



Airlines Have Called a Ceasefire on Trans-Atlantic Business Class Fare Wars. How Long Will It Last?

November 2017

[In August](#) we wrote that Business Class fares to Europe were now “dependably low”, with gettable prices starting at \$1,750 from the East Coast and \$2,200 from the West Coast, as long as you had a little flexibility.

We were confident they’d stick around for the time being.

We were half-wrong.

THE AIR-STAIRS JUST MOVED

A couple of months back, airlines were making sorties into each other’s territories. They were poaching their enemy’s hubs, picking off passengers with nice low-hanging prices. For example, out of Atlanta (a Delta hub),

United was undercutting Delta to Europe up to 73%.

But that's all changed. Prices have risen across the board by between 20% and 30%, and in some cases over 60%. Now, the airlines are holding their fire on each other, and instead, turning their fare weapons onto travelers.

HERE AT FCF HQ:

We've had our binoculars on the battlefield and supplying you with up-to-the-minute dispatches.

COMPARING FARE CHANGES OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS:

Routes	Recent Business Class Fare	October Business Class Fare	Change
Atlanta - Brussels	\$2,000	\$2,500	\$500 / 25%
Atlanta - Zurich	\$1,925	\$2,400	\$475 / 25%
Boston - Amsterdam	\$1,900	\$2,100	\$200 / 11%
Boston - Rome	\$1,940	\$2,500	\$560 / 29%
Chicago - Bucharest	\$1,800	\$2,100	\$300 / 17%
Dallas - London	\$2,300	\$3,800	\$1,500 / 65%
Dallas - Madrid	\$2,100	\$3,200	\$1,100 / 52%
Dallas - Milan	\$2,300	\$3,300	\$1,000 / 44%
Houston - Amsterdam	\$1,950	\$2,450	\$500 / 26%
New York - Frankfurt	\$1,700	\$2,200	\$500 / 29%
New York - Paris	\$2,005	\$2,500	\$475 / 25%
New York - Rome	\$2,080	\$2,500	\$420 / 20%
Seattle - Amsterdam	\$2,080	\$2,600	\$520 / 25%
Washington, DC - Amsterdam	\$1,950	\$2,580	\$630 / 32%
Washington, DC - Paris	\$2,000	\$2,600	\$600 / 30%

WHAT FCF GOT RIGHT AND FARES UNDER \$2K

While destinations like London, Paris and Rome have increased in price, others have not, and you can still limbo to Europe **under the magic \$2,000** Business Class bar.

Remember, everything's pretty close in Europe, so getting to the destination of your choice isn't such a big deal.

In the meantime, stay low and be flexible. For more on that see [our report On How to be Opportunity Traveler](#), the best way to get through times like this unscathed.

Also, fares aren't changing overnight like they did in the recent past. They're more stable. Will that remain? Nobody knows.

On the bright side at least, while fares have risen lately, they're still nowhere near the dark times (five+ years ago), when the norm was \$4,500+.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIGH AND LOW DEPENDS ON WHERE YOU START AND WHERE YOU GO

One thing's for certain, FCF will continue to monitor low-fare routes from U.S. departure cities to Europe, just like we've always done. With a global team of upgrade analysts, and doing over 100 person hours a day of research, you're in the best of hands.

When Should I Use Miles to Upgrade to First Class on American? (Plus Availability Survey)

November 2017

This special report is for oneworld (American) members looking to maintain elite status, and for those who can't find a low First Class fare.

Our Pitch: Use American miles to upgrade to First. Forget free mileage awards because you don't earn elite miles or elite dollars.

THE UPGRADE PROGRAM

To Europe, Asia, and southern South America, American requires [25,000 miles one-way to upgrade, plus a \\$550 co-pay each way](#), with the lowest upgradeable Business Class fares (I class). The co-pay is kind of high, but when First Class fares are high, this upgrade offers a great return.

SAVE 34% ON AMERICAN FIRST CLASS TO ASIA

Say you're traveling Dallas-Hong Kong, often an expensive First Class fare route. The lowest Business Class fare is currently \$6,170 from Dallas, while First Class is \$4,840 more (\$11,010)—so even with the \$1,100 co-pay, you can save 34% off the published fare by using miles. (See chart below for upgrade award space.)

SAVE 41% ON AMERICAN FIRST CLASS TO SOUTHERN SOUTH AMERICA

Say you're traveling Dallas-São Paulo, another expensive First Class fare route. The lowest Business Class fare is currently \$5,030, while First Class is \$5,270 more (\$10,300)—so even with the \$1,100 co-pay, you can save 41% off the published fare by using miles. (See chart below for upgrade award space.)



American First Class

AMERICAN FIRST CLASS TO EUROPE: WHEN USING MILES IS NOT A DEAL

Buying First Class in advance or on short-notice can be cheaper than upgrading. Let's take New York-London for travel in April: The lowest First Class fare is \$4,575 and Business Class starts at \$3,753, only a difference of \$822. If you upgrade using miles, the fare is more expensive, given the co-pay (\$1,100) plus the 50,000 miles.

Round trip

One way

Multi-city

First

1 adult

JFK New York City

London (all airports)

Tue, April 3

Tue, April 24

Nonstop

Price

American (-1)

Times

More

Choose an outbound flight

Sort by price

Business Class

\$3,753

First Class

\$4,575

Prices round trip. Additional bag fees may apply.

These are the lowest fares within ±3 days

Show Flexible dates

Track prices

Learn more

Save this trip to track price changes and receive price alerts and travel tips by email.

OFF

\$4,575

round trip

6:05 PM – 6:20 AM+1

American

7h 15m

JFK-LHR

Nonstop

HOW TO GET AMERICAN MILES

Buy American miles when they go on sale (go [here](#) for recent alert details), or transfer Starwood points.

Sweet Redeems Survey: American First Class Upgrades

Routes	Departure Availability			Return Availability		
	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 to São Paulo	Nov., Dec., Feb., June	Nov., Feb.	Nov., March to May	Dec.	Jan., May	Nov., Feb. to April
Miami to Buenos Aires	Jan.	Nov., Dec.	Nov., May to Aug.	May, July	Nov., Dec., March	Nov., Dec., June, Aug.
Miami to São Paulo	Aug.	June	Nov., Dec., Feb. to May, June	July	Jan., June	Nov., Feb. to May, Aug.
Los Angeles to London	Nov.	Nov.	Dec. to Aug.		Nov.	Dec. to Aug.

Routes	Departure Availability			Return Availability		
	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 to London		Nov.	Nov., Dec. to Aug.	Nov., June		Nov., Dec. to May
Dallas to London	Nov.	Nov.	Nov., Dec. to Aug.	Nov.		Nov., Dec. to Aug.
Miami to London		Nov., Jan.	Dec., Jan., Feb. to Aug.	Nov., Dec.	Nov.	Nov., Dec., Jan. to Aug.
Dallas to Hong Kong	Nov., Jan.	Nov., Dec.	Dec., Jan., Feb. to Aug.	Nov., Dec., Jan.	Dec.	Jan., Feb., March, May, July, Aug.
Los Angeles to Hong Kong	Dec. to April, June to Aug.	Nov.	Dec. to April, June to Aug.	Nov., Dec. to April, June to Aug.	Nov., Dec. to Feb., May	Dec., Feb., March to Aug.

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



Some Deals on Singapore Airlines in Business Class Can Be Found If You Look Closely

November 2017

The Five Best Ways to Find Them.

FLASH FARES

This is one of the few ways Singapore discounts in public. You just have to keep your eyes peeled.

Last Two Singapore Flash Business Class Fare Sales

Sale Start	Sale End	Routes	Sale Fares	Normal Fares	Savings
Sept 8	Sept 24	Los Angeles - Seoul	\$2,987	\$3,428	\$441
Feb 19	Feb 20	Los Angeles - Tokyo	\$1,997	\$3,526	\$1,529

BLOW MILES

Singapore is famous for offering one award seat in First Class (see our report [here](#) for how couples can plan a trip when only one seat is available). In Business Class, however, the picture is different. FCF research shows that three routes, Los Angeles to Seoul and Tokyo, and Houston to Manchester, have good mileage award availability. In fact, Los Angeles-Seoul even had four seats available over a seven-month period.

Sweet Redeem Survey for Singapore's Business Class

Routes	Departure Availability			Return Availability		
	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
San Francisco - Singapore	May, July, Sept.	Aug.	Aug.	June, Sept.	July, Aug.	
New York - Frankfurt	Jan. to April, June to Sept.					
San Francisco - Hong Kong	April to June, Sept.	July, Aug.		April	June	May, July to Sept.
Los Angeles - Tokyo	Nov., Dec., April, May to July	Jan., March, April, Aug., Sept.	Feb., May to Aug.	Dec., Jan., Feb., April, May, June, Aug.	Feb., March, April, May, July, Aug.	June to Aug.
Los Angeles - Seoul	Jan. to June, Aug., Sept.	July	Jan. to Sept.	March, April, June, July, Sept.	May	Jan. to Sept.
Houston - Manchester		Nov., Dec.	Jan. to Sept.		April	Nov., Dec. to March, May to Sept.

