



# Mining for Miles Availability: 10 Common Mistakes Most Travelers Make

June 2020

## **Skyrocket your mining success for mileage award availability by looking for smaller veins to exploit**

Amid the relentless challenges of covid, many people will increasingly become anxious to get away from home. So let's be positive and keep our sights set on the reality that we be traveling again at some point in the future. And while you do that, we'll continue to mitigate a common annoyance for you: finding award space in premium cabins. Even though mileage award availability isn't necessarily great across the board, there are some unprecedented deals out there if you know where to look.

Mileage award tickets are currently [FCF's favorite way of booking premium tickets](#). That's thanks to the [unprecedented availability](#) we're seeing on a number of routes right now. And on top of that, the [risk of booking with miles is low](#) because you can redeposit your mileage ticket for as little as \$30 to \$150, or change your ticket for just \$25 to \$150. Plus some airlines, including [American, Delta, and United](#), currently have no change or redeposit fees for mileage award tickets.

That said, here are some common mistakes to avoid when searching for availability.

## HOW MOST TRAVELERS SEARCH FOR MILEAGE SEATS AND FAIL

Let's say you have a big trip in mind, and you search for your ideal itinerary. For example, from Boise to Budapest with four seats in First Class for a single departure and return date. The odds of getting favorable search results for ALL these requirements are astronomically bad. In other words, it will never happen in most cases.

This is when most people give up and start to curse the airlines and figure their miles are worthless.

Not you. Not anymore.

## 10 MILES-MINING MISTAKES TO AVOID AFTER INITIAL SEARCH FAILURE

After you don't find availability for EXACTLY what you want, don't give up. You can radically increase your chances of finding availability if you avoid making these 10 mining mistakes on your **follow-up searches**.



## COMMON MISTAKE TO AVOID #1

### CONTINUING TO SEARCH FOR AVAILABILITY BASED ON ALL THE SEATS YOU ULTIMATELY WANT

, then search for a second seat, and so on. Why? Because when you search for a group of seats, you often won't find the available one-seat opportunities. You don't have to get all the seats you want in order to use miles. In other words, if you start out searching for four seats, and only three are available, most airline search engines will simply show, "no availability." I'd take three out of four seats with miles if I only had to pay for one with cash. Wouldn't you? This is the most common, overlooked error many travelers make. Start looking for smaller opportunities at a time, and expand your search when you find out where they exist.

Also remember that you can book whatever you can and continue to check for award space, which tends to open up as the departure date gets closer. If it does open up, cancel the paid cash ticket, because most airlines will allow you to re-book the cash ticket.

## COMMON MISTAKE TO AVOID #2 ONLY SEARCHING FOR ROUND-TRIP AVAILABILITY

**Pro Solution:** In this situation, do what FCF does and **search for one-way availability**. That's because if the return ticket isn't available you could always A) buy a one-way return ticket, or B) return with another mileage program you have access to (with miles or your points' transfer partners), or C) use a mileage

program that offers waitlists usually with a small number seats that clear closer to departure, for example Cathay Pacific and All Nippon.

Or, book round-trip seats using **two different mileage redemption rates**. There might be only one saver seat and one non-saver and it might be a few more miles but could end up being cheaper than using another airline mileage program that is more expensive one-way. For example, flying American from New York to London will cost only 42,000 miles on the departure, but 67,000 miles on the return, giving you a total cost of 109,000 miles. Not bad.

## **COMMON MISTAKE TO AVOID #3 SEARCHING FOR TWO FIRST CLASS AWARD SEATS**

**Pro Solution: Grab a seat in First Class and one in Business.** Business Class tends to have better availability if only because the cabin is much larger. In fact, you could even get a seat on a different flight. It's not perfect, but at least you'll both get to your destination in comfort. And as they say, absence makes the heart grow fonder.

Or, if you're more flexible, wait until closer to your departure date when more seats might be released. For example, Lufthansa First Class seats typically don't get released until two weeks in advance when using partner miles like United.

## **COMMON MISTAKE TO AVOID #4 SEARCHING FOR YOUR FULL ITINERARY ALL AT THE SAME TIME**

**Pro Solution: Concentrate on the long-haul segment first.** If you're traveling internationally from a smaller U.S. city, focus your efforts on **the most important part of the journey**: the long-haul flight. Let's say you live in Boise and are going to London via Chicago. Obviously the priority comfort leg is Chicago to London. If you divide the legs, you're more likely to conquer them. You might also consider other departure or arrival gateways. It's likely that it won't be too difficult to move between cities. If all else fails, book the connecting flight to the hub city to connect to the international flight/leg in coach using miles or buy a second ticket to the hub city.

**Another option to consider is a stopover.** Consider this scenario: The second leg of the award reservation is not available right after you land from the first leg. Instead, it's a day or two later. For example, from San Francisco to Bangkok on Singapore Airlines, the first flight from San Francisco to Singapore could be available, but the flight from Singapore to Bangkok might not be on that day. But if it's available on the following day or two, then stopping over will still let you travel on Singapore Airlines. And Singapore's fun! Great food, nice hotels... It's an awesome place to visit and you'll get to enjoy a little bonus trip. But you'd never know about the opportunity if you didn't break up your itinerary and search for long-haul availability discreetly.



## COMMON MISTAKE TO AVOID #5 ONLY TRYING TO SCORE ROUND-TRIP AWARD SEATS IN AND OUT OF THE SAME ARRIVAL OR DEPARTURE CITY

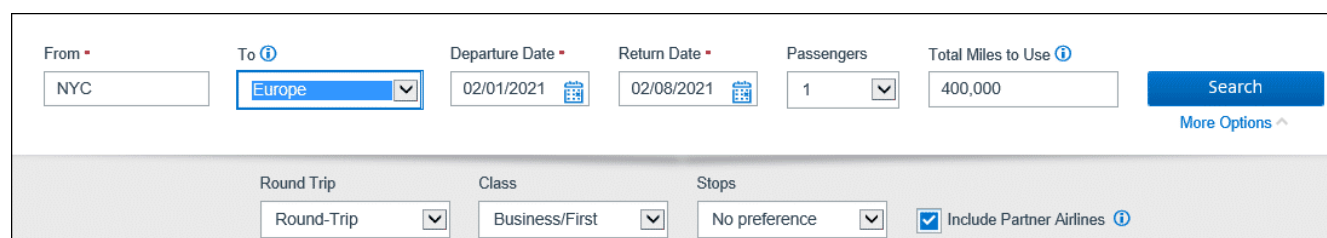
**Pro Solution:** Try an **open-jaw strategy**, which involves arriving at and departing from two different cities. This works really well in Europe where you can get to other cities easily. For example, you could fly into Paris and return from London. We published a special report all about it [here](#).

