



Treasure Island: How AA Pays You to Go to St. Thomas

April 2021

How to add the Caribbean jewel St.Thomas to a domestic round-trip on American Airlines and pay up to \$223 less.

Last month we alerted you to [a stopover treat in San Juan](#), Puerto Rico. As it turned out, we were just getting warmed up. Now we're staying warm in tropical St. Thomas, which suns itself among the world-famous Leeward Islands.

Yes, get ready for another happy chapter of our Stopover Loophole Strategy.

THE SLS BRINGS THE HEAT WHEN YOU NEED R&R

A stopover is a planned stop between flight segments on a trip. For international trips, a stop for 24 hours is usually allowed for free, but on domestic flights it's generally just 4 hours. That said, there are some amazing "exceptions to the rule."

To offer an example, you could pay \$1,145 for a Business Class return trip between San Francisco and New York. But with our stopover loophole strategy, you could sneak in a relaxing few days or longer in the Caribbean on the way home. Imagine adding a paradise like St. Thomas, and paying \$223 *less* on your overall fare. Who wouldn't be happy as a clam with that?!

Viewed another way, you **add a vacation in St. Thomas and only pay a total of \$922 for the entire trip** in Business Class. Not all of these add-on trips are "less than free" as we like to say (when you end up paying less than your original price, for more).

Note that you can stop in St. Thomas in either direction using the same cities, but the cost may be different. Still good, just different.

For example, Chicago-Dallas-**St. Thomas**-Chicago is \$732 (Chicago-St. Thomas round-trip is \$622) while Chicago-**St. Thomas**-Dallas-Chicago is \$782.

You can find the current Covid [testing requirements here](#).

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

U.S. R/T	Normal Premium Fare R/T	Outbound Side Trip City	New Premium Fare w/Side Trip	Free Side-Trip Savings
Dallas - New York	\$676	St. Thomas	\$778	\$102
Chicago - Dallas	\$622		\$732	\$110
Cleveland - Philadelphia	\$668		\$755	\$87
St. Louis - Charlotte	\$746		\$765	\$19
Atlanta - Miami	\$582		\$644	\$62
Minneapolis - Chicago	\$612		\$637	\$25
Los Angeles - Dallas	\$812		\$839	\$27

U.S. R/T	Normal Premium Fare R/T	Inbound Side Trip City	New Premium Fare w/Side Trip	Free Side-Trip Savings
Austin - New York	\$1,047	St. Thomas	\$956	(\$91)
Nashville - Philadelphia	\$1,022		\$879	(\$143)
Denver - Philadelphia	\$865		\$808	(\$57)
San Francisco - New York	\$1,145		\$922	(\$223)
Seattle - Miami	\$1,070		\$903	(\$167)
Salt Lake City - Charlotte	\$1,079		\$994	(\$85)
Phoenix - New York	\$1,020		\$867	(\$153)
Tulsa - Miami	\$982		\$1,094	\$112

NEED A REASON, OR TWO, TO VISIT ST. THOMAS?

St. Thomas is the second-largest and most visited island in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and it shows off its assets with pride. The capital of Charlotte Amalie, one of the prettiest in the Caribbean, frames a gorgeous turquoise harbor dotted with sleek yachts and splashy cruise ships. Its 200-year-old red-roofed buildings climb hillsides and offer jaw-dropping views from the top. In addition to excellent dining, exciting nightlife, duty-free shopping, and even submarine rides, you can still see remnants of the island's Dutch and Danish heritage in museums, forts, and historic houses around the island.

And we can't fail to mention the beaches. St. Thomas is blessed with 40 sun-drenched beaches — from intimate pocket coves to long sigh-worthy strands like bleach-white Magens Bay, which is the glorious granddaddy of them all. You can swim, fish, snorkel, sail, windsurf, or just swing on a hammock sipping a fancy umbrella drink. After dark, join the fun at the waterfront bars and taverns in the Red Hook area, which turns into a bustling nightlife scene.



The Over-the-Top (Under-the-Cost) Way to Asia + Europe

April 2021

Include Europe on your Asia trip, or Asia on your Europe trip, and pay less than you ever thought possible.

Whether you're an American AAdvantage elite looking to score a ton of cheap status credit, an opportunist looking for a better fare, or an adventurous type who sees a city like Helsinki and thinks it'd be interesting to visit (or anywhere else in the area), then we've got something that might turn your world on its head.

Literally.

A TO B? IT'S ALL HOW YOU LOOK AT IT.

When you picture our planet in your mind's eye, usually it's with the north pole at the top and south pole at the bottom, right? Well, it's strange that we think of the earth in this way, because we don't think of a basketball as having an up or down. It's just round.

And I think this mind's-eye view of the world makes us a little blind to actual distances.

For example, we think of Europe as being "to the right" of the U.S., and Asia "to the left." But that's not exactly right. Asia is more "over the top," i.e., it's not as far as we think.

So let's turn the world around and view it from above the north pole, like this.



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Suddenly it looks like another planet. But enough upside down geography — **let's talk about great flight opportunities to Asia.**

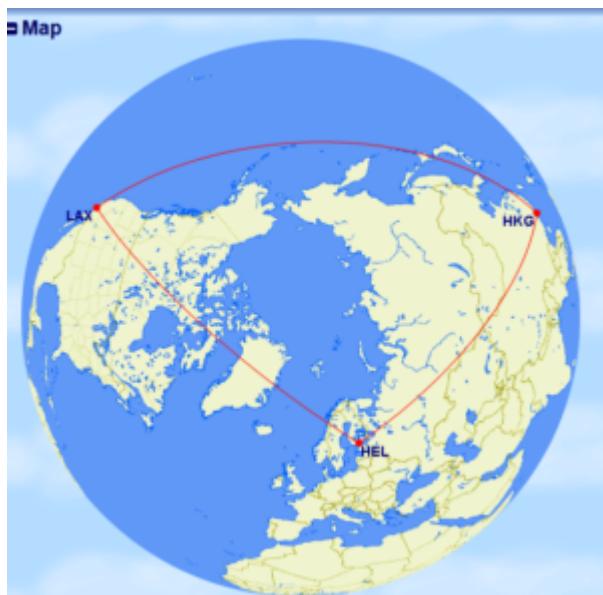
ASIA VIA EUROPE?! IT'S ALL HOW YOU LOOK AT IT.

