



No Delta or SkyTeam Partner Miles? No Problem.

August 2018



Delta



Delta



A plan for the person who wants to get in the upgrade game overnight—without even taking a flight.

That's right, you can get in the game without having any Delta or SkyTeam airline partner miles or even boarding a flight.

The only terms you have to know are "transfer points" and "buy miles."

"Transfer points" means moving credit card points that you already have to Delta or SkyTeam partner airlines in order to get an award ticket. "Buying miles" means taking advantage of purchasing miles with Delta or

SkyTeam partner airlines, which is especially smart when published fares are high.

The one technical term you have to keep in mind is **Transaction Completion Time**, meaning the time between initiating a mileage-purchase or points-transfer and actually receiving the miles in your account. This ranges from instantly, which means low or zero risk of losing a seat, to seven or more days. Most airlines won't hold a seat unless the miles are in your account. (See chart below.)

This special report focuses on major airlines that we include in our Sweet Redemptions alerts for [SkyTeam airlines](#). You won't find Aeromexico, Aeroflot, or China Southern.

KNOW YOUR HOLD-FRIENDLY AIRLINES WITH SKYTEAM

The drawback to accumulating miles through purchases or transfers is the time it takes for the miles to post to your account. In the interval, seat availability can disappear.

That's why choosing an airline that will hold a seat while you get the miles into your account is so important.

Air France and **KLM**, both part of the Flying Blue mileage program, hold free award space on their flights and partner flights for [up to 48 hours](#) if you book by phone (800) 375-8723.

Korean holds free award space on its own flights if you book by phone (800-438-5000), but the time varies by reservation; it can take [up to a month](#). No partner award hold is offered.

KNOW YOUR TRANSFER- AND BUY-MILES OPTIONS WITH SKYTEAM AIRLINES

Air France or KLM / Flying Blue Miles

New members can buy [75,000 miles](#) in a calendar year, but they can take up to 72 hours to post. Elites (Silver, Gold and Platinum) can purchase up to 100,000 miles in any one transaction and an unlimited number of miles in any calendar year.

Flying Blue has [five credit card transfer partner partners](#): American Express Membership Rewards, Chase Ultimate Rewards, Citi ThankYou Rewards, Marriott Points, and Barclays Points. Three of them allow you to buy points (Amex Rewards, Citi Rewards, and Marriott Points), as much as 500,000 from Amex Rewards. Point transfer time varies (see chart below).

Delta Miles

New members can buy [60,000 miles](#), which can take up to 24 hours to post. Delta has [two credit card transfer partners](#), American Express Membership Rewards and Marriott Points, and the former allows you to buy [up to](#)

[500,000](#) points. Point transfer time varies (see chart below).

Korean Air Miles

You can get miles by transferring Chase Ultimate Rewards or Marriott Points. There's no option to buy miles. Point transfer time varies (see chart below).

SkyTeam Rapid Miles Accumulation

Airline(s) / Loyalty Program	Accumulation Method	Annual Purchase Limit	Normal Purchase Price per Mile/Point	When on Sale Purchase Price	Transaction / Transfer Completion Time
Air France & KLM / Flying Blue	Direct Purchase	75,000	3.2¢	2¢	N/A*
	American Express Membership Rewards	Up to 500,000	2.5¢	No Sale	Instant
	Chase Ultimate Rewards		N/A		Instant
	Citi ThankYou Rewards	100,000	2.5¢	No Sale	Few Hours
	Marriott/SPG Points	50,000	1.25¢	No Sale	7 Days
	Barclays Points		N/A		N/A
Delta / SkyMiles	Direct Purchase	60,000	3.5¢	No Sale	Instant
	American Express Membership Rewards	Up to 500,000	2.5¢	No Sale	Instant
	Marriott/SPG Points	50,000	1.25¢	No Sale	2 Days
Korean Air / Skypass	Direct Purchase		N/A		
	Chase Ultimate Rewards		N/A		2 Days
	Marriott/SPG Points	50,000	1.25¢	No Sale	N/A*

*Research in progress: check back in a week or so.

Sample of Recent Delta and SkyTeam Airline Partners Sweet Redemptions Alerts in FCF Newsroom:

[Good Four-Seat Air France Biz Class Award Availability Found to/from Europe—from Houston, Miami, Washington, DC](#)

[Korean Air First Class Award Availability Found to/from Asia From Chicago, New York, and More](#)

[Good Delta Business Class Award Availability Found to/from Beijing](#)

[Delta Business Class Awards Found Boston, Detroit, Minneapolis to/from London \(and Beyond\)](#)

Related FCF Reports on Buying Points or Miles, and the Right Time to Buy Miles or Points Instead of Paying Cash:

[How to Get Around Buying Miles Maximum Limits](#)

[How to Buy American Express Membership Rewards Points](#)

[When to Buy Miles Instead of Purchasing a Normal Published Fare](#)

[Upgrader's Block and How to Overcome It, Volume 1: When to Use Your Miles](#)



Have You Become Set in Your Tropical Ways?

