

Grabbing the Delta SkyMiles Greased Pig at Last with Up to 10,800% New Availability of Discount Tickets (Dream & Book Now, Travel Later - Risk Free)

April 2020

Get while the getting is up to 480,000 fewer miles on Premium Flights for travel later in 2020 and into 2021

This month we're covering the big three U.S. airlines and their currently unprecedented discount mileage ticket availability. For American Airlines, go [here](#). For Delta, stay right here.

In the past, Delta has been mean and miserly when it came to confirmable availability of discounted SkyMiles Business Class redemptions, almost without exception.

In FCF's recent subscriber survey, one contributor put it succinctly:

"Trying to use Delta SkyMiles is like grabbing a greased pig. The harder you try to hold on, the slipperier it gets."

Well put!

But here's the thing: That pig isn't so slippery right now. If you're a Delta SkyMiles member (or Amex points collector), now you can use miles for low-cost saver Business Class seats. If you're used to paying 300,000+ miles and think that's not too bad, you're now able to get **huge** discounts. Such is the unparalleled nature of travel at the moment. And by the way, this isn't just for travel this summer, but flights through the end of 2020 and into 2021.

While availability isn't necessarily great across the board, **intermittently the availability is unprecedented. You still have to know where to look.**

The good news is that we've done that heavy lifting for you as our team has conducted hundreds of hours of research this month. Here are specific treasure maps to the best of the best we found...

DELTA-PORTUNITY #1: ISRAEL

Last year, our research didn't find one day all year that discount awards were available to Tel Aviv. Now, we're seeing [109 days of the year you can book](#) Delta Business Class round-trip from New York to Tel Aviv, saving you up to **350,000 miles!**

You'll remember that scene in "Singin' in the Rain" when Gene Kelly is, er, singing and dancing in the rain. Well, this current situation is actually a downpour as you can see. After a long drought of Delta low-cost award space, we're finding a deluge of availability, even if we don't exactly feel like singing and dancing right now.

We have never seen such a large amount of low-cost award space on Delta, and this isn't just for one month. FCF's research shows space from September 2020 through February 2021. Let's dive into a few more examples.

DELTA-PORTUNITY #2: GERMANY

We found outrageously great Delta SkyMiles discount Business Class [availability to Frankfurt for travel later this year and into 2021](#).

For up to four travelers (and possibly more), FCF's research team discovered an opportunity to **save up to 480,000 / 75% Delta SkyMiles** when compared to normal/everyday prices traveling to/from the U.S.

Days Available	> 13+	9 TO 12	4 TO 8
2020			
SEP			
OCT			
NOV			
DEC			
2021			
JAN			
FEB			

 4 Seats
  2 Seats
  1 Seat

But wait, not only did FCF find unprecedented mileage award space to Frankfurt, we also found it to [Berlin](#) and [Dusseldorf](#), with **savings of up to 480,000 / 75%**. That's right, Germanophiles, Germany is so hot right now when it comes to using your Delta miles or Amex points. *Danke*.

DELTA-PORTUNITY 3: ZURICH

Unprecedented Delta SkyMiles Business Class availability unearthed for travel later this year and into 2021. For up to four travelers (and possibly more), you can [save up to 480,000 / 75% miles to Zurich](#) when compared to normal/everyday prices traveling to/from the U.S.

DELTA-PORTUNITY #4: AMSTERDAM

Here comes that word again: *Unprecedented* Delta SkyMiles Business Class deals from [Boston, Detroit, Minneapolis, or New York for travel later this year to Amsterdam](#). It's for up to four travelers, with savings of up to **480,000 / 75%** miles.

All of this comes as very welcome news to Delta's huge member base, which has been traditionally starved of opportunity.

DELTA-PORTUNITY #5: PARIS

And there's more. Delta Airlines Business Class from [Minneapolis, Salt Lake City, or Seattle to Paris](#), with four seats available, for travel from September to February with **savings of up to 480,000 / 75% miles**.

DON'T SEE YOUR HOME AIRPORT MENTIONED?

Connecting flights to the Delta hub cities in this report are free in most cases with Delta because its mileage plan is zone-based. Here's an example.

Boston to Amsterdam in Business Class on Delta costs 160,000 miles round-trip. But if you live in Chicago, you can add a flight to Boston to hook up with that deal (or your departure city) for no additional miles so long as it's available.

For details on getting free connecting flights to hub cities with the great availability, go [here](#) and [here](#).

IF YOU DON'T HAVE DELTA SKYMILES, BUT DO HAVE CREDIT CARD POINTS (PLUS HOW TO SAVE EVEN MORE DEPENDING ON YOUR TRAVEL DATES)

American Express, Chase, Citi, and Marriott have a points-to-miles transfer partnership with Virgin Atlantic—a **Delta flights redemption partner**—although nowadays Virgin's availability of Delta flights is often less than Delta's. If you can find availability through Virgin, you can pay just 100,000 miles round-trip to Europe and 120,000 miles to Tel Aviv for the same Delta flights.

ATTENTION OPPORTUNISTS AND DELTA LOYALISTS

While we're all socially distancing ourselves, we can still look ahead to happy days of travel in our future. Your computer or smartphone is your window to the world. Do some research, do some planning, do some dreaming, and now more than ever before, do some booking! We'll get through this together, even while we're apart.

