



# Best FCF Fares & Miles/Points Alerts Still Available

May 2021

We've put together a survey of the best airfares and unprecedented mileage availability (aka "Sweet Redemptions") 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 Rare Fares

Domestic & Hawaii

[Transcon Business Class Fares from \\$606 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Honolulu from \\$878 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the West, Midwest, and Canada to Hawaii from \\$905 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Honolulu from \\$838 R/T With Delta](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Kona from \\$817 R/T with Alaska Airlines](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Honolulu from \\$777 R/T With Alaska Airlines](#)

## Caribbean

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to St. Lucia from \\$805 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to U.S. Virgin Islands from \\$361 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Barbados from \\$755 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to St. Maarten from \\$546 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Puerto Rico from \\$328 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. to St. Lucia from \\$775 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to U.S. Virgin Islands from \\$484 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Puerto Rico from \\$285 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Antigua from \\$648 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Saint Kitts and Nevis from \\$713 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Jamaica from \\$585 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to The Bahamas from \\$537 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Aruba from \\$629 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to U.S. Virgin Islands from \\$352 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. to Cayman Islands from \\$600 R/T](#)

## Europe

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Milan, Venice and Naples from \\$999 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. to London, Lisbon, and Madrid from \\$981 R/T On TAP](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Vienna from \\$1,862 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Amsterdam from \\$999 R/T On TAP](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Paris, Barcelona, and Rome from \\$993 R/T On TAP](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Amsterdam from \\$1,874 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Moscow from \\$1,920 R/T](#)

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

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Venice from \\$1,859 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Milan from \\$1,847 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Lisbon from \\$1,862 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Malta from \\$1,990 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Madrid from \\$1,844 R/T](#)

[First Class Fares from the U.S. to Prague from \\$3,281 R/T](#)

[\\*First Class\\* Fares from the U.S. to Lisbon from \\$3,055 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Barcelona from \\$1,839 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Portugal from \\$1,849 R/T](#)

[First Class Fares from the U.S. to Italy from \\$2,905 R/T](#)

### **South America**

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Rio de Janeiro from \\$1,396 R/T](#)

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

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Peru from \\$761 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Brazil from \\$1,356 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Chile from \\$1,518 R/T](#)

[Premium Economy Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Brazil from \\$706 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Peru from \\$761 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. to Argentina from \\$1,648 R/T](#)

[Premium Economy Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Chile from \\$560 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. to Rio de Janeiro from \\$1,140 R/T](#)

[First Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Brazil from \\$2,600 R/T](#)

[Premium Economy Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Rio de Janeiro from \\$653 R/T](#)

### **Africa**

[Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. to Morocco from \\$2,324 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. to Kenya from \\$2,673 R/T](#)

[Premium Economy Fares from the U.S. to Casablanca from \\$703 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. to Casablanca from \\$2,256 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. and to Kenya from \\$2,644 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to South Africa from \\$2,613 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Egypt from \\$1,658 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. to Morocco from \\$2,265 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to South Africa from \\$2,627 R/T](#)

### **Middle East**

[Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. to Jordan \(Petra\) from \\$2,090 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. to Dubai from \\$2,314 R/T](#)

[Unprecedented Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Israel from \\$1,954 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Israel from \\$1,993 R/T](#)

[Premium Economy Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Israel from \\$997 R/T](#)

[Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Istanbul from \\$2,227 R/T](#)

## **FCF Sweet Redeems**

### **Europe**

[Unprecedented American Airlines Business Class Opportunities from the West Coast to London](#)

[Unprecedented American Airlines Business Class Opportunities from Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and Many Other Cities to London](#)

[Unprecedented American Business Class Opportunities from New York and Many Other Cities to Milan, Madrid, and Paris](#)

[Unprecedented United Business Class Opportunities from Washington, DC and Many Other Cities to Munich and London](#)

[Unprecedented United Business Class Opportunities from Chicago and Many Other Cities to London, Brussels, and Frankfurt](#)

## **Asia**

[All Nippon Discount First Class Availability to Tokyo from Washington, DC](#)

[All Nippon Discount First Class Availability to Tokyo from Los Angeles](#)

[All Nippon Discount First Class Availability to Tokyo from Chicago](#)

[All Nippon Discount Business Class Availability to Tokyo from San Francisco](#)

[All Nippon Discount Business Class Availability to Tokyo from Chicago](#)

[All Nippon Discount Business Class Availability to Tokyo from Los Angeles](#)

[All Nippon Discount Business Class Availability to Tokyo from Houston to Tokyo](#)

[All Nippon Discount First Class Availability to Tokyo from Houston](#)

[All Nippon Discount Business Class Availability to Tokyo from Washington, DC](#)

[All Nippon Discount First Class Availability to Tokyo from San Francisco](#)



# FCF's Delta-Virgin Ethical Hack Is Back—Netting Two to Six Tickets for the Price of One

May 2021

**Our once wishful thinking prediction came true, wouldn't you know it?**

If you've been following me for very long, you know how much I love FCF's Delta-Virgin hack. It's where you can get Business Class flights to Europe for just 95,000 miles through Delta's partner Virgin Atlantic (an Amex points partner) **on Delta flights**, when Delta charges 206,000 to 630,000 miles for the same one.

That's up to 85% off.

Or two to six tickets for the price of one.

**And on top of that, there's better availability** at the lower price than with Delta. Crazy, right? Anything deal-worthy when it comes to Delta is good news, because it's so rare. Leave it to FCF to excavate one-of-a-kind treasures like this for you.

We get excited about this strategy soap opera every time there's a twist, turn, or new insight — as you can see by how much we've written about it: [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). Hear, hear!

## RETURN OF THE JEDI

**This quick good news** report is a 180-degree turn from the [bad news](#) we got back in January about Virgin Atlantic's new reward flight chart with skyrocketing pricing (which changed a week later). But availability on Virgin virtually dried up, effectively killing our favorite FCF Delta (ethical) hack.

At the time, we predicted availability would come back, which went against mainstream thought. (A big part of FCF's Upgrade Mindset is to keep an open, hopeful outlook for the future.)

**Happily, Virgin availability is indeed starting to return** and it's crazy good for travelers willing to be flexible. Stay tuned for more FCF alerts to come, this is the ultimate hack for saving you a stack. Here are the latest examples.



## DELTA'S FCF HACK TREASURE MAP – FIND YOUR STEAL IN NO TIME –

Route	Depart			Return			R/T Price Booking Through Amex partner Virgin Atlantic	Delta's Lowest R/T Price	Delta's Everyday Price
	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-Frankfurt	Aug. to Oct.	July, Nov.		June, Sept. to Nov.	Aug., Sept.	July	100,000	206,000	610,000
Atlanta-Barcelona	Aug.			Aug., Dec.		July	100,000	590,000	630,000
Atlanta-Madrid	July	Aug.		July	July, Aug.		100,000	206,000	610,000
Atlanta-Munich	Aug.		July	July, Aug.			100,000	240,000	620,000
Boston-Amsterdam		June	July		July	June	100,000	240,000	510,000
Boston-Rome	July, Aug.	June, July	July	June, July	June, July	Aug.	100,000	270,000	450,000
Detroit-Amsterdam	July, Nov., Dec.	Oct., Nov., Dec.		Oct., Dec.	Nov.	July, Aug., Nov.	100,000	540,000	570,000
Detroit-Paris	July, Aug., Sept., Oct. to Dec.		Oct.	June, July, Aug., Dec.			100,000	580,000	610,000
Minneapolis-Amsterdam	July to Sept., Nov., Dec.	Oct., Nov.		Oct. to Dec.	July, Aug.		100,000	540,000	570,000
Minneapolis-Paris	Aug., Sept., Dec.	June, July, Oct., Nov.		June, Oct., Nov.	July, Sept., Dec.	Aug.	100,000	580,000	610,000
New York-Amsterdam		June, Aug.	July			June to Aug.	100,000	240,000	270,000
New York-Barcelona	June to Aug., Dec.	July, Dec.		Sept.	June to Aug.	Dec.	100,000	210,000	640,000

Route	Depart			Return			R/T Price Booking Through Amex partner Virgin Atlantic	Delta's Lowest R/T Price	Delta's Everyday Price	
	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month				
New York- Brussels		Sept., Oct., Dec.	June to Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov.			Dec.	June to Nov.	100,000	570,000	640,000
New York- Dublin	Nov.	July, Aug., Nov.	June, Aug., Oct., Nov.	June, Oct., Dec.	July, Aug., Oct., Nov.	Nov.	100,000	470,000	500,000	
New York- Frankfurt	Dec.	Sept., Dec.	June to Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov.				June to Dec.	100,000	570,000	640,000
New York- Lisbon	June, July			June, Aug., Dec.	Dec.		100,000	310,000	570,000	
New York- London		June				June	95,000	240,000	470,000	
New York- Madrid	Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.	Aug.	July, Aug.	June, Nov.	July, Aug.	July, Dec.	100,000	260,000	260,000	
New York- Rome	July, Aug.	July, Aug.		July, Aug.			100,000	230,000	370,000	
New York- Paris		June	July, Aug.			June to Aug.	100,000	240,000	490,000	
New York- Zurich	June, July, Oct., Nov.	Aug., Oct., Nov.		July, Aug.	Oct.	June, Nov.	100,000	270,000	600,000	
Raleigh - Paris	July	July		July, Aug.			100,000	440,000	470,000	
Salt Lake City-Paris	July			July, Aug.			100,000	208,000	550,000	

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

See you up front.



