



Airline Tactical Fares and the Upgrade Mindset

February 2024

When airlines get tactical, it's time to get practical

We thought it was a good time to revisit **tactical fares**.

A tactical fare (an airline industry technical term) is a fare that an airline intentionally and strategically discounts to move seats it doesn't expect to sell at full price. A tactical fare's shelf life is unpredictable, more of a one-off, and targeted to unsold inventory.

These "discounted" fares are affected by a wide range of specific factors, including season, holidays (Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, etc.), the airport of departure (JFK vs. Newark, for example), soft market destinations (London vs Florence), and other reasons.

Back in December 2017, we did a deep dive into this subject. Back then, low Business Class fares to Europe were in the \$1,700-\$1,800 range and didn't stick around long. We referred to those fares as "flash" or "anomaly" fares. Unfortunately, we're not seeing fares that low on major airlines now. These days they're typically in the \$2,400 to \$2,800 range. While it's not 2017 anymore, these tactical fares are still good in this climate of inflation compared to today's typical high fares to Europe, which can often otherwise be \$5,000+.

For example:

Oneworld: On American from New York to Rome, we've recently seen tactical fares for about [\\$2,521](#). When these fares are not available, you can often find prices in the \$3,200 to \$5,000 range.

SkyTeam: From Los Angeles to Milan, recent tactical fares ran about [\\$2,510](#). At other times, prices are often in the \$3,200 to \$5,000 range.

Star Alliance: We've seen tactical fares from Orlando to Zurich, on United for about [\\$2,520](#). Otherwise, prices are often in the \$3,200 to \$5,000 range.

TACTICAL TRENDS

Pricewise, airline travel is such a dynamic industry. So, trying to view it like it's a walrus lazing on a rock is a huge mistake. With over a million fare changes *every day* around the world, it's more like a cheetah with wings and the reflexes of a condylostylus.*



The airline industry moves lightning-fast

That means you have to move fast too! And keep your eyes wide open for movement in the jungle. Let's zoom in our binoculars on the current market's tactical fare animals.

Today, [fare dips](#) seem to be the trend, although they are sporadic. So, it's good to know where these volatile fare markets are. Plus, you need to be "[upgrade-open-minded](#)" to take advantage of them.

We've recently seen [great low "Business Class" fare routes](#) from all over the U.S. to Brussels starting at \$2,525, Florence at \$2,529, Frankfurt at \$2,001, Lisbon at \$1,639, Madrid at \$1,782, Malaga at \$2,524, Naples at \$2,522, and Paris at \$1,897.

So if you want to land these low tactical fares to Europe, you'll need to be flexible and keep a close eye on [FCF alerts](#) for the best fares.

Speaking of which, our alerts are a simple tool in our overarching philosophy of either paying less for upcoming premium travel or [getting a better deal](#) with what you already booked. We call this "[upgrading](#)," which is another way of saying that you've improved your travel situation.

When fares are high, more workarounds below about tactical fare mindset strategies for the [upgrade mindful](#), traveler.

TACTICAL FARES: WHEN AIRLINES HAVE A SALE AND DON'T TELL ANYONE

Airlines aren't like Macy's running a commercial every hour on your television. When airlines have a sale, they're very particular about who knows about it.

That's because Peter in 3B would be incandescent with fury if he knew that Paul next to him in 3A paid \$1,574+ less for his seat.

That's what tactical fares can do: They rob Peter to pay Paul.

Take the Chicago-to-Frankfurt route. United's computers forecast some empty seats in Business Class, so they offer those traveling from Milwaukee to Frankfurt (who are willing to fly via Chicago) a spectacular deal to fill those seats. The difference is 63 miles and 35% *LESS* when departing from Milwaukee vs Chicago.

The shortcut to happiness? Be Paul, not Peter.

UNITED.COM SCREENSHOT CHICAGO-FRANKFURT BUSINESS CLASS FARE \$4,519

 UNITED			
Your trip to: Frankfurt, DE (FRA)	3:30 PM ORD 8H, 15M FRA	5:45 AM	Mon, Mar 25 United Polaris business (P)
Your trip to: Chicago, IL, US (ORD)	8:50 AM FRA 9H, 5M ORD	10:55 AM	Mon, Apr 1 United Polaris business (P)
		Fare	\$4,330.00
		Taxes and fees	\$189.00
		Total due	\$4,519.00

UNITED.COM SCREENSHOT MILWAUKEE-FRANKFURT VIA CHICAGO BUSINESS CLASS FARE \$2,945

 UNITED			
Your trip to: Frankfurt, DE (FRA)	5:20 PM MKE 10H, 35M FRA ORD - 1H, 11M	9:55 AM	Mon, Mar 25 United Economy (Y) United Polaris business (P)
Your trip to: Milwaukee, WI, US (MKE)	8:50 AM FRA 13H, 18M MKE ORD - 3H, 15M	3:08 PM	Mon, Apr 1 United Polaris business (P) United Economy (Y)
		Fare	\$2,742.00
		Taxes and fees	\$203.60
		Total due	\$2,945.60