BOOKING WITH MILES IN THE TIME OF COVID: RISKY OR NOT?

To use your miles to book these great deals (given the uncertain travel atmosphere caused by Coronavirus), [read our special report](#) about the risk of booking, also in this month's Upgrade Advisor.

American Airlines Increases Availability of Discount Miles Tickets Up to 1,689%—While Cutting Prices Up to 69% at the Same Time—for Travel Later in 2020 + 2021

April 2020

The double upgrade: American Airlines has award availability plus discounted mileage tickets. Don't miss out.

Given what the world is going through right now, it's nice to be the bearer of good news. That's particularly the case for American Airlines loyalists with this is one.

AA's unprecedented award seat availability as well as new lower prices. (Elsewhere in this issue, we also look at [Delta's](#) and [United's](#) equally great opportunities right now, in separate reports).

Ahh, award seat availability you say, FCF? Readers have told us exactly what they think in a recent survey we conducted...

"My biggest frustration is the fact that the big three U.S. legacy carriers rarely offer premium seat availability on international flights until the last minute."

And:

"Earning miles and points is not the problem. The issue is using them effectively!"

We couldn't agree more. Good award availability is as rare as, well... a worldwide pandemic.

Let's hope this thing sorts itself out as quickly as possible so we can get back to good old scarce award availability! But in the meantime, there are some incredible opportunities to be had.

Along with great, unprecedented availability, AA also has new lower mileage prices as well. That's a huge win-win.

The message is coming in clear: Book your tickets now, because it won't last, and when that happens, we'll be clear of this horrible Coronavirus. A definitive win of another sort. Don't miss out in the meantime.

UNPRECEDENTED DISCOUNT BUSINESS CLASS AVAILABILITY LATER THIS YEAR AND INTO NEXT YEAR.

TO/FROM LONDON

[Now often just 84,000 miles round-trip](#) in Business Class! Save up to 136,000 miles, or 62%, when compared to normal prices traveling to/from Chicago or New York (with connections from anywhere in the U.S.**) to Europe connecting via London.**

This is one of the routes we look at often here at FCF, and that's because it's so well traveled. But for finding low-cost mileage award space, it's usually very slim pickings.

Research done back in May 2019, November 2019, December 2019, and even January 2020 showed, at the most, 9 days of availability over a year's time on the Chicago- or New York-London route when flying with American. Now we're see **[161 days this and next year with availability—1,689% more!](#)**

TO/FROM HAWAII

Now just 56,000 miles round-trip from [Phoenix](#) and [Los Angeles to Honolulu, Kona, Kauai, and Maui](#): **save up 124,000 miles, or 69%**, when compared to everyday prices traveling to/from the U.S. Again, it includes

connections from anywhere in the U.S. when also available.

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Deal Routes

Depending on the program, you may qualify for free connecting flights to and from your deal route airports. [Learn more.](#)

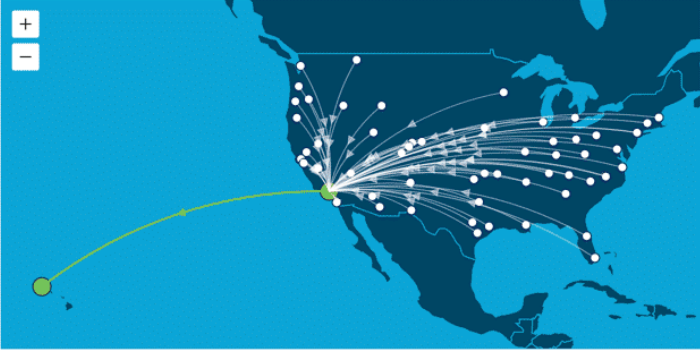
From Los Angeles

⇌

To Lihue

+

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Deal Availability

Fly at other times and pay double or triple.

Partner availability varies... [Show More](#)

Days Available	> 13+	9 TO 12	4 TO 8
2020			
SEP	🛩️🛩️🛩️		
OCT	🛩️🛩️🛩️		
NOV	🛩️🛩️🛩️		
DEC			
2021			
JAN		🛩️🛩️🛩️	
FEB			🛩️🛩️🛩️

🛩️🛩️🛩️ 4 Seats 🛩️🛩️ 2 Seats 🛩️ 1 Seat

NON-STOP TRANSCON NEW YORK TO/FROM SAN FRANCISCO

Consider [42,000 miles for a round-trip in Business Class between New York and San Francisco](#), with connections from any U.S. city, **saving you up to 63,000 miles, or 60%**, when compared to the usual prices.

You haven't seen this in a decade or two.

HOME AIRPORT NOT MENTIONED?

Connecting flights to the hub cities in this report are free in most cases with American Airlines because its mileage plan is zone-based.

To illustrate, Chicago to London in Business Class on American costs 84,000 miles round-trip. But if you live in Las Vegas, you pay no additional miles to add a flight to Chicago to score that deal. Jackpot!

For details on getting free connecting flights to hubs with great availability go [here](#) and [here](#).

