It's Still Flying: The World's Best Airfares Are Here Months Later and are Now Even Lower

February 2018

The World's Most Ridiculously Amazing Airfare Strategy Nets Business Class for up to $92 Less than Coach on Delta & SkyTeam Partners to Europe and South America.

After 22 years of premium airfare analysis, we thought one thing was constant: Really great deals don't stick around for long.

For one particular strategy however, spectacular fares are still ripe for the picking. These fares are not only still valid, but now, seven months later, on many routes they are **even lower**.

FCF'S LEG STRETCH STRATEGY—A QUICK RECAP:

FCF readers have surely seen the special reports we've written under the heading "Leg Stretch Strategy." The approach uses unconventional routings and a North American stop-over to save money on international tickets—in other words, it connects you with the world, using a U.S. city (your origin) as the middle-leg or stop-over.

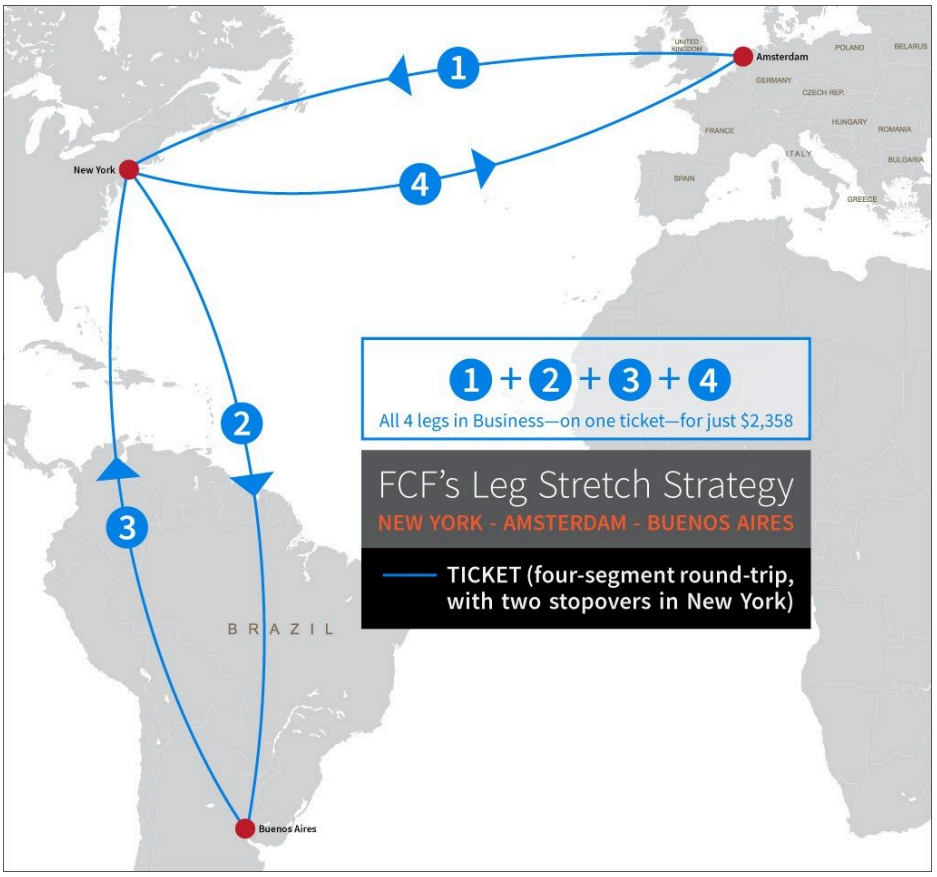
EVER THOUGHT OF YOUR HOME AS THE STOP-OVER?

It works if you live in the U.S. and do business or vacation in Europe twice a year or more, and you have a hankering to go to South America for whatever reason. This strategy gets you an irresistible.

The Leg Stretch Strategy packages these seemingly disparate destinations into one beautiful fare-friendly ticket that does NOT have to be done in one go. You can break up the itinerary to suit your schedule. Remember, your home is the stopover city, and you can stay there for months at a time, as long as your trip does not exceed one year.

It does this by making use of free round-trip stopovers on low-fare routes to South America from Europe. The trick is in the sequencing of the trip, and the first part is to get to Europe on a discounted one-way flight. It's not hard to do.

From there, the sequencing goes: Europe to the U.S. (free stopover), U.S. to South America, South America to the U.S. (free stopover), U.S. to Europe.

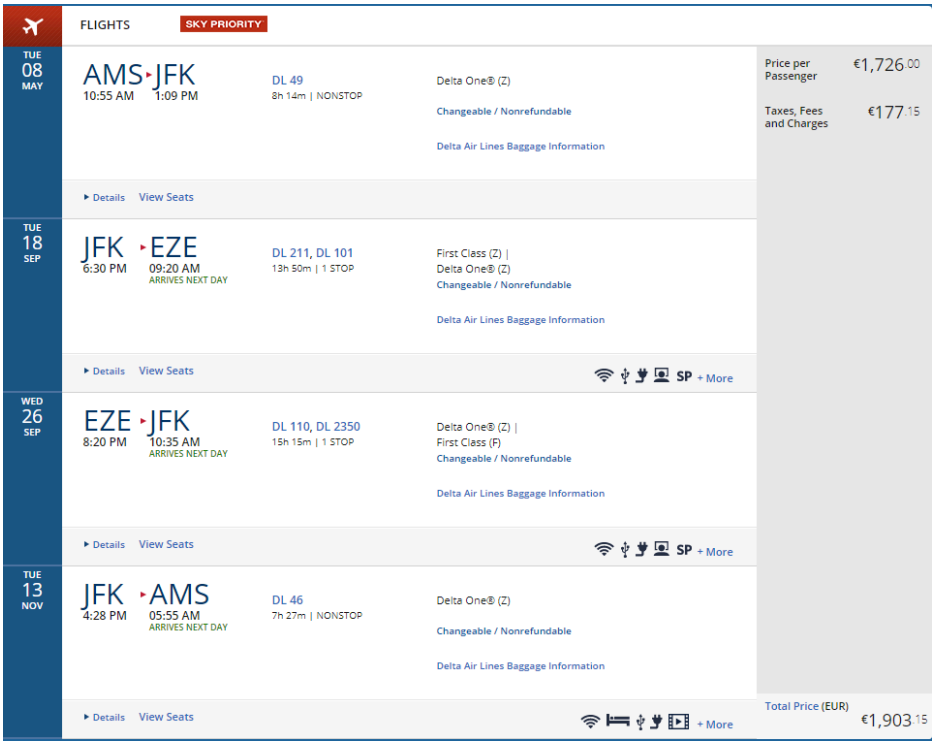


How a Simple One-Way Ticket to Europe Unlocks Trips to Europe & South America for Just $2,358 in Business Class for Four (4) Long-haul Segments in Comfort

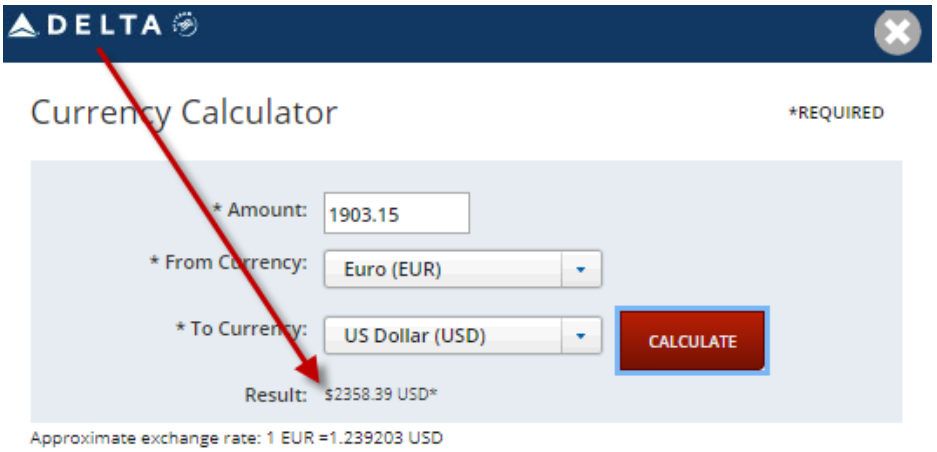
AIRFARE MATH LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN

A New York to Amsterdam return ticket in economy typically ranges from ~$400 to $1,000; and a New York to Buenos Aires return ticket in economy ranges from ~$1,060 to $1,450 on Delta. That's $1,460 at a minimum to fly economy—and easily $2,450, depending on your dates—while the LSS nets those same destinations in Business Class for $2,358.

Delta.com itinerary screenshot:



Delta.com currency calculator screenshot:



The SkyTeam Leg Stretch Strategy Update

Start Your LSS Ticket In:	Your U.S. Stop (Both Going and Coming):	Your South American Destination:	Fare At Time of Writing (JAN, 2018), for Four Legs (in effect, two round-trips)	Quick Links:
~~Amsterdam~~	~~Atlanta~~	~~Santiago~~	~~$2,297~~	Expired
~~Amsterdam~~	~~Miami~~	~~São Paulo~~	~~$2,457~~	Expired
~~Amsterdam~~	~~New York~~	~~Buenos Aires~~	~~$2,366~~	Expired
~~Amsterdam~~	~~Washington, D.C.~~	~~São Paulo~~	~~$2,412~~	Expired
~~Brussels~~	~~Boston~~	~~São Paulo~~	~~$2,521~~	Expired
~~Brussels~~	~~New York~~	~~Rio de Janeiro~~	~~$2,278~~	Expired
~~Frankfurt~~	~~Chicago~~	~~Rio de Janeiro~~	~~$2,497~~	Expired
~~Frankfurt~~	~~Miami~~	~~São Paulo~~	~~$2,543~~	Expired
~~Milan~~	~~New York~~	~~Rio de Janeiro~~	~~$2,327~~	Expired
~~Venice~~	~~Atlanta~~	~~Santiago~~	~~$2,397~~	Expired
~~Venice~~	~~Atlanta~~	~~São Paulo~~	~~$2,447~~	Expired
~~Venice~~	~~New York~~	~~Buenos Aires~~	~~$2,508~~	Expired
~~Venice~~	~~New York~~	~~Rio de Janeiro~~	~~$2,344~~	Expired

If you haven't done so, we urge you to take another look at the Leg Stretch Strategy, because it is an astonishing way to save on airfares. The airlines could put a stop to this with a simple change in the fare rules, but they haven't yet. That could change by the end of this paragraph. Don't wait. Get out that bucket list and make it work for you.

THE MAY LSS: STILL FLYING

The LSS fare outlined in May for a US—Europe—South Pacific itinerary in Business Class is still valid on Air New Zealand. Fares currently start at £4,158 (at today's exchange rate, about $5,879). For details, see FCF's May report.