HOLIDAY TACTICAL FARES

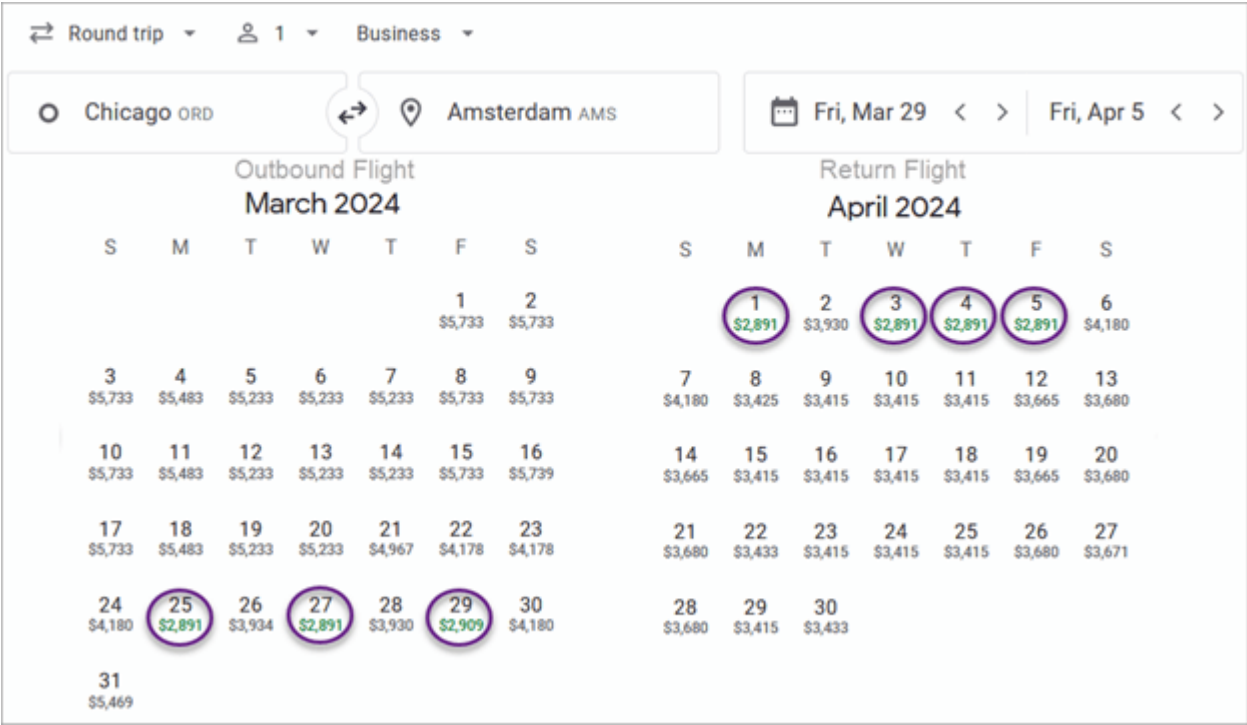
Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, and New Year's Eve are all examples of holiday tactical fare discounting. It's a time when many business travelers stay at home, so airlines historically have more unsold premium seats.

Holiday fares back [in 2020 were in the \\$1,900 to \\$2,250](#) range from both the East and West Coast to Europe. This year, holiday travel saw higher than usual fares in the \$2,500 to \$3,000 range from all over the U.S. Instead of the typical short travel window from November 20 to December 3 for Thanksgiving and December

18 to January 4 for Christmas, the window expanded for travel throughout November, December, and January, as well as a short seven–10-day window both to and from Europe for Easter at the end of March to mid-April, which is still valid on many routes.

Below is a sample of Tactical Business Class fares for travel from Chicago to Amsterdam during the Easter holiday for \$2,891, which typically go for \$3,930 to \$4,973 just one week later, from early April onward. That's a savings of up to 42%.

SAMPLE OF EASTER TACTICAL FARES



There are still several routes offering these low-cost tactical Easter holiday fares, which [you can find in FCF's newsroom](#).

This is great for the [upgrade-mindful person who is flexible](#) with their dates. Is that you? If so, this is a good opportunity to tick off your bucket list in no particular order.

If Amsterdam or Frankfurt are on sale — go there or use one of them as a bridge route to another nearby destination that is on your bucket list.

DEPARTURE-SPECIFIC TACTICAL FARES

Singapore Airlines charges \$11,289 for a First Class round-trip fare from New York to Frankfurt. Lufthansa charges \$7,549. The difference, apart from the price? The Lufthansa flight leaves from Newark, while the Singapore flight leaves from JFK. So, the upgrade-mindful are aware of how an airport location can yield big savings. They don't pull the shutters down when JFK isn't on the table. If a cheaper fare appears from Hartford, they might spend \$120 on a limo to Hartford to save \$3,740 on the fare.

Round trip		1	First		
New York		Frankfurt FRA	Thu, May 30		Thu, Jun 6
	6:00 PM – 7:30 AM ⁺¹ Lufthansa	7 hr 30 min EWR–FRA	Nonstop	2,220 kg CO2e -11% emissions ⓘ	\$7,549 round trip
	8:55 PM – 10:40 AM ⁺¹ Singapore Airlines	7 hr 45 min JFK–FRA	Nonstop	3,455 kg CO2e +38% emissions ⓘ	\$11,289 round trip

DESTINATION-SPECIFIC TACTICAL FARES

While London and Paris might be on sale because of **excess capacity**, other cities such as Amsterdam, Barcelona, Brussels, Bucharest, Budapest, Copenhagen, Geneva, Lisbon, Oslo, Vienna, and Warsaw are examples of **softer markets**, and they're all prone to market-specific tactical fares.

The airlines look for ways to bolster sales to those destinations when they need to. The upgrade-*mindless* person says: "I don't want to go to Geneva, I want to go to Paris." And so, like Swiss chocolate melting in the sun, there goes a great opportunity. The [Upgrade Mindful](#), on the other hand, knows that most European cities are relatively close to each other. Flights within Europe are cheap, and even free at times when you fly within airline alliances. For example: the New York-Amsterdam route goes for \$2,709 round-trip, compared to Prague for \$3,953. That's a savings of \$1,244 (31%).