Fares to Asia right now are all over the place and they can be especially expensive in Business Class. They mostly range between \$6,000 to \$8,000+ if you fly nonstop or in a westerly direction.

But here's the thing.

On your return, if you add a stop in Europe (in this case Helsinki, which is perhaps the last place on earth you'd think to connect to Asia), you can **save up to 50%** on your fare, and you'll **get a stop in Europe for free.**

A crazy long way? Actually, it's not as far as you might think. Let's look at that map again, this time with the applicable cities added. You're not flying one way or the other, you're creating a top-of-the-world triangle.



Of course, it's still farther than flying from Los Angeles to Hong Kong direct, but the price offsets a lot of that pain, and you're flying in Business Class comfort. Oh, AND AAdvantage elites are going to reap the miles like it's nobody's business.

Let's check out the numbers for a moment.

- The Los Angeles-Helsinki-Hong Kong-Helsinki-Los Angeles fare is \$3,106 on Finnair.

The next best Los Angeles-Hong Kong fare is \$5,884 on Cathay.

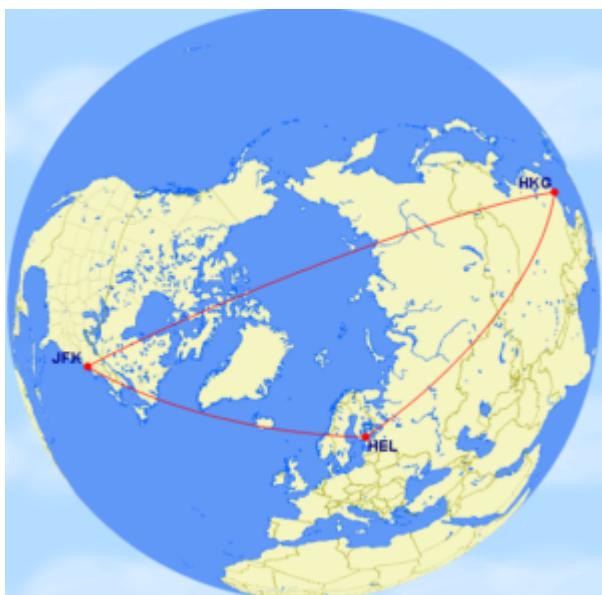
The chart below shows return flights on Finnair from Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York to Helsinki, as well as the prices when you add an Asian "stopover." In most cases, you save money to add on the Asian city.

U.S. Origin	R/T Fare to Helsinki	Asia Add-on City	Price with Add-on City	Difference with Add-on City	Link to Pre-Baked Trip
New York	\$3,414	Hong Kong	\$3,106	-\$308	EXPIRED
		Tokyo	\$3,188	-\$226	EXPIRED
		Beijing	\$2,974	-\$440	EXPIRED
		Bangkok	\$3,086	-\$328	EXPIRED
		Osaka	\$3,198	-\$216	EXPIRED
Chicago	\$3,384	Hong Kong	\$3,106	-\$278	EXPIRED
		Tokyo	\$3,195	-\$189	EXPIRED

U.S. Origin	R/T Fare to Helsinki	Asia Add-on City	Price with Add-on City	Difference with Add-on City	Link to Pre-Baked Trip
Los Angeles	\$3,726	Bangkok	\$3,161	-\$223	EXPIRED
		Osaka	\$3,198	-\$186	EXPIRED
		Hong Kong	\$3,106	-\$620	EXPIRED
		Beijing	\$2,974	-\$752	EXPIRED
		Osaka	\$3,198	-\$528	EXPIRED

STOPOVER DIRECTION MATTERS

The New York-Helsinki-Hong Kong-Helsinki-New York fare is \$3,106. That's including the stopover in Helsinki on the return. If you stopover in Helsinki on the outbound, the fare jumps to \$4,361. The chart below shows prices for outbound stopovers to and from various cities.



The deal is still good, but not quite as good as stopping over on inbound flights.

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U.S. Origin	R/T Fare to Asia	Price with Helsinki Add-on	Difference with Add-on	Link to Pre-Baked Trip
New York	Hong Kong	\$2,649	\$4,361	-\$1,712
Chicago	Singapore	\$2,645	\$4,384	-\$1,739

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES

The pre-baked trip links take you to an itinerary. As with any airline, fares tend to go up and go down. If you don't see a great price try different dates. Los Angeles-Helsinki-Osaka-Helsinki-Los Angeles Returning on

July 20 is \$3,197, returning on July 22 and the price jumps to \$4,397.

1 · Business Class

Multi-city trip

Share

Total price from **\$3,197**

 Tue, Jul 6 · 7:30 PM – 8:55 AM ^{*2} Finnair - American, British Airways, JAL	21 hr 25 min LAX-KIX	1 stop 1 hr 15 min HEL	▼
 Fri, Jul 16 · 10:45 AM – 2:40 PM Finnair - JAL, British Airways	9 hr 55 min KIX-HEL	Nonstop	▼
 Tue, Jul 20 · 4:40 PM – 5:40 PM Finnair - American, British Airways, Iberia	11 hr HEL-LAX	Nonstop	▼

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HELSINKI ELEVATOR PITCH

Finland's capital city sits on the nation's southern coast right on the Gulf of Finland. It's where Scandinavian urban cool meets fresh air and gorgeous waterside living.

