.	Dec., July	Dec., Jan., Feb., May, June	Nov.	Dec., May, July	Jan., Feb., June
Los Angeles - Maui		Oct.	Oct.	Dec. to Feb.	Nov.	Oct., Jan.	Dec., Jan., Feb. May
Phoenix - Maui		May			May		
Phoenix - Kona		May					May

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

PACKAGES NOW SAVING UP TO 44%

You're not the only one thinking about Hawaii. **When booked directly, hotels are charging up to 50% more than normal** given the limited supply and pent-up-demand. We told you about it recently [here](#).

So the savings you can get by packaging up a deal are worth mentioning again, and fresh samples shown in the chart below. Packages are negotiated way ahead so they don't always fall prey to in-the-moment price fluctuations.

Although we didn't find any package deals using American Airlines, United and Delta both show only West Coast departures at a decent savings.

Airline	Route	Air Only (Lowest Advance Fare 2 people)	Hotel Price	Air Ticket + Hotel Booked Separate	Package Price (Non-stop Air + 7 Nights Hotel)	Supplier	Hotel	Savings	
Delta	Los Angeles - Kona	\$3,256	\$6,159	\$9,415	\$5,379	Delta Vacations	Fairmont Orchid / King Garden View	\$4,036	43%
Delta	Los Angeles - Maui	\$3,056	\$13,791	\$16,847	\$9,361	Delta Vacations	Fairmont Kea Lani / Ocean View Suite	\$7,486	44%
United	San Francisco - Kona	\$2,576	\$6,260	\$8,836	\$4,994	United Vacations	Fairmont Orchid / King Garden View	\$3,842	43%
United	Los Angeles - Honolulu	\$2,196	\$2,351	\$4,547	\$3,127	United Vacations	Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach / Resort View King	\$1,420	31%

WIDE-BODY BLISS

If you're flying from North America to Hawaii and you know the 18 American Airlines flights, the 30 Delta flights, and the 43 United flights that use wide-body international aircraft with more comfortable international Business/First Class seats, you'll have a simple way to get an **in-class seat upgrade**. That's right, a significant seat and comfort upgrade by simply knowing which particular flight to book.

In the charts below we have a rundown of all wide-body aircraft flying to Hawaii on the Big 3 U.S. carriers.

You can read more about in-class seat upgrades [here](#) and [here](#).

American To/From	Flight numbers*	Days of Operation	Aircraft	Return	Days of Operation	Aircraft
Charlotte - Honolulu	AA569	Sunday through Saturday	777-200	AA569, AA552	Sunday through Saturday	777-200
Dallas - Honolulu	AA5	Monday through Saturday	787-900	AA8	Monday through Saturday	787-900
Dallas - Honolulu	AA115, AA123	Sunday through Saturday	787-900, 777-200, 777-300	AA102, AA115	Sunday through Saturday	787-900, 777-200, 777-300
Dallas - Kona	AA229		777-200	AA230		777-200

American To/From	Flight numbers*	Days of Operation	Aircraft	Return	Days of Operation	Aircraft
Dallas - Maui	AA119, AA7		777-200, 787-900	AA116, AA6		777-200, 787-900

*Valid for flights through September 30

Delta To/From	Flight numbers*	Days of Operation	Aircraft	Return	Days of Operation	Aircraft
Atlanta-Honolulu	DL0427	Sunday through Saturday	A330	DL0304	Sunday through Saturday	A330
Los Angeles-Honolulu	DL0330, DL0443, DL0480		B757	DL0331, DL0368, DL0495		B757
Los Angeles-Kauai	DL0428			DL0361		
Los Angeles-Kona	DL0370			DL0509		
Los Angeles-Maui	DL0362, DL0533			DL0355, DL0448		
Minneapolis-Honolulu	DL0472		A330	DL0379		A330
Salt Lake City-Honolulu	DL0397			DL0347		
Seattle-Honolulu	DL0444	SU/M/W/TH/FR/SA	B767	DL0522	SU/M/W/TH/FR/SA	B767
	DL0450	Sunday through Saturday	A330	DL0440	Sunday through Saturday	A330
Seattle-Kauai	DL0344		B757	DL0474		B757
Seattle-Kona	DL0565			DL0485		
Seattle-Maui	DL0481			DL0429		