It's closer than you think.

CLOSE IN TACTICAL FARES

For some reason that only airline execs could tell you, these fares seem to defy the norm when it comes to advance-purchase requirements. For example, flying from Houston to London nonstop in Business Class on major airlines such as American, Delta, KLM, Lufthansa, and United goes for between \$3,500 and \$3,700, whereas the Houston-to-Paris route is \$5,750 to \$6,600 on short notice.

Are you active or passive when it comes to fares? Maybe it's time to [consider what airlines are offering](#), and not just what you initially want. This is the [Upgrade Mindset](#) at work: being flexible, opportunistic, and taking advantage of the airlines' own tactical game.

See you up front.

**Glad you asked. A condylostylus is a species of fly with a reflex response time of less than 5 milliseconds. For comparison, it takes us at least 100 milliseconds to blink our eyes.*



FCF's Three U-Turn Strategies That Can Net First Class to Asia for Nearly the Cost of Biz

February 2024

Save up to 59% on round-trip flights in First Class and up to 52% in Business Class when you travel from Asia to the U.S.

Last July we told you about the [U-Turn Strategy](#) to Europe. That's the one where Business Class round-trips starting in Europe can be way more cost-friendly than those that start in the U.S.

Today we're talking about using that strategy to get to Asia.

But first, the (Asian) elephant in the room: "Matt, I live in the U.S. so this doesn't work for me."

Well, yes it can.

If you’re planning to visit Asia more than once in a 12-month period, as many do for business, family travel, or pleasure, then this strategy can save you a trunk load of money.

SETTING THE TABLE FOR AN ASIAN KICK-OFF

With round-trip fares up to 59% less in First Class and 52% less in Business Class when you travel **from Asia to the U.S.** versus from the U.S. to Asia, that’s where a U-turn becomes a U-win.



U Turn, U Win

Below are some **sample round-trip fares from the U.S. to Asia**. Now compare those prices with U.S. round-trips that originate in Asia. Just look at those with \$10,000+ in savings — a staggering difference.

SAMPLE FIRST CLASS FARES U.S. > ASIA VS. ASIA > U.S.

U.S. Airport	Asia Destination	Airline	U.S. to Asia First Class	Asia to U.S. First Class	Low-fare Airline	Savings	
Chicago	Tokyo	Japan	\$24,805	\$10,214	ANA	\$14,591	59%
Dallas			\$23,471	\$20,609	Japan	\$2,862	12%
Los Angeles	Seoul	Korean	\$19,988	\$8,143	Korean	\$11,845	59%
	Tokyo	Singapore	\$20,191	\$12,053	Singapore	\$8,138	40%
	Taipei	Starlux	\$20,323	\$14,681	EVA	\$5,642	28%
New York	Tokyo	ANA	\$22,864	\$10,815	ANA	\$12,049	53%
San Francisco			\$20,671	\$9,164		\$11,507	56%

SAMPLE BUSINESS CLASS FARES U.S. > ASIA VS. ASIA > U.S.

U.S. Airport	Asia Destination	Airline	U.S. to Asia Business Class	Asia to U.S. Business Class	Airline	Savings	
Atlanta	Seoul	Korean	\$9,214	\$6,059	Korean	\$3,155	34%
Chicago	Tokyo	United	\$7,696	\$5,950	Japan	\$1,746	23%
Dallas		American	\$10,696	\$5,961	American	\$4,735	44%
Denver		United	\$8,026	\$5,203	United	\$2,823	35%
Houston				\$6,030	ANA	\$1,996	25%
			\$5,707	\$3,968	Japan	\$1,739	30%
Los Angeles	Seoul	Korean	\$4,804	\$3,942	Asiana	\$862	14%
	Osaka	Japan	\$5,712	\$4,926	Japan	\$786	
	Singapore	Singapore	\$6,822	\$5,897	Singapore	\$925	
	Taipei	EVA	\$5,581	\$4,860	EVA	\$721	13%
New York	Tokyo	Japan	\$7,718	\$5,962	American	\$1,756	23%
	Hong Kong	Cathay Pacific	\$9,433	\$7,912	Cathay Pacific	\$1,521	16%
	Singapore	Singapore	\$6,122	\$5,288	Singapore	\$834	14%
Newark	Tokyo	United	\$7,697	\$5,892	United	\$1,805	23%
San Francisco	Osaka		\$10,823	\$5,203		\$5,620	52%
	Tokyo	ANA	\$8,696	\$5,280	Japan	\$3,416	39%
	Singapore	Singapore	\$7,122	\$5,041	Singapore	\$2,081	29%
	Seoul	United	\$5,324	\$3,942	United	\$1,382	26%
Seattle	Tokyo	ANA	\$7,696	\$3,831	Delta	\$3,865	50%
	Seoul	Asiana	\$4,304	\$3,804		\$500	12%
Washington, DC	Tokyo	ANA	\$8,225	\$6,030	ANA	\$2,195	27%

Have you noticed that there's only one half-decent Cathay Pacific example? Fans of that airline should note that this strategy typically doesn't work as their fares from Asia to the U.S. are often higher than their U.S.-Asia fares.



The elephant in the room is that this strategy starts in Asia – but Americans can still save a trunk load.