London to **Los Angeles**	Tue 5 Jun 2018	ed ws	Business (J)	3 bags	1 adult £2,180.17
NZ0001 London Heathrow to Los Angeles Air New Zealand BOEING 777-300ER	Duration 11h 10m	ed ws	Lie flat bed	3 x 23kg	
Departs 4:15PM	Arrives 7:25PM				
			Business Saver fare conditions	Baggage info	
Los Angeles to **Auckland**	Tue 7 Aug 2018	ed ws	Business (J)	3 bags	
NZ0001 Los Angeles to Auckland Air New Zealand BOEING 777-300ER	Duration 12h 45m	ed ws	Lie flat bed	3 x 23kg	
Departs 9:30PM	Arrives Thu 9 5:15AM				
			Business Saver fare conditions	Baggage info	
Auckland to **Los Angeles**	Tue 21 Aug 2018	ed ws	Business (J)	3 bags	1 adult £1,981.20
NZ0006 Auckland to Los Angeles Air New Zealand BOEING 777-300ER	Duration 12h 5m	ed ws	Lie flat bed	3 x 23kg	
Departs 7:30PM	Arrives 12:35PM				
			Business Saver fare conditions	Baggage info	
Los Angeles to **London**	Wed 10 Oct 2018	ed ws	Business (J)	3 bags	
NZ0002 Los Angeles to London Heathrow Air New Zealand BOEING 777-300ER	Duration 10h 30m	ed ws	Lie flat bed	3 x 23kg	
Departs 5:00PM	Arrives Thu 11 11:30AM				
			Business Saver fare conditions	Baggage info	
					GBP **£4,158.17** incl. taxes & charges of £268.17

The same hold true for the LSS for fares for travel U.S.—Europe—South America in Business Class on United, but fares are higher than Delta's, for details see FCF's August report.

FCF is sorry to report that fares for the LSS for travel U.S.—Europe—South America in First Class on American, first reported back in September, have expired.

More on Tactical Business Class Fares and How to Save Thousands to South Africa

February 2018

Recently we spoke about tactical fares. They are significantly discounted fares airlines offer sporadically for a variety of interesting reasons.

Some include **holiday** tactical fares at Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, and New Year; **origin-specific** tactical fares; **destination-specific** tactical fares, and **advance-purchase** tactical fares, to name a few.

And then there's this beauty:

LIMITED-ROUTE TACTICAL FARES

Limited-route tactical fares come in two tasty flavors:

1. Small airlines sniping at the majors' heels, and
2. Competition between majors

Right now we're seeing some big-time sniping all the way to beautiful South Africa.

BETTER LATAM THAN NEVER

LATAM (formerly LAN) is Latin America's largest airline and a member of oneworld, of which American Airlines is a member.

Let's look at an example of a regional airline shouldering its way onto the big stage. You can fly from Miami to Johannesburg on LATAM starting at $2,321 round-trip, an amazingly cheap fare.

Itinerary

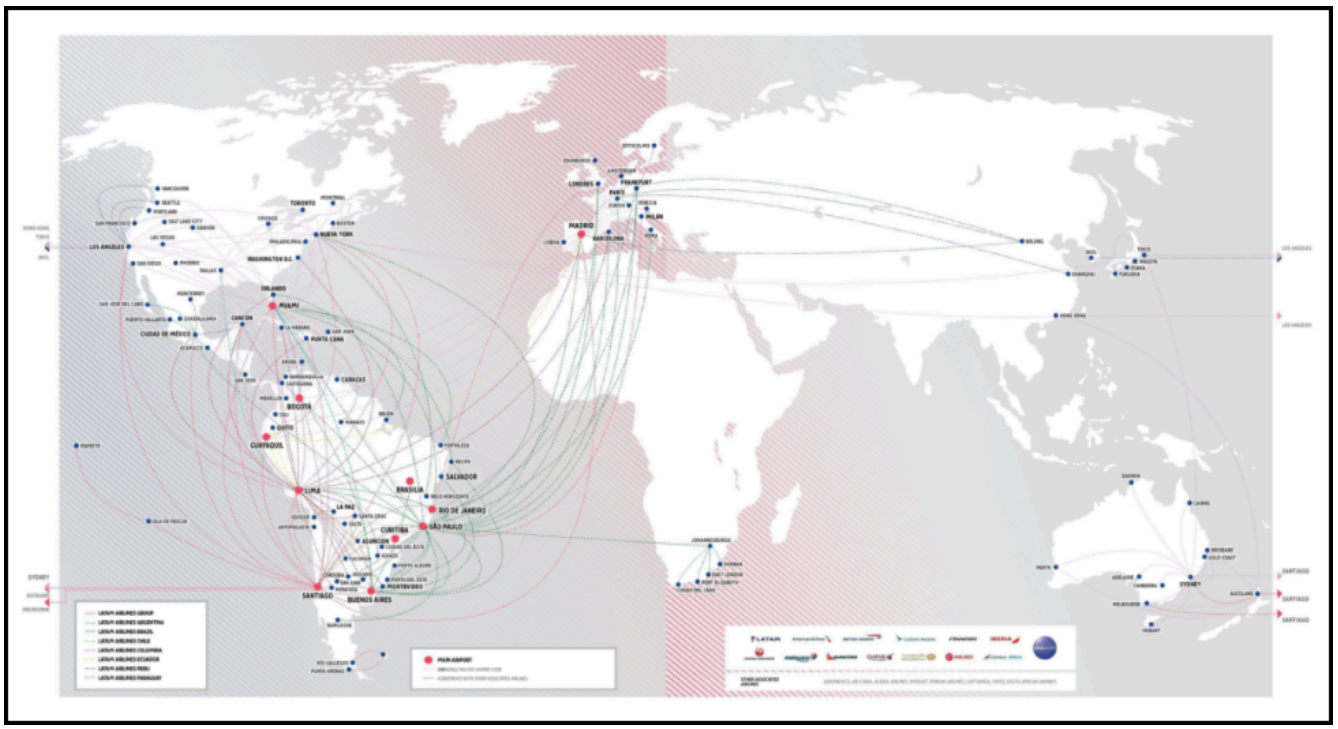
Departure more information	Departure	Arrival	Flight	Cabin	Baggage
Wednesday 07 march 2018	**19:25** Miami (MIA)	05:45 (Thursday) Sao Paulo (GRU)	JJ8091 Operated by LATAM Airlines Brasil	Premium Business-Z	3 pieces up to 23 Kgs. each
Thursday 08 march 2018	17:55 Sao Paulo (GRU)	**09:20 (Friday)** Johannesburg (JNB)	JJ8162 Operated by LATAM Airlines Brasil	Premium Business-Z	3 pieces up to 23 Kgs. each
Return more information	**Departure**	**Arrival**	**Flight**	**Cabin**	**Baggage**
Saturday 17 march 2018	**11:40** Johannesburg (JNB)	17:30 Sao Paulo (GRU)	JJ8163 Operated by LATAM Airlines Brasil	Premium Business-Z	3 pieces up to 23 Kgs. each
	23:30 Sao Paulo (GRU)	**06:45 (Sunday)** Miami (MIA)	JJ8090 Operated by LATAM Airlines Brasil	Premium Business-Z	3 pieces up to 23 Kgs. each

Fare in U.S. Dollars

Passenger	Fare	Tax	Total (USD)
Passenger Adult num 1	2,220.00	101.91	2,321.91

Now who would think of flying an airline synonymous with South America to South Africa?

Hardly anyone. So what's an airline to do on that route? Have a sale and undercut the other airlines to get its foot in the door. The normal fare to Johannesburg on other airlines starts at around $5,000. So, by flying LATAM you cut the cost by up to $2,679 (54%). **That's a 2-for-1.** Take note that trips to Africa on LATAM don't earn miles. They do between South America and other regions, but alas, not Africa.



QUICK LATAM PRIMER

LATAM's Business Class, called "Premium Business Class", no less, offers flatbed seats and a 15.4 inch high-resolution TV.

LATAM' Business Class

NOW, ABOUT THE LAYOVER

This deal involves a 12-hour layover in São Paulo, Brazil, on the way to South Africa, and a 6-hour layover on the way back. Now that's going to put most people off. Or not. Don't forget, flying via Europe on most schedules requires a half-day layover anyway. It's all about whether you view a layover as a pain or an opportunity.

Generally, the more direct the route, the higher the fare, and that's the case on routes to South Africa. But here at FCF, we think if you can turn that layover time into a benefit, the savings is cream on top. It's not only a lot cheaper, you get a life experience thrown in as well in São Paulo. The more direct route, typically through West Africa and often with a stop to refuel, doesn't allow enough time to leave the airport, stretch your legs, and bucket-list tick.

Another way to look at it is that on Delta in economy, Miami-Johannesburg can easily cost $1,500+. So using LATAM instead, you get a $821 upgrade to Business Class for 36+ hours of flying, round-trip. That's just $23 an hour to escape economy! Take my money!

SÃO PAULO: SÃO COOL?!

- See the crazy architecture of the perfectly named Hotel Unique.
- This is Brazil after all, so you have to visit the Football Museum.
- Get the heart rate up on a São Paulo bike tour.
- Visit Municipal Market and dine out on its famed Bologna Sandwich.
- Wonder at the Catedral da Sé, one of the largest neo-Gothic churches in the world.

LIMITED ROUTE TACTICAL FARE #2: WASHINGTON, D.C. TO JOHANNESBURG

Now here's an example of a limited route tactical fare involving competition between major airlines. **Virgin Atlantic** from **Washington, D.C.** to Johannesburg starts at $3,372.

With more than 15 airlines flying this route, Virgin Atlantic is offering a lower fare to compete. The fare on oneworld airlines starts at around $5,100 to Johannesburg. Another example is **Chicago**-Johannesburg, but this time on **SWISS**, starting at $3,850, compared to other airlines starting at $4,800. For details see FCF Africa alert.

WHILE YOU'RE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Read our report about plunging Business Class fares to Nairobi here, with one Business Class deal currently at $2,661, and our South Africa fare alert here.

NOT GOING TO JO'BURG?

Johannesburg may be the ultimate second-fiddle city. You know what I mean. It's your entry, but as quickly as possible it's your exit. Everyone who goes to South Africa has his eye on Cape Town, the luxury game lodges around Kruger National Park, and, those really in the know, on getting to the Okavango Delta in Botswana, one of the world's great destinations.

But with these amazing new fares, it's the hub for getting wherever you want in not just South, but southern Africa. Change planes for Cape Town, Kruger, Maun (the jumping-off point for a small plane to your game

lodge in the Okavango Delta), Namibia (one of my all-time favorite trips), Zambia, Zimbabwe, and even Mauritius, your sandy beach after days spent in the bush.

MAKE NO MISTAKE, THESE ARE REAL FARES

Many people think FCF is in the mistake-fare business because there are now so many bloggers and paid sites that focus on them. The fares we're talking about in this article may appear to be mistakes because they're so low, but they're not, they're honest-to-goodness real published fares. Be aware that mistake fares are a risky proposition because airlines often don't honor them.

Part 2: How (And Why) to Bust Out of Delta SkyMiles Bondage for Travel to Asia, Europe, and South America

February 2018

Use Korean Air to fly Delta Business Class for up to 60,000 fewer miles—or save enough for a free domestic, round-trip First Class ticket on Delta.