# Mixed Cabin Part II: The One Step Above Cattle Class. When Elites Should Consider Going for Extra Legroom

May 2021

**Want to gain much more overall value? Consider leveraging your elite status or fees for extra legroom on your daytime flight and shift your budget to the night flight for a higher class of service.**

Normal economy class seating is pretty tight, so the four to six inches of “extra legroom” in the better economy class seats can make a world of a difference in your travel experience, particularly on a long flight.

So who ends up benefiting most from economy extra legroom seats, and when? We take a *rare visit to the back of the plane* to evaluate the situation.

This is a sister special report to FCF's February report, ["Horses for Courses \(and Cabins\),"](#) where we looked at flying from A to B in one Premium Class of service and returning in another. Why pay for a lie-flat seat when it's a day flight and you'll be tapping away at your laptop or watching a movie? You'll save money by sleeping in Business, and doing your daytime business in Premium Economy. It makes perfect sense for some, but since most people don't consider this option, we decided to bring it to your attention.

This month we look at doing the "cabin shuffle," meaning using the extra legroom seat for the day flight and Business Class or Premium Economy for the overnight flight. This is ideal for elite status members with American, Delta, and United, who get the extra legroom benefit for free.

How many of you are elite status members who've gotten stuck in the upgrade waitlist waiting room (again)? Many elites spend too much time there, wasting plenty of hard-earned time in the process. We have a better idea.

It's important to use your seats *smartly*. As an elite, you get extra legroom in economy for free – or **you can buy-up if you don't hold an elite card**. So there are times when you can really make use of this benefit to add a ton of value to your travel life.

It's also an effective ploy when Business Class or Premium Economy is sold out on a flight you must be on for whatever reason. Go for the extra legroom seat instead.

I like to think of it as threading the needle on value, and not overpaying where you don't need to.

Let's look at a concrete example.

## SAVE \$393 FOR A SEAT YOU MIGHT NOT EVEN SLEEP IN

Consider the Newark-London route on United, for example. And let's say you're flying in **Premium Economy outbound and return in an economy seat with extra legroom**. The time of the day is critical for making this decision. That Newark-London flight is overnight, so you should make use of the more comfortable Premium Economy if your budget is tight and you can't fly Business Class. The return flight leaves at 10:25 am so having a reclining seat isn't as important. In this case, you can save \$393 and get the extra legroom on a normal coach seat instead, while still earning your elite credit.

[United Gold, Platinum and 1K elites](#), and up to eight companions (gold one companion) have free access to Economy Plus at the time of booking when traveling on United. Star Alliance partner travel on Lufthansa, SWISS, and Singapore does earn United elite credit but offers no advantage over a regular paying passenger for Extra Legroom seats for United elites.

Or there's this example...

## A FAMILY OF FOUR WOULD SAVE \$2,684

Let's say you plan a trip for the whole family to fly from Miami to Madrid on Iberia in **Business Class** and **return in the economy Extra Legroom seat**. Again, it's an overnight flight out of Miami, and an afternoon flight coming home. You can make the most of those Business Class amenities on the overnight flight, while enjoying the extra legroom and stretching your legs in a more upright seat on the way home. That's how you net big savings versus opting for Business Class both ways.



## Review and pay

### DEPART

#### Miami, FL to Madrid, Spain

Tuesday, September 7, 2021 to Wednesday, September 8, 2021

Flight	Depart	Arrive	Travel time	Class	Seats
8638 American Airlines Operated by Iberia	10:55 PM MIA	1:55 PM MAD	9h 0m	Business	--

### RETURN

#### Madrid, Spain to Miami, FL

Tuesday, September 14, 2021

Flight	Depart	Arrive	Travel time	Class	Seats
8637 American Airlines Operated by Iberia	4:45 PM MAD	8:10 PM MIA	9h 25m	Economy	--

## AAdvantage earnings for this trip

Elite Qualifying Miles (EQMs)	Segments (EQSs)	Dollars (EQDs)	Award miles Total
13,272	2	1,212	8,484

## Cost summary

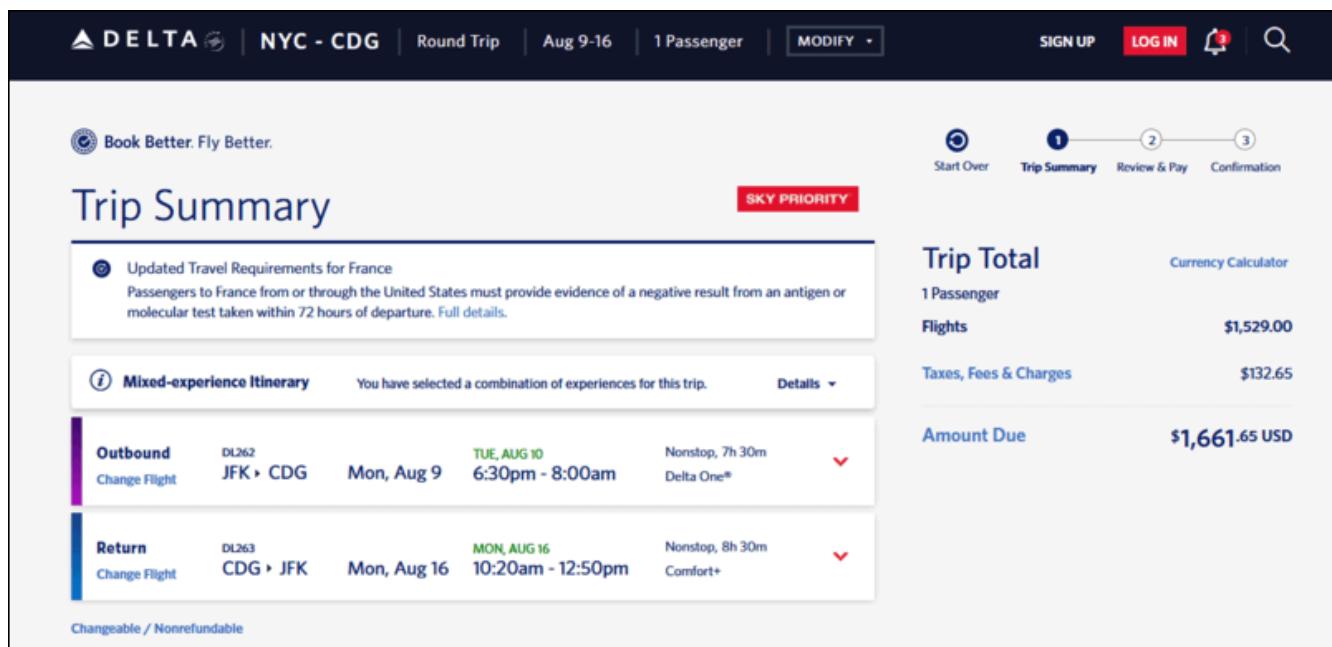
Your trip total <b>\$1,306.45</b>
Includes all taxes and carrier-imposed fees

<b>Passenger</b>	<a href="#">Bag and optional fees</a>
Trip MIA / MAD	<a href="#">Reservation and tickets FAQs</a>
Taxes	<a href="#">Price and Tax Information</a>
Carrier-imposed fees	<a href="#">Conditions of Carriage</a>
<hr/> Subtotal	\$1,306.45
 <b>AAdvantage® benefits</b>	
Priority	\$0.00
<hr/> <b>Total (all passengers)</b>	<b>\$1,306.45</b>

[AA elites](#) and their companions booking flights with Iberia via the American Airlines website get free access to extra legroom seats (AA gold members can for a small fee). All levels of American AAdvantage elites traveling on American, and top-tier AA elites when traveling on Finnair, have free access to Economy Comfort for up to eight companions traveling together. All levels of American AAdvantage elites and their companions traveling on British Airways have free access to extra legroom seats. Top-tier elites can book online during the booking process.