U TURN, U WIN. THREE WAYS TO USE THIS STRATEGY

FCF'S U-TURN STRATEGY #1:

START WITH A ONE-WAY TICKET TO ASIA (PROBABLY WITH MILES) AND THEN BOOK YOUR ROUND-TRIP FARES ORIGINATING IN ASIA. *THE KEEP-IT-GOING STRATEGY*

If you want to avoid high Business or First Class fares starting in the U.S., book a lower-fare round-trip from Asia to the U.S. Now, since your fare starts in Asia, you'll have to get yourself there first. You can start this strategy with a one-way flight ([paying in miles is often best for one-ways](#)). We often find free award seat availability to Asia, just keep an eye on your inbox for our [Sweet Redeems Alerts](#).

From there you can keep your trip going by buying another round-trip ticket from Asia to the U.S. as many times as you like if you're a regular visitor. The savings multiply. And as we'll cover in a moment, your airline alliance makes no difference with this strategy.



Here's what it looks like:

Real-Life Example

To start the strategy, here are some sample one-way ticket possibilities.

TICKET #1: POSSIBILITIES USING MILES:

A one-way award ticket using 120,500 Singapore Airline miles to begin the trip in First Class from Los Angeles to Tokyo

SINGAPORE AIRLINES		
One way		Total fare
05 MAR (TUE)	06 MAR (WED)	1 ADULT FIRST/SUITES SAVER
LAX 12:45	NRT 17:30	120,500 miles + USD 5.60
Los Angeles	Tokyo	Including taxes and surcharges

OR

A one-way award ticket using 60,000 American miles to begin the trip in Business Class from Los Angeles to Tokyo

American Airlines		
Business	PLAN TRAVEL	TRAVEL INFORMATION AADVANTAGE*
One way (per person)	DEPART	
60,000 miles	Los Angeles, CA to Tokyo, Japan	
+ \$5.60	Sunday, January 21, 2024	
Total (all passengers)	10:05 AM → 3:05 PM ¹	12h 0m Nonstop Business
60,000 miles + \$5.60	AA27 788-Boeing 787	
	Details Change	

TICKET #1: POSSIBILITIES USING MONEY:

Buy a Premium Economy fare one-way from Los Angeles to Tokyo on Singapore Air often for around \$1,172

SINGAPORE AIRLINES		
One way		Total fare Hide details
12 FEB (MON)	13 FEB (TUE)	1 ADULT
LAX 12:45	NRT 17:30	USD 1,172.30
Los Angeles	Tokyo	Total fare includes discounts, taxes and surcharges
Los Angeles Intl	Narita	
Terminal B	Terminal 1	
Singapore Airlines SQ 11 . Boeing 777-300ER		Flights
Premium Economy (L)		Fare
		1,140.00
		Airport/Government taxes
		32.30
		Subtotal
		1,172.30

OR

Buy a budget Business Class one-way fare from Los Angeles to Tokyo on ZIPAIR often for around \$1,407

Los Angeles → Tokyo		
One way · Business Class · 1 passenger		\$1,407
ZIPAIR	Tue, Jan 23 · 9:35 AM – 2:25 PM ¹	11 hr 50 min Nonstop 2,472 kg CO ₂
ZIPAIR Tokyo	LAX-NRT	Avg emissions

More possible one-way low fare opportunities

Airline	Class	U.S. Airport	Asia Destination	U.S. to Asia Business Class
ZIPAIR		Vancouver	Tokyo	\$1,011
		Los Angeles		\$1,407
Delta	Business	Seattle	Seoul	\$2,663
Japan		Los Angeles	Tokyo	\$2,836
			Osaka	\$2,838
Eva	Premium Economy		Taipei	\$1,262
Singapore		San Francisco	Singapore	\$1,340
ANA		Chicago	Tokyo	\$1,402
Delta		Seattle	Seoul	\$1,461
ANA		New York	Tokyo	\$1,488
Singapore		Los Angeles	Singapore	\$1,675
Cathay Pacific		New York	Hong Kong	\$1,882
Japan		Los Angeles	Osaka	\$1,984
ANA		Houston	Tokyo	\$2,211

So many possibilities we can't cover them all.

Ticket #2: \$8,701 for travel in First Class from Tokyo to Los Angeles round-trip.

ANA Inspiration of JAPAN

Itinerary				
	Departure/Arrival		Flight	Class
Mar 13 Wednesday 14h10min	17:00	Tokyo (Narita) Terminal: 1	NH008 ANA	First:A
	10:15	San Francisco Terminal: 1	77W	
	13:38	San Francisco Terminal: 3	NH7263☆ 738	Business:J
	15:10	Los Angeles (LAX) Terminal: 7	Operated by United Airlines	
Mar 20 Wednesday 14h00min	22:40	Los Angeles (LAX) Terminal: 7	NH7510☆ 739	Business:J
	00:13 +1day	San Francisco Terminal: 3	Operated by United Airlines	
	Mar 21 (Thu)			
	01:20	San Francisco Terminal: INT	NH107 ANA	First:A
	04:40 +1day	Tokyo (Haneda) Terminal: 2/3	77W	

USD 8,701.90

Ticket #3: Keep your journey going with another round-trip from Asia to the U.S.

WHO IS FCF'S U-TURN STRATEGY #1 FOR?

Budget Business Class travelers.

This is great if you hate coach but won't pay rack rates for Business Class (a lot of people are like this). It's also for those who can be flexible enough to jump on the routes and dates that offer deals.

Travelers who know their dates in advance.

The outbound Asia>U.S. flights are most important because you can typically change the return flight (U.S.>Asia) on a published fare for little or no cost (**be sure to check the fare rules!**). But if you're visiting family in Tokyo in August, and then going back for the holidays, or you know your dates in advance, no problem. If your plans are uncertain, consider [refundable fares often for just a little more](#).