## COMMON MISTAKE TO AVOID #6 ONLY LOOKING FOR ONE SPECIFIC DESTINATION CITY – WHEN MILES SEEM TO GET YOU EVERYWHERE BUT THERE

**Pro Solution:** We say this a lot: be an [opportunity traveler](#). Widen your horizons – literally. Sometimes the best experiences are the ones you never expected in destinations you hadn't imagined. If you're flexible, you can visit more places than you ever dreamed of, and because you're flexible, you'll be able to get there at a much lower cost. For example, don't close your mind to travel to Rio if low-cost mileage is available, just because you have Paris on your mind.

Always keep your eye on new routes – even seasonal routes that airlines offer, as they might open up new ideas for you. Study travel blogs, travel magazines, and destination websites to get inspiration.

American Airlines has a great award [tool map](#), which lets you search for possible award space bookings. You can filter by your departure city, destination (by region), dates, number of travelers, total miles you have to use (we recommend putting a high number of mile, to make sure that it shows all availability), round-trip or one-way, class of service, stops, and AA and partner flights.

The image shows a search interface for American Airlines award space. It features several input fields: 'From' with 'NYC' selected, 'To' with a dropdown menu showing 'Europe', 'Departure Date' with '02/01/2021', 'Return Date' with '02/08/2021', 'Passengers' with '1', and 'Total Miles to Use' with '400,000'. There is a blue 'Search' button and a link for 'More Options'. Below these fields are additional filters: 'Round Trip' (set to 'Round-Trip'), 'Class' (set to 'Business/First'), 'Stops' (set to 'No preference'), and a checked box for 'Include Partner Airlines'.

## COMMON MISTAKE TO AVOID #7

### ONLY LOOKING FOR AWARD SPACE ON THE AIRLINE IN THE PROGRAM YOU HAVE MILES WITH

. Airline partners can open up lots of cabin doors because airline partner space greatly increases your chances of getting the dates and destinations you want. For example, in researching a recent article, we looked at flying New York to Lisbon using United miles. The United flight didn't have any space, but United's partner, TAP Air Portugal, did.

**Another option to consider is buying miles or points.** When it comes to buying airline miles the best time to do this is when they go on sale with **bigger discounts** (recent opportunity [here](#) which had American miles as low as 1.84¢ each and [here](#) which had United miles as low as 1.75¢ each when you buy the maximum). [here](#) which had United miles as low as 1.75¢ each when you buy the maximum).

Or, buy Amex Membership Reward points for 2.5 cents each and transfer them to [19 different mileage program](#), including All Nippon, Qantas, and Singapore. Check out [How to Buy American Express Membership Rewards Points](#), and [When to Buy Miles Instead of Purchasing a Normal Published Fare](#).

In general, FCF wouldn't recommend buying miles right now unless you have a planned trip, or if you don't have any miles in your account and know you'll eventually be able to use them. That's because the landscape is very dynamic at the moment and points sitting in your "bank" could become devalued.

## **COMMON MISTAKE TO AVOID #8 ONLY SEARCHING FOR AWARD SPACE ON SPECIFIC DATES**

**Pro Solution:** Most mileage award programs have a **calendar view** (or a week view), which is a great tool when searching for award space. It means you can filter by class of service and then see what dates have space, and book accordingly.

## **COMMON MISTAKE TO AVOID #9 ONLY SEARCHING ONLINE FOR AWARD SPACE**

**Pro Solution:** Go "old school" by **picking up the phone** to call for award space. Also, not all partner airlines can be booked online with miles. For example, with [Delta](#) you have to call for partner airlines Air Tahiti Nui and Garuda. Websites can have problems with their online calendars and not all airline partner award space shows up online. When you pick up the phone and make a call, no airline partner space options are missed. For special reports on American and United go [here](#) and [here](#).

## **COMMON MISTAKE TO AVOID #10 ONLY SEARCHING FOR AWARD SPACE WITH ONE MILEAGE PROGRAM**

**Pro Solution:** Even within the same airline alliance, airlines release different mileage allotments to their partners. Take a recent search of Lufthansa flights from New York to Frankfurt for travel on June 10 using United miles or LifeMiles, for example. With United miles you had two out of three possible flights available. Meanwhile, LifeMiles did not even have one flight available. So, when all else fails, consider going to different partner airline sites to **see if there is better availability with an airline program you have miles with, or is an airline partner in a points program you bank with.**

### **BONUS: GRAB WHAT YOU FIND AS SOON AS YOU FIND IT:**

Know the airlines that will hold mileage award space. American, for example, will hold free award space for five days for free. And for a small fee, United gives you a hold-time of three or seven days on United flights. More on all that [here](#).



You now have the infrastructure to mine for award tickets like a pro.





# Best FCF Fare & Miles Alerts Still Available

June 2020

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

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

## FCF Special Fares

### Domestic & Hawaii



[New Transcontinental Business Class Fares from \\$578 R/T With Alaska Airlines](#)

[Hawaii: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$998 R/T](#)

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

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

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

## **Asia**

[Jakarta: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$2,405 R/T](#)

[New Premium Economy Fares from Canada and the U.S. to Tokyo from \\$987 R/T](#)

## **Caribbean & Mexico**

[St. Lucia: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada \\$679 R/T](#)

[Jamaica: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$665 R/T](#)

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

[U.S. Virgin Islands: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$595 R/T](#)

[Saint Kitts and Nevis: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$794 R/T](#)

[U.S. Virgin Islands: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$610 R/T](#)

[Antigua: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$708 R/T](#)

[Grand Cayman: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$641 R/T](#)

[Bonaire: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$883 R/T](#)

[Barbados: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$785 R/T](#)

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

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

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

[Acapulco: New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. from \\$567 R/T](#)

[Mexico: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$594 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. to Cancun from \\$453 R/T](#)

## **Europe**

[Unprecedented Zurich Business Class Opportunities With United from Chicago and Many Other U.S. Cities](#)

[First Class: London Opportunities from New York and Many Other U.S. Cities With American](#)

[First Class: Opportunities from Los Angeles and Many Other U.S. Cities to London With American](#)

[Europe: Cheapest Business Class R/Ts for 68,000 Amex or Chase Points from Boston to Madrid](#)

[Edinburgh: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$1,943 R/T](#)

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

[84% Off Delta Business Class from New York to Dublin, With Amex Points](#)

[Super Cheap Europe Business Class Flights from New York 68,000 Amex or Chase Points R/T](#)

[Unprecedented Zurich United Business Class Opportunities from Chicago and Many Other Cities](#)

[Rome: New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. from \\$1,629 to \\$1,864 R/T](#)

[Europe: Super Cheap Business Class Flights from Miami 85,000 Amex or Chase Points R/T](#)

[Unprecedented Munich Business Class Opportunities on United from San Francisco and Many Other Cities In 2022](#)

[Amsterdam: New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. from \\$1,613 to \\$2,026 R/T](#)

[Barcelona: New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. from \\$1,581 to \\$1,841 R/T](#)