Water makes Helsinki, whether you're taking a shoreside bike ride to visit Sibelius Monument, Finlandia Hall, Market Square, and Sky Wheel, or taking a tourist spin out on a ferry. You can explore beautiful nearby islands such as Lonna and Vallisaari, or the Suomenlinna maritime fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage Site built on eight islands.

There's plenty to taste in Helsinki's thriving street food scene, or if you're feeling like something more refined, there are six Michelin-starred restaurants like Olo, Grön, Demo, and Ora.

If you need a mid-afternoon pick-me-up, there are great cafes (as you'd expect from the world's biggest coffee drinkers).



Helsinki Cathedral and surrounds

Helsinki offers wonderful cultural opportunities at HAM, the Helsinki Art Museum, and the Design Museum. These are a great way to understand the country that prides itself on contemporary design.

During your Helsinki stopover, don't miss the Rock Church – Temppeliaukio Church – quarried out of natural bedrock.

You can also explore beyond Helsinki. Beautiful St. Petersburg is just an hour's flight away (4.5 hours by train), and Stockholm is about an hour and 20 minutes. Both cities are easily reachable by ferry as well.



Finnair's Business Class Cabin



AN ELITE MILE BONANZA

One of the benefits of this strategy for elites is that you earn a lot of miles for a relatively cheap price. On the Los Angeles – Helsinki – Hong Kong – Helsinki – Los Angeles trip mentioned above, the miles earned are easily valued at \$523 with the American Airlines mileage program, bringing the trip down to \$2,583. Here's some quick math: earned miles on Finnair are 125% for an AA mileage member, so the math is 20,920 flight miles — which become 26,160, thanks to the 125% — at 2 cents per mile that equals \$523. If you are not elite and want to earn Finnair miles it is 20,920.

Finnair	Route	Base Miles	Cabin Bonus	EQMs	EQDs	EQSs
Multi-City	Los Angeles - Helsinki - Hong Kong - Helsinki - Los Angles	20,920	5,240	41,840	5,240	4
Round-Trip	Los Angeles - Hong Kong	14,460	3,620	28,920	3,620	2
Difference		6,460	1,620	12,920	1,620	2



Best FCF Fare & Miles Alerts Still Available

April 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 Special Fares

Domestic & Hawaii

[New Transcontinental Business Class Fares from \\$478 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Hawaii from \\$718 R/T With Alaska Airways](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Hawaii from \\$748 R/T With Alaska Airlines](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Honolulu from \\$746 R/T on Major Airlines](#)

Caribbean & Mexico

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

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Sint Maarten from \\$633 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to U.S. Virgin Islands from \\$457 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to The Bahamas from \\$588 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Antigua from \\$693 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Barbados from \\$621 R/T](#)

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

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Jamaica from \\$605 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Puerto Rico from \\$276 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Dominican Republic from \\$529 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. to St. Lucia from \\$650 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. to Saint Kitts from \\$605 R/T](#)

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

[New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. to Cancun from \\$477 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Acapulco from \\$490 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Cabo from \\$437 R/T](#)

Europe

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Malta from \\$1,995 R/T](#)

[New *First Class* Fares from the U.S. to Hungary from \\$3,288 R/T](#)

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

[New *First Class* Fares from the U.S. to Switzerland from \\$3,285 R/T](#)

[New First Class Fares from Boston and New York to Santorini from \\$3,273 R/T](#)

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

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

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Spain from \\$2,000 R/T](#)

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

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

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

[New First Class Fares from the U.S. to Denmark from \\$3,278 R/T](#)

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

[New First Class Fares from the U.S. to Sweden from \\$3,302 R/T](#)

[New First Class Fares from the U.S. to Madrid from \\$3,172 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Italy from \\$1,876 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Spain from \\$1,958 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Lisbon from \\$1,937 R/T](#)

[New First Class Fares from the U.S. to Rome from \\$2,913 R/T](#)

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

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Rome from \\$1,863 R/T](#)

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

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Spain from \\$1,983 R/T](#)

Africa

[New Premium Economy Fares from the U.S. to Casablanca from \\$1,003 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. to Kenya from \\$2,668 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Casablanca from \\$2,238 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Cairo from \\$1,659 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. to South Africa from \\$2,626 R/T](#)

South America

[New Premium Economy Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Chile from \\$550 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Chile from \\$1,502 R/T](#)

[New *First Class* Fares from the U.S. to Brazil from \\$2,673 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Peru from \\$721 R/T](#)

Middle East & India

[New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. to Israel from \\$2,148 R/T](#)

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

[New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. to India from \\$2,254 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Mumbai from \\$2,323 R/T](#)

[New Premium Economy Fares from the U.S. to Mumbai from \\$1,147 R/T](#)

FCF Sweet Redeems

Europe

[Wide Open 85,000-Mile R/T Iberia \(Amex & Chase Partner\) Business Class Opportunities from Chicago to Madrid](#)

[Emirates Business Class Opportunities from New York to Milan with Miles/Points](#)

[Emirates Business Class Discounted Opportunities from Newark to Athens](#)

Asia

[Japan Airlines Discount Business Class Availability from Dallas and Many Other Cities to Tokyo and Beyond](#)

[Forward Thinking All Nippon *First Class* Opportunities to Tokyo from Chicago](#)

[All Nippon Airways *First Class* Opportunities from San Francisco and Many Other U.S. Cities to Tokyo](#)

[All Nippon Airways *First Class* Opportunities from Houston and Many Other U.S. Cities to Tokyo](#)

