



Or get open-jaw fares including Buenos Aires or Santiago at just \$2,730. But this sale bonanza will be discontinued on Nov. 27, so the time to act is now.

Ever watch the Batman TV show? They had a red “Batphone” that flashed when something big was happening.

We have one in our office, too. It’s a gold flashing “Upgrade Hotline” and it ran hot the other day with a KAPOW! WHAM! BAM!! of a deal.

Maybe we're exaggerating a little about the hotline, but suffice to say, we get bat-you-know-what crazy when fares like this pop. Now, this super low fare is to the city of [Santa Cruz de la Sierra](#), Bolivia's commercial capital and largest city, on American Airlines. But remember, it won't be available after Nov. 27, as the airline is discontinuing this route.

BOLIVIAN BONANZA

Fares to Santa Cruz de la Sierra from New York [start at just \\$1,446](#) on American Airlines for travel in October and November. Fares from Boston, Charlotte, Dallas, and Philadelphia range from \$2,100 to \$2,300.

These low fares are primarily offered from the East Coast, but you can use cash or miles to take advantage of this deal from other cities too. If you're using miles to add a short- to mid-range flight to those low-cost departure cities, British Airways miles (which partners with Amex and Chase) offers great value on [American flights to New York](#).

SANTA CRUZ DE LA SIERRA

Referred to as Santa Cruz, this tropical city of 1.5 million offers a number of things for the traveler with a layover en route to South America. You can book a Marriott or Radisson for under \$150 if you want to stay overnight.

SOUTH AMERICAN BUCKET LIST DESTINATIONS BEYOND BOLIVIA

Buenos Aires, Santiago, and São Paulo are about 3 hours away and have nonstop flights. Rio is similar but requires a connection.



TWO DESTINATIONS FOR THE PRICE OF ONE

We like the idea of an “open jaw” itinerary here at FCF. That’s when, instead of flying from A to B and back to A, you fly from A to B to C and back to A. This tactic often works well with cruises, where you fly to a destination, cruise to another destination, and come home from there. More about [open jaw trips here](#), and why they can save you lots of money. This low price Bolivian fare makes an open jaw a possibility to get two destinations for less than the price of one.



Business Class to Aruba for the Cost of Coach to Hawaii

October 2019

Get two tickets to Aruba for less than the cost of one in Business Class to Hawaii. And get almost two hotel nights in Aruba for the price of one in Hawaii.

Quick test: close your eyes and think of long sandy beaches, swaying palm trees and tepid turquoise water. Okay, have you just gone to Hawaii in your mind *again*. Hate to say it, but that's the kind of default thinking we frown upon here at FCF. Of course Hawaii is beautiful. Of course you've had a great vacation there in the past.

But it’s not the only island in the sea. And for all its beauty, Hawaii is *kind of* expensive. Consider a tropical sabbatical in the Caribbean, and you can get **two tickets (almost three) in Business Class for less than the cost of one to Hawaii**, and almost **two nights in Aruba for the price** of one in Hawaii.

Or, you could look at it this way: You’ll almost get a free upgrade, as the economy ticket to Hawaii is about the same price as a Business Class ticket to Aruba! **You get free upgrades just by switching destinations.**

CLOSER LOOK AT THE FARES

New York-Maui Business Class fares with American, Delta, and United range from \$1,739 to \$2,567. Contrast that with fares from New York to Aruba in Business Class with American, Delta, and United, which range from \$645 to \$1,060. Delta might be your best bet to save on flights, as it flies nonstop from New York and has fares in the lower end of our range from March to June—as low as [\\$645](#) round-trip.

This is where that “free upgrade” piece comes in. You can typically find economy flights as low as \$600 to Hawaii, but by changing your destination to Aruba, you’ll fly in Business Class for about the same price.

For example, traveling March 17 for a week from New York, the Business Class fare to Aruba is \$645, whereas the economy fare to Maui is \$639.

The airfare savings in Business Class to Aruba isn’t for the whole U.S., such as many West Coast departure cities, where fares to Aruba or Hawaii are often similar.