Last month FCF wrote about why Delta-focused travelers should earn Amex Points or Starwood Starpoints, and transfer them to a Virgin Atlantic mileage account for flying on Delta. That's because Virgin gives you a **much better value-per-mile** than that offered by using Delta co-branded cards. Use the Delta card to hit your elite-status spend bonus, then switch over.

This month FCF is taking a closer look at the Delta-Korean Air partnership as a possible back-up—especially for travel to Europe as Korean Air has a zone-mileage program, meaning all departures and destinations in a given zone require the same number of miles.

The same rule applies: Spend enough on your Delta card to get your elite status bonus, then switch cards to one earning Starpoints, then transfer the points to a Korean Air mileage account.

A QUICK RECAP

Korean Air's mileage program often has **lower mileage award rates for Delta operated flights than Delta's own rate.** Plus, award availability using Korean Air's mileage program is often the same as Delta's.

One Drawback: Award taxes are higher than those Delta charges on tickets to Europe and South America, sometimes $330 to $1,000 more.

Upside: Korean Air is part of the SkyTeam alliance. The continental U.S. is part of the North American zone, which also includes Hawaii, Alaska, and Canada. Likewise, "Europe" is one zone, so the mileage cost is the same to Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Gibraltar, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Monaco, Mordovia, Morocco, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and West Russia.

HOW TO SAVE 43% / 60,000 MILES TO EUROPE

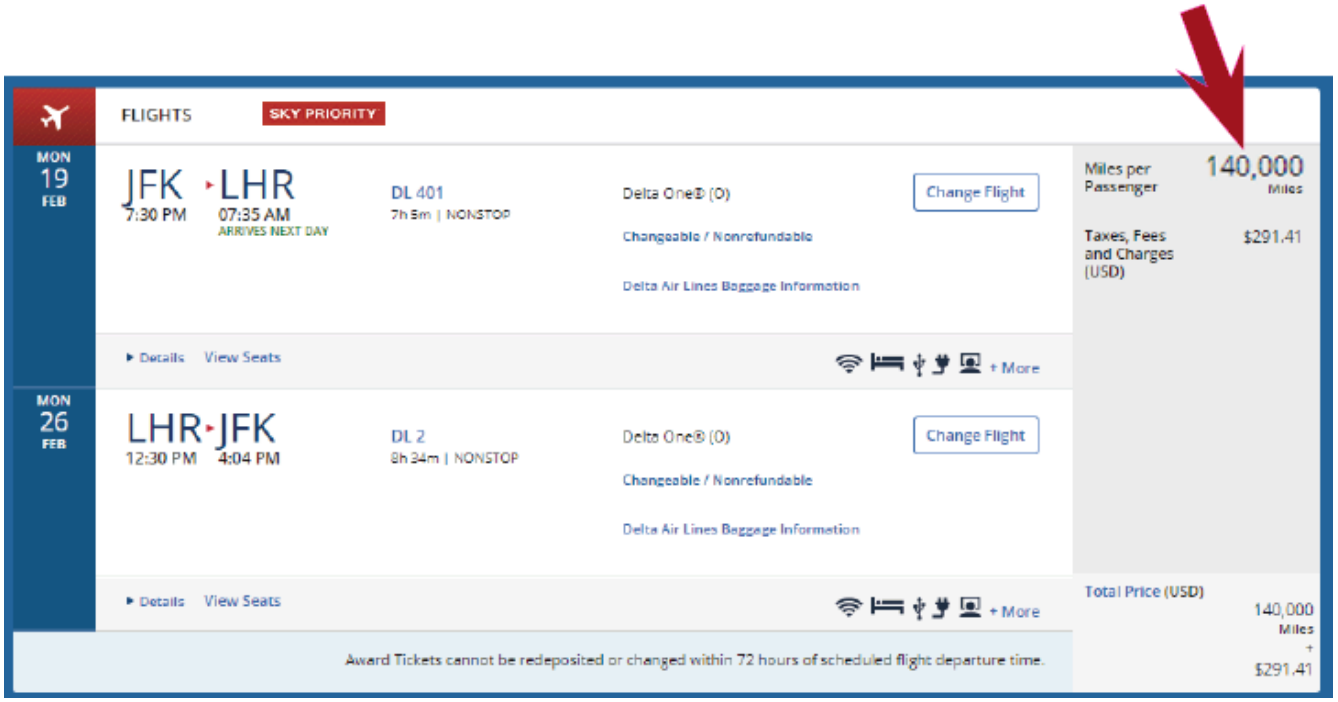
One Example: New York-London in Business Class: Delta's lowest mileage cost is 140,000 round-trip and $291 in taxes. The same flight using Korean Air miles costs 80,000 and $628 in taxes.

And you want to keep collecting Delta miles?

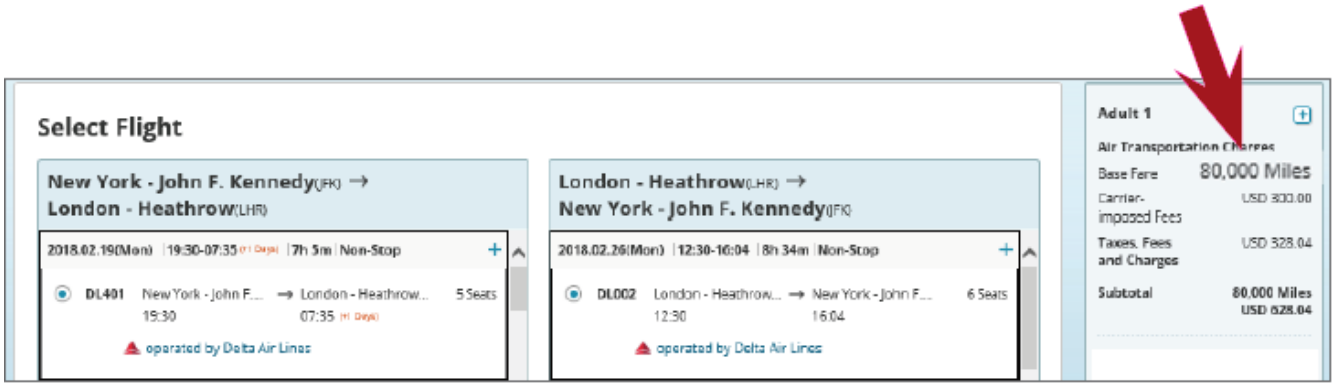
The way to view your savings: You get a free domestic First Class ticket or nearly two tickets for the price of one.

In case you don't believe me:

Delta.com @ 140,000 Miles…



KoreanAir.com @ 80,000 Miles…

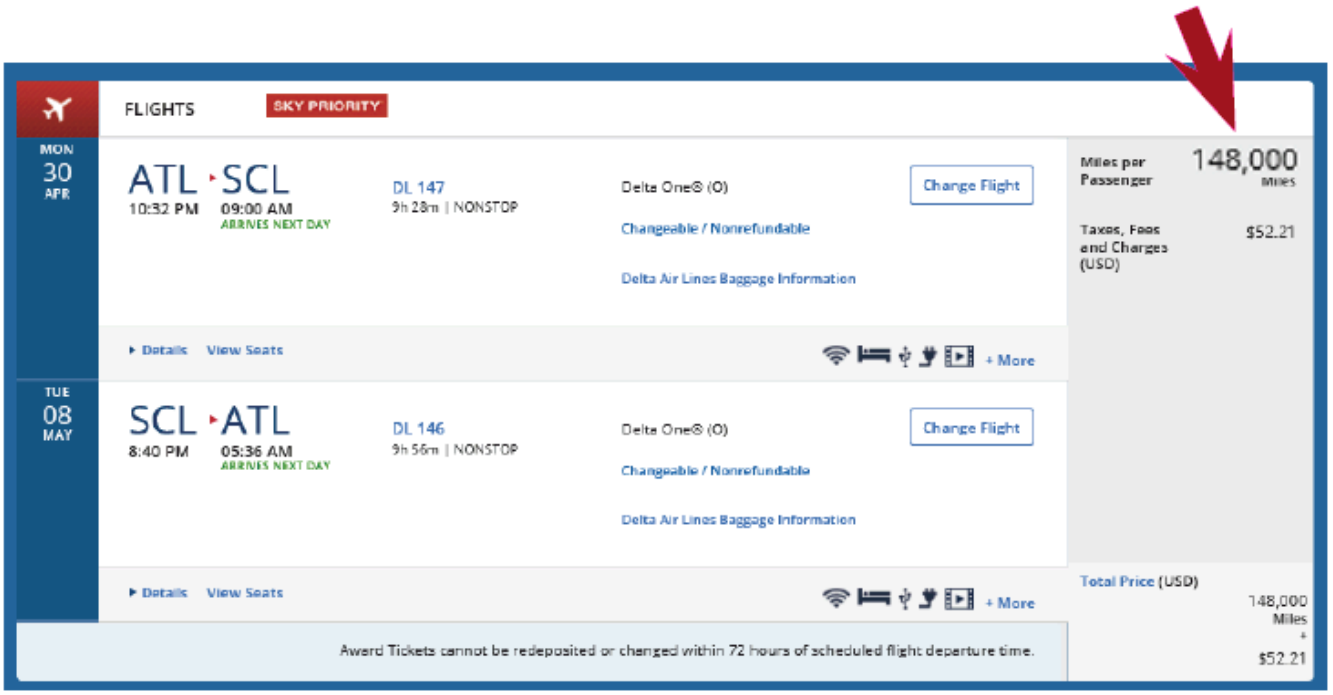


BONDAGE BUSTER #2

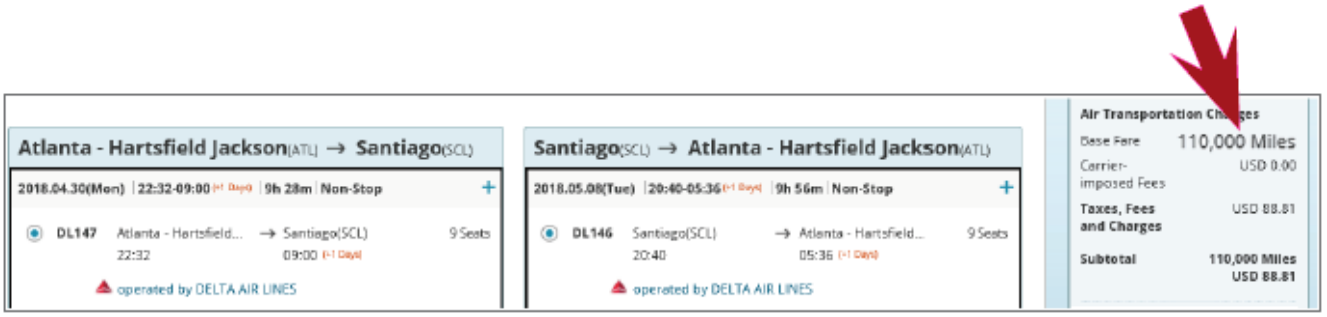
Save 38,000 miles to southern South America: On the Atlanta-Santiago route Delta's lowest Business Class award costs 148,000 miles and $52 in taxes, while Korean Air charges 110,000 miles and $89 in taxes.