[Forward Thinking Cathay Pacific *First Class* Single-Seat Opportunities from Los Angeles to Hong Kong](#)

[Cathay Pacific *First Class* Single-Seat Discount Opportunities to Asia from New York and Other Cities](#)

Middle East

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

[Qsuite Opportunities from Chicago and Many Other U.S. Cities to the Middle East](#)

[Scads of Qsuite Discount Opportunities from San Francisco and Many Other U.S. Cities to Middle East & Beyond](#)

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

[Emirates *First Class* Discount Opportunities from Boston to Dubai](#)

South Pacific

[Forward Fiji Thinking with New Business Class Opportunities from San Francisco Later This Year](#)

[Forward Thinking Bora Bora Opportunities on Miles or Points](#)



FCF's Survey of Caviar Class Seats *Now Bookable* to Asia for Tuna Fish Prices

April 2021

FCF finds 15 hidden routes to Asia with up to 12 cents of value per mile/point – or buy for cash at 87% / \$19,627 off

I've heard about that movie *Crazy Rich Asians*, about the only ones that can afford off-the-shelf fares to Asia in First Class. I'm talking tickets in the range of \$17,400 to \$22,500. Crazy, indeed.

Here are some more crazy First Class fare examples:

- New York to Hong Kong nonstop on Cathay runs \$19,706; from Los Angeles \$16,430.
- New York to Tokyo nonstop on All Nippon goes for \$21,736; from Los Angeles \$17,406.

- New York to Tokyo nonstop on Japan Airlines runs \$22,507; from Los Angeles \$17,778.

WHAT IT COSTS WITH MILES

While we have a strategy whereby you don't need miles, and we'll get to that in a moment, here's what you can look to pay with miles or points:

Airline	First Class Route	Award Cost R/T	Transfer Partner	Lowest Amex Partner	Amex Points R/T	Lowest Cost Non-Amex Partner	Cost R/T
All Nippon Airways	Chicago - Tokyo	150,000	Amex, Marriott	Virgin Atlantic	120,000	LifeMiles	180,000
	Houston - Tokyo				120,000		
	Los Angeles - Tokyo				110,000		
	New York - Tokyo				120,000		
	San Francisco - Tokyo				110,000		
	Washington, DC - Tokyo				120,000		
Cathay Pacific	Boston - Hong Kong	250,000	Amex, Citi, Marriott	Cathay Pacific	250,000	Alaska	140,000
	Los Angeles - Hong Kong	220,000			220,000		
	New York - Hong Kong	250,000			250,000		
	San Francisco - Hong Kong	220,000			220,000		
Japan	Chicago - Tokyo	190,000	Marriott		240,000		120,000
	Los Angeles - Tokyo						
	New York - Tokyo						
	San Francisco - Tokyo	165,000					

NO MILES? NO POINTS? NO PROBLEM.

Might it be better to save up to 87% by using your cash (to buy miles or points) instead? The chart farther below shows just how much you can save by buying miles when they're on sale (which is often) and using them rather than paying the crazy rich First Class fare.

Quick highlight: Why pay \$22,507 for New York-Tokyo in First Class on Japan Airlines when you can buy the 160,000 required miles on sale at ~1.8 cents each for a total cost of \$2,880? **That's a \$19,627 difference.**

CRAZY EXPENSIVE ASIAN FIRST CLASS FARES TAMED BY FCF'S AWARD DRAGON

Can you spot the deal that's \$19,627 off when you buy miles to do the deal?

Airline	To / From:	Buy Miles Partner	Award Cost	Cost Per Mile When On Sale	Cost	Regular Published Fare	Difference
All Nippon Airways	Chicago - Tokyo	United	220,000	\$3,960	\$21,136	\$17,176	81%
	Houston - Tokyo				\$22,800	\$18,840	83%
	Los Angeles - Tokyo				\$17,406	\$13,446	77%
	New York - Tokyo				\$21,736	\$17,776	82%
	San Francisco - Tokyo				\$19,742	\$15,782	80%
	Washington, DC - Tokyo				\$21,200	\$17,240	81%
Cathay Pacific	Boston - Hong Kong	American	220,000	\$3,960	\$19,706	\$15,746	80%
	Los Angeles - Hong Kong				\$16,430	\$12,470	76%
	New York - Hong Kong				\$19,706	\$15,746	80%
	San Francisco - Hong Kong				\$16,430	\$12,470	76%
Japan	Chicago - Tokyo		160,000	\$2,880	\$21,932	\$19,052	87%
	Los Angeles - Tokyo				\$17,778	\$14,898	84%
	New York - Tokyo				\$22,507	\$19,627	87%
	San Francisco - Tokyo				\$19,963	\$17,083	86%

BOOK VALUE-CONSCIOUS FIRST CLASS SEATS LIGHTNING FAST WITH FCF'S EXCLUSIVE RESEARCH

We've found 15 routes with First Class availability as shown in the chart below.

Airline	First Class Route	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 Airways	Chicago - Tokyo	March		Oct. to Feb.	May, June, Aug., Nov., March		July, Oct. Dec. to Feb.
	Houston - Tokyo	June, July, Aug., Oct.	Sept.	Aug.	May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Aug.		July, Aug.
	Los Angeles - Tokyo	May, June, Sept.	July, Feb.	Aug., Nov. to Feb.	Jan.	May, June, Oct., Nov.	July, Dec., Jan., Feb.
	New York - Tokyo	Feb.			Feb.		Feb.
	San Francisco - Tokyo	July, Oct., Jan., March	Aug., Feb.	Nov. to Feb.	July, Sept. to Dec., March	Aug., Jan.	Jan., Feb.
Cathay Pacific	Washington, DC - Tokyo	July, Sept., Oct.			June	Sept.	Aug.
	Boston - Hong Kong	Oct.		Nov. to Feb.	Oct.		Nov. to Feb.
	Los Angeles - Hong Kong	Oct.		Nov. to Feb.	Oct.		Nov. to Feb.
	New York - Hong Kong			Nov. to Feb.			Nov. to Feb.
Japan	San Francisco - Hong Kong	Dec.		Jan., Feb.			Dec. to Feb.
	Chicago - Tokyo	July, Feb., March	May	April, May	July, Feb., March	May	April, May
	Los Angeles - Tokyo	Feb., March	May	April, May	Feb., March	May	April, May
	New York - Tokyo	May, Feb., March		April	May, Feb., March	May	April
	San Francisco - Tokyo	Feb., March			Feb., March		

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

LIMITED SEATS?