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

No Singapore miles? No problem.

Use points from **Amex, Starwood Preferred Guest, Citi, or Chase**. SPG is best because of the 25% transfer bonus.

PARTNER AVAILABILITY AND THE ONE EXCEPTION

Partner-mileage programs often have lower rates, however availability is not always the same as the airline's own. One big exception: Lufthansa Miles & More (M&M) program. FCF research has found that M&M partner award space in Business is almost the same as Singapore's own. (To use Miles & More miles you have to call 1-800-581-6400.)

PARTNER SAVINGS

Save as much as 41,000 miles to Asia using Lufthansa Miles & More program miles (25,000 to Europe; see chart below).

Route	Singapore Miles Round-Trip	Lufthansa Miles Round-Trip	Savings
San Francisco - Singapore	176,000	135,000	41,000
San Francisco - Seoul	170,000	135,000	35,000
New York - Frankfurt	130,000	105,000	25,000
San Francisco - Hong Kong	164,000	135,000	29,000
Los Angeles - Tokyo	170,000	135,000	35,000
Los Angeles - Seoul	170,000	135,000	35,000
Houston - Manchester	130,000	105,000	25,000

TRAVELING ON BUSINESS OR SHORT-NOTICE? BUY MILES

This is the best way to avoid paying \$5,000 to \$8,000 when flying on short-notice. Buying Amex Rewards miles to fly Houston-Manchester in Business Class costs \$3,250 (130,000 miles round-trip), whereas booking a ticket on short-notice costs \$5,233. On the high-priced San Francisco-Hong Kong route, the fare skyrockets to \$6,007, even booked far in advance, and can cost as much as \$8,082 on shorter notice. Buying and transferring the points from Amex Rewards can save you \$1,900 to \$4,000.

Houston to Manchester Edit search		
The total number of miles shown here is indicative, for the entire journey for one passenger, and do not include taxes, fees, or any applicable promotional discounts.		
Sort ▾		
Flight information	Saver	Standard
<div>FLIGHT SQ51 ▾</div> <div><div>IAH 19:40</div><div>Houston 31 Oct (Tue), Intercontinental Terminal D</div><div>Singapore Airlines</div></div> <div><div>MAN 09:30</div><div>Manchester 01 Nov (Wed), Manchester Ringway Intl Terminal 2</div></div> <div>Total travel time: 8hrs 50mins</div>	<div>65,000 miles</div> <div>Total miles, 1 passenger</div>	<div>80,000 miles</div> <div>Total miles, 1 passenger</div>


SINGAPORE'S INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS CLASS SEAT

Aircraft with this seat: Airbus A380-800s, Boeing 777-300ERs, and refitted Boeing 777-200ERs. The seat is 34 inches wide (on most other carries, the seat is about 21 inches wide). Singapore is in the process of

rolling out [a new international Business Class](#) seat on A350s and Boeing 777-300ERs which is 28 inches wide. It is currently offered on all flights from the U.S. with the exception of New York-Frankfurt.



Singapore's New Business Class Seat



Don't See Your Origin and/or Destination in an FCF Asia Travel Headline? (Part 2)

November 2017

How to use FCF's New Connection Widget to Snag a Deal to Asia.

Last month, FCF released its new "Sweet Redeem (SR)" widget for travel to Europe. It highlights mileage programs that offer a free add-on connection in the U.S. and Europe, so even if your departure city isn't mentioned in a Newsroom Alert headline, you can still often get the mileage award, with the help of the Sweet Redeem Widget. For details go [here](#).

Now we're telling you how to use the Sweet Redeem Widget for travel to Asia.

In general, the Asia widget is like the Europe one: Scour the FCF Newsroom for a deal on the long-haul route, then use the Widget to get an idea of the connecting flights that can potentially be made to/from the gateway/s.

However, when it comes to the details, the story changes. Add-on connections are not always free to Asia, and two mileage programs, even ones that use the same type of award chart, may differ greatly in their offerings on a given route.

That's mainly because, unlike Europe (one zone), Asia is so big that the carriers have divided it into a number of regions or zones—at least two (Air Canada) and as many as seven (Singapore Air).

Take First Class Los Angeles to Tokyo on Singapore Airlines: The ticket costs 190,000 Singapore miles round-trip, and doesn't allow a free domestic U.S. add-on flight to reach the gateway. That costs 35,000 miles more.

The same goes on the other end, for example, if you're traveling on to Bangkok. That city costs 46,000 more miles because it lies in a different zone. Total cost: 236,000 miles. This is often the case on Asian routes, whether on an Asian carrier or not.

The point is that we don't want you to zone out because you live in Omaha or Orlando and don't see a deal from there to Bangkok or Hong Kong. FCF's Sweet Redeem alert will help you see where the potential is for the long-haul flight from other major U.S. cities to other major Asian cities.

Asiana is an airline that often turns up in FCF's Alerts. It's one you should keep top-of-mind because it often allows a free or low-cost add-on flight.

Take a recent SR Asiana alert, **First Class** Los Angeles to Seoul for 160,000 Asiana miles, which can include an add-on flight on United, an Asiana partner, from anywhere in the U.S. to Los Angeles at the same cost. On the other end, add on a flight to Taiwan, and the cost remains the same, but add on a flight to Hong Kong and the cost increases to 180,000 miles, 20,000 more.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- When using the domestic mileage programs of Air Canada, Alaska, American, Delta, and United for a ticket to Asia, the cost includes a connecting flight from any city in the U.S. (including Alaska, but not Hawaii) and Canada.
- Air Canada and American charge the same mileage rates for its own and partner flights.
- Alliance mileage-chart rates, for example, that of Korean for SkyTeam or All Nippon for Star, are valid from any departure city in the continental U.S. (including Alaska, but not Hawaii) and Canada.
- Lufthansa's Miles & More is the only major mileage program that charges Asia at one price, so a ticket to Hong Kong costs the same number of miles as one to Saigon or Tokyo.

- Airlines that use a Flight-Distance Award Chart (British Airways, Cathay Pacific, and Iberia) usually charge for a U.S. connecting flight or an onward flight in Asia, as the cost is based on distance flown.

When Flight-Distance Mileage Programs Offer Great Value

When you fly non-stop to Asia from the U.S., meaning no connecting flights on either end. For example, a non-stop flight on Cathay Pacific from New York to Hong Kong in First Class using partner miles with American (a zone chart mileage program) costs 220,000 miles round-trip. However, if you use Japan Airline miles (a flight-distance program) the cost is only 155,000 miles (65,000 fewer miles).

ALLIANCE PARTNERSHIPS: WHERE THE GEMS FREQUENTLY ARE

I see Asiana in the Headline, but don't have Asiana miles: Bad? No! Because of those handy Alliance Partnerships.

So, if you have stacks of United miles, for example, you can use them to fly Asiana because both airlines are Star Alliance members. By the way, **Asiana often has good availability in First Class, even if you're using partner miles** (United—see screenshot below—and All Nippon). Although United will charge you a premium—meaning more miles than Asiana—but on the upside, the carrier offers you a free connecting flight from anywhere in the continental U.S. or Canada.

The screenshot displays a flight search interface for the route Los Angeles, CA, US (LAX) to Seoul, KR (ICN - Incheon). It lists two nonstop flights operated by Asiana Airlines. The first flight, OZ 203, departs on Monday, December 4 at 11:00 pm and arrives on Wednesday, December 6 at 5:20 am, with a duration of 13h 20m. The second flight, OZ 201, departs on Monday, December 4 at 11:00 am and arrives on Tuesday, December 5 at 5:30 pm, with a duration of 13h 30m. Both flights are marked as 'Operated By Asiana Airlines'. To the right of the flight details, there are two columns for award chart information: 'Business Saver Award' and 'First Saver Award'. Both columns show a requirement of 80k miles for the Business Saver Award and 120k miles for the First Saver Award, with an additional fee of +\$5.60. The OZ 203 flight is also noted as a 'Red-eye flight'.

If you have Amex Rewards points, transfer them to All Nippon (see screenshot below), as Asiana is not an Amex point-transfer partner, then use them to book Asiana, as both are Star Alliance members.

