



## On oneworld, SkyTeam, and Star Alliance

When it comes to buying airline tickets with cash, many travelers think Business Class is too expensive. So, in order to get a bit more legroom and improved service than economy, they go straight for Premium Economy without comparing.

Currently, on many routes, mostly in July and August at the moment, and on lots of airlines such as American, Air France, British Airways, Delta, Lufthansa, and United, you can get a much better deal on Business Class fares. At the same time, Premium Economy fares have nudged higher. This perfect storm creates the conditions for a **free upgrade**, and how we love that here at FCF.

## WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

Two reasons:

1. **Premium Economy fares during summer months are often priced at their highest** (this is also the case for economy) for travel to Europe. That's because airlines know that summer is peak season for Europe, so they charge the most for economy and Premium Economy during vacation / leisure travel season, if only because that's when economy fares are highest.
2. **Business Class fares during the summer months are often priced at their lowest** for travel to Europe. This is also true for Thanksgiving and the Christmas holidays. The reason is simple: Most people traveling for business and buying Business Class tickets avoid doing so in summer. This leaves the airlines with many unfilled seats on some routes, so they run special low Business Class fares during this time.

As the chart below shows, you can even pay *less* in Business Class than Premium Economy for the same flight. Wouldn't PE flyers be happy to hear that in the next cabin back? NOT!

## Sample Routes Pricing Business Class Less Than Premium Economy

Sample Route	Travel Month(s)	Airline With Business Class Fare	Business Class Fare	Airline With Premium Economy Fare	Premium Economy Fare
Orlando-Brussels	July, Aug.	Delta	<b>\$1,707</b>	Lufthansa	\$2,700 to \$3,200
Washington, DC-Moscow	Sept. to March	Delta	<b>\$1,738</b>	Air France	\$1,600 to \$2,000
New York-Moscow	Sept. to March	Delta	<b>\$1,844</b>	Air France	\$1,600 to \$2,400
New York-Brussels	Aug.	Lufthansa, United	<b>\$2,024</b>	Lufthansa	\$2,100 to \$2,700
Miami-Bologna	July, Aug.	American, British Airways	<b>\$2,209</b>	Air France	\$1,700 to \$2,200
San Francisco-Lisbon	July, Aug.	American	<b>\$2,260</b>	British Airways	\$1,700 to \$2,300
Houston-Paris	July, Aug.	American	<b>\$2,282</b>	British Airways	\$1,900 to \$2,400
Los Angeles-Lisbon	Aug.	United	<b>\$2,350</b>	Lufthansa	\$1,900 to \$2,500
Houston-Munich	July, Aug.	American	<b>\$2,358</b>	British Airways	\$1,600 to \$2,200
San Francisco-Frankfurt	July, Aug.	American	<b>\$2,363</b>	British Airways	\$1,700 to \$2,300

Sample Route	Travel Month(s)	Airline With Business Class Fare	Business Class Fare	Airline With Premium Economy Fare	Premium Economy Fare
Los Angeles-Athens	July, Aug.	Air France, Delta	\$2,466	Air France	\$2,170 to \$2,600
Dallas-Copenhagen	July, Aug.	Delta	\$2,466	Lufthansa	\$1,500 to \$2,400

Sample Routes Pricing Business Class Less Than Premium Economy

## A TIME AND A PLACE FOR PREMIUM ECONOMY

It's certainly been the flavor of the last couple years with many airlines. Europe has had PE for years and the U.S. has been slow to take it up. But that's changed. That said, Premium Economy is great when the price is right—and when Business Class fares are high and much more than you might want to pay—as it is clearly an improvement over economy. The price is not right over the summer months we're talking about.

## OPPORTUNITY TRAVELING

Now, we're talking general trends here, not every summer flight to Europe. Airlines don't need to have European summer sales across the board anymore with limited competition and a strong economy, so you need to be what we at FCF call "an opportunity traveler." Beat the airlines at their own game, don't just play along blindly and accept the dice numbers they roll. More on being an opportunity traveler [here](#):

## EVEN MORE ONEWORLD SAVINGS

Keep in mind that the fares shown in the chart DO NOT include other discounts offered by British Airways such as \$200 off for AARP or the 10% Visa discount. This can take a \$2,000 ticket down to \$1,600.

Here's an example. New York to Berlin goes for as little as \$2,020 round-trip (inclusive) at the moment, but with the \$200 [AARP discount](#) for Business Class and the 10% discount for the [British Airways Visa Card](#) (current promo code is CHASEBA10), the fare drops to \$1,638.

## AARP – NOT JUST THE SOUND YOU MAKE AFTER EATING

As a member of [AARP](#) you get a \$200 discount on flights with British Airways. Anyone can join and annual fees are just \$16.

