

A

Cheap Domestic First Class Short-Haul Mileage Awards on Delta

January 2021

How to squeeze value from a Delta SkyMile

Nowadays, getting more than a penny of value out of a Delta SkyMile is a tall order. For example, a \$1,300 transcontinental domestic First Class flight costs 120,000 SkyMiles – which is about a cent a mile.

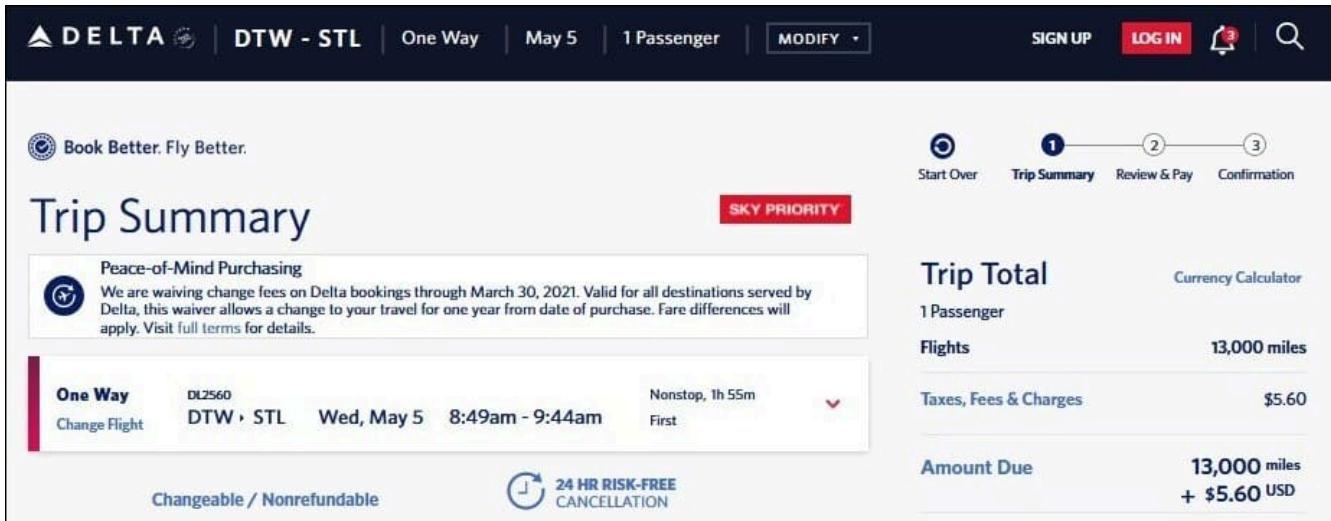
Flying to Europe, you can easily spend 360,000 miles on a \$2,500 Business Class ticket, netting much less than a penny in value for your SkyMiles (whereas with Amex and other currencies, you can [get 4X+ the value](#)).

So what if I could show you how to get 2 cents of value per mile on short-haul First Class Delta trips? Not great, but double or more value than you usually get now, right?

DECISIONS, DELTA, DECISIONS

It's a long-time travel conundrum: [Should I pay with cash or miles?](#)

The answer is simply a matter of going to the calculator. Check out the example below, which allows you to redeem miles for 3.2 cents each, for the St. Louis-Detroit \$454 round-trip First Class fare. In this case, using miles was the obvious way to go.



Trip Summary

SKY PRIORITY

Peace-of-Mind Purchasing
We are waiving change fees on Delta bookings through March 30, 2021. Valid for all destinations served by Delta, this waiver allows a change to your travel for one year from date of purchase. Fare differences will apply. Visit full terms for details.

One Way DL2560 DTW - STL Wed, May 5 8:49am - 9:44am Nonstop, 1h 55m First

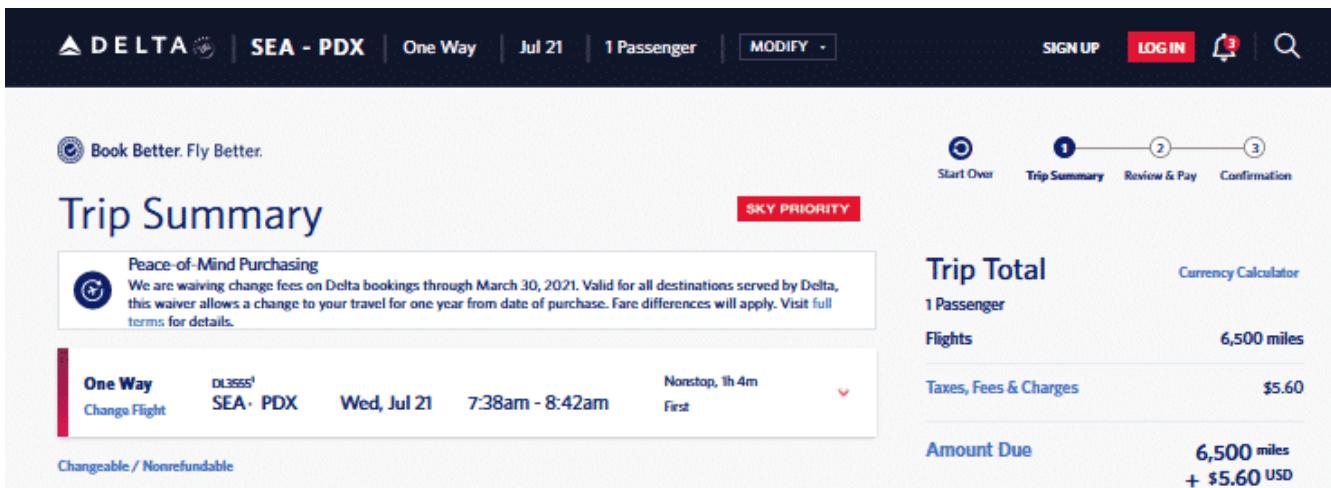
Changeable / Nonrefundable 24 HR RISK-FREE CANCELLATION

Trip Total 1 Passenger 13,000 miles

Flights Taxes, Fees & Charges \$5.60

Amount Due 13,000 miles + \$5.60 USD

Delta is also offering low-cost award rates on routes like Seattle to Portland. See screenshot below for 6,500 miles one-way.



Trip Summary

SKY PRIORITY

Peace-of-Mind Purchasing
We are waiving change fees on Delta bookings through March 30, 2021. Valid for all destinations served by Delta, this waiver allows a change to your travel for one year from date of purchase. Fare differences will apply. Visit full terms for details.