FCF'S U-TURN STRATEGY #2:THE MIXED-ALLIANCE BACK-TO-BACK PUBLISHED FARES

If you book multiple trips with one airline, and fly the segments out of sequence, many airlines will think you're trying to do "back-to-back ticketing," which is the practice of nesting one round-trip ticket inside another to save money. This can cause them to cancel one of your trips without notice because it's **against their rules**.

However, you're fine if you book multiple trips on different airlines. So... consider booking one round-trip starting in the U.S. with airline alliance A airline (perhaps SkyTeam), and another round-trip starting in Asia from alliance B airline (perhaps Star Alliance).

Here's what it looks like:



Here's what it looks like:

Use different airline alliances because there's no telling how much inter-alliance communication is happening between airlines. If you need a primer on why not to go all in with one airline, read our report on [Loyalty Free Agency](#).

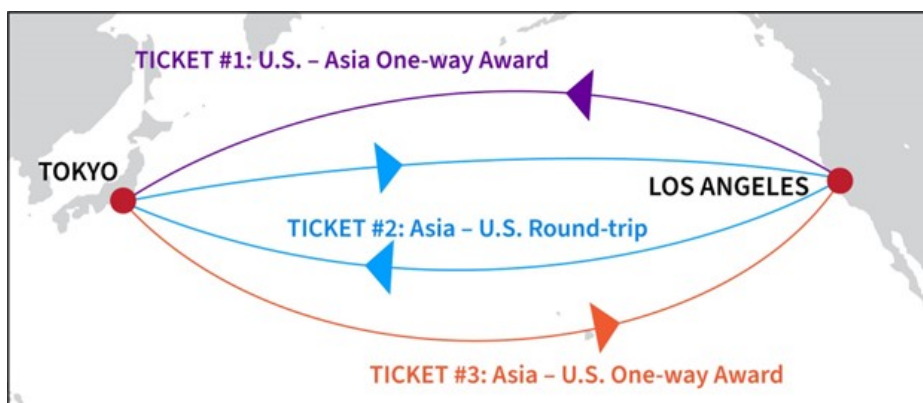
WHO IS FCF'S U-TURN STRATEGY #2 FOR?

The Frequent Traveler to Asia: Since the U.S.>Asia>U.S. fare is much higher, you **take multiple trips in the middle of your first and last segment on the U.S.-originating flights** to yield big savings.

FCF'S U-TURN STRATEGY #3:

THE MIXED-ALLIANCE: BOOKENDS WITH MILEAGE-AWARD/S + LOW-PUBLISHED-FARE ASIA>U.S.>ASIA

This is where you bookend the cost-effective Asia>U.S.>Asia flight with two mileage award or low-fare one-way flights at either end. Check out the diagram below for clarity.



WHO IS FCF'S U-TURN STRATEGY #3 FOR?

The Sometimes-Flexible Business Class Budget Traveler: There's only one way to get a round-trip mileage award ticket to Asia nowadays — and that's by being flexible. You can use miles for this strategy to get to and from Asia.

On the other hand, your round-trip flight originating from Asia in the middle is a published fare, so you can be much choosier with your dates. So you only need to be flexible on the award ticket portion of your trip.

If there is no low fare to your Asian destination departing from the U.S., use a positioning flight. [We wrote about it here](#). That's where you take a shorter flight (usually) that gets you to where the better deal is. All in all, you can net some big savings on your trips to Asia.

See you up front.

The background image shows two glass bowls filled with water. The bowl on the left contains a group of about six small, bright orange goldfish. The bowl on the right contains a single, larger orange goldfish. Water is splashing out of the top of the right bowl, creating a dynamic, high-contrast scene with blue and white water droplets against a dark background.

Ten Reasons Why I'm the Biggest Fan of Mileage Upgrade Awards—and Why You Should Be Too

February 2024

An overview of how to save thousands with American Airlines and United Airlines to destinations all around the world.

Benefits of Mileage Upgrades at a Glance:

- Open Otherwise-Locked Doors
- Earn Elite Status Credit
- Connecting Opportunities

- Spend Fewer Miles
- The Bucket List Buster
- Seat Volume
- Take the Family
- High-Award-Tax Alternative
- A Path to First Class
- Easy to Book

THE CLUE IS IN THE WORD “MILEAGE UPGRADE”

Mileage upgrade award / *noun* / mile-age up-grade—A redemption option some airlines offer that enables loyalty program members to change the class of service, usually from economy class to Business Class, Premium Economy Class to Business Class, or Business Class to First Class, by using the “miles” accumulated by the member in conjunction with a normal, paid ticket.

“I’d like to go to Florence and the economy fares are \$787 round-trip. I think we ought to look at dates when we can pay that fare and use a mileage upgrade award that’s available. That way, we can fly Business Class for just \$787 plus the ‘co-pay’ surcharge or \$1,487 along with 50,000 miles—instead of the normal Business Class fare of \$3,887.”

These are the kinds of conversations I have in my head because I’ve been in love with mileage upgrades ever since I started flying frequently in premium class 27 years ago and have been writing about them ever since.

It was how I used to fly, almost exclusively, back in the 90s when I lived in Miami, and flew the world on American. In those days there were no co-pays and an upgrade was one of the best ways to fly premium for way less.

Recently, we’ve been getting a lot more inquiries on mileage upgrade awards, perhaps because we’ve been writing about them more. So, I thought to take a step back and give a high-level overview of 10 great benefits of using miles to upgrade.

