



# Backflip: Why the Virgin Devalue/Revalue Isn't All Bad News, Delta Business Class 6-for-1 Still Works On Some Routes

February 2021

**You can still save up to 500,000 miles / 83% with Amex points on Delta flights, through a secret backdoor**

Gee, I'd love to be a fly on the wall at the Virgin Atlantic HQ. Right after the new year kicked off, they **massively devalued their miles (up to 64%)** by raising their redemption rates across the board, taking everyone by surprise. Here at FCF, we held a silent vigil in memory of the amazing, little-known opportunities that left the marketplace.

But that's not the end of the story.

Seven days later, and just as inexplicably, **they restored the redemption rates on European flights — including on their partner, Delta.** Perhaps a few board members were keen to hop across the pond? Hard to say for sure what the reasoning was, but it happened nonetheless.

This is a good example of the **problem with collecting miles instead of points.** The value can be yanked out from under you like a rug without any prior warning. Unfortunately, it's standard airline shenanigans.

So given this unprecedeted deval-reval, what does it mean for you now?

It means good news and bad news. The bad news first.

As mentioned, all those non-European destinations are more expensive if you're paying in miles. The chart below tells the sorry tale in all its unfortunate glory. You can clearly see the Virgin miles required for a trip before and after the new year. Look at the Atlanta-Tokyo route, for example, which shows a difference of +210,000 miles. Thanks again, Virgin Atlantic. And we were all looking forward to 2021.

## Compare Virgin Old and New Award Costs

Delta Flights from U.S. to:	Sample Route	Former Virgin Cost R/T Off-Peak	Virgin's New Cost R/T Off-Peak	Difference
Domestic	Los Angeles to New York	45,000	105,000	60,000
Hawaii	Los Angeles to Honolulu	75,000	105,000	30,000
Asia / Middle East / Africa	Los Angeles to Tokyo	120,000	260,000	140,000
	Atlanta to Tokyo		330,000	210,000
	Atlanta to Dubai*	120,000	330,000	210,000
	Atlanta to Johannesburg	120,000	330,000	210,000
U.K.	Atlanta, Detroit, Minneapolis, New York, Boston - London	95,000	95,000	0
	Salt Lake City - London		135,000	0
Europe	U.S. to Europe (Excluding U.K.)	100,000	100,000	0
South America	Atlanta to Sao Paulo	90,000	210,000	120,000
South Pacific	Los Angeles to Sydney	150,000	330,000	180,000

**THE GOOD NEWS:  
THE VIRGIN 6-FOR-THE-PRICE-OF-1 PLAY STILL WORKS ON SOME**

## ROUTES TO EUROPE

You may recall [ECF's Delta/Virgin loophole here](#), and [here](#), where you **use Virgin Atlantic miles (that you get by transferring Amex points) rather than Delta SkyMiles to buy seats — on Delta flights**. Sounds weird, but it's because Delta only released a limited number of low-cost mileage award seats to its own SkyMiles members—a different number than it releases to its partner Virgin Atlantic. By using your Virgin Atlantic miles for the same Delta flights, you can open up low-cost award space that Delta doesn't offer. For example...

*Virgin Website Pricing at 50,000 Miles  
(or Amex Points) Each Way for Delta Flights Now*

Flexible Dates [Price Calendar](#) [Edit search](#) [Join](#) [Log in](#) [Search](#)

**MAY/JUN**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
2 Not available	3 Not available	4 Lowest 50,000 +\$6	5 Not available	6 Not available	7 Not available	8 Not available
9 Not available	10 Not available	11 Not available	12 Lowest 50,000 +\$6	13 Not available	14 Not available	15 Not available
16 Not available	17 Not available	18 Lowest 50,000 +\$6	19 Lowest 50,000 +\$6	20 Not available	21 Not available	22 Not available
23 Not available	24 Not available	25 Lowest 50,000 +\$6	26 Lowest 50,000 +\$6	27 Not available	28 Not available	29 Not available
30 Not available	31 Not available	1 Not available	2 Lowest 50,000 +\$6	3 Not available	4 Not available	5 Not available

▲ DELTA | DTW - FRA | One Way | May 14 | 1 Passenger | MODIFY | SIGN UP | LOGIN | Q