[Lisbon: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$1,609 to \\$1,915 R/T](#)

[Dublin: New Business Class Fares from Canada \\$1,416 R/T](#)

[Dubrovnik: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$2,076 R/T](#)

[Paris: New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. from \\$1,671 R/T](#)

[Switzerland: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$1,999 R/T](#)

[Milan: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$1,662 R/T](#)

[Valencia: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. from \\$1,779 R/T](#)

[New Business Class Fares from the U.S. to Venice from \\$1,676 R/T](#)

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

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

**South America**

[First Class: Brazil Fares from Canada and the U.S. from \\$2,649 R/T](#)

[Buenos Aires: New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. from \\$1,745 R/T](#)

[Rio de Janeiro: New Business Class Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$1,457 R/T](#)

[Unprecedented American \\*First Class\\* Opportunities from New York and Many Other Cities to Brazil](#)

[Rio: New Premium Economy Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$784 R/T](#)

[Chile: New Premium Economy Fares from the U.S. and Canada from \\$610 R/T](#)

[Chile: New Business Class Fares from Canada and the U.S. from \\$1,620 R/T](#)

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

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

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

## Sweet Redeems

### Asia

[Unprecedented Cathay Pacific \(Amex Partner\) Business Class Availability to Hong Kong and Beyond from San Francisco and Many Other U.S. Cities](#)

[2022 Travel: Cathay Pacific \\*First Class\\* Single-Seat Discount Opportunities to Asia from New York and Other Cities](#)

### Europe

[Unprecedented Zurich Business Class Opportunities With United from Chicago and Many Other U.S. Cities](#)

[First Class: London Opportunities from New York and Many Other U.S. Cities With American](#)

[First Class: Opportunities from Los Angeles and Many Other U.S. Cities to London With American](#)

[Europe: Cheapest Business Class R/Ts for 68,000 Amex or Chase Points from Boston to Madrid](#)

[84% Off Delta Business Class from New York to Dublin, With Amex Points](#)

[Super Cheap Europe Business Class Flights from New York 68,000 Amex or Chase Points R/T](#)

[Unprecedented Zurich United Business Class Opportunities from Chicago and Many Other Cities](#)



[Europe: Super Cheap Business Class Flights from Miami 85,000 Amex or Chase Points R/T](#)

[Unprecedented Munich Business Class Opportunities on United from San Francisco and Many Other Cities In 2022](#)

## **South America**

[Unprecedented American \\*First Class\\* Opportunities from New York and Many Other Cities to Brazil](#)

A hand holding a lightbulb against a yellow background. The hand is positioned as if about to turn the bulb on or off. The background is a solid, warm yellow color.

# Covid-Forward Thinking: Book (and Really Save) Now For Super Cheap Travel Later

June 2020

**Don't expect this climate of opportunities to be around forever for several reasons.**

There are certainly mixed feelings about travel right now. On the one hand, there are those who can't wait to get back out there, while others are being more cautious about it. If there's one thing about a lockdown, it's that it gives you time to think and reflect, in one way or the other.

Whichever way you're leaning on travel right now, we have an idea in three symphonies:

1. dream now

2. book and save now

3. travel later

The first part is probably happening anyway. The second is the rare opportunity (given the current state of the travel market). And the third is the icing on the cake. All three phases of our plan are good for your wellbeing too. Research has shown that even just planning a trip gets our endorphins flowing in a positive way. Planning a trip is a great way to make yourself feel good at a time when we could all use any good that's available.

"To have a big dream requires the same effort as having a small dream."

~Jorge Paulo Lemann

## BOOK & SAVE. NOW.

Of course some people around you will be saying, "Travel?! Are you out of your mind?"

But hey, I've been called worse.

Look, when it comes to using **your miles to book now** for a deal that will (with 80%+ certainty) **not be around later** (which includes such reasons as fewer routes, airlines streamlining service and much fuller flights), you've got to go for it. Nobody wants to look back and think, "Should have. Could have. Didn't." Not anymore.

Procrastination is something we did pre-covid.

## SEE YOU LATER. WHY BOOKING NOW IS RISK-AVERSE AND OPPORTUNITY EMBRACING

You should grab that awesome deal now because the risk factor when using miles is low. Plus, some airlines ([American](#), [Delta](#), [United](#), etc.) are currently offering a "travel change/cancel fee waiver" for new bookings, including mileage award flights. It means you don't have to pay any fees if you cancel your ticket and put your miles back in your account. Our new [widget](#) details airline policies including waivers.

In other words: The cost to dream has never been cheaper.

But even if the airline has no travel waiver in place, the risk is still low. In most cases, you can redeposit your mileage ticket for as little as \$30 to \$150 worst case, or change your ticket for between \$25 and \$150. Details [here](#).

Think of the change and/or redeposit fee as an insurance policy. If your plans change or you just decide not to travel, for whatever reason, you can do so with little cost.

Plus, miles aren't like wine. They don't get better as they sit and age. In fact, they often decline in value when mileage programs change their redemption prices, or when low-cost mileage awards are not available. Garçon! These miles are corked!

## THREE BOOK NOW, TRAVEL & SMILE LATER EXAMPLES

**Delta to Europe:** For up to four travelers (and often more), we unearthed hidden routes that save up to **480,000 miles, or 75%**, when flying Business Class with Delta SkyMiles or using Amex points to Paris, for example. That's compared to normal everyday prices traveling to and from the U.S., for travel from September through March 2021. For more on grabbing this exceptional Delta SkyMiles (Amex points partner) opportunity, go [here](#). And for recent FCF Delta Sweet Redeems alerts to Europe go [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

**Save more on Delta flights:** See how more flexible (or lucky) travelers can save big with Virgin miles, an Amex points partner, [here](#).

**American to Europe:** For up to four travelers (and often more), we found routes that save up to 120,000 miles, or 54%, when flying Business Class with AA miles or Amex points to Barcelona when compared to normal everyday prices for travel from October through February 2021. For more on American Airlines' up to 1,689% increase in availability of discount miles tickets for travel later in 2020 and 2021—while cutting prices up to 69% at the same time—go [here](#). You can also see last month's FCF report on American's "new" hidden award calendar that quietly crushes misconceptions on pricing and availability with 20% to 35% savings [here](#).

**United to Europe:** For up to four travelers (and often more), we spotted routes that save up to **190,000 miles, or 61%**, when flying Business Class with United miles or Chase points to [Lisbon](#), [London](#), or [Munich](#). That's when compared to normal everyday prices traveling to and from the U.S., for travel from November through March 2021. For more on how you can find up to 6,850% increase in United MileagePlus discount availability for travel later this year and into 2021, go [here](#).