## EVEN MORE SKYTEAM SAVINGS

[Amex's International Airline Program](#) (IAP) offers fare discounts of between 8% and 12% on many published First Class, Business Class, and Premium Economy fares. That could easily be a couple hundred dollars in your pocket and not in the airlines'.

## **AN ADDED SEAT BONUS**

Not only are you getting a much better seat and service on the long-haul international flight when you buy a Business Class ticket, your domestic connecting flight is in domestic First Class. And if connecting in Europe, you fly in inter-Europe Business Class. On the other hand, when buying a Premium Economy ticket, any connecting flights in the U.S. or Europe will almost always be in economy. That's enough to seal the deal.





Most travelers are now aware that United no longer offers a First Class cabin. In fact, many airlines are moving away from First Class cabins these days, but not all.

All Nippon Airways, Japan's largest airline, offers a First Class suite from hubs throughout the United States, including Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C.

The reason I mention it is because **you can get way more Business and First Class mileage award seats when booking directly through All Nippon, using All Nippon miles (via Amex easy), than you can booking with United miles.** This is especially the case if you're traveling with another person and want to book two mileage award seats.

Our research found that for two people traveling together, **United offered less than half as many First Class Suites** for award redemption than All Nippon does.

Furthermore, did you know your **chances of scoring a First Class seat on All Nippon are greater than scoring a Business Class seat?** Yes, you read correctly, there are TWO times more days in the month that First Class mileage seats are made available as there are Business Class seats available. This is highly unusual as the opposite is true with most other airlines.

Sure, you can use your United MileagePlan miles to book travel on All Nippon, but when you do that, you'll find a pretty big price difference between the two—in addition to **United's availability problems**—as United mileage partner rates are **much higher than All Nippon rates**.

## LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT THIS DISCREPANCY FOR FLIGHTS TO ASIA ON ALL NIPPON

Basically, you can fly First Class for the price of Business Class. Here's what the pricing looks like for round-trip flights to Asia:

If you book First Class seats on All Nippon, **through United you'd pay 220,000 miles** OR Business Class seats on All Nippon through United, you'd pay 160,000 miles.

Now, if you book First Class seats on All Nippon, **through All Nippon (an Amex points partner) you'd pay only 150,000**.

Meanwhile, United charges 160,000 miles for Business Class on United—so that's essentially a **free upgrade**. In peak season, All Nippon's price goes up to 165,000 miles per ticket, but you're still getting an awesome upgrade for just 5,000 more miles.

So, it doesn't always pay to collect your miles through United Airlines—especially if you're flying to Asia. Chances are that All Nippon will offer you a much better deal.

## HOW TO GET ALL NIPPON MILES

**Transfer Points:** All Nippon is a point transfer partner with Amex Rewards and Marriott.

**Buy Points:** Another option is to buy points directly from Amex Rewards for 2.5 cents each.

To learn more about buying Amex Points and transferring them over to All Nippon, check out this special report: [How to Buy American Express Membership Rewards Points](#).

**Sample savings from the U.S. to Asia in First Class:** The published First Class fare on All Nippon’s Los Angeles to Tokyo route is \$19,146 round-trip. Through the Amex purchase strategy, you can pay \$3,750 round-trip (includes taxes and about \$100 in award tax).

**That’s a total savings of a whopping \$15,296 (80%).**



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(80%).

## FCF Treasure Map: All Nippon First Class to Tokyo

U.S. Departure Cities	Depart			Return		
	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month	4 to 8 Days Per Month	9 to 12 Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month
Chicago	March, May	Feb.	Jan., April	Feb., March	May	
Houston	July, Aug., Nov., Jan., Feb.	Dec., Feb., March, May	Jan., April	Oct., Jan., Feb., March	Dec., Jan., April, May	Feb.
Los Angeles	Oct. through Dec., Jan., Feb., March, May		Jan., April	Oct., Dec., March, April	Sept., Nov., Jan., Feb., May	Jan., March
San Francisco	Feb., March	Feb., April		Feb., March	March, May	
Washington, DC	Dec., Jan., Feb., May	Jan., March, April	Feb.	Dec., Feb.	Jan., through April, May	

\*Months in black at least one seat available; in [blue](#) at least two seats.





# How Both Spontaneous and Advance-Planning Travelers Can Score Dream Trips to the South Pacific and Middle East

June 2019

**Adopt The Upgrade Mindset to take advantage of the best availability for these exotic destinations.**

Whether you're a last-minute traveler or have already booked your trip, this special report is for you.

## **NO SPECIFIC TRIP IN MIND, BUT YOU'RE SPONTANEOUS?**

If you get excited about grabbing a last-minute First Class bargain, say to an exotic destination, then buckle up — and always have your bags packed and ready to go. It that's simple. Just wait till an [FCF alert](#) brings you an amazing deal, perhaps using your points that you never seem to be able to use, and pounce today on New Zealand or Etihad's First Apartment.