MILEAGE UPGRADE BENEFITS

OPEN OTHERWISE-LOCKED DOORS

Access more seats: Free mileage award tickets can be an availability nightmare on American and United to much of the world (Asia, Europe, South America, and the South Pacific). So, the first and most obvious reason to love mileage upgrades is that the volume of seats these airlines make available for using your miles, on some routes, is substantially more than they allocate for normal mileage award tickets.

Tradition says that the reason behind this is because the airlines are generating some revenue by having you buy the economy airfare, so they are relatively happy to have you do this.

EARN ELITE STATUS CREDIT

Keep or Upgrade Your Credentials: While I've written about the many reasons to forget about elite status, most recently [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#), I know that some of you have good reasons to maintain your elite status. Mileage upgrades help you do that because they earn elite credit for the paid ticket, whereas free mileage tickets do not.

CONNECTING OPPORTUNITIES

Able to fly from and to most places: While very often with normal mileage award tickets, you *can* find the long-haul flight segment available in a premium class of service (perhaps via FCF's multitude of [Sweet Redeems alerts](#)), you often can't get *to* the long-haul flight segment's departure city or *beyond* its destination city, on the same, free award ticket.

That makes you vulnerable to missing a connection if you have to [buy a separate ticket to connect](#) your dots. (When times like this occur, it's wise to take a flight that gets you to the gateway city with plenty of time to spare.)

With mileage upgrade awards however, you're buying an economy class ticket, so unless the flight is 110% sold out, you can always find a fare that gets you from your departure to your destination city, all on one ticket.

Quick example: Say you live in San Antonio and want to fly to Stockholm, and you get an FCF alert with availability on American from Chicago to London, the long-haul segment is the one on which it's critical to get a comfortable seat. With a normal **mileage award**, you'd have to get lucky with availability on the San Francisco-Chicago and the London-Salzburg segments.

With an available mileage **upgrade award** on the Chicago-London segment, however, because you're simply buying an everyday economy class airfare from San Francisco to Salzburg, you're much likelier to find **upgrade award** space on the San Francisco-Chicago segment. Worst case scenario: *You waitlist*. The London-Salzburg segment is part of the economy fare ticket, which is on a partner airline for travel within Europe, so mileage upgrade availability doesn't even enter the picture. I can handle sitting in coach on that hour and forty-seven-minute flight, when everything else is going in my favor.

SPEND FEWER MILES

The normal mileage award on United from San Francisco to Split in Business Class goes for 200,000+ miles, whereas a mileage upgrade costs 30,000 each way, or 60,000 miles round-trip, plus the co-pay and the paid ticket. So, the upgrade offers better value per mile, and it doesn't drain your mile bank so drastically. **More miles left in your armory for your next trip** and you earn miles on the paid economy ticket.

THE BUCKET LIST BUSTER

You want to use miles to fly on a free award ticket to Tahiti? No way, mate. Good luck finding low-cost free award space. And the Business Class fares are typically \$5,500 to \$8,000. With mileage upgrades, however,

you can pay [\\$2,150 in money and 60,000 in miles](#). Time to put Tahiti back on your bucket list? **Mileage upgrades get you where low-cost free awards can't.**

SEAT VOLUME

Finding many seats available for free award travel—all for the same flight and date—is as difficult as climbing Mt. Everest, or at least Mt. Makalu. One seat might be available on 1 out of 20 dates, two seats 1 in 100, four seats 1 in 1,000, and six seats available on 1 in 10,000 flights, if I were forced to guess off the top of my head. With help from FCF's [Sweet Redeem upgrade alerts](#), **getting a deal for the whole family is easier with mileage upgrades.**

TAKE THE FAMILY

If you're not an advanced planner and you want to take your family using your miles to fly on a free award ticket to Australia, no way, mate. You might find one or two low-cost award tickets but good luck finding three or four low-cost award tickets. And the Business Class fares are typically \$10,600 to \$12,200. With United mileage upgrades, however, you can pay [\\$2,366 in money and 60,000 miles](#) round-trip, per ticket.

HIGH-AWARD-TAX ALTERNATIVE

If you're going to spend \$1,100 on taxes with a British Airways or Lufthansa Business Class mileage award ticket (on top of the 105,000 to 120,000 miles it will cost you), why not instead book an economy class ticket on American or United when they are on sale—say for \$500 or \$600, plus the co-pay of \$700 to \$1,100, a total of \$1,200 to \$1,700—and you only need 40,000 to 50,000 miles to get into Business Class via a mileage upgrade award. It's a lot easier to save miles on premium travel this way. And who doesn't love avoiding and minimizing taxes? **Save cash and miles together with mileage upgrades.**

A PATH TO FIRST CLASS

Perhaps one of my favorite benefits. Many of the awesome [flash and low-fares routes](#) we publish in Business Class are upgradable to First Class. Find an awesome fare on American and the fun begins.

Comfort airficianados should pair awesome fares with mileage upgrade awards, or at least when you're in the mood to splurge. Perhaps you just upgrade to First Class for the long-haul, overnight flight. It's no problem because upgrades are on a one-way basis.

EASY TO BOOK

Step 1: Find out the routes and months with availability. Perhaps in FCF's [Upgrade Reports and Sweet Redeems Upgrade Alerts](#).

Step 2: Verify your specific dates, or ones you can live with. Just pick up the phone or go online, depending on the airline.

[American](#): Phone call needed as you can't see availability online: (800) 433-7300.

1. It can be done in less than 10 minutes from beginning to end (if there's no hold time), or you select the "call back" feature if they are backed up and not wait on hold.
2. No American miles? Anyone can buy them after you have an account for 30 days, and they go [on sale often](#).