The way to view your savings: Equals just 2k miles shy of a one-way Biz Class ticket between the U.S. and Europe.

Delta.com @ 148,000 Miles…



KoreanAir.com @ 110,000 Miles…

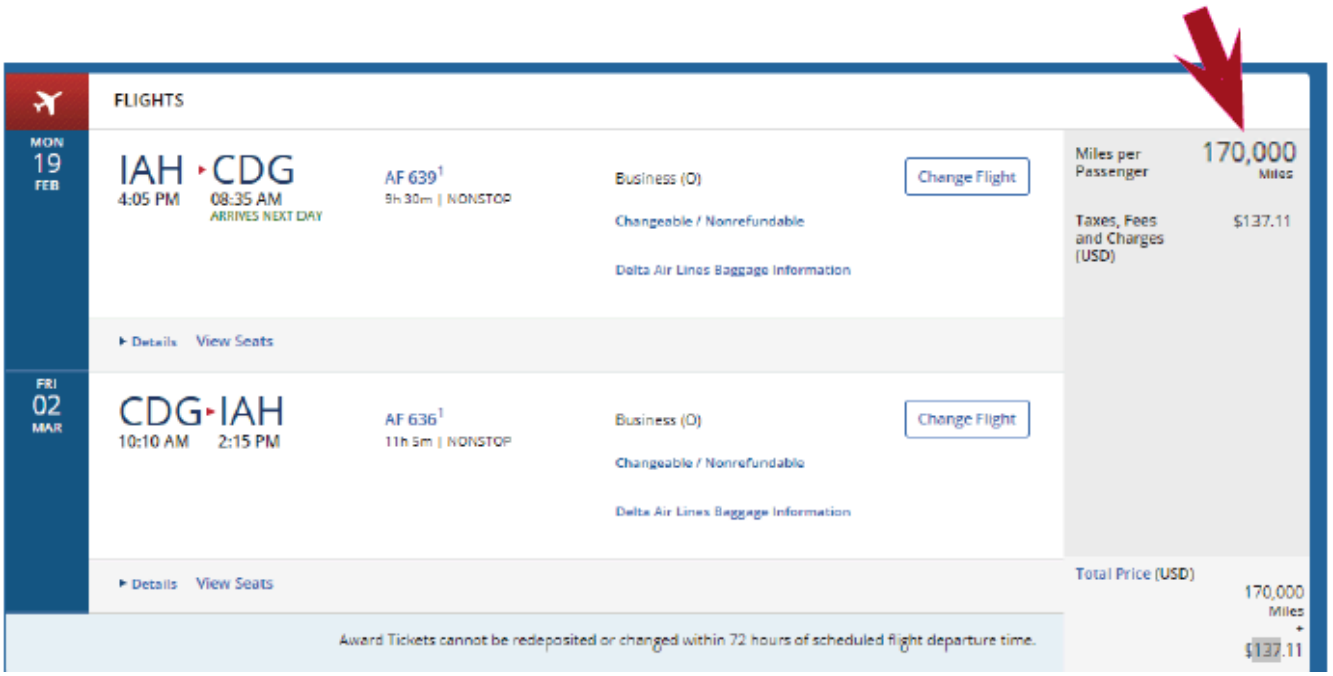


ANOTHER EUROPE BONDAGE BUSTER #3

On **Air France** Houston-Paris, Delta's lowest Business Class *partner award* costs 170,000 miles and $137 in taxes, while Korean Air's is 80,000 miles round-trip and $1,129 in taxes.

The way to view your savings: Better than a 2-for-1, for ~$1,000.

Delta.com @ 170,000 Miles…



Korean Air.com @ 80,000 Miles…

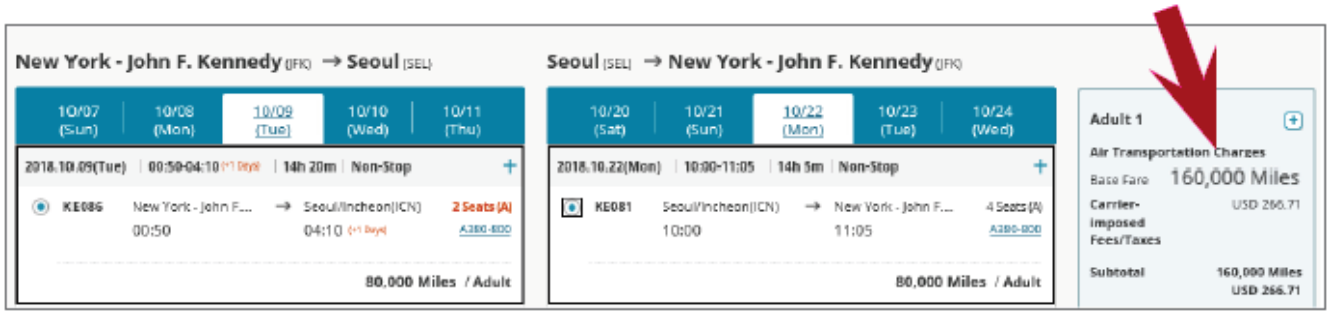
FIRST CLASS BONDAGE BUSTER #4

Fly First Class for the same number of miles as Delta charges in Business Class (aka a "free upgrade").

Korean Air gives you access to First Class awards; **Delta does not**, even on partner airlines, because Delta doesn't have a First Class cabin. So Delta's partners don't share their best seats with the carrier.

Book Korean's First Class cabin New York-Seoul for 160,000 Korean miles and $267 in taxes. FCF's research shows that there's often good availability for two and at times even four seats. (See Jan. 23 and Jan. 30 Sweet Redeems for lucrative Korean Air First Class availability.)

Korean Air.com @ 160,000 Miles…



HOW TO BOOK/SEARCH FOR KOREAN AIR AWARD SPACE?

Just create a Korean Air mileage account, which can be done in 5 minutes or less, and then login. The easiest path from there is to click on “Book a Flight” and then on “Award Booking.” From here, search for “Korean Air award” or “SkyTeam Award”—or just call 1-800-438-5000 next time you’re in the car for a while.

The Power of American Upgrades to Southern South America + Surprising Availability

February 2018

Elite, Non-elite, Business, and Leisure Travelers can now Save big on 14 Routes—up to 67% off.

In the past two months, FCF has written two special reports for oneworld members (American) looking to deploy miles in order to achieve or maintain their elite status. In December, we focused on Europe and in January on Asia. By the way, **the tactics also work for anyone** who can't find a low Business Class fare and also work for those who don't even have any American miles.

This month FCF takes the same approach to southern South America: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, and Paraguay.

Our Pitch: The same as Asia and Europe: Forget about free mileage awards because they don't earn elite credit, and it can be difficult to find availability. Instead, use miles to upgrade, as **availability is much greater,** and you earn miles and elite credit.

AMERICAN'S UPGRADE PROGRAM

To southern South America, American requires 25,000 miles plus a $350 co-pay each way on the lowest upgradeable economy fares (H, K, M, L, V, G, Q, N, O, S classes). The co-pay is kind of high, but when Business Class fares are high, this upgrade offers a great return.

SAVE 53% ON HIGH-FARE ROUTES

One Example: Say you're traveling Dallas-Buenos Aires, often an expensive Business Class route, even when booked way in advance. The lowest AA economy fare is currently $1,671 from Dallas, while Business Class is $5,023 ($3,352 more)—so even with the $700 co-pay, you can save 53% off the published fare by using miles. (See chart below for upgrade award availability survey.)

AA.com screenshot below…

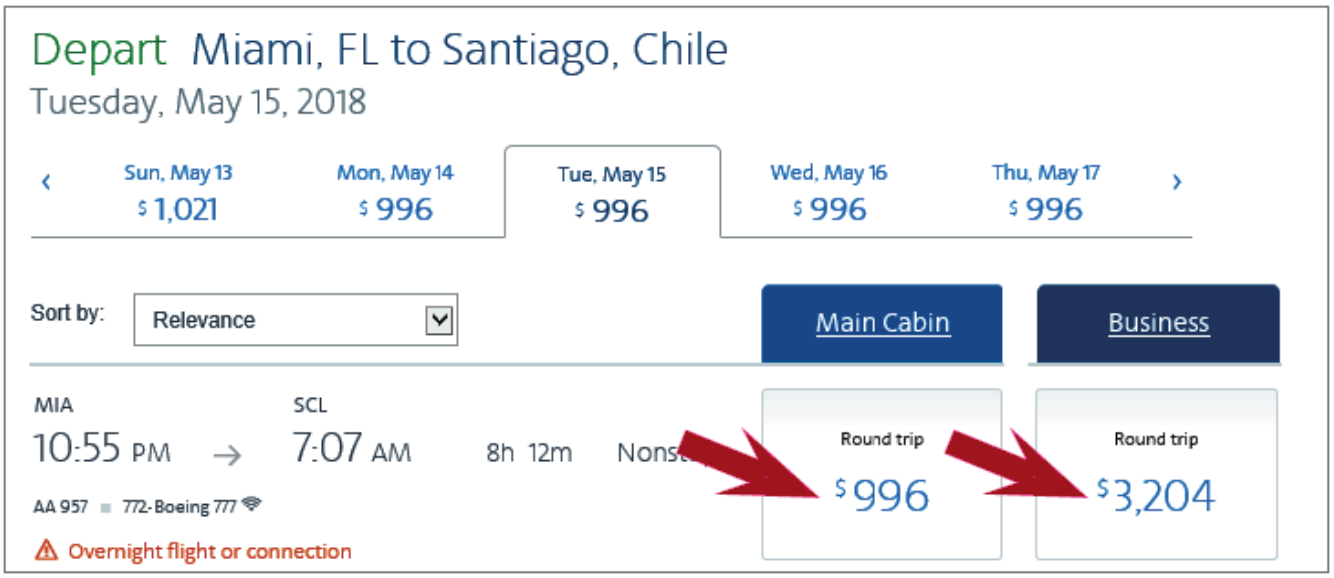
WHAT TO DO WHEN AN UPGRADE IS ONLY AVAILABLE ONE WAY?

American lets you combine coach and Business Class fares, so you can upgrade the segment that has space and book the other leg in paid Business Class. On New York-Rio de Janeiro, the combined coach-Business Class fare is $2,693 while round-trip Business Class is $4,248—so even with the $350 one-way co-pay, you can still save 28% by using miles one-way.

LOWEST ECONOMY ROUTE ON AMERICAN SAVES 47%

Miami-Santiago is one of AA's lowest economy fare routes, currently starting at $996 round-trip, while Business Class is $3,204. Even with the $700 co-pay, you can save 47% off the published fare by using miles.

AA.com screenshot below…



BRIDGE ROUTE CONNECTIONS CAN SAVE UP TO 67%

Smart travelers use the long-haul Business Class flight as a "bridge." All they have to do is get to and from the bridge gateway.