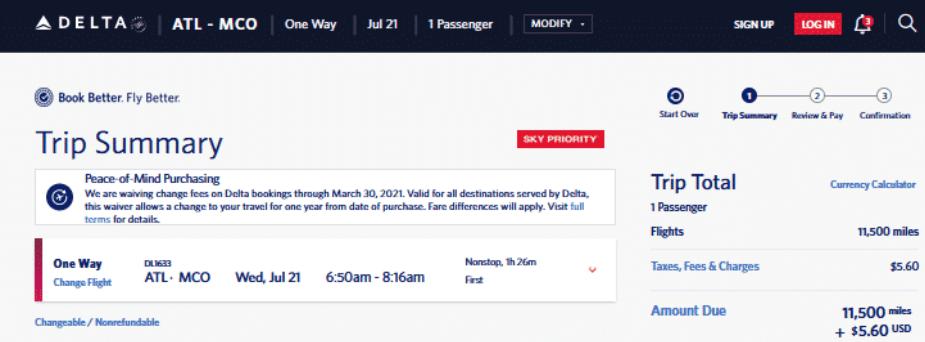
One Way DL3655¹ SEA - PDX Wed, Jul 21 7:38am - 8:42am Nonstop, 1h 4m First

Changeable / Nonrefundable

Trip Total 1 Passenger 6,500 miles

Flights Taxes, Fees & Charges \$5.60

Amount Due 6,500 miles + \$5.60 USD



Trip Summary

SKY PRIORITY

Peace-of-Mind Purchasing
We are waiving change fees on Delta bookings through March 30, 2021. Valid for all destinations served by Delta, this waiver allows a change to your travel for one year from date of purchase. Fare differences will apply. Visit full terms for details.

One Way DL3653 ATL - MCO Wed, Jul 21 6:50am - 8:16am Nonstop, 1h 26m First

Changeable / Nonrefundable

Trip Total 1 Passenger 11,500 miles

Flights Taxes, Fees & Charges \$5.60

Amount Due 11,500 miles + \$5.60 USD

Atlanta to Orlando for as low as 11,500 miles one-way.

The deal also flips around advantageously. For example, if you live in Orlando, you can fly to Atlanta for just 11,500 miles one-way in First Class.

Here are some of the lowest cost First Class awards we found on Delta.

Route	Cash Cost R/T	Miles Cost R/T	Value of Miles
Atlanta to Orlando	\$445	23,000	1.9¢
Minneapolis to Chicago	\$405	23,000	1.8¢
Minneapolis to St. Louis	\$465	25,000	1.9¢
Detroit to Chicago	\$409	14,000	2.9¢
Detroit to St. Louis	\$420	13,000	3.2¢
Detroit to Washington, DC	\$459	25,000	1.8¢
Seattle to Medford	\$365	14,000	2.6¢
Seattle to Portland	\$340	13,000	2.6¢
New York to Buffalo	\$405	20,000	2¢
New York to Chicago	\$475	23,000	2.1¢
New York to Portland (ME)	\$385	23,000	1.7¢
New York to Raleigh	\$415	24,000	1.7¢
New York to Columbus, Ohio	\$437	24,000	1.8¢
New York to Pittsburgh	\$425	24,000	1.8¢
Boston to New York	\$370	22,000	1.7¢
Los Angeles to Las Vegas	\$440	24,000	1.8¢
Los Angeles to Phoenix	\$445	17,000	2.6¢
Los Angeles to Reno	\$345	19,000	1.8¢
Raleigh to Boston	\$445	25,000	1.8¢
Raleigh to New York	\$411	23,000	1.8¢



Nine Reasons Why This United Soap Opera Is Heading for Another Season

January 2021

Explore nine different ways why Amex points are better to collect than Chase points for United flights even though Chase is a partner with United and Amex is not.

This one is like a scene from a soap opera. Blaine is married to Storm but is secretly seeing Echo, who was separated at birth from Blaine's first wife Drucilla, thought to be lost in a Peruvian rainforest.

Funny thing is, airlines and banks are like soap operas too. Chase is a partner of United, yet Amex is so much better for United than Chase. Let's unravel this tangled web.

Most United-focused travelers go for co-branded credit cards such as Chase Infinite, Gateway, Explorer, Business, and Business Club because they think they're getting special or targeted benefits.

Meanwhile, shrewd United elites go for more lucrative points-earning cards that allow access to many more opportunities, including United flights via United airline partners. But then they discover they've made the mistake of going with Chase, thinking that because United is a direct Chase partner, that's the better way to go.

Cue the music: Dun Dun *DUN*.

Lover, beware: Even though all the so-called "experts" tout Chase cards ...

I'm here to tell you that it's all a dream.

Why? Because **United flights cost up to 50% more with United miles than they do with AMEX points.**

Check out the table below.

**If You're a United Flyer,
Amex Points Crush MileagePlus Partner Chase**

To	Cost Using United Miles (e.g. Chase Points)	Amex Partner	Partner Miles Cost	Partner Level of Availability Compared to United	AMEX Savings Over United and Chase	
Europe	140,000	All Nippon	88,000	Same	52,000	37%
Hawaii	80,000-100,000	Air Canada	50,000	Same	30,000-50,000	38%-50%
Caribbean	60,000-80,000	Air Canada	50,000	Same	10,000-30,000	17%-38%
South America	120,000	All Nippon	88,000	Same	32,000	27%
North America	70,000	Air Canada	50,000	Same	20,000	29%

Let's cut to the, er, chase (pun intended). Look at those last two columns. They show you what United flyers save by using Amex points for United flights, rather than Chase points. Those are big savings.

9 Reasons to Go with an Amex Card Instead

- [Amex](#) has 11 more partners than Chase. That can be problematic in a soap opera, but when it comes to travel, more partners mean better options and better deals and better availability of premium

discount saver awards.

- Want to fly Emirates, one of the world's greatest flying experiences? Well, you can't with a United co-branded card because United and Emirates are not partners. However, you can if you transfer Amex Rewards points to Emirates.
- Awards typically cost less with [Amex](#). You can save up to 45,000 miles for travel to Asia and Europe **when booking a United flight** with partner All Nippon miles, accessible with partner Amex Rewards points. Talk about a love triangle.
- Unlike United, most Amex partners publish an award chart or calculator online, so you can budget properly or determine where you even stand.
- Amex partners ANA and Air Canada have fixed price awards for partners, not flakey fluctuating ones.
- Amex Membership Rewards periodically offers great bonuses—up to 40%—with [British Airways](#) and [Virgin Atlantic](#).
- American Express Platinum and Centurion cardholders barely have to lift a finger to knock off a couple of hundred dollars (or even thousands) on lots of premium fares on a bunch of airlines (25), thanks to [Amex's International Airline Program \(IAP\)](#).
- Bulk savings: You can buy up to 500K Amex miles vs. United's 175K (excluding bonus).
- Free Upgrades: United does not offer First Class to Asia. The best you can get is Business. So, your only option is to redeem miles to book First Class with one of United's partners, which will cost you a lot—220,000 for flights to Japan on partner All Nippon, for example, 240,000 to North Asia, and 280,000 for Central and South Asia. However: All Nippon, an Amex Card points partner, often has [First Class mileage availability](#)—and **for less than what United usually charges for Business Class**. And All Nippon only charges 150,000 miles, 70,000 fewer than United. That's right, 150,000 miles for free First Class award tickets.

