



# Uncommonly Fantastic Fare Finds to India Save up to \$3,971 (60%) in Business Class

February 2020

## **By booking a package even if you don't need a hotel.**

A trip to India, whether for business or pleasure, can be expensive. You usually need to be in Business Class just to be comfortable on a flight that can be 30+ hours round-trip, and those Business Class tickets often don't come cheap. So how about a package deal combining flights and hotel that can save you up to 60% on your flight? Before you say "I don't need a hotel," hear us out.

We've found a way that both business travelers (who need a hotel) and leisure travelers (who may or may not need a hotel) can absolutely make this strategy work for them—and save up to 60% to India.

First, some background on packages. It's common for Online Travel Agencies like Expedia and Orbitz, and even an airline's own website, to offer package deals (hotel + airfare) that could save you thousands of dollars. Both Expedia and Orbitz packages offer many hotel options, filtered by price, ratings and many other variables. So you can choose the right one for you.

In this special report, we'll review a few different options to India for travel in Business Class that **can save a leisure traveler between \$1,012 and \$3,971, and a business traveler up to a whopping \$6,344.**

## LEISURE VS. BUSINESS TRAVELERS

We've divided our examples below into Leisure and Business Traveler categories to address the savings potential for each. We're distinguishing between them based on the high fares business travelers are typically faced with when traveling without an advance purchase and/or Saturday-night stay. Let's check out some examples of packages to India that make the flight up to 60% less expensive.

### NO HOTEL NEEDED

There are a few reasons that you might not need a hotel. As a leisure traveler, you might already have a hotel or vacation rental booked, or you might be staying with a friend. As a business traveler, your team may have booked a room for you already.

But, to make the most of this package opportunity, you've got to just go ahead and *book* a hotel, even if you don't need it. Both Orbitz and Expedia offer packages that only require you to *book* a minimum of a one-night hotel stay. So you could pick any one night during your trip, book the lowest-priced room for that night, **and just not stay there** in order to get that low Business Class fare. Or, book one or more nights at a hotel you *would* actually stay in; it's up to you.

So just what kind of savings are available through a package to India?

### LEISURE TRAVELERS WHO DON'T NEED A HOTEL: SAVE UP TO \$3,971 (OR 60%) BY BOOKING A PACKAGE

Say your favorite airline is Delta. So by booking a hotel + airfare package instead of just your flight, you can decrease the cost of the flight. Consider this example:

**Boston-Mumbai:** The lowest published Business Class fare on Delta on this route for May 7 to 14 is \$3,756, while the Expedia air-and-land package, on the other hand, is \$2,744 (based on one traveler) flying Delta in Business Class and pricing a low-end hotel (that you won't actually use). That's a total savings of **\$1,012, or 27% less.**

But you can't always count on your preferred airline to give you the best deal. Consider the following example:

**Detroit-Mumbai:** Say you want to travel to Mumbai from August 4 to 18. The lowest published Business Class fare on Delta is \$6,568 per ticket—quite high.

Time to consider a different airline (United) to score the package deal.

The Orbitz and Expedia air-and-land package is \$5,194 (based on two travelers and a bit more if just one traveler), or \$2,597 per person, flying United in Business Class and including a low-end hotel (which, remember, you don't have to use). That's a total savings of **\$3,971 each, or 60% less per ticket**. Wow.

### **LEISURE TRAVELERS WHO DON'T NEED A HOTEL: SAVE UP TO \$1,451 (OR 33%) ON NON-STOP FLIGHTS**

**San Francisco-New Delhi Non-Stop:** The lowest published Business Class fare on United Airlines on the San Francisco-New Delhi route for June 8 to 15 is \$4,374.

The Expedia air-and-land package is \$2,923 (based on one traveler) flying United in Business Class and pricing a low-end hotel for one night (that you won't use). That's a total savings of **\$1,451, or 33%**.

### **HOTEL, PLEASE**

Now, what about those travelers who *do* need a hotel? For these cases, we're still going with a package because it lowers your airfare. But this time, we're picking a hotel that you'll actually want to stay in.

### **LEISURE TRAVELERS WHO DO NEED A HOTEL: SAVE UP TO \$2,369 (OR 25%) ON NON-STOP FLIGHTS**

**New York-Mumbai Non-Stop Example:** The lowest published Business Class fare on Delta for May 11 to 19 is \$4,863 per ticket. If you book the five-star St. Regis Mumbai for seven nights (May 12 to 19) in a deluxe king city-view room, that adds \$1,972, bringing the total cost of your air and hotel to \$11,698 per couple.

The Delta Vacation air-and-land package, on the other hand, is \$9,329 (based on two travelers) flying Delta in Business Class and staying at the St. Regis for seven nights. That's a total savings of **\$2,369, or 25% less**.

List your property

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### Your trip to Mumbai, India

Mon, Apr 13 - Fri, Apr 17    Total price: **\$4,829.84**

Mon, Apr 13 - Fri, Apr 17  
Roundtrip 1 traveler

	9:05pm - 9:50pm Delta	15h 15m JFK - BOM	Nonstop Arrives Tue, Apr 14 ✓ Free cancel within 24 hrs	Special Fare
	12:05am - 6:05am Delta	15h 30m BOM - JFK	Nonstop ✓ Free cancel within 24 hrs	Special Fare

[Show flight and baggage fee details](#)

[Change flights](#)

Tue, Apr 14 - Fri, Apr 17  
3 nights 1 room

**The St. Regis Mumbai**

★★★★★

Mumbai

Deluxe Room, 2 Twin Beds, City View

✓ Breakfast Buffet

Non-refundable

[Show room information](#)

4.7/5  
(367 reviews)

[Change hotel](#)

**Getting to and from your hotel**

Check out these transportation deals for you while in Mumbai, India.

**Roundtrip Flight**  
New York (JFK) to Mumbai (BOM)  
Mon, Apr 13 - Fri, Apr 17  
Departure: Arrives on Tue, Apr 14. Your hotel check-in reflects this arrival.  
1 Ticket: 1 Adult

**The St. Regis Mumbai**  
Mumbai  
Tue, Apr 14 - Fri, Apr 17  
1 Room: 3 nights

Add transportation to and from your hotel for more bundled savings

Starting price	\$11,262.02
Bundled savings	-\$6,432.18
<b>Total due today:</b>	<b>\$4,829.84</b>

[Pay as low as \\$437/month](#)

All prices include taxes & fees and are quoted in US dollars

**Next: Final details**

✓ Don't forget to add travel protection to your booking at checkout.