MAY/JUN											
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT					
315,000 +\$6 2	315,000 +\$6 3	LOWEST 300,000 +\$6 4	LOWEST 300,000 +\$6 5	LOWEST 300,000 +\$6 6	315,000 +\$6 7	315,000 +\$6 8					
315,000 +\$6 9	315,000 +\$6 10	LOWEST 300,000 +\$6 11	LOWEST 300,000 +\$6 12	LOWEST 300,000 +\$6 13	Depart 315,000 +\$6 14	315,000 +\$6 15					
315,000 +\$6 16	315,000 +\$6 17	LOWEST 300,000 +\$6 18	LOWEST 300,000 +\$6 19	LOWEST 300,000 +\$6 20	315,000 +\$6 21	315,000 +\$6 22					
315,000 +\$6 23	315,000 +\$6 24	LOWEST 300,000 +\$6 25	LOWEST 300,000 +\$6 26	LOWEST 300,000 +\$6 27	315,000 +\$6 28	315,000 +\$6 29					
315,000 +\$6 30	315,000 +\$6 31	LOWEST 300,000 +\$6 1	LOWEST 300,000 +\$6 2	LOWEST 300,000 +\$6 3	315,000 +\$6 4	315,000 +\$6 5					

Fri, May 14 | Non Stop

From 315,000 + \$6

CONTINUE

## BAD NEWS: AVAILABILITY

It's not great at the moment. We checked 29 Routes to Europe up to 330 days out and here's what we found:

- Only one route, Detroit to Frankfurt, had a handful of days with award space in the month of May for four travelers, in both directions.
- There were only 10 routes with a seat here or there.
- There were 18 routes with NO award space.

## WHAT CAN WE EXPECT IN THE FUTURE?

We're holding out hope that availability opens up much more. In the meantime, **book around the above dates where you can get a 6-for-1.**



# Best FCF Fare & Miles Alerts Still Available

September 2021

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

Hawaii & Mexico

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

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

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

### **Africa**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Asia**

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

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

### **Europe**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Middle East**

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

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

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

### **South America**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# FCF Sweet Redeems

## Asia

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

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

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

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

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

## Europe

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

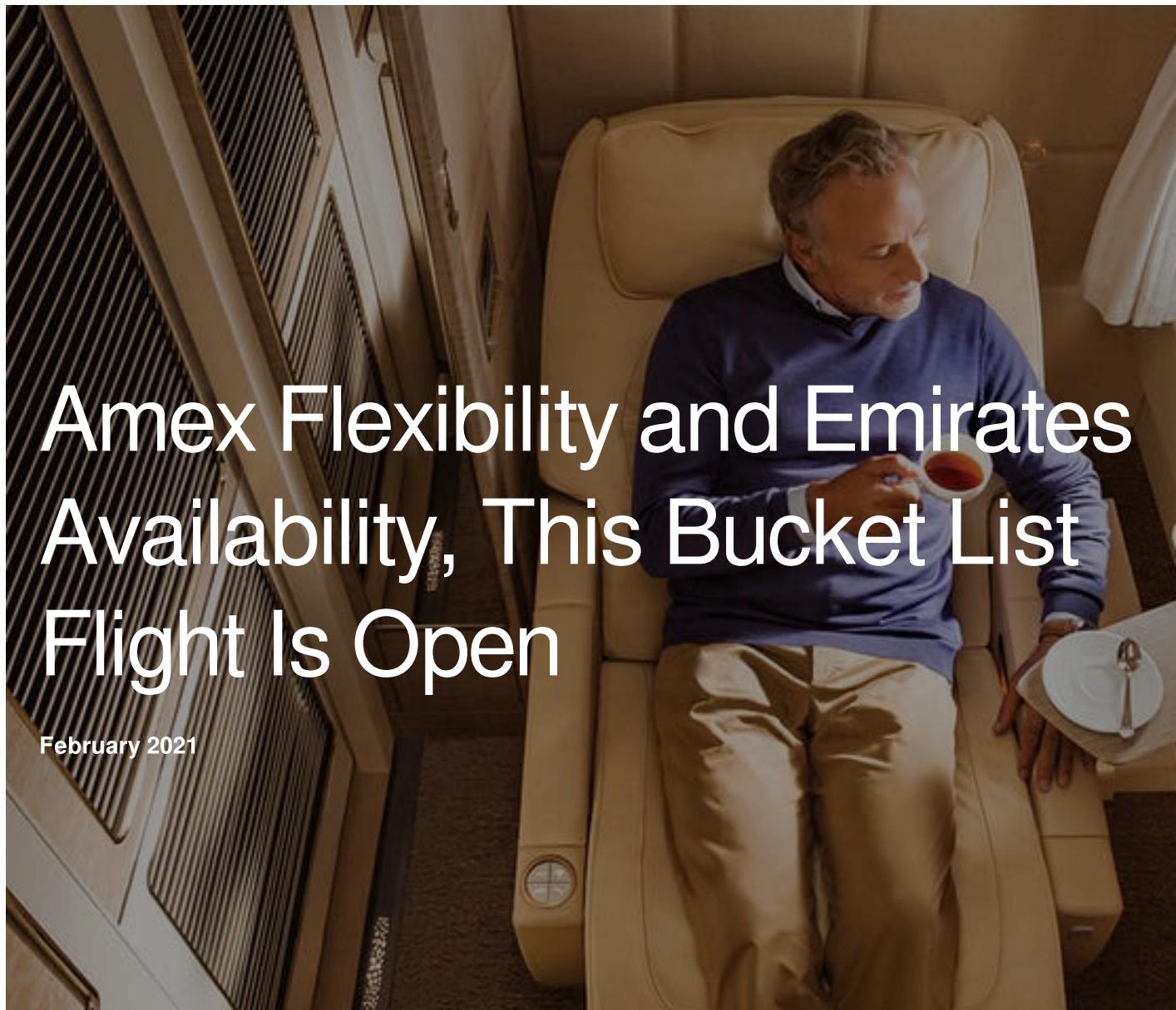
[Many United Business Class Opportunities from Washington, DC and Many Other U.S. Cities to London](#)