[More on my favorite credit cards for premium travelers here.](#)



Looking Forward to 2021: FCF's Crystal Ball Predictions

January 2021

Ambitious premium travelers have much to hope for.

First of all, FCF has a new crystal ball. After all, our last one missed the lockdowns! So we got rid of that one and procured a new beauty, featuring high-quality bohemia crystal from the Czech Republic. Now we're ready to see those premium travel trends clearly in 2021.



HINDSIGHT IS 2020. FORESIGHT IS 2021.

2020 was not only a tough year to predict, but also a tough year for many to live through. I know you've probably thought that a million times over the last year. As a glass-half-full kinda guy, I'm feeling optimistic about 2021 as **many low- or no-lockdown U.S. states and countries around the world are flourishing** and as the premium travel opportunities are starting to roll in all around us.

If there's one thing that confinement does, it reminds us of the power of travel. Travel [is good for us on every level](#), especially the soul. That's why I'm happy to report that it's picking up again. There were about 500,000 U.S. travelers each day back in June — up from the low on April 14 of just 87,534 — and now that figure is regularly reaching [over the million-person mark per day](#). It's only about half of what it was last year, but it's steadily growing.

2020 RECAP (DO WE HAVE TO?!)

What Didn't Surprise Us

[American](#), [Delta](#), and [United](#) were quick to offer lots of premium award space when lockdown hit. Supply, meet demand. However, the cynics might say it's easy to look generous when planes are empty.

Oneworld First Class fares to Europe flew low enough to scrape Big Ben on the way in. A welcoming, although not a surprising outcome given the circumstances.

Change fees were eliminated on [American](#), [Delta](#), and [United](#), as well as many others, altering how speculative ambitious travelers are willing to be. Whoo-hoo.

What Did Surprise Us

Delta was as quick to take away award space as it was to give it out. C'mon guys.

There were tax breaks seemingly everywhere. Not the IRS, we're talking airline taxes. [More here about that](#). And while we're talking about it, a bleedin' smack across the north and south for British Airways, which *hasn't* reduced taxes.

FARE TRENDS

In 2020 we locked our eyes and computer mice on these happy travel trends.

Coast to coast with the most (actually, the least): transcontinental fares as low as \$[797](#) [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

Caribbean canoodling: Business Class fares as low as \$261 From Miami to San Juan, Puerto Rico, and countless others in the \$500 range. More on current low Caribbean fares [here](#).

Flights and fares heading south: Business Class flash fares to South America as low as \$[1,017](#) from Chicago to Rio de Janeiro and from all over in the \$1,500 to \$1,700 range.

Euro bingo: Business Class flash fares to Europe as low as \$[1,727](#), and First Class flash fares to Europe as low as \$[2,953](#).

Asia/Canada cancan: Business Class flash fares to Asia from Canada as low as \$[1,701](#) and \$[2,390](#) from the East Coast.

Safari suiters: Business Class flash fares to Africa as low as \$1,808.

2020 MILES TRENDS

Delta the “Care Less” Airline.

At 360,000 miles to Europe, Delta doesn't seem to care if you can get an award seat or not. We recently checked 12 Delta routes to Asia and none had availability for less than 360,000 miles round-trip. In [April](#), award space was wide open at discount levels for routes we checked to Europe, and in [June](#) most of the European routes still showed space. In [September](#), FCF surveyed 34 international nonstop routes on Delta and found that only seven had a decent amount of low-cost award space. If you play it smart, take advantage

of domestic mileage award costs that have been low for short-haul destinations as reported [here](#), and for international destinations [here](#).

American the “Some Care” airline.

Transcon award costs were low as seen [here](#). In [May](#), American offered low-cost award space to Hawaii and the Caribbean. Research we did back in May 2019, November 2019, December 2019, and even January 2020 showed, at the most, nine days of availability over a year’s time on the Chicago- or New York-London route. Then in [April](#), thanks to lockdowns, we saw [161 days with availability—1,689% more!](#)

United the “More Care” airline.

2019 showed, at the most, four days of discount availability over a year on United’s Newark/New York-London route. In [April](#) 2020, our research showed [278 days with availability—6,850% more!](#) Unprecedented Business Class opportunities to London were also available from [Chicago](#), [Denver](#), [Houston](#), [Los Angeles](#), [San Francisco](#), and [Washington, DC](#), and for four-plus seats for travel from September to February. In [June](#), on **United to Europe** for up to four travelers (and often more), we spotted routes that saved up to **190,000 miles, or 61% to [Lisbon](#), [London](#), or Munich.**

LOOKING FORWARD (IN EVERY WAY)

Ok, I’ve just plugged the Crystal Ball into the USB outlet, and here’s what I’m seeing for the next year. Drum roll, please.

2021 Miles & Points Predictions

Go for it. Speculative bookings are relatively [risk-free with no change fees](#), and anyway, booking and planning travel is a great way to [boost your happiness](#).

Point transfers. Credit cards will be giving bonuses for [transferring points](#), so be sure to plan ahead to seize them.

Sale time. Airlines will be offering discounts for [buying miles](#) or bonus mileage promotions. Be ready to jump when the opportunity arises as deals will come with the excess capacity, then go as capacity reduces. **Don’t be the last to get in on the deals.**

Kickstarter. Airlines from low- or no-lockdown countries will be offering creative promotions. **The mad dash to get out of dodge will emerge before long.**

Domestic award travel. Domestic mileage award costs will remain low for many short-haul routes on [American](#) and [Delta](#).

International award travel. Delta will continue to be [stingy](#), but the **massive opportunity** will still be by [booking Delta flights through Virgin with Amex points](#). American and United will also be Scrooge-like, although United upgrades to South America may remain available. Everywhere else, not so much, the more people look to breakthrough the lockdown.

That said, **expect Flash Award Availability** to be what marks the year. Airlines won't figure out how to optimize revenue, but they will try and will be experimenting all the time. **Be ready to jump when the deals hit.**

Premium Fare Forecast

A permanent new travel order. Airlines are increasing capacity to warm weather destinations and low-fear and low-lockdown destinations such as Florida and the Caribbean. Vaccines will draw travelers on the fence back into the air, and as more [countries open](#) up with fewer restrictions with more and more data coming in confirming a survival rate of 99.9%+.