AWARD MILEAGE HOLD WITH AMERICAN

If you want to grab these opportunities but haven't sorted out dates, vacation plans, etc, you can hold the award seat for five days for no additional charge. You can also hold more than one date, and then cancel the ones you don't need. There's no charge for the mileage award hold. For more details go [here](#).

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IF YOU DON'T HAVE AA MILES, BUT DO HAVE CREDIT CARD POINTS

Europe/London Business Class: American Express and Chase have a points-to-miles transfer partnership with Iberia: For example, this gives you New York to London for 92,000 Iberia miles round-trip.

Hawaii and Transcon: American Express and Citi have a points-to-miles transfer partnership with Cathay Pacific, so Los Angeles or Phoenix to Kauai can be had for 60,000 Cathay Pacific miles round-trip.




These are the lowest partnership costs we've found for those regions. Just note that when booking with partners such as Iberia and Cathay Pacific, there's typically less mileage award space than with American.

AA OPPORTUNITY TRAVELERS: TIME TO BOOK

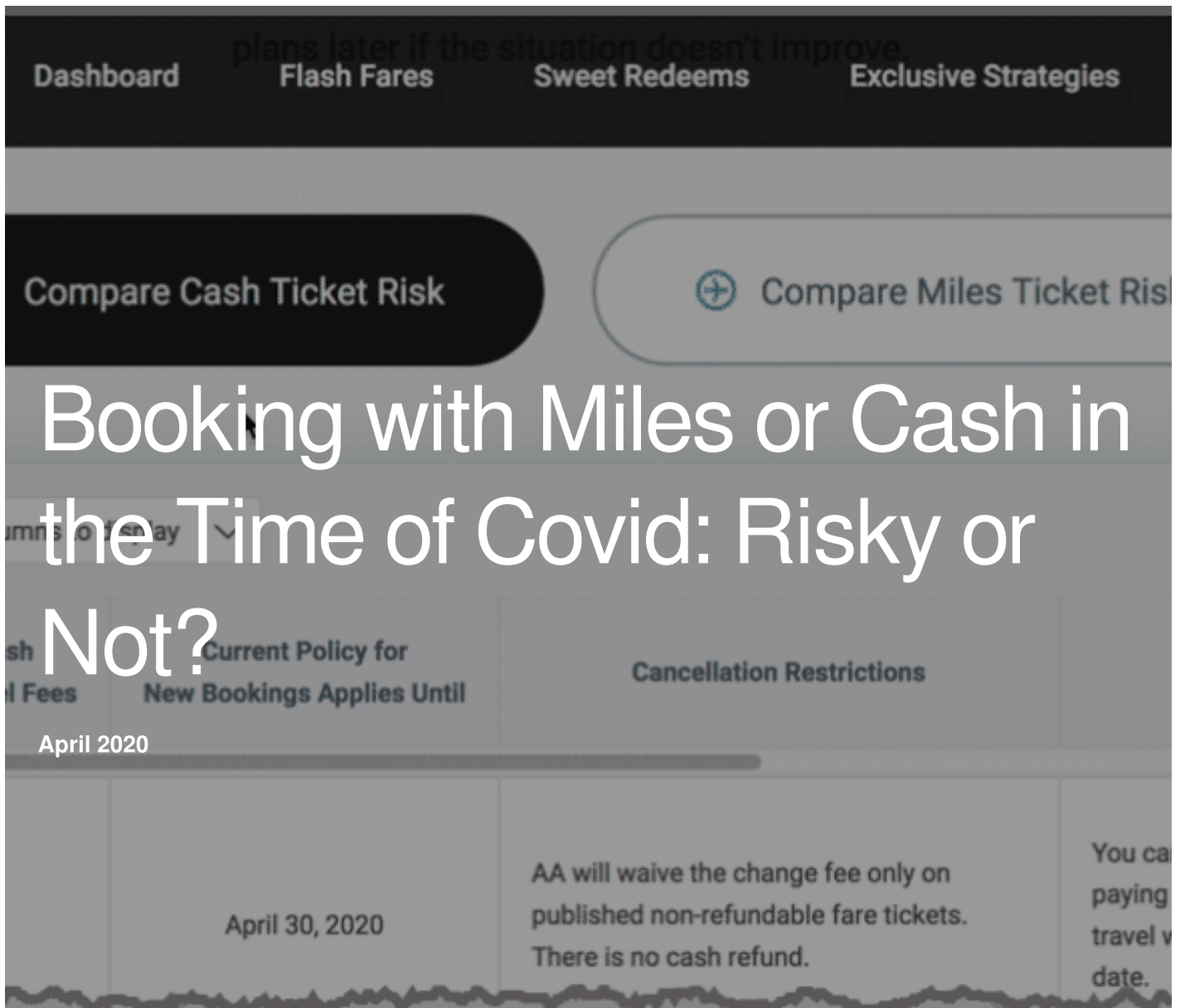
Remember that nice feeling of having a vacation planned for the future? Why not make it happen with unprecedented American award space available right now? From what we're seeing, there's never been a better time to book. These are extraordinary times in every way. You might as well make the best of them and book that trip. Opportunity travelers, as always, will fly the highest.

REMARKABLE:

Is booking with miles in the time of Covid risky behavior or not? Check out our special report on the [change fee or cancellation issues with AA award travel](#).