From 180,000 miles

Select itinerary

Sort by: Recommended [Departure time](#) [Arrival time](#) [Flight duration](#) [Modify search](#)

Depart

Dec 4 (Mon)
✕

Los Angeles
→ Seoul(Incheon)

Los Angeles
23:00
OZ203 ✨ 388
[Operated by Asiana Airlines](#)
First Class
Total travel time 13h20min
Award Type **I**

Seoul(Incheon)
05:20 +2day

Return

Jan 16 (Tue)
✕

Seoul(Incheon)
→ Los Angeles

Seoul(Incheon)
20:40
OZ204 ✨ 388
[Operated by Asiana Airlines](#)
First Class
Total travel time 10h55min
Award Type **I**

Los Angeles
14:35

From 95,000 miles

Select itinerary

Sort by: Recommended [Departure time](#) [Arrival time](#) [Flight duration](#) [Modify search](#)

Depart

Dec 4 (Mon)
✕

Los Angeles
→ Seoul(Incheon)

Los Angeles
23:00
OZ203 ✨ 388
[Operated by Asiana Airlines](#)
Business Class
Total travel time 13h20min
Award Type **I**

Seoul(Incheon)
05:20 +2day

Return

Jan 16 (Tue)
✕

Seoul(Incheon)
→ Los Angeles

Seoul(Incheon)
20:40
OZ204 ✨ 388
[Operated by Asiana Airlines](#)
Business Class
Total travel time 10h55min
Award Type **I**

Los Angeles
14:35

Operating Airline Miles: Free & Paid Award Connections to Asia (From North America: Canada & Continental USA, Including Alaska)

Operating Airline You See in FCF Sweet Redeems Alert Headline	Operating Airline Miles Round-trip		Free U.S. Connecting Ticket on Operating Airline?	Free Connecting Ticket to other Countries in Asia When Using Operating Airline?	Getting the Operating Airline Miles
Business Class	First Class				
All Nippon*	To Japan, cost varies by season: 75,000 to 90,000, and as high as 115,000 to other regions in Asia.	To Japan, cost varies by season: 150,000 to 165,000, and as high as 210,000 to other regions in Asia.	At times, yes, as the Star Partner rate starts at 85,000 and so does All Nippon's regular season, but can be up to 15,000 more miles to Japan.	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies, up to 40,000 more miles in Business Class and 60,000 more miles in First Class.	AMEX, SPG
United	Cost varies: 140,000 to 150,000.	Cost varies: 180,000 to 190,000.	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies, but has same price for onward connections on partners (but could be more if bridge flight is to one region/zone,	CHASE

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Operating Airline You See in FCF Sweet Redeems Alert Headline	Operating Airline Miles Round-trip		Free U.S. Connecting Ticket on Operating Airline?	Free Connecting Ticket to other Countries in Asia When Using Operating Airline?	Getting the Operating Airline Miles
				and final destination is another region/zone).	
Delta	160,000 (no award chart: FCF priced a few sample routes and all cost the same).	N/A	Yes	Same price for onward connections on partners (but could be more if bridge flight is to one region/zone, and final destination is another region/zone): no chart.	AMEX, SPG
American	Cost varies: 120,000 to 140,000.	Cost varies: 160,000 to 220,000.	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies, but AA has same rates for own and partner flights.	SPG
Asiana	Cost varies: 125,000 to Korea, and as high as 175,000 miles to other regions in Asia.	Cost varies: 160,000 to Korea, and as high as 225,000 to other regions in Asia.	Often, yes, as the Star Partner rate ranges from 120,000 to 150,000 in Business Class, and 160,000 to 210,000 in First Class, depending on region/zone.	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies, up to 50,000 more miles in Business Class and 65,000 more miles in First Class.	SPG
Cathay Pacific	Uses flight-distance chart so miles required varies by flight.				AMEX, CITI, SPG
Korean Air*	Cost varies: 125,000 to Korea, and as high as 225,000 miles to other regions in Asia.	Cost varies: 160,000 to Korea, and as high as 285,000 miles to other regions in Asia.	No: cost varies 15,000 or more miles in Business Class and 20,000 or more miles in First Class.	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies, up to 100,000 more miles in Business Class and 125,000 more miles in First Class.	CHASE, SPG
Singapore	Varies depending upon departure from East or West Coast and destination in Asia: 170,000 to 230,000.	Varies depending upon departure from East or West Coast and destination in Asia: 190,000 to 300,000.	No: cost varies by region/zone from 175,000 to 195,000 in Business Class, and 200,000 to 225,000 in First Class.	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies, up to 60,000 more miles in Business Class and 110,000 more miles in First Class.	AMEX, CITI, CHASE, SPG
Japan Airlines**	To Japan, cost varies by season: 80,000 to 100,000, and as high as 140,000 to other regions in Asia.	To Japan, cost varies by season: 110,000 to 140,000, and as high as 170,000 to other regions in Asia.	No	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies, up to 60,000 more miles in Business Class and First Class.	SPG

Operating Airline You See in FCF Sweet Redeems Alert Headline	Operating Airline Miles Round-trip		Free U.S. Connecting Ticket on Operating Airline?	Free Connecting Ticket to other Countries in Asia When Using Operating Airline?	Getting the Operating Airline Miles
Air Canada	Cost varies: 150,000 to 155,000	N/A	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies (only 5,000 miles difference between the zones), same rate for own and partner flights.	AMEX, SPG

*Mileage cost varies depending on the zone and seasonality. **North America departure cities: Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York, San Diego, San Francisco, Vancouver. AMEX = Amex Rewards, CHASE = Chase Ultimate Rewards, CITI = Citi ThankYou, SPG = Starwood.

Using Partner Miles: Free & Paid Award Connections to Asia (From North America: Canada & Continental USA, Including Alaska)

Operating Airline You See in FCF Headline Sweet Redeems Alert	Possible Better Deal: Book Sweet Redeems Award and Get Free (or Low Cost) Connecting Flights With These Partners Mileage Programs in U.S./Canada and Asia Hub Cities	Partners Programs Miles Round-trip		Free U.S. Connecting Ticket on Partners Mileage Programs?	Connections to other Countries in Asia when using Partners Mileage Programs?	Getting the Partners Programs Miles
Business	First					
All Nippon	United	160,000 to 180,000	220,000 to 280,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	CHASE
	Air Canada	150,000 to 155,000	210,000 to 215,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	AMEX, SPG
	Singapore	175,000 to 195,000	200,000 to 225,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	AMEX, CITI, CHASE, SPG
	Asiana	120,000 to 150,000	160,000 to 210,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	SPG
	Lufthansa Miles & More	135,000	210,000	Yes	Yes	SPG

Operating Airline You See in FCF Headline Sweet Redeems Alert	Possible Better Deal: Book Sweet Redeems Award and Get Free (or Low Cost) Connecting Flights With These Partners Mileage Programs in U.S./Canada and Asia Hub Cities	Partners Programs Miles Round-trip		Free U.S. Connecting Ticket on Partners Mileage Programs?	Connections to other Countries in Asia when using Partners Mileage Programs?	Getting the Partners Programs Miles
	LifeMiles	150,000 to 156,000	180,000 to 222,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	SPG
	Virgin Atlantic	90,000 to 95,000	110,000 to 120,000	No		AMEX, CITI, CHASE, SPG
United	All Nippon	85,000 to 136,000	150,000 to 240,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	AMEX, SPG
	Air Canada	150,000 to 155,000	210,000 to 215,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	AMEX, SPG
	Singapore	175,000 to 195,000	200,000 to 225,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	AMEX, CITI, CHASE, SPG
	Asiana	120,000 to 150,000	160,000 to 210,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	SPG
	Lufthansa Miles & More	135,000	210,000	Yes	Yes	SPG
	LifeMiles	150,000 to 156,000	180,000 to 222,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	SPG
Delta	Air France/KLM	200,000	N/A	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	AMEX, CITI, SPG
	Virgin Atlantic	120,000		No		AMEX, CITI, CHASE, SPG
	Korean	140,000 to 170,000		Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	CHASE, SPG
Asiana	United	160,000 to 180,000	220,000 to 280,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	CHASE
	Air Canada	150,000 to 155,000	210,000 to 215,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	AMEX, SPG