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

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

#### **South America**

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



# Amex Flexibility and Emirates Availability, This Bucket List Flight Is Open

February 2021

**Emirates luxury made possible (and affordable) with FCF's analysis**

Last month we took a deep dive into

As we mentioned [last month](#), Emirates' hub, Dubai, is now open to tourists. You just have to present a valid negative Covid PCR test taken no more than 96 hours before departure.

Also, there's an important date approaching fast: as of **April**, Emirates will no longer offer its First Class award space to partners. So if you have Alaska or Marriott points and want to fly Emirates, you should lock in your booking soon.

**Current Emirates routes between the U.S. and Dubai:** Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, and Washington, DC.

**Coming soon:** Dallas to Dubai resumes its service March 2 with Business Class until October 31, when it begins service with a three-cabin aircraft offering First Class.

Seattle to Dubai resumed service February 2 with Business Class until March 28, when it begins service with a three-cabin aircraft offering First Class.

San Francisco to Dubai resumes service March 3 with a three-cabin aircraft offering First Class.

## FIRST CLASS OPPORTUNITIES WITH MILES & POINTS

First Class	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 to Dubai	March, <a href="#">Sept.</a>	<a href="#">April, Oct., Nov.</a>	Nov.	<a href="#">March, April, Sept. to Nov.</a>	Oct.	Nov.
Chicago to Dubai	<a href="#">Nov.</a>	<a href="#">March, Sept.</a>	Oct.	<a href="#">April, Sept., Dec.</a>	<a href="#">March, Sept., Nov.</a>	<a href="#">Oct.</a>
Dallas to Dubai		Nov.			Nov.	
Houston to Dubai	Dec.	<a href="#">April, July, Oct.</a>	<a href="#">Aug., Sept., Nov.</a>	<a href="#">Sept., Dec.</a>	<a href="#">April to June, Oct.</a>	Nov.
Los Angeles to Dubai	<a href="#">April</a>			May		
New York to Dubai	<a href="#">April, May</a>	<a href="#">March, April</a>	March			
San Francisco to Dubai		March		March		
Seattle to Dubai	<a href="#">April, May, Aug. to Nov.</a>			<a href="#">May, Sept. to Dec.</a>		
Washington, DC to Dubai	<a href="#">April, May, Oct., Nov.</a>	<a href="#">March, Aug., Sept.</a>		<a href="#">May, June, Sept., Oct.</a>		

First Class	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
Newark to Athens		Sept., Dec.	Oct., Nov.		Oct., Dec.	Nov.