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Dashboard Flash Fares Sweet Redeems Exclusive Strategies Upgrade Search My Account					
Compare Cash Ticket Risk Compare Miles Ticket Risk					
Select airlines to compare Select columns to display					
Airline	Risk of Buying with Cash and Paying Change/Cancel Fees	Current Policy for New Bookings Applies Until	Cancellation Restrictions	Change Restrictions	
 Air Canada	Low Risk	April 15, 2020	There is no cash refund, you will receive future flight credit for travel before April 30, 2021. Any fare difference will apply if the new flight is more expensive. If the new flight is less expensive, any residual value resulting from a lower fare will be lost.	You can do a one-time change to your existing booking without a fee, any difference in fare will apply. The rebooked travel needs to take place before April 30, 2021.	
 American Airlines	Low Risk	April 30, 2020	AA will waive the change fee only on published non-refundable fare tickets. There is no cash refund.	You can change your flight once without paying a change fee. You need to start all travel within 1 year of original ticket issue date.	
 DELTA	Low Risk	May 31, 2020	There is no cash refund, but you can use the value towards a future flight, for up to a year from the date you purchased the	Tickets can be changed without a change fee for up to a year from the date you purchased the ticket, the fare difference	For mile change

Topping off your account hasn't been this cheap in eons: American Airlines is currently running a deal whereby miles can be acquired for as [low as 1.6¢ each](#). This is through a new, up-to-100% bonus miles-buy promo, which runs through April 12, 2020.



Know what you're getting yourself into with FCF's new [No-Worries Widget](#) and why we're recommending booking miles over cash if you're hesitant

[aside headline="Two Report Assumptions:" alignment="aligncenter" width="big" headline_size="default"]

#1: Sure, airlines could go out of business. We assume that they won't given the volume of stimulus money they are getting already and will likely get in the future.

#2 We've all heard nightmare stories of airlines making it hard to get refunds now. This report assumes that, going forward, the new policies, for tickets purchased post-covid, will turn out to be less of a fiasco.

That said, you'll be covered in both instances if you use miles./aside

Conventional wisdom: It's not a good time to be thinking of booking travel right now.

Unconventional wisdom: Or is it?

Even though we're all grounded, our dreams don't have to be. We can still plan amazing trips for the future, and believe it or not, you can find some incredible opportunities right now if you do your due diligence on the deal and the airline. Oh wait, we've done it for you. More on what we found in a minute...

TIME TO DREAM

An unexpected outcome of Coronavirus is that all of a sudden people have time on their hands. Time to dream. Time to plan. Time to do more research, work out a seamless itinerary, and **dive deep into the history and culture of the places to go**. At the end of the day, that'll just make your experience better when you get there.

OPPORTUNITY TRAVELERS: THIS IS YOUR TIME

We all know that the travel bans from the Coronavirus will be lifted at some point soon. Borders will reopen and large machines with wings called "airplanes" will once again dot the sky between continents, shuttling people across the world for exciting getaways or business trips.

At this point you're probably thinking: "FCF: what are the *risks* of booking now?!" Glad you asked. Our team has created a definitive [search-and-find-by-airline widget](#)—and by miles versus cash tickets—to inform you at a glance the risks.

SUMMARY OF CASH TICKET CANCELLATION AND CHANGE POLICIES

Many airlines have new "change fee waiver" policies in place for non-refundable tickets due to the virus. The policy does vary by airline, but in general, the policy waives 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 it applies.

SUMMARY OF MILES TICKETS CANCELLATION AND CHANGE POLICIES

With some airlines, the "change fee waiver" policy due to the virus also includes mileage-award tickets. The policy does vary by airline (see our widget [here](#)), but in general, the policy **waives the redeposit fee** for mileage award bookings.

A good example of this is Delta. Its “[travel waiver](#)” currently offered for new bookings till May 31 includes award flights, meaning no fees to cancel your ticket.

Normal mileage award booking policies vary by airline, but in general you can redeposit your mileage ticket for as little as \$30 to \$150, or change your ticket for \$25 to \$150. Details [here](#).

You can think of the change and/or redeposit fee as an insurance policy. That is, if your plans change and you decide not to travel, you can do so with very little hassle and cost. We think it’s well worth it.

FIRST CLASS AWARD LOW-RISK EXAMPLE

We found a cheap flash-mileage deal on American Airlines from New York to London for 114,000 miles round-trip in First Class (to quote our analyst: “I’ve never seen this. Period.”) To give you an idea of the value, just last year it cost 115,000 miles round-trip (if you could ever actually find it) on this same route in Business Class. **So you’re able to get First Class tickets for Business Class prices by booking now.**