So, what if despite FCF's team working night and day to find the above availability-packed routes, you can't find seat options for the route you're considering? Like maybe you want to take your husband on an anniversary trip to Asia but there's only one seat available.

HERE'S AN IDEA-STORM FOR SNARING MORE THAN ONE SEAT:

- Rather than starting your search for two seats, start with a search for one. Then go wider. For example, Cathay Pacific typically only releases one First Class award seat at a time, *but...* they sometimes drip-feed availability up until departure. Other airlines do the same thing. Sometimes you just have to play the patience game a bit. With All Nippon, Cathay Pacific and Japan Airlines you can redeposit the miles if you don't get exactly what you want.
- Consider getting one seat in First and the other in Business. Granted, that's not ideal for our anniversary example, but in some cases, it might be a good play.
- Play the brinkmanship game. Award space tends to open up much more as departure approaches. Get the seat in Business then rebook when and if an opportunity arises. I do this often.
- Waitlist if other ways aren't working. Cathay Pacific and All Nippon offer waitlist in Business and First Class, Japan Airlines allows waitlisting in First Class only.
- **If all else fails, buy one ticket with cash and the other with miles. At least you're 50% in front.**

A PLAY FOR WHEN ROUND-TRIP AWARDS AREN'T AVAILABLE

When you can't nab that round-trip award, consider one-way tickets instead. Divide your itinerary in two and search for the best deal for each leg. I rarely book round-trip mileage awards because often I'm going to multiple destinations. But it's the same idea. I'll divide and conquer to get better seats or schedules from different airline programs with the exceptions of All Nippon as it offers round-trip awards only.

CONSIDER THE LEG STRETCH STRATEGY TO ASIA

You can use all of the above to kickstart FCF's amazing Leg Stretch Strategy to Asia and another continent. Read all about it [here](#).



DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME WITH...

American Airlines as, at the time of our research, there's no current availability on their existing three routes to Asia that offer First Class cabins (Los Angeles-Tokyo and Los Angeles and Dallas to Hong Kong)

Singapore Airlines as they're not showing any routes with First Class availability at the moment.

Delta Airlines or United Airlines: Neither have a First Class cabin. And on top of that, Delta doesn't even have access to a partner that offers First Class. High and dry.



Domestic Cheap Fare Deals Flowering in Florida and Beyond

April 2021

Never a worse time to play “free” Elite Upgrade Roulette.

Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de León called it la Florida, the land of flowers. That name feels appropriate right now because we’re seeing great deals blooming all over the state.

And on top of that, we’ve also discovered domestic fares to other regions that are smelling particularly sweet.

Our chart below adds all the necessary color you need to score the best deal. You’ll see the airline, the cities involved, the Business and economy class fares, round-trip flying hours, and the cost per hour to upgrade from economy to Business — all the features to consider when value is on your mind. Note that these great fares are the same in both directions.

With fares this low, why would you bother playing “free” elite status upgrade roulette?

That's possibly the biggest takeaway.

SAMPLE FLORIDA'S SWEET-SMELLING DEALS

Airline	From / To	Business Class Fare	
American	Los Angeles	\$493	
United	New York	\$435	
United	Fort Lauderdale	Cleveland	\$475
United		Chicago	\$415
United		Houston	\$495
American		Charlotte*	\$458
United		New York	\$375
American		Chicago*	\$505
American		Boston*	\$665
United	Miami	Houston	\$415
American		San Francisco	\$757
American		Seattle	\$781
American		Denver	\$643
United		Los Angeles	\$724
United		Houston	\$355
United	Orlando	Chicago	\$441
United		Cleveland	\$433
United		Washington, DC	\$399
United		Chicago	\$415
United	Naples	New York	\$415
United	Tampa	Denver	\$674
United		Chicago	\$435
United		New York	\$415

Airline	From / To	Business Class Fare
United	Houston	\$355
Delta	Boston	\$443
United	Cleveland	\$513
American	Philadelphia	\$531
United	Washington, DC	\$385

* Wide-body aircraft offered on this route, always recheck aircraft type at time of booking as aircraft can change.

OTHER EXAMPLES OF SWEET DOMESTIC DEALS

Airline	From / To	Business Class Fare
United	New York	Denver
		Dallas
Delta	Seattle	Chicago
		Nashville
	Los Angeles	Austin
United		Chicago
Delta	Los Angeles	Indianapolis
American		Boston
United	Washington, DC	Seattle
		Denver
	Chicago	San Diego

Let's expand this discussion with American domestic flights using a wide-body aircraft. You'll never have to rub shoulders so closely again.

If you live in Miami, Charlotte, Chicago, or Boston, you can fly American's wide-body in some markets. If you don't, and must make a connection, consider doing so via wide-body aircraft to get a free in-class upgrade as we have discussed [here](#).