## BUSINESS TRAVELERS WHO NEED A HOTEL: SAVE UP TO \$6,344 ON NON-STOP FLIGHTS

**New York-Mumbai Non-Stop:** The lowest published Business Class fare on Delta departing on a Monday and returning on Friday for April 13 to April 17 is \$10,192 for one ticket. Plus, if you book the St. Regis Mumbai for three nights (April 14 to 17) in a deluxe king city-view room, that adds about \$982 for the hotel, bringing the total cost of air and hotel to \$11,174.

The Expedia air-and-land package is \$4,830 (based on one traveler) flying Delta in Business Class and staying at the St. Regis for three nights for the same dates. That's a total savings of **\$6,344, or 57% less**. Wow.

## HOW TO BOOK ORBITZ AND EXPEDIA PACKAGES

1. Go to the [Expedia home page](#) and click "Bundle and Save." On the [Orbitz home page](#), click "Vacation Packages."

2. Enter departure and return cities and dates.

3A. **If you don't need a hotel:** Check the box that says "I only need a hotel for part of my stay." (Remember, you will choose a hotel for one night only, to get the price of your flight lowered.) Select the date for the one-

night hotel stay.

**3B. If you need a hotel:** No other input is needed, just go straight to your travel class selection (see No. 4, below).

4. Select Business Class under “Preferred class.”

5. Click “Search.”

## TO CONSIDER

Before booking anything, always check flight and hotel prices first to see whether it is cheaper to book the package or the flight and hotel separately.

Also, FCF can’t possibly price every trip combination for travel dates, airlines and hotels, so the sample savings above are a high-level overview of how you can take advantage of hotel and air packages to India, in general.

A Passage to India? Make that “A Package to India.” The savings are as spectacular as the country.



# Delta Deception: Why Partner Power Doesn't Work for Your SkyMiles

February 2020

**Know what you're getting into when it comes to investing in Delta miles and don't crop dust where there ain't crops and other Delta dangers**

In Alfred Hitchcock's "North by Northwest," Roger Thornhill, played by Cary Grant, gets chased by a crop dusting airplane. This happens moments after a local man watches the crop duster circling nearby and the following exchange takes place.

*Man: That's funny.*

Thornhill: What?

Man: *That plane's dustin' crops where there ain't no crops.*

Which brings me to Delta, a carrier that grew out of the world's first crop dusting company, [Huff Daland Dusters](#).

I find that interesting because, to put it bluntly, when you're a Delta SkyMiles loyalist, you're collecting miles that are of limited value because it's so hard to find low-cost award space.

In other words, you're dusting crops that aren't there.

## THE MORE PARTNERS THE MERRIER? NOT IN DELTA'S CASE

In theory, flying with an airline alliance that has a lot of partners increases your chances of using miles to get the dates and routes that might work for you. **But that's not the case with Delta.**

As a part of the SkyTeam alliance, Delta buddies up with major airlines such as Air France, Alitalia, KLM, Korean Air and many more. And, separately, it also partners with Virgin Atlantic and Virgin Australia.

While using SkyMiles with Delta's partners *potentially* opens up new routes and availability, often you'll find award space that shows as available on the partner airline's site does not show as available on delta.com. This is because many of those **partners release much less availability to their partner Delta** than they release to their own mileage program members.

## THE DELTA HELTER SKELTER

Let's dive in further to this Delta "deception" to see exactly where you stand and with whom.

**Less Availability:** Delta partner airlines that generally release less space to Delta than to their own mileage members: Air France and Virgin Atlantic.

**Much Less Availability:** Partners that rarely have available seats: Alitalia, KLM, and Korean.

## ACCESS TO FIRST CLASS WITH DELTA MILES

**No crops whatsoever:** Access to First is not possible with Delta miles, as its partners with a First Class (Air France and Korean Air) do not release any of it to Delta.



Cary Grant in "North by Northwest" (Photo by Sunset Boulevard/Corbis via Getty Images)

## **SHELTER FROM THE DELTA STORM? WHAT TO KNOW.**

Now you know why we don't write many reports on how to use Delta miles. They don't exist! Even though Delta is one of the three major U.S. mileage programs (the other two are American and United), it's not a great option for using miles or finding low-cost mileage awards on its own flights *or* partner flights.

### **DUST FOR EVIDENCE FIRST**


- Know what you are getting into with Delta miles.
- Know that using miles for Delta's own flights for low-cost mileage awards is difficult to find.
- Know that using miles on Delta's major partners for low-cost mileage awards is difficult to find.
- Know that you have no access to First Class mileage award redemptions.

The solution? Adopt FCF's flexible "Upgrade Mindset." Forget about being married to one mileage program and having all your miles there. Play an expansive game and choose a mileage program that offers value via partner award redemptions such as the American or United mileage programs. Your chances of redeeming miles on their partners is usually much better than with Delta. **Plus, you'll have access to First Class award redemptions, on many airlines.**

**A final word.** We don't like "grounding" an airline like this, but that's what our thorough research shows. As a 100% independent organization with not a cent of paid advertising support from airlines or credit card companies, you can rely on us to give you the real, sometimes ugly, picture. We'll always call it as we see it—especially if it prevents you from dusting crops that aren't there.

Related FCF Exclusive Reports:

- [American Partner Power 101: Hidden Opportunities](#)
- [United Partner Power 101: Hidden Opportunities](#)

A grayscale image of an American Express Platinum Card. The card features the classic centurion design in the center, surrounded by a repeating pattern of the American Express logo and the words "WORLD SERVICE". The cardholder's name "C F FROST" is embossed at the bottom. The word "PLATINUM" is prominently displayed above the centurion. A "MEMBER SINCE 95" stamp is visible on the right side.

# Easy Money: Amex Platinum Card Discounts Save \$200 to \$6,557 Off Many Published Fares

February 2020

**Get 7% to 39% off Premium Economy, Business and First Class, bookable online or by phone**

You have to love an easy discount.

American Express Platinum and Centurion cardholders barely have to lift a finger to knock off a couple hundred dollars (or even thousands) on lots of premium fares on a bunch of airlines (25), thanks to **Amex's International Airline Program (IAP)**.