## DELTA EXAMPLE

You can fly from New York to Paris on Delta in Business Class and return in its Economy Comfort+ seat. Again, it's an overnight flight out of New York, and a mid-morning flight coming home. Make the most of **Business Class and get your beauty sleep on the overnight flight, while stretching your legs in a more upright seat in Economy+ on the way home.** Once again, you net big savings versus paying an extra \$2,350 in Business Class both ways.



The screenshot shows the Delta website's Trip Summary page. At the top, there are navigation links for 'SIGN UP', 'LOG IN', and a search bar. Below the header, there's a 'Book Better. Fly Better.' message and a progress bar with three steps: 'Start Over', 'Trip Summary' (which is the current step), 'Review & Pay', and 'Confirmation'. The main content area is titled 'Trip Summary' and includes a 'SKY PRIORITY' button. It displays travel requirements for France, a 'Mixed-experience Itinerary' (outbound in Business Class, return in Economy Comfort+), and flight details for both legs (outbound on DL262 from NYC to Paris on Aug 9, return on DL263 from Paris to NYC on Aug 16). The 'Trip Total' is listed as \$1,661.65 USD, including 1 passenger, flights (\$1,529.00), and taxes, fees & charges (\$132.65). The page also notes that the trip is changeable and non-refundable.

Delta top-tier elites and one companion have free access to Comfort+ at time of ticketing when traveling on Delta. [Delta elites](#) have access to Extra Legroom seats for up to eight companions traveling together on Air France at a discounted rate at the time of booking. Although Delta elites do earn elite credit on Air France, KLM, and Alitalia, KLM and Alitalia don't offer any advantage to Delta elites for Extra Legroom seats over regular paying passengers.

P.S. Don't worry, FCF's once-every-five-years report on anything economy class won't happen again for a while.

# Easy Come, Easy Go: Why Pressing Go on a Deal Is the Best Play Right Now

May 2021

**Example No. 4719 of why not to wait. If you're thinking of a future trip and see an award deal, book it now. You can always change your plans later, risk-FREE.**

We see it time and time again. Good award deals are here today, gone tomorrow. So if you see a great FCF-found opportunity, grab it, because from what we're seeing, the airlines will squeeze the juice out and leave you wilting.

Case in point: You might remember a transcon deal I recently told you about [here](#) and [here](#). It showed there were more than seven seats on 120 days over the next 11 months available for just 20,000 to 22,500

American AAdvantage miles.

*Goneski.*

Now American Airlines is offering (on some days, no less) the transcon route at 52,500 miles each way, almost the same as Delta's high 57,000 miles each way. The sad screen shots tell the tale...

## BEFORE AVAILABILITY

Calendar

Mon, Mar 1  
JFK to LAX  
20K

One way (per person) from  
20K miles  
+ \$5.60

Nonstop only      Business / First      **20K** Lowest price this month

March 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b> 20K	<b>2</b> 20K	<b>3</b> 20K	<b>4</b> 20K	<b>5</b> 20K	<b>6</b> 20K
<b>7</b> 20K	<b>8</b> 20K	<b>9</b> 20K	<b>10</b> 20K	<b>11</b> 20K	<b>12</b> 20K	<b>13</b> 20K
<b>14</b> 26K	<b>15</b> 20K	<b>16</b> 20K	<b>17</b> 20K	<b>18</b> 20K	<b>19</b> 20K	<b>20</b> 20K
<b>21</b> 26K	<b>22</b> 20K	<b>23</b> 20K	<b>24</b> 20K	<b>25</b> 36.5K	<b>26</b> 44K	<b>27</b> 44K
<b>28</b> 20K	<b>29</b> 20K	<b>30</b> 20K	<b>31</b> 20K			

<      >

## AFTER AVAILABILITY

Calendar

Set. May 1  
JFK to LAX  
52.5K

One way (per person) from  
52.5K miles  
+ \$5.60

Nonstop only

Business / First

52.5K Lowest price this month

May 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 52.5K
2 62.5K	3 62.5K	4 64.5K	5 64.5K	6 64.5K	7 52.5K	8 52.5K
9 62.5K	10 62.5K	11 64.5K	12 97K	13 64.5K	14 52.5K	15 52.5K
16 62.5K	17 62.5K	18 64.5K	19 64.5K	20 64.5K	21 52.5K	22 52.5K
23 62.5K	24 62.5K	25 64.5K	26 64.5K	27 64.5K	28 52.5K	29 52.5K
30 62.5K	31 62.5K					

Moral of the story: Book now or forever pay “the price.” You have been warned.

## WHERE THE GOING'S GOOD: BUSINESS CLASS AWARD AVAILABILITY AT TIME OF WRITING

That all said, there are some small pockets of availability at low rates. FCF has captured them for you, and for fun put them side-by-side how lucrative it used to be, for perspective.

## Comparing October 2020 to Today

Business Class	To / From	Month	Depart			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
American	New York - Los Angeles	October	July	June, Oct.	Jan. to May, Aug., Sept.	April to June, Sept., Oct.	Jan., March, April, June, Sept.	Feb., March, April, June, July, Aug.
		April	June., Oct., Jan., Feb.	Jan.		Jan., Feb.		
	New York - San Francisco	October	July, Oct.	March, June, July	April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept.	June, Oct.	March to May, Sept.	April, May, July, Aug., Sept.
		April	June, March	Jan., Feb.		Jan., March	Feb.	Feb.
United	Newark- Los Angeles	October	Feb.	Feb. to May		Feb.	Feb. to May	
		April						
	Newark - San Francisco	October		April, May			April, May	
		April						
	New York - Los Angeles	October		Feb. to May		March	Feb., March, April, May	
		April						
	New York - San Francisco	October	Aug.	Feb. to May		March, April	Feb., May	
		April						

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

## BONUS: 10 HOT FCF SWEET REDEEMS AVAILABLE (FOR THE MOMENT)

[Iberia Business Class Opportunities from New York \(via Madrid\) to Dubrovnik](#)

[Air France/KLM Business Class Opportunities from Chicago \(via Amsterdam or Paris\) to Athens – An Amex Partner Opportunity](#)

[Air France/KLM Business Class Opportunities from San Francisco \(via Amsterdam or Paris\) to Athens – An Amex Partner Opportunity](#)

[Cathay Pacific \\*First Class\\* Single-Seat Discount Opportunities to Asia from Boston and Many other Cities](#)

[Cathay Pacific Discount Business Class Availability to Hong Kong and Beyond from New York and Many Other Cities](#)

[Qsuite Opportunities from Washington, DC and Many Other U.S. Cities to Middle East & Beyond](#)

[All Nippon Discount First Class Availability to Tokyo from Washington, DC / Save Up to \\$18,925 / 89%](#)

[All Nippon Discount First Class Availability to Tokyo from Los Angeles / Save Up to \\$14,150 / 87%](#)



# All Nippon, All Good: How to Save \$20,621 / 91% in First Class to Asia

May 2021

**Miles: If you can't collect 'em, buy 'em — with a little-used strategy anyone can leverage. You can save up to \$8,464 / 84% in Business Class too.**

All Nippon's First Class suite has become much more accessible lately thanks to a stunning buy-miles deal through its Virgin Atlantic partnership — plus new rules that allow you to book one-way awards.

While the most recent window of opportunity has partly closed, rest assured it'll open again if you didn't leverage [FCF's Sweet Redemptions](#), letting in some refreshing low-priced breeze. So be ready to pounce. The strategy outlined here will put you ahead of the curve so you'll be ready when the opportunity strikes.

**\*\*\*If you're an Amex, Chase, or Citi points collector, you can take advantage of the special First Class opportunity now.**

## SKY-HIGH FARE EQUALS GREAT MILEAGE OPPORTUNITY

For the Washington, DC-Tokyo route, published First Class fares are normally \$17,400 to \$20,400 round-trip, making this a prime route for using miles — **whether you have any or not**. The mileage cost starts at 150,000 miles during low and shoulder season, and reaches up to 165,000 miles in high season through All Nippon.