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

## BUSINESS CLASS OPPORTUNITIES WITH MILES & POINTS

Business Class	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 to Dubai	May	March, Dec.	March, April, Aug. to Nov.		June, Sept.	March to May, June, Oct. to Dec.
Chicago to Dubai		Aug.	March, April, Sept. to Nov.		June	March to May, Sept. to Dec.
Dallas to Dubai	July, Sept., Oct.	April, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov.	March	March, April to June, Sept., Oct.	March	
Houston to Dubai	April, July, Oct., Nov.	March, Sept.	March, Aug.	March, April	June, Sept.	May, Oct., Nov.
Los Angeles to Dubai	March, May, Sept., Oct.	May, Aug., Oct., Nov.	March, April, Aug., Sept.	Oct., Dec.	March, Sept., Oct., Nov.	March, April to June, Sept., Nov.
New York to Dubai	May	May	March, April, Aug. to Oct.	Dec.	April, June	March, April, May, June, Sept. to Nov.
San Francisco to Dubai	April	April	March	Nov., Dec.	March, April, May	March
Seattle to Dubai	April, May, Aug.	Feb., March, April	Feb., March	Feb., April	Feb., March, April	
Washington, DC to Dubai	May	April, Sept.	March, April, Oct., Nov.	March, April, May, Sept. Dec.	March, May, Sept.	Oct., Nov.
Newark to Athens	Nov.	Oct.	July to Sept.	Nov.		July to Oct.
New York to Milan		Dec.	July to Nov.			July to Oct.

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

## USE EMIRATES OPPORTUNITIES WELL BEYOND DUBAI

From the perspective below, Dubai is the center of the world, with Emirates offering flights to bucket list destinations such as Tanzania, the Maldives, Cape Town, Nairobi, and Mauritius, to name a few.



## COMPARING AMEX POINTS, ALASKA AIRLINES MILES, AND JAPAN AIRLINES MILES

To put these in perspective though, some of these flights can cost more than \$24,000 if you pay for them in cash.

First Class Round-Trip	Amex partner Emirates currency cost	Partner Alaska Airline miles cost	Partner Japan Airline Miles cost
Boston to Dubai	217,500	300,000	165,000
Chicago to Dubai	217,500	300,000	190,000
Dallas to Dubai	247,500	300,000	190,000
Houston to Dubai	247,500	300,000	190,000
Los Angeles to Dubai	247,500	300,000	190,000
New York to Dubai	217,500	300,000	165,000

First Class Round-Trip	Amex partner Emirates currency cost	Partner Alaska Airline miles cost	Partner Japan Airline Miles cost
San Francisco to Dubai	247,500	300,000	190,000
Seattle to Dubai	247,500	300,000	190,000
Washington, DC to Dubai	217,500	300,000	190,000
Newark to Athens	135,000	360,000	135,000

These routes all use the existing B777 aircraft apart from New York-Dubai, which has the *new* B777 featuring just six seats in First rather than the current eight. From March 28, this aircraft will be replaced by the A380, with a handful of days' availability for free award seats for up to two people on the return flight from Dubai as we alerted you [here](#). Space on these flights is constantly changing (to say the least!) so keep your eyes peeled, check back regularly, and be ready to jump on 'em fast.

Business Class Round-Trip	Amex partner Emirates currency cost	Partner Alaska Airline miles cost	Partner Japan Airline Miles cost
Boston to Dubai	145,000	165,000	110,000
Chicago to Dubai	145,000	165,000	130,000
Dallas to Dubai	165,000	165,000	130,000
Houston to Dubai	165,000	165,000	130,000
Los Angeles to Dubai	165,000	165,000	130,000
New York to Dubai	145,000	165,000	110,000
San Francisco to Dubai	165,000	165,000	130,000
Seattle to Dubai	165,000	165,000	130,000
Washington, DC to Dubai	145,000	165,000	130,000
Newark to Athens	180,000	210,000	85,000
New York to Milan	180,000	210,000	80,000