From the U.S., that means you might even buy an economy through-fare ticket, meaning the fare gets you to and from the international gateway all on one ticket rather than requiring two separate tickets. Upgrade all the flight segments if upgrade space is available.

Example: Chicago-Rio de Janeiro: The through-fare ticket gets you there via Miami or New York for $844 instead of $4,712, the cost of a Business Class ticket. Even with the $700 co-pay, you can save 67% off the published fare by using miles.

Use our cheat sheet below to know when you can easily upgrade the long-haul segments; fly the short connecting flight/s in coach if you must.

TRAVELING ONWARD IN SOUTH AMERICA, BUT NOT ON AMERICAN?

It's easy if you stick with AA's partner, LATAM, and book the entire trip on one ticket.

Say you want to fly Miami-Porto Alegre in Brazil. On American, that means making a connection in São Paulo. The round-trip through-fare is $1,352 in coach versus $3,780 in Business Class. You upgrade the bridge legs of the trip (because LATAM flights don't allow upgrades), Miami-São Paulo and São Paulo-Miami. Even with the $700 co-pay, you can save 46% off the published fare by using miles. Note that the São Paulo-Porto Alegre leg will be on LATAM, in economy (but the flight is less than two hours).

Google Flights screenshot below…

MIA Miami | POA Porto Alegre

Tue, May 8 | Wed, May 23

Outbound flight

Tue, May 8

8:00 PM – 5:15 AM+1 — 8h 15m
Miami (MIA) – São Paulo (GRU)
American 929 · Economy Class · Boeing 777
Average legroom (31")
Overnight flight
Often delayed by 30+ min
Wi-Fi
In-seat & USB power
On-demand video

Layover in São Paulo GRU — 3h 20m

8:35 AM+1 – 10:25 AM+1 — 1h 50m
São Paulo (GRU) – Porto Alegre (POA)
LATAM 3394 · Economy Class · Airbus A320
Below average legroom (29")
Often delayed by 30+ min
Stream to your device
No Wi-Fi
No in-seat power

Return flight

Wed, May 23

12:25 PM – 2:10 PM — 1h 45m
Porto Alegre (POA) – São Paulo (GRU)
LATAM 3160 · Economy Class · Airbus A320
Below average legroom (29")
Stream to your device
No Wi-Fi
No in-seat power

Layover in São Paulo GRU — 7h 15m

9:25 PM – 5:00 AM+1 — 8h 35m
São Paulo (GRU) – Miami (MIA)
American 930 · Economy Class · Boeing 777
Average legroom (31")
Overnight flight
Wi-Fi
In-seat & USB power
On-demand video

Book, track or share this flight
Total incl taxes & fees for 1 adult · Additional bag fees may apply.
Ads

Book with **American**
Marketed as AA 929, AA 7825, AA 7821, AA 930
$1,352

HOW TO BOOK MILEAGE UPGRADES WITH AMERICAN

Before buying your economy ticket, call American (upgrades cannot be done online) at 1-800-433-7300 to find out if the flights/dates you want are available for a mileage upgrade. Book the economy ticket online—keep

American on the phone—then have the AA reservationist book the upgrade, or pay the by-phone booking fee and book both the economy ticket and upgrade at the same time directly with the AA reservationist.

If the upgrade on the flights/dates you want are not available, have the agent check dates/flights on the days before and after.

Use our survey below to get an idea of routes and months with great upgrade space.

HOW ANYONE CAN PLAY THIS UPGRADE GAME

Don't have any or enough American miles? No problem. Just buy American miles when they go on sale (recent opportunity here), or transfer Starwood points (takes about two days), and you too can save big.

Sweet Redeem Survey: American Upgrade Availability to southern South America

Routes	Departure			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
Dallas - Buenos Aires	March, April, May, July, Aug., Oct.	May, June, Aug., Sept.	May through July,	May, June, Oct., Nov.	June, July, Aug., Sept.	May, July, Aug.
Dallas - Santiago	March, April, May, June, Aug., Sept.	May, June, July, Sept.	May, June, July, Aug.	May, June, July, Sept., Oct., Nov.	June, Aug., Sept.	May, June, July, Aug.
Dallas - São Paulo	June, July through Sept.	Aug., Sept.	June, July, Aug., Sept.	June, July	Feb., March, May, June, Aug., Sept.	March, April, May, through Sept.
Los Angeles - São Paulo	April					
Miami - Belo Horizonte	Feb., May, June, July, Aug.,	Feb., May, July, Oct., Nov.	March, April, May, June, July through Sept., Oct., Nov.	Feb., Aug., Sept.	Feb., July, Aug.,	Feb., March through June, July, Aug., Sept. through Nov.
Miami - Brasília	Feb. through April, June, July, Oct., Nov.	Feb. through April, May, Aug., Sept.	May,	May through July, Sept, through Nov.	March, April, June, Aug.,	Feb., April, July,

Routes	Departure			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
Miami - Manaus	Feb, March, June, July	April, May, Aug.	April through June	March, June, July, Aug. through Oct.	May, June,	March, April, May,
Miami - Montevideo	Feb., March, April, May, July, Nov.	March, April, Aug., Oct.,	March, May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov.	Feb., March, May	March, April, June, Nov.	April, May, June, July, through Oct., Nov.
Miami - Rio de Janeiro	Feb., April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept.	Feb., March, June, July, Sept.		Feb., March, April, May, Aug. through Oct., Nov.	March, May, July, Sept.	May, June, July, Aug.
Miami - Santiago	Feb., March, April July, Oct., Nov.	March, April, May, Aug., Sept.	March, April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept.	Feb., March, April, June, Oct., Nov.	May, July through Sept., Oct., Nov.	April, May, June, July through Sept., Oct.
Miami - São Paulo	May, June, Aug., Sept.	April, June, July	Feb., March, April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept.	July, Aug.	May, June, Sept.	Feb., through April, May, June, July, through Sept.
New York - Buenos Aires	April, May, June, Aug.	May, July	Aug.	May, June, Aug.	July	July
New York - Rio de Janeiro	May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Nov.	Feb., April, May, June, Sept., Oct., Nov.	Feb., March, April, May, June through Aug., Oct.	Feb., April, June, Aug., Sept., Oct.	Feb., April, May, June, Oct., Nov.	March, April, May, June, July, Aug., Oct., Nov.
New York - São Paulo	March, April, May, June through Aug., Sept.	Feb., March, May, June	March, April, Aug.	April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept.	March, April, May, June	Feb., March, April, May, June through Aug.

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

How to Get Around Buying Miles Maximum Limits

February 2018

One of the best ways to get in the upgrade game—and overnight:

You don’t need to be sitting on a mountain of earned miles to upgrade to Business or First Class cheaply. You can buy them instead. Most airlines sell miles, and cheaply when they put them on sale, which is often.

THE ONE HURDLE WHEN BUYING MILES

There's often a limit to the number of miles you can purchase. And since miles aren't transferable from one mileage account to another for free—yes, you can gift miles (or share them) to someone else, usually at a fee of about 1¢, but even these miles come with a limit—you can be caught short.

But there is a better way to get around mileage-purchase limits.

We love this move because it quickly gets you into the upgrade game.

HE AIN'T HEAVY, HE'S MY BROTHER (or Mother, Nephew, Neighbor, Paperboy, Hair-Cutter, etc.)

Most airlines allow you to redeem miles from your account for someone else's travel. So just reverse the process: Open an account for your dad, daughter, or other family members or friends, fill it with miles when miles go on sale, and then use the miles for your ticket.

Once you have these other mileage accounts set up, you can buy the annual maximum for each account when the miles are on sale, giving you almost unlimited access to miles for travel.

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ONLY THREE SIMPLE STEPS TO KNOW

1. Buy miles during a sale up to the annual limit.
2. Set up another account in someone else's name and repeat the process.
3. If the number of miles needed is high, say 200,000, and the annual limit is 150,000, split the round-trip into two one-way tickets, and just buy 100,000 for each of the two accounts, but book the award ticket in your name as two one-ways. (Most airlines allow you to book one-ways nowadays, at half price; All Nippon and Japan Airlines are notable exceptions.)

HOW TO USE MILES IN DIFFERENT ACCOUNTS

Think one-way: Buy one-way outbound on one account and one-way home on another account, if you must.

Take a recent United MileagePlus sale. Here's the link. It ended Dec. 31, and offered up to a 100% bonus, which came to about 1.9¢ per mile. United has a yearly maximum of 150,000 miles they allow you to purchase, which works fine for most Business Class awards, but not for international First Class awards, as

these often start at 160,000+. But you can circumvent that by booking two one-way flights, each using a different mileage account.

CHICAGO – TOKYO ON UNITED: THANKS MOM!

In First Class the lowest fares starts at $12,688, or would require 180,000 miles round-trip. That's well over the 150,000-miles maximum. But if you took advantage of the United December deal using your account and the one you set up in your Mom's name—90,000 for each account—the cost would have been about $3,676.

In 2017 we saw miles on sale as low as 1.9¢ with United, 1.8¢ with American, 1.5¢ with LifeMiles, and 2.1¢ with Alaska. These are the four biggest mileage sellers.

Thinking ahead: The airlines know that you will be reading this, so they have put a small obstacle in the way of mileage purchases: A waiting period before you can buy miles. American and United impose a 10-day waiting period, while Alaska imposes a 30-day period. LifeMiles only asks that you be an existing member in order to buy miles when they are on sale. Figure this into your plans and set up mileage accounts in advance to buy miles when they go on sale.

Now some of you may be thinking that this sounds a little shady, but don't worry—it's legitimate. In fact, I do it myself with my own Mom and Dad. I said, "Mom and Dad, I've set up mileage accounts in your names—but you don't have to do anything or pay for anything—it's all done with my credit card." Mom said: "That's fine honey. I hope you're eating your greens and keeping your room clean."

THE BUY-LOYALTY BEGINNERS GUIDE

For more on how to play the "Buy Miles to Fly In Style" Strategy to Net Up to 90% Off Premium Travel' see our June special report.

SAMPLE SAVINGS

- 58% Off With American Airlines First & Business Class to South America
- 74% Off With Emirates First Class to Middle East
- 59% Off on Business Class to Asia on United
- 65% Off With Cathay Pacific First Class to Asia
- 71% Off on Business Class to South America with The Buy-LifeMiles Strategy

OTHER RELATED REPORTS

- How Most Anyone Can Get Domestic and International Business and First Class from 41% to 81% Off
- Fly Deluxe for Fewer Bucks the World Over with Alaska Airlines 14 Partners
- How the Major **Non-Alliance Airlines** Rate for the Person Who Has Few or No Miles, But Wants to Get In the Upgrade Game Overnight

- How the Major **Star Alliance Airlines** Rate for the Person Who Has Few or No Miles, But Wants to Get In the Upgrade Game Overnight
- How the Major **Oneworld Airlines** Rate for the Person Who Has Few or No Miles, But Wants to Get In the Upgrade Game Overnight
- How the Major **SkyTeam Airlines** Rate for the Person Who Has Few or No Miles, But Wants to Get In the Upgrade Game Overnight

A Rare Transcon Route with Wide Open Business and First Class Availability

February 2018

The Transcon, the premium non-stop service offered from Los Angeles and San Francisco to New York/JFK (and by United to Newark), is America's glamour route. It's a domestic route on which the airlines strive to equal the international Business Class in-flight experience.