Aruba vs. Hawaii Business Class Fares

U.S. Departure City	Aruba Fare Range*	Maui Fare Range*
Boston	\$749 to \$1,167	\$1,773 to \$2,309
Chicago	\$1,084 to \$1,468	\$1,734 to \$2,096
Dallas	\$1,085 to \$1,306	\$1,679 to \$2,504
Miami	\$650 to \$860	\$2,065 to \$3,026
New York	\$645 to \$1,060	\$1,739 to \$2,567

*No destination just has one single price over the next 11 months, so we are using a range of airfares in the examples, with the exception being travel for the holidays, as fares tend to be higher during the holidays.

SAVE ON ARUBA HOTELS, TOO

Along with saving money on flights, you can also save on hotels. Depending on the season, the Marriott Aruba, for example, starts at \$303 per night, while the Marriott Maui can easily run \$500+ per night or more.

Let's put it all together with an example traveling June 3 to June 10: New York-Aruba vs. New York-Maui and staying at a Marriott in each place.

	Flight (Business Class) from New York	Total Cost for a One Week Stay at a Marriott Hotel	Total Based on Two People Traveling
Aruba	\$645 per person	\$2,475	\$3,765
Hawaii (Maui)	\$1,739 per person	\$4,612	\$8,090



FCF Premium Special Fares Monitor

October 2019

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...

ASIA

[\\$2,267 R/T China Biz Class Fares from Northeast and Midwest, All Year Long.\(Major Airlines\)](#)

AUSTRALIA

[Premium Economy Fares Surface from Los Angeles to Australia Just \\$1,538 R/T, Major SkyTeam Airlines](#)

EUROPE

[British Airways First Class to Europe from Boston, Chicago & New York from \\$2,993](#)

[\\$1,911 R/T Biz Class Fares to Europe from Boston and Chicago for Winter and Spring Travel \(Major Airlines\)](#)

[Florida to Europe Winter/Spring \\$1,884 R/T Business Class Fares on Star Alliance](#)

[Atlanta and Ft. Lauderdale > Europe Winter/Spring \\$1,835 R/T Business Class Fares Found \(Major Airlines\)](#)

[Los Angeles and San Francisco > Europe Business Class Fares Starting at \\$1,900 for Travel in April \(Major Airlines\)](#)

[\\$1,983 R/T West Coast Biz Fares to Europe for December Flights](#)

[\\$1,495 R/T Business Class Winter/Spring Fares to Ireland from Boston and New York, Major Oneworld Airlines](#)

[First Class Fares to Europe Starting at \\$2,932 R/T from Texas \(59%+ Off\)](#)

[Flash Dallas and Houston > Europe \\$1,825 R/T Biz Class Fares Found—Major Carriers](#)

AFRICA

[Save 55% on First Class with British Airways to Africa from Several U.S. Cities](#)

INDIA

[Special First Class Fares on British Airways to India from All Over the U.S., Starting at \\$3,910](#)

ISRAEL

[Special First Class Fares to Israel Starting at \\$3,344 for November Travel from East and West Coast](#)