And it's easy. You can book tickets [online](#). We'll give you the details below, but let's check out some deals first.

## AMEN TO AMEX: 7% TO 39% OFF

The IAP program offers a fare discount of 7% to 39% on many published First Class, Business Class and Premium Economy fares to many destinations around the globe. First Class tickets can be booked with the IAP on such airlines as Air France, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Emirates, Etihad, Lufthansa, Qantas, Singapore and SWISS.

## FIRST CLASS SAVINGS WITH AMEX: UP TO \$6,557 (OR 34%) LESS

**Cathay Pacific** from New York to Hong Kong currently costs \$19,668 round-trip in First Class booked with American and flying Cathay Pacific. Via Amex IAP it's \$13,111, a savings of **\$6,557 or 33%**.

Yes, this might take an extra 10 minutes to find the lowest fare, but if you save \$6,557, you're making up to \$655 for each minute that you do some research.

**Japan Airlines** from Los Angeles to Tokyo is currently \$16,453 round-trip in First Class. Via Amex IAP it's \$10,866, a savings of **\$5,587 or 34%**.

**Emirates** from New York to Dubai is currently \$13,787 round-trip in First Class. Via Amex IAP it's \$10,935, a savings of **\$2,852 or 21%**.

**Singapore Airlines** from Los Angeles to Tokyo is currently running \$11,888 round-trip in First Class. Via Amex IAP it's \$9,529, a savings of **\$2,359 or 20%**.

## UPGRADE TO FIRST CLASS FOR ONLY \$475

**First Class on British Airways** from San Francisco to London is currently \$4,061 round-trip for travel April 9 to 16, but via Amex IAP it drops to \$3,561. United charges \$2,661 for Business Class for the same dates, so essentially, booking on BA with the Amex IAP you get an upgrade to First Class for only ~\$900 round-trip.

Pay with your American Express Platinum Card and you also earn 5X points for booking via American Express Travel, which is about 14,000 extra points on a \$3,500 ticket. That easily has a value of \$425, making the overall **upgrade cost even less at \$475**. Note that this is even better than the British Airways 10% Visa discount in the long run as you earn valuable points back.

## BUSINESS CLASS SAVINGS WITH AMEX IAP: UP TO \$4,117 (OR 39%) LESS PLUS TACTICAL AND FLASH FARE SAMPLE SAVINGS UP TO \$200 (OR 14%) LESS

[Example Savings On Tactical Fares to Europe:](#) Los Angeles to Paris is currently \$2,239 round-trip on **Air France in Business Class** for travel in August. Via Amex IAP it's \$2,088 for a **\$151 or 7% savings**.

[Example Savings On Flash Fares to South America:](#) When New York to Rio de Janeiro was running \$1,394 round-trip on **Delta**, Amex IAP was pricing at just \$1,194, a **\$200 or 14% savings**.

## REVIEW YOUR TRIP

Fares are per person in US dollars. Total fare includes taxes & airline/American Express imposed fees. Additional baggage charges may apply. Charges after booking are subject to change fees.

**Free 24 Hour Cancellation**

Call 1-800-297-2977 within 24 hours of booking for a full refund.

DEPARTURE

NON-STOP

9H 55M

+ 1 DAY

**TUE, JAN 21, 2020**

Delta 479  
4,826 Miles

6:40pm → 6:35am  
New York, NY (JFK) → Rio de Janeiro, BR (GIG)

Business  
Baggage Fees  
**Only 2 Tickets Left**

Exclusive Platinum Card® Member Benefit: Save with the [International Airline Program](#). ⓘ

RETURN

NON-STOP

10H 8M

**WED, JAN 29, 2020**

Delta 478  
4,826 Miles

9:10am → 5:18pm  
Rio de Janeiro, BR (GIG) → New York, NY (JFK)

Business  
Baggage Fees  
**Only 2 Tickets Left**

Exclusive Platinum Card® Member Benefit: Save with the [International Airline Program](#). ⓘ

**Important Information**

Tickets are non-refundable 24 hours after booking. An airline imposed change fee \$300, fare difference and an American Express fee of \$39 is charged for itinerary changes. Tickets are non transferable. Name Changes are not allowed.

**MYTRIP SUMMARY**

[Change Flight](#) ✎

Jan 21 to Jan 29

1 Traveler  
[Fare Rules](#)

Round Trip

**DEPARTURE**

Jan 21, 2020  
Delta  
Non-Stop

**JFK → GIG**

06:40pm → 06:35am  
(+1 day)

**RETURN**

Jan 29, 2020  
Delta  
Non-Stop

**GIG → JFK**

09:10am → 05:18pm

Platinum Card® Members have complimentary airport lounge access at JFK.

[INTERNATIONAL AIRLINE PROGRAM](#) ⓘ

[5X MEMBERSHIP REWARDS® POINTS](#)

**COST DETAILS**

<b>Total Trip Cost</b>	<b>\$1,193.95</b>
<u>Round trip, 1 Adult</u> ▲	
1 Adult	\$1,100.00
<u>Taxes &amp; Fees</u>	\$93.95
<u>American Express Imposed Fees</u>	\$0.00

Total fare includes Taxes & Airline/American Express Imposed Fees. Additional airline baggage fees may apply.

Call 1-800-297-2977 within 24 hours of booking for a full refund.

**Total Trip Cost**

**\$1,193.95**

## SAMPLE SAVINGS WITH EVERYDAY FARES: UP TO \$1,237 (OR 19%) LESS

### ASIA

Los Angeles to Singapore is currently \$3,378 round-trip on **Singapore Airlines in Business Class**. Via Amex IAP it's \$2,938. This may not be thousand-dollar savings, but it turns a good deal into a great one with a **\$440 or 13% savings**.

New York to Tokyo is currently running \$6,662 round-trip on **Japan Airlines in Business Class**. Via Amex IAP it's \$5,425 for a **\$1,237 or 19% savings**.

San Francisco to Seoul is currently \$4,371 round-trip on **Asiana in Business Class**. Via Amex IAP it's \$4,008, a **\$363 or 8% savings**.

### AFRICA

Atlanta to Johannesburg is currently \$6,292 round-trip on **Delta non-stop in Business Class**. Via Amex IAP it's \$5,423 for an **\$869 or 14% savings**.

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## EUROPE

Los Angeles to Paris is currently \$3,369 round-trip on **Air France and Delta in Business Class** for travel in May. Via Amex IAP it's \$2,968 for a **\$401 or 12% savings**.