**Also note that All Nippon has never offered one-way awards in the past, but now they're allowing partners to do so. At a very low price, in this case, it's Virgin.**

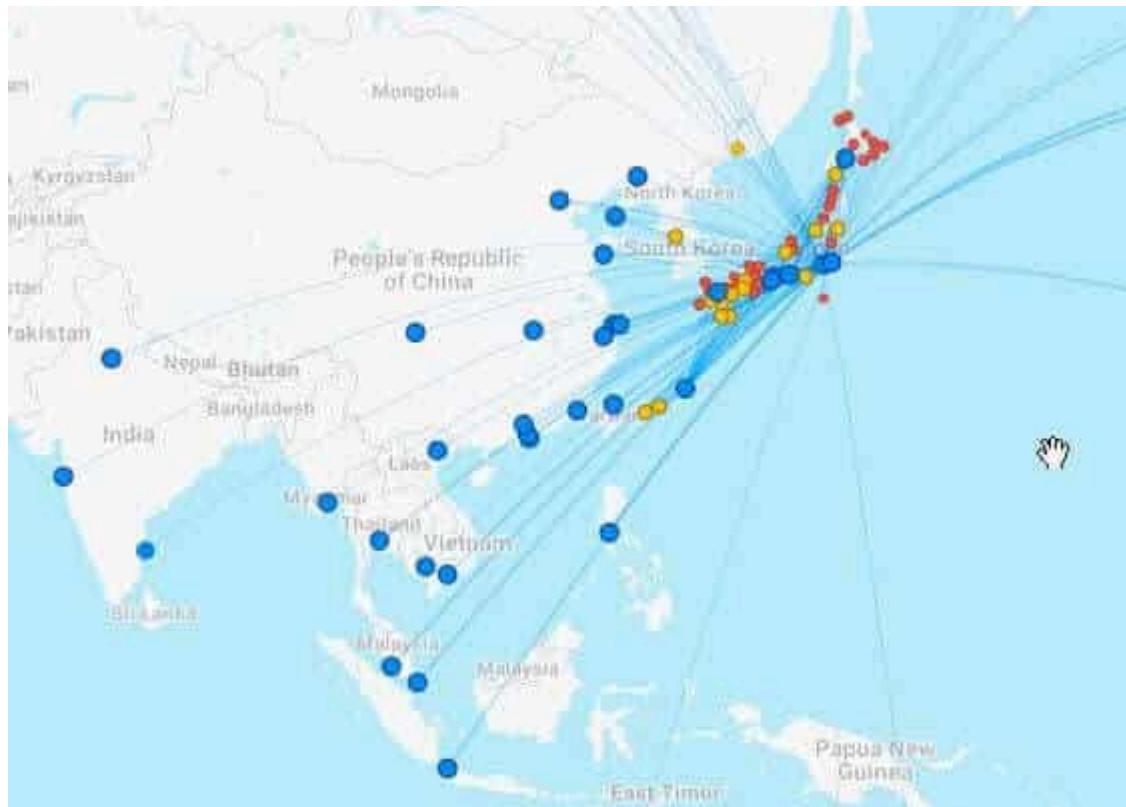
To/From Tokyo	ANA Miles Cost	Virgin Miles Cost	United Miles Cost	Air Canada Miles Cost
Chicago		60,000		
Houston	One-Ways Not Available		121,000	110,000
Los Angeles		55,000		
San Francisco				

## ALL NIPPON CONNECTIONS TO/FROM ASIA WITH THEIR FIRST CLASS SUITE

Flights using miles are available to/from Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, and San Francisco to/from Tokyo.

If flying beyond Tokyo, All Nippon's [destinations in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East](#) can be added for more miles.

All Nippon Airways [Route Map](#) on FlightConnections.com



To/From Tokyo	ANA Miles Cost	Virgin Miles Cost	United Miles Cost	Air Canada Miles Cost
Chicago		47,500		
Houston				
Los Angeles	Not Available		88,000	70,000
San Francisco		45,000		
Washington, DC		47,500		

## NO ALL NIPPON MILES? NO PROBLEM.

Up until April 30, there was a buy-miles bonus deal offered by Virgin Atlantic of up to 50%. That got you as many as 223,500 Virgin miles for as little as \$4,048 (including a \$25 fee). A 50% bonus yields a cost-per-mile of 1.8¢. An amazing value.

If you didn't keep this strategy in your front pocket for your next trip to Asia, you can **buy miles — anytime —** through Amex Membership Rewards for 2.5 cents each and transfer them to Virgin Atlantic. Check out [How to Buy American Express Membership Rewards Points](#), and [When to Buy Miles Instead of Purchasing a Normal Published Fare](#).

The Virgin buy-miles purchase limit is 100,000, so if you need more miles, follow our [guide to getting around the purchase limits here](#). Before you can buy miles with Virgin, you must have made at least one Flying Club transaction.

The good news is that if you have Amex, Chase, or Citi points, you can transfer them to Virgin Atlantic miles to get these deals as well. FYI, transfer time from [Amex to ANA](#) is often instantaneous.

## BARGAINS GALORE TO TOKYO FOR BUYING MILES, SALE OR NOT

To/From Tokyo	Buy Miles Partner	First Class Award Cost	Cost Per Mile When On Sale	Total Cost for First Class R/T	Regular Published Fare R/T	Difference	
Chicago	Virgin	120,000	1.8 Cents	\$2,160	\$21,311	\$19,151	90%
Houston		120,000		\$2,160	\$22,781	\$20,621	91%
Los Angeles		110,000		\$1,980	\$20,400	\$18,240	89%
San Francisco		110,000		\$1,980	\$22,500	\$20,520	91%

Tokyo To/From	Buy Points Partner	First Class Award Cost	Cost Per Point (Anytime)	Total Cost for First Class R/T	Regular Published Fare R/T	Difference	
Chicago	Amex	120,000	2.5 Cents	\$3,000	\$21,311	\$18,311	86%
Houston		120,000		\$3,000	\$22,781	\$19,781	87%
Los Angeles		110,000		\$2,750	\$20,400	\$17,400	85%
San Francisco		110,000		\$2,750	\$22,500	\$19,750	88%

Take a long look at San Francisco-Tokyo in the chart above. The First Class award cost is 110,000 miles. If you buy them when on sale with partner Virgin, the cost is \$1,980. **Compare that to the regular published fare: a staggering \$22,500. That's a 91% difference.**

**I'll take that any day. Or you can buy through Amex to get equally Mount Fuji-esque savings of between 85% and 88%.**

## ALL NIPPON'S FIRST CLASS SEAT OFFERED FROM CHICAGO, HOUSTON, LOS ANGELES, AND SAN FRANCISCO

**The First Square** features eight semi-enclosed suites (no privacy doors) on B777-300ERs, arranged in a 1x2x1 layout. Each has its own closet, a 77-inch-long lie-flat seat, and a 23-inch-wide LCD monitor. [Experience the suite details in all their glory](#) here. At the moment, the special availability of First Class seats at this low price is not available from New York.

First Class	Tokyo To/From	Depart			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
All Nippon	Chicago		Nov.	July to Oct., Dec. to March	Oct., Nov.	June	July to Sept., Dec. to March
	Houston	Oct.	Sept.	July, Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	July, Aug.
	Los Angeles	June	Sept., Nov., March	July, Aug., Dec. to Feb.	Sept., Nov., Jan., March	June, Aug., Feb.	July, Dec. to March
	San Francisco	July, Sept., Oct.	July, Aug., Dec.	Nov., Jan., Feb.	Aug., Sept., Feb., March	July	

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

## THE BUSINESS CLASS OPPORTUNITY

The First Class opportunity is a much better value, but might not be available for dates you will be happy with. In this case, know that Business Class flights are available to/from Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Washington, DC, to/from Tokyo with this approach.

Published Business Class Fares are normally between \$10,600 and \$11,600 to Tokyo from Washington, DC, round-trip, making this once again a prime opportunity for massive savings.

The cost starts at 75,000 during low season, 85,000 miles in shoulder season, and 90,000 miles in high season with All Nippon and 90,000 to 95,000 using Virgin Atlantic miles.

Business Class	Tokyo To/From	Depart			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
All Nippon	Chicago	Aug., Oct. to Dec., March	July, Sept., Jan.	Aug., Jan., Feb., March	Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.	July, Sept., Oct., Dec., Jan., March	Jan., Feb., March
	Houston	Aug., Sept., Nov., Dec.	July, Oct., Nov., Jan.	Aug., Jan., Feb., March	July, Aug., Sept., Dec., Jan.	Feb.	Aug. to Nov., Jan., Feb., March
	Los Angeles	Nov., Dec., Jan., Feb.		Jan. to March	June	Dec., Jan. to March	Jan. to March

Business Class	Tokyo To/From	Depart			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
	San Francisco	July, March	Feb.	Aug., Jan., Feb.	July, Nov. to Jan.	Feb., March	Feb., March
	Washington, DC	July, Aug., Sept., Feb.		Aug., Jan.	July, Feb., March	Oct., Nov., Jan. to March	Aug., Sept., Dec.

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

## NEED-TO-KNOWS WHEN USING VIRGIN ATLANTIC MILES

For more information about credit card partnerships, transfer bonuses available throughout the year, and mileage award taxes, go [here](#).

For more information about Virgin Atlantic partners, [go here](#).

Note that All Nippon flights can't be booked online with Virgin, so you'll need to call 1-800-862-8621. Use FCF's treasure maps above to zero-in on the available clusters before calling.