<p>First</p> <p>Round trip (per person)</p> <p>114,000 miles</p> <p>+ \$273.85</p> <hr/> <p>JFK to LHR → 57,000 miles LHR to JFK ← 57,000 miles</p> <hr/> <p>Total (all passengers) 114,000 miles + \$273.85</p> <p>Includes taxes and carrier-imposed fees Price and tax information</p> <hr/> <p>Web Special rules and restrictions</p> <p>This trip includes a Web Special award and cannot be changed once ticketed. You can cancel your trip and reinstate miles, but fees may apply.*</p> <p><small>*Fees do not apply if you're an Executive Platinum member and use miles from your account.</small></p>	<p>DEPART</p> <p>New York, NY to London, United Kingdom</p> <p>Monday, November 2, 2020</p> <p>8:40 PM → 8:35 AM 6h 55m Nonstop First</p> <p>AA106 ■ 77W - Boeing 777</p> <p>⚠ Overnight flight or connection</p> <p>Details Change</p> <hr/> <p>RETURN</p> <p>London, United Kingdom to New York, NY</p> <p>Monday, November 23, 2020</p> <p>5:05 PM → 8:10 PM 8h 5m Nonstop First</p> <p>AA107 ■ 77W - Boeing 777</p> <p>Details Change</p>
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If you change your mind later for whatever reason and want to cancel, you only pay a \$150 “redeposit fee” (per account for the first award ticket, additional award tickets reinstated to the same account at the same time will have a \$25 charge per ticket) to put your miles back into your account. That’s a small price to pay for a deal that will most likely not be around later, or ever again. Don’t wait: Book now as the risk is low.

With times as uncertain as they are now, it’s no wonder some people are hesitant to book travel, even if they could find great deals—because of the perceived risk factor.

Use [FCF' No-Worries Widget](#) to know what you're getting yourself into.

plans later if the situation doesn't improve.

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Upgrade Search




My Account

Compare Cash Ticket Risk

Compare Miles Ticket Risk

Select airlines to compare

Select columns to display

Airline	Risk of Buying with Cash and Paying Change/Cancel Fees	Current Policy for New Bookings Applies Until	Cancellation Restrictions	Change Restrictions	
<div><div>Air Canada</div></div>	Low Risk	April 15, 2020	There is no cash refund, you will receive future flight credit for travel before April 30, 2021. Any fare difference will apply if the new flight is more expensive. If the new flight is less expensive, any residual value resulting from a lower fare will be lost.	You can do a one-time change to your existing booking without a fee, any difference in fare will apply. The rebooked travel needs to take place before April 30, 2021.	
<div><div>American Airlines</div></div>	Low Risk	April 30, 2020	AA will waive the change fee only on published non-refundable fare tickets. There is no cash refund.	You can change your flight once without paying a change fee. You need to start all travel within 1 year of original ticket issue date.	
<div><div>DELTA</div></div>	Low Risk	May 31, 2020	There is no cash refund, but you can use the value towards a future flight, for up to a year from the date you purchased the	Tickets can be changed without a change fee for up to a year from the date you purchased the ticket, the fare difference	For mile change

Up to 6,850% New United MileagePlus Discount Availability for Travel Later This Year and Into 2021

April 2020

Get while the getting is up to 210,000 fewer miles on Premium Flights.

Just like the other two big U.S. carriers, it's notoriously hard to squeeze low-price mileage award availability out of United. But obviously we are in exceptional times right now, and with that uncertainty comes unprecedented opportunity for those willing and able to grasp it.

This month we cover United (a Chase points partner), [American](#), and [Delta](#), and the news is *spectacularly* good on the availability front. We're happy to bring you some good news right now, and everyone here at FCF hopes all our awesome readers are staying safe out there!

PUTTING ON A UNITED FRONT

Like its U.S. airline siblings, United Airlines has been stingy when it comes to confirmable availability of discount Business Class redemptions. You could often only use United miles for low-cost partner award space or for United upgrades.

Availability is a common complaint received by FCF, as evidenced in a recent survey we undertook:

"I have not been able to use miles to fly Business Class for my last four overseas trips, either because the flight did not offer them or because the number of points was totally exorbitant."

However, for the time being at least, that has changed.

In this new "corona world," airlines are releasing low-cost mileage award space on routes and destinations on an amazing, unprecedented scale. FCF is seeing some pockets of award space that we never see. So if you're thinking about booking a trip for later this year or into early 2021, book now. [You can always cancel and for free.](#)

The way we see it, you don't have to ground all future bookings. Instead, take advantage of this rare opportunity.

While availability isn't necessarily great across the board, intermittently the availability is unprecedented. You still have to know where to look.

The good news is that we've done that heavy lifting for you as our team has conducted hundreds of hours of research this month. Here are specific treasure maps to the best of the best we found...

TO LONDON

Research last year showed, at the most, 4 days of discount availability over a year's time on United Newark/New York-London. Now we're seeing [278 days this and next year with availability—6,850% more!](#)

Unprecedented Business Class opportunities to London are also available from [Chicago](#), [Denver](#), [Houston](#), [Los Angeles](#), [San Francisco](#), and [Washington, DC](#), and for 4+ seats for travel September to February.

Days Available > 13+ 9 TO 12 4 TO 8			
2020			
SEP			
OCT			
NOV			
DEC			
2021			
JAN			
FEB			

 4 Seats
  2 Seats
  1 Seat

On United, the cost is 120,000 miles round-trip. That's limbo-dancing low. This mileage award typically goes for 310,000 miles with United's normal everyday price, a **savings of 190,000 miles, or 61%**. But if you live in, say, Portland you can add a flight to San Francisco to connect with the deal for no added miles.