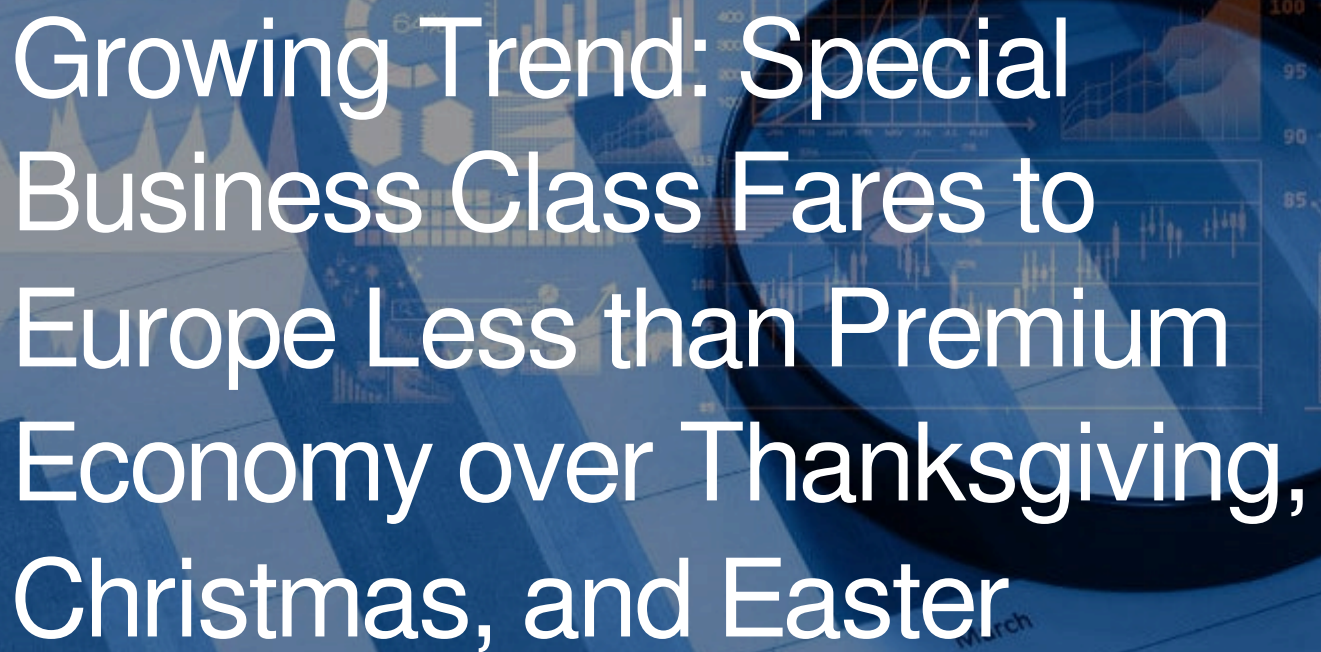
[Israel \\$1,953 R/T Business Class Flash from the East Coast \(Major Airlines\)](#)

SOUTH AMERICA

[Biz Class Fares to Bolivia \\$1,446, to Argentina \\$1,573 on American](#)

[\\$1,906 Biz Class Fares Found to Brazil with LATAM, \\$2295 with Delta](#)





Growing Trend: Special Business Class Fares to Europe Less than Premium Economy over Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter

October 2019

Fly to Europe in Business Class for \$89 Less than Premium Economy over the Holidays.

This trend is low-cost **Business Class Holiday Season fares**, and by all accounts, it looks like they're sticking around for a while with dates into 2020. In some cases, we're even seeing fares on Business Class flights lower than Premium Economy—can you say “free upgrade?” This is because during holiday seasons, more leisure travelers fly (and business travelers stay home), so economy and Premium Economy fares are often higher, typically ranging from \$1,000 to \$1,800.

LOW-COST AND FREE UPGRADES FROM THE EAST COAST

Example: Fly Business Class to [Shannon, Ireland, from New York and Boston](#) on British Airways for just \$1,695 in December and April.

Travel in Premium Economy during the same window (say, December 22 to December 30) and you'll pay \$1,784. Yes—that's \$89 more to travel a lot less comfortably.

Seasonal Opportunity Travelers Wanted

We love Destination Opportunity Travelers soooo much that we wrote all about them [here](#). We base a lot of what we do on the very simple idea that smart travelers have a broad bucket list of destinations on their list, rather than becoming too attached to one particular location. So rather than saying "I'm going to Paris in December, gee I hope I don't have to pay too much!" a Destination Opportunity Traveler has Paris, Barcelona, Budapest, and Sydney on their bucket list and will pick them off one by one **depending on what the best deals are at any given time**. They'll get to Paris when the price is right, it just may be next December, not this December.

The same goes for being a Seasonal Opportunity Traveler. If you're at all open to shifting the time of year you travel, you open yourself up to more opportunities.

For example, [Dallas to Copenhagen](#) is as low as \$1,895 in Business Class next Easter (April), while it normally ranges between \$3,095 and \$3,245.

THINK OF A REASON TO GO TO EUROPE. ANY REASON.

Other great deals can be found from all over the U.S., such as:

- [\\$1,884](#) from Miami to Dublin, \$1,895 to Copenhagen, \$1,910 to Milan, and more.
- [\\$1,900](#) from Los Angeles to Madrid, \$1,986 to Dublin.
- [\\$1,900](#) from San Francisco to Madrid, \$1,923 to Helsinki.
- [\\$1,911](#) from Chicago to Madrid, \$1,923 to Helsinki, \$1,928 to Venice, and more.
- [\\$1,925](#) from Boston to Valencia.
- [\\$1,925](#) from Dallas to Copenhagen, \$2,005 to Nice.
- [\\$2,018](#) from Atlanta to Milan or Amsterdam.
- [\\$2,023](#) from Houston to Zürich.
- [\\$2,031](#) from Las Vegas to Prague.