*Valid for flights through September 30

United To/From	Flight numbers*	Days of Operation	Aircraft	Return	Days of Operation	Aircraft
Chicago-Honolulu	UA0219	Sunday through Saturday	B777	UA0218	Sunday through Saturday	B777
Chicago-Maui	UA0202	SU/M/THU/FRI/SA	B787	UA0348	M/THU/FRI/SA/SU	B787
Denver-Honolulu	UA0384, UA1801	Sunday through Saturday	B767, B777	UA0383, UA1802	Sunday through Saturday	B767, B777
Denver-Kauai	UA2307		B767	UA1685		B767
Denver-Kona	UA1758			UA1731		
Denver-Maui	UA1736	Wednesday through Sunday	B777	UA1430	Wednesday through Sunday	B777
Denver-Maui	UA1808	Sunday through Saturday	B767	UA1720	Sunday through Saturday	B767
Houston-Honolulu	UA0253		B777	UA0252		B777
Los Angeles-Honolulu	UA1158			UA0534		
San Francisco-Honolulu	UA1509, UA1591, UA2380		B767, B777	UA0372, UA0396, UA0650, UA0724, UA1575		B767, B777
	UA1581	Saturday	B777		Sunday through Saturday	
San Francisco-Kauai	UA1111	Sunday through Saturday	B767	UA1152	Sunday through Saturday	B767
San Francisco-Kona	UA0694			UA1724		
San Francisco-Maui	UA1614, UA1725			UA1288, UA1722		
Newark-Honolulu	UA0363			UA0362		
Newark-Maui	UA0042			UA0043	Saturday	
Washington, DC-Honolulu	UA0345	Thursday through Sunday		UA0344	Thursday through Sunday	

*Valid for flights through September 30

A close-up photograph of two young women with long brown hair. The woman on the left is wearing a denim jacket and has her hand near her mouth, appearing to be part of a group conversation or a secret. The woman on the right is also looking towards the same direction with a curious expression. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting with greenery.

Five Secret Routes to Get Business Class 3-for-1s (Or More) to Europe Right Now

September 2021

Where to get 320,000-mile Delta Biz Class tickets for 100,000 points, or less

Travelers bemoan the lack of Business Class availability to Europe on Delta routes, but the truth is that you CAN get there for cheap. Instead of using 320,000 to 640,000 miles on Delta, use 100,000, or less with the current Amex transfer promo, more on that [here](#).

You may recall [ECF's Delta/Virgin loophole here](#), and [here](#), where you **use Virgin Atlantic miles (that you get by transferring Amex points) rather than Delta SkyMiles to buy seats — on Delta flights**. Sounds weird, but it's because Delta only releases a limited number of low-cost mileage award seats to its own SkyMiles members — which is a different number than it releases to its partner Virgin Atlantic. In other words,

by using Virgin Atlantic miles / Amex points for the same Delta flights, you can open up low-cost award space that Delta doesn't offer.

THE 5 HIDDEN ROUTES AVAILABLE FOR BOOKING NOW

We've done the heavy lifting, checking dozens of routes over thousands of dates, and FCF research shows award space ripe for the taking (for up to four passengers per flight) on the following routes:

To/From	Airline	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
Atlanta-Paris	Delta (Using Virgin Atlantic miles, an Amex points transfer partner)	Jan., Feb.			Feb.		
Boston-Amsterdam		Dec. to Feb., Mar.	Nov.		Jan., Feb.	Nov.	Dec.
New York-Frankfurt			March	Dec. to Feb.		Dec., March	Jan., Feb.
New York-Milan		Nov., Feb.	Dec., Jan.		Jan.	Dec. to Feb.	Dec.
Minneapolis-Paris		Nov., Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Nov., Dec., Jan.		Feb.

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

HOW TO SEARCH FOR DELTA FLIGHTS BOOKABLE ONLINE USING VIRGIN ATLANTIC MILES

You don't have to create a Virgin Atlantic mileage account to check for availability. However, if you're booking award seats, then you'll have to log in. [Just go to](#) "Book" and click "Advanced search." For more on searching for Delta flights, see our report [here](#).