## BOOKED 3, 6, OR 11 MONTHS AGO, AND YOU'RE ABOUT TO TAKE OFF?

On the other hand, if you feel most comfortable when you're able to book a flight way in advance, I get it. But how often do you think the people who book when they want to get the best deal? I'll tell you, **it's incredibly rare.**

That's because airlines offer deals **when they want to — not when you feel like booking your flight.** Think about it.

If you walk into a car dealership and tell them you want this model, in that color, with this kind of interior, that kind of stereo, this exact kind of performance package, and those very specific kind of wheels, do you think they are going to give you a deal?

Fuhgeddaboutit!

But walk into the dealership at the end of the sales quarter, and take a nice car that has 80% of what you want, you'll get a great deal, right?

So, when it comes to travel, what do you care if you get a Rolls (say to New Zealand non-stop) or a Bentley (say Etihad's First Apartment to Bhutan, India, or wherever).

### What you want is First Class to some exotic destination, right?

If you want the best flight experiences to top destinations around the world, then you need to be ready to pull the trigger when the airlines want you to book — not when you want to book.

And very often, the best travel deals become available just a week or month from departure, more or less.

So even for travelers who've already booked tickets far in advance — using cash or miles doesn't matter much (the concept is the same) — it's still worth it to [keep a close eye on FCF alerts](#). Why? Chances are that you'll be able to **upgrade your flight booking** and cancel your original booking for around a \$200 fee if you used miles, and around \$500 if you bought the ticket with cash, **to book a world-class deal instead.**

## THINK OF IT AS A \$200 OR \$500 UPGRADE

This is especially the case with coveted destinations like the South Pacific and with certain airlines, such as Etihad Airways in First Class from New York, which are notoriously difficult to find mileage availability. And if you try to book these routes without mileage availability, they are some of the most expensive in the world when paying cash. The South Pacific can easily run \$6,000+ in Business Class and \$20,000+ in Etihad's First Class.

In this special report, I'm going to show you a few options that our research team recently uncovered on routes to the South Pacific and Middle East. (How many times can you go to Europe or Hawaii?)

## **HOT DEAL #1: AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND**

Using United miles / Chase points, we've found quite a bit of mileage award space for travel to New Zealand from major U.S. cities in June and July. The airports we found for Business Class seats are Houston (IAH), Los Angeles (LAX), and San Francisco (SFO), with all flights going to Auckland (AKL). See FCF's alert [here](#)

### **The Two Auckland Deal Perspectives:**

**Perspective #1 No trip Planned in June?** Grab this one since it's as good as it gets.

**Perspective #2 Already Have a Flight Booked to Auckland?** I bet it's not nearly this good. You either have a less-convenient routing, higher cost, or similar cost for a lower class of service. Cancel what you have — pay the measly cancel fee — and book using one of the following methods for Air New Zealand's Business Class. (Mileage cost below is for round-trip.)

- 160,000 Air Canada Aeroplan miles (Amex and Marriott transfer partner)
- 160,000 Avianca LifeMiles (Amex and Marriott transfer partner)
- 180,000 United MileagePlus miles (Chase and Marriott transfer partner)
- 120,000 All Nippon ANA Mileage Club miles round-trip only (Amex and Marriott transfer partner)

### **No miles? No problem.**

- You can buy Amex Rewards points and transfer to Air Canada Aeroplan miles
- You can buy Amex Rewards points and transfer OR buy miles directly with Avianca LifeMiles
- You can buy miles directly with United MileagePlus
- You can buy Amex Rewards points and transfer to All Nippon ANA Mileage Club

**Great Deal Gets Better:** A great deal is available through the Virgin Atlantic Flying Club, which charges just 125,000 miles (62,500 one-way) for Business Class round-trip. And right now, there's a 30% transfer bonus if you transfer points from Amex Membership Rewards or Citi ThankYou to Virgin Atlantic. So, you could transfer just 49,000 points for enough miles for a one-way or 97,000 points for a round-trip.

You can buy the Virgin points from Amex at 2.5c, which means you can get the ticket for just \$2,425 (plus taxes). So for the \$500 cancel fee you'd pay United (if you bought the fare online at United.com), you'd save as much as \$4,791/66% if you bought the Auckland ticket departing from Houston.

## HOW TO SAVE \$4,791 IN 10 TO 20 MINUTES

**Step 1:** Make sure there is availability for your specific dates in June or July (2 minutes)

**Step 2:** Call Amex and transfer points to Virgin or buy them on the phone if you don't have enough (2 or 5 minutes)

**Step 3:** Book Air New Zealand flights by calling the Virgin Atlantic Flying Club at 800-365-9500

**Step 4:** After you have the ticket number in hand and triple checked that it's accurate, cancel your \$7,216 United/Air New Zealand booking.