Low fares to many destinations are available now for those with plans set in stone or those planning to travel [close in](#), so [buy when the deals are extraordinary](#). However, if you do buy now and need to make a change, you should only change during a sale to avoid paying an increase in fare. [Keep a close eye on FCF Alerts for sales.](#)

Extra discounts are there waiting to be found through programs like the Amex [International Airline Program](#) — and could increase as **airlines look for under-the-radar ways to discount**. Keep an eye out in unexpected places for higher-than-usual discounts in 2021.

Business travel will be slow to return and that means one thing: Business and First Class cabins will be relatively empty, for a while anyway. That means another thing...

Deeply Discounted First Class fares could become more common, if only on an under-the-radar, flash basis, on airlines that traditionally don't like to discount the front of the plane, like Air France, Lufthansa, SWISS, and Singapore Airlines.

Transcon fares lower than normal will continue as the airlines need to fill premium seats lost to low business-travel demand, so don't mess with miles; save them for big long-haul First Class adventures. Airlines are going to be stingy with miles anyway, minus flash deals. The formula for when to use miles or cash is [here](#).

The Caribbean. You can grab low fares now to the islands now, many of which are open for business. They're so low we recommend you use cash not miles to get the best bang for your buck. More on current low Caribbean fares [here](#).

Europe. Routes to destinations with low- or no-lockdown will have higher fares. High-lockdown cities, such as Los Angeles, New York, and London, will see lower fares due to significantly less demand. Airlines will

continue to pull and/or reduce flights to cities locked down.

CONCLUSION

With a virus-survival rate of 99.9%+, things could be a lot worse. As more people realize and appreciate their [odds of living](#) through this ‘pandemic,’ deals will dry up. The best opportunities will not last, and you want to seize them before the later travel waves hit. The last to get in will pay the price the airlines really, really want them to, as usual.

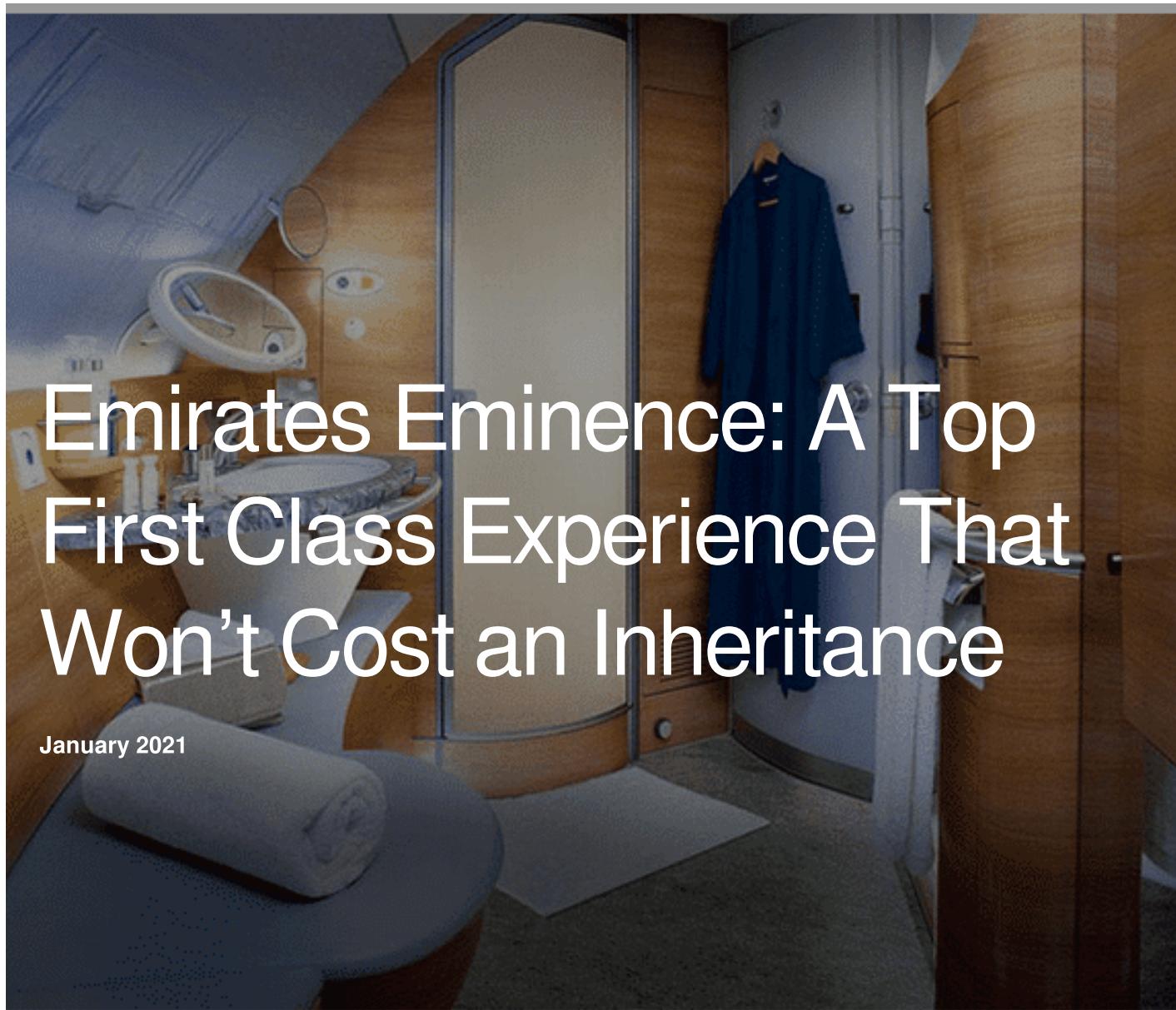
THANK YOU

Happy New Year to all our wonderful readers. **Many thanks for sticking with FCF through thick and thin.** Don’t forget [FCF’s Crisis Help Desk](#).

Here’s to some great travel adventures in 2021.

See you up front,

Matt Bennett
mr.upgrade@firstclassflyer.com



Emirates Eminence: A Top First Class Experience That Won't Cost an Inheritance

January 2021

Now that 2020 is over, you're thinking more about diving back into long-haul travel if you haven't already. And if so, we've got good news for you.

We put together this special report to help you kick off 2021 in the right direction. Because hey, we all need some positivity right now. I can't think of a better way to head into the new year than with a top-tier First Class ticket on Emirates in your hand to an exotic locale across the world.

How much do I love the opportunities we're seeing? Let's run through the 9 First Class reasons why I'm excited for travel in 2021 — all available through the airline's points-to-miles transfers with Amex or Chase points.