August 2018

Today's Upgrade Mindset Matchup: Hawaii versus Bali: Go exotic for a more exciting vacation—at a comparable cost.

I have a friend that goes to Hawaii just about every year. Her daughter is a great, young, competitive surfer, so it's a no brainer for a couple of Californians.

But I asked if her daughter would more be interested in going to Bali to surf or stay with what she knew in Hawaii.

Her daughter's answer, in a heartbeat, was Bali!

PERSPECTIVE

I said that a Business or First Class airline ticket is probably going to be more expensive.

Bali will cost you maybe 20,000 more miles round-trip in Business Class, if even that, since Business Class awards can start as low as 100,000 miles (with Alaska or All Nippon and/or Amex, Marriott/SPG points) and range up to 155,000 miles (with Air Canada, American, Korean Air, or United and/or Amex, Chase, or Marriott/SPG points).

Then, factor in that most of the time low-cost (80,000 miles) awards are not available to Hawaii, so you end up paying anytime rates ranging from 135,000 to 180,000, sometimes even more.

Bali might even end up costing you less than Hawaii. More on this in a moment.

NO MILES OR POINTS? NO PROBLEM

A ticket to Hawaii can easily cost \$1,200 from the West Coast to \$2,000 from the East Coast, but you can buy miles cheaply when they're on sale. For more see FCF's Beginner's Guide: How to Play the "Buy Miles to Fly In Style" Strategy to Net Up to 90% Off Premium Travel [here](#).

Or buy up to 500,000 points through Amex Rewards at 2.5¢ per point (more [here](#)). In effect you can buy 100,000 points for \$2,500—not much more than a ticket to Hawaii—and then transfer to All Nippon for a mileage award.

4-STAR BALI HOTELS AT 2-STAR HAWAII HOTEL PRICES

However, this also comes with a side benefit: When you do get there, you can stay at a four-star hotel, like the [Grand Bali Nusa Dua](#), the [Westin Resort Nusa Dua](#), or the [Fairmont Sanur Beach Bali](#), and **pay hundreds less per night** than you would for a hotel of comparable quality in Hawaii.

The Grand Bali Nusa Dua and the Westin Resort Nusa Dua, for example, cost \$150 per night, while the Grand Hyatt and Westin in Maui will easily cost \$350 per night or more.

Then, there's the usual vacation fun to be bought or rented—scuba gear, surfboard, car rental, meals, drinks—and they, too, will be a lot less expensive than in Hawaii.

COOKIN' WITH BALI

We humans compartmentalize travel because it's one less thing to trouble our brains about. Places like Bali are often placed in the too hard / too far / too expensive basket.

As a result, we are overlooking some of the world's most beautiful, friendly, and exotic places.

Yes, it can be more expensive to get to Bali because it's further away. But it's **a lot cheaper once you're on the ground.**

Now, don't get me wrong, I love Hawaii, and you don't need a passport to get there. *But* don't have a one-track mind when it comes to your next vacation in the sun. You might be missing out on something different, and something great, for the same cost, while also flying in a premium cabin.

Upgrade Mindset Matchup: Hawaii versus Bali

FCF Fast Fun Perspective Facts	Hawaii	Bali
Cost of Four-Star Hotels	\$350	\$150
Average Annual Temperature Range	81 to 88 degrees	84 to 88 degrees
Cost of a Taxi	Honolulu Airport to Waikiki Beach: (9 miles) about \$40	Denpasar Airport to Nusa Dua: (8 miles) about \$10
Cost of a Beer	\$6 and \$8	\$1 and \$6
Cost of a Big Mac	\$5.30	\$2.70



Best Ways of Booking First Class to Europe, Now that Fares Have Increased

September 2018

SPECIAL REPORT AT A GLANCE:

- Bad News: First Class fares are climbing.
- Good News: Low-fare routes exist, from \$3,267
- What to do when First Class fares are \$5,000+?
- What to do when you lack the miles or points to get a First Class mileage ticket?
- Amex's International Airline Program (IAP) can save up to 23% on First Class fares
- Using miles to upgrade to First Class
- Related strategies to help reduce high First Class fares

It was only about year ago when Air France changed the First Class fare landscape by introducing [new 90-day advance purchase fares, starting at \\$3,413](#). Lufthansa, SWISS, and United offered seats at \$3,515. Back then, British Airways was not a deal, it was offering fares starting at \$5,000+.

Well, the wind has changed.

THE BAD NEWS

The Air France, Lufthansa, SWISS, and United fares are gone. On many routes, a First Class seat on these airlines now costs \$4,500 to \$6,000.