Operating Airline You See in FCF Headline Sweet Redeems Alert	Possible Better Deal: Book Sweet Redeems Award and Get Free (or Low Cost) Connecting Flights With These Partners Mileage Programs in U.S./Canada and Asia Hub Cities	Partners Programs Miles Round-trip		Free U.S. Connecting Ticket on Partners Mileage Programs?	Connections to other Countries in Asia when using Partners Mileage Programs?	Getting the Partners Programs Miles
	Singapore	175,000 to 195,000	200,000 to 225,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	AMEX, CITI, CHASE, SPG
	All Nippon	85,000 to 136,000	150,000 to 240,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	AMEX, SPG
	Lufthansa Miles & More	135,000	210,000	Yes	Yes	SPG
	LifeMiles	150,000 to 156,000	180,000 to 222,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies	SPG
American	Alaska Airlines	100,000 to 110,000	125,000 to 135,000	Yes	No	SPG
	Etihad Airways	100,000 to 110,000	125,000 to 135,000	Yes	No	CITI, SPG
Cathay Pacific	Alaska Airlines	100,000	140,000	No	Yes: only on Cathay	SPG
	American	120,000 to 140,000	160,000 to 220,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	SPG
Korean Air	Air France/KLM	200,000	N/A	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	AMEX, CITI, SPG
	Delta	190,000 (no award chart)				AMEX, SPG
	Emirates	105,000 to 140,000	N/A	No	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies, only on Korean Air	AMEX, SPG
Singapore	United	160,000 to 180,000	220,000 to 280,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	CHASE
	Air Canada	150,000 to 155,000	210,000 to 215,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies	AMEX, SPG
	All Nippon	85,000 to	150,000 to	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise	AMEX, SPG

Operating Airline You See in FCF Headline Sweet Redeems Alert	Possible Better Deal: Book Sweet Redeems Award and Get Free (or Low Cost) Connecting Flights With These Partners Mileage Programs in U.S./Canada and Asia Hub Cities	Partners Programs Miles Round-trip		Free U.S. Connecting Ticket on Partners Mileage Programs?	Connections to other Countries in Asia when using Partners Mileage Programs?	Getting the Partners Programs Miles
		136,000	240,000		cost varies.	
	Asiana	120,000 to 150,000	160,000 to 210,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	SPG
	Lufthansa Miles & More	135,000	210,000	Yes	Yes	SPG
	LifeMiles	150,000 to 156,000	180,000 to 222,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	SPG
Japan Airlines	Alaska Airlines	120,000 to 130,000	140,000 to 150,000	No: Japan Air flights only	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies, only on Japan Air	SPG
	Emirates	125,000 to 145,000	185,000 to 215,000	No	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies, only on Japan Air	AMEX, SPG
	American	120,000 to 140,000	160,000 to 220,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	SPG
Air Canada	United	160,000 to 180,000	220,000 to 280,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	CHASE
	Singapore	175,000 to 195,000	200,000 to 225,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	AMEX, CITI, CHASE, SPG
	All Nippon	85,000 to 136,000	150,000 to 240,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	AMEX, SPG
	Asiana	120,000 to 150,000	160,000 to 210,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	SPG
	Lufthansa Miles & More	135,000	210,000	Yes	Yes	SPG
	LifeMiles	150,000 to 156,000	180,000 to 222,000	Yes	Yes, if in the same zone: otherwise cost varies.	SPG

AMEX = Amex Rewards, CHASE = Chase Ultimate Rewards, CITI = Citi ThankYou, SPG = Starwood.

Make sense? Please provide feedback below; we're listening!



How Open-Jaw Itineraries and Airfares Can Save You From Getting Bitten

November 2017

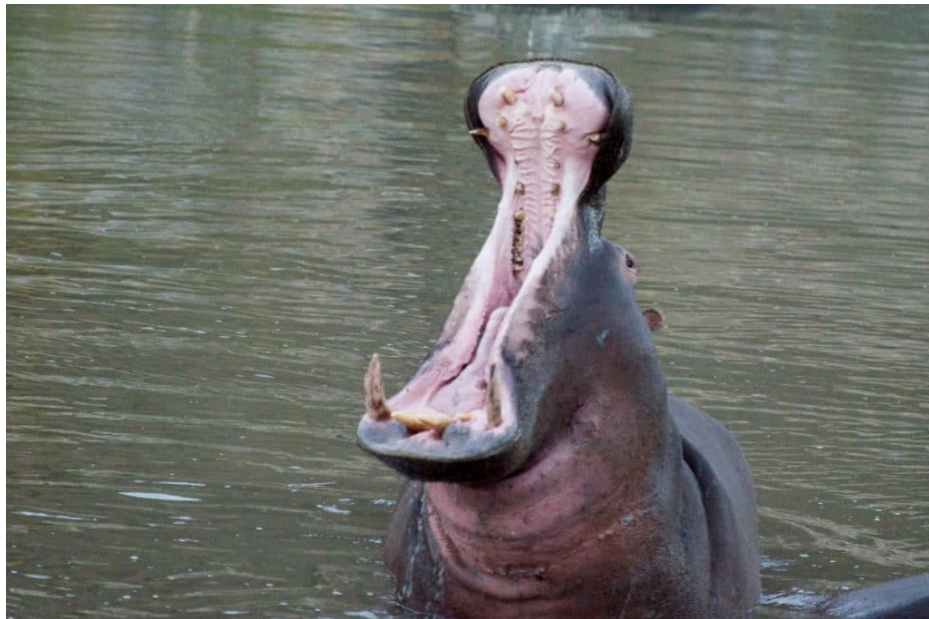
An explanation of the strategy and how to utilize it to get three destinations for “half the price of one.”

One of the most frequent questions members ask us is, “Why does my departure/destination city not turn up more often in FCF fare alerts in the newsroom?”

The answer is simple: The aim of FCF fare alerts is to highlight the routes, departure cities, and destinations that offer the best deal or the lowest fare at that moment. We couldn’t possibly show every fare from every place. So we’re not ignoring you.

Plus, many fares are temperamental and sporadic, and simply may not be very low on the specific route you're looking for.

ENTER OPEN-JAW THINK



Most people fly point-to-point (A-B-A) and back. An Open-Jaw Itinerary, on the other hand, means flying to one city and returning from another (Depart City A, arrive City B, return to City A from City C). Sketch this on a napkin and you'll see that the itinerary looks like a triangle—or the mouth and jawline with the mouth open. Hence, Open Jaw.

Cruise ship itineraries are a perfect example for open-jaw fares. You fly to Barcelona, cruise to Rome, and then fly home from there.

And while you might have every reason to visit B and C before returning home for cruise vacations, we're talking about it because it can **save you a lot of money when flash low fares rear their beautiful heads —on non-cruise trips.**

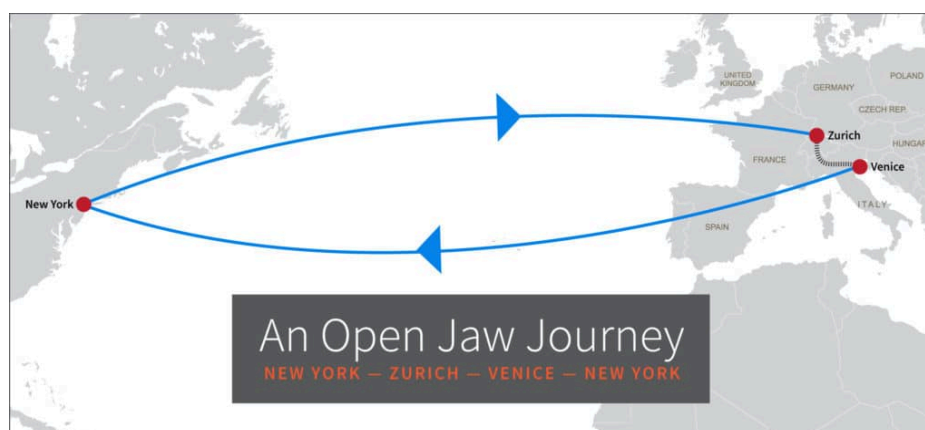
Let's look at an example. Tony has always wanted to go to the Regata Storica in Venice. It's a spectacular regatta that includes races featuring gondolas.

Obviously, Tony has to be in Venice on a particular day (September 2 next year). Now he could buy a return Business ticket to Venice from his home in New York and pay, ouch, \$4,000, because Venice generally commands a high fare.

Or he could look into the jaws of possibility (cue Twilight Zone music).

Tony's an avid [FCF Daily Alert](#) reader, and he sees that a round-trip to Zurich comes up for \$1,600.

Being someone with an Upgrade Mindset, Tony hatches a plan to fly into Zurich, make his way to Venice via train, see the Gondola races in Venice and return to New York from there. A classic open-jaw journey.