# Horses for Courses (and Cabins). How Returning in a Different Class Can Make for a Much Better Value

February 2021

## **A fresh lockdown look at cabinus interruptus. A worthwhile ploy to save big.**

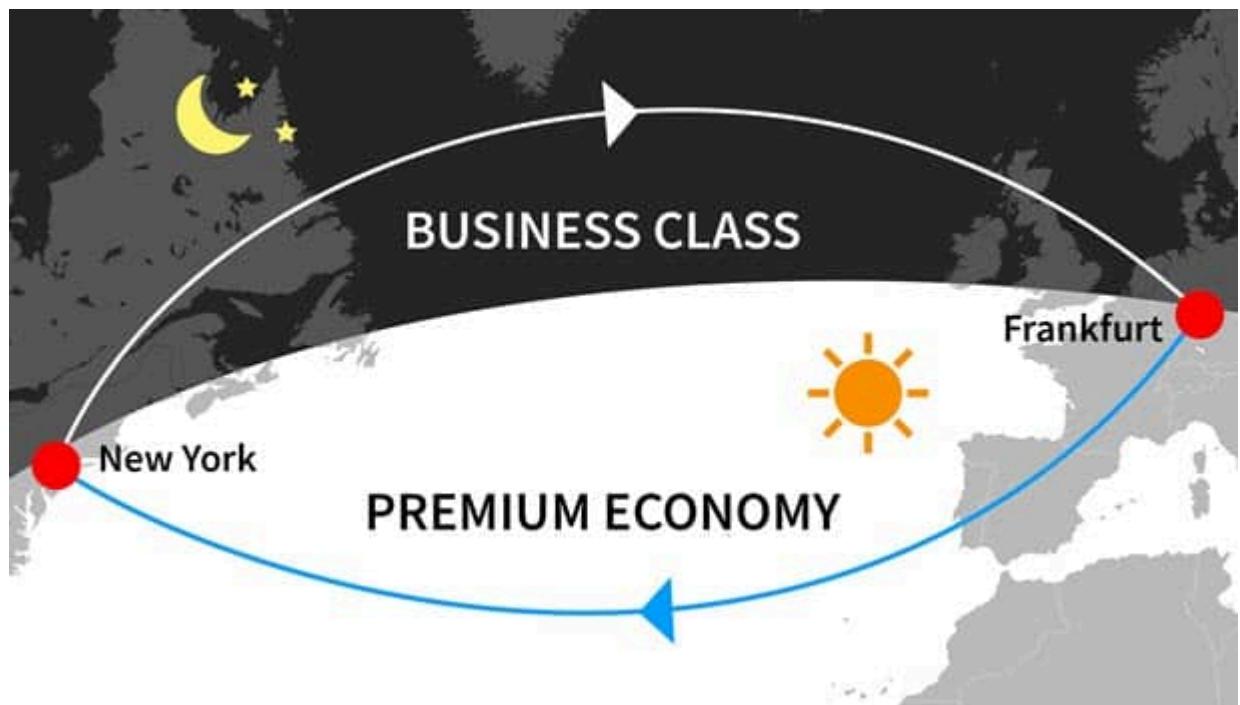
One of the (many) default behaviors that travelers subconsciously engage in is departing and returning in the same class of service. I'd like to let you in on a little-used secret: You can mix up the cabins depending on the circumstances of your trip to **save a lot, or upgrade cheaply—either way, it's about getting the most bang for your buck.**

## SO WHAT ARE THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE THIS MIGHT APPLY?

The decision should be based on *how you're going to use your seat each way*. If it's a night flight (and most all flights to Europe depart at night), you'll want a comfy sleep so you'll be fresh when you arrive. Hello Business or First Class. If it's a day flight and you want to do some work, read a book or catch up on Season 1 of "Flight Attendant," then Premium Economy might suffice — if saving your budget for another part of the trip, say upgrading to a suite — is important.

### Why pay for a lie-flat sleeper seat on a day flight if you don't plan on sleeping in it?

But here's where it really makes a difference. By not taking the default option of returning in Business Class, you can save \$1,135 on a trip from New York to Frankfurt, or save \$822 on a trip from Dallas to Paris, as you're about to discover. *Vive la différence!*



### SMART COMEBACK EXAMPLE #1 SAVE \$1,135 TO FRANKFURT FOR A SEAT YOU MIGHT NOT EVEN SLEEP IN

A New York-Frankfurt round-trip ticket costs \$3,649 in Business Class on Delta. But if you fly in Business Class to Frankfurt (as the flight leaves at 7:45 pm), and return in *Premium Economy* (flight leaves at 10:40 am so *seat recline* is not as critical), the total cost is \$2,514, a savings of \$1,135. You can put that towards an out-of-this-world dining or tour experience and not think twice about it.

A Dallas-Paris round-trip ticket costs \$3,202 in Business Class on American. But if you fly in Business Class to Paris and return in *Premium Economy*, the total cost is \$2,380, a savings of \$822.

## SMART COMEBACK EXAMPLE #2

### UPGRADE YOUR PREMIUM ECONOMY R/T TO BUSINESS O/W FOR JUST \$16/HOUR

Let's look at another way you can use a mixed cabin to your advantage. You can *upgrade* from a standard Premium Economy flight to Europe (with a lousy night's sleep) to a mixed-cabin strategy (Business Class to Europe on the sleep leg, Premium Economy on the return) for a mere \$16 per flight hour. I mean, sleep is precious, right? And surely that preciousness is worth more than \$16 an hour. Sounds like a done deal to me.