See a Great Fare? Freeze Right There.

If you spot one of these trendy seasonal fares but aren't sure if the dates are right, many airlines offer a hold option for locking in your fare so you have time to decide to buy the ticket. It means you lock in, or "freeze," the fare before it disappears without notice.

Take the British Airways fare from New York to Shannon for \$1,695, mentioned above. For only [\\$10 per ticket you can hold your flights and the price for up to 72 hours](#). So even if BA's published fare disappears, your locked-in price won't increase. Plus, once you pay for your ticket, BA will refund your \$10.

GOODBYE ANOMALY; HELLO TREND.

We [wrote about this a couple of months ago](#), noting that fares can change very quickly. Airlines were discounting destinations and then suddenly they were discounting seasonally. But we were not sure that these holiday fares would stay.

But "low" and behold, those seasonal fares seem to have settled in for a comfy stay.

Many of the holiday fares we've found are offered by British Airways, but there are a few ways to make the deals even sweeter.

- Get an additional 10% off on British Airways when using the [BA Visa card](#), and/or
- Get [\\$200 off through AARP](#) for Business Class fares on British Airways.

For example, with the AARP discount that super-low \$1,695 New York-Shannon Business Class fare plummets to **\$1,495**.

Using Your Miles or Points

Miles are great to have, but there's **no need to use miles for free awards or upgrades when fares are this low**. If you have miles, save them for when ticket prices are high.



Strike While the Champagne is Cold: British Airways First Class Fares in Freefall

October 2019

Upgrade opportunities abound to Africa, Europe, India, and Israel starting at \$336 each way.

You may remember when United Airlines' First Class cabin became less competitive a few years back and the airline was forced to slash fares to fill seats? And then, whoosh! In June 2018, United's First Class was no more.

Well lookie here, British Airways First Class is on a similar trajectory from one perspective or two, so we can't help but wonder...

Actually, no. British Airways will continue to operate a First Class product. However, competitive pressure is creating some spectacular savings.

IS BRITISH AIRWAYS FIRST CLASS LITTLE BETTER THAN ITS BUSINESS CLASS? PRICES SUGGEST SO...

While the airline's First Class offering seems to be in no danger of disappearing, we can't ignore the fact that the airline's First Class fares have really bottomed out on some routes: [Africa for \\$4,900](#), [Europe for under \\$3,000](#), [India for \\$4,300](#), and [Israel for \\$3,300](#). Many of these special fares are **40% to 60% off** normal fares.

This price drop reflects the challenge of competition and with excess inventory. BA simply can't compete when it comes to its First Class product.

By comparison, consider [what Air France offers](#) on most of its B777-300 aircraft. It has only four seats in its First Class "La Première" cabin, a much better experience.

The airline recognizes this, and in addition to slashing First Class fares, it is also "[upgrading" its First Class "soft product" experience](#): with items such as better bedding, meals, drinks, and other add-ons like amenity kits, linens, slippers, and the like. Nice to have, but I come for the *hard product*, thank you very much.

Meanwhile, on its [newly delivered B787-900](#), BA is cutting First Class seats down to just eight, compared to the usual 14 on the B787-800. Currently the B787-900 flies routes to [London from U.S. departure cities](#): Atlanta, Austin, Boston, Los Angeles, Newark, Philadelphia, and San Jose.

A PRICE WAR YOU CAN WIN

All of this competition in quality has forced British Airways into an undercutting battle to fill seats, just like United had near the end of its First Class life. And while BA's competitors offer impressive First Class experiences, they come at a cost. In short, BA's First Class cabin may not be First in the way you're accustomed to, but it's still a solid experience—and the savings are quite spectacular.

Take the **New York > Basel** route, for example. With British Airways you pay \$3,344 and connect via London. With Air France you pay \$7,014 and connect via Paris. That's a savings on BA of \$3,670 or 52%, which means you could buy a second ticket on BA for the price of *one* on Air France and *still* have more than \$300 left over.