TO BRAZIL

United Business Class from [Chicago to São Paulo for up to four seats is wide open through November](#). That *never* happens. Our research team is busy year-round checking airlines and routes for low-cost mileage availability in premium cabins.

We fish in all traveling rivers, streams, and water holes, even puddles, but often don't get a bite. That's typical for a route like Chicago-São Paulo on United Airlines.

July 2019 was the last time our research showed any decent low-cost mileage award space on this route. And even then, it was only for one month of the year to São Paulo. Other research done in August, September, November 2019, and even February 2020 showed just a few days throughout the year with barely a handful of low-cost award space.

But oh boy has that changed. Now you can book São Paulo with United miles for JUST 120,000 miles round-trip. This mileage award typically goes for 320,000 miles with United's normal everyday price, **giving you a total savings of 200,000 / 62%** for up to four seats. And that's for travel June through November, 13 or more days a month.

DON'T SEE YOUR HOME AIRPORT MENTIONED? GET FREE CONNECTING FLIGHTS

Connecting flights to the hub cities on United are free because its mileage plan is zone-based. Chicago to São Paulo in Business Class on United costs 120,000 miles round-trip. But if you live in Boston, you can add a flight to Chicago (or your departure city) for no additional miles so long as it's available.

For details on getting free connecting flights to hub cities with the great availability, go [here](#) and [here](#).

TO AMSTERDAM, LISBON, & MUNICH

Another United destination with [unprecedented discount Business Class availability from Chicago, Houston, and Newark is to Amsterdam](#), with 4+ seats, wide open June through February, 2021.

Add Lisbon to the list [from New York/Newark offering discount MileagePlus availability](#) in Business Class for travel Nov. to Feb. 2021.

We discovered similar unprecedented availability [to Munich from Chicago, Newark, and Washington, D.C.](#)

U.S. to Europe in Business Class on United costs 120,000 miles round-trip at the lower levels. These mileage awards typically go for 310,000 miles with United's normal everyday price, **a savings of 190,000 / 61% miles**. But let's say you live in Miami. No problem. You can add a flight to Newark to connect with that awesome deal for no added miles.

TO INDIA

Good luck trying to find [discount availability to Delhi](#) or [Mumbai](#), ordinarily. But now you can book India in Business Class on United for 150,000 miles round-trip. This mileage award typically goes for 360,000 miles with United's normal everyday price, a huge **savings of 210,000 / 58% miles**. And to give you an example, if you live in New Orleans, you can add a flight to Newark to nab the deal for no extra miles. If it wasn't for the pandemic, we'd be hugging each other right now.

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Deal Routes

Depending on the program, you may qualify for free connecting flights to and from your deal route airports. [Learn more.](#)

From San Francisco

↔

To Delhi

Deal Availability

Fly at other times and pay double or triple.

Partner availability varies... [Show More](#)

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SEP			4 Seats
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2021			
JAN			4 Seats
FEB		2 Seats	1 Seat

AWARD MILEAGE HOLD WITH UNITED

If you want to grab these unprecedented opportunities but haven't sorted out dates, vacation plans, or meeting windows, etc., you can hold the award seat with United's "Fare Lock" option. For a small fee, you can get a hold time of three or seven days on United flights. For more details go [here](#).

IF YOU DON'T HAVE UNITED MILES, BUT DO HAVE CREDIT CARD POINTS (PLUS HOW TO POSSIBLY SAVE EVEN MORE DEPENDING ON YOUR TRAVEL DATES)

American Express and Marriott have a points-to-miles transfer partnership with All Nippon Airways—a **United flights redemption partner**—although All Nippon's availability of United flights is often less than United's. If you can find availability through All Nippon, you can pay just 88,000 miles round-trip to Europe and 136,000 miles to India for the same United flights.


You can also transfer Chase points to United miles.

OPPORTUNITY TRAVELERS: THIS IS YOUR TIME

While we're all grounded right now, we don't have to ground all future travel (or our travel dreams) because we will come out of this. Now is the time to book that unprecedented low-cost mileage award ticket. These prices are tailor made for the Opportunity Traveler.

BOOKING WITH MILES IN THE TIME OF COVID: RISKY OR NOT?

To use your miles to book these great deals (given the uncertain travel atmosphere caused by coronavirus), [check out our special report](#) about it, also in this month's Upgrade Advisor.



Covid-19 Response and Why I Just Booked a Round-the-World Trip During the Global Pandemic

April 2020

Plus five reasons why now might be the best time for you to book your Dream Vacation whatever it might be.

First, let me say that if you've been affected by this virus in any way, from being cooped up at home, to canceling travel, feeling unwell, or dealing with the loss of a loved one, my heart goes out to you.

**FOR FCF MEMBERS IN CRISIS WE ARE OFFERING
FREE PERSONAL EMERGENCY PHONE CONSULTING**

If you or a family member is ill right now and in need of an urgent flight we will try to help you. Even though there are few flights right now, we are offering free personal phone consultations with myself and my staff on

how to implement our ticketing strategies right now for emergency travel needs.

Whether you need to visit an ill family member, or you're sick and want to fly family to visit you, we are available to members at this most stressful of times. Domestic or international, we're here to help. Simply click [here](#) and let us know how we can help you reach a loved one or transport a loved one to you using your miles or a cash ticket (if your situation is critical). We are here to provide our expertise and help as much as we can.