FREE IN-CLASS UPGRADES

From	To	Departure Flight number*	Aircraft	Return Flight number*	Aircraft
Charlotte		1152, 0312	B777-200	N/A	N/A
Chicago	Miami	2553, 0477, 0335	B777-800 / B777-200	2736, 0876	B777-800
Boston		2247	B777-200	2247	B777-200

*Always recheck aircraft type at time of booking as aircraft can change by the week. FCF research is based on flights through April 30.



Tee up a Florida deal



The Spring Qsuite for Fall - Enjoy This 66% Off Sale & More

April 2021

Book now for travel later and save up to 77% with AA miles, or 66% if paying in cash

We're a big fan of Qatar Airways' Qsuites with their sleek sliding-door Business Class offering. As you know, we're also a big fan of saving a lot of money on travel (hello up to 66%), so this deal combines both sweet options.

If you were to fly from New York or Los Angeles to Qatar's hub city Doha in a Qsuite, you'd be stung by high fares, as the table below shows. For example, the New York-Doha route costs \$7,863 round-trip. But get this – you can stop in Doha for 24 hours (for free) and then move on to another city, and the price plummets drastically.

If You Don't Stop in Doha, Say Doh

Qatar QSuite	Non-stop	via Doha		Difference		
From	To	Fare	To	Fare		
New York	Doha	\$7,863	Bangkok	\$3,784	-\$4,079	-52%
Los Angeles		\$6,509		\$3,151	-\$3,358	-52%
New York		\$7,863	Istanbul	\$3,784	-\$4,079	-52%
Los Angeles		\$6,509		\$3,151	-\$3,358	-52%
New York		\$7,863	Cairo	\$2,683	-\$5,180	-66%
Los Angeles		\$6,509		\$3,301	-\$3,208	-49%
New York		\$7,863	Nairobi	\$3,439	-\$4,424	-56%
Los Angeles		\$6,509		\$3,702	-\$2,807	-43%
New York		\$7,863	Delhi	\$3,041	-\$4,822	-61%
Los Angeles		\$6,509		\$2,783	-\$3,726	-57%
New York	Abu Dhabi	\$7,863	Mumbai	\$3,716	-\$4,147	-53%
Los Angeles		\$6,509		\$3,193	-\$3,316	-51%
New York		\$7,863		\$4,250	-\$3,613	-46%
Los Angeles		\$6,509		\$3,691	-\$2,818	-43%
New York	Dubai	\$7,863	Dubai	\$3,261	-\$4,602	-59%
Los Angeles		\$6,509		\$3,561	-\$2,948	-45%

Fly New York-Bangkok with a 24-hour stopover in Doha and it will cost you \$3,784, netting a total savings of \$4,079.

That's right, flying to the hub is much more expensive than flying beyond the hub. And look at their map – that hub has lots of connections. There are some very nice destinations available including Bangkok, Istanbul, Cairo, Nairobi, Delhi, and Dubai, to name a few. Some routes are opening back up faster than others.

DOHA – ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST CONNECTED CITIES



Changes and Refunds

All tickets purchased by April 30 for travel by December 31 allow for [unlimited changes](#). As far as [refunds](#) go, penalties will be waived and credited back to the original form of payment but does change by the day so make sure to check before purchasing your ticket.

The Qsuite Seat?

The extra sweet Qsuite seat is 21.5 inches wide and reclines to a fully lie-flat bed 79 inches long. The center section seats are set close together and can conveniently become a double bed for couples or families traveling together.



ROUTES AND FLIGHTS FEATURING QSUITE

- San Francisco-Doha: QR 738/737
- Philadelphia-Doha: QR 728/727
- New York (JFK)-Doha: QR 702/701 & 704/705
- Washington, DC-Doha: QR 708/707
- Houston-Doha: QR 714/713
- Chicago-Doha: QR 726/725
- Boston-Doha: QR 744/743
- Los Angeles-Doha: QR 740/739

Although these aircraft move around and flight numbers may change, here's the trick to finding Qsuite aircraft:

- All A350-1000s have Qsuites.
- The A350-900 can be tricky as both layouts have nine rows in Business Class. The Qsuite aircraft has row 2 D/G/J while the non-Qsuite configuration has row 2 A/E/K.
- B777-200 aircraft with 11 rows in Business Class have the Qsuite.
- B777-300 aircraft with 11 rows in Business Class have the Qsuite.

- B787-800 do NOT have the Qsuite.

If booking online, look for this symbol:

Qatar Award Costs

To Doha From	Miles Required	Transfer Partner	Lowest Cost Amex Partner	Miles Required
Boston				150,000
Chicago				
Dallas				
Houston				180,000
Los Angeles	140,000	Citi, Marriott	Cathay	
New York				150,000
Philadelphia				
San Francisco				180,000
Washington, DC				150,000

COST IF YOU BUY (PARTNER) AMERICAN MILES WHEN ON SALE

Who doesn't love a good sale? In this example, we buy miles for .018 cents per mile, which is a typical sale price. Keep your eye out for them. They appear often and can make a huge difference when you use award miles versus coughing up for the cash fare.