**Further reading about booking in advance, and All Nippon:**

[Pro Tips and Tricks on Booking Mileage Tickets Way in Advance and How to Strike While the Iron](#)

[The Secret First Class Workaround to United's Poor Award Availability to Asia](#)



# Fly This European Airline for 68,000 R/T in Business. No Jeopardy About It

May 2021

**Amex, Chase, and Citi points travelers can score big this fall, winter, and early next year.**

Unlike the [summer opportunity trend](#) we just uncovered, there's one airline that's playing a different game. They're offering up the cheapest Business Class ticket you'll find to Europe using miles/points and the good news is **they partner with Amex, Chase, and Citi points programs**. Yes, "Jeopardy" players, we're talking about Spain's flag carrier, Iberia Airlines.

## IT'S GAME OVER WHEN COMPARED WITH THE BIG 3

Context is King and highlights the savings: American Airlines typically charges 115,000 to 220,000 miles to Europe round-trip, Delta charges 208,000 to 630,000, and United 120,000 to 310,000. So, if you're not immediately hitting the buzzer when you see round-trip flights in Business Class for 68,000, you've clearly got way too many points to play with.

For further context: American and United airlines charge 60,000 miles for coach, and Delta often charges 112,000 for back of the bus.

**So you can think of this as an almost free upgrade from coach to Business.**

## LET'S PLAY

Given this lucrative offer of Iberian generosity, many of you will want to jump on these opportunities and strike while the iron's hot. Especially since there's no risk of booking because of [Iberia's redeposit policy](#).

Iberia's U.S. gateways with free award seats available to Madrid are Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, and New York.

### FCF'S IBERIA TREASURE MAP – FIND YOUR STEAL IN NO TIME –

Airline	Route	Depart			Return			R/T Typical Price
		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	Oct. to Dec., March	Jan., Feb., March		Nov., Dec., Feb.	Jan. to March		68,000
	Chicago - Madrid	March	Nov., Dec.	Jan. to March	Jan. to March	Nov., Dec.	Nov., Jan. to March	85,000
	New York - Madrid	Oct.	June, Nov.	Jan. to March	June, Nov., Dec.	June, Nov.	Jan. to March	68,000
	Los Angeles - Madrid	Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.	Oct., Nov., Feb., March	Jan.	Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.	Jan., Feb., March	Jan.	102,000
	Miami - Madrid	Nov., Dec., March		Jan. to March	June, Nov., Dec.		Jan. to March	85,000

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

Get while the getting is good and pay up to 89% less, or get a free upgrade. Game over.



# Hawaiian Hustle: Costa Rica Makes a Play for Value-Seeking Tropical Trippers

May 2021

## **Costa Rica First Class for the cost of Hawaii in economy?**

It's ironic that Costa Rica literally means "rich coast" when the cost of getting there means you can be anything but rich. And that's a good place to start when thinking about a tropical vacation, as so many families invariably do.

While Hawaii is a super common choice, of course, both Hawaii and Costa Rica have gorgeous beaches, warm sunny weather, palm trees, and cocktails in coconuts.

But when considering your next tropical escape, there are some key differences to consider.

## COSTA RICA VS. HAWAII

First, let's look at distances. From many U.S. cities, Costa Rica is less than 6 hours away, and as little as 4 hours away for some. That's similar to Los Angeles-Maui. But of course, New York-Maui is a different kettle of (slow-cooked) fish (in banana peels).



## GETTING THERE

### Flight Time to Costa Rica

New York to San José: 2,215 miles, 5:15 hours  
Los Angeles to San José: 2,725 miles, 5:55 hours  
Dallas to San José: 1,772 miles, 4:10 hours

### Flight Time to Hawaii

New York to Maui: 5,102 miles, 10:55 hours  
Los Angeles to Maui: 2,485 miles, 5:50 hours  
Dallas to Maui: 3,711 miles, 8:30 hours

## AIRFARES TO COSTA RICA VS. HAWAII

Here's a whopping difference: Business Class to Costa Rica can at times be had for the price of a coach fare to Hawaii. For example, New York-Maui with American, Delta, or United in coach costs from ~\$500 to \$1,200. Fares from New York to San José or Liberia, Costa Rica, in Business Class with American, Delta, or United can frequently cost as little as \$724.

If you believe, as I do, that with a seat in a comfy premium cabin your vacation begins when you get on the plane, not off it, then this is just the ticket.

Here are comparative fares from a range of U.S. cities.

Costa Rica	Business Class		Economy
San Jose	Liberia	Maui	
New York	\$762	\$724	\$446-\$991
Los Angeles	\$762	\$676	\$346-\$508
Atlanta	\$748	\$737	\$576-\$874
Miami	\$677	\$829	\$552-\$814
Dallas	\$844	\$849	\$544-\$758



Arenal Volcano, Costa Rica

## **SAMPLE HOTEL COST COMPARISON COSTA RICA VS. HAWAII**

Costa Rica hits the mark with lower-price hotels too. For example, you can stay at a four-star hotel such as the [JW Marriott Guanacaste Resort & Spa](#) and pay hundreds less per night than you would for a hotel of similar quality in Hawaii.

The JW Marriott Guanacaste starts at \$250 per night for a standard room, while the Wailea Beach Resort Marriott, Maui starts at \$614+ per night.

For a one-bedroom garden suite at the JW Marriott Guanacaste, you pay as low as \$539 per night, while the Wailea Beach Resort Marriott, Maui starts at \$1,700+ per night — that's three tropical romantic nights in

Costa Rica for the price of one in Hawaii.

Once again, Costa Rica takes the cake.

## **FUN IN COSTA RICA VS. HAWAII**

Don't get me wrong, I love Hawaii, and I'll certainly be back there. We put this together to show that there's more than just the default option. There are great alternatives waiting south of the border.

Both Hawaii and Costa Rica have their share of spectacular beaches, volcanoes, water sports, and rainforests. That said, the cost to access some of these activities is much cheaper in Costa Rica. What's more the Central American country is known for its magical fog-shrouded cloud forest and thrilling zip-lining opportunities, where you skim across the jungle canopy, sometimes above crashing waterfalls. It's a pretty special place.

When you're itching for a quick tropical getaway, the winner just might be Costa Rica.



# Flexibility and Refundability. The Buzzwords for Post- Lockdown Travel

May 2021

**Volatile fare pricing, which has been around for a long time, is now turning up in the form of refundable fares.**

## FREE-RANGE FLEX FARES

The lockdown brought a host of new airline incentives with it. The airlines started offering free cancellations and changes like never before. While that is great — and understandable — there's often a catch when airlines are being generous or testing out new offerings. So, we thought we'd dive deeper into the postmodern world of flexible fares, and outline how to navigate them after one of our eagle-eyed senior analysts unexpectedly spotted something new.

Let's take a step back for a moment. Free cancellations in the form of a voucher or a trip credit are usually valid for 12 to 36 months (more information [here](#)). Although you have that year+ up your sleeve, "voucher" or "trip credit" means you don't get any cash back in your hands, pockets, or otherwise.

As we were working on this special report, we discovered several things:

- New flexibility policies are popping up on airline websites like little buds in spring.
- Opportunities vary for the same flight from one airline to the next.
- **Everything is changing on a day-to-day basis. Blink and you could miss a golden opportunity.**
- Gold medal for being first goes to American. Delta and United have quickly followed suit.

Given these trends, it's important to note that much of this may have changed by the time you search for yourself – things are that volatile right now. So, **use this report to be aware of the variables** you should look out for if you care about flexibility and refundability. That way, you can compare website offers for the same routes on different sites.



## A TALE OF TWO CLICKS

On some airline websites, you can see what the refundable fare is, take control of your change and cancellation destiny, and net some huge savings over traditional, exorbitantly-priced refundable fares. All in just a click or two.

Note that new “flexible fares” are making the cancel option a lot friendlier, easier, and certainly a lot cheaper than normal refundable fares.

Most airlines, such as American, Delta, and many others, allow you to choose while selecting your flights. At that point, you select “Lowest Fare” or “Flexible.”

On the other hand, British Airways and United, for example, require you to choose the option to book a refundable fare when entering your flight data, **so it can easily be overlooked**, if not expensive.