As the screenshots below show, a Premium Economy return flight between New York and Rome costs \$1,229. However if you depart in Business Class, you arrive fresh as a *margherita* (believe it or not, that's Italian for "daisy") in The Eternal City at 7:15 am, ready to walk off the plane and straight into a day on the town (not a recovery nap in the hotel). You then return to New York in Premium Economy looking at all the photos on your laptop, for just \$1,512, or \$282 more. Now that's what I call great value for the money.

#### Your trip summary

Premium Economy  
Round trip (Non-refundable)

**\$1,229** per person

Total \$1,229.55 (all passengers)  
Price and tax information

More room

- Wider seat with more legroom
- 2 free checked bags\*
- Priority security at participating airports
- Priority boarding
- Premium beverages

\*Only 1 free checked bag on flights to / from Alaska and Hawaii.

Includes taxes and carrier imposed fees.  
Bag and optional fees

Depart New York, NY to Rome, Italy  
Wednesday, August 4, 2021

4:45 PM → 7:15 AM 8h 30m Nonstop Premium Economy

AA 236 ■ 772-Boeing 777

**Overnight flight or connection**

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

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Return Rome, Italy to New York, NY  
Wednesday, August 18, 2021

9:40 AM → 1:20 PM 9h 40m Nonstop Premium Economy

AA 235 ■ 772-Boeing 777

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

## Your trip summary

Flagship Business / Premium Economy

Round trip (Non-refundable)

**\$1,512** per person

Total \$1,511.55 (all passengers)

Price and tax information [\[?\]](#)

Includes taxes and carrier imposed fees.  
Bag and optional fees [\[?\]](#)

Depart New York, NY to Rome, Italy

Wednesday, August 4, 2021

4:45 PM → 7:15 AM

8h 30m Nonstop

Flagship Business

AA 236 ■ 772-Boeing 777



**Overnight flight or connection**

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

Return Rome, Italy to New York, NY

Wednesday, August 18, 2021

9:40 AM → 1:20 PM

9h 40m Nonstop

Premium Economy

AA 235 ■ 772-Boeing 777



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

## SMART COMEBACK #3 TIME TO SPLURGE A BIT, FOR \$57 AN HOUR

Okay, now let's dial up the comfort notch using this mixed-cabin strategy. Imagine it's a special occasion, maybe an anniversary. Or maybe your team just won the World Series. I'd pitch to upgrade that Business Class night flight between Los Angeles and London with a First Class flight on the way there, and Business on the way back. That well-deserved comfort upgrade will only cost an extra \$57 per flight hour. Divide and conquer, whether you're leaving or heading home, a change-up just might win you the game.

## HOW TO SEARCH AND BOOK WITH KAYAK

While you can book these flights on the airlines' websites, the benefit of [Kayak.com](#) is that it lets you search for different classes on one round-trip ticket by **using the multi-city search option**. This way, you can select different classes of service as needed.

To leverage Kayak's search power, select "Multi-city" from the drop-down instead of "round-trip."

Enter your departure and destination, and departure and return dates, and class of service for each flight segment, and hit search. Easy.

## Find the right flight from hundreds of sites.

Multi-city 1 Adult 

Los Angeles (LAX)



London (LON)



Wed 8/4

First



London (LON)



Los Angeles (LAX)



Wed 8/18

Business

[+ Add another flight](#)[clear all](#)



# No Better Time to Consider Australia, Fiji, or Tahiti Than by Using Your Miles, Now—Risk-Free

February 2021

**Typically high-priced routes offer limited-time opportunities for those ready to commit — or speculate — risk-free.**

Looking to burst out of lockdown in 2021 with a trip to an exotic destination with wide-open spaces to roam and explore? We've got just the ticket. The USA has 88 people per square mile – Australia has just nine. So there's plenty of room to stretch out Down Under as well as lots of room on flights to get there, too.

Plus, we've also found great Business Class **deals to Fiji and Tahiti**, which are not only rare but also satisfy those requiring human distance.

So don't be late to this party. Once those vaccines become increasingly available, you can bet you won't be the only one itching to take a life-changing trip. A needle in your arm is one thing, a needle in a haystack is quite another.