This is your new corona lockdown mantra: **Book mileage awards now, save now, and travel later... and be happier in the meantime with the adventure to look forward to.**

## HOW SOON IS "LATER"?

There are opportunities available for travel later this year and into 2021 that will most likely not be available a month or two from now. That's when you'll go back to paying [640,000 miles for a Delta ticket to Paris, instead of 160,000](#) Delta SkyMiles, the current opportunity that saves you **75% when using Delta miles**, or **84% when using Virgin Atlantic miles**.

If you book now you have the opportunity to use your American (Amex and Chase point partner is [Iberia](#), [which has same award space as AA](#); and [Cathay Pacific](#), which is a point partner with Amex, but has less space), Delta (Amex points partner), and United (Chase points partner) miles at prices we've rarely seen before.



You also have easy access to (finally) use your credit card points, say, Amex and Chase, on airlines like All Nippon, Cathay Pacific, and Singapore in **First Class**. In the past, many of these routes have not had any availability at low-cost rates.

Here are some unprecedented mileage award availabilities FCF found for **dreaming, booking and saving now, and travel later**:

[Singapore Airlines First Class to Tokyo, for Travel October Through April 2021](#)

[Japan Airlines First Class from Los Angeles to Tokyo, for Spring Travel in 2021](#)

[Japan Airlines First Class from New York to Tokyo, for Travel Next Spring](#)

[Cathay Pacific First Class from Chicago to Hong Kong, for Travel Nov. to May 2021](#)

[Cathay Pacific First Class from Boston to Hong Kong, for Travel Sept. to May 2021](#)

[Cathay Pacific First Class from Los Angeles to Hong Kong, for Travel September Through May, 2021](#)

[First Class Single-Seat Cathay Pacific Availability from New York to Hong Kong, for Travel September Through May 2021](#)

[All Nippon First Class Washington, D.C.-Tokyo Opportunities](#)

[First Class on All Nippon from Los Angeles to Tokyo, for Travel Sept. to May 2021](#)

[All Nippon First Class to Tokyo at 62% to 72% Off](#)

> > > Don't see your origin or destination above? See how you can get free add-on connections [here](#). < < <

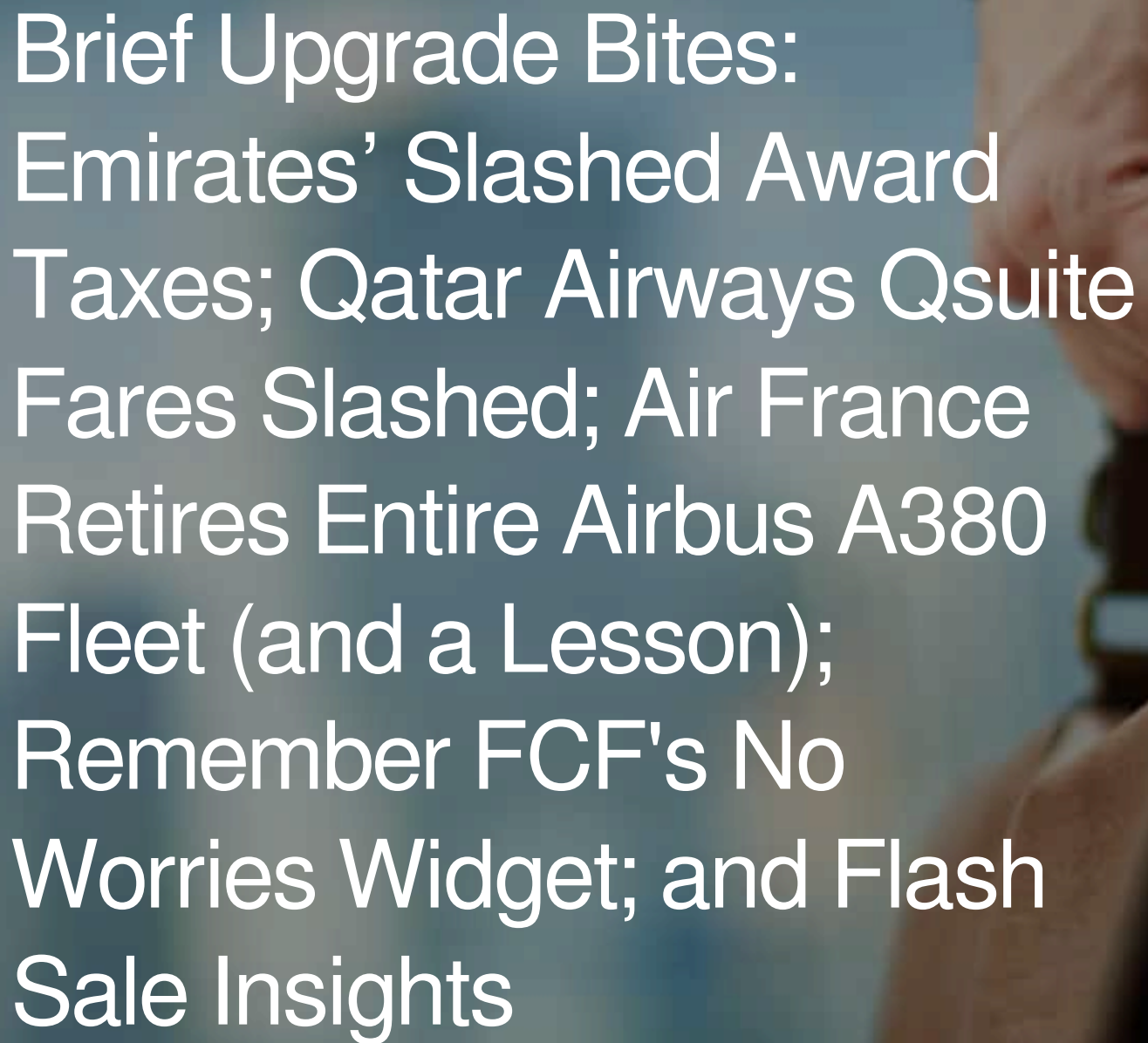
Also, keep in mind that this availability does change and was valid when originally published. If you see something good, grab it before it disappears.

## **WHY WON'T CURRENT DEALS BE AROUND LATER TO BOOK?**

For a number of reasons: fewer routes, streamlined service, and fuller flights. All of this can lead to fewer low-cost mileage awards being available when you're ready to book travel later this year.

**ONE MORE TIME:**  
**DREAM NOW, BOOK NOW, SAVE BIG, TRAVEL LATER, BE HAPPIER**

It's been a terrible time and we're all desperate to find the hidden silver linings. So for us the playbook is clear: dream about that vacation and grab the great deals right now, while they're still here. The risk is low or nil if you end up changing your mind. The upside SIGNIFICANTLY outweighs the negatives. You know what you have to do. Best wishes to all our members.