HOW TO ADD CONNECTING FLIGHTS

If you need to add extra flights to a nonstop Delta flight with good availability, it will cost more miles. A one-way domestic (non-transcontinental) flight costs 22,500 more Virgin miles. More here on [how to book Delta connecting flights with Virgin miles](#). That said, compared to the savings this strategy presents, this is nothing.

OTHER IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN USING VIRGIN ATLANTIC MILES ON DELTA FLIGHTS

Credit Card Partnerships: Virgin Atlantic has more credit card point transfer partners than Delta (Amex Rewards, Chase, Citi, and Starwood/Marriott). Delta only has two (Amex Rewards and Starwood/Marriott).

Transfer Bonuses: Currently (more on that [here](#)) and throughout the year, Virgin Atlantic and Amex Membership Rewards offer transfer bonuses. Their most recent bonus was 30%. Meanwhile, Delta's co-branded credit cards never offer transfer bonuses.


IS IT RISKY TO BOOK WITH MILES NOWADAYS?

Both [Virgin Atlantic and Delta](#) have a "travel fee waiver" currently offered for new bookings until the end of this year. This includes award flights. That means you won't have to pay any fees if you need to cancel your ticket.

Normal mileage award booking policies vary by airline, but you can generally redeposit or change your mileage ticket for as little as \$50, if not free. Details [here](#).

Think of the change and/or redeposit fee as an insurance policy. If your plans change and you decide not to travel, you can do so with very little hassle and cost. We think it's well worth it.

Happy 3-for-1ing!

A photograph of the Lufthansa First Class cabin interior, showing wide, comfortable seats with large windows and overhead storage bins. The text "Lufthansa First Class Upgrade Update: Good News & Bad News" is overlaid in white.

Lufthansa First Class Upgrade Update: Good News & Bad News

September 2021

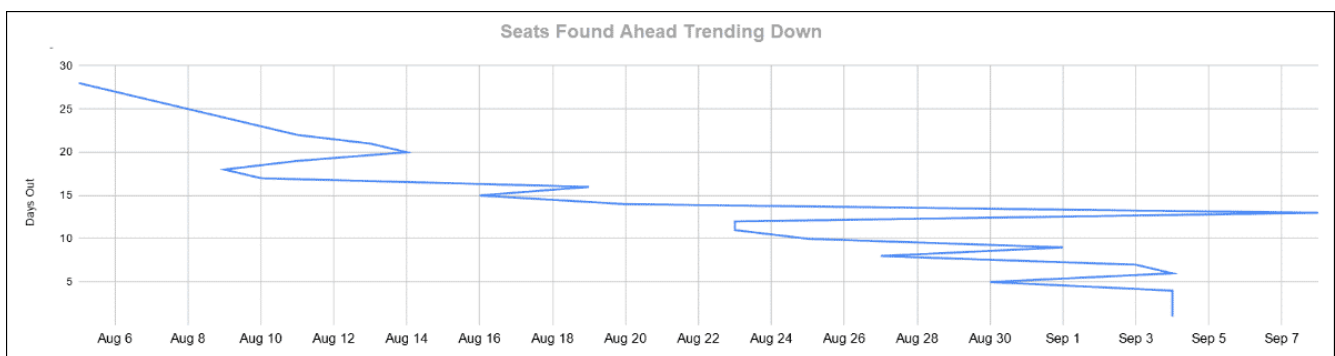
Short notice opportunities are down, but routes and deals are up on one of the biggest upgrade opportunities to Europe this month.

Over the last two months we reported that [Lufthansa's First Class is back in the game to Europe](#) with available seats found at 19 days out. And in our report, [Euro Game Changing First Class Upgrades, Part 2](#), we found First Class seats available as far out as 28 days on prime routes, instead of the usual 14.

FIRST, WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM LAST MINUTE AVAILABILITY SO CLOSE TO DEPARTURE ANYWAY?