We've been finding some great deals on these routes as reported in our alerts [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#):

- Air Tahiti Nui – Los Angeles to Papeete, Tahiti
- Fiji Airways – Los Angeles to Nadi, Fiji
- Fiji Airways – San Francisco to Nadi
- Qantas – Los Angeles to Brisbane
- Qantas – San Francisco to Sydney

Check out the charts below for more details about **which partner points to use** to grab these deals, and browse current availability after July when Australia is expected to reopen its international border. Don't delay, [not every boomerang comes back](#).

What's more, [many airlines included mileage award tickets in their “change fee waiver” policies due to the virus](#). The policy does vary by airline (see our widget [here](#)), but in general, the policy waives the redeposit fee for mileage award bookings. That alleviates a lot of the pressure of whether to book or not. Many of these airline waivers are still in place at publication time.

## MILES & POINTS OPPORTUNITIES NOW

Flights to Fiji and Tahiti are few and far between, so finding mileage award seats is usually a pipedream. Not now. We found a number of seats available from July through November, as you can see below.

Airline / 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
Air Tahiti Nui - Los Angeles to Papete	Nov.			Nov.		
Fiji Airways - Los Angeles to Nadi	July, Aug., Sept., Nov.,	July, Aug.		Aug., Sept.		
Fiji Airways - San Francisco to Nadi	July, Aug., Sept.			Aug., Sept.		
Qantas - Los Angeles to Brisbane	July,	July	Aug.	Aug., Sept., Oct.	Aug., Oct.	July,

Airline / 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
Qantas - San Francisco to Sydney	July, Sept.		July, Aug.	July, Oct.	July, Aug., Oct.	July, Aug.

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

## GET UP TO 5 CENTS OF VALUE WITH MILES NOW

While Business Class to these destinations can easily run \$5,000 to \$14,000, it's tempting to wait until there's even more availability. But now that you know you can snag seats with miles, compare the booking currencies you have, starting at just 140,000 Amex points or 154,500 Chase points for Business Class round-trip.

Carrier / Route	Partner Currency	Currency Cost	Partner Points
Air Tahiti Nui - Los Angeles to Papetee	Air Tahiti Nui	120000	
	American	160000	Marriott
Fiji Airways - Los Angeles to Nadi	Fiji Airways	110000	
	American	160000	Marriott
Fiji Airways - San Francisco to Nadi	Alaska	110000	Marriott
	British Airways	185500	Amex, Chase
Qantas - Los Angeles to Brisbane	Cathay	140000	Amex, Citi
	Japan Airlines	160000	Marriott
	Fiji Airways	110000	
	American	160000	Marriott
	Alaska	110000	Marriott
	British Airways	185500	Amex, Chase
	Cathay	140000	Amex, Citi
	Japan Airlines	160000	Marriott
	Qantas	216800	Citi
	American	160000	Marriott

Carrier / Route	Partner Currency	Currency Cost	Partner Points
Qantas - San Francisco to Sydney	Alaska	110,000	Marriott
	British Airways	154,500	Amex, Chase
	Cathay	140,000	Amex, Citi
	Japan Airlines	160,000	Marriott
Qantas - San Francisco to Sydney	Qantas	216800	Citi
	American	160000	Marriott
	Alaska	110,000	Marriott
	British Airways	154,500	Amex, Chase
	Cathay	140,000	Amex, Citi
	Japan Airlines	160,000	Marriott

## STILL NEED MORE REASONS TO GO?

**Papeete:** The capital of French Polynesia, otherwise known as Tahiti, is the gateway to a tropical paradise of 118 islands and atolls scattered across an iridescent aquamarine sea. Use this vibrant, multicultural city – known for its lively nightlife and black pearls – as your base to island-hop and find your own dreamy Bali Hai.

**Nadi:** Beach lovers to this Fiji destination make a beeline for its beautiful palm-fringed strands, from white sandy crescents to rocky coral stretches. Meanwhile, snorkelers and divers head to the dazzling underwater seascapes and endless coral reefs of Fiji's many gorgeous islands. No wonder "The Blue Lagoon" was filmed here.



St. Regis Bora Bora, Tahiti



# Curious Lockdown Fare Trends, February 2021 Edition

February 2021

**With Dubai prices falling 48%, what else is going on these days?**

Call me old-fashioned, but I would have thought that fares right now were being deeply discounted across the board.

Alas, that's not true.

For example, one year ago, Virgin Atlantic's New York-London round-trip in Business Class (pre-lockdown) was \$3,184. Now it's only \$2,049.