# Brief Upgrade Bites: Emirates' Slashed Award Taxes; Qatar Airways Qsuite Fares Slashed; Air France Retires Entire Airbus A380 Fleet (and a Lesson); Remember FCF's No Worries Widget; and Flash Sale Insights

June 2020

## THE GOOD & BAD WITH EMIRATES' SLASHED AWARD TAXES

**Good news:** As we [covered in March](#), one of the most annoying airline habits is to charge huge taxes on flights for which you use your miles. So how about some good news for a change? Emirates offers one the world's best First Class experiences, but FCF has not been a fan of their Skywards program because of high award taxes ([\\$1,500+ to Dubai](#) and [\\$1,100 to \\$1,700 to Europe](#)). Those taxes are just thrown on top of what is supposed to be a "free" award trip with miles. But thankfully, that changed in May when Emirates drastically reduced surcharges on award tickets.

**Bad news:** We checked more than 11 Emirates routes from the U.S. for First Class availability and found none! Is this a hustle? Lower the pricing and just pull all your flights from the shelf? Maybe I'm just being a wishful thinker (it wouldn't be the first time), but there is First Class availability between Dubai and Kuala Lumpur. So I imagine it's only a matter of time before seats are released to/from the U.S.

**Quick example:** On the [Newark-Athens](#) route back in April, Emirates charged \$1,100+ for award taxes in First Class. And then in May, taxes were reduced to just \$125 round-trip, a big drop of 89%.

**And another:** On the [New York-Dubai](#) route in April, Emirates charged \$1,543 for award taxes. In May, those taxes were reduced to \$362 round-trip, a drop of 76%.

**As soon as new availability surfaces, we'll let you know.**



As soon as new availability surfaces, we'll let you know.

## GET IN THE QSUITE WITH SPECIAL FARES

We're a big fan of [Qatar Airways' Qsuites](#) (Business Class) with their sliding doors, lie-flat seats, and business or family-friendly configurations. They may not be First Class, but they're still very good compared to many other Business Class cabins. Why are we mentioning it here? We've found some terrific low fares for travel September 2020 through April 2021; some examples:

- Boston to Delhi: [\\$2,571](#)
- Chicago to Bangkok: [\\$2,758](#)



- Washington, DC, to Mumbai: [\\$2,649](#)
- Los Angeles to Singapore: [\\$2,982](#)

The Qsuite is available from the U.S. on selected flights from New York's JFK, Washington, DC, Chicago, Los Angeles, Boston, Dallas, and Houston. All fly to Doha, Qatar's hub.

Other routes worth considering are Montreal (Qsuite also offered) to Bangkok for travel September through April 2021 for [\\$2,398](#), and to Kuala Lumpur for the same time frame for [\\$2,455](#).

Stopover in Doha for kicks is free for 24 hours in most cases.



Stopover in Doha for kicks is free for 24 hours in most cases.

## **SIGN OF THE TIMES: AIR FRANCE RETIRES ENTIRE AIRBUS A380 FLEET**

Due to the current covid crisis and its impact on anticipated activity levels, the [Air France-KLM Group](#) announced the end of Air France's Airbus A380 operations. This A380 retirement was initially scheduled for the end of 2022, but has been accelerated. The A380 will be replaced by new generation aircraft including the Airbus A350 and the Boeing 787. A sign of the times I guess... Remember all the buzz that accompanied the A380 "megaliners" back in 2007? It was dubbed "cleaner, greener, quieter and smarter." But not cheaper, it seems, as these big planes are not cost-effective for airlines with fewer people flying amid ongoing covid issues.

**Lesson:** The traveler who hesitates will lose. No more travel procrastinations when the world starts spinning again!

## **DON'T FORGET OUR NO WORRIES WIDGET**

It's an ongoing question, and a fair one: What are the risks of booking flights at the moment? We thought it a good idea to remind you of our "[No Worries Widget](#)," a lightning-fast way to get a handle on what the airlines have in place to protect you from getting left in the lurch.

Many airlines have new “change-fee waiver” policies in place due to the virus. The policies vary by airline, but in general, they waive change fees if you decide not to travel. There’s no cash refund, but you can apply the value of your unused ticket towards future travel. Keep in mind that you’ll have to pay any fare difference if applicable.

Right now, most airlines have a change-fee waiver in place for new tickets issued until June 30. They include Air Canada, American, Delta, and United, to name a few, but the fine print does vary by airline, so go [here](#) for details by airline and links.

Some airlines are offering a new ticket policy for after June 30. Here are a couple of examples: British Airways covers tickets issued until **July 31**, with a departure date up to December 31, 2020. Qatar Airways covers tickets issued by **September 30** for travel on/before December 30, 2020.

## THE NEW NORM NOW: MILEAGE AWARD AND CASH FLASH SALES

Given the covid situation, it’s probably no surprise that “normal” is no longer normal, and going forward everything is up for grabs.

Yes, that means the new norm for low-cost mileage awards and deeply discounted fares will often only be on a **flash-sale** basis.

*Bennett, what do you mean by that?*

Well, I have three good examples for **flash sales**, based on three special reports we worked on this month, which I ended up having to cancel.

**#1 Covid fare fall:** Late 2020 low-cost Premium cabin opportunities to Europe with fares ranging from \$2,100 to \$2,300 for travel September through December were aimed at luring people back into the skies, especially as Europe is opening up again. Normally these fares range from \$3,200 to \$4,900 on non-stop flights. These low-cost fares were only offered on a **flash-sale** basis, as they were gone in a week. We published many as FCF alerts and hope many of you scored.

**#2 United mileage upgrades to Asia:** Recent FCF research showed that United had upgrade space on **10 non-stop flights to Asia** for travel January through April 2021, and again, it was only on a **flash-sale** basis, as the upgrade space was gone in a week.

**#3 Emirates First Class award space:** Recent FCF research showed that Emirates had free low-cost mileage award space in First Class for travel from New York to Athens and Dubai for travel later in 2020 and into spring 2021. Once again, it was only on a **flash-sale** basis, as the award space was gone in a week.

There are probably many more surprises in store for us, but **The Opportunity Traveler** (that’s you) will win big by booking when those flash sales surface. Stay tuned to FCF Alerts for more.



# FCF's Delta-Virgin Loophole Gets a Knot, But You Can Still Tie Up a Win

June 2020

## **Supersonic savings or high-flying availability: You choose.**

Most people assume that mileage partnerships and partner award space are like gigantic A380s: immovable, dependable, and slow to change course.



In reality, it's kind of the opposite. Instead, you should think of it as an F-18 Super Hornet that can turn on a dime at whip-crack speed (and then shoot that dime from 10 miles away).





And there you have perception versus speed-of-sound-breaking reality in the world of partners and miles.

So, it's time to strap into the cockpit, look at your instrument panel, and set "autopilot" to "manual." If there was ever a year to change your flying habits, it's 2020. We'll show you why, and how.

## WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR FCF'S DELTA-VIRGIN HACK?

FCF readers know that we've been excited about Delta's Virgin Atlantic loophole for a while now. It's where you use Virgin Atlantic miles—which you can transfer from Amex, Chase, Marriott, and Citi points programs (rather than using Delta SkyMiles)—to book seats on Delta flights, because Virgin Atlantic offers more low-cost award availability at lower mileage award rates for travel to Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America.