For some time now, FCF research has not found any free award availability on American, Delta, and United's Transcon flights to speak of.

For whatever reason, American's Transcon now has space, up to four seats in Business Class on SFO-JFK and up to two seats in First Class LAX/SFO-JFK (see chart below).

COST WITH AMERICAN

65,000 miles round-trip in Business Class and 100,000 miles in First Class, plus about $11 in taxes, for a ticket that otherwise starts at $1,117 (Saturday flights only) and runs up to $3,987 in Business Class. In First fares start at $1,717 (also only on Saturday flights) and go up to $4,677.

AMERICAN: HOLD FRIENDLY

American usually holds free award space for five days if a ticket is booked 15 or more days in advance. Departures booked within 14 days only net a 24-hour hold option. (Refer back to FCF's report on What the Humble Pea Can Point Out About Using Miles & Points for Premium Air Travel.)

GETTING AMERICAN MILES

You can buy up to 150,000 miles from American (for 1.8¢ when on sale), or you could transfer points from Starwood. (Transfer time from Starwood is about two days.)

GOOD CONNECTIONS

Don't live in Los Angeles, New York, or San Francisco? You can still take advantage of AA's availability by taking a connecting flight to a Transcon gateway. For example, fly San Diego-NY via LAX or Syracuse-LAX via NY.

OTHER WAYS TO PAY

Using Japan Airlines Miles: 60,000 (5,000 fewer than AA charges) in Business Class and 90,000 (10,000 fewer than AA charges) in First Class from SFO and LAX, plus $11 in taxes. Japan Airlines' award space is often the same as American's.

Starwood Points-to-Japan Airline Miles: 50,000 to 75,000 points.

Using British Airways Miles: 75,000 round-trip in Business Class and 100,000 in First Class from SFO and LAX, plus about $11 in taxes.

Getting British Airways Miles: Transfer 75,000 to 100,000 points from Amex Rewards or Chase, or 60,000 to 80,000 Starwood.

BEST DEAL: Watch out for the 40% transfer bonus to BA that Amex Rewards offers every few months. That brings down the cost to only 54,000 (11,000 fewer miles than AA charges) to 72,000 (28,000 fewer).

BUY LOYALTY, SAVE HANDSOMLY

Buying miles at 2.5¢ each from **Amex Membership Rewards** and transferring them to British Airways during a 40% transfer deal makes the net cost of a First Class seat $1,800, plus about $11 in taxes—a savings of up to $1,286 (42%). 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 special report for more details.

Using Cathay Pacific Miles: 50,000 (15,000 fewer than AA charges) in Business Class and 70,000 in First Class from LAX (30,000 fewer than AA charges) and **only 60,000 Starpoints.** From SFO Business Class costs 80,000 miles and in First Class 120,000 round-trip, plus about $11 in taxes.

Getting Cathay Pacific Miles: Transfer points from Amex Rewards, CITI, or Starwood.

Using Alaska Airlines Miles: 50,000 (15,000 fewer than AA charges) round-trip in Business Class from SFO and LAX, plus about $11 in taxes. (No First Class redemption.)

Getting Alaska Airlines Miles: Transfer 40,000 points from Starwood. Or buy an unlimited amount of miles (but a limit of four transactions permitted on the same credit card in 30 days) from Alaska as low as 2.1¢ each (for more details go here).

Sweet Redeem Survey: Free Award Availability on American Transcon

Routes	Class of Service	Departure			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
New York/JFK - Los Angeles	First	June, Aug., Sept.		Feb.	Sept.		Feb.
	Business	Feb.	Feb.		Feb., Aug., Sept.	Feb., Aug.	Feb.
San Francisco - New York/JFK	First	May through July, Sept., Oct.	April, Aug., Sept.	Feb.	March, May, July, Oct.	March, April, June, Aug., Sept.	Feb., April, May, Aug.
	Business	May, June through Sept.	Feb.	Feb.	Feb., April, May, June, Aug., Sept.	Feb.	

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

How and Why to Bust Out of United MileagePlus Bondage—for Travel to Asia, Europe, and South America

February 2018

Fly United Business Class for 45,000 fewer miles to Asia, 32,000 fewer miles to Europe and South America—or save enough for a free domestic First Class round-trip for every long-haul booked.

Many FCF readers are United loyalists, or feel that they don't have a choice, given the sway United holds in many cities.

That's fine.

But many travelers use United co-branded credit cards well beyond the spend required to 'waive' the Premier Qualifying Dollars (PQDs) requirement to net elite status easier.

That's where I draw the line.

Why? Because the miles are not transferable and you (likely) already have many United miles and therefore **you don't need any more of this limited-opportunity currency.**

C'mon, you know it.

A BETTER IDEA
(IF YOU INSIST ON FLYING UNITED AND ITS PARTNERS)

Earn Amex Points or Starwood Starpoints, and transfer them to an All Nippon mileage account. It makes a lot more sense because it gives you **a much better value per mile.**

The devil's in the United details: All Nippon's mileage program often has **lower rates for United-operated flights than United's own rate.** Plus, award availability using All Nippon's mileage program is often the same as United's.

Furthermore, All Nippon's mileage program award taxes are about the same as those that United charges to Asia, Europe, and South America.

BONDAGE BUSTER PROOF:
SAVE 32% / 45,000 MILES TO ASIA

For example, San Francisco-Beijing in Business Class costs 140,000 United miles round-trip and $36 in taxes. The same flight using All Nippon miles costs 95,000 miles and $72 in taxes.

United.com @ 140,000 Miles…

Trip summary

Thu, Feb 01, 2018

Fare 140,000 miles

Taxes and fees $36.21

Thu, Feb 1 10:50 am San Francisco, CA, US (SFO) → Fri, Feb 2 3:30 pm Beijing, CN (PEK - Capital)

Nonstop 12h 40m total

UA 888 Boeing 777-300ER

Revise flight Details

Wed, Feb 21, 2018

5:25 pm Beijing, CN (PEK - Capital) → 1:05 pm San Francisco, CA, US (SFO)

Nonstop 11h 40m total

UA 889 Boeing 777-300ER

Revise flight Details

AllNippon.com @ 95,000 Miles…

Itinerary

	Departure/Arrival		Flight	Seat	Class	Status	Service
Feb 1 Thursday 12h40min	10:50 15:30 +1day	San Francisco Beijing	UA888 77W Operated by United Airlines	--	Business	OK	
Feb 21 Wednesday 11h40min	17:25 13:05	Beijing San Francisco	UA889 77W Operated by United Airlines	--	Business	OK	

Payment

Required mileage 95,000 Miles

Total USD 72.80

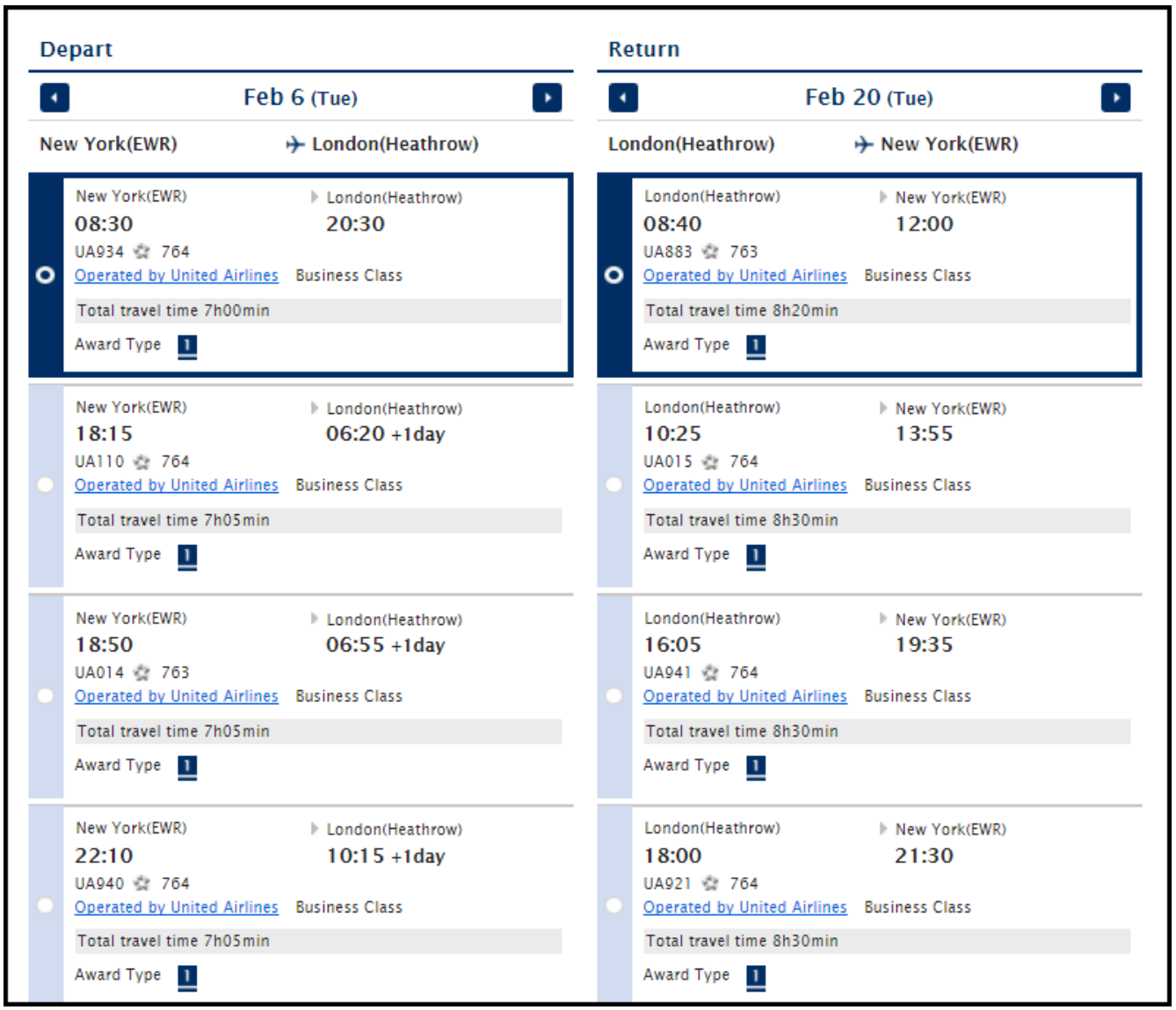
Current Mileage Balance 0 Miles

BONDAGE BUSTER #2:

Sample trip to Europesaves 32,000 miles: On the Newark-London route United's lowest Business Class award costs 120,000 miles and $291 in taxes for a Feb. 6 departure and a Feb. 20 return (these *travel dates*

had four flights available using United miles and All Nippon miles; see screenshots below). Booking the flights using All Nippon miles costs 88,000 miles round-trip and $224 in taxes.