[United](#): See availability online, or call (800) 538-2929

1. Search upgrade award space on the "[Advanced search](#)" page.
2. Make sure you have the miles required in your account. (If you don't have the miles, you can buy them easily or get them by transferring points from Chase.)
3. Click the "Upgrade type" dropdown box in the middle of the page.

The screenshot shows the 'Advanced search' page for United MileagePlus. It features several sections for filtering search results:

- Cabin:** Two radio button options: 'Economy/Premium Economy' (selected) and 'Business/First'.
- Type of fare:** Two radio button options: 'Lowest available fares' (selected) and 'Fully refundable'.
- Show flights from:** Three radio button options: 'All airlines' (selected), 'United and United Express® only', and 'All Star Alliance airlines™'.
- Fare class (optional):** A text input field with placeholder text 'Examples: Y, B, M'. To its right, a note states: 'Searching by fare class may not be combinable with other search preferences (e.g. upgrades, fare types)'.
- Sort flights by:** A dropdown menu currently set to 'Best match'.
- Upgrades, certificates, and promotion codes:** A section header with an upward arrow icon.
- Upgrade type:** A dropdown menu currently set to 'MileagePlus Upgrade Awards (MUA)'.

4. In the "fare preferences" section, select the "Upgrade to Business, Buy Economy" option to search for upgrade space in Business Class. Your search results will show fares and flight schedules as well as the flights offering an upgrade and the cost. (Sample route below is Washington, DC-London.)

5. You will see a green box with a check mark if the upgrade is available. Select your flights and book your ticket.

English - United States \$
Search
SIGN IN
MENU

IAD

LON

Oct 25 - Oct 31

MileagePlus Upgr

Update

Washington, DC, US
London, GB
or [Advanced Search](#)

DEPART ON: October 25

[Compare fare types](#)

	Economy	Upgrade to Premium Economy Buy Economy	Upgrade to Business Buy Economy
NONSTOP 8:30 AM IAD 7H, 25M 8:55 PM LHR UA 122 (Boeing 767-300) Details Seats 402 kg CO₂	Roundtrip \$825 United Economy (L)	Roundtrip \$825 + 20k miles, each way Upgrade available	Roundtrip \$825 + \$550 service fees, each way + 20k miles, each way Upgrade available
NONSTOP 5:30 PM IAD 7H, 25M 5:55 AM LHR UA 918 (Boeing 777-200) Details Seats 417 kg CO₂	Roundtrip \$825 United Economy (L)	Roundtrip \$825 + 20k miles, each way Upgrade available	Roundtrip \$825 + \$550 service fees, each way + 20k miles, each way Upgrade available

There you have it: You're on your way to quickly becoming an American and United mileage-upgrade expert—and flying more lucratively for less.



February's Top 46 Mileage Awards & Special Fares Greatest Hits (Still Available)

February 2024

Feb's Fab Fare and Mile Finds

In a flap about a future foray? Our fanatical team has found freakishly great fare and mile flights of fancy to far-flung destinations, flagged below, as well as those not so farther afield. It's a feeding frenzy of Feb-tastic finds. **Fact!**

Special Published Fares

AFRICA

[Money > Johannesburg > Fall > Biz Class > \\$3,281 to \\$4,014 R/T](#)

ASIA

[Money > Vietnam > Fall/Winter > Biz Class > from Vancouver and Montreal from \\$3,363 to \\$4,214 USD R/T](#)

[Money > Mumbai > All Year > Biz Class > \\$3,052 to \\$3,702 R/T](#)

[Money > Seoul > All Year > Biz Class > from Canada from \\$3,357 to \\$4,043 USD R/T](#)

[Money > Bangkok > All Year > Biz Class > from Canada from \\$3,263 to \\$4,124 USD R/T](#)

[Money > Singapore > Fall/Winter > Biz Class > from Vancouver and Montreal from \\$3,377 to \\$3,770 R/T](#)

[Money > New Delhi > All Year > Biz Class > \\$2,954 to \\$3,828 R/T](#)

CARIBBEAN

[Money > Barbados > All Year > Biz Class > \\$935 to \\$1,170 R/T](#)

[Money > St. Thomas > All Year > Biz Class > \\$793 to \\$1,156 R/T](#)

[Money > Saint Kitts > Fall > Biz Class > \\$875 to \\$1,160 R/T](#)

[Money > Aruba > All Year > Biz Class > \\$742 to \\$1,152 R/T](#)

[Money > Grand Cayman > All Year > Biz Class > \\$767 to \\$1,112 R/T](#)

[Money > Sint Maarten > All Year > Biz Class > \\$796 to \\$1,101 R/T](#)

[Money > Puerto Rico > Fall > Biz Class > \\$661 to \\$791 R/T](#)

EUROPE

[Money > Paris > All Year > Biz Class > \\$2,205 to \\$3,140 R/T](#)

[Money > Brussels > Spring > Biz Class > \\$2,525 to \\$2,880 R/T](#)

[Money > Geneva > Fall/Winter > Biz Class > \\$2,715 to \\$3,008 R/T](#)

[Money > Madrid > All Year > First Class > \\$3,757 to \\$5,508 R/T](#)

[Money > Valencia > All Year > Biz Class > from New York, Orlando, and Phoenix from \\$2,723 to \\$3,098 R/T](#)

[Money > London > All Year > First Class > \\$4,188 to \\$5,609 R/T](#)

[Money > Greece > All Year > First Class > from New York, Seattle, and Atlanta from \\$3,972 to \\$5,673 R/T](#)

[Money > Zurich > Spring/Summer > Biz Class > \\$2,520 to \\$3,045 R/T](#)

[Money > Europe to U.S. > All Year > Premium Economy > \\$749 to \\$898 USD R/T](#)