THE GOOD NEWS

Now it's BA's turn to be the go-to airline. It offers First Class fares to Europe (via London) starting at \$3,600. Get a [10% discount for using a British Airways Visa Card](#) and the fare drops to \$3,267. (Sample screenshot below.)

Flight details						Price
21:05 09 Nov	10:00 10 Nov	Hartsfield-Jackson Int	Heathrow (London)	BA0226 British Airways	First	\$3,266.93 1 passenger
16:15 10 Nov	23:10 10 Nov	Heathrow (London)	Ataturk (Istanbul)	BA0680 British Airways	Club Europe	Email price quote Baggage allowance Currency calculator
Flight details						
10:00 16 Nov	11:20 16 Nov	Ataturk (Istanbul)	Heathrow (London)	BA0675 British Airways	Club Europe	
14:20 16 Nov	18:55 16 Nov	Heathrow (London)	Hartsfield-Jackson Int	BA0227 British Airways	First	
Change flights						

Passenger	Fare	Taxes, fees and carrier charges per person	Original total price
1 Adult	\$2,452.00	\$1,177.92 <small>i</small>	\$3,629.92

The original total price shown above is the price of your ticket before any discounts and is for reference.
The total price does not include promotion code discounts.
The inclusive total of your ticket includes government taxes, fees, carrier imposed charge or fuel surcharge, where applicable per flight levied by the carrier [More details](#)

- Promotion code or eVoucher
Discount has been applied
[Got another promotion code or eVoucher?](#)

Promotion value: **\$362.99**
Total price to pay: **\$3,266.93**

Go [here](#) for recent FCF First Class fare alert showing more routes on British Airways.

Remember, BA is going to fly you via London, so you must make a connection if you're headed for the continent, and on the connecting flight you'll be in Business Class.

To find out how to get a 72-hour hold, for \$10, on a BA First Class ticket, see FCF's July report on [How to Hold Amazing Business and First Class Flash Fares Before They Disappear into a Black Hole](#).

WHAT TO DO WHEN FIRST CLASS FARES ARE \$5,000+

Use miles or points to get to Europe, even though award taxes can be \$1,100+ on British Airways, Emirates, and Lufthansa. The upside is that BA, as well as Emirates and Lufthansa, have good award availability. If

you're very flexible, book within two weeks of departure to find lower award taxes on partner airlines.

For example, if you have United miles or points to transfer from Chase, you might find award space on United on short-notice. The benefit: The tax is about \$150.

Recent Sweet Redemptions alerts:

[Lufthansa First Class](#)

[First Class on British Airways](#)

HAVE NO MILES OR POINTS?

If the First Class fare is over \$6,000, consider buying and redeeming miles for your ticket.

For example, New York to Milan non-stop in First Class on Emirates starts at \$8,000 round-trip. Emirates is a points transfer partner of Amex Rewards and you can buy 135,000 Amex Rewards points for about \$3,375 and transfer them to Emirates to buy the ticket. You'll incur \$1,100+ on award taxes with Emirates, but you're still saving \$3,500.

For more details see FCF's special report on [When to Buy Miles Instead of Purchasing a Normal Published Fare; Upgrader's Block and How to Overcome It; Volume 1: When to Use Your Miles](#); and [How to Buy American Express Membership Rewards Points](#).

AMEX'S INTERNATIONAL AIRLINE PROGRAM

In our research, the program offers a fare discount of 5% to 23%—on Air France, British Airways, Emirates, and Lufthansa—on many published First Class fares, depending on airline, advance-purchase, and route.

HOW TO BOOK AND DETAILS:

- Call 800-525-3355 for Platinum Travel Service or 800-553-9497 for Business Platinum Travel Service
- There's a \$39 booking fee per ticket
- You can buy up to eight tickets
- Valid for First Class, Business Class, and Premium Economy
- **Bonus:** Earn 5x Membership Reward points by paying with an Amex card
- Yes, you still earn award miles

USING MILES TO UPGRADE TO FIRST CLASS

American, British Airways, and United allow you to upgrade low Business Class fares using miles. For more details see below.

- **Upgrading on American: From Business to First Class** takes 50,000 miles round-trip plus \$1,100 co-pay. More [here](#).
- **Upgrading on British Airways: From Business to First Class** takes 36,000 to 45,000 miles during off-peak and 40,000 to 50,000 miles during peak season round-trip. More [here](#).
- **Upgrading on United: From Business to First Class** takes 40,000 miles round-trip plus \$1,100 co-pay. More [here](#).

RELATED REPORTS ON FIRST CLASS FOR LESS

- [How Open-Jaw Itineraries and Airfares Can Save You From Getting Bitten](#)
- [Are You An Opportunity Traveler?](#)



How South Pacific Business and Leisure Travelers Can Save Up to 72% Using United Upgrades

August 2018

Oftentimes it's smart to forget about free mileage awards, because they don't earn elite credit and are difficult to find anyway. Instead, consider using miles to upgrade because availability is much greater and the ticket earns miles and elite credit, to boot.