1. DUBAI IS NOW OPEN FOR TRAVEL

Dubai has announced it is [open to tourists](#) and Americans (among many other nations) who only have to present a valid negative COVID-19 PCR test taken no more than 96 hours before departure. Remember, Emirates also has a [vast route network beyond Dubai](#) for those that have been there and done that.

2. THE OPULENT B777 EXPERIENCE HAS ARRIVED IN THE U.S.

As we've reported previously, Emirates came out with an [amazing new B777 First Class seat](#) back in December 2017. It's a top-shelf experience and debatably the best in its class.

Until now, the problem was that their best First Class offering was only available on European routes. But now the door has opened to the U.S. We're currently seeing it on the New York-Dubai route until March 27, 2021. There's only limited award availability for this flight, and availability changes by the minute, from okay to nothing, back to okay. So be sure and check often if you don't snag it the first time around. While it costs 217,500 Emirates miles, remember you can get them by using your Amex or Chase points. Otherwise, the published fare can easily run \$23,013+.



Emirates New B777 First Class

3. THE OPULENT B777 EXPERIENCE OUTSIDE THE U.S.

In addition to the seats being the epitome of plush, there are ways to experience this seat outside the U.S. Here are some of the routes we found with discount miles award availability abroad:

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
Dubai - Brussels	Feb.	March, April	May to Nov.	Feb.		March to Nov.
Dubai - Frankfurt	April, Oct.	April	Feb., March, May to July, Sept., Nov.	April, Oct.	April	Feb., March, May to July, Sept., Nov.
Dubai - Geneva	July	Sept., Oct.	Aug.	May, Aug.		June, July
Dubai - Riyadh	Aug., Nov.	April, Oct.	Feb., March, May, June to Aug., Sept., Oct.	Feb., Aug., Oct., Nov.	March, April, Sept.	May, June to Oct.
Dubai - Seychelles	Feb.	Feb., July	March, April to June, Aug. to Nov.	March	Feb.	March, April to June, July to Nov.
Dubai - Singapore	Feb., March	March	April to June, Sept to Nov.	July	Feb., March., April	May, June, Oct., Nov.
Dubai - Vienna	March, April, Oct.	Feb., May, June, July	May, Aug., Sept.	March, April, Oct.	Feb., June	May, July to Sept.

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

4. AWARD TRAVEL TO DUBAI FROM THE MIDWEST & EAST COAST

Here are some of the routes you can fly the airline's normal (still great) [First Class](#) cabin at their discount saver award rate of 217,500 Emirates miles: Boston, Chicago, and Washington, DC, to Dubai.

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
Boston - Dubai		Feb., March, Sep. to Nov.	April, Oct., Nov.	Feb., March, April	Feb. to April, Sept. to Nov.	Oct., Nov.
Chicago - Dubai	Nov., March	Feb.	Sept., Oct.	Feb.	March	Sept. to Nov.
Washington, DC - Dubai	Feb., March, May, Oct.	Feb., April, Aug., Sept.	Sept.	March, June, Aug. to Nov.	May	

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

5. ONE (RELATIVELY) LOW-FARE TRANSATLANTIC ROUTE

Let's say you're not really a loyalty-program gamer, but you have the budget and want to get good value. Great. There's one hidden North America gateway that you can save 69% or more off fares like New York-Dubai's whopping \$23,013 regular First Class fare. Which one you ask? Toronto, which comes in at \$7,044, and is serviced by both [B777s \(though not the newest-seat ones\)](#) and [A380s depending on your travel dates](#).

Route	AirCraft	Flight Time R/T	R/T Published Fare
Toronto - Dubai	777/A380	28 Hours	\$7,044

6. THE MAGNIFICENT A380

If you love flying, [this is one of those must-do experiences](#) of a lifetime. I've flown on the A380 — the largest passenger aircraft in the world — many times, and it's a real treat. Even though flying isn't always fun, it's almost guaranteed to be interesting when you're aboard one of these mammoth luxury birds, which come replete with showers. While many are temporarily "retired" right now, here are the routes where you can still enjoy the A380 experience:

Dubai to Amman, Cairo, Jeddah, London, Moscow, and Paris. Here are some of the routes we found with discount miles award availability:

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
Dubai - Amman			Feb., March			Feb., March
Dubai - Cairo		Feb.	Feb., March to Nov.			Feb. to Nov.
Dubai - Jeddah	May, July	July	Feb. to April, June, Aug. to Nov.	May to July		Feb. to April, June, July, Aug. to Nov.
Dubai - London	April		May to July, Sept. to Oct.		Aug., Oct.	Feb. to July, Sept., Oct., Nov.
Dubai - Moscow	March to June		July to Oct.	Feb., April to June	April, Sept.	March, July, Aug.
Dubai - Paris	April, Aug.	July	Feb., March, April, May, June, Aug., Sept. to Nov.		April, Aug.	Feb., March, May to July, Sept. to Nov.

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



Emirates A380 Shower / Room

7. LOW-FARE FIRST CLASS ROUTES ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD

Perhaps you're in another part of the world and you want an opulent flight. Well, these options would make a pretty special birthday surprise for a significant other. Here are some routes around the globe we found with disproportionately low fares for Emirates First Class:

Route	AirCraft	Flight Time R/T	R/T Published Fare
Bangkok - Hong Kong	A380	6 Hours	\$804
Sydney - Christchurch	A380	6 Hours	\$1,661
Dubai - Riyadh	777	4.5 Hours	\$2,662
Dubai - Jeddah	A380	6 Hours	\$3,672

8. HIGH-FARE ROUTES YET LOW-MILEAGE MORSELS

Like our previous options, these are great if you're out in the world and want to fly in the grand seats, but pay with your miles. For example, Dubai to Jeddah has a high fare of \$3,672 but low mileage requirements at just 45,000 round-trip. More examples below:

Route	Aircraft	Flight Time R/T	Emirates R/T Mileage Cost	R/T Published Fare
Dubai - Jeddah	A380	6 Hours	45,000	\$3,672
Dubai - Manchester	A380	16 Hours	135,000	\$9,269
Dubai - Cairo	A380	8.5 Hours	82,500	\$5,017

Route	Aircraft	Flight Time R/T	Emirates R/T Mileage Cost	R/T Published Fare
Dubai - Frankfurt	B777	16 Hours	135,000	\$8,466
Dubai - Brussels	B777	15 Hours	135,000	\$8,752
Dubai - Geneva	B777	14 Hours	135,000	\$8,847
Dubai - Paris	A380	15 Hours	135,000	\$9,552
Dubai - Moscow	A380	10.5 Hours	135,000	\$9,215

9. EMIRATES PARTNER MILES OPPORTUNITIES

As of September, 2021, Emirates will no longer offer its First Class award space to its partner Japan Airlines. So if you want to save miles, book now on JAL -- a Marriott Points transfer partner -- as it offers the best savings, from 37,500 to 52,500 miles round-trip less than Emirates charges.