## HOT DEAL #2: ETIHAD FIRST APARTMENT

Here's another great deal we found flying First Class with Etihad Airways, which rarely has mileage award space when booking very far in advance. And the bonus is that Etihad's First Apartment is the most sumptuous First Class seating anywhere with both onboard showers and a ridiculous amount of personal space. [More here on that.](#)

On to the deal... Our research team found a trend of availability of one to four days for one person and one to two days for two people using American Airlines miles when booking close to your departure date or over the first two weeks of June.

That's because American Airlines has a partnership with Etihad, so you can use AAdvantage miles for Etihad flights from New York to the Middle East for just 115,000 miles one-way. (Also note that you can now book Etihad online with American at [aa.com](http://aa.com).)

## THE POINT IS THIS....

If you always have your bags packed and ready to go (and you're mentally prepared as well), you can score many amazing premium travel deals. **The key is simply follow FCF and be imaginative.** The travelers who do this are the ones who consistently get the best deals and are able to travel around the world – in Business or First class – at a fraction of the price other travelers pay.

**Even if you've already booked your flights:** you should always have your eyes on FCF alerts. You never know when that once-in-a-lifetime opportunity is going to come up. And based on FCF's research, there are always golden opportunities waiting for savvy travelers to take advantage of.



# All It Takes is Three Letters (ABA) to Save 60% on High-End Hotel Bookings

June 2019

Sometimes the best deals come from the most unlikely places...

For example, in the past we've written about [the cost-saving benefits of joining AARP](#). Yes, *that* AARP. Anyone over the age of 16 can join for just \$16 per year. And with that membership, you instantly qualify for a \$200 reduction on Business Class tickets with British Airways.

Likewise, we've also talked about the benefits of [joining Amex's International Airline Program \(IAP\)](#). If you sign up for an American Express Platinum Card or Business Platinum Card, you can save an average of 8% to 12% on many published First Class, Business Class, and Premium Economy fares. It's a lesser-known benefit of these cards, but one that shouldn't be overlooked.



However, this special report highlights a membership benefit closer to the AARP model, because it involves joining something you probably haven't considered before: **American Bar Association (ABA)**.

Yep, that's the association self-described as "defending liberty and delivering justice as the national representative of the legal profession." But that's not the important part for travelers.

## WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN THE ABA

Here's the short answer: **ABA members can save up to 60% off luxury hotels!** Even though the membership fee is \$150 per year, you can get it back completely after just one luxury hotel booking. The ABA is able to offer this discount because they've negotiated special rates with a number of luxury hotels around the world. So their members are saving significant amounts of money by being a member.

Also, you don't need to be a lawyer to join the ABA. I'm far from being a lawyer and I've been paying for the membership for years. The cost-savings are just too big to ignore.

Just to give you a taste of what's possible, take a look at these awesome deals that we found, in New York for example.

This first screenshot shows prices for the St. Regis and Ritz-Carlton in New York City **BEFORE** the ABA discount is applied for a two-night stay in June. \$1,031 at the St. Regis and \$749 for The Ritz-Carlton in a standard room using a AAA (American Automobile Association) rate code.

The screenshot shows a hotel booking interface. At the top, there are navigation links for English, Help, Loyalty FAQs, My Trips (17), and a user profile for Matthew. The search criteria are: Destination: New York, NY, US; Stay Dates: Tue, Jun 25, 2019 - Thu, Jun 27, 2019; Rooms & Guests: 1 Room: 1 Adult/Room. Below the search bar, there are filters for Map View, Currency (Default), Sort by (Distance), and a button to 'SELECT FROM 30 UNIQUE BRANDS'. The results show two hotels:

- The St. Regis New York**: Two East 55th Street, at Fifth Avenue New York, New York 10022. 0.6 miles from destination. 4.5 817 Reviews. Category 8. Price: From 1,031 USD Avg./night.
- The Ritz-Carlton New York, Central Park**: 50 Central Park South New York, New York 10019. 0.9 miles from destination. 4.5 251 Reviews. Category 8. Price: From 749 USD Avg./night.

Now, check this out. Once you apply the **ABA** membership discount code, the prices drop dramatically to \$625 at the St. Regis and \$595 for The Ritz-Carlton.

**That's a savings of \$406 at the St. Regis and \$154 at the Ritz-Carlton, per night!**

The screenshot shows the Marriott Bonvoy website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for English, Help, Loyalty FAQs, My Trips (17), and a user profile for Matthew. The search bar at the top left shows the destination as New York, NY, US, with stay dates from Tuesday, June 25, 2019, to Thursday, June 27, 2019, and one room for one adult. Below the search bar, there are filters for Map View, Currency (Default), Sort by (Distance), and a button to 'SELECT FROM 30 UNIQUE BRANDS'. The results section shows 'Showing 1 - 3 of 3 hotels'. The first hotel listed is 'The St. Regis New York' at 'Two East 55th Street, at Fifth Avenue New York, New York 10022'. It is 0.6 miles from the destination, has a 4.5 rating from 817 reviews, and is a Category 8 hotel. The price is listed as 'From 625 USD Avg./night'. The second hotel listed is 'The Ritz-Carlton New York, Central Park' at '50 Central Park South New York, New York 10019'. It is 0.9 miles from the destination, has a 4.5 rating from 251 reviews, and is a Category 8 hotel. The price is listed as 'From 595 USD Avg./night'. Both hotels have a 'VIEW RATES' button next to their price.