The savings can be as much as 72%.

UNITED'S UPGRADE PROGRAM TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC

To upgrade to Business Class to the South Pacific, [United](#) requires 30,000 miles plus a co-pay of \$600 each way on the lowest upgradeable economy fares (S, T, K, L, and G). **When Business Class fares are high,**

which is almost always the case when flying to Australia or New Zealand, **using miles for an upgrade can offer a great return.**

HOW TO SAVE 72% ON HIGH-FARE ROUTES

Say you're traveling Houston to Sydney, often an expensive Business Class route, even when booked way in advance. The lowest United economy fare is currently \$1,178, while Business Class is \$8,594 (\$7,416 more). So, even with the \$1,200 co-pay, you can save \$6,216 (72%) off the published fare by using 60,000 miles.

See chart below for upgrade award availability survey.

United.com screenshot showing fare difference between economy and Business Class plus Upgrade Math:

Departure: Select your flight
Houston, TX, US → Sydney, NSW, AU

Nonstop \$1,178 With stops \$1,183 [Choose connecting airports](#)

Depart Arrive Stops Duration

Tue, Mar 12	Thu, Mar 14	Nonstop	17h 30m		Details	Seats	Roundtrip \$1,178 +30k miles +\$600 co-pay each way, per person	Roundtrip \$8,594 Select
9:30 pm	7:00 am						Select	

LOW ECONOMY ROUTE SAVES 66%

Los Angeles to Melbourne is one of United's lowest economy fare routes, currently starting at \$777 round-trip, while Business Class starts at \$5,779. Even with the \$1,200 co-pay you can save \$3,802 (66%) off the published fare by using 60,000 miles to upgrade.

United.com screenshot with 66% savings opportunity:

Fare	\$635.00
Taxes and fees	\$141.81
MileagePlus Upgrade	60,000 miles
Awards	
Upgrade Award service charges	\$1,200.00

Trip summary

Wed, Aug 15, 2018

TOTAL \$1,976.81
+ 60,000 miles

Wed, Aug 15	Fri, Aug 17	Nonstop
10:35 pm	7:25 am	
Los Angeles, CA, US (LAX)	Melbourne, VIC, AU	
	(MEL - Tullamarine)	15h 50m total
 UA 98	Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner	 
		Revise flight  Details

Wed, Aug 29, 2018

9:25 am		6:35 am	Nonstop
Melbourne, VIC, AU (MEL - Tullamarine)		Los Angeles, CA, US (LAX)	14h 10m total
 UA 99 Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner			 

BRIDGE ROUTE CONNECTIONS CAN SAVE UP TO 64%

Smart travelers use the long-haul Business Class flight as a “bridge,” which means getting the premium seat on the international leg and using economy to reach the gateway(s).

From the U.S., that means you should consider buying an economy through-fare ticket that includes the entire itinerary on one ticket. Then use miles just to upgrade from the gateway to your international destination. If upgrade space is available on the domestic segments, grab it, as the cost is the same.

Example: On Kansas City-Sydney, the lowest through-fare ticket (connecting via San Francisco) costs \$1,241 in economy versus \$6,806 in Business Class. Even with the \$1,200 co-pay to upgrade the San Francisco-Sydney leg, you save \$4,365 (64%) off the published fare by using miles.

Use our survey below to get an idea of upgrade availability on the long-haul segment.

WHAT TO DO WHEN AN UPGRADE IS ONLY AVAILABLE ONE WAY?

United lets you combine economy and Business Class fares, so you can upgrade the flight-segment that has upgrade space and book the one that doesn't in Business Class. On Los Angeles-Sydney, the combined coach-Business Class fare is \$3,476, while round-trip Business Class is \$6,091. So, even with the \$600 one-way co-pay, you can still save \$2,015 (33%) by using miles one way.

TRAVELING ONWARD IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC, BUT NOT ON UNITED?

It's easy if you stick to United's partners and book the entire trip on one ticket, either coach or Business Class. Just upgrade the United transpacific segments. Book the routing in coach based on the availability of Business Class upgrades.

[Air New Zealand](#): Flights to other destinations in Australia and New Zealand from Auckland: Adelaide, Cairns, Christchurch, Perth, Queenstown, and many more.

HOW TO BOOK MILEAGE UPGRADES ON UNITED

Determine availability date-clusters online using our survey below.

- Confirm that the flights/dates you want are available for the upgrade using miles by requesting upgrade award space on the "[All search options](#)" page.
- Make sure you have the miles required in your account.
- Click on the "Upgrade type" search in the middle of the page.
- In the "Fare preferences" section, select the "Buy Economy and upgrade" option to search for upgrade space in Business Class. Your search result will not only show fares and flight schedules, but also the flights offering an upgrade and the cost.
- Click on "Details" to find out if the upgrade space is available.
- Select your flights and book your ticket.