Or take **New York > Tel Aviv** for \$3,344 round-trip on BA, compared to higher-priced airlines such as SWISS at \$11,832, a savings of \$8,488 (72%).

The opportunities shine brightest, of course, on routes that require a connection (e.g. [San Diego > Oslo at just \\$3,256](#) for First)—as a non-stop in most any Business Class is better than First with a connection.

IS FIRST CLASS ON BA REALLY 'PREMIUM BUSINESS' IN DISGUISE, AND IF SO, WHY PAY FOR FIRST INSTEAD OF BUSINESS CLASS?

Some consider BA's [new Business Class](#) better than its First. While the new seats can be found on almost no routes (selected Toronto routes starting October 8) and therefore are largely irrelevant today, this comparison is highly subjective, of course.

While some travelers may "need" the "privacy" of sliding doors to have a premium experience, I actually think there's often much to be said for a more open, less claustrophobic feel, in many cases. That's just me.

Take Turkish Airlines, for example. Its Business Class cabin is wide open, and my legs and feet aren't jammed into a tiny cubby hole, which many hail as a premium experience. And most Business Class seats nowadays are barely flyable for someone like me, at 6'3" with broad shoulders. Naaa. My knees hit the tiny cubby hole ceiling and my feet prefer more than a shoebox.

So give me British Airways First Class: You get your own very private, [spacious suite and treated much better on the ground](#).

AS LOW AS FIRST CAN GO

For those keen to take advantage of these low First Class fares while they're (still) around, you need look no further than FCF's deal alerts, summarized here:

Europe First Class: [\\$2,932 R/T to Europe from Texas](#).

[San Diego and Seattle, from \\$2,930](#).

[Boston, Chicago and New York to Europe Starting at \\$2,993](#).

[Phoenix, San Francisco and Seattle from \\$3,087](#).

India First Class: [To Delhi from \\$4,300](#).

Israel First Class: [To Tel Aviv from \\$3,340](#).

Africa First Class: [To Nairobi from \\$4,933](#).

For Africa, India, and Israel, all flight segments are in First Class, not just the U.S. to London segments.

Upgrade Cheaply From Business To First

Route	Business Class Fare	First Class Fare	Cost to Upgrade One-way
Houston - Amsterdam	\$2,358	\$3,258	\$450
Dallas - Nairobi	\$3,934	\$4,933	\$499
Miami - Mumbai	\$3,045	\$4,345	\$650
New York - Tel Aviv	\$2,671	\$3,344	\$336

If forced to choose between BA's First Class and any Business Class seat out there, I'd certainly pay more for First on BA everything else being equal. IOW: Privacy doors are overrated. [What do you think?](#)

A photograph of the Hainan Airlines Business Class cabin interior. The seats are white with red upholstery and are arranged in a staggered layout. Each seat has a large entertainment screen. The cabin has large oval windows along the side.

Hainan Airlines Offering Significant Discounts for Business Class (With Lie-Flat Seats) Starting at \$1,543 R/T

October 2019

Like a glinting piece of gold that keeps catching our eye in the sun, we couldn't ignore this Chinese carrier shining a blindingly bright light on low prices.

SO WHAT IS HAINAN CHARGING?

Not much, and that—plus its lie-flat seat—is the reason for the FCF spotlight.

For **Los Angeles to Beijing** (via Changsha), the round-trip Business Class fare starts at [\\$1,543](#) (normal fares are about double that). Los Angeles to Shanghai goes for [\\$1,543](#); Guangzhou [\\$1,675](#); Shenzhen [\\$1,675](#).

Examples from other major U.S. cities include non-stop from **Chicago to Chengdu** Business Class for only [\\$1,687](#) round-trip and **New York to Beijing** for [\\$1,807](#).

ADDING OTHER U.S. DEPARTURE CITIES

Hainan Airlines is not part of an alliance, but it has a partnership with Alaska Airlines. This means other U.S. departure cities can be added on one ticket as a through fare with Alaska domestic flights being in First Class. You can [earn](#) and [use miles](#) with Alaska for flights on Hainan Airlines.