That flightpath has altered a little in this covid-crazy new reality. Now you need to decide what's most important to you: **cost OR availability**. That's because Delta now releases more low-cost mileage award seats to Europe using Delta SkyMiles than Virgin Atlantic miles. So, unlike the recent scenario, if you use your Delta SkyMiles to fly Delta you will currently have access to more mileage award seats. *Whoosh!!!* That Super Hornet just flew past. Grab the binoculars and let's take a closer look at what's going on.

## 35,000-FOOT PERSPECTIVE: 12 EXAMPLES

FCF research has found that Delta SkyMiles members can pay 160,000 miles and often find unprecedented award availability. For example, [Seattle to Paris for travel September through April 2021](#) (a big window), with space for four people or more on 13+ days a month.

Members of the Virgin Atlantic mileage program still pay the lower rate of 100,000 miles but have *less* award availability (our alert [here](#)). On that same Paris-Seattle route, we found award space for only three months: September to November, with space for four people (also about the same for one or two people) or more on 13+ days a month.

## Save Miles Or Have Better Availability? Some Examples.

Route	Availability Using Delta Miles	Availability Using Virgin Atlantic Miles	Award Availability Difference	Mileage Cost Using Delta Miles (R/T)	Mileage Cost Using Virgin Atlantic Miles (R/T)	Mileage Cost Difference
<a href="#">New York - Amsterdam</a>	September through March 2021	September & October	5 months (November - March 2021)	160,000	100,000	60,000
<a href="#">Atlanta - Brussels</a>	September through April 2021	September & October	6 months (November - April 2021)	160,000	100,000	60,000

Route	Availability Using Delta Miles	Availability Using Virgin Atlantic Miles	Award Availability Difference	Mileage Cost Using Delta Miles (R/T)	Mileage Cost Using Virgin Atlantic Miles (R/T)	Mileage Cost Difference
<a href="#">New York - Amsterdam</a>	September through March 2021	September & October	5 months (November - March 2021)	160,000	100,000	60,000
<a href="#">Raleigh Durham - Paris</a>	September through April 2021	September & November	5 months (December - April 2021)	160,000	100,000	60,000
<a href="#">Seattle - Paris</a>	September through April 2021	September & November	5 months (December - April 2021)	160,000	100,000	60,000
<a href="#">New York - Athens</a>	September & October	September	1 month (October)	160,000	100,000	60,000
<a href="#">New York - Lisbon</a>	September through April 2021	September & October	6 months (November - April 2021)	160,000	100,000	60,000
<a href="#">Minneapolis - Paris</a>	September through April 2021	September & November	5 months (December - April 2021)	160,000	100,000	60,000
<a href="#">Detroit - Paris</a>	September through April 2021	September & November	5 months (December - April 2021)	160,000	100,000	60,000
<a href="#">Atlanta - Dusseldorf</a>	September through April 2021	September & October	6 months (November - April 2021)	160,000	100,000	60,000
<a href="#">New York - Zurich</a>	September through April 2021	September & November	5 months (December - April 2021)	160,000	100,000	60,000
<a href="#">Detroit - Amsterdam</a>	September through April 2021	September & November	5 months (December - April 2021)	160,000	100,000	60,000
<a href="#">Minneapolis - Amsterdam</a>	September through April 2021	September & November	5 months (December - April 2021)	160,000	100,000	60,000

It's a classic trade-off. Use more miles and get more award space (flexibility), or use fewer miles and get less award space. We had it great for a while there with that lucrative Delta/Virgin loophole. It's still good, but you can't always have the best of both worlds to Europe (see the analysis below for other regions).



## WHO DOES THIS BENEFIT MOST?

This is best for Amex Rewards and Marriott Points members who have the option to transfer to Delta SkyMiles or Virgin Atlantic miles. They're in the best position to decide if a lower rate of 100,000 miles to Europe is more important, and if so, knowing that mileage award space will be less if transferred to Virgin Atlantic. Flexibility is king, as there are fewer travel dates. If you're not flexible, be prepared to pay the higher 160,000 miles rate for the award ticket, but have access to more award space.

## THAT'S EUROPE, WHAT ABOUT OTHER PLACES?

We're happy to report that the Delta-Virgin Loophole is still in play for travel to Africa, Asia, and South America.

**Delta still releases a very limited number of low-cost mileage award seats** to its own SkyMiles members for travel to Africa, Asia, and South America—a different number than it releases to its partner Virgin Atlantic. So, using Virgin Atlantic miles for the same Delta flights can open up low-cost award space that Delta doesn't offer its own members.

## AFRICA FOR \$3,093, A SAVINGS OF 61%

The Delta route from Atlanta to Lagos, Nigeria, has award space using Virgin miles for travel September through December. More details [here](#).

The cost to use Delta miles is often 640,000 miles round-trip, and \$93 in award taxes, while Virgin Atlantic only charges 120,000 and \$93 in taxes.

If you don't have the miles, the cost to buy them (more on this below) is currently as low as \$3,093 round-trip (includes taxes and about \$93 in award tax). The lowest published fare is \$7,979, a savings of \$4,886 (61%).

## **ASIA FOR \$3,036, A SAVINGS OF 52%**

Delta flies Atlanta to Seoul and our truffle hounds found award space using Virgin miles for travel September through December. More [here](#) for travel to Asia.

The cost to use Delta miles is generally 640,000 miles round-trip and about \$36 in award taxes. Virgin Atlantic only charges 120,000 and \$36 for taxes.

If you don't have the miles, the cost to buy them (more below) is as low as \$3,036 round-trip (includes taxes and about \$36 in award tax). The lowest published fare is \$6,318, making for a big savings of \$3,282 (52%).

## **SOUTH AMERICA FOR \$2,290, A SAVINGS OF 48%**

Delta flies from New York to Sao Paulo and FCF's team found award space using Virgin miles for travel September through December. More [here](#).

The cost to use Delta miles is generally 700,000 miles round-trip and about \$40 in award taxes, while Virgin Atlantic only charges 90,000 miles and \$40 for taxes.

If you don't have the miles, the cost to buy them (more below) is as low as \$2,290 round-trip (includes taxes and about \$40 in award tax), while the lowest published fare is \$4,387, a savings of \$2,097, or 48%.

## **BUY MILES CHEAPLY**

Buy Amex Membership Reward points for 2.5 cents each and transfer them to Virgin Atlantic. Check out [How to Buy American Express Membership Rewards Points](#), and [When to Buy Miles Instead of Purchasing a Normal Published Fare](#).

Also, you still have two more credit card partners that transfer to Virgin Atlantic: Chase and Citi points.