Now, here is one of the few times airline fares make any sense, so we've put it in bold: **Most of these fares are "combinable"—you simply halve each round-trip airfare (New York-Zurich and Venice-New York) and add them together to get the total. Just so long as it's with the same airline, or with a code-share partner.**

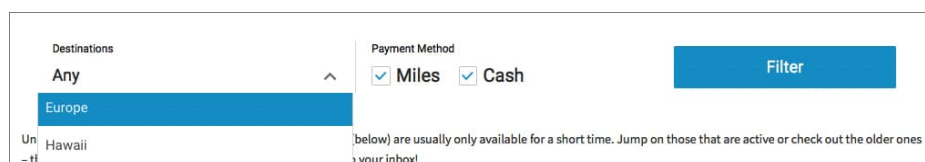
So, half of the Zurich round-trip cost (\$1,600) is \$800. And half of the Venice round-trip cost (\$4,000) is \$2,000. $\$800 + \$2,000 = \$2,800$.

That's a savings of \$1,200 that gets you an added city, and pays for the spectacular train ride or a luxurious suite in Venice.

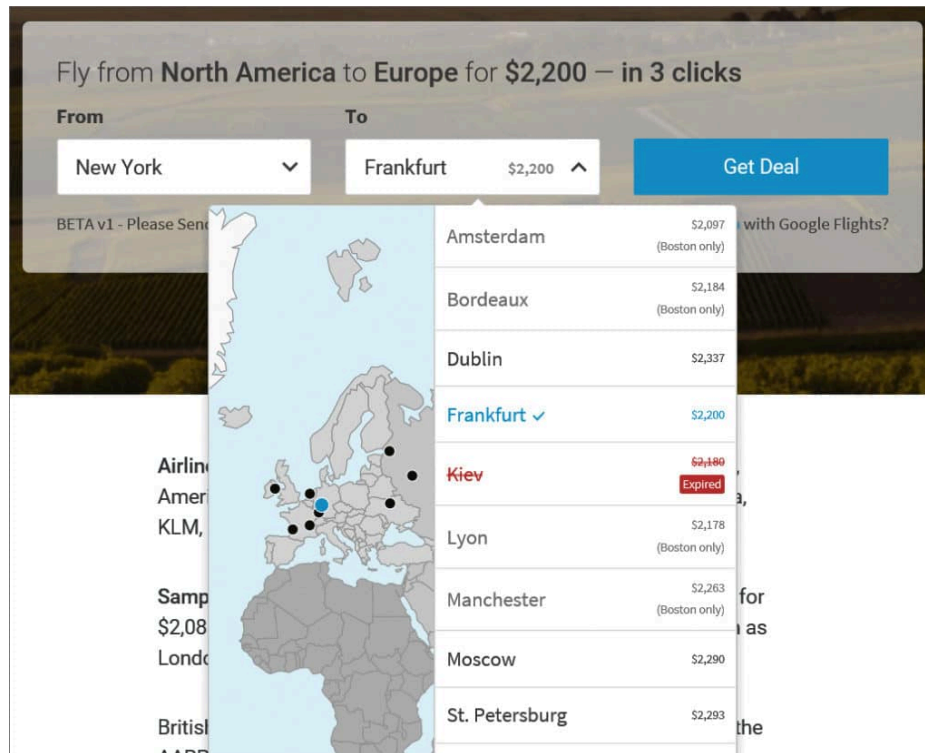
HOW TO BOOK/PRICE AN OPEN-JAW TRIP

First, keep in mind that you'll never see the term "Open-Jaw" in the FCF newsroom or on any booking site, including Google Flights. Instead, click on the "Multi-City" tab and enter the cities in the FCF alert. If you have a travel agent, outsource this task.

Now that you know how to open the opportunities, keep watching for FCF alerts for deals. Remember, you can filter for deals to specific regions on our [upgrade alerts page](#) (see screenshot below for an example), or you might see one on a FCF email alert.



Once you've found a great deal, check out the other cities on offer and the fares (screenshot below) on our amazing hidden-fare widget. Perhaps you always wanted to visit Dublin? Or Moscow?



Once you've decided on your destination, it's time to book. Our fare widget takes you straight to Google Flights.

Google Flights will help you "experiment with pricing various routes" lightening fast—and provide links to book the fares—at airline web sites and other places airline tickets are sold, lightening fast.

As already mentioned, you'll never see the term "open-jaw" on Google Flights, but you will see Multi-city as an option along with Round-trip and One-way. Choose the Multi-city tab and simply enter the cities (and travel dates) involved from the FCF alert. (See screenshot below.)

Obviously, the return flight home will be from a different city—in this example, it's from Venice. (The total fare cost will be the sum of both halves of the return fares, plus taxes.)

Round trip	One way	Multi-city	Business	1 adult
New York City (all airports) +	ZRH Zürich +	Tue, Aug 28 ◀ ▶ ✕		
Venice (all airports) +	New York City (all airports) +	Fri, Sep 14 ◀ ▶ ✕		
Add a flight				

Of course, you don't have to travel by train between European destinations. Zurich and Venice are only 1 hour and 5 minutes apart by air, so a super low economy flight comes into play. Our only caution here is to treat that flight as a separate one-way ticket, because we find the saving are best when you do that. But, by all means, crunch the fares to see what works best. Those jaws like something to chew on.

THE JAWS OF POSSIBILITY ARE ENDLESS

Here at FCF we're always on the lookout for flash fare opportunities. Back in September, for example, the lowest New York to London fare started at about \$3,230. But New York to Frankfurt was only \$1,692. So an open-jaw involving those cities (New York to Frankfurt and London to New York) comes to \$2,461. The Frankfurt to London segment isn't included in that price, but they aren't far apart and cheap to connect.

Or what about a Chicago native who needs to get to Munich? That round-trip fare in Business Class is often around \$3,908. She sees a FCF alert telling her that Chicago to Nice in Business Class is \$1,779. She combines those destinations into an open-jaw ticket on Air France for a total cost of \$2,843 (including taxes), a saving of around \$1,065, that more than takes care of the Nice-Munich connection as well as a nicer hotel in Munich.

THREE CITIES FOR HALF-THE-PRICE-OF-ONE

In the above example, if she was really ambitious, she could fly Chicago-Nice (\$1,779), Bucharest-Chicago (\$1,798), both cities were low-fare routes in recent FCF fare alerts, **and get it all for less than \$1,800—half the cost of a single ticket to Munich (\$3,908).**

If one or both of those cities are on your bucket list, so much the better.

Looking for a smarter way to get from A to B? Think OJ. The power of the open-jaw plus a low fare can make a trip a deal.

Please provide feedback below on your read of this special report. Your feedback will be read by our team of upgrade analysts and used for our next special report. - MB

Best Premium Economy to Europe: Award Season (Part 2)

November 2017

Background
Image

Best Experience, Best Fares, Lowest Mileage Cost—And Where the Free Upgrades Are

Last month we analyzed the best Premium Economy opportunities to Asia. This month we take the awards show to the continent with some decidedly non-European (or even U.S.) winners. And here they are (drumroll):

- **Best PE experience:** Air New Zealand and Singapore Airlines.
- **Lowest PE fares:** Aeroflot, starting at \$937 to Moscow and SAS starting at \$1,027 to Copenhagen or Stockholm.
- **Lowest mileage award rate:** Virgin Atlantic, 35,000 miles round-trip to the UK.

So let's take a short walk along the U.S./Canada-Europe routes. Last month we reviewed airlines to Asia with Premium Economy, all of which you'll find [here](#); and coming soon we'll have a South Pacific report to ponder.

Let's recap the show so far:

Premium Economy has an A-list (PE Elite) and a B-list (PE Lite).

The former refers to airlines that have created a separate cabin and an upgraded seat—among them, many international airlines and a line-up that now includes American and Delta—while the latter (United among them) are putting in wooden performances, having just put in a bit more legroom at the front of economy.

MILEAGE AWARD COST DIFFERENCE: ECONOMY VS. PE

Flying to/from Europe allows you to take advantage of award-chart anomalies. Having the right credit cards, meaning those from Amex Rewards, Chase, Citi ThankYou, or Starwood, enables you to take advantage of those anomalies.


It means you can sometimes book a **PE Elite award at or less than the cost of economy (that's like a free upgrade)** to Europe.


An Example: On New York-London, Virgin Atlantic charges as little as 35,000 miles for PE Elite (United charges 60,000 for economy). This is one of the lowest PE Elite awards to Europe from the U.S. (The second best is on British Airways, starting at 52,000 miles on NYC-London.) It costs even less if you use Starwood points: only 30,000 Starpoints—**30,000 fewer miles for PE Elite than for economy (again, think free**

upgrade). In other words, if you earn miles/points via a Starwood card and book via Virgin Atlantic, as opposed to earning with a United credit card, you're getting a **free upgrade.** (Standing ovation.)

THE BEST PE ELITE AIRLINES TO EUROPE

Here's a rundown—the seat and the cost to use miles or cash.