**PERSPECTIVE** If you stay three or four nights at the St. Regis in New York on an ABA rate, your ABA membership will save you enough to fly First Class free from most anywhere in the U.S. to New York, if not several times over. **MORE EXAMPLES** Want to stay at The Peninsula in New York? Well, **BEFORE** the ABA discount is applied, a two-night stay in July will run you \$870 in a deluxe room. Once you apply the ABA membership discount, the price drops dramatically to \$550. That's a savings of \$320. **Chicago Example:** The Four Seasons Hotel in Chicago **BEFORE** the ABA discount is applied for a two-night stay in June is \$755 in a standard room. Once you apply the ABA membership discount, the price drops dramatically to \$345. That's a savings of \$410—or four nights for the price of two. Want to stay in a Four Seasons suite? Expect to pay \$935 for a two-night stay in June, but apply the ABA discount and the price drops to \$605, a savings of \$330.

Another way to look at it is that with the ABA discount you get a free upgrade to a suite. **International Example** The St. Regis in Rome **BEFORE** the ABA discount is applied for a two-night stay in August is \$763 in a standard room. Once you apply the ABA membership discount, the price drops dramatically to \$451. That's a savings of \$312. This ABA booking discount can be used at the following hotel chains, among many others: Four Seasons Hotels, Marriott Hotels (The Ritz-Carlton, St. Regis, Westin Hotels, etc.), Hilton Hotels (Waldorf Astoria), Fairmont Hotels, Trump International Hotel & Tower, Mandarin Oriental, Omni Hotels. You can find them in 36 major U.S. cities like New York, Los Angeles, and Miami. You'll also find deals for international hotel bookings in places like Canada, Asia, South America, the Middle East, and Europe. For a list of hotels and cities around the world, you can visit this [link from the ABA website](#). **How to Join the ABA** Joining the ABA is simple. All you need to do is visit this [link](#) and submit a payment of \$150 per year. It takes two minutes.

Once you do that, you're all set to score some truly amazing hotel deals.

## **PERSPECTIVE**

If you stay three or four nights at the St. Regis in New York on an ABA rate, from most anywhere in the U.S. to New York, if not several times over.

## MORE EXAMPLES

Want to stay at

**Chicago Example:** The Four Seasons Hotel in Chicago **BEFORE** the ABA discount is applied for a two-night stay in June is \$755 in a standard room. Once you apply the ABA membership discount, the price drops dramatically to \$345. **That's a savings of \$410—or four nights for the price of two.**

Want to stay in a Four Seasons suite? Expect to pay \$935 for a two-night stay in June, but apply the ABA discount and the price drops to \$605, a savings of \$330. Another way to look at it is that with the ABA discount you get a **free upgrade to a suite.**

## INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLE

The St. Regis in Rome **BEFORE** the ABA discount is applied for a two-night stay in August is \$763 in a standard room. Once you apply the ABA membership discount, the price drops dramatically to \$451. That's a **savings of \$312.**

This ABA booking discount can be used at the following hotel chains, among many others:

- Four Seasons Hotels
- Marriott Hotels (The Ritz-Carlton, St. Regis, Westin Hotels, etc.)
- Hilton Hotels (Waldorf Astoria)
- Fairmont Hotels
- Trump International Hotel & Tower
- Mandarin Oriental
- Omni Hotels

You can find them in 36 major U.S. cities like New York, Los Angeles, and Miami. You'll also find deals for international hotel bookings in places like Canada, Asia, South America, the Middle East, and Europe. For a list of hotels and cities around the world, you can visit this [link from the ABA website](#).

## HOW TO JOIN THE ABA

Joining the ABA is simple. All you need to do is visit this [link](#) and submit a payment of \$150 per year. **It takes two minutes.** Once you do that, you're all set to score some truly amazing hotel deals.







# East Coast to Far East Premium Flash Fares Match Those from the West Coast, Representing Great Values

June 2019

In [April](#) we told you how West Coast fares to Europe were dropping to East Coast levels. Now it looks like the East Coast is reciprocating—with lower Business Class fares recently found to Asia.

Generally speaking, travel in Business Class to Asia from the East Coast is typically ~\$1,500+ more than from the West Coast, with Business Class fares in the \$4,000 to \$6,000 range. But recently we've seen many fares under \$2,800 from the East Coast and \$2,400 from the West.

To Asia, East Coast fares have been even lower than from the West in some cases.