For example, **Dallas to Beijing** is \$2,969, flying Alaska in First Class from Dallas to Seattle, and then Hainan Airlines non-stop Seattle to Beijing. Compare this to other airlines, such as American (non-stop) at \$4,963, and you're saving almost \$2,000—or almost getting two tickets for the price of one.

[A SEAT AT THE TABLE](#)

How often do you see \$1,600 round-trip Biz Class fares to Asia?

Not often.

Hainan's Business Class (there's no First Class) on the [Boeing 787-9](#) offers a 1-2-1 reverse herringbone layout with an extra four inches of space. On the [A350](#), Business Class is either in a staggered 1-2-1 or 2-2-2 configuration. Each seat can reach a length of 78 inches when fully reclined at 180 degrees.



Hainan Business Class seat on B787-9

WHERE DOES HAINAN AIRLINES FLY FROM THE U.S.?

All the following flights are on the B787-9 (except the first one): **Boston** to Beijing–A350; Boston to Shanghai. **Chicago** to Beijing and Chengdu. **Las Vegas** to Beijing. **Los Angeles** to Chongqing, Changsha, and

Chengdu. **New York** to Chongqing and Chengdu. **San Jose** to Beijing. **Seattle** to Beijing and Shanghai.

A LOW-COST CONNECTOR

If you're thinking of traveling to Asia, consider Hainan to do the heavy lifting to get you there at a low price. For a taste of the many cities they service in Asia go [here](#).



How I Saved \$1,772 Last Month at the Ritz Carlton and St. Regis with my \$150 ABA Membership

October 2019

ST REGIS
HOTELS & RESORTS

And snagged a two-Star hotel upgrade at the same time.

FCF published a special report back in June on [the power of an association membership](#)—which anyone can get—for just \$150.

The feedback we received, however, was mixed. Many claimed the deal doesn't always lower the price for whatever reason. They're right. Generally, this strategy works mostly at higher end hotels, but even then, it can be hit-or-miss. But when it hits, it hits big, so it's always worth a try.

What's more, to find out if rates are lower takes just 20 seconds. Depending on where I'm going and what my needs are, I'm happy to burn that 20 seconds to potentially save BIG.

While I struck out several times last month, I scored, too. Here are two examples:

THE RITZ CARLTON CLEVELAND – SEPT. 2 TO 7

Lowest (Normal) Available Rate for Five Nights: \$2,685 (\$537/night)

The screenshot shows the Marriott Bonvoy booking interface for The Ritz-Carlton, Cleveland. The header includes the hotel name, address (1015 West Third Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44113 USA), phone number (+1 216-623-1300), and a 4.7-star rating from 156 reviews. The booking dates are Mon, Sep 2, 2019 – Sat, Sep 7, 2019, for 1 Room : 1 Adult. The page displays three tabs: Special Rates (From \$27 USD Avg/night), Standard Rates (From \$53 USD Avg/night), and Deals and Packages (From \$69 USD Avg/night). A note states: "Please note-W Huron Dr will be restricted to eastbound traffic only thru October 2019. Please follow detour signs to access hotel." Another note says: "To book an accessible room, select a room type first." The selected room is "Guest room, 2 Queen" with a photo of the room. The rate is "AAA rate, AAA membership card required" at "537 USD Avg/night" with a "2,685 Total per room". A "SELECT" button is visible.

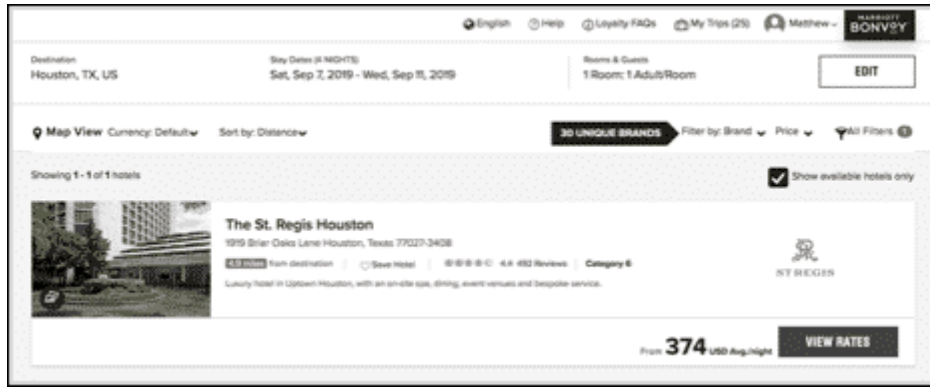
American Bar Associate Rate for Five Nights: \$1,345 (\$267/night)