- The **Last-Minute “Opportunity” Traveler**, who we describe [here](#).
- The **You-Already-Have-an-Award-Ticket-in-a-Lesser-Class Traveler**. More on that [here](#).
- The **[Can’t-Find-a-Round-Trip-in-First-Class](#) Flyer**. Fly Lufthansa First Class on your night flight and return in Business Class for your day flight on an award ticket.
- The **First-Class-Fares-Are-Steep-So-You-Purchased-Business-Class Traveler**. More on that [here](#).
- The **First-Class-Wasn’t-Available-So-You-Booked-a-Business-Class-Award Person**. More about that [here](#).

We questioned whether the new trend would change when travel picks up. Well, over the last month it looked like availability was returning closer to 14 days out again. Bummer.



It's part of a trend, as you can see in the chart. On August 5, we found seats 28 days out (to September 2), while on August 16 and August 18 it had bottomed out to just 15 days, and currently back to the same 14 days.

That's the bad news.

THE GOOD NEWS

On the upside, there are more routes with First Class seats available, and some big savings to be had if you follow our guidance below.

CURRENT LUFTHANSA TRANSATLANTIC ROUTES WITH A FIRST CLASS CABIN TO FRANKFURT

- Chicago
- Los Angeles
- Houston (no nonstop return service September 28 through November 1, 2021)
- Miami (no nonstop return service October 23 through March 26, 2022)

- New York/Newark
- New York/JFK
- San Francisco
- Washington, DC (service resumes March 27, 2022)



ADD CONNECTING FLIGHTS TO THE LONG-HAUL INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT

By making a multi-city booking with Air Canada miles (screenshot below), you can book itineraries like Columbus to Copenhagen via Chicago and Frankfurt for 117,814 miles (or \$1,531 if you purchased Air Canada points during the [recent sale](#)) — or **transfer Amex or Chase points to Air Canada miles**.

Compare that to a purchased fare of \$8,591. Note that the connecting flights may be in economy or Business Class. The trick is to search for the long-haul segment first, since that's the one you want to fly in upgraded comfort. More on that [here](#).

Multi-city
CMH → CPH
Aug 18 - Aug 18
1 A

Modify

1. Review
2. Passengers
3. Seats
4. Payment

Review

When fare types are combined, the most restrictive cancellation policy will apply to your entire journey.

There are not enough Aeroplan points in your account to apply to this booking.

Flight summary

Flight 1: Departure Wed, Aug 18 Columbus to Chicago

Change flight

06:00
Non-stop | 1h19m
06:19

Columbus
Chicago

Operated by Republic Airways DBA United Express
Details

Flight 2: Departure Wed, Aug 18 Chicago to Copenhagen

Change flight

16:00
1 stop | 17h55m +1
16:55

Chicago
FRA
Copenhagen

Includes travel operated by Lufthansa, Scandinavian Airlines
Details

Time to confirm your redemption option

Unfortunately, there are not enough Aeroplan points in your account to apply to this booking.

117,814

POINTS ONLY

106,000

+ CA \$133.82

84,800

+ CA \$505.47

63,600

+ CA \$887.07

AEROPLAN

Columbus to Chicago

Departing Wed, Aug 18

06:00
Columbus CMH

UA 3441
Embraer E175
Operated by Republic Airways DBA United Express

Duration: 1h19m

Cabin: Economy Class (Y)

06:19
Chicago ORD

Chicago to Copenhagen

Departing Wed, Aug 18

16:00
Chicago ORD

LH 431
Boeing 747-8I
Operated by Lufthansa

Duration: 8h20m

Meal

Cabin: First Class (J)

07:20
Frankfurt FRA

+1 day
Arriving Thu, Aug 19

Layover: 8h10m

15:30
Frankfurt FRA

+1 day
Departing Thu, Aug 19

SK 676
Airbus 319
Operated by Scandinavian Airlines

Duration: 1h25m

Wi-Fi

Meal

Cabin: Business Class (I)

Mixed cabin: you will be seated in Business Class.

16:55
Copenhagen CPH

+1 day
Arriving Thu, Aug 19

5 WAYS TO SKIN THE LUFTHANSA FIRST CLASS DEAL

Although FCF research shows United offering MUCH LESS availability than Air Canada for Lufthansa First Class flights, United has many sales promotions for miles throughout the year if you don't have Amex or Chase points to transfer.