This can all be done online. (For detailed screenshots of the steps go [here](#).) If you want to book over the phone, call 800-421-4655.

By the way, many of **these tactics also work for anyone** who can't find a low Business Class fare and for those who don't even have many American or United miles.

HOW ANYONE CAN PLAY THIS UPGRADE GAME

Don't have any or enough United miles? No problem. **Just buy United miles when they go on sale** (recent opportunity [here](#)), or transfer Marriott points to redeem points with [Marriott's Travel Packages](#) (for more information go [here](#)), or transfer points from Chase to United.

OTHER RECENT UPGRADE REPORTS

Just look at these similar examples with American and United. In the past eight months, FCF has written eight special reports for oneworld (American) and Star Alliance (United) members looking to deploy miles to achieve or maintain elite status *while flying up front*.

In December, we focused on [American to Europe](#), in January to [Asia on American](#), in February to [South America on American](#), in March on [American's Transcon](#), in April to [Hawaii on American](#), in May to [Asia on United](#), in June to [South America on United](#), and in July to [Europe on United](#).

Sweet Redeem Survey: United Mileage Upgrades to the South Pacific

Routes	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
Los Angeles - Sydney	Nov., June	Sept., Oct., March, April, May	Aug., May	Jan., June	Dec., March	Aug., Sept. through Nov., May
San Francisco - Sydney	Oct., Nov., March., June	Aug., Sept., April, May	May	Nov. through Jan., April, May., June	Aug. through Oct., May	
San Francisco - Auckland	Oct., Jan., Feb.	Nov., Dec., March, April, May	Nov., Jan., March	Nov., Jan., Feb., March, April	May	Nov., Dec., March
Los Angeles - Melbourne	Oct. through Dec., Feb., March, April, June	Sept., May	Aug., April, May	June	Jan., Feb., April	Aug., Sept. through Dec., March., April., May
Houston - Sydney	Sept., June	March, April, May	Aug., April, May	Sept., Oct., March, April, May, June		Aug., April, May

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



A clever, premium-travel, around-the-world ticket strategy using the high-octane (and well-connected) Alaska Airlines loyalty program.

As Jules Verne wrote in his classic novel, Around the World in Eighty Days, “It’s really useful to travel, if you want to see new things.”

If that describes you, you’ll want to consider Alaska Airlines powerful loyalty program, which offers a unique and very inexpensive way to see new things—all around the world.

THE ALASKA MILEAGE PROGRAM

Alaska's awards allow you to book a different partner in each direction and/or to book one-way awards (all of its partners are priced on a one-way basis, so a round-trip is simply double that amount), plus Alaska's awards program is especially high value because it allows **one stopover on each one-way ticket** (or two for a round-trip).

Many carriers don't allow stopovers at all, or they might allow one on a round-trip ticket. So, suddenly the world opens up with extra destinations on the same trip for no extra money—just by using Alaska's loyalty program.

On top of that, Alaska is very well connected through its [airline partnerships](#) (17 partner airlines). Because it has a perception of being out of the way (up and over...*there*), Alaska has to work harder to get its share of the sky market.



[/aside]

AROUND THE WORLD IN BUSINESS CLASS FOR 132,500 MILES

This premium ticketing strategy proposes that you combine two one-way Business Class tickets, each with a free stopover.

The outbound ticket is A (home) to B (first free stop) to C (final destination) on airline X.

The return ticket is C (destination) to D (second free stopover), to A (home) on airline Y.

For example, you could fly with Alaska Airline's partner Cathay Pacific (airline X) to Johannesburg and get a free stopover in Hong Kong. From there, you could return by flying on partner Y (British Airways) and stopover in destination D (London). So, you can get two stopovers and your final destination—three different places (Hong Kong, Johannesburg, and London)—all for the price of one.

As in this case, it could be three continents. Three bucket-list-busting cities you'll tell all your family and friends about. The slide show will be epic; even the PowerPoint presentation.

"It may be taken for granted that, rash as the Americans are, when they are prudent there is good reason for it."