FOR EVERYONE ELSE WE HOPE TO PROVIDE A LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT & PERSPECTIVE

From our humble beginnings 24 years ago, FCF's editorial mission has been to curate the best the industry has to offer and share it with travelers. There is obviously no shortage of bad news, so you don't need us for that. In other words, I'm biased towards setting my mind on Good News.

In the same FCF spirit—given there is no shortage of bad news these days—**we will continue our “tone-deafness” (to primarily focusing on bad news) and continue to curate the best of the best news for you.** Although the airline industry is struggling and the Corona crisis is gripping the world, the news is NOT 100% bad and I believe the best of it should be shared.

So we've started [A Contrarian Coronavirus Crisis Response](#) page, with good-news only headlines **from both the airline industry and some on the health crisis** that you may have missed. If you're starving for good, uplifting news to improve your mindset, I think you'll love the content we've started to curate for you [here](#), as I haven't seen any source focused on the uplifting news and believe FCF is here to attempt to fill that gap in some small way. It may sound counter-intuitive with what's going on, but I think it's essential for our health and well-being.

WHY ARE WE ALSO TALKING ABOUT TRAVEL NOW?

I received a message from a longtime subscriber the other day saying, “Bennett, you shouldn't be talking about booking flights right now. You should be focused on the human tragedy.” While I understand the point, and with the utmost respect, I think we can do both at the same time.

In fact, that interaction is what led to this column.

FCF members sign up to hear what they don't hear anywhere else, and that's not going to change.

Travel is at the very heart of us. The drive to explore is built into our DNA. It's emotional, physical, and it nurtures and refreshes the soul and always enlightens.

Trips can serve like an intermission if not a wholesale hitting of the reset button; I love that about travel.

REASON #1 TO BOOK YOUR DREAM TRIPS NOW: PLANNING TRAVEL MAKES YOU HAPPY

Interestingly enough, even the *promise* of travel has a profound effect on our well-being. A study published in the [Applied Research in Quality of Life](#) journal reported that merely planning or anticipating travel makes you happier, and more importantly, the *happiest* part of the whole vacation process happens well before you actually arrive at your destination.

HOW ARE YOU SPENDING YOUR TIME RIGHT NOW?

I see a lot of people talking about “things to do while you’re isolated.” Some of it is great advice—especially with regards to learning new skills, studying, and benefiting from virtual hangouts with the people closest to you. But there’s also a lot of time being wasted. Many people are gluing themselves to the couch to watch seven seasons of some show on Netflix or movie trilogies. There could be a lot of lost opportunity in that, especially given the potential for (the longer lasting and more tangible) happiness that planning travel brings.

“But Bennett, we CAN’T travel!”

You’re right. And we certainly don’t recommend traveling now. But the opportunities available for travel later this year and next year that we’ve cherry-picked, combined with the protective measures put in place by airlines and the government, make this one of the more extraordinary times to plan that I’ve ever seen.

REASON #2 TO BOOK YOUR DREAM TRIPS NOW: THINKING ABOUT THE TRIP YOU JUST BOOKED WILL MAKE YOU HAPPY

Okay, so you don’t take off on the trip for 4 months or 10 —all the better! During that time, you’re going to have **hundreds or thousands of pleasant thoughts** about the trip. Those thoughts are going to lead to happiness you can’t buy anywhere else, or get on Netflix for that matter.

The further in advance you book, the more time you have to enjoy researching all the life experiences you’ll have. That kind of exhilaration money can’t otherwise buy.

REASON #3 TO BOOK YOUR DREAM TRIPS NOW: UNPRECEDENTED MILEAGE AVAILABILITY (IF YOU KNOW WHERE TO LOOK)

In this April issue, we also dive deep into something you historically can’t get: easy access to burning your miles and points for premium flights with [American](#), [Delta](#), and [United](#) at **prices most people have never seen before**. For detailed cheap travel treasure maps, especially if you’re a loyalist and have miles in any of these three programs, follow those links above. In the meantime, here are a few **examples** of what I’m talking about.

American to Hawaii: How does Hawaii sound, looking ahead? We've found 56,000-mile round-trips in Business Class on non-stops from [Los Angeles](#) and [Phoenix](#) to Honolulu, Kauai, Kona, and Maui with free connections from other U.S. cities when that space is available.

Perspective: That's savings of up to 124,000 miles or 69% when compared to normal everyday prices, for travel June through November, with 13 or more days a month of availability, and a handful of dates in January and February 2021. These are not normal everyday times. **Upgrade from normal coach prices for just 3,000 miles each way.**

We're seeing other American routes with up to **1,689% more availability** than usual. More [here](#).

Delta to Europe Example: For up to four travelers (and possibly more), we unearthed routes that **save up to 480,000 / 75%** when flying Business Class with Delta SkyMiles to [Paris](#) when compared to normal everyday prices traveling to and from the U.S., for travel from September through February 2021.

We're seeing other Delta routes with up to **10,800% more availability** than usual. More [here](#).