And United's Chicago-Amman, Jordan, fares are about the same.

A year ago, British Airways Business Class from Dallas to Dubai cost \$4,389, whereas today it's just \$2,280.

Makes sense, there are lockdowns happening across the world.

But look at the New York-Abu Dhabi route. It costs \$5,746 and Abu Dhabi is only 140 miles from Dubai. Don't forget you could just get an Uber to head over there.



FCF Tongue Twister: How many high-fare bugaboos can an Abu Dhabian do?

Needless to say, airlines are not deeply discounting everywhere, but if you know where to look you can find those sweet deals.

## WHY LOCKDOWN AIRFARES AREN'T ALL THEY'RE CRACKED DOWN TO BE

We looked at a number of routes and fares and compared them with pre-lockdown fares from 12 months ago. So you can use this special report for ideas on what to book while the going is good, and also to stay informed about what's really happening in the air travel sphere.

The moral of the story is that it's not a pure buyer's market. Don't expect those special premium airfare deals to fall into your lap without some know-how and effort.

## WORLD WRAP: FARE FLUCTUATIONS IN FOCUS

Here's a high-level, unscientific overview of some of the airlines and routes FCF is monitoring right now:

### **Asia: ↑ Fares are higher from 6%-101%.**

Example: Business Class from United's Los Angeles to Tokyo used to be \$4,590 – now it's \$5,400+.

United and All Nippon's Los Angeles to Beijing used to be \$2,408 – now it's \$4,838+.

### **Europe: ↓ Fares are down 36%-50%.**

Example: American's Business Class from Chicago to Rome is often over \$3,600+ – now it's \$1,864, as are many other routes.

### **South America: ↓ Fares are down 62%-83%.**

Example: American and United's Business Class from Houston to Rio de Janeiro used to be \$8,505+ – now it's \$1,470, a savings of \$7,035.

### **Africa: ↑ Fares are up to Johannesburg 100% and Nairobi 63%.**

Example: Business Class from Delta's New York to Johannesburg used to often be in the low \$3,000's – now it's \$6,799. Delta and KLM's Los Angeles to Nairobi used to be \$3,319 now it's \$5,407.

**Middle East:** 21% higher in some markets, lower in others (42% to 48%). In some markets there hasn't been any change.

Example: British Airways' Business Class from Dallas to Dubai used to be \$4,389 – now it's \$2,280, while Etihad's New York to Abu Dhabi used to be \$4,763 – today it's \$5,746.

Route	Today's Price	Airline	Last Year's Price	Difference
Dallas - Dubai	\$2,280	British Airways	\$4,389	-\$2,109 -48%
New York - Dubai	\$2,617	British Airways	\$4,479	-\$1,862 -42%
New York - Abu Dhabi	\$5,746	Etihad	\$4,763	\$983 21%

Route	Today's Price	Airline	Last Year's Price	Difference	
Chicago - Amman	\$2,953	United	\$2,953	\$0	0%
Atlanta - Istanbul	\$2,638	United	\$4,508	-\$1,870	-41%
New York - Tel Aviv	\$2,790	British Airways	\$3,420	-\$630	-18%
Washington, DC - Tel Aviv	\$2,705	Virgin	\$3,525	-\$820	-23%
New York - Johannesburg	\$6,799	Delta	\$3,399	\$3,400	100%
Los Angeles - Nairobi	\$5,407	Delta, KLM	\$3,319	\$2,088	63%
Houston - Rio de Janeiro	\$1,470	American, United	\$8,505	-\$7,035	-83%
Los Angeles - Sao Paulo	\$1,291	Delta	\$3,381	-\$2,090	-62%
Los Angeles - Tokyo	\$5,491	United, All Nippon	\$4,590	\$901	20%
Los Angeles - Beijing	\$4,838	United, All Nippon	\$2,408	\$2,430	101%
Newark - Singapore	\$4,066	Singapore	\$3,850	\$216	6%
San Francisco - Taipei	\$5,200	United	\$4,750	\$450	9%
Chicago - Rome	\$1,864	American	\$3,656	-\$1,792	-49%
Los Angeles - London	\$2,050	Virgin Atlantic	\$4,100	-\$2,050	-50%
Miami - Madrid	\$1,977	American, British Airways, Finnair, Iberia	\$2,953	-\$976	-33%
New York - London	\$2,049	Virgin Atlantic	\$3,184	-\$1,135	-36%

Remember, many things are not only different these days, but **counterintuitive**. Stay tuned.