— Jules Verne, *Around the World in Eighty Days*

ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

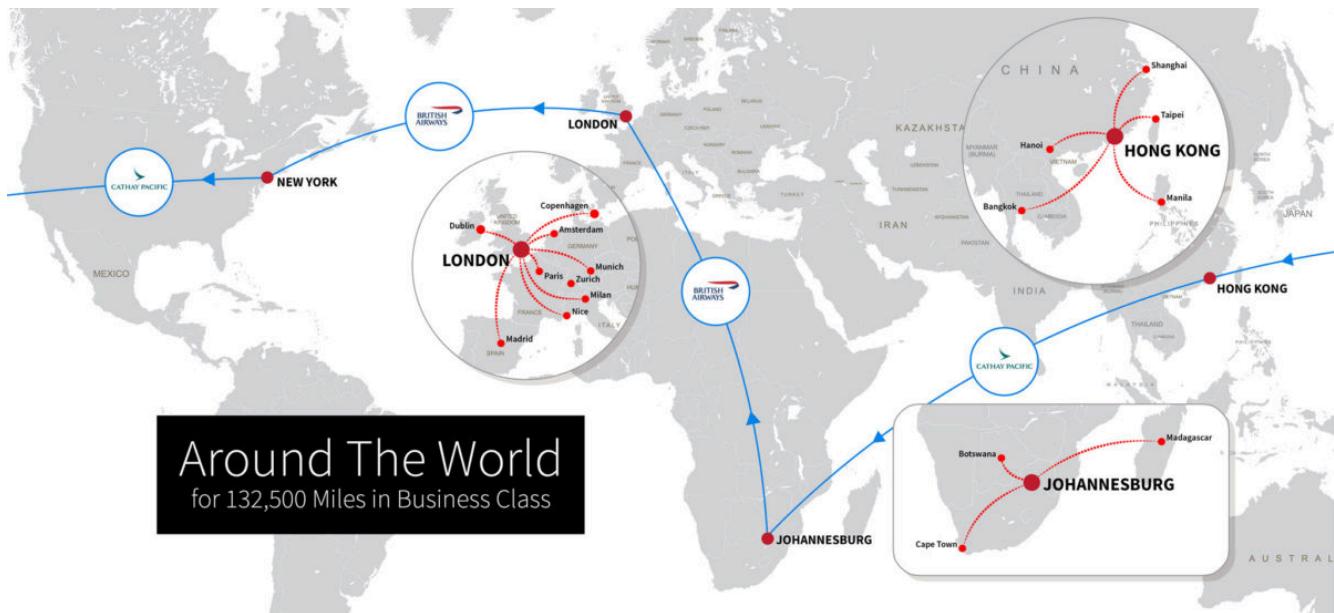
Fly from the U.S. to India on Cathay Pacific, stopping in Hong Kong, and return on a second one-way ticket on British Airways, stopping in London.

Or:

Fly from the U.S. to the Middle East on Cathay Pacific, stopping in Hong Kong, and return on a second one-way ticket on British Airways, stopping in London.

So many options are possible—well over 80 if the truth be told. See charts below for possible pre-baked trips in Business Class on British Airways and Cathay Pacific. Note that partner award space using Alaska miles is at times similar to the operating airline.

All these options cost **132,500 miles in Business Class** (plus taxes). To put this deal in context, consider that Delta charges 150,000 miles for a Business Class round-trip between the U.S. and Europe, and 170,000 miles for one to Asia.



AIRLINE / STOPOVER-CITY OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY:

List of Alaska partner airlines this could work with [shown by each region](#) (cost varies by airline and regions).

- **To Asia:** Cathay Pacific (free stopover on one-way ticket: Hong Kong), Emirates (Dubai), Japan Airlines (Tokyo), Korean Air (Seoul)
- **To India and South Asia:** British Airways (London), Cathay Pacific (Hong Kong), Emirates (Dubai), Korean Air (Seoul)
- **To Africa:** British Airways (London), Cathay Pacific (Hong Kong), Emirates (Dubai)
- **To Australia/New Zealand:** Cathay Pacific (Hong Kong), Emirates (Dubai), Fiji Airways (Nadi), Korean Air (Seoul)
- **To the Middle East:** British Airways (London), Cathay Pacific (Hong Kong), Emirates (Dubai), Korean Air (Seoul)
- **To the South Pacific:** Fiji Airways (Nadi) and Korean Air (Seoul)

WHAT ELSE TO KNOW

- **How to Search for Availability:** Some airlines, including Air France and British Airways, require you to sign up for their mileage programs to check award space online. [Alaska](#) doesn't— you can see what's offered by its partners, even before you join. Note: To find availability on Cathay Pacific or LAN, you have to call Alaska at 800-252-7522; all others are booked online.
- Credit card point transfers can be done with Marriott/SPG points.
- For information on how to book a stopover with Alaska go [here](#).

ADD EVEN MORE DESTINATIONS TO YOUR RTW TICKET!?

Want more than three cities on your “thank you, Alaska” around-the-world tour? With British Airways short-haul awards (get miles easy via Amex points transfers, Chase, and/or Marriott/SPG), you can, for example, make a side-trip to Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Milan, Munich, Nice, Paris or Zurich from London for only 8,000 miles in coach or 15,500 in Business Class round-trip.

You can also use Cathay Pacific miles to jog from Hong Kong to Hanoi, Manila, or Taipei for only 15,000 miles in coach or 32,000 in Business Class round-trip.