Route	Aircraft	Emirates R/T Mileage Cost	Japan Airlines R/T Mileage Cost	Savings
Dubai - Singapore	B777	157,500	120,000	37,500
Dubai - Bangkok	A380	157,500	120,000	37,500
Sydney - Christchurch	A380	108,000	65,000	43,000
Dubai - Moscow	A380	135,000	90,000	45,000
Toronto - Dubai	A380	217,500	165,000	52,500
Dubai - Tokyo	A380	187,500	135,000	52,500

EMIRATES COVID TESTING REQUIREMENTS

Don't let a little extra effort slow you down. Getting a covid test, which is required for Americans entering Dubai, is worth the effort. Here's everything you [need to fly Emirates today.](#)



Best FCF Fare & Miles Alerts Still Available

January 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 & Caribbean

[New Non-Stop Transcon Business Class Fares from \\$576](#)

[New Business Class Fares from All Over the Mainland U.S. and Canada to Hawaii from \\$576 With Alaska Airlines](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to The Bahamas from \\$477](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Aruba from \\$537](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Puerto Rico from \\$260](#)

[New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. to Saint Kitts from \\$604](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Grand Cayman from \\$512](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Jamaica from \\$523](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Antigua from \\$578](#)

[New Business Class Fares to the Dominican Republic from \\$491](#)

[New Business Class Fares from All Over the U.S. to San Jose, Costa Rica from \\$541](#)

Europe

[New First Class Fares from Boston and Miami to Naples, Italy from \\$3,110](#)

[New Business Class Fares from All Over the U.S. and Canada to Sweden from \\$2,050](#)

[New First Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Spain from \\$3,216](#)

[New Business Class Fares from All Over the U.S. to Amsterdam from \\$2,008](#)

[New Business Class Fares from All Over the U.S. to Zürich from \\$1,879](#)

[New Business Class Fares from All Over the U.S. and Canada to Athens from \\$2,012](#)

[New Business Class Fares from All Over the U.S. to Copenhagen from \\$1,999](#)

[New Business Class Fares from All Over the U.S. and Canada to Venice from \\$1,727](#)

[New Business Class Fares from All Over the U.S. to Spain from \\$2,005](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Portugal from \\$2,024](#)

[First Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Milan from \\$2,955](#)

[First Class Fares From the U.S. to Lisbon from \\$3,289](#)

[New *First Class* Fares from the U.S. to Italy from \\$2,953](#)

[New First Class Fares from the U.S. to Madrid from \\$3,053](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Zagreb from \\$2,125](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Warsaw from \\$2,073](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. to London from \\$2,049](#)

[New First Class Fares from Several U.S. Cities to Ibiza from \\$2,982](#)

[New First Class Fares from the U.S. to France from \\$3,423](#)

[New *First Class* Fares from the U.S. to Valencia and Barcelona from \\$2,953](#)

Asia

[New Premium Economy Fares from the U.S. to Thailand from \\$991](#)

[New Premium Economy Fares from the U.S. to Asia from \\$813](#)

Africa

[New Business Class Fares from Canada and U.S. to Kenya from \\$2,687](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Cape Town from \\$2,825](#)

[New Biz Class Fares from the Northeast and Canada to South Africa from \\$2,760](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Cairo from \\$2,061](#)

[Premium Economy Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Casablanca from \\$1,053](#)

[New Business Class Fares from All Over the U.S. to Lagos from \\$2,614](#)

South America

[New Business Class Fares from New York and Atlanta to Brazil from \\$1,877](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. & Canada to Peru from \\$791](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Argentina from \\$1,626](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Chile from \\$1,582](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Rio de Janeiro from \\$1,017](#)

South Pacific

[New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. to New Zealand from \\$3,892](#)

Mexico

[New Business Class Fares from All Over the U.S. and Canada to Cozumel from \\$478](#)

[Business Class Fares from All Over the U.S. and Canada to Mexico City from \\$472](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Mazatlan from \\$497](#)

[New Business Class Fares from All Over the U.S. to Acapulco from \\$505](#)

[New Business Class Fares from All Over the U.S. to Cancun from \\$439](#)

Middle East & India

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada to Dubai from \\$2,280](#)

[New Business Class Fares from Chicago and Montreal to India from \\$2,391](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Dakar from \\$2,253](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. & Canada to Tel Aviv from \\$2,242](#)

FCF SWEET REDEEMS

North America

[Unprecedented Transcon Business Class Award Availability Between New York and Los Angeles, American Airlines](#)

[Unprecedented Transcon Business Class Award Availability Between New York and San Francisco, American Airlines](#)

Europe

[Unprecedented United Business Class Opportunities from Newark and Many Other Cities to London](#)

Asia

[Forward Thinking Japan Airlines *First Class* Opportunities from San Francisco to Tokyo](#)

[Japan Airlines *First Class* Opportunities from New York to Tokyo for Two Seats](#)

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

Middle East

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

[Some Emirates *First Class* Discount Availability from Chicago to Dubai](#)

[Many Months with Emirates *First Class* Discount Availability from Washington, DC to Dubai](#)

[2021 Emirates *First Class* Discount Opportunities from Boston to Dubai](#)



Our SLS New Year Kickoff: Get Ready for Fireworks in 2021

January 2021

Aruba? Grand Cayman? St. Croix? You can have them for nothing with the SLS.

Our infamous Stopover Loophole Strategy (SLS) is being particularly productive right now. Along with welcoming in the new year with champagne and celebrations, the FCF research team were on their computers welcoming new ways to maximize your savings with this strategy. There might be as big an appetite for these deals as there is to saying good riddance to 2020!

The SLS is based on what's called a "stopover allowance," which is offered by a number of airlines. A stopover is defined as a planned stop between flight segments on a trip, i.e., more than four hours for domestic flights and 24 hours for international trips. The loophole we're talking about here is that these stops

are *sometimes* “allowed” for free for stays longer than 24 hours, or for a very small fee. So rather than thinking of them as something to avoid when you’re booking travel, think of them as a chance to score a side vacation (for days or weeks) in a great destination for nothing (or close to it). And believe it or not, it actually costs *less* to do this in some cases.

Right now, we’re spotting some great fares to the Caribbean (see our special report from this same January issue [here](#)). If you apply the SLS formula, you can score some of these gorgeous tropical destinations as a spectacular side trip nestled in the middle of an otherwise rather ordinary round-trip.

LIKE WOW: TROPICAL AND DOMESTIC STOPOVERS APLENTY

Example: A Los Angeles-Charlotte return flight in Business Class costs \$1,095. However if you **add in a stopover to the lovely St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands, you’ll pay \$263 LESS!** That’s a grand total of \$832 to get two different experiences for the price of one. It essentially means that the airline is paying you to snorkel, sunbake and cocktail-test. Count me in.