Houston to Frankfurt is \$3,529 round-trip on **Lufthansa in Business Class** for travel in June. Via Amex IAP it's \$3,331 for a savings of **\$198 or 6%**.

## SOUTH PACIFIC

Los Angeles to Sydney is currently \$6,599 round-trip on **American, Delta, and Virgin Australia in Business Class**. Via Amex IAP it's \$5,632 on Delta for a **\$967 or 15% savings**.

## THE MIDDLE EAST

New York to Dubai is currently running \$5,000 round-trip on **Emirates non-stop in Business Class**. Via Amex IAP it's \$4,835 for a **\$165 or 3% savings**.

And finally, Dallas to Doha is currently running \$4,875 round-trip on **Qatar non-stop in Business Class**. Via Amex IAP Travel it's \$4,506 for a savings of **\$369 or 8%**.

## BUSINESS TRAVELERS SAVE BIG

### SAMPLE FARE SAVINGS UP TO \$4,117 (OR 39%) LESS

There are lots of reasons people fly Business Class, but the business traveler has specific needs: often flying last minute, and/or without a Saturday-night stay. Here's what we found for sample savings with the Amex International Airline Program using these types of parameters.

**Last-minute savings on a high-demand route:** Traveling a week from your departure date? And have no weekend stay (out on Monday and returning on Friday, for example)? New York to London is very expensive for the business traveler, with fares starting at around \$8,251 round-trip on Delta and Virgin Atlantic. Via Amex IAP it's \$6,219 for the same flights for a **\$2,032 or 25% savings with both airlines**.

Seven-day advance on the **New York-to-Frankfurt** route is currently \$2,970 round-trip on Delta non-stop in Business Class. Via Amex IAP it's \$2,667 **for a savings of \$303 or 10%**.

Seven-day advance on the **Washington, DC,-to-Paris** route is currently \$9,503 round-trip on Air France non-stop in Business Class. Via Amex IAP it's \$7,913 for a savings of **\$1,590 or 17%**.

Seven-day advance on the **Chicago-to-Tokyo** route is currently \$12,563 round-trip on Japan Airlines non-stop in Business Class. Via Amex IAP it's \$8,446 for a **\$4,117 or 33% savings**.

Seven-day advance on the **New York-to-Hong Kong** route is currently \$8,112 round-trip on Japan Airlines non-stop in Business Class. Via Amex IAP it's \$4,938 for a **\$3,174 or 39% savings**.

## PREMIUM ECONOMY SAVINGS WITH AMEX IAP: UP TO \$830 (OR 37%) LESS

### ASIA

New York to Tokyo is currently \$2,250 round-trip on **American/Japan Airlines in Premium Economy**. Via Amex IAP it's \$1,420 for a **\$830 or 37% savings**.


### SOUTH PACIFIC

Los Angeles to Sydney is currently \$2,170 round-trip on **Virgin Australia in Premium Economy**. Via Amex IAP it's \$1,548 for a **\$622 or 29% savings**.

## HOW TO BOOK

**Step 1:** Find low-fare premium deals using [FCF fare alerts](#).

**Step 2:** Click on the “Get Deal” button to take you to [google.com/flights](https://google.com/flights) and search the dates the deal works for you.

FARE ▾	ORIGIN ▾	DESTINATION ▾	AIRLINES	NEXT STEP
\$1,395	New York	Rio de Janeiro		<a href="#">How to Book</a> <a href="#">Get Deal</a>

**Step 3:** Research fare on Google Flights (and confirm the fare through a Google booking partner to make sure it's real) or on your favorite Online Travel Agency.


**Step 4:** [Go online to Amex travel](#) and log in to your American Express Platinum or Centurion Card account, or if you prefer to call: 1-800-525-3355 for Platinum Travel Service or 1-800-553-9497 for Business Platinum Travel Service. (FYI: There's a \$39 booking fee per ticket if you call and no fees when you book online.) Then enter the same dates and route you found on Google Flights.


Log in and book online to get exclusive access to lower fares


Round Trip ▾


1 Traveler ▾


Business Class ▾


 **JFK**  
New York, NY, United States ...



 **RIO**  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (RIO-A...

 **Feb 1**  
Saturday

 **Feb 12**  
Wednesday



☒ Non-stop flights only

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So, the next time you're browsing through [FCF's special fare alerts](#) and spot a nice low \$1,800 Business Class long-haul fare—or even a flash deal for \$1,400, book it [online with Amex](#) to save even more.

## **WHEN AMEX IAP DID NOT WORK FOR FCF**

Based on FCF's research, we found that not every route or airline offered an IAP discount, even if the airline itself had service, so sometimes getting the IAP fare can be a bit hit-and-miss.

For example, Qatar and Lufthansa to Africa, Etihad to Abu Dhabi and Qantas in First Class to Sydney offered no discount. The Caribbean routes we checked also offered no savings. Nor did Central America. That said, keep in mind FCF's research was limited; checking every airline, class, and route is impossible so results will vary.



# Hold It Right There: How to Lock in Amazing Premium Flash Fares Long Enough to Decide If They're Right for You

February 2020

**More airlines allow fare holds that prevent you from missing that awesome fleet-footed fare (the airline's version of a "call option")**

The 1999 film, "The Matrix" popularized a cinema technique called "Bullet Time," and since has been used in countless films, TV shows, video games and ads. Whether you've seen The Matrix or not, you've seen the technique. It's where they slow down a fast moving object—like the firing of a bullet—and move slowly around that moving object observing it from a range of different angles.

**It gave you time to stop and analyze what was happening, and take in the big picture, before real time resumed.**

It was a wow moment for Hollywood. It's not often a game changing technique comes along.

Well, we have a WOW technique for you to use in travel—that's just like Hollywood's Bullet Time: the very underused (and very inexpensive) **Fare Hold** option, and now, happily, more airlines are getting on board.

So, do not be fooled by what everyone is always writing on “**when is the best time to book your flight?**” It is not a matter of when to book, but rather when to hold a great fare when you see it:

1. Then do more research and decide if the dates and destination work for you. If so, buy the ticket; if not cancel the hold.
2. The best time to buy a ticket is when your hold fare is lower than the current “live” fare.