Aeroflot	
<div><p>SEAT</p><p>Available on B777 aircraft: 20 inches wide, 38-inch pitch, 123-degree recline, 10.6-inch monitor, footrest, headrest, amenity kit, and meals from the Business Class menu.</p></div>	<div></div>
<div><p>MILEAGE AWARD COST</p><p>To Moscow: 90,000 miles. Business Class is 20,000 miles more.</p></div>	
<div><p>CASH</p><p>Fares to Moscow start at \$937 from New York, compared to \$2,517 in Business Class.</p></div>	

Air Canada	
<div><p>SEAT</p><p>Varies by aircraft: 18 to 20 inches wide, 38-inch pitch, 7- to 8-inch recline, 10.4- to 11-inch touch-screen (8.9 inches on the A330-333), adjustable headrest, foot bar, amenity kit (international flights), and upgraded meal service.</p></div>	<div></div>
<div><p>MILEAGE AWARD COST</p><p>75,000 to 90,000. Business Class is 25,000 to 35,000 miles more.</p></div>	
<div><p>CASH</p><p>Varies by route. Vancouver-London starts at US\$1,736 versus US\$5,455 in Business Class, and Toronto-Paris costs US\$1,512 (Business Class is US\$4,619). In short, PE is a decent value.</p></div>	

Air France (New Premium Economy Seat Offered on B787-9)	

Air France (New Premium Economy Seat Offered on B787-9)

SEAT

Based on the B787: 19 inches wide, 38-inch pitch, 130-degrees recline, 11-inch monitor, calf rest and footrest, headrest, amenity kit, and upgraded meal service (complimentary drinks, Ice cream, fresh products, mini sandwiches (self-service buffet), a box of sweet and savory snacks).



Air France B787 Premium Economy Seat

MILEAGE AWARD COST

To Paris: 100,000 miles. Business Class is 25,000 miles more.

Air France Premium Economy

CASH

Fares start at \$1,395 on NYC-Paris and \$1,649 from Los Angeles, compared to \$2,535 in Business Class from NYC and \$3,360 from Los Angeles.

Air New Zealand

SEAT

Only one route (LAX-LON), and it uses a B777-300: 19.3 inches wide (with a 5-inch wide armrest), 41-inch pitch, 9-inch recline, 11-inch touchscreen monitor, leg and foot rest, adjustable winged headrest, amenity kit, and upgraded meal service.




MILEAGE AWARD COST


The cost varies by value of paid ticket.

CASH


Fares start at \$1,620 on Los Angeles-London, compared to \$4,078 in Business Class.

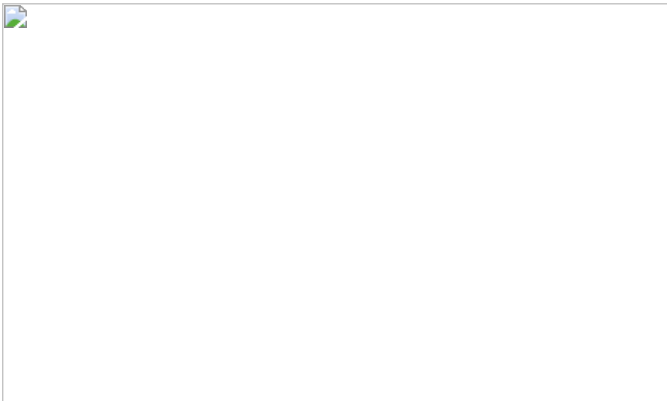
Air New Zealand Premium Economy


Alitalia	
<div>SEAT</div> <div>19.2 inches wide, 37 to 38-inch pitch, 120-degree recline, 10.4 to 10.6-inch monitor, calf rest and footrest, headrest, amenity kit, and upgraded meal service.</div>	<div></div>
<div>MILEAGE AWARD COST</div> <div>To Italy: 65,000 miles round-trip. Business Class is 15,000 more miles. (Valid till Dec. 31.)</div>	
<div>CASH</div> <div>Fares on the New York-Rome route start at \$1,438 and Miami-Rome starts at \$1,435, compared to \$2,653 in Business Class from NYC and \$3,199 from Miami.</div>	
Alitalia Premium Economy	

American	
<div><div>SEAT</div><div>19-inch seat width, 38-inch seat pitch, 6-inch recline, 15.6-inch touch-screen monitor, foot, leg and head rests, amenity kit, and upgraded meal service.</div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
<div><div>MILEAGE AWARD COST</div><div>While it offers a PE Elite seat, AA currently does not offer Premium Economy mileage awards.</div></div>	
<div><div>CASH</div><div>Varies by route: Miami-Paris PE fares start at \$1,116 versus \$2,527 in Business Class; Dallas-</div></div>	<div>American Airlines Premium Economy</div>


American	
Frankfurt at \$1,768 versus \$3,958. PE is a good value. (For more on AA's PE Elite routes and fares, go here .)	

British Airways: BA is currently upgrading its Premium Economy product, so it offers two types of Premium Economy seats. The new cabin is available now on BA's following aircraft: A380, B787, B777-300ER. Still being refurbished are the B777-200 and B767. Seat data below is based on the new seat.	
<div>SEAT</div> <div>18.5 inches wide, 38-inch pitch, 8-inch recline. 10.5-inch IFE monitor, lumbar support, head rest and foot rest, amenity kit, and upgraded meal service (lunch or dinner, a choice of two of the meals featured on the business class menu and complimentary bar).</div>	<div></div>
<div>MILEAGE AWARD COST</div> <div>To London varies by route and season: 52,000 to 80,000 from New York and 65,000 to 100,000 from Los Angeles. Business Class is 40,000 to 60,000 miles more.</div>	
<div>CASH</div> <div>Fares to London start at \$1,216 from New York and \$1,341 from Los Angeles, compared to \$3,575 in Business Class from NYC and \$4,108 from LAX. In short, PE is a good value.</div>	
British Airways Premium Economy	


Delta	
<p>SEAT</p> <p>Will start offering Delta's A350 on the Detroit-Amsterdam route March 31, 2018: 19-inch seat width, 38-inch pitch, 7-inch recline, 13.3-inch screen, foot, leg and head rests, amenity kit, and upgraded meal service.</p>	
<p>MILEAGE AWARD COST</p> <p>110,000 miles; Business Class is 140,000 miles. (Delta does not publish a mileage chart, at time of publishing this was the lowest mileage rate we could find.)</p>	
<p>CASH</p> <p>Lowest fares start at \$1,649 on the Detroit-Amsterdam route, versus \$2,919 in Business Class.</p>	

EL AL	
<p>SEAT</p> <p>19.5 inches wide, 38-inch pitch, 8-inch recline, 13.3-inch monitor, calf rest and footrest, headrest, amenity kit, and upgraded meal service.</p>	
<p>MILEAGE AWARD COST</p> <p>One route only, New York-Tel Aviv: 2,800 to 3,200 points. Business Class is 5,000 points.</p>	


EL AL	
<p>CASH</p> <p>Fares start at \$1,748 from New York, compared to \$3,340 in Business Class.</p>	


Lot Polish	
<p>SEAT</p> <p>19.5 inches wide, 38-inch pitch, 132 degree (6-inch) recline, 10.6-inch monitor, footrests, leg support and adjustable headrests, amenity kit, and upgraded meal service, access to LOT's Business Lounge in Warsaw.</p>	
<p>MILEAGE AWARD COST</p> <p>To Warsaw: 80,000 miles. Business Class is 25,000 miles more.</p>	
<p>CASH</p> <p>Fares start at \$2,112 on New York-Warsaw route, compared to \$4,219 in Business Class.</p>	<div>  <div></div> </div> <p>Lot Polish Premium Economy</p>


Lufthansa	

Lufthansa	
<p>SEAT</p> <p>19 inches wide, 38-inch pitch, 7-inch recline, 11 to 12-inch monitor, footrest, headrest, amenity kit, and upgraded meal service, Business Class lounge access for \$35.</p>	 <p>Lufthansa Premium Economy</p>
<p>MILEAGE AWARD COST</p> <p>To Germany: 80,000 miles. Business Class is 25,000 miles more.</p>	
<p>CASH</p> <p>Fares start at \$1,304 on the NYC-Frankfurt route and \$2,049 from Los Angeles, compared to \$2,300 from NYC and \$4,600 from LAX in Business Class.</p>	

OpenSkies	
<p>SEAT</p> <p>20 inches wide, 47-inch pitch, 130-degree recline, personal iPad, calf rest and footrest, headrest, amenity kit, and upgraded meal service.</p>	

OpenSkies	
<p>MILEAGE AWARD COST</p> <p>80,000 miles. Business Class is 25,000 miles more.</p>	
<p>CASH</p> <p>Fares start at \$1,620 on Los Angeles- London, compared to \$4,078 in Business Class.</p>	<p>OpenSkies Premium Economy</p>