Or you could check out this well-worn route: instead of traveling round trip from Los Angeles to Chicago in Business Class for \$838, you can add St. Croix into the bargain for \$4 LESS.



Carambola Beach on beautiful St Croix

As our chart below shows, you can apply this idea to U.S. stopovers as well, not only in the Caribbean.

For example, you can fly from New York to Los Angeles and stop over in Phoenix to catch some sun (and the Suns) for just \$11 more; or stop in Nashville to catch a show at the [Grand Ole Opry](#) (now open!) for only \$90 more.

And check out that Boston-San Francisco SLS: Add in a stop in Cabo and **SAVE \$179**. Whoops, I guess it's time for an afternoon nap before hitting the beach...

Example / Normal Trip	Normal Premium Fare R/T	Side Trip City	Premium Fare with Side Trip	Side Trip Cost / (Savings)	Link to Pre-Baked Trip (Fares Valid At Press Time, Will Change)
Los Angeles - Boston	\$1,060	Aruba	\$1,187	\$ 127.00	Sample
Los Angeles - Charlotte	\$1,095	St. Croix	\$832	\$ (263.00)	Sample
Los Angeles - Chicago	\$838	St. Croix	\$834	\$ (4.00)	Sample
Los Angeles - Miami	\$957	Grand Cayman	\$1,106	\$ 149.00	Sample
New York - Los Angeles	\$977	Nashville	\$1,067	\$ 90.00	Sample
New York - Los Angeles	\$977	Phoenix	\$988	\$ 11.00	Sample
Phoenix - Portland, Maine	\$1,049	Chicago	\$999	\$ (50.00)	Sample
Boston - San Francisco	\$1,655	San Jose del Cabo	\$1,476	\$ (179.00)	Sample
San Francisco - Philadelphia	\$895	San Juan	\$904	\$ 9.00	Sample
Montreal - Charlotte	\$583	San Juan	\$621	\$ 38.00	Sample
Toronto - Chicago	\$404	Cancun	\$451	\$ 47.00	Sample
Vancouver - New York	\$838	San Juan	\$922	\$ 84.00	Sample

WHO CAN USE THIS STRATEGY?

You. If you're a **leisure traveler** with the flexibility to add in a side trip when visiting friends or family across North America. Or, if you're a **business traveler** on a budget, but still want to sneak in a vacation before or after a domestic business trip.



India: The Latest Addition to FCF's Stopover Loophole Strategy

January 2021

Loop the loophole to India in Business Class via Europe or vice versa for less

“Incredible India” is the country’s slogan, and with FCF’s spectacular Stopover Loophole StrategyTM you can travel to India at an incredible price. Oh, and the TM? That stands for “Thanks, Matt!” You’re welcome.

This particular strategy introduces India to the SLS family. It combines Europe and India together to get you twice the travel experience for the price of one, more or less. The more expensive your trip to Europe, the more it makes sense to include India into the deal.

THE STOPOVER LOOPHOLE STRATEGY IN FIVE SENTENCES

Airlines *sometimes* allow you to stop in a city for more than the usually-permitted 24 hours, on an international route, on the way to another destination – for free or close to it. Usually the stopover is in that airline's hub city. But if you could stay there for a week and call it a vacation, why not?! That way you can visit two cities for the price of one, **or even less than the price of one**. Incredible.

THE SLS IN ACTION

Let's say Phyllis the foodie from Philly just has to get some international cuisine on her plate. She's been craving strawberries with lobster and *boudin noir* at Septime, down on the Rue de Charonne. Well, she could make that round-trip to Paris on British Airways in Business Class and pay \$3,335. Those would be some pricey strawberries...

Or she could really make a feast of her journey and add Mumbai to the menu. Trishna's famous butter garlic crab has been calling her name for a while now. So what do you think it would cost to add Mumbai to her Paris trip? It would *cost a total of \$3,030*. That's right, **she ADDS an amazing city such as Mumbai onto a Paris trip and pays \$305 LESS to do it**. Incredible India indeed.

Here's the recipe:



Mumbai Harbour

PHILADELPHIA TO PARIS EXAMPLE

Round trip · 1 · Business Class

Philadelphia ↔ Paris

Total price from **\$3,335**

 This airline may be offering additional flexibility for bookings. [More details](#)

Selected flights

 Tue, Apr 6 · 6:40 PM – 11:15 AM [†] British Airways · American, Iberia	10 hr 35 min PHL–CDG	1 stop 2 hr 5 min LHR
 Tue, Apr 20 · 10:30 AM – 3:35 PM British Airways · American, Iberia	11 hr 5 min CDG–PHL	1 stop 1 hr 45 min LHR

Booking options

 Book on Google with British Airways BA 66, BA 306, BA 307, BA 67	\$3,335	Select
---	---------	------------------------

PHILADELPHIA TO PARIS WITH A STOP IN MUMBAI -- \$305 LESS --

1 · Business Class

Multi-city trip

Total price from **\$3,030**

 This airline may be offering additional flexibility for bookings. [More details](#)

Selected flights

 Tue, Apr 6 · 6:40 PM – 11:55 PM [†] British Airways - American, Iberia	19 hr 45 min PHL–BOM	1 stop 3 hr 25 min LHR
 Tue, Apr 13 · 1:10 PM – 10:25 PM British Airways	12 hr 45 min BOM–CDG	1 stop 1 hr 35 min LHR
 Tue, Apr 20 · 12:10 PM – 5:50 PM British Airways, American - Iberia	11 hr 40 min CDG–PHL	1 stop 2 hr LHR

Fare options

 Book with British Airways Marketed as BA 66, BA 129, BA 198, BA 320, BA 309, BA 1539	Fare details unavailable	\$3,030	Select
---	--------------------------	---------	------------------------

Let's say Phyllis does it the other way round. She travels from Philadelphia to Mumbai with a stopover in Paris. **Using the genius of the SLS, she can add a stop in Paris for just \$115.** The City of Light for a lightweight price? I'll take it.

The chart below outlines the cost difference the SLS makes, but here are a couple more juicy morsels to note.

If you're a New Yorker going to Delhi, you can stopover in Rome for \$28 (less than a pumpkin ravioli with melted butter and sage from Il Chianti Osteria Toscana).

These SLS deals work best with American, British Airways and United.

Bon appetit!