All fundamentally important to be aware of if you buy premium published fares very often—and who'd have guessed?

## AIRLINES ARE GETTING MORE TACTICAL

Just as with the cost of travel to Europe getting closer together from both coasts, I think the reasons for this Asia trend are tactical. Airlines are finding more and more intricate ways to slice and dice the premium travel market. Their computer servers must be hot to touch because it's happening a lot. But do we really care *why*? Not so much. The trick is to jump on them when we spot them for you.

For instance, we've seen Business Class fares from the East Coast to Asia—Bangkok, Singapore, Shanghai, and Taipei—around the \$2,700 mark. Compare that with the approximately \$1,700 cost of flying from New York to Los Angeles. **For just \$1,000 more, East Coasters can take their vacations in faraway Asia, instead of the U.S.**

## EASY COME, EASY GO, EASY FREEZE

These flash fares often don't last very long. We've been surprised how fast they're coming and going. But we're also encouraged that **they continue to come, and we expect it to keep happening.**

Consider yourself prepared for upcoming opportunities.

If you haven't planned all your trip details yet, you can "freeze" great airfare deals when you see them. See our March report for details on [How to Lock in Amazing Premium Flash Fares to Use Later](#).

## CONSIDER COST PER HOUR — VALUE THINK

One way to look at flight costs and value is from the perspective of the "cost per flight hour," as it can be an eye-opener. For example, the travel time between New York and Singapore is about 41 hours round-trip with Japan Airlines. When the Business Class fare is down at those \$2,700 levels, it equals about **\$66 per flight hour**.

Compare this to a New York-Rome fare at \$2,761 nonstop with a flight time of 18 hours round-trip. That comes to a **cost per flight hour of \$153**. Relative to that fare, the East Coast to Asia option at flash prices represents noodle-cheap value. The tickets' prices are roughly the same, but when you consider value, you're getting a lot more flight bang(kok?) for your buck when you head Asia's way.

**Think value—not price.**

## EAST VS WEST EXAMPLES

**New York-Singapore:** Just a few weeks ago we spotted American Airlines and Japan Airlines with published fares starting at \$2,748 round-trip. Compare that to **Los Angeles-Singapore** starting at \$3,207. Say again?!

It was costing less to fly to Asia from the East Coast than the West. Almost looks like a mistake.

**Boston-Taipei:** We also saw published fares starting at \$2,753 round-trip. Compare it to **San Francisco-Taipei** starting at \$2,983 with Air Canada. Again, \$230 *less*.

**New York-Bangkok:** American Airlines and Japan Airlines had published fares starting at \$2,647 round-trip. Compare that to **Los Angeles-Bangkok**, starting at \$2,877 with American Airlines. That number again: \$230 *less*.

Other recent East Coast-Asia special fares found: [Northeast to Taipei Business Class \\$2,753 R/T](#) and [Singapore \\$2,724 R/T With American and United Business Class](#).

## PARLAY THE DEAL INTO FIRST CLASS

With Japan Airlines you can also upgrade discounted Business Class (class X) fares to First Class. It takes 45,000 miles one-way to upgrade from Business to First on the international long-haul flight, New York to Tokyo.

## TWO ALLIANCES / THREE AIRLINES

Two alliances are leading this trend: oneworld (with American and Japan Airlines), and Star Alliance (United).

## LOW-FARE EAST COAST DEPARTURE CITIES

The best fares we've seen are from Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. (Dallas too. Not exactly East Coast although the Cowboys do play in the NFC East).

## LOW-FARE WEST COAST DESTINATION CITIES

Good low-fare destinations are more spread out—and to all corners of Asia. The best fares vary and currently include Bangkok, Singapore, Shanghai, and Taipei. But keep in mind that this can change quickly.

## IT'S NOT ALL EAST COAST TO ASIA ROUTES

Not all flights between an East Coast city and all Asian cities get the low fares. They vary and don't necessarily get low across the board. Again, it's a tactical play by airlines and they're specific about the routes.

**Exhibit A:** Boston-Singapore went for as little as \$2,724 round-trip just a few weeks ago. Compare that to a high fare route such as Boston-Bali, at \$5,265—**93% more**.

## OPPORTUNITY TRAVELERS REWARDED

As we mentioned, not all routes offer these great deals, so you want to be an [opportunity traveler](#). To get these kinds of fares, don't succumb to "destination blindness."

For example, if you don't see a deal to Hong Kong in Business Class, but you do see a deal to Taipei, why not check out Taipei? Then hop over to Hong Kong; it's less than two hours away. And perhaps return from Shanghai—what we call using [Open-Jaw itineraries](#) to land a premium deal and great vacation.

## TWO ALLIANCES / THREE AIRLINES

Two alliances are leading this trend: oneworld (with American and Japan Airlines), and Star Alliance (United).