## **WHY PAY EXTRA FOR A REFUNDABLE FARE?**

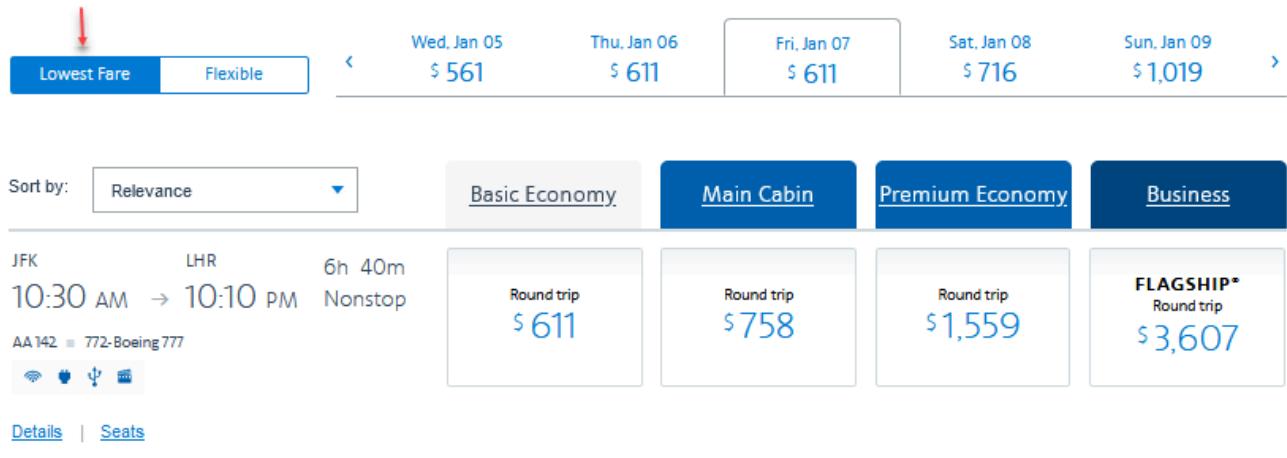
- If you don’t fly too often. It’s good insurance if you might not be able to use a voucher within the next 12 to 36 months.
- There’s no buyer’s remorse. It makes changing or canceling your travel plans much more palatable.
- If you’re a traveler with an unpredictable schedule.
- If you’re traveling for business and the client is covering the cost, or not.
- When you’re simply unsure. You can potentially score a great sale now for an extra \$400 to save \$1,000 in the future

## **FLEX FARES IN ACTION: AMERICAN’S FLEXIBLE FARES TURN UP THE VOLATILITY ALTIMETER**

The screenshot below shows American Airlines’ New York-London route, which offers flexible fares right now. It shows how you can lock in a refundable fare for just \$400 more than a non-refundable fare. That’s \$400 extra for a whole lot more peace-of-mind for many in 2021. For context, refundable fares have historically run 2X to 4X more.

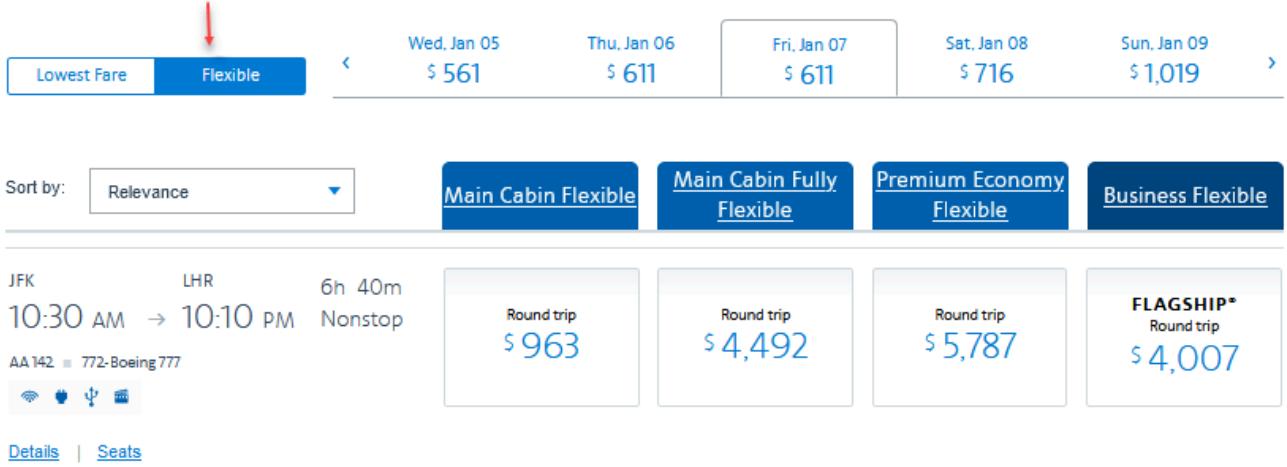
## Depart New York, NY to London, United Kingdom

Friday, January 7, 2022



## Depart New York, NY to London, United Kingdom

Friday, January 7, 2022



American's flexible fare for their partner Finnair offers a flexible fare difference of just \$200 on their New York-Helsinki route.

## A TALE OF TWO SITES

Compare booking with American and British Airways for the same New York-London Business Class flight. On American, it costs \$3,080 non-refundable, while the refundable option is \$3,480.

## Your trip summary

Flagship Business

Round trip (Non-refundable)

**\$3,080** per person

Total \$3,079.25 (all passengers)

Price and tax information 

Room to work or relax

- Lie-flat seat
- 2 free checked bags\*
- Priority security at participating airports
- Priority boarding
- Same-day flight change & standby when available on American flights

\*If you're an elite status member, your bag allowance applies if it's higher.

Includes taxes and carrier imposed fees.

Bag and optional fees 

Depart New York, NY to London, United Kingdom

Monday, August 30, 2021

10:30 AM → 10:10 PM 6h 40m Nonstop Flagship Business

AA142 ■ 772-Boeing 777



[Details](#) | [Change](#)

Return London, United Kingdom to New York, NY

Wednesday, September 15, 2021

9:45 AM → 1:00 PM 8h 15m Nonstop Flagship Business

AA101 ■ 77W-Boeing 777



[Details](#) | [Change](#)

## Your trip summary

Flagship Business Flexible

Round trip (Flexible)

**\$3,480** per person

Total \$3,479.25 (all passengers)

Price and tax information 

Room to work or relax

- Changes or refunds allowed
- Lie-flat seat
- 2 free checked bags\*
- Priority security at participating airports
- Priority boarding

\*If you're an elite status member, your bag allowance applies if it's higher.

Includes taxes and carrier imposed fees.

Bag and optional fees 

Depart New York, NY to London, United Kingdom

Monday, August 30, 2021

10:30 AM → 10:10 PM 6h 40m Nonstop Flagship Business

AA142 ■ 772-Boeing 777



[Details](#) | [Change](#)

Return London, United Kingdom to New York, NY

Wednesday, September 15, 2021

9:45 AM → 1:00 PM 8h 15m Nonstop Flagship Business

AA101 ■ 77W-Boeing 777



[Details](#) | [Change](#)

But on BritishAirways.com, it costs \$3,079 for the non-refundable option, while the refundable option on American is \$3,480. Compare that to British Airways' refundable price: a whopping \$15,929.

## A TALE OF ONE BENJAMIN

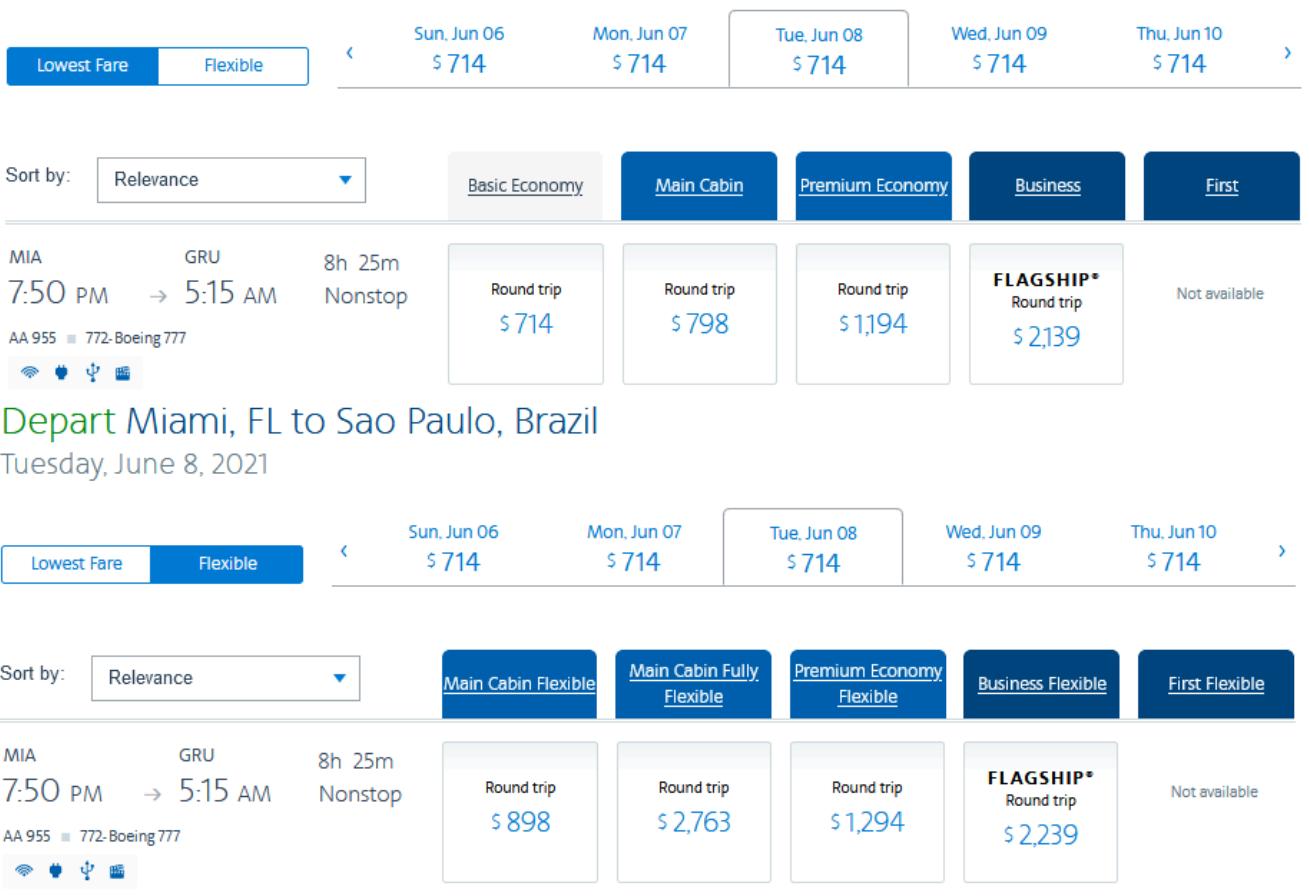
Some routes offer a low flexible fare option. American's Miami-São Paulo lowest Business Class fare is \$2,139 while its flexible fare is only **\$100** more at \$2,239 – now that's a wise deal.