To Doha From	American Miles	Cost Per Mile When on Sale	Regular Published Fare	Strategy Savings
Boston	140,000	\$2,520	\$10,966	\$8,446 77%
Chicago			\$8,104	\$5,584 69%
Dallas			\$8,298	\$5,778 70%
Houston			\$8,738	\$6,218 71%
Los Angeles			\$6,609	\$4,089 62%
New York			\$8,006	\$5,486 69%
Philadelphia			\$9,246	\$6,726 73%
San Francisco			\$8,338	\$5,818 70%
Washington, DC			\$8,637	\$6,117 71%

FCF DISCOUNT Availability Treasure Map

To/From Doha	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
Boston	July, Sept., Dec., Feb.	Oct., Dec.	Oct., Nov., Jan.	Sept., Jan., Feb.	Sept., Oct., Jan.	Nov., Dec.
Chicago	May, July, Sept., Oct., Nov.	Sept., Nov., Feb.	Sept., Oct., Jan.	May, June, July, Aug., Sept.	May, Oct., Nov., Dec., Feb.	May, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec., Jan.
Houston	May, Feb.	May, July, Dec., Feb.	Sept. to Nov., Jan.	June	May, June, July, Feb.	May, July, Aug. to Jan.
Los Angeles	May, June., Nov.	May, June, Sept., Oct., Dec.	July, Sept., Oct., Nov., Jan.	June, Oct., Nov., Dec.	May, Aug., Sept.	May., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec., Jan.
Philadelphia	May, Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec., Feb.	Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec., Feb.	Nov., Jan.	May., Sept., Feb.	Oct., Nov., Feb.	Oct., Nov., Dec., Jan.
New York	July, Sept., Nov., Dec.	May, Oct., Feb.	May., Sept. to Nov., Dec., Jan.	May, Sept., Oct.	May., Feb.	Sept., Oct., Nov. to Jan.
San Francisco	May, June, Sept., to Nov.	June., Dec., Feb.	May, June, July, Sept. to Nov., Jan.	May, June, July, Sept., Nov., Feb.	Oct., Feb.	May, July, Aug., Sept. to Nov., Dec., Jan.

To/From Doha	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
Washington, DC	May, July, Dec.	Sept., Feb.	Sept., Oct., Nov., Jan.	June, Jan., Feb.	July, Sept., Feb.	May, July, Aug., Sept., Oct. to Dec., Jan.

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

Qatar Award Costs

To Doha From	Miles Required	Transfer Partner	Lowest Cost Amex Partner	Miles Required
Boston				150,000
Chicago				
Dallas				
Houston				180,000
Los Angeles	140,000	Citi, Marriott	Cathay	
New York				150,000
Philadelphia				
San Francisco				180,000
Washington, DC				150,000

Cost if you buy (partner) American miles when on sale

Who doesn't love a good sale? In this example, we buy miles for .018 cents per mile, which is a typical sale price. Keep your eye out for them. They appear often and can make a huge difference when you use award miles versus coughing up for the cash fare.

To Doha From	American Miles	Cost Per Mile When on Sale	Regular Published Fare	Strategy Savings
Boston	140,000	\$2,520	\$10,966	\$8,446 77%
Chicago			\$8,104	\$5,584 69%
Dallas			\$8,298	\$5,778 70%

To Doha From	American Miles	Cost Per Mile When on Sale	Regular Published Fare	Strategy Savings
Houston			\$8,738	\$6,218 71%
Los Angeles			\$6,609	\$4,089 62%
New York			\$8,006	\$5,486 69%
Philadelphia			\$9,246	\$6,726 73%
San Francisco			\$8,338	\$5,818 70%
Washington, DC			\$8,637	\$6,117 71%

FCF DISCOUNT Availability Treasure Map

To/From Doha	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
Boston	July, Sept., Dec., Feb.	Oct., Dec.	Oct., Nov., Jan.	Sept., Jan., Feb.	Sept., Oct., Jan.	Nov., Dec.
Chicago	May, July, Sept., Oct., Nov.	Sept., Nov., Feb.	Sept., Oct., Jan.	May, June, July, Aug., Sept.	May, Oct., Nov., Dec., Feb.	May, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec., Jan.
Houston	May, Feb.	May, July, Dec., Feb.	Sept. to Nov., Jan.	June	May, June, July, Feb.	May, July, Aug. to Jan.
Los Angeles	May, June., Nov.	May, June, Sept., Oct., Dec.	July, Sept., Oct., Nov., Jan.	June, Oct., Nov., Dec.	May, Aug., Sept.	May., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec., Jan.
Philadelphia	May, Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec., Feb.	Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec., Feb.	Nov., Jan.	May., Sept., Feb.	Oct., Nov., Feb.	Oct., Nov., Dec., Jan.
New York	July, Sept., Nov., Dec.	May, Oct., Feb.	May., Sept. to Nov., Dec., Jan.	May, Sept., Oct.	May., Feb.	Sept., Oct., Nov. to Jan.
San Francisco	May, June, Sept., to Nov.	June., Dec., Feb.	May, June, July, Sept. to Nov., Jan.	May, June, July, Sept., Nov., Feb.	Oct., Feb.	May, July, Aug., Sept. to Nov., Dec., Jan.
Washington, DC	May, July, Dec.	Sept., Feb.	Sept., Oct., Nov., Jan.	June, Jan., Feb.	July, Sept., Feb.	May, July, Aug., Sept., Oct. to Dec., Jan.

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



Pining for Exotic Isles? Take a Sea Spell in the Seychelles

April 2021

Here are the best ways to land in luxury, now that these glamorous islands are open again – whether you have miles or points, or neither.

The beautiful Seychelles are open for business once again, but if we're really being honest, this is all about pleasure. A thousand miles off the coast of East Africa, this group of 115 islands in the Indian Ocean offers a warm vacation oasis in an exotic locale. And talk about bragging rights: You'll crush the next one-upmanship among your friends and colleagues. All you must do is present a valid negative PCR test taken no more than 72 hours before departure. Here's the [official word](#).



GET THERE WITH EMIRATES

Emirates offers daily flights to the Seychelles via Dubai with **discount** award availability in **First Class** from Boston, Chicago, Dallas, and San Francisco. **Business Class** is available from Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Washington, DC.

Emirates First Class fares from U.S. cities range from \$13,302 to \$14,416 while Business Class fares range from \$5,551 to \$6,661.