Option 1		Option 2 & 3		Option 4 & 5	
Buying Air Canada Miles When On Sale		Transferring Amex Points to Air Canada Miles or Buy Amex Points		Using Your United Miles or Buying Them	
Benefits: Much more award space + dirt cheap		Benefits: Much more award space + easy with Amex points		Benefit: Cheap and you might already have the miles. Downside: Much less availability	
Miles When On Sale	1.3¢	Amex Points Cost	2.5¢	Typical Sale Cost	1.8¢
Mileage Cost	117,814	Mileage Cost	117,814	Mileage Cost	121,000
Cash Cost When On Sale	\$1,531	Cash Cost	\$2,945	Cash Cost	\$2,178

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UNITED

United States | English

Saved trips

Contact us

From

Columbus, OH, US (CMH)

To

Copenhagen, DK (CPH)

Departure date

Aug 30, 2021

Return date

Add return date

Search by:

☐ Price
 ☒ Award travel

Update

Advanced search

Depart

Arrive

Stops

Duration

First Saver Award

↓

Mixed cabin

Mon, Aug 30

Tue, Aug 31

1:48 pm

2:15 pm

2 stops

18h 27m

▼ Details

► Seats

121k miles

+\$42.70

Select

1 ticket left at this price

Includes Travel Operated By Gojet Airlines Dbu United Express

Columbus, OH, US (CMH) to Chicago, IL, US (ORD)

1:48 pm - 2:10 pm (1h 22m)

UA 4471 | Canadair Regional Jet 550

Operated By Gojet Airlines Dbu United Express

Wi-Fi

Long Layover

Long layover

Over Night

Red-eye flight

1h 50m connection

Chicago, IL, US (ORD) to Frankfurt, DE (FRA)

4:00 pm - 7:20 am (8h 20m)

LH 431 | Boeing 747-8 Intercontinental

Operated By Lufthansa

Depart ORD: Mon, Aug 30

Arrive FRA: Tue, Aug 31

Long Layover

Long layover

Over Night

Red-eye flight

5h 35m connection

Frankfurt, DE (FRA) to Copenhagen, DK (CPH)

12:55 pm - 2:15 pm (1h 20m)

LH 828 | Airbus A320-200

Operated By Lufthansa

United Economy (X)

Meals are not offered for this flight

First (O)

Meal

Business (I)

Meal

RELATED READS:

If Germany is not your preferred destination, think [opportunistically](#) and reap the rewards.

There's also pond skipping gold available in our transatlantic masterclass: [The Art of Skipping Stones & What We Can All Learn from the Boise to Budapest Premium Traveler](#)

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Best FCF Fare & Miles Alerts Still Available

September 2021

We've put together a survey of the best airfares and unprecedented mileage availability (aka "Sweet Redeems") that we've published in the last month—on major airlines—that are still live today. So in case you missed them the first time, here they are in all their glory.

*****Don't see your origin and/or destination in an alert below? [This report was made for you.](#)**

FCF Special Fares

Hawaii & Mexico

[Hawaii: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$968 R/T – Major Carriers](#)

[Hawaii: New Business Class Fares from \\$957 R/T With Alaskan Airways](#)

[Cozumel: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$537 R/T](#)

Africa

[Egypt: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$2,064 R/T](#)

[Kenya: New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. from \\$2,302 R/T](#)

[Casablanca: New Premium Economy Fares from the U.S. from \\$1,004 R/T](#)

[Johannesburg: New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. from \\$2,627 R/T](#)

[Morocco: New Business Class Fares from Canada from \\$2,033 R/T](#)

Asia

[Maldives: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$2,120 R/T](#)

[Hong Kong: New Premium Economy Fares from the U.S. from \\$958 R/T](#)

Europe

[Lisbon: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$1,735 R/T](#)

[Scotland: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$2,057 R/T](#)

[First Class: Athens from the U.S. from \\$3,350 R/T](#)

[Venice: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$1,936 R/T](#)

[First Class: Vienna from the U.S. from \\$2,977 R/T](#)

[Madrid: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$1,859 R/T](#)

[First Class: Belgium from the U.S. from \\$2,968 R/T](#)