## LOW-FARE EAST COAST DEPARTURE CITIES

The best fares we've seen are from Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. (Dallas too. Not exactly East Coast although the Cowboys do play in the NFC East).

## LOW-FARE WEST COAST DESTINATION CITIES

Good low-fare destinations are more spread out—and to all corners of Asia. The best fares vary and currently include Bangkok, Singapore, Shanghai, and Taipei. But keep in mind that this can change quickly.

## IT'S NOT ALL EAST COAST TO ASIA ROUTES

Not all flights between an East Coast city and all Asian cities get the low fares. They vary and don't necessarily get low across the board. Again, it's a tactical play by airlines and they're specific about the routes.

**Exhibit A:** Boston-Singapore went for as little as \$2,724 round-trip just a few weeks ago. Compare that to a high fare route such as Boston-Bali, at \$5,265—**93% more**.

## OPPORTUNITY TRAVELERS REWARDED

As we mentioned, not all routes offer these great deals, so you want to be an [opportunity traveler](#). To get these kinds of fares, don't succumb to "destination blindness."



For example, if you don't see a deal to Hong Kong in Business Class, but you do see a deal to Taipei, why not check out Taipei? Then hop over to Hong Kong; it's less than two hours away. And perhaps return from Shanghai—what we call using [Open-Jaw itineraries](#) to land a premium deal and great vacation.

A photograph of a Delta airplane cabin interior, showing rows of seats with white quilted headrest covers and entertainment screens. The lighting is dim, and the view is from the aisle looking towards the front of the plane.

# The Best Delta Deal of the Decade Gets 30% Better

June 2019

**Plus new FCF upgrade treasure maps to more exotic destinations that make booking dream trips fast and easy.**

As we've been saying for a while now ([here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)), using Delta SkyMiles to fly on Delta is **NOT the best** strategy, strange as it may seem.

Instead, use Virgin Atlantic miles to fly Delta because they have **better award rates and MUCH better award space** than you will find on Delta.com.

## ADD IN THE 30% BONUS DEAL AND YOU HAVE A SYMPHONY

Right now (through July 1) there is a 30% American Express points-transfer bonus deal offered with Virgin Atlantic miles that makes the extraordinary deal that much better.



Not only is Amex Rewards offering a 30% transfer bonus, but points transfers from [Citi ThankYou Rewards to Virgin Atlantic also receive a 30% bonus through June 22](#).

For example, the great deals to Europe for 100,000 Virgin Atlantic miles—that normally run 300,000 to 560,000 on Delta.com—are only 78,000 Amex or Citi points with the transfer bonus deal.

That's the same as **getting Business Class for a bit more than the cost of coach**—given that for economy tickets to Europe, many airlines charge around 60,000 miles. At times, Delta charges even more.

FCF has also been busy finding **interesting new destinations** for which you can use Virgin Atlantic miles to fly Delta cheaper.

## MUMBAI MELODY

**Business Class for 93,000 Points R/T:** Delta flies New York to Mumbai, India. FCF's research team found award space using Virgin Atlantic miles flying Delta for travel Dec., Jan., and March 2020. [More here](#).

The cost to use Delta miles at the lowest price is generally 270,000 miles round-trip and \$43 in taxes. Book the same flights using Virgin Atlantic miles, and it only costs 120,000 miles and the same \$43 in taxes.

That sounds great, but now, it's even less. With the 30% Amex or Citi transfer bonus, you only need to transfer 93,000 points to get 120,000 Virgin Atlantic miles. That's a savings of 177,000 miles (66%), or getting almost **three Business Class tickets to India for the price of one**.

## AFROBEAT (CAN'T BE BEAT)

**Business Class for 93,000 Points R/T:** Another interesting destination we've found with mileage award space using Virgin Atlantic miles is Africa. On the Atlanta to Lagos, Nigeria route, Delta charges 240,000 miles round-trip and \$93 in award taxes, while Virgin Atlantic only charges 120,000 and the same \$93 for

taxes. Factor in the current 30% transfer deal and you only need to transfer **93,000 Amex** or **Citi** points, a savings of 147,000 (61%). [More here.](#)



## CHILEAN CUECA

**Business Class for 70,000 Points R/T:** South America is another interesting Delta destination we've found with mileage award space using Virgin Atlantic. On the Atlanta to Santiago route, Delta charges 220,000 miles round-trip and \$48 in award taxes, while Virgin Atlantic only charges 90,000 and the same \$48 for taxes. Factor in the current 30% transfer deal and you only need to transfer **70,000 Amex** or **Citi** points, a savings of 150,000 (68%) miles. [More here.](#)

## DELTA'S GREATEST HITS: LOOPHOLE FAVORITES YOU'LL WANT TO CROON ABOUT

Here's a recap of this loophole that we've found lately. Warning: You can't un-hear these toe-tapping deals.