## **HOW TO SEARCH FOR DELTA FLIGHTS THAT CAN BE BOOKED ONLINE USING VIRGIN ATLANTIC MILES**

There's no need initially to create a Virgin Atlantic mileage account to check for space. However, if you are booking award space, then you'll have to log in. [Just go to](#) "Book" and click "Advanced search."

For more on searching for Delta flights, see our special report [here](#) (the important information is about halfway down the page with the same header as above).

## HOW TO ADD CONNECTING FLIGHTS

If you need to add extra flights to the non-stop Delta flight that has good availability, you'll have to spend more miles. A one-way domestic (non-transcontinental) flight costs 22,500 more Virgin miles. More on [how to book Delta connecting flights with Virgin miles](#).

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

To review other key details such as credit card partnerships, throughout-the-year transfer bonuses, and mileage award taxes, go [here](#).

## RISK FACTOR WHEN BOOKING WITH MILES?

Both airlines, [Virgin Atlantic and Delta](#), have a "travel fee waiver" currently offered for new bookings until June 30. This includes award flights. It means there will be no fees to cancel your ticket.

Normal mileage award booking policies vary by airline, but in general, you can redeposit or change your mileage ticket for as little as \$50. Details [here](#).

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



A hand is shown holding a lightbulb, with the fingers wrapped around its base. The background is a solid, warm yellow color. The lightbulb is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the image, and the hand is positioned above it, with the thumb and index finger visible. The overall composition is simple and focused on the act of holding the lightbulb.

# Covid-Forward Thinking: Book (and Really Save) Now For Super Cheap Travel Later

June 2020

**Don't expect this climate of opportunities to be around forever for several reasons.**

There are certainly mixed feelings about travel right now. On the one hand, there are those who can't wait to get back out there, while others are being more cautious about it. If there's one thing about a lockdown, it's that it gives you time to think and reflect, in one way or the other.

Whichever way you're leaning on travel right now, we have an idea in three symphonies:

1. dream now

2. book and save now

3. travel later

The first part is probably happening anyway. The second is the rare opportunity (given the current state of the travel market). And the third is the icing on the cake. All three phases of our plan are good for your wellbeing too. Research has shown that even just planning a trip gets our endorphins flowing in a positive way. Planning a trip is a great way to make yourself feel good at a time when we could all use any good that's available.

"To have a big dream requires the same effort as having a small dream."

~Jorge Paulo Lemann

## BOOK & SAVE. NOW.

Of course some people around you will be saying, "Travel?! Are you out of your mind?"

But hey, I've been called worse.

Look, when it comes to using **your miles to book now** for a deal that will (with 80%+ certainty) **not be around later** (which includes such reasons as fewer routes, airlines streamlining service and much fuller flights), you've got to go for it. Nobody wants to look back and think, "Should have. Could have. Didn't." Not anymore.

Procrastination is something we did pre-covid.

## SEE YOU LATER. WHY BOOKING NOW IS RISK-AVERSE AND OPPORTUNITY EMBRACING

You should grab that awesome deal now because the risk factor when using miles is low. Plus, some airlines ([American](#), [Delta](#), [United](#), etc.) are currently offering a "travel change/cancel fee waiver" for new bookings, including mileage award flights. It means you don't have to pay any fees if you cancel your ticket and put your miles back in your account. Our new [widget](#) details airline policies including waivers.

In other words: The cost to dream has never been cheaper.

But even if the airline has no travel waiver in place, the risk is still low. In most cases, you can redeposit your mileage ticket for as little as \$30 to \$150 worst case, or change your ticket for between \$25 and \$150. Details [here](#).

Think of the change and/or redeposit fee as an insurance policy. If your plans change or you just decide not to travel, for whatever reason, you can do so with little cost.

Plus, miles aren't like wine. They don't get better as they sit and age. In fact, they often decline in value when mileage programs change their redemption prices, or when low-cost mileage awards are not available. Garçon! These miles are corked!

## THREE BOOK NOW, TRAVEL & SMILE LATER EXAMPLES

**Delta to Europe:** For up to four travelers (and often more), we unearthed hidden routes that save up to **480,000 miles, or 75%**, when flying Business Class with Delta SkyMiles or using Amex points to Paris, for example. That's compared to normal everyday prices traveling to and from the U.S., for travel from September through March 2021. For more on grabbing this exceptional Delta SkyMiles (Amex points partner) opportunity, go [here](#). And for recent FCF Delta Sweet Redeems alerts to Europe go [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

**Save more on Delta flights:** See how more flexible (or lucky) travelers can save big with Virgin miles, an Amex points partner, [here](#).

**American to Europe:** For up to four travelers (and often more), we found routes that save up to 120,000 miles, or 54%, when flying Business Class with AA miles or Amex points to Barcelona when compared to normal everyday prices for travel from October through February 2021. For more on American Airlines' up to 1,689% increase in availability of discount miles tickets for travel later in 2020 and 2021—while cutting prices up to 69% at the same time—go [here](#). You can also see last month's FCF report on American's "new" hidden award calendar that quietly crushes misconceptions on pricing and availability with 20% to 35% savings [here](#).

**United to Europe:** For up to four travelers (and often more), we spotted routes that save up to **190,000 miles, or 61%**, when flying Business Class with United miles or Chase points to [Lisbon](#), [London](#), or [Munich](#). That's when compared to normal everyday prices traveling to and from the U.S., for travel from November through March 2021. For more on how you can find up to 6,850% increase in United MileagePlus discount availability for travel later this year and into 2021, go [here](#).

This is your new corona lockdown mantra: **Book mileage awards now, save now, and travel later... and be happier in the meantime with the adventure to look forward to.**

## HOW SOON IS "LATER"?

There are opportunities available for travel later this year and into 2021 that will most likely not be available a month or two from now. That's when you'll go back to paying [640,000 miles for a Delta ticket to Paris, instead of 160,000](#) Delta SkyMiles, the current opportunity that saves you **75% when using Delta miles**, or **84% when using Virgin Atlantic miles**.

If you book now you have the opportunity to use your American (Amex and Chase point partner is [Iberia](#), [which has same award space as AA](#); and [Cathay Pacific](#), which is a point partner with Amex, but has less space), Delta (Amex points partner), and United (Chase points partner) miles at prices we've rarely seen before.

You also have easy access to (finally) use your credit card points, say, Amex and Chase, on airlines like All Nippon, Cathay Pacific, and Singapore in **First Class**. In the past, many of these routes have not had any availability at low-cost rates.