[Sweden: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$1,895 R/T](#)

[Barcelona: New Premium Economy Fares from New York and Boston from \\$776 R/T](#)

[First Class: Zurich from the U.S. from \\$2,969 R/T](#)

[Barcelona: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$1,854 R/T](#)

[Malaga: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$1,859 R/T](#)

[Barcelona: New First Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$3,153 R/T](#)

[First Class: Budapest from the U.S. from \\$2,968 R/T](#)

[Florence: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$1,872 R/T](#)

[Malta: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$2,049 R/T](#)

[Moscow: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$1,761 R/T](#)

[Seville: New Business Class Fares from Chicago, New York and Philadelphia from \\$1,999 R/T](#)

[Bologna: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$1,875 R/T](#)

[First Class Stockholm: New Fares from the U.S. from \\$2,981 R/T](#)

[London: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$1,934 R/T](#)

[Rome: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$1,873 R/T](#)

[First Class: Prague from the U.S. from \\$2,962 R/T](#)

[Amalfi Coast: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$1,962 R/T](#)

[Mallorca: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$1,957 R/T](#)

[Milan: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Milan from \\$1,861 R/T](#)

[Valencia: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$1,978 R/T](#)

[Italy / Spain: New Business Class Flash Fares from the U.S. from \\$1,865 R/T](#)

[First Class to Switzerland from the U.S. from \\$2,960 R/T on BA](#)

Middle East

[Jordan: New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. from \\$2,206 R/T](#)

[Dubai: New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. from \\$2,437 R/T](#)

[Abu Dhabi: New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. from \\$2,450 R/T](#)

South America

[Chile: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$1,348 R/T](#)

[Brazil: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$1,352 R/T](#)

[Rio: New Premium Economy Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$746 R/T](#)

[Peru: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$759 R/T](#)

[New Buenos Aires \\$1,660 R/Ts In Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S.](#)

[First Class: Sao Paulo from the U.S. from \\$2,540 R/T](#)

[Chile: New Premium Economy Fares from the U.S. from \\$750 R/T](#)

[Rio de Janeiro: New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. from *\\$1,391* R/T](#)

[Brazil: New Premium Economy Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Sao Paulo from \\$747 R/T](#)

FCF Sweet Redeems

Asia

[Handful of Cheap Amex *First Class* All Nippon Airways Seats from Chicago to Tokyo, 93,000 R/T](#)

[Handful of Cheap *First Class* All Nippon Airways from San Francisco to Tokyo, 85,000 R/T](#)

[Handful of Cheap *First Class* All Nippon Airways from New York to Tokyo, 93,000 R/T Next Month & August](#)

[First Class: Scattered All Nippon Single-Seat Discount Availability to Tokyo from Los Angeles, If you know Where to Look](#)

[Handful of Japan Airlines *First Class* Seats from Los Angeles to Tokyo, If You Know Where to Look](#)

Europe

[Very Rare: Treasure Map of 49,000 Amex Points Availability for Boston-Europe Business Class R/Ts](#)

[Europe: Business Class Flights for 61,000 Miles \(Or Amex / Chase Points\) R/T from Miami, Great Availability for Two Seats](#)

[Europe: Two Delta Routes Biz Class 77,000 Miles / Points R/T \(Four Seats\)](#)

[Three Delta Routes to Europe 77,000 Points Biz Class R/T... Think Getting 5- to 9-for-1s](#)

[Very Rare: Treasure Map of 49,000 Amex Point Availability for New York-Europe Business Class R/Ts](#)

[Handful of Dirt Cheap Europe Business Class Flights from Los Angeles 73,000 Amex Points R/T For Travel in 2022](#)

[Many United Discount Business Class Opportunities from Houston and Many Other U.S. Cities to Amsterdam](#)

[Many United Business Class Opportunities from Washington, DC and Many Other U.S. Cities to London](#)

[Many United Business Class Opportunities from Chicago and Many Other U.S. Cities to London](#)

[Unprecedented American Business Class Opportunities from Charlotte and Many Other U.S. Cities to Munich](#)

South America

[Unprecedented American *First Class* Opportunities from Miami and Many Other Cities to Brazil, for Travel in 2022](#)