And for “tax avoiders,” there’s more good news: Emirates recently lowered its taxes as we reported [here](#). For Chicago to Dubai in First Class, for example, taxes were previously \$1,543; currently, they’re about \$400.

NO MILES? NO PROBLEM. WE SELL SEYCHELLES BY THE SEA SHORE. (UP TO 56% OFF)

You can buy points from Amex and transfer them directly to Emirates. Do this, and you’ll pay up to \$8,041 / \$56% less than the traveler sitting next to you. Look at the math below:

To Seychelles From	Emirates Buy Miles Partner	Emirates Award Cost	Cost Per Mile / Point	Cost	Regular Published Fare	Difference
Boston	Amex	255,000	0.025	\$6,375	\$13,302	\$6,927 52%

To Seychelles From	Emirates Buy Miles Partner	Emirates Award Cost	Cost Per Mile / Point	Cost	Regular Published Fare	Difference
Chicago	270,000			\$6,375	\$13,302	\$6,927 52%
Dallas				\$6,750	\$13,367	\$6,992 52%
San Francisco				\$6,750	\$14,416	\$8,041 56%

FCF'S EMIRATES AVAILABILITY TREASURE MAP

First Class to Dubai 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
Boston	July, Sept., Oct.	Sept., Oct.	Aug., Nov., Jan.	May, June, Sept., Jan.	May, Oct.	Nov., Dec.
Chicago	Aug., Nov.	Aug., Sept., Jan.	Oct., Jan.	Sept., Nov., Dec., Jan., Feb	Sept., Oct.	
Dallas	Nov., Feb.		Jan.	Dec., Jan., Feb.	Feb.	Dec.
San Francisco	May, July, Sept., Jan.	Aug., Nov.		May, June, Sept. to Nov., Jan.		Dec.

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

First Class to Seychelles 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
Dubai	Aug., Dec.	July, Feb.	May, June, Sept. to Nov., Jan.		Feb.	May to Jan.

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

OR GET THERE WITH TURKISH AIRLINES

Turkish doesn't offer First Class flights to the Seychelles. Business Class fares from the U.S. range from \$5,416 to \$6,561.

However, if you use United miles for Business Class it can save big. See our chart a little further below.

Turkish flies to the Seychelles via Istanbul on Mondays and Saturdays with **discount** award availability using United miles in Business Class from Boston, Chicago, and New York.



Don't forget that Turkish Airlines offer fully lie-flat seats that open to a 76-inch bed. (I like these seats.)

BUSINESS CLASS COSTS

Airline / Class	To / From	Buy Miles Partner	Award Cost	Cost per miles when on sale	Cost	Regular Published Fare	Difference
Emirates Business Class	Boston	Amex	170,000	0.025	\$4,250	\$5,606	\$1,356 24%
	Chicago		170,000		\$4,250	\$5,606	\$1,356 24%
	Dallas		180,000		\$4,500	\$5,940	\$1,690 28%
	Houston		180,000		\$4,500	\$5,940	\$1,690 28%
	Los Angeles		180,000		\$4,500	\$6,661	\$2,411 36%
	New York		170,000		\$4,250	\$5,551	\$1,301 23%
	San Francisco		180,000		\$4,500	\$6,661	\$2,161 32%
	Washington, DC		170,000		\$4,250	\$5,606	\$1,106 20%
Turkish Business Class	Boston	United	166,000	0.018	\$2,988	\$6,561	\$3,573 54%
	Chicago					\$5,416	\$2,428 45%

Airline / Class	To / From	Buy Miles Partner	Award Cost	Cost per miles when on sale	Cost	Regular Published Fare	Difference
	New York					\$6,217	\$3,229 52%

BUSINESS CLASS AVAILABILITY TREASURE MAP

Airline	Business Class to Dubai 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
Emirates	Boston	May, Dec., Feb.	July	Aug. to Nov., Jan.	June, Jan.	May, June, Sept., Feb.	May, Oct. to Dec.
	Chicago	Aug.	Aug., Feb.	Sept. to Nov., Jan.	June., Jan.	June., Feb.	May, Sept. to Dec.
	Dallas	July, Feb.	Aug. to Oct.	Nov., Jan.	May, June, Sept., Jan.	Sept., Feb.	Oct. to Dec.
	Houston	July, Oct., Nov., Feb.	Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov.	Aug., Jan.	May, June, Sept., Dec., Feb.	Sept., Oct., Dec., Jan.	Oct., Nov.
	Los Angeles	May, July, Nov., Feb.	Sept., Oct.	Aug., Sept., Oct., Jan.	July	May, Nov., Dec., Feb.	May, June, Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec., Jan.
	New York	Feb.	May, Nov.	Aug. to Oct., Jan.	Jan.	Dec., Feb.	May, June, Sept. to Nov.
	San Francisco	May, July, Aug., Feb.	Sept.	Sept., Oct., Nov., Jan.	May	June, Sept., Oct., Feb.	May, June., Sept., Oct., Nov. to Jan.
	Washington, DC	May, Dec., Feb.		Aug. to Nov., Jan.	May, June, Jan.	Feb.	Sept. to Dec.

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

Airline	Business Class to Seychelles 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
Emirates	Dubai	Dec.	July, Feb.	May, June, Aug. to Nov., Jan.		Feb.	May to Jan.

Airline	Business Class to Istanbul 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
Turkish	Boston	June, Aug. to Nov., Jan.			June, Sept. to Nov.		
	Chicago	June, Aug. to Nov., Jan.			June, Sept.	Nov.	
	New York	May, Sept., Nov., Dec.	June, Oct.	Aug., Jan.	May, June, Aug. to Dec.		

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

Airline	Business Class to Seychelles 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
Turkish	Istanbul	May, June, Aug. to Jan.			May, June, Aug. to Dec.		

*Months in black at least one seat available.