Or just buy separate cash tickets to and from the stopover city.

“Monsieur is going to leave home?” “Yes,” returned Phileas Fogg. “We are going round the world.”

— Jules Verne, *Around the World in 80 Days*

Other FCF Around-the-World Favorites

Amex points partner All Nippon, [here](#) (fly around the world starting at 105,000 miles in Business Class).

Marriott/SPG and Barclays point partner Japan Airlines, [here](#) (fly around the world starting at 120,000 miles in Business Class).

PRE-BAKED TRIPS IN BUSINESS CLASS ON BRITISH AIRWAYS FOR 70,000 MILES ONE-WAY

Routes	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

North America

Atlanta - London	April	Aug., Oct. , Nov. , May	Oct., Nov., Dec. through March, June	Oct.	Aug., Sept., March	Nov., Dec. through Feb. , March , April, May , June
Boston - London	Aug.		Nov. through May, June	Oct., June	Aug.	Nov. through May, June
Calgary - London	Sept., May , June	Aug. , Oct., April	Aug., April, May	Sept., May, June	Aug. , Oct.,	Aug., April
Chicago - London	Aug., Oct.	Nov., April , May	Dec. through March, April , May , June	Aug.	Nov., April , May	Dec. through March, April , May , June
Dallas - London	Aug., Dec., March, April	Jan. , Feb. , June	Jan., Feb.	Dec., April, May	Jan. , March, June	Feb.
Denver - London	Oct., Feb.	Jan. , March, April , June	Nov., Dec., Jan., April , May , June	Dec., Feb.	Dec., March	Nov., Jan., April through June

Routes	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
Houston - London	Oct., Jan. through June	Aug., Nov., Dec.	Dec., Jan. through June	Sept., Oct., April, June	Aug., Nov., May	Jan. through June
Las Vegas - London	Aug., Jan., May, June	Feb., March	Dec. through Feb., March	Dec., March, April, May	Dec., Jan., Feb., March	Jan., Feb., June
Los Angeles - London	Nov., April	June	Dec. through March	Nov., Dec.	April	Dec., Jan. through March, June
Miami - London	Aug., Nov., Jan., Feb., May		June	Dec., April	Aug.	Jan. through March, May, June
New York - London		Aug., Oct.	Aug., Oct., Nov. through June	Aug., Sept., Oct.	Nov.	Aug., Nov., Dec. through June
Pittsburgh - London	April		April through June	April		April through June
San Francisco - London	Aug., April, June	Dec., Feb., March	Dec., Jan., Feb., March	Feb., March, May	Dec., Jan., April, June	Jan. through March
Seattle - London	Oct., Jan., April	Dec., March	Jan., Feb.	Feb., June	Dec., Jan., March	Jan., Feb., April
Toronto - London	Nov., Dec., May	Jan., March	Jan., Feb., March, April, May, June	Jan., March, May	Nov., April	Dec., Jan., Feb., March, April, May, June
Vancouver - London	March	May	Nov. through Feb., May			
Washington, D.C. - London		Oct., Nov., May, June	Nov., Dec. through April, May, June	Oct., March, June	Nov., Feb., April, May	Dec., Jan., Feb. through June
Africa						
London - Johannesburg	Dec., Jan., March	Feb., May	Jan., March, June	Jan., June	Jan., March, May	Dec., Feb., March, June
London - Nairobi	Nov., Jan., Feb.	Oct., Dec., March through June	Nov., Jan. through June	March	Nov., June	Nov., Dec., April, May, June
India						
London - Mumbai	Oct., Nov., Dec., June	Sept.	Aug., Oct., Jan. through May, June	March	April through June	Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec., April through June

Routes	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
London - New Delhi	Jan., Feb.	Aug., April	Aug., March, April, May, June	April	Jan., March, June	Sept., Oct., Feb., March, April, May, June

The Middle East

London - Abu Dhabi	Dec., Feb., March, April	Sept., Nov., Jan.	Aug., Sept., Feb., March, April, May, June	Nov., Dec., Feb., March, April	Jan., Feb.	Aug., Sept., Oct., May, June
London - Dubai	Oct., Nov., May	Sept., Dec., April	Aug., Nov., Jan. through March, April, June	Nov., May	Oct., Feb.	Aug., Sept., Dec., Jan., Feb., March, May, June

Months in black at least one seat available; in blue at least two seats; in green at least four seats.