The screenshot shows the Marriott Bonvoy booking interface for The Ritz-Carlton, Cleveland. The header includes the hotel name, address (1015 West Third Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44113 USA), phone number (+1 216-623-1300), and a 4.7-star rating from 156 reviews. The booking dates are Mon, Sep 2, 2019 – Sat, Sep 7, 2019, for 1 Room : 1 Adult. The page displays three tabs: Special Rates (From \$69 USD Avg/night), Standard Rates (From \$53 USD Avg/night), and Deals and Packages (From \$69 USD Avg/night). A note states: "Please note-W Huron Dr will be restricted to eastbound traffic only thru October 2019. Please follow detour signs to access hotel." Another note says: "To book an accessible room, select a room type first." The selected room is "Guest room, 1 King" with a photo of the room. The rate is "American Bar Assoc. rate, includes wireless Internet, free WiFi for Marriott Bonvoy members, company ID required, see Rate details" at "269 USD Avg/night" with a "1,345 Total per room". A "SELECT" button is visible.

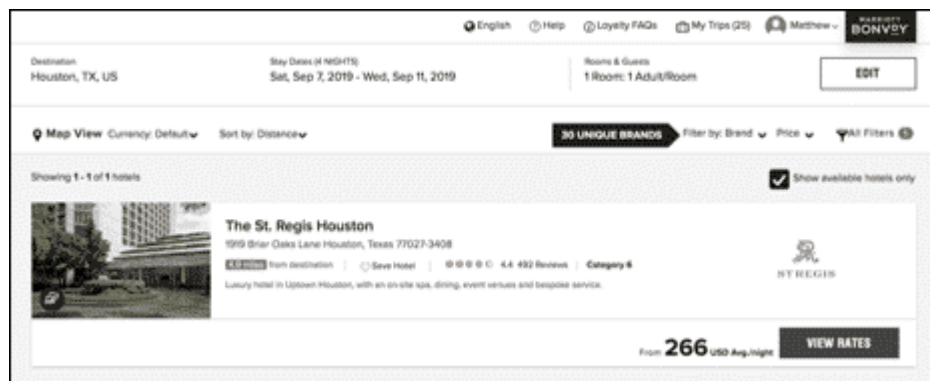
Ritz Carlton Savings: \$1,340 / 50%

ST. REGIS HOUSTON – SEPT. 7 TO 11

Lowest (Normal) Available Rate for Four Nights: \$1,496 (\$374/night)



American Bar Associate Rate for Four Nights: \$1,064 (\$266/night)



St. Regis Savings: \$432 / 29%

Total ABA savings over these two deals for September: \$1,772

A HOTEL UPGRADE

While these opportunities are huge dollar savings, a better way to look at these deals is from the perspective of a Hotel Upgrade.

These work kind of like flight upgrades. Book a “lower level” room/flight, pay a little bit (in money/miles/points) and get upgraded to a “higher level” room/flight.

Here’s how it’s worked for me. In places like Cleveland and Houston for non-significant occasions, I’m certainly not going to pay \$400 to \$500 per night, but I’ve got to stay somewhere. And, given I have a 75%+ success rate getting *upgraded* to suites with my Marriott Platinum and now Ambassador status, you bet I’ll pay the American Bar Association rate of \$266 for a room at the St. Regis (with the likelihood of an upgrade to the Astor Suite). Unbeatable.

These days \$200 often buys you very little in many places; I see Best Western Inns going for that. So a better way to look at this: **I’m getting, in effect, a 5-star hotel at a 3- to 4-star price. That’s a big Hotel Upgrade.**

P.S. Perhaps the greater point is: If a deal fails to deliver savings for you several times, be like Winston Churchill who said, “never surrender,” and just try to get it to deliver the next time. And like my experiences in September, you too could save a small fortune and maybe also upgrade your hotel experience two levels.