United to South America: We've found [unprecedented Business Class availability to Brazil](#) with United miles for only 120,000 miles round-trip. This is a journey that typically goes for 320,000 miles with United's normal everyday price, a savings of 200,000 miles, or 62%, for up to four seats, for travel June through November, with 13 or more days a month of availability.

Look ahead and be positive my friends. We're seeing other United routes with up to **6,850% more availability** than usual. More [here](#).

While availability isn't necessarily great across the board, intermittently the availability is unprecedented. You still have to know [where to look](#). The good news is that we've done that heavy lifting for you as our team has conducted hundreds of hours of research this month.

REASON #4 TO BOOK YOUR DREAM TRIPS NOW: WHY I BOOKED A ROUND-THE-WORLD TRIP IN THE MIDDLE OF A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

I'd never ask you to do something I wouldn't do, so here it is. What I call "[The Ultimate Award Ticket](#)." I just locked mine in and it will certainly be something to look forward to: **a life-changing Round-the-World trip in Business Class for a spectacularly low price of 105,000 miles.**

Savings Perspective: This is a staggering opportunity. Consider that **Delta charges 160,000 miles (52% more)** for a simple Business Class round-trip ticket between the U.S. and Europe, and 170,000 miles **(62% more)** from the U.S. to Asia.

What a way to blow the covid cobwebs away, once we're all clear.

And if you don't have any miles or points, but do have an Amex card, you can [book the RTW ticket for just \\$2,625](#) (retail price is \$9,000+).

Not ready to book a round-the-world ticket? No problem. Here are a few other top happy-making routes to have fun booking and looking forward to:

1. First Class Non-stop on (Amex/Chase Partner) Emirates to Athens and Milan [from New York & Newark](#)
2. First Class Non-stop on (Amex/Chase Partner) Emirates to Middle East from [Boston, Chicago, New York](#); and [Dallas, Houston, Orlando, and Washington D.C.](#)
3. First Class Non-stop on (Amex Partner) All Nippon to Tokyo from the [East](#) & [West](#) Coast, [Chicago, and Houston](#)
4. First Class Non-stop on (Amex/Chase Partner) [Singapore Airlines to Tokyo](#)
5. First Class Non-stop on Japan Airlines to Tokyo from the [East](#) and [West](#) Coast
6. Business Class to [India on United from Newark/New York](#) and [San Francisco](#)
7. [First Class Non-stop to Sydney](#) on Qantas (Amex Partner)

**REASON #5 TO BOOK YOUR DREAM TRIPS NOW:
IF YOU NEED TO CHANGE, PUSH BACK, OR CANCEL THE TRIP,
IT'S CHEAP (OR FREE) TO "REDEPOSIT THE MILES"**

It varies by airline, but if a "change fee waiver" is offered for mileage-award tickets, the policy waives the redeposit fee or change fee for mileage-award bookings.

An example is Delta, which is currently offering its "[travel waiver](#)" for all new bookings until May 31, including award flights. It means all fees are waived for redepositing miles.

Even if an airline doesn't offer a waiver, the cost to change or redeposit your miles is low: just \$25 to \$150. (If you are a top elite, you can redeposit miles for free with American, Delta, and United.)

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.

Explore FCF's NEW [No-Worries Widget](#) to compare the risk of booking with cash or miles based on airlines' new change and cancellations policies. Our team has scrambled to get this up and running for you and I think it's pretty cool.




plans later if the situation doesn't improve.

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Dashboard Flash Fares Sweet Redeems Exclusive Strategies Upgrade Search My Account

Compare Cash Ticket Risk Compare Miles Ticket Risk

Select airlines to compare Select columns to display

Airline	Risk of Buying with Cash and Paying Change/Cancel Fees	Current Policy for New Bookings Applies Until	Cancellation Restrictions	Change Restrictions	
 Air Canada	Low Risk	April 15, 2020	There is no cash refund, you will receive future flight credit for travel before April 30, 2021. Any fare difference will apply if the new flight is more expensive. If the new flight is less expensive, any residual value resulting from a lower fare will be lost.	You can do a one-time change to your existing booking without a fee, any difference in fare will apply. The rebooked travel needs to take place before April 30, 2021.	
 American Airlines	Low Risk	April 30, 2020	AA will waive the change fee only on published non-refundable fare tickets. There is no cash refund.	You can change your flight once without paying a change fee. You need to start all travel within 1 year of original ticket issue date.	
 DELTA	Low Risk	May 31, 2020	There is no cash refund, but you can use the value towards a future flight, for up to a year from the date you purchased the	Tickets can be changed without a change fee for up to a year from the date you purchased the ticket, the fare difference	For mile change

TURN OFF THE TV?

We humans are hardwired to travel. I think it's both a need *and* a want. When we get through this wild time, and we will, don't look back at this period as a missed opportunity. If you are getting itchy feet, be smart now with all the savings available. Always check cancellation or change fees and dates involved.

Take care, everyone.

LOTS ABOUT MILES. WHAT ABOUT BOOKING FARES?

FCF doesn't recommend booking tickets with cash right now unless it's an amazing fare AND for a trip you'll likely take, say like visiting Mom over Christmas. But generally, now's the time to use your miles on the unprecedented availability we're seeing on a number of routes.