Here are some unprecedented mileage award availabilities FCF found for **dreaming, booking and saving now, and travel later**:

[Singapore Airlines First Class to Tokyo, for Travel October Through April 2021](#)

[Japan Airlines First Class from Los Angeles to Tokyo, for Spring Travel in 2021](#)

[Japan Airlines First Class from New York to Tokyo, for Travel Next Spring](#)

[Cathay Pacific First Class from Chicago to Hong Kong, for Travel Nov. to May 2021](#)

[Cathay Pacific First Class from Boston to Hong Kong, for Travel Sept. to May 2021](#)

[Cathay Pacific First Class from Los Angeles to Hong Kong, for Travel September Through May, 2021](#)

[First Class Single-Seat Cathay Pacific Availability from New York to Hong Kong, for Travel September Through May 2021](#)

[All Nippon First Class Washington, D.C.-Tokyo Opportunities](#)

[First Class on All Nippon from Los Angeles to Tokyo, for Travel Sept. to May 2021](#)

[All Nippon First Class to Tokyo at 62% to 72% Off](#)

> > > Don't see your origin or destination above? See how you can get free add-on connections [here](#). < < <

Also, keep in mind that this availability does change and was valid when originally published. If you see something good, grab it before it disappears.

## **WHY WON'T CURRENT DEALS BE AROUND LATER TO BOOK?**

For a number of reasons: fewer routes, streamlined service, and fuller flights. All of this can lead to fewer low-cost mileage awards being available when you're ready to book travel later this year.

**ONE MORE TIME:**  
**DREAM NOW, BOOK NOW, SAVE BIG, TRAVEL LATER, BE HAPPIER**

It's been a terrible time and we're all desperate to find the hidden silver linings. So for us the playbook is clear: dream about that vacation and grab the great deals right now, while they're still here. The risk is low or nil if you end up changing your mind. The upside SIGNIFICANTLY outweighs the negatives. You know what you have to do. Best wishes to all our members.





# Crazy Prices Right Now and How FCF Is Dealing with AA's Dynamic New Redemption Costs

June 2020

**Here's how FCF will define an American Airlines Sweet Redeems (SR) alert "deal" going forward, the lowest mileage rates we've seen (and why it doesn't matter), and why you shouldn't get too greedy in this new dynamic pricing environment.**

Spare a thought for FCF's research team, please.

As quickly as we brief our research team on a miles price range to qualify for a specific FCF Sweet Redeems availability alert, it changes, right before their eyes.

Oh how we long for the good old days... Before dynamic pricing came in and when the big three U.S. airlines would work off an ancient tablet called a “miles cost chart.” Back then, you always knew the highest cost and the lowest cost. Life was so much simpler.

And now? It seems like anything goes. Especially with American Airlines’ dynamic pricing. (Whoops, don’t want to say the “A” word too loudly around here as it triggers anxiety with our team of availability analysts.)

## FCF, WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY “DYNAMIC PRICING?”

Let us count the ways. Consider things like American charging a “ya gotta be kidding me” 960,000 miles for a round-trip Los Angeles to Sydney in Business Class as reported [here in January](#).

Or a [49% decrease](#) in miles cost to Hawaii when compared with 2019 prices.

And, as reported just last month, savings of between [20% and 35%](#) to regions all over the world when compared with 2019 prices.

## PRICING TREND WITH AA THIS MONTH

We’re seeing lowest-available mileage redemption rates changing by the day, by the week, and by the month. For example:

- Philadelphia-London round-trip in Business Class was 84,000 miles in April and 100,000 in May.
- Miami-Sao Paulo round-trip in Business Class was 80,000 miles on May 13 and 90,000 on May 21.
- Washington, DC-Hong Kong round-trip in Business Class was 90,000 miles on May 13 and 120,000 on May 14.
- Austin-London round-trip in First Class was 104,000 on May 13, 124,000 on May 19, and 132,000 on May 21.

Even though the miles price range is fluctuating like crazy, these are all **still amazing deals**. By the way, even with the increases from the lowest rate FCF has seen, they are **still extremely rare finds**. So, if you’re planning to travel and use AA miles for later this year or next year, **now is still the perfect time to try to snag an amazing deal with American**.

## COMPARED TO LAST YEAR: PERSPECTIVE

So before we get all outraged, and perhaps greedy, only last year American had AAnytime space to Europe at the price of 270,000 miles! Now *that’s* a price to be outraged about. We used to be able to search Europe for a whole year and not find one seat under 270k on many routes, because low-cost mileage awards were almost never available.

Or, take Asia. This region only had AAnytime space at the price of 350,000 miles. Again, that’s because low-cost mileage awards were almost never available.

Hey, it's easy to be greedy when you see those ultra-low-cost redemptions, like Europe for 84,000 miles. So why not be satisfied with 115,000? It's still a lot better than paying 270,000 and if you balk at 115,000 who knows what it will be a week from now. So don't hold off too long, current prices are **still amazing**.

Also, with covid, mileage award opportunities are still unprecedented for booking now for travel later this year and 2021, which will most certainly not be the case in three to six months from now.

So where do you go from here? How do we soothe our beloved analysts, and still give you the intel you need?

## WE'RE GOING TO SHOW A RANGE OF MILEAGE RATES IN OUR ALERTS

Up until now, our Sweet Redeems (SR) alerts simply showed the lowest mileage rate for AA and the dates it applied to. But given the ultra-dynamic state of affairs with American's lowest-cost mileage rates, we're going to show you a **range of prices** we've found in the "**Flash Deal Summary**" section of the alert. The chart below shows the prices FCF will be reporting on by region and class of service.

### AA's Dynamic Redemption Prices

Contiguous 48 U.S. States to (Region)	Range of Mileage Award Prices FCF Will Report on for SR Alerts		Lowest Mileage Award Rate FCF Has Seen in 2020	
Business	First	Business	First	
Hawaii	56,000 - 75,000	n/a	56,000	n/a
Transcon	42,000 - 65,000	100,000	42,000	100,000
Europe	84,000 - 115,000	104,000 - 170,000	84,000	104,000
Deep South America*	80,000 - 115,000	122,000 - 170,000	80,000	122,000
Asia 1**	90,000 - 120,000	140,000 - 160,000	90,000	140,000
Asia 2***	90,000 - 140,000	140,000 - 220,000	90,000	140,000

\*Deep South Americ: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay; \*\* Asia 1: Japan, Korea; \*\*\* Asia 2: China, Hong Kong.

FCF will continue to monitor AA's dynamic pricing closely and keep you posted on any changes.



FCF will continue to monitor AA's dynamic pricing closely and keep you posted on any changes.

## **POWER TO THE LESS FLEXIBLE**

The dynamic American pricing actually helps those who are less flexible with dates. Because now there are so many prices, the chances are you will probably only have to pay a little more to fly on the days you want, rather than jump to a whole new pricing tier like in the old days. This is where **nuanced volatility can work in your favor**.

## **FREEZE THAT GREAT AA DEAL**

If you want to "snap freeze" great opportunities but haven't sorted out convention plans, school vacations, the date for Tom and Ruby's engagement party, and the like, you can hold the award seat for five days for no additional charge.

You can also hold more than one destination, and then cancel the ones you don't need. FCF's chief editor said she's held as many as six bookings at a time, and why not—there's no charge for the mileage award hold. For more details go [here](#).