And keep in mind, that's only one set of dates. Flex fares are clearly still in the experimental phase. We don't know exactly where and when they work. That'd take about 7,000,000,000 searches, which we don't have time for. Will they end when the lockdown does? Probably.

## Depart Miami, FL to Sao Paulo, Brazil

Tuesday, June 8, 2021



## THE NEWS ISN'T ALL GOOD

Keep in mind that some routes offer low flexible fares and some do not. The lowest American Airlines Transcon fares are \$1,297 while the lowest flexible fare is a whopping \$6,889.

The summary below shows a snapshot of examples of fare differences for some destinations. Obviously, there will be wild variability across more routes, dates, and airlines. It's as moveable as an artichoke ravioli on AA142 to Heathrow.

## PUTTING THE FUN BACK INTO REFUNDABLE. MORE ON WHAT WE'RE SEEING

And subject to change by the time you read this.

### Europe

### Oneworld

- American offers low flexible fares for its own flights and most partners, ranging from an additional \$200 to \$400. British Airways offers low flex fares on partner Finnair for an additional \$450.
- British Airways and Iberia both offer flexible fares at a very high price for their own flights as well as their partner American.

- Finnair offers low flexible fares on American, British Airways (\$75 extra fee), and Iberia for an incremental \$400.

### **SkyTeam**

- Delta offers low flexible fares on many of their own flights and partner Air France, KLM, and Virgin flights.
- Air France, KLM, Alitalia, and Virgin do not offer low flexible fares on their own flights or partners.

### **Star**

- United offers low flexible fares for partners Air Canada, Lufthansa, and SWISS starting from \$400 extra.
- LOT offers semi-flex and full flex; better to buy semi flex as the \$900 fee is \$100 less than full flex.
- Air Canada offers lowest fares for a fee of approximately \$500; it does not offer low flexible fares on partner flights online.
- TAP offers low flexible fares for their own flights for about \$180 extra, but not for partners.

### **Domestic**

#### **Short/Medium Haul:**

- American does not offer low flexible fares on routes such as Philadelphia to Miami or New York to Dallas.
- Delta offers low flexible fares on routes such as Seattle to Orlando for an extra \$200. Delta does not offer low flexible fares on routes such as Seattle to Atlanta.
- United offers flexible fares on routes like Houston to San Francisco for an incremental \$400.

#### **Transcon:**

- Low flexible fares were not found on American, Delta, or United.

#### **Hawaii:**

- No carriers were found to offer low flexible fares.

#### **Caribbean:**

- American offers low flexible fares to some destinations such as Miami to San Juan and St. Thomas for an extra \$50.
- Delta offers low flexible fares to some destinations such as New York to San Juan for \$200 extra.
- United has flexible fares on routes such as Houston to St. Thomas for an extra \$425.

#### **South America:**

- American offers low flexible fares for as low as \$100 extra on some routes.

- Delta and United do not.

### **South Pacific:**

- American's flexible fares start at \$725 extra for American and Qantas flights.
- Air Canada offers refunds on the lowest flexible fare for an extra \$400 for their own flights but not for partner flights.
- No low flexible fares were found on Delta, Qantas, or United, for their own flights or partner flights. Beware of Qantas flexible fares, which offer credit only in the form of a voucher.

### **Middle East:**

- Emirates has four fare types. The difference between the lowest non-refundable and the lowest refundable is \$268 for New York-Dubai in Business Class plus a \$400 fee. Qatar offers a refund on the lowest fares for \$590 New York-Doha.

### **Asia:**

- American fares are so high that both the lowest and the flexible fares are the same and are all refundable for American, Japan, and Cathay Pacific flights.
- Cathay Pacific offers cancellation for \$500 on the lowest fares (which are high). Singapore Airlines offers a mid-level flexible fare for about \$1,600 plus a \$200 fee.



# How to Exploit Lockdown Route Pricing for European “Open” Destinations—to Save Up to 83%

May 2021

**Make moussaka out of a molehill by leveraging lockdown rates to get the most out of availability to Europe. It's what FCF is calling The Lockdown Open Loopthrough (LOL).**

On April 26 the European Union announced that it would be allowing travelers from the United States who have been vaccinated to enter this summer. However, it wasn't specific about dates. Is it June 1? August 31? According to the Farmers' Almanac? Who knows?

Sometimes these announcements are to build anticipation; other times, they serve less-obvious motives, which could include:

- To entice more Americans to get fully vaccinated so they can visit – “only” 28% have been and interest is still far below expectations.
- With Croatia, Greece, and other EU countries opening up, to encourage travelers not to overlook the other countries for too long.
- To have its lockdown cake and its tourism cash too.

## **SHORT-TERM BLEAKNESS**

When travel dropped to 5% of its usual levels back in early spring of 2020, there were [lockdown deals](#) to be had across the board. It made perfect sense: 95% of travelers were either afraid to fly or their destination was on lockout and the airlines were desperate for business.

But a year later, Western European countries still aren’t openly welcoming Americans, and it seems like that will be the case for a while longer as they hash out the details of their “summer” opening for vaccinated travelers. France’s President Macron recently said the country planned to start easing lockdowns in May, but that sounds tentative to say the least and less likely by the day.

## **SO, WHAT ARE THE AIRLINES DOING?**

In many instances, we’re seeing airlines “dump” seats on these relatively empty flights to places that don’t want us. They do it by deeply discounting mileage award tickets for those routes. Eye roll. They never offer award seats when and where you actually want them, right?

## **(DO YOU REMEMBER) THAT SURGE IN SEPTEMBER?**

You can get a good sense of which way the wind is blowing for airlines by when they offer good mileage-seat availability. Take a look at this picture of Business Class American’s Dallas-Frankfurt non-stop that FCF analysts recently spotted:

Days Available	> 13+	9 TO 12	4 TO 8
2021			
JUN	4 Seats		
JUL	4 Seats		
AUG	4 Seats		
SEP			2 Seats
OCT			2 Seats
NOV			
DEC			1 Seat
 4 Seats  2 Seats  1 Seat			

**Some say a picture is worth 1,000 words. I say a picture will save you 122,000 miles or points on premium flights.**

As you can see, American Airlines doesn't plan on selling many Business Class seats to Frankfurt until September. Business travelers aren't flying, and leisure travelers usually book around 90 days out.

With that in mind, you could wait to plan a summer trip to see what the EU *might* do, or you could book Croatia and Greece now, like many are doing. If you're set on visiting Europe this summer, we have a special treat for you...

**"Round, round, get around, I get around"** sang the Beach Boys

Since Western Europe is largely closed to Americans (for now), you need a way to get around the lockdowns. As we say here at FCF, if you can't join them, beat them.

What do I mean by "getting around the lockdowns"? No, it's not pleading with their governments to open things up and return to normal. It's **using the current award travel availability on nonstop flights to lockdown countries from the U.S., only to make a connection onward, particularly to sunny open destinations Greece and Croatia.**

Selah.