Scandinavian Air	
<p>SEAT</p> <p>18 inches wide, 38-inch pitch, 7-inch recline, 12- inch monitor, footrest, headrest, amenity kit, and upgraded meal service, use the Business Class check- in, SAS Business Lounges (SAS operated only) from the U.S. in Newark and Chicago.</p>	
<p>MILEAGE AWARD COST</p> <p>80,000 miles. Business Class is 20,000 miles more.</p>	
<p>CASH</p> <p>Fares start at \$1,027 on Newark- Stockholm/Copenhagen routes, and \$1,223 Los Angeles-Stockholm, compared to \$2,900 from New York and \$3,194 from Los Angeles in Business Class.</p>	<p>Scandinavian Premium Economy</p>

Singapore	
<p>SEAT</p> <p>19.5 inches wide, 38-inch pitch, 8-inch recline, 13.3-inch HD touchscreen monitor, calf rest and footrest, headrest, amenity kit, and upgraded meal service (book via 'Book the Cook').</p>	
<p>MILEAGE AWARD COST</p> <p>Only two routes: New York-Frankfurt and Houston-Manchester are 90,000 miles (Business 130,000).</p>	 Singapore Airlines Premium Economy
<p>CASH</p> <p>Fares start at \$1,273 on NYC-Frankfurt and \$1,778 on Houston-Manchester, compared to \$2,503 in Business Class from NYC and \$3,858 from Houston. Your choice: Save up to \$2,080 (54%) over Business Class or 40,000 (31% fewer) miles.</p>	Singapore Airlines Premium Economy

SEAT

Up to 21 inches wide, 39-inch pitch, 16 degrees of recline, 11-inch monitor, footrest, headrest, amenity kit, and upgraded meal service.

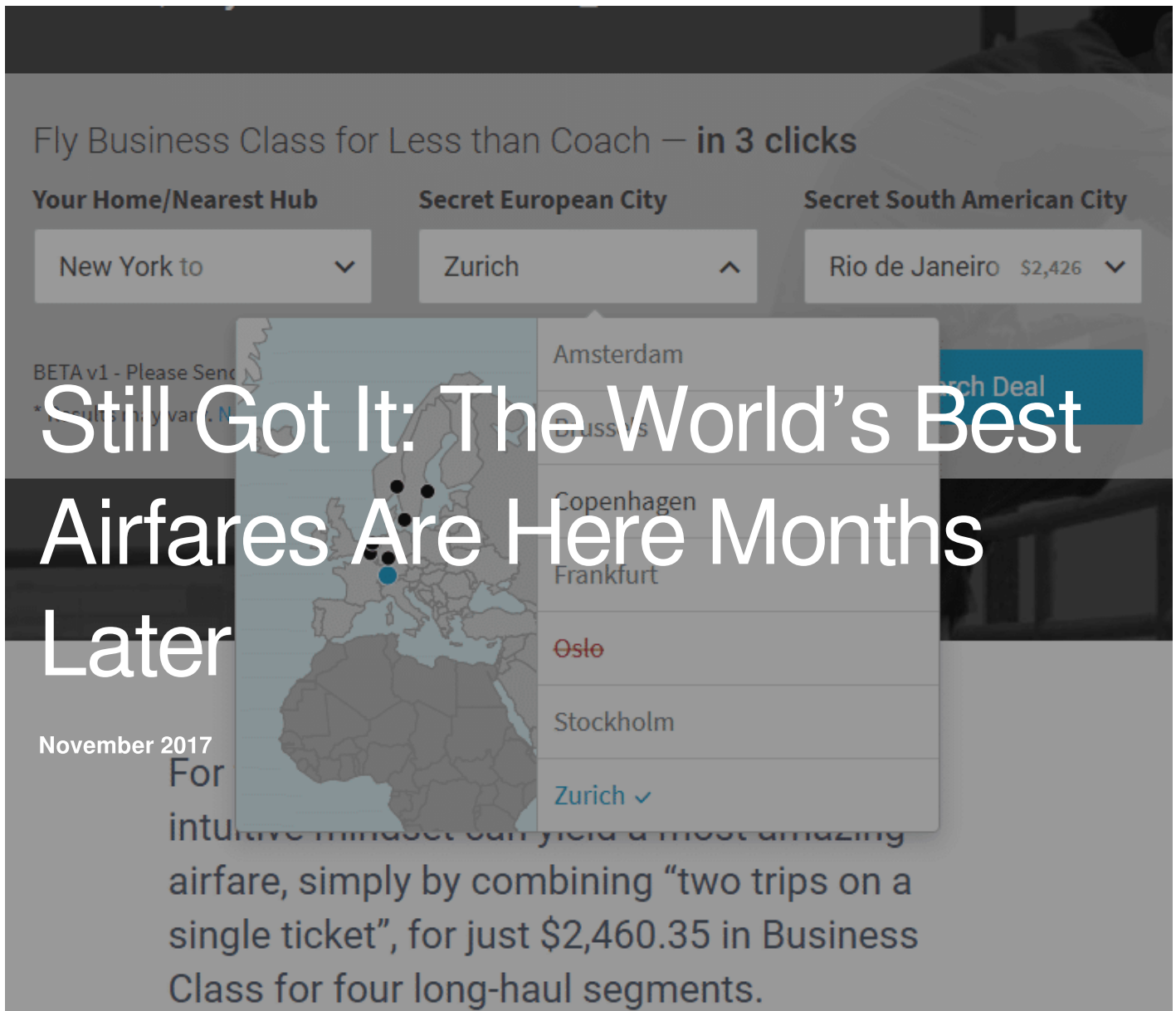
**MILEAGE AWARD COST**

To UK varies by route and season: 35,000 to 55,000 miles round-trip standard season; peak season is 20,000 miles more. Business Class is 95,000 to 135,000 miles.

CASH

Fares to London start at \$1,215 from New York and \$1,116 from Los Angeles, compared to \$3,501 in Business Class from NYC and \$3,901 from LAX. In short, PE is a good value.

Virgin Atlantic Premium Economy



After 21+ 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.

FCF'S LEG STRETCH STRATEGY: HOW TO STRETCH YOUR BUSINESS CLASS DOLLAR THE FURTHEST

FCF readers have surely seen the special reports we've written over the past few issues under the heading about the Leg Stretch Strategy.

A quick recap: The Leg Stretch Strategy uses unconventional routings and a North American stopover to save money on international tickets—in other words, it connects non-North American continents, with the U.S. acting as the middle-leg.

For example, you live in the U.S. and do business or vacation in Europe twice a year or more. In addition, you have a hankering to go to South America if you can get the right fare.

The Leg Stretch Strategy packages these seemingly disparate destinations into one beautifully fare-friendly ticket that doesn't have to be done in one go. You break up the itinerary to **suit your schedule**.

It does this by making use of free round-trip stopovers, which are cheapest out of **little-known special-fare cities in Europe**. Some folks turn off right there because they live in the U.S. and want to go to Europe. The trick is in the sequencing of the trip, and the first part is: get yourself to Europe on a discounted one-way flight, 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. The report links below all show how the structure works.

KEEP STRETCHING


As mentioned, the great news is that the Leg Stretches FCF has been writing about recently are still active, particularly the best fare, [as reported here in May involving Europe and the South Pacific](#), a savings of over \$6,000. We've been constantly updating these routes and fares and our [Trip Widget](#) gives you everything you need to know to make it happen.

In June the Leg Stretch covered [Asia and South America](#), a savings of over \$4,000.

In July it was [Europe and South America using Delta and their SkyTeam partners](#), getting Business Class for less than coach.

In August it was [United and Star Alliance partners between Europe and South America](#), getting Business Class for less than coach.

If you haven't done so, we urge you to take another look at the Leg Stretch Strategy, because it is quite an astonishing way to save on airfares. The airlines could put a stop to this with a simple fare rule change, but 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.



Six Plays to Consider When There's Only One Mileage Seat Available

November 2017

Scoring mileage award seats can be hard, especially in Business and First Class. So when pickings are slim, do you just give in? Those words aren't in FCF's vocabulary. Here's why.

There's nothing like sharing a First Class experience with a loved one. Memories are made of this (I often hear from readers, who recall many a great flight). Maybe it's just us romantics at FCF, but we think the memories are even more special when you score those First Class seats with some smart tactical thinking.

Here are six ways to score more than one premium ticket when that's all there seems to be at first.

SEARCHING FOR MILEAGE AWARD SPACE

Most folks naturally search for availability depending on the number of people traveling. We don't. We search for one seat. *Then* search for a second seat. Why? Because when you search for two seats you won't see the one-seat options available. It's just the way airline search engines work. Search for two seats and you'll find much less availability.