Routes	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

North America

Boston - Hong Kong	Aug.					
Chicago - Hong Kong			Aug.			
Los Angeles - Hong Kong	April through June	Feb.		Feb., April through June		
New York - Hong Kong	Dec., April, May	Aug., Jan., Feb., March, June	March, April, May, June	Dec., Jan., March, April	March, May	Feb., April, June
San Francisco - Hong Kong	Jan., April, May	Aug., Feb., March, June	Feb., April, May	Aug., Feb., March	April, May, June	April
Seattle - Hong Kong	June					

Routes	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
Toronto - Hong Kong	Aug., Jan.	Feb., March	Jan. through March, April through June	Feb., June		
Vancouver - Hong Kong	Dec. through March, June	May	April, May			
Washington, D.C. - Hong Kong	Oct. through Dec., Jan., Feb.	March through May, June	Jan. through May	Oct., Jan., April	Nov. through Jan., Feb., May	Feb., March, April, June

Africa

Hong Kong - Johannesburg	Feb., June	Dec., May				Jan.
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India

Hong Kong - Mumbai		Sept., Dec.	Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec., Jan. through June	Sept., Nov., Jan.	Aug., Nov., Jan., Feb., March	Aug., Oct., Dec., Jan., Feb., March, April through June
Hong Kong - New Delhi			Aug. through June			Aug. through June

The Middle East

Hong Kong - Dubai	Aug.	Dec.	Nov., Dec., Jan. through June	Nov.	Feb.	Aug., Sept., Jan., March through June
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Months in black at least one seat available; in blue at least two seats; in green at least four seats.



Upgrading to First on American to South America from Business Class: A Three-Minute Guide

August 2018

Plus, the availability treasure map.

The Strategy: Use American miles to upgrade. Forget free mileage awards because they don't earn elite miles or elite dollars, and are much harder to find availability.

Works Best For: American or oneworld members looking to maintain elite status.

Works Best When: Low First Class fares are scarce.

The Cost: [25,000 miles each way and a \\$550 co-pay](#) with "I" fares (lowest upgradeable Business Class fare).

SAVE 53% ON HIGH FIRST CLASS FARE ROUTES

Say you're traveling New York- São Paulo, often an expensive First Class fare route. The lowest Business Class fare is currently \$3,602 from New York, while First Class is \$6,496 more (\$10,098)—so even with the \$1,100 co-pay, you can save 53% off the published fare by using 50,000 miles. (See chart below for upgrade award space.)

LOW BUSINESS CLASS FARE ROUTE ON AMERICAN SAVES 51%

Miami-Buenos Aires is a low Business Class fare route with American, currently starting at \$3,272 round-trip, while First Class is \$8,961. Even with the \$1,100 co-pay, you can save 51% off the published fare by using 50,000 miles.

IF UPGRADE IS ONLY AVAILABLE ONE-WAY?

Combine a Business and First Class fare. On Miami- São Paulo, the combined Business-First Class fare is \$6,106 (plus 25,000 miles), while round-trip First Class is \$9,018. See cheat sheet below for availability.

THROUGH-FARE / CONNECTION TICKETS CAN SAVE UP TO 49%

Great choice if you are not in an American Airlines gateway city, as the fare gets you to and from the U.S. departure city to the South American destination. A Boston-Buenos Aires through-fare ticket, via Miami in Business Class, is \$3,656 (plus \$1,100 co-pay and 50,000 miles) versus \$9,375 in First Class. Even with the \$1,100 co-pay, you can save \$4,619 (49%) off the published fare.

ONWARD TRAVEL IN SOUTH AMERICA?

Go with AA's partner [LATAM](#) and book the entire trip on one ticket. Say you want to fly Miami-Gramado in Brazil. On American that means making a connection in São Paulo. The round-trip through-fare is \$3,210 in Business Class versus \$9,034 in First Class. You upgrade the long-haul/bridge legs of the trip, Miami-São Paulo and São Paulo-Miami. Even with the \$1,100 co-pay, you can save **52%** off the published fare by using miles. Note that the São Paulo-Gramado leg will be on LATAM in economy (but the flight is less than two hours).

HOW TO BOOK AMERICAN UPGRADES

Upgrades cannot be booked online. Call 1-800-433-7300 to find out if the flights/dates you want are available for a mileage upgrade. Book the Business Class ticket online—keep the American rep on the phone while you book the Business Class ticket online, then have the reservationist book the upgrade. Doing all of this by phone incurs a booking fee of \$35.

NO AA MILES?

Just buy them when they go on sale (recent opportunity [here](#)); or transfer Marriott/SPG to AA (takes about two days).

Sweet Redeem Survey: American Upgrade Availability to First Class to southern South America

Routes	Depart	Return
	13+ Days Per Month	13+ Days Per Month
Dalla - São Paulo	Aug. through June	Aug. through June
New York - São Paulo	Aug., Nov. through April, June, Sept., Oct., May	Aug., Sept., Dec. through June, Oct., Nov.
Miami - Buenos Aires	Aug. through June	Aug. through June
Miami - São Paulo	Sept. through June, Aug.	Aug. through June

Months in green at least four seats; in purple at least six seats.