## **WHAT IS A FARE HOLD OPTION?**

Spectacular low fares come and go all the time. They can change within a day or two, more or less. With a fare hold option you are able to lock in your fare without having to buy your ticket. In other words, low fares can be extended, before they disappear, giving you a chance to finalize your travel arrangements and dates.

## **HOW DOES IT WORK?**

At FCF, we like to call it “Look, Lock, Book.” Find the fare (Look), use a fare hold option (Lock), and then book (or not) based on further research on your travel arrangements and dates. **The best time to buy the ticket is when the fare on hold is lower than the current live fare.**

You just have to know the airlines and their rules for fare lock options, which gives you time to decide whether to purchase the ticket or let it go.

## **FCF'S 2020 FARE HOLD GUIDE: NOW WITH MORE AIRLINES**

Since March 2019, when FCF last published a special report on the topic, 15 major airlines had the option to hold a reservation and guarantee the fare for free or a small fee. Now, four more airlines offer the fare hold option, making the total 19.

## **WHY SHOULD YOU FOCUS ON THE AIRLINES THAT ALLOW YOU TO LOCK IN AMAZING FLASH FARES?**

Look at the “lock” option as a way to stop time and keep fares from increasing so you have time to decide. For example, say you come across an [FCF fare alert](#) from Houston to Amsterdam on United for \$2,096 in Business Class, but you're not sure of your travel plans yet. You could buy a Fare Lock option with United for three days for \$16.99 or for seven days for \$19.99 per ticket to lock in your fare and flights.

Or, you could hold three (or more) tickets, on different dates with British Airways for 72 hours for \$30 (\$10 per ticket). You can space them out to cover yourself, with one departing the first week of the month, one the second, and one the third, or in three (or more) different months, or three (or more) different destinations, for example.

American's hold is free for up to 24 hours, while Lufthansa charges \$39 per reservation, for 48 hours. BA and Lufthansa even refund the fee if you buy the ticket.

## WHAT ARE THE AIRLINES THAT OFFER A FARE HOLD LOCK IN 2020?

There are 19 airlines that will lock and guarantee the fare and flights. The hold period and cost varies by airline. The "lock option" goes by different names, but it comes up during the booking process on eligible flights. The Details;

## 2020 Hold Matrix: Airlines That Lock in Amazing Premium Flash Fares to Use Later

Airline	Cost Per Ticket or per Reservation	Hold Time	Name for Hold Option	Comments
<a href="#">Air France</a>	15 EUR (about \$17) per ticket	Up to 72 hours	Time to Think	Non-refundable; not offered for First Class
<a href="#">Air New Zealand</a>	\$35 per reservation	72 hours	Fare Hold	The Fare Hold fee is refundable if you cancel the Reserved Fares within 24 hours from the time you pay the Fare Hold fee. After that 24-hour period, the Fare Hold fee is not refundable, even if you cancel the Reserved Fare. Not offered if flight departure is less than 21 days.
<a href="#">All Nippon Airways</a>	\$10 per person	72 hours	Keep My Fare	Non-refundable
<a href="#">American Airlines</a>	Free	24 hours	Hold Your Reservation	When available on select American-marketed-and-operated flights, you can pay (non-refundable) to hold your reservation for an extended time period. The free 24-hour hold is also offered at times on British Airways, Iberia, Finnair, Japan Airlines, and Qantas.
<a href="#">British Airways</a>	\$10 per ticket	72 hours	Hold Your Flight Price	Fee will be charged only if you cancel your reservation or take no action within the time limit
<a href="#">Cathay Pacific</a>	\$25 per reservation	72 hours	Hold Your Fare	The fee is only charged if you do not buy the tickets within 72 hours.
<a href="#">Eva Air</a>	\$16 per ticket	72 hours	Time to Think	Non-refundable
<a href="#">Eji Airways</a>	20 FJD (about \$9) per ticket	72 hours	Time to Think	Non-refundable; not offered if flight departure is less than 5 days.

Airline	Cost Per Ticket or per Reservation	Hold Time	Name for Hold Option	Comments
<a href="#">Hawaiian Airlines</a>	Cost is per person and price varies	Varies: 3 or 7 days	Fare Hold	Non-refundable
<a href="#">Iberia</a>	\$10 per ticket (the first 24 hours are free)	24 or 72 hours	Need More Time	The fee is then deducted from the final ticket price if you confirm the purchase within 72 hours.
<a href="#">KLM</a>	Cost is per ticket and price varies: 10 to 15 EUR	72 hours	Time to Think	Non-refundable
<a href="#">LATAM</a>	Free	24 hours	Hold Reservation	Offered one week or more prior to the flight's departure.
LOT Airlines	Cost is per ticket and varies: \$10 or \$13	Varies: 24 or 48 hours	Time to Think	Non-refundable
<a href="#">Lufthansa</a>	\$39 per reservation	48 hours	Secure Your Fare	Fee will be charged only if you cancel your reservation or take no action within the time limit
<a href="#">Qatar Airways</a>	Cost is per reservation and price varies: 24 hours free, 48 hours \$15, 72 hours \$20	24 to 72 hours	Hold My Booking	Non-refundable; if duplicate bookings are found, one of the bookings will be cancelled and the 'Hold My Booking' option will no longer be valid; offered 3 days or more before departure
<a href="#">Singapore Airlines</a>	Cost is per ticket and price varies	72 hours	Secure My Fare	Non-refundable; Premium Economy only (not offered for Business Class); made at least 30 days from the departure date.
<a href="#">SWISS</a>	25 CHF (about \$27) per reservation	72 hours	Hold the Booking	Non-refundable; at least 48 hours prior to departure required
<a href="#">TAP Air Portugal</a>	\$13 per ticket	48 hours	Time to Think	Non-refundable
<a href="#">United</a>	Cost is per reservation and price varies	Varies: 3 or 7 days	FareLock	Non-refundable; not offered for partner flights.

## WHAT IS THE BACK-UP TO A FARE LOCK?

Most airlines allow you to cancel without penalty after you buy your ticket, and by law, you should receive a full refund within 24 hours of purchasing your ticket. (The Department of Transportation mandates that “U.S. and foreign air carriers allow a reservation to be cancelled within 24 hours without penalty.”) So when you book your ticket, make sure the airline shows that you get a refund if cancelled within 24 hours, somewhere during the booking process. Delta, for example has “24-Hour Risk Free Cancellation” on the flight summary page.