**The Shanghai Shuffle:** A round-trip short-notice ticket booked [using Virgin Atlantic miles to fly Delta for Atlanta-Shanghai](#) will cost you 120,000 miles, plus \$36 in taxes. That same award with the 30% transfer bonus would only require **93,000 Amex** or **Citi** points transferred. That same ticket using Delta miles would be 600,000 miles for the same dates, plus \$36 in taxes. **That's 5 times cheaper.** A sweet sound indeed. Go [here](#) for more details.

## LONDON CALLING

In March, Delta didn't have one seat available at the low-cost mileage rate for the Minneapolis to London route using Delta miles. For that entire month, the cost was 280,000 miles—for a one-way flight. However, if you had booked your Delta flights using Virgin Atlantic miles for the same travel window, you'd find 20 days available at the low-cost rate of 47,500 miles for a one-way ticket last we checked. Now that same award with the 30% transfer bonus would only require **37,000 Amex** or **Citi** points transferred.

Not only could you get much better award availability, but you also got it for 232,500 miles *cheaper* than Delta's lowest rate.

The only drawback with traveling to London on Virgin Atlantic is that they have a high tax rate of \$527 for a one-way trip. Delta's taxes are only \$5 one-way. Non-London routes have much lower taxes. Despite all that, you're still well ahead.

## AMSTERDAM ANTHEM

In August this year, Delta has exactly zero seats at the low mileage cost currently available for the New York–Amsterdam route. It's the same tune as "London Calling": All that month it will cost 280,000 miles—for a one-way flight. That is way out of tune to these FCF ears. Now, if you book your Delta flights using Virgin Atlantic miles during the same travel window, you have 20 days available at the low-cost rate of **just 50,000 miles** one-way for one seat. And 17 days have two seats available and 11 days have four seats available.

But now that same award with the 30% transfer bonus would only require 39,000 Amex or Citi points transferred. **Five tickets for the price of one?** Play that again. Ok, we will: FCF found similar price differences using Virgin Atlantic miles for travel on Delta flights from **New York to Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Milan**. These deal aren't available on every route so double check first. Go [here](#) for more details.

## FIRST CLASS BONUS

For travel from the U.S. to Japan, All Nippon typically charges 150,000 to 165,000 miles for round-trip for First Class travel. With Virgin Atlantic miles, the round-trip cost is only 110,000 miles (from western U.S.) to 120,000 miles (from eastern U.S.), but now that same award with the 30% transfer bonus would only require **93,000 Amex or Citi** points transferred. So you're able to save up to 72,000 miles. Go [here](#) for more details.

## HOW TO PLAY THESE HITS

Not all routes can be booked online with Virgin Atlantic because its booking engine doesn't have all Delta routes loaded. Here are the non-stop Delta routes that can be booked using Virgin Atlantic miles **by phone**:

To/From Atlanta: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Brussels, Buenos Aires, Frankfurt, Madrid, Munich, Rome, Santiago, São Paulo, Seoul, Stuttgart, Zurich

To/From Detroit: Frankfurt, Munich, Rome, Seoul

To/From Minneapolis: Seoul

To/From New York: Accra, Athens, Berlin, Barcelona, Buenos Aires, Copenhagen, Dakar, Frankfurt, Lisbon, Nice, Prague, Rome, Tel Aviv, Venice, Zurich

To/From Seattle: Osaka, Seoul



## **Non-stop Delta routes that can be booked using Virgin Atlantic miles online:**

To/From Atlanta: Dublin, Dusseldorf, Honolulu, Johannesburg, Lagos, Lima, London, Paris, Shanghai, Tokyo

To/From Boston: Amsterdam, Dublin, London

To/From Cincinnati: Paris

To/From Detroit: Amsterdam, Beijing, Honolulu, London, Nagoya, Paris, Shanghai, Tokyo

To/From Los Angeles: Honolulu, Kona, Maui, Shanghai, Sydney, Tokyo

To/From Minneapolis: Amsterdam, Honolulu, London, Paris, Tokyo

To/From New York: Amsterdam, Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow, London, Milan, Paris

To/From Portland: Amsterdam, London, Tokyo

To/From Raleigh: Paris

To/From Salt Lake City: Amsterdam, Honolulu, London, Paris

To/From Seattle: Amsterdam, Beijing, Honolulu, Kauai, Kona, Maui, Paris, Shanghai, Tokyo

## **ONE DOWNSIDE, FOR SOME**

Note that a downside to using Virgin Atlantic miles is that you can only use them for Delta's non-stop routes. All connecting flights would require you to purchase a second ticket. For many, it still could be a great idea to buy a separate ticket to the gateway to take advantage of the Virgin opportunity.

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

For everything you need to know to search for Delta flights click our report [here](#) and the information is about halfway down the page with the same headline as above.

Now clear your throat, warm up your vocal chords and get ready to sing your way to melodious sweet savings with American Express Membership Rewards or Citi ThankYou Points.