Sample Opportunities Adding *Europe to India*

Airline	U.S. Origin	Stop 1	Normal Fare 1 Stop	Stop 2	2 Stop Fare	Cost Savings By Adding Stop 2	Link to Pre- Baked Trip
United	Newark	Mumbai	\$2,876	Lisbon	\$2,959	-\$83	Sample
British Airways/American	Chicago	Delhi	\$2,354	London	\$2,610	-\$256	Sample
United	Washington, DC	Chennai	\$2,747	Frankfurt	\$3,032	-\$285	Sample
British Airways	Miami	Chennai	\$2,736	Paris	\$2,851	-\$115	Sample
British Airways	Philadelphia	Mumbai	\$2,713	Paris	\$2,828	-\$115	Sample
British Airways	Dallas	Delhi	\$2,674	Madrid	\$2,681	-\$7	Sample
United	Boston	Mumbai	\$2,810	Zurich	\$2,847	-\$37	Sample
British Airways	New York	Delhi	\$2,354	Rome	\$2,382	-\$28	Sample

Sample Opportunities Adding *India to Europe*

Airline	U.S. Origin	Stop 1	Normal Fare 1 Stop	Stop 2	2 Stop Fare	Cost Savings By Adding Stop 2	Link to Pre- Baked Trip
United	Newark	Lisbon	\$2,215	Mumbai	\$2,926	-\$711	Sample
British Airways/American	Chicago	London	\$2,428	Delhi	\$2,611	-\$183	Sample
United	Washington, DC	Frankfurt	\$2,266	Chennai	\$3,032	-\$766	Sample
British Airways	Miami	Paris	\$2,570	Chennai	\$2,854	-\$284	Sample
British Airways	Philadelphia	Paris	\$3,335	Mumbai	\$3,030	\$305	Sample
British Airways	Dallas	Madrid	\$2,928	Delhi	\$2,697	\$231	Sample
United	Boston	Zurich	\$2,205	Mumbai	\$2,866	-\$661	Sample
British Airways	New York	Rome	\$1,927	Delhi	\$2,392	-\$465	Sample



Beat the 2020 Blues: Snag Yourself a Low-Cost Caribbean Vacation in 2021

January 2021

Business Class fares are dropping faster than coconuts from a palm tree.

The future is looking brighter and sunnier in 2021. We're happy to report that Caribbean islands are starting to open up again, and the low fares we're seeing make it so much sweeter.

We know a lot of you are thirsting to break out of the lockdown cloud and enjoy yourselves, so we've put together a list of those beautiful islands along with fares from a range of U.S. cities that are surprisingly low and only require proof of a negative COVID-19 test prior to arrival.

NEW WARM AND WELCOMING DEAL TREND

Alright let's get to the good stuff. We've seen Business Class fares as low as \$261 from Miami to San Juan, Puerto Rico, and in the \$500-range on many other routes. Even though some islands still require quarantine right now, **many don't** and you can lock in a great deal for later in 2021 either way. In fact, fares are so low that we recommend you use cash instead of miles.

To/From:	Miami	New York	Chicago	Dallas	Houston	San Francisco	Los Angeles
Aruba	\$466	\$566	\$879	\$748	\$656	\$758	\$726
Barbados	\$706	\$661	\$925	\$869	\$1,161	\$873	\$915
Belize	\$767	\$856	\$874	\$696	\$841	\$922	\$696
Punta Cana	\$496	\$520	\$694	\$723	\$990	\$990	\$695
Montego Bay	\$496	\$534	\$610	\$740	\$762	\$785	\$796
Bahamas	\$510	\$488	\$817	\$823	\$910	\$603	\$793
Saint Croix	\$430	\$634	\$765	\$506	\$791	\$758	\$576
Saint Thomas	\$381	\$411	\$792	\$485	\$798	\$758	\$888
Santo Domingo	\$465	\$534	\$826	\$846	\$824	\$575	\$542
Sint Maarten	\$455	\$509	\$877	\$802	\$862	\$800	\$799
Turks & Caicos	\$564	\$537	\$874	\$812	\$987	\$867	\$883

WHO ON EARTH WANTS TO GO TO THE CARIBBEAN?

Everyone. From its beautiful palm tree-lined beaches to world-class luxury, the Caribbean offers a serenely relaxing experience for anyone and everyone.

Here are some quick-hit highlights of several destinations... because we know that you'd rather be lying on a lovely beach than reading about it.



Antigua: This former British naval base offers historic colonial buildings, 365 dazzling beaches (one for each day of the year), and easy-going, friendly locals.

Aruba: If you like to scuba dive, you'll find some of the best wreck diving in the region along with white-sand beaches, dramatic desert landscapes, and standout windsurfing.

Bahamas: With 700 islands bathed in warm clear turquoise waters, the country is a water-sports lover's paradise with show-stopping pretty-in-pink beaches.

Barbados: The birthplace of rum offers 166 square miles of luxury hotels, fun festivals, and rich Caribbean history to explore.

Montego Bay: This Jamaican city and former pirate haunt offers gorgeous beaches, galleries and markets, and pristine golf courses.

Punta Cana: On the eastern tip of the Dominican Republic, this town is part of the Coconut Coast, with lavish resorts and an abundance of water sports.

Saint Croix: Part of the U.S. Virgin Islands (so no passport needed), is just 22 miles long but packed with a quirky personality and gorgeous scenery.

Saint Thomas: Another U.S. Virgin island, its busy port city Charlotte Amalie is a popular cruise ship gateway to the Caribbean and a tropical shopping mecca.

Santo Domingo: The Dominican Republic's capital is the Caribbean's oldest, with a walled, cobblestoned historic center dating way back to the 1500s.

Sint Maarten: The tiny Dutch half of the dual-nation island of Saint Martin (shared with France) is famous for planes that land gaspingly low over the beach – and for a lively shopping and nightlife scene.

Turks & Caicos: A superb beach destination for sunbathers, scuba divers, and snorkelers with abundant sea life, coral reefs, and whale watching.

Phew. Just the thing we need to get over 2020.



Add some Antiguan color to your day

AIRLINES RAMPING UP SERVICE

American offers nonstop service from **Dallas** to the Bahamas, Belize, Grand Cayman, Montego Bay, San Juan, Saint Thomas; **Chicago** to Montego Bay, San Juan, Punta Cana; **Miami** to Antigua, Aruba, Belize, Montego Bay, Punta Cana, Saint Croix, Sint Maarten, Saint Thomas; **New York** to Montego Bay.

Delta offers nonstop flights from New York to Aruba, Bahamas, Montego Bay, Punta Cana, Santo Domingo, Sint Maarten.

United offers nonstop flights from **New York** to Grand Cayman, Montego Bay, Punta Cana, San Juan, Santo Domingo, Sint Maarten; **Chicago** to the Bahamas, Punta Cana, San Juan, Montego Bay; **Houston** to the Bahamas, Grand Cayman, Georgetown, Punta Cana, San Juan.