AllNippon.com with four United flights



United.com @ 120,000 Miles…

Trip summary

Tue, Feb 06, 2018

Fare	120,000 miles
Taxes and fees	$291.41

8:30 am — New York/Newark, NJ, US (EWR - Liberty)

8:30 pm — London, GB (LHR - Heathrow)

Nonstop — 7h total

UA 934 Boeing 767-400ER

Revise flight | Details

Tue, Feb 20, 2018

8:40 am — London, GB (LHR - Heathrow)

12:00 pm — New York/Newark, NJ, US (EWR - Liberty)

Nonstop — 8h 20m total

UA 883 Boeing 767-300

Revise flight | Details

AllNippon.com @ 88,000 Miles…

Itinerary

	Departure/Arrival		Flight	Seat	Class	Status	Service
Feb 6 Tuesday 7h00min	08:30 20:30	New York(EWR) London(Heathrow)	UA934 764 Operated by United Airlines	--	Business	OK	
Feb 20 Tuesday 8h20min	08:40 12:00	London(Heathrow) New York(EWR)	UA883 763 Operated by United Airlines	--	Business	OK	

Payment

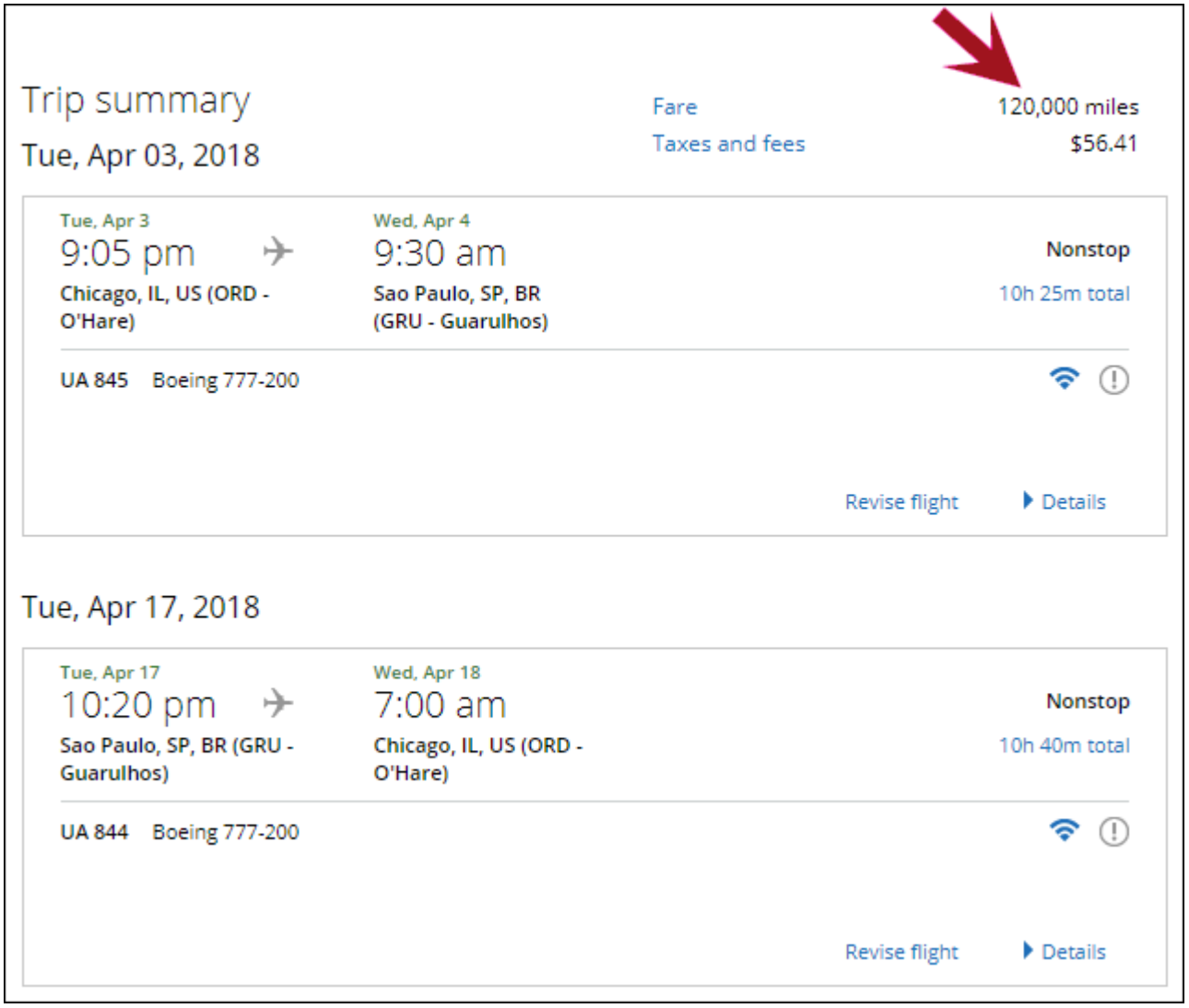
Required mileage	Total	Current Mileage Balance
88,000 Miles Adult x1	USD 224.44	0 Miles

BONDAGE BUSTER #3:

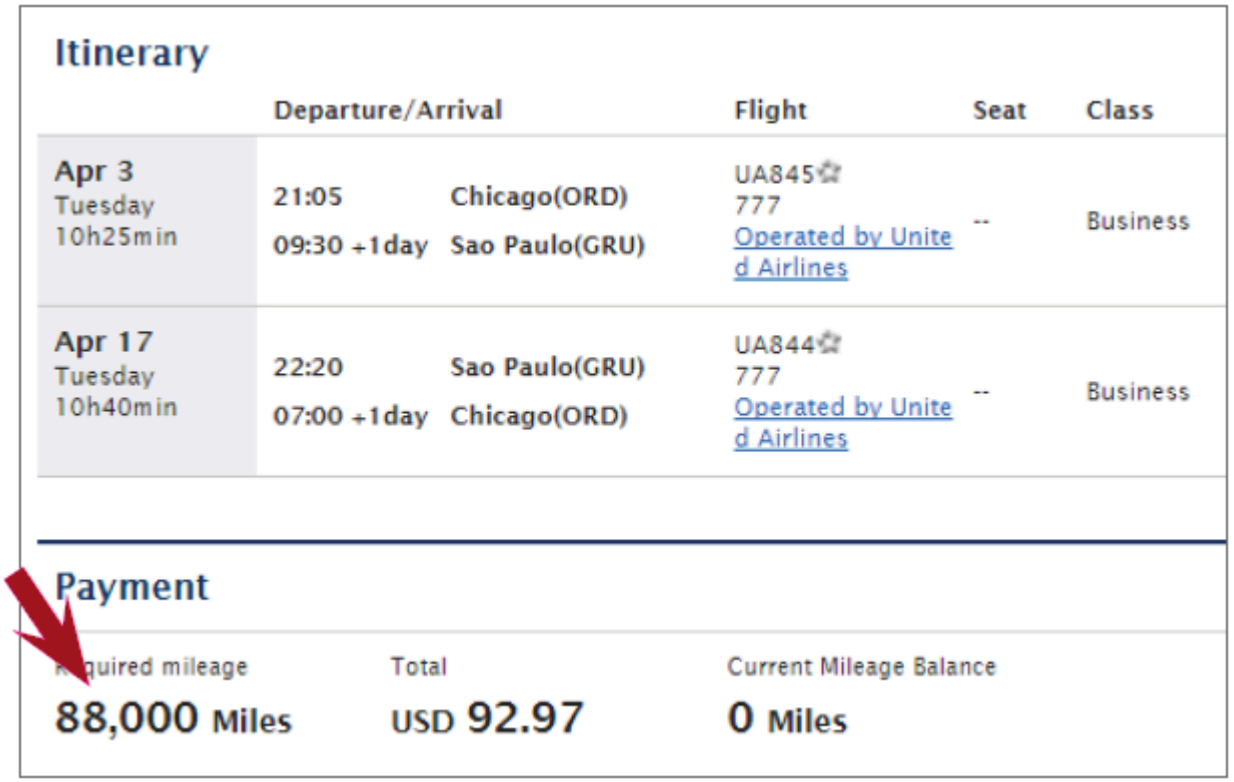
Sample trip to South Americasaves 32,000 miles: On the Chicago-São Paulo route United's lowest Business Class award costs 120,000 miles and $56 in taxes, while All Nippon charges only 88,000 miles and

$93 in taxes.

United.com @ 120,000 Miles…



AllNippon.com @ 88,000 Miles…



Itinerary

	Departure/Arrival		Flight	Seat	Class
Apr 3 Tuesday 10h25min	21:05 09:30 +1day	Chicago(ORD) Sao Paulo(GRU)	UA845 777 Operated by United Airlines	--	Business
Apr 17 Tuesday 10h40min	22:20 07:00 +1day	Sao Paulo(GRU) Chicago(ORD)	UA844 777 Operated by United Airlines	--	Business

Payment

Required mileage	Total	Current Mileage Balance
88,000 Miles	USD 92.97	0 Miles

FIRST CLASS BONDAGE BUSTER #4:

Sample trip to Asiasaves 70,000 miles: Based on past FCF research, United almost never has First Class award space for its own flights, but sometimes it offers First Class seats on partners. However, they cost more. The solution is to book All Nippon's First Class using All Nippon miles. On the Los Angeles-Tokyo route, United's lowest First Class partner award costs 220,000 miles and $46 in taxes, whereas All Nippon charges 150,000 miles and $170 in taxes.

United.com @ 220,000 Miles…

Trip summary

TOTAL 220,000 miles + $45.81

Mon, Jun 04, 2018

Mon, Jun 4
12:45 pm
Los Angeles, CA, US (LAX)

Tue, Jun 5
4:25 pm
Tokyo, JP (NRT - Narita)

Nonstop
11h 40m total

NH 5 Boeing 777-300ER
Operated By All Nippon Airways

Revise flight | Details

Mon, Jun 18, 2018

4:05 pm
Tokyo, JP (NRT - Narita)

10:00 am
Los Angeles, CA, US (LAX)

Nonstop
9h 55m total

NH 176 Boeing 777-300ER
Operated By All Nippon Airways

Revise flight | Details

AllNippon.com @ 150,000 Miles…

Itinerary

	Departure/Arrival		Flight	Seat	Class	Status	Service
Jun 4 Monday 11h40min	12:45 16:25 +1day	Los Angeles Tokyo(Narita)	NH005 ANA 77W	--	First	OK	Lounge Meal Movie Duty Free
Jun 18 Monday 9h55min	16:05 10:00	Tokyo(Narita) Los Angeles	NH176 ANA 77W	--	First	OK	Lounge Meal Movie Duty Free

Payment

Required mileage	Total	Current Mileage Balance
150,000 Miles Adult x1	USD **170.36**	**0 Miles**

BONUS BONDAGE BUSTER:

Buying Amex Rewards points makes sense, even if you have none: Flying All Nippon Los Angeles-Tokyo in First Class costs $15,838, but the cost to buy 150,000 American Express points, the amount needed for the flight, comes to about $3,920 (including $170 for taxes). You save $11,918 or 75%.