# FCF Premium Special Fares Monitor

February 2020

Here's a survey of the best special airfare deals we've published in the last month—on major airlines—that **remain live**. In case you missed them, forgot about them, or are just now ready to pounce, have at 'em...

## AFRICA

[New Africa Business Class Fares from Los Angeles, New York, Miami and Washington, DC to Africa, Starting at \\$3,074](#)

[Fly Premium Economy to Nairobi for just \\$1,435 R/T](#)

[New Cairo Business Class Fares Starting at \\$1,992 R/T](#)

## ASIA

[Non-stop \\$1,095 R/T Premium Economy Fares from the West Coast to Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan](#)

## EUROPE

[Special Canary Islands Business Class Fares from All Over the U.S. Starting at \\$2,106](#)

[8 Best Non-stop Business Class Fares to Europe from New York \\$2,089](#)

[Fly from Florida to Germany, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, and More with \\$2,082 R/T Business Class Fares](#)

[Fly to Many Mediterranean Destinations with \\$2,154 Business Class Fares from Los Angeles and San Francisco](#)

[New Business Class Fares from Los Angeles to Europe \\$2,076 R/T](#)

[New First Class Non-stop Fares to Europe Starting at \\$3,113 R/T with Discounts](#)

A close-up photograph of a hand placing a pushpin into a map. The map is spread out on a surface, and the pushpin is being inserted into a specific location. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the hand and the map.

# FCF's Secret Side Hustle Part 2: Add a Wondrous Destination to Your Euro Trip for Zip-Zilch-Zero (or Even Less)

February 2020

## **Check Off Your Bucket List With Outrageously Affordable Add-On Destinations**

Think ignorance is bliss? Think again.

Ignorance means missing out on some of travel's great unknown secrets. You may read this special report in disbelief because it almost seems too good to be true. It's part two of our report from [January](#) about a different way to look at your European trip.

Whether you're traveling to Europe for business or pleasure, instead of simply returning home, make your European destination a free stopover on your way to *another* destination for barely any additional cost, sometimes even for less. It's what we call our Stopover Loophole Strategy (SLS).

Last month we showed you [how this works on Lufthansa and SWISS to Africa, Egypt, Europe, India, Israel, Morocco and the Middle East](#) via Germany or Switzerland. This month we look at the SLS with other Star Alliance airlines Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, and SAS, which opens up a whole range of destinations all over the globe **when you travel to Vienna, Brussels, and Copenhagen**, the hub cities of those airlines.

## **SLS-ING ALL THE WAY VIA AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, OR DENMARK GO TO EUROPE THEN SAFARI ON DOWN TO AFRICA**

Say you're flying from Newark to Copenhagen non-stop September 14 to 28 at the lowest Business Class fare with SAS: \$5,329 round-trip. Why not "SLS" to **Johannesburg, South Africa**, the connecting city to great safari destinations in Africa including nearby Madikwe Game Reserve and Kruger National Park (and flights to Botswana) for **\$1,681 less (\$3,648) for the whole trip?** I know, loopy, right?

Or consider Los Angeles to Vienna September 7 to 21 for the lowest Business Class fare with Austrian Airlines of \$3,465 round-trip. You can add flights to **Nairobi, Kenya** (a departure point for spectacular safaris to famed Masai Mara or Tanzania's Serengeti National Park) **for \$160 less (\$3,305) for the whole trip.** "Grunt-roar-wheeze!" (That's the sound of a happy hippo).

## **GO TO EUROPE THEN RENDEZVOUS IN RUSSIA**

Say you're flying non-stop on Brussels Airlines from Washington, DC, to Brussels June 10 to 24 and the lowest Business Class fare is \$3,200 round-trip. You can add **St. Petersburg**, Russia's cultural center, and celebrate the midnight sun at the famed White Nights Festival taking place during these dates for \$3,218, or **just \$18 more.** A renowned bucket list city for \$18? Are you kidding me?

## **GO TO EUROPE, ADD THE SPHINX**

Flying non-stop on Austrian Airlines from Chicago to Vienna May 5 to 19 costs \$3,215 round-trip. But you can add **Cairo** for almost free, because the whole trip is \$3,247, or **just \$32 more.** You know you've been hemming and hawing about Egypt for years – this is your golden hieroglyphic-covered chance.



## GO TO EUROPE THEN SLS YOUR WAY TO ISRAEL

Let's say you're flying Los Angeles to Vienna (non-stop) September 7 to 21 for the lowest Business Class fare with Austrian Airlines: \$3,465 round-trip. But you can **add Tel Aviv, Israel, for just \$90 more** (\$3,555).

## More Samples of FCF'S Secret Side Hustle

Non-stop Route	Airline	Business Class Fare	Add-on City	Business Class Fare	Difference
Newark to Copenhagen	SAS	\$5,329	Johannesburg, South Africa	\$3,648	<b>\$1,681 less</b>
Los Angeles to Vienna	Austrian Airlines	\$3,465	Nairobi, Kenya	\$3,305	<b>\$160 less</b>
			Tel Aviv, Israel	\$3,555	\$90 more
			Moscow, Russia	\$3,238	<b>\$227 less</b>
			St. Petersburg, Russia	\$3,163	<b>\$302 less</b>
			Cairo, Egypt	\$4,106	\$641 more
			Amman, Jordan	\$3,532	<b>\$67 more</b>
Washington, DC to Brussels	Brussels Airlines	\$3,200	St. Petersburg, Russia	\$3,218	<b>\$18 more</b>

Non-stop Route	Airline	Business Class Fare	Add-on City	Business Class Fare	Difference
			Nairobi, Kenya	\$3,564	\$364 more
			Moscow, Russia	\$3,212	<b>\$12 more</b>
			Marrakesh, Morocco	\$3,478	\$278 more
			Cairo, Egypt	\$3,282	<b>\$82 more</b>
New York to Vienna	Austrian Airlines	\$3,165	Amman, Jordan	\$3,255	\$90 more
			St. Petersburg, Russia	\$2,845	<b>\$320 less</b>
			Moscow, Russia	\$3,125	<b>\$40 less</b>
Chicago to Vienna	Austrian Airlines	\$3,215	Amman, Jordan	\$2,983	<b>\$232 less</b>
			Marrakesh, Morocco	\$3,636	\$421 more
			Moscow, Russia	\$3,263	<b>\$48 more</b>
			St. Petersburg, Russia	\$3,273	<b>\$58 more</b>
			Nairobi, Kenya	\$3,686	\$471 more
			Cairo, Egypt	\$3,247	<b>\$32 more</b>
Washington, DC to Vienna	Austrian Airlines	\$3,215	Cairo, Egypt	\$3,256	<b>\$41 more</b>
			Moscow, Russia	\$3,245	<b>\$30 more</b>
			Nairobi, Kenya	\$3,567	\$352 more
			Johannesburg, South Africa	\$3,499	\$284 more
			Amman, Jordan	\$2,983	<b>\$232 less</b>