## SKIP TO THE GOOD BIT: LOCKDOWN OPEN LOOPTHROUGH (LOL)

Remember skipping stones as a kid? That's the kind of maneuver we're seeing here. The first skip is always the biggest, i.e., the one that gets you across the pond. Then the skips are smaller and smaller from there.

So, in this case, **skip right on through the lockdown countries and go straight for the gold medal** (with miles/points availability at the lowest pricing; more on that in a moment) Dubrovnik or Athens (or Split or Zagreb).



### WHAT ABOUT “TRANSITING THROUGH” A LOCKDOWN COUNTRY’S AIRPORT?

In most cases, all you need is a negative Covid test taken within the last 72 hours. More on those rules you will want to know before booking flights:

The [European Union’s Re-open EU website](#) is also a rich source of transit rule information. Sample [details for transiting through Germany](#).

### HOW TO SAVE UP TO 524,000 MILES TO CURRENTLY OPEN COUNTRIES

I love that kind of headline. Greece — think beautiful sun-drenched isles, ancient Athens, and delicious souvlaki — [is opening as of May 14](#) to those who are vaccinated, have antibodies, or test negative for Covid. Croatia — think the Dalmatian Coast, Dubrovnik and world-class sailing — was open as of [January 26](#).

### ACROPOLIS NOW

For Business Class to Europe, American Airlines typically charges a whopping 220,000 miles; Delta, 270,000 to 630,000; and United 310,000. But now, **if you book flights via lockdown cities**, connecting onward to Croatia and Greece, you can pay as little as:

- 98,000-115,000 (off-peak) to 133,000-158,000 (off-peak) and just ~\$230 to \$400 in taxes round-trip booking through Iberia (a savings of 62,000 to 122,000),

- 106,000 miles and about \$550 in taxes round-trip on Air France and KLM--an Amex, Chase and Citi transfer partner (a savings of 100,000 to 524,000 / up to 83% off), and
- 132,00 to 154,000 and about \$125 in taxes round-trip booking through United (a savings of 156,000 to 178,000) traveling with the airline and its partners Brussels, LOT, Lufthansa, SAS, SWISS, TAP and Turkish.

Those are some *sweetly discounted* lockdown prices.

## OPPORTUNITIES GALORE VIA FCF'S OPPORTUNITY TREASURE MAP

Lots of U.S. cities can dial into this deal with airlines from the three major alliances. And as the following good-news FCF Treasure Map shows, availability is spectacular right now on a number of routes connecting via lockdown countries.

Mileage Program	Route	Depart			Return			R/T Price for These Months
		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 Avios	Boston-Dubrovnik		July	Aug.			July, Aug.	98,000-133,000
	Chicago-Dubrovnik	June		July, Aug.	June		July, Aug.	115,000-158,000
	Miami-Dubrovnik	July	July	Aug.	July, Aug.	Aug.	Aug.	115,000-158,000
	New York-Dubrovnik	June	June	July, Aug.	June		July, Aug.	98,000-133,000
	Boston-Split	July, Aug.			July	Aug.		98,000-133,000
	Miami-Split		Aug.	Aug.			Aug.	115,000-158,000
	New York-Split	June, July		Aug.	July	July	Aug.	98,000-133,000

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

Mileage Program	Route	Depart			Return			R/T Price for These Months
		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 France/KLM Flying Blue	Atlanta-Athens		July	June, July		July	June, July	106,000
	Boston-Athens		June to Aug.	July, Aug.	Aug.	Aug.	June, July	
	Chicago-Athens			June to Aug.			June to Aug.	
	Las Vegas-Athens	July, Aug.			July, Aug.	July		
	New York-Athens			June to Aug.	Aug.		June, July, Aug.	
	Miami-Athens	Aug.	July, Aug.	July			July	
	San Francisco-Athens	June, Aug.	June	July	Aug.		June, July	
	Washington, DC-Athens	June	June	July, Aug.		Aug.	June, July, Aug.	
	Boston-Dubrovnik	Aug.	Aug.	July	Aug.		July, Aug.	
	Chicago-Dubrovnik	June		July, Aug.	June		July, Aug.	
	New York-Dubrovnik	June		July, Aug.			June, July, Aug.	
	Miami-Dubrovnik	Aug.	July, Aug.	July, Aug.	Aug.		July	
	San Francisco-Dubrovnik			July	July			
	Washington, DC-Dubrovnik	June		July, Aug.		June	July, Aug.	
	Atlanta-Split	June, July, Aug.		July	July, Aug.	June	June	
	Boston-Split	July	Aug.	July, Aug.	July, Aug.	Aug.	June, July	
	Chicago-Split			June to Aug.	June		July, Aug.	
	Las Vegas-Split	July, Aug.	Aug.		June, July			

Mileage Program	Route	Depart			Return			R/T Price for These Months
		4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month	
	New York-Split			June to Aug.	Aug.			June, July, Aug.
	Miami-Split	Aug.	July, Aug.	July	July, Aug.	June	July	
	San Francisco-Split	Aug.	Aug.	July	July, Aug.	July	June	
	Washington, DC-Split	June, July, Aug.	June	July, Aug.	Aug.	June, July, Aug.	July	
	Atlanta-Zagreb		June, July	June, July			July	July
	Boston-Zagreb		June, Aug.	July, Aug.	Aug.	June, July	June to Aug.	
	Chicago-Zagreb			June to Aug.				June to Aug.
	Los Angeles-Zagreb	June			July		June	
	New York-Zagreb	Aug.	Aug.	June, July				June to Aug.
	Miami-Zagreb	July, Aug.				June	July, Aug.	
	San Francisco-Zagreb	June to Aug.	June, July, Aug.		Aug.			June, July
	Washington, DC-Zagreb	June	July	July, Aug.		Aug.	June, July, Aug.	

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

Mileage Program	Route	Depart			Return			R/T Price for These Months
		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	
United Mileage Plus	Chicago-Athens	June	July	July, Aug.			June to Aug.	132,000-154,000

Mileage Program	Route	Depart			Return			R/T Price for These Months
		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	
	Denver-Athens	June, Aug.	June, Aug.	July	Aug.	Aug.	June, July	
	New York-Athens			June to Aug.			June to Aug.	
	Washington, DC-Athens	June	July	Aug.			June to Aug.	
	Chicago-Dubrovnik	June	July	July, Aug.	July, Aug.		June, July, Aug.	
	Denver-Dubrovnik	Aug.	June	July	Aug.		June, July, Aug.	
	New York-Dubrovnik			June to Aug.			June to Aug.	
	Washington, DC-Dubrovnik	June, July	July	Aug.	Aug.	June	June, July	
	Chicago-Split		June	June, July, Aug.	July, Aug.		June	
	Denver-Split	June, Aug.		July	Aug.	Aug.	June, July	
	New York-Split			June to Aug.			June to Aug.	
	Washington, DC-Split	June, July	July, Aug.	Aug.	June, July, Aug.	June		
	Chicago-Zagreb	Aug.	June, July	June to Aug.			June, July, Aug.	
	Denver-Zagreb	June, Aug.	July, Aug.	July		Aug.	June, July, Aug.	
	New York-Zagreb		July, Aug.	June, July, Aug.			June to Aug.	
	Washington, DC-Zagreb	June	June, July, Aug.				June to Aug.	

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

## ATHENS BONUS

You can fly nonstop to Athens from New York/Newark with Emirates in Business and First Class. Although we didn't find any summer award space in First Class, we did find some gems early next year. First Class on Emirates to Athens? Who could refuse that? Or, fly Emirates nonstop Newark-Athens in Business Class all year long + 2022.

Depart			Return			R/T Price for These Months
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	
Dec., March		Jan., Feb., March		Jan., March	Jan., Feb., March	135,000

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



Depart			Return			R/T Price for These Months
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	
June	July, Dec.	Aug. to Nov., Jan. to March	July, Sept.	June, Oct. to March		90,000

## TRAVEL LATER THIS YEAR BONUS

Although we didn't find any lockdown summer award availability on Iberia's crazy-low 63,000 mile/point award ticket to Madrid, we did find some gems in Business Class later this year. Check out our special report [here for opportunities](#).

## BEST DELTA DEAL IN TOWN BONUS

We found some gems on Delta routes using Virgin Atlantic with summer *and* all-year availability. See our special report [here for availability](#).

## A TALE OF TWO TRAVELERS

For 24.58 years, FCF has advocated being an [Opportunity Traveler](#). What's that? Well, most of us have a long list of places we'd like to go, for the first time or the 17th. Opportunity travel means to opt for the premium, third-of-the-price option to the places currently offering it. As opposed to having your mind locked onto one

destination and paying whatever they're asking to get there, often 2X to 6X more. Put the stone in your hand, not the airlines', and control your destiny. More comfortably, of course.

See you up front.