HOW TO SEARCH FOR ALL NIPPON AWARD SPACE

Just create an All Nippon mileage account, which can be done in 5 minutes or less, and login. Then go to “Flight Awards”, click on “Partner Flight” and then click on “Award Reservation.” No sweat.

Which U.S. Airline Offers the Best Mileage Upgrade Deal to Europe?

February 2018

And the other three questions mileage upgraders should be asking.

Who this special report is for:

- New Yorkers bound for Europe*
- Leisure travelers with advance-booking flexibility
- Business travelers who can book a little ahead

**But the thinking and formula applies to anyone seeking an upgrade, no matter the departure city.*

You'd think the question posed in the headline would be easy to answer. Just crunch the numbers and out pops the airline. But it's not so simple because there are a number of factors involved, such as:

- Which carrier charges the fewest miles for an upgrade?
- Which one has the most availability?
- Which carrier offers upgrades on the lowest economy fares?
- What co-pays (surcharges) are imposed?

HORSES FOR COURSES

Ever heard that phrase? Some racehorses are better in the mud, others on a fast surface. Some prefer longer distances, others prefer running clockwise, not counterclockwise.

The same goes for airlines. There is no simple answer. And although we do have a winner—an answer to the question—still, depending on your particular circumstances, the horse that placed second may be your best option.

ARE YOU AN 'ELITE' FREQUENT FLYER?

This special report isn't for elites per se, as they tend to be Business travelers and book closer to departure. This report is for travelers who can book further out and are flexible with travel dates, and are thus often able to get the lowest economy fare.

That said, elites can certainly put the thinking to use, if only to realize that they shouldn't be playing the elite game anymore. Why play elite games, say with Delta, if you're not going to pay for a Business Class ticket? Upgrading is a waste of time and using miles for free tickets is a no-no because you don't earn elite credit.

You'd think Delta would do a little more to conceal that it has no interest in being competitive when it comes to elite status. **If you want a deal, and you want to be an elite status player, you don't fly Delta.**

C'MON FCF, JUST TELL ME THE ANSWER!

OK, it's **American Airlines**. *But* you need to know our methodology so you know how your particular situation fits that outcome.

For example, **Delta** often has the lowest upgradeable fare because it doesn't charge a co-pay, but it charges the highest amount of miles for that ticket. Get this: 130,000 for a round-trip upgrade! That's **crazy** when you consider that a free ticket on Delta to Europe costs 140,000 miles.

United charges the fewest miles (40,000 round-trip for an upgrade), but it has the highest co-pay—$1,100 for an upgrade on the lowest economy fares. So even if a ticket is only $400 (that's really cheap on a U.S. airline from New York to Europe), your out-of-pocket cost starts at $1,500+. Depending on the route, that might not

be much of a savings from NYC in some cases, as the lowest Business Class fares start at $2,100. Because other fares start at $3,600, United mileage upgrade **can sometimes be a deal**.

WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT THE BIG APPLE?

There are countless routes to Europe from the U.S. of course, so we had to concentrate on one gateway. New York made sense because it is such a major gateway. But the thinking can be applied to any other U.S. city. The numbers will change, but they'll be relative to each other for the most part.

New Yorkers also have access to the three major U.S. airlines as all three offer a lot of non-stop flights to Europe, so we were able to **compare apples-to-apples** here: We looked at six non-stops in all from New York. All that said, the formula for determining which airline you should / should not consider is the same, and we will be looking at other routes in coming reports.

THE WINNER

In our horse race, based on six non-stop New York-Europe routes (to Dublin, London, Madrid, Milan, Paris, and Rome) American came out first. It won in all three categories:

– **Lowest cash cost,** and
– **Value per mile,** and
– **Most availability.**

The average lowest upgradeable fare, including the $700 round-trip co-pay, is about $1,200 to $1,400 (depending on the route and economy fare available), plus 50,000 miles round-trip. Happily too, many routes had upgrade space. So congrats AA, grab your trophy on the way out.

RUNNER UP

Come on down, **United**. UA allows upgrades on all economy fares (same as AA), and it charges the fewest miles (40,000 round-trip) for an upgrade—10,000 fewer than AA. United's drawback however, is its $1,100 co-pay on the lowest economy fares. That means cash costs are often $1,500 to $1,900. Our search also found that on average, United had less upgrade space than American, depending on the route. On New York-Milan, American had eight months in which upgrades were available, whereas United had only one month. The same was true for Madrid: AA had seven months, United one.

TRAILS THE FIELD

As you may have deduced, it's **Delta**. It gives you **no value** on mielage upgrades, no matter the fare or the availability, because of the cost: 130,000+ miles. Many airlines charge less for a free award. (See here where you can get a Delta ticket for 80,000 miles through one of its partners—50,000 fewer miles than the upgrade, which also requires purchasing a coach ticket.)

Delta charges 140,000 miles for a free award to Europe, making the value-per-mile almost always less than one cent. Remember that number. Delta sounds enticing at first glance because it charge no co-pay. Even so, the value is just not there. Many people have points in multi-airline credit cards so transfer your points to airlines that offer the best value.

WHY SHOULD I USE MILES FOR AN UPGRADE AND NOT A FREE TICKET?

Good question. Leisure travelers should use miles for an upgrade for two reasons:

Airlines frequently offer **a lot more availability** of upgrades than free seats. They often don't make it easy to search for upgrade availability online, so few travelers are aware of this. Most travel websites don't discuss upgrades much because they cater to people who are only interested in things that are free, and with upgrades you must purchase an economy ticket and pay a cash surcharge.

The upgrade almost always **requires fewer miles** than a free award ticket, so for those of you who don't have a bulging mileage account, an upgrade is a way to make them fly farther, especially for those that fly often and/or with many people at a time.

WHEN TO USE MILES TO UPGRADE?

In general, the highest return on mileage upgrades are when Business Class fares are high. If a route offers a low Business Class fare, even American and United don't offer a great return on miles.

SO WHAT'S THE BEST DEAL TO EUROPE?

To London with American. The cash outlay starts at about $1,288 (the upgradable economy fare at $588 + the $700 round-trip co-pay), while the lowest Business Class fare starts at $3,617, giving you a **savings of $2,329 (64%)**. The return-on-miles is 4.7¢ (the savings divided by the miles used, $2,329 ÷ 50,000).

Upgrade Comparisons: New York-London

Airline	Lowest Upgradable Economy Fare	Co-pay / Surcharge	Total Cash Cost	Lowest Business Class Fare	Savings	Value-Per-Mile
American	$588	$700	$1,288	$3,617	$2,331 (64%)	4.7¢
Delta	$1,081	$0	$1,081	$3,394	$2,313 (68%)	1.8¢
United	$588	$1,100	$1,688	$3,376	$1,688 (50%)	4.2¢

Plus, our research showed that almost every month this year had days with upgrade space. The upgrade award even yields a higher return on miles then a free ticket does, at times. The math for NYC-London: $3,617 (cash) ÷ 115,000 (free award miles with American) equals 3.1¢.

All three airlines had great upgrade space on the NYC-London route compared to the other five routes.

Upgrade Availability from/to New York

	Dublin					London					
Departure			**Return**			**Departure**			**Return**		
American	Delta	United	American	Delta	United	American	Delta	United	American	Delta	United
Feb.			**Many**			**Many**	**Many**	**Many**	**Many**	**Many**	Decent	**Many**
March			Handful			Handful	Decent	**Many**	**Many**	**Many**	**Many**	**Many**
April	Handful	Handful		Decent			Decent	**Many**	**Many**	**Many**	**Many**	**Many**
May	Handful			**Many**	Decent		Handful	Handful	**Many**	**Many**	Handful	**Many**
June								Decent		**Many**	Decent	**Many**
July				Handful			Decent	Decent	Decent	**Many**	Decent	Decent
Aug.		Handful		Handful	Decent		**Many**	**Many**	**Many**	**Many**	Decent	**Many**
Sept.		Decent			Decent		Decent			**Many**		**Many**
Oct.		**Many**			Decent		Decent		Decent	**Many**		**Many**
Nov.		Decent			Decent		Decent	Handful		**Many**	Handful	Decent

Handful: Our most recent research shows that upgrade space is available for at least one person (and possibly more) 4 to 8 days during the months indicated in the chart. Worth pursuing if you're flexible. **Decent:** Our most recent research shows that upgrade space is available for at least one person (and possibly more) 9 to 12 days during the months indicated in the chart. **Many:** Our most recent research shows that upgrade space is available for at least one person (and possibly more) 13+ during the months indicated in the chart.

Upgrade Availability from/to New York

	Madrid					Milan					
Departure			**Return**			**Departure**			**Return**		
American	Delta	United	American	Delta	United	American	Delta	United	American	Delta	United

	Madrid						Milan					
Feb.	Decent		Handful	**Many**		Decent	Handful			Decent		
March	**Many**			**Many**		Decent	Handful			**Many**		
April	Handful			**Many**		Handful				Handful		
May	Handful			**Many**			Handful			**Many**		
June				Handful			Handful			Decent		
July	**Many**			Handful			**Many**		Handful	Decent		Handfu
Aug.	Decent			**Many**						**Many**		
Sept.				Handful			Handful			Handful		
Oct.	Handful						Decent			Handful		
Nov.		Handful					Handful	Handful				

Handful: Our most recent research shows that upgrade space is available for at least one person (and possibly more) 4 to 8 days during the months indicated in the chart. Worth pursuing if you re flexible. **Decent:** Our most recent research shows that upgrade space is available for at least one person (and possibly more) 9 to 12 days during the months indicated in the chart. **Many:** Our most recent research shows that upgrade space is available for at least one person (and possibly more) 13+ during the months indicated in the chart.

Upgrade Availability from/to New York

	Paris						Rome					
Departure			**Return**			**Departure**			**Return**			
American	Delta	United	American	Delta	United	American	Delta	United	American	Delta	United	
Feb.	Decent		Handful	**Many**		Decent						
March				**Many**		Handful						
April	Handful			**Many**		Handful						
May	Handful			Decent			Decent			Decent		
June												
July	Handful											
Aug.	**Many**		Handful	**Many**			Handful			**Many**		
Sept.				Handful								

	Paris						Rome					
Oct.				Handful								
Nov.	Handful							Handful	Handful			Handful

Handful: Our most recent research shows that upgrade space is available for at least one person (and possibly more) 4 to 8 days during the months indicated in the chart. Worth pursuing if you're flexible. **Decent:** Our most recent research shows that upgrade space is available for at least one person (and possibly more) 9 to 12 days during the months indicated in the chart. **Many:** Our most recent research shows that upgrade space is available for at least one person (and possibly more) 13+ during the months indicated in the chart.