## NOT PLANNING TO GO TO BRUSSELS, COPENHAGEN OR VIENNA?

Maybe you had Berlin in your sights. No problem. Travel within Europe is cheap, and there are many options: fly, drive, train or segway your way from burg to burg (even Hamburg). Berlin is just an hour's flight from Copenhagen, and about the same to Vienna. That's the thing about European cities—they're so close to each other, and yet so different from each other.

## WHAT IF I DON'T LIVE IN A MAJOR U.S. DEPARTURE HUB CITY?

Don't live in Los Angeles or Washington, DC, or New York? You can fly there with cash or miles by booking a second ticket to take advantage of these opportunities.

If you're [using miles for short- to mid-range flights](#) to Los Angeles or New York, British Airways miles (which partner with Amex and Chase) offer **great value on American flights**.

## STAR ALLIANCE BONUS

One more awesome thing: Most of these great deals can be booked as code-share flights with United, so United elites and non-elites earn miles, while earning elite status credit as well.

Enjoy your trip — and the one you add to it!



Two cheetah brothers in Masai Mara

A person is standing in a river, fishing with a rod and reel. The river is calm, reflecting the sky and the person. In the background, there are mountains under a cloudy sky. The text is overlaid on the image.

# Europe Fishing Lessons: How to Reel in Business Class for About \$2,000, Five Different Ways

February 2020

## **Carp Diem: Five Ways to Seize the Day with Lie-Flat Seats Across the Pond**

Do you fish in the same old travel holes? Most people do. They go to the same places, at the same times of year, because that's the comfortable option. They use the same airline over and over to earn those award and elite miles. It's easy. Convenient. Humans like the warmth of familiarity. Forget that the prices may be higher. It's what we did last time, and last time was alright. Yes?

Yes and no.

Fishing in the same old travel holes can mean you’re hanging out in overfished holes. Traveling on the same old travel dates to the same destinations, and flying airlines that might earn you elite status and award miles, can also increase your fare way over the value of those award and elite miles. That’s especially true compared to great fares like a ~\$2,000 Business Class ticket to Europe.

**So where are the fishing holes that the crusty, wise old fishermen know about?** The ones where premium tickets to Europe don’t cost you \$3,500 to \$5,500? The ones that don’t take your eye out with a yanked hook or clunk you on the head with a swinging sinker?

We’ve mapped them all out here—the deeply-discounted published fares you can reel in if you know where to fish (plus one additional strategy on a deal that can cost as little as \$1,250 if you’re careful). Sure, you *might* need to be a bit more flexible to get to the fishing holes (but not necessarily), however the catches can be amazing. And I don’t think you’ll be throwing any back.

Here are FCF’s five fab fishing holes for the next time you travel to Europe, so you can hook a Business Class ticket in the \$2,000 range.

**TODAY FCF STANDS FOR FRESH CAUGHT FISH**

**FISHING HOLE #1:**

**SECRET LOW-COST TRAVEL WINDOWS**

Airlines have shifted away from their older practice of pricing seats as high as they *possibly* can. Now they’re [pricing them more strategically](#) to sell all their seats. (FCF calls them [tactical fares](#).) In doing so, airlines change traveler behavior by enticing you to book flights when *they* want you to (intended to funnel you to lesser-sold flights), so all their seats get sold.

**A SAVINGS OF \$2,300?!**

**WHAT’S THE STORY, JOHN DORY?**

Los Angeles to Paris non-stop in Business Class on Air France or Delta for travel in August, for example, runs just \$2,189. Compare this to the June fare of \$4,489. That’s **a difference of \$2,300 (51%)**. That’s extraordinary for just a 42-day gap.

*See Los Angeles-Paris Business Class Pricing, Six Weeks Apart:*

						<b>Trip Total</b>		<a href="#">Currency Calculator</a>
Outbound	DL8553 <sup>1</sup>	LAX ▶ CDG	Tue, Aug 4	WED, AUG 5 3:20pm - 11:10am	Nonstop, 10h 50m	1 Passenger		
					Business			
Return	DL8395 <sup>1</sup>	CDG ▶ LAX	Tue, Aug 18	10:15am - 12:55pm	Nonstop, 11h 40m	Flights	\$2,000.00	
					Business			
						Taxes, Fees & Charges	\$189.15	
						<b>Amount Due</b>	<b>\$2,189.15 USD</b>	

[Changeable / Nonrefundable](#)

<b>Outbound</b>	DL8553 <sup>1</sup>	LAX ▶ CDG	Tue, Jun 23	WED, JUN 24 3:20pm - 11:10am	Nonstop, 10h 50m Business	▼
<b>Return</b>	DL8395 <sup>2</sup>	CDG ▶ LAX	Tue, Jul 7	10:15am - 12:55pm	Nonstop, 11h 40m Business	▼
Changeable / Nonrefundable						
<b>Trip Total</b>						<a href="#">Currency Calculator</a>
1 Passenger						
<b>Flights</b>						<b>\$4,300.00</b>
<b>Taxes, Fees &amp; Charges</b>						<b>\$189.15</b>
<b>Amount Due</b>						<b>\$4,489.15 USD</b>

Or, New York to Milan non-stop in Business Class, for travel in August, which costs \$2,095 (compared to the June fare of \$4,197), **a difference of \$2,102 (50%)**.

**Takeaway:** By keeping your desired destination, but changing your travel dates, you can save as much as 51%.

Below are a few recent FCF reports about secret travel windows:

- [The Best Month to Book Business Class Flights to Europe](#)
- [Business Class Fares to Europe Less than Premium Economy](#)
- [Seasonal Business and First Class Fares Are Back](#)

## FISHING HOLE #2: SECRET LOW-COST DESTINATIONS

In the airlines' quest to offload Business Class seats, airlines will sell some destinations—for *year-round travel*—much cheaper than other destinations. Often the airlines have no discernible reason as to why certain cities fly onto the low-fare radar (other than to funnel you to lesser-sold flights), but for you it means airlines are changing your behavior by enticing you to book destinations they want you to book, so all the seats get sold. These cities can be both non-stop or with connections, and they are often on a [flash-sale](#) basis.