Singapore Airlines, for example, is notable for only releasing one First Class award seat at a time. But here's the thing: They continue to drip-feed availability up to departure time, as do other airlines. So when you do get that precious award seat, it doesn't mean you won't get another; you just have to play the game and be patient.

GRAB A SEAT IN FIRST AND ONE IN BUSINESS

If it comes down to it, grab the one award seat in First and then search Business Class, as it tends to have better availability. Grab that seat, too. Then you have a few choices:

1. You can toss a coin as to who gets to sit in First.
2. Call us crazy, but if you want to sit next to your honey, you can offer your First Class seat to the passenger next to them in Business Class as a trade. We've never heard anyone say, "No thanks, but I prefer the service and comfort of Business over First."
3. Be pragmatic about it, even if it is on a different flight. You've just spent a week together, she needs to do some laptop work and I'm going to watch a movie—we can endure being a cabin apart or on a different flight in order to fly in comfort.

AWARD AVAILABILITY IS A GAME OF BRINKMANSHIP

It's a fact of flying: award space tends to open up as the day of departure approaches. If you can stay on top of the ever-changing allotment of low-cost award seats, you can score big upgrades, simply by upgrading confirmed seats to their more luxurious cousins 20 yards ahead. Etihad, Singapore, and Japan Airlines, for example, often only open up award space two or so weeks before departure for First Class, and the same holds true for flights to regions such as the South Pacific. Maybe we should call it "blinkmanship"—in the staring contest with the airline, who's going to blink first?

SIZE UP THE AIRCRAFT

All things being equal, consider the size of the cabin. The more seats there are on one particular flight, the greater the chance of getting two mileage award seats on the one flight. That's simple math, but not everyone thinks about it.

For example, take Los Angeles-Frankfurt on Lufthansa for travel June 5. Lufthansa offers two non-stop flights that day, LH457, an [A340-600](#) aircraft that has 44 to 56 Business Class seats, and LH451, a [B747-8](#) aircraft that has 80 Business Class seats—36 more seats can increase the odds of low-cost mileage award availability opening up along the way.

WAITLIST AWARD SPACE

It's worth waitlisting if you're not having much luck with other options. We've seen it come through, but it came through one seat at a time, not both together. All Nippon, Cathay Pacific, Japan Airlines, Singapore Airlines, and United are best for this.

BUY ONE TICKET WITH CASH

If all else fails, get the other with miles and you're still 50% ahead.

CONCENTRATE ON THE LONG HAUL SEGMENT

If you're traveling internationally from a smaller U.S. city, put your chips on the long-haul flight. For example, if you live in Boise and are going to London via Chicago, the important seats are the ones on the Chicago to London leg. It sounds obvious, but divide the legs and you're more likely to conquer them.

BE PROACTIVE: FCF TO THE SEAT RESCUE

FCF gives you a heads-up on multi-seat availability in our [Sweet Redeem alerts](#) with an Availability Calendar. It shows one-, two-, and four-seat availability by route, so you can see at a glance what's on offer. If you want to make award flying easy like I do, just book "Where the seats are."



A person is captured mid-jump, leaping from a dark rock formation on the left towards another rock formation on the right. The person is wearing a dark shirt, shorts, and a backpack. The background is a clear, deep blue sky. The title text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

The Stump, Jump, And Dump: A Unique Approach to Upgrading Your Booking, Close-In

November 2017

Airlines see last-minute or Business travelers coming from a mile away; they often leave tell-tale patterns, as clear as a jet's white trail, against a deep blue sky. Here's a way to fly under the airline-pricing radar.

Business travelers tend to book on short notice AND/OR they travel mid-week, as they want to be home for the weekend. With these signs, a little bell rings at airline HQ: "We've got another one: crank up the fare!"

Last-minute and Business travelers (particularly if they have their own business) detest paying these disproportionately-high fares, but they know that the airlines have them over a barrel (and the barrel is at the

top of Niagara Falls).

WE SEE ANOTHER DYNAMIC AT PLAY

Now, here at FCF, we see another dynamic at play that most business travelers don't take into account: **close-in mileage-seat availability**. On many airlines, "Sweet Redeems" (routes with *unusual very-low-cost premium class award availability*) become a lot more prevalent a week or two out from the departure date, often.

The airlines have learned how to play the final two minutes of the game.

AND SO AN FCF STRATEGY IS BORN: THE STUMP, JUMP, AND DUMP

Here's how it plays:

1. **Stump** up for whatever Business Class airfare your trip requires.
2. **Jump** on a lucrative "Sweet Redeem" award when it comes up closer to departure. This could mean using existing miles, or [buying miles](#) (more cost-effective) if you don't have them.
3. **Dump** that high priced cash ticket. You may be able to get a complete refund, but more likely there will be a fee (relatively minor compared to the savings), to be able to use the cost of the ticket for a future flight, usually 12 months from the booking date.

HERE'S THE STUMP, JUMP AND DUMP IN SCREENSHOTS

As an example, take the New York-London fare on American in the screenshot below. A typical Business Class walk-up fare (meaning within two weeks of departure) is \$7,622. If you must get to your meeting in Business Class and there are no other options, **Stump** up for it in the meantime.

Round trip One way Multi-city Business 1 adult

JFK New York City LHR London

October 23 Wed, November 1

Nonstop Price Airline Times More

Calendar Flexible dates Price graph

October							November						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4			
							\$7,622	\$4,416	\$4,416	\$4,416			
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
							\$6,094	\$4,416	\$4,416	\$4,416	\$4,416	\$4,416	\$4,416
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
				\$7,772	\$7,772	\$7,622	\$4,416	\$4,416	\$4,416	\$4,416	\$3,502	\$4,042	\$3,502
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
\$7,622	\$7,622	\$7,622	\$7,622	\$7,622	\$7,622	\$7,622	\$3,502	\$3,502	\$3,502	\$3,502	\$3,502	\$3,502	\$3,502
29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30		
\$7,622	\$7,622	\$7,622					\$3,752	\$3,502	\$3,502	\$3,752	\$3,502		

Next, short-term availability opens up at low-cost mileage rates (115,000 miles round-trip). We say: **Jump** on it!

Departure
From: New York John F Kennedy Intl - JFK and Area
To: London Heathrow - LHR and Area
Flight Date: Thursday, October 19, 2017
Miles Used: 30,000
[Taxes and Carrier-Imposed Fees](#)
All award travel requires the government taxes/fees, and carrier-imposed fees when applicable, from \$60.60 per person per award

Award Legend Taxes and Carrier-Imposed Fees Apply [Award Details](#)

Economy MileSAAver Economy AAnytime **Business/First MileSAAver*** Business/First AAnytime* First MileSAAver First AAnytime

* Valid for Business/First on flights with two classes of service where applicable and Business class on all other flights.

October / November 2017 Requested: Thu Oct 19 [Close Full Calendar](#)

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				19 30K	20 30K	21 30K
22 30K	23 57.5K	24 57.5K	25 30K	26 30K	27 57.5K	28 30K
29 65K	30 57.5K	31 47.5K	1 57.5K	2 47.5K	3 47.5K	4 47.5K
5 47.5K	6 47.5K	7 22.5K	8 22.5K	9 22.5K	10 22.5K	11 22.5K
12 22.5K	13 57.5K	14 22.5K	15 22.5K	16 22.5K		

Number of Stops: Non-stop only
Calendar(s) displays the lowest available Award Miles for that day

And finally, the next screenshot shows the cost of that “Sweet Redeem” award opportunity if you have to buy miles: \$3,392 (not including the current buy miles promotion, which offers a 10% cash savings and 35,000 bonus miles). So, instead of paying \$7,622, it’s costing \$3,392 to buy 115,000 miles, a savings of \$4,230, less any fees for refunds and the like, which is what will happen when you happily **Dump** that first high-priced cash ticket.

Check out the October bonus miles and discount promotion

Number of miles to buy / gift
Miles + bonus miles = price

115,000 + 35,000 = \$3,053.25

You save \$339.25 and earn 35,000 bonus miles!

Save big and earn bonus miles when you buy or gift American Airlines AAdvantage® miles through November 2.

Use your eligible AAdvantage® credit card to earn additional miles for every dollar you spend.

If you already have the miles, you're laughing all the more.

THERE'S ALSO A PLAY AT FIRST

Another way to play the **Stump, Jump, and Dump** is to *use the savings* to **upgrade to First Class**, always enticing for a transatlantic flight. For a First Class fare, normally around \$10,000+, it equates to an upgrade for the price of a Business Class fare, if not less.

In other words, using your miles to get a First Class ticket (or by buying the miles required if you don't have any or enough) can cost substantially less than the original Business Class ticket you bought.