FCF has written many exclusive reports about tactical low-cost destinations over the last year, below are a few recent ones:

- [Greece's Sparkling Island Jewels Shine Bright in Business Class](#)
- [From Russia with Love: Moscow & St. Petersburg](#)
- [Bologna is No Load of Baloney for Low Business Class Fares.](#)

## A \$3,500 SAVINGS (AND NOT A RED HERRING)

Here are some other examples.

New York to Edinburgh non-stop in Business Class on Delta for travel June 9 to 23 costs \$5,441. Compare that to traveling New York to Dublin (an hour ten minutes flight time away) instead of Edinburgh, on Delta, for just \$2,490, a difference of **\$2,951 (54%)**. Or to Frankfurt from New York on Singapore Airlines for \$2,108, a difference of **\$3,313 (61%)**.

**Takeaway:** By keeping your travel dates, but changing your destination, you can save as much as 65%.

### FISHING HOLE #3: LOW-COST AIRLINES

Instead of only focusing on major airlines for travel to Europe, consider smaller, low-cost airlines. These airlines often have Business Class fare deals when your preferred carrier might not, though they may require a connection, depending on the route. Think of airlines such as:

- Aer Lingus (oneworld)
- [La Compagnie](#)
- LOT (Star Alliance)
- TAP (Star Alliance)

Several of these carriers belong to a major alliance so you can earn award and elite mileage credit. Plus, they also offer lie-flat Business Class seats.

## Low-Cost Airlines Business Class Seat Information

Airline	Aircraft	Lie-Flat Seat	Seat Length (inches)	Seat Width (inches)	More Seat Information
Aer Lingus	A330-300	Yes	77	22	<a href="#">Details</a>
	A330-200	Yes	77	22	<a href="#">Details</a>
	B757	Yes	77	22	<a href="#">Details</a>
	A321neo LR	Yes	77	22	<a href="#">Details</a>
La Compagnie	A321neo	Yes	75	19	<a href="#">Details</a>
LOT	B787	Yes	79	23	<a href="#">Details</a>
TAP	A321neo	Yes	77	22	<a href="#">Details</a>
	A330-900neo	Yes	77	20.5	<a href="#">Details</a>
	A330	Yes	77	20	<a href="#">Details</a>

Some examples:

- Chicago-Barcelona non-stop in Business Class on American June 18 to July 3 costs \$4,639, compared to traveling on Aer Lingus (connecting via Dublin) for \$2,971, yielding a savings of **\$1,668 (36%)—while flying on the same alliance.**

- Newark-Berlin round-trip non-stop on United for travel June 4 to 18 costs \$4,508, compared to traveling LOT (connecting via Warsaw) for \$2,682. Fly LOT for a ticket that's **\$1,826 (or 40%) cheaper**—while flying on the same alliance.
- Washington, DC-Barcelona on United, non-stop, for travel May 21 to June 3 is \$5,372, compared to traveling on TAP (connecting via Lisbon) for \$3,268. Flying TAP gives you a savings of **\$2,104 (39%)**—while flying on the same alliance.
- Newark-Paris on United non-stop for travel November 3 to 17 sets you back \$2,790, compared to traveling on La Compagnie (also non-stop) for \$1,620, a savings of **\$1,170 / 42%**. (From time to time, La Compagnie even has fares as low as [\\$999 round-trip](#).)

**Takeaway:** By keeping your travel dates, destination, and often your preferred alliance, but by flying a low-cost airline, you can save as much as 42%.

## **FISHING HOLE #4: MIXED-CABIN BOOKINGS**

When you can't find Business Class fares in the \$2,000 range, and that's the max you want to pay, and you're not flexible with dates, destinations, or airlines, consider [mixed-cabin bookings](#) – flying Business Class one way and Premium Economy the other.

**Example:** The Business Class fare on United from Newark to Paris is \$2,790 round-trip for travel October 20 to November 3. Compare that to buying a mixed-class ticket at \$1,877; flying to Paris in Business Class on the overnight night flight while returning in Premium Economy on the day flight, saving **\$913 (33%)**.

**Takeaway:** By keeping your travel dates, destination, and airline, but by changing your travel class one-way, you can save as much as 33%.

## **FISHING HOLE #5: BUY MILES AND BOOK ON IBERIA**

Most of the fishing holes in this special report get you deeply discounted fares paying in cash. But this last hole? It's a *little* off-course, but can be filled with five-star catches of the day.

Selling miles is big business for airlines and [buying miles for a trip is the overlooked option](#). This means buying miles when they're on sale is a pond swimming with possibilities.

Consider an airline with low mileage award rates, such as Iberia, which charges as little as 68,000 miles round-trip in Business Class from Boston and New York to Madrid. You can buy these miles when they're on sale for ~\$1,045. Award taxes are ~\$205. **Making the total ~\$1,250!**

It's much cheaper than paying a published fare: The lowest Business Class fare, by comparison, is \$2,094 on the New York-Madrid route, a savings of \$844 (40%).

Details on the Iberia deal [here](#).

## IF THE FISH STINKS, YOU'RE PROBABLY FISHING IN THE WRONG HOLE

There are times, of course, when your route, date and airline are all locked in. Say you're traveling from New York to Madrid between March 9 and 23 and you want to fly United. Your Business Class fare will be \$5,093. But just change the airline (for example to American or Delta) and your fare drops to \$2,843; change your travel date to August and your fare drops to \$2,094. Pay what you want.

**Bottom line:** If you're locked in, you'll be very popular—with the airlines. They love people like you. Because you're flying right into their hands, their timings, and their prices.

## THE UPGRADE MINDSET

Instead, keep a list of travel dates or months that could work for you, a broad bucket list of destinations, and don't be married to one airline. Keep FCF's five fab fishing holes in mind the next time a trip to Europe surfaces so you can hook a Business Class ticket for just about \$2,000, or less.

*"There's a fine line between fishing, and standing on the shore looking like an idiot."*

~ Steven Wright