[Money > Europe > All Year > Biz Class with TAP > \\$2,001 to \\$2,731 R/T](#)

[Money > Prague > All Year > Biz Class > \\$2,549 to \\$3,064 R/T](#)

[Money > Milan > All Year > Biz Class > \\$2,510 to \\$3,166 R/T](#)

[Money > Italy > Spring > Biz Class from Canada > \\$2,158 to \\$2,364 USD R/T](#)

[Money > Madrid > All Year > Biz Class > \\$2,507 to \\$3,036 R/T](#)

[Money > London > All Year > Biz Class > \\$2,258 to \\$3,181 R/T](#)

[Money > Amsterdam > All Year > Biz Class > \\$2,441 to \\$3,179 R/T](#)

[Money > Greece > All Year > Biz Class > from New York from \\$2,551 to \\$2,679 R/T](#)

[Money > Stockholm > All Year > Biz Class > \\$2,430 to \\$3,211 R/T](#)

HAWAII

[Money > Kona > Summer > Biz Class > \\$988 to \\$1,500 R/T](#)

[Money > Kauai > Summer > Biz Class > \\$1,038 to \\$1,511 R/T](#)

MEXICO

[Money > Acapulco > All Year > Biz Class > \\$762 to \\$903 R/T](#)

[Money > Cozumel > All Year > Biz Class > \\$639 to \\$888 R/T](#)

[Money > Cabo San Lucas > All Year > Biz Class > from \\$666 to \\$924 R/T](#)

NORTH AMERICA

[Money > Transcon > All Year > Biz Class \\$766 to \\$1,199 R/T](#)

[Money > *from Europe* to U.S. > All Year > Biz Class > \\$1,605 to \\$2,256 USD R/T](#)

SOUTH AMERICA

[Money > Sao Paulo > All Year > Biz Class > from Canada from \\$2,569 to \\$2,871 USD R/T](#)

[Money > Buenos Aires > All Year > Biz Class > from Miami, New York, and Orlando from \\$2,548 to \\$3,174 R/T](#)

[Money > Santiago > All Year > Biz Class > \\$1,911 to \\$3,112 R/T](#)

[Money > Sao Paulo > All Year > Biz Class > from New York, Miami, and Los Angeles from \\$2,587 to \\$3,046 R/T](#)

SOUTH PACIFIC

[Money > Tahiti > All Year > Biz Class > from Los Angeles and Las Vegas from \\$3,193 to \\$4,260 R/T](#)

Sweet Redeems

ASIA

[Miles > Close In & Far Out > All Nippon Airways > Handful of Business Class Opportunities from Houston & San Francisco to Tokyo > 2+ Travelers](#)

[Cash OR Miles > Business Class > Cathay Pacific > Los Angeles and Many Other Cities to Hong Kong & Beyond > 2+ Travelers](#)

[Cash OR Miles > *First Class* > Cathay Pacific > New York and Many Other Cities to Hong Kong & Beyond > 2+ Travelers](#)

[Cash OR Miles > First Class > Cathay Pacific > Los Angeles and Many Other Cities to Hong Kong & Beyond > 2+ Travelers](#)

EUROPE

[Cash OR Miles > First Class > Lufthansa > Houston and Many Other Cities to Frankfurt & Beyond > 2+ Travelers](#)

[Miles / Points > London > First Class > 4+ Travelers > American from New York and Many Other Cities](#)

[Miles / Points > First Class > Single Seat > Emirates > East Coast to Athens](#)

[Cash OR Miles > First Class > Lufthansa > New York and Many Other Cities to Munich & Beyond > 4+ Travelers](#)

[All Year: Lots of Lufthansa First Class Availability from Chicago, Washington, DC & Many Other Cities to Frankfurt and Beyond with Miles or \\$](#)

[Miles / Points > London > Close In > First Class > 4+ Travelers > American from Dallas and Many Other Cities](#)

MIDDLE EAST

[Cash OR Miles > First Class > Single Seat > Emirates from Boston to Dubai](#)

[Miles > All Year > First Class > Scads of Single Seat Emirates Opportunities from Chicago to Dubai](#)

[Miles / Points > First Class > Single Seat > Emirates > Houston to Dubai](#)

SOUTH AMERICA

[Cash OR Miles > First Class > Winter 2024 > Miami and Many Other Cities to Brazil > Handful > 4+ Travelers](#)

Upgrades

EUROPE

[Miles & Cash > Handful of United Upgrade Opportunities from Chicago to London > 4+ Seats](#)

[Miles & Cash > Close In > Handful of United Upgrade Opportunities from California to Japan > 4+ Seats](#)

[Miles & Cash > Close In > Handful of United Upgrade Opportunities from the East Coast to Spain > 4+ Seats](#)

[Miles & Cash > Close In > Handful of United Upgrade Opportunities from San Francisco to Beijing > 4+ Seats](#)



The World's Easiest Upgrade, Hawaiian Style

February 2024

Travel like a champ on the most comfortable flights if you know where to find them

It's the world's easiest upgrade, or a **WEUP** as I sometimes call it.

I mean, how else to describe a situation where all you have to do to get an upgrade is know the type of aircraft you're flying in?

The **WEUP** is the clever *in-class upgrade*. It's a little-known secret to many travelers that international long-haul-configured cabins are a lot nicer than their domestic cousins.

You just need to know which ones, and voilà, you have an upgrade. That's because they're usually priced the same, sometimes even *LESS*.

It's like a Birkin handbag going for the same price as its cheap look alike.

I'm feeling so good about this that I'm going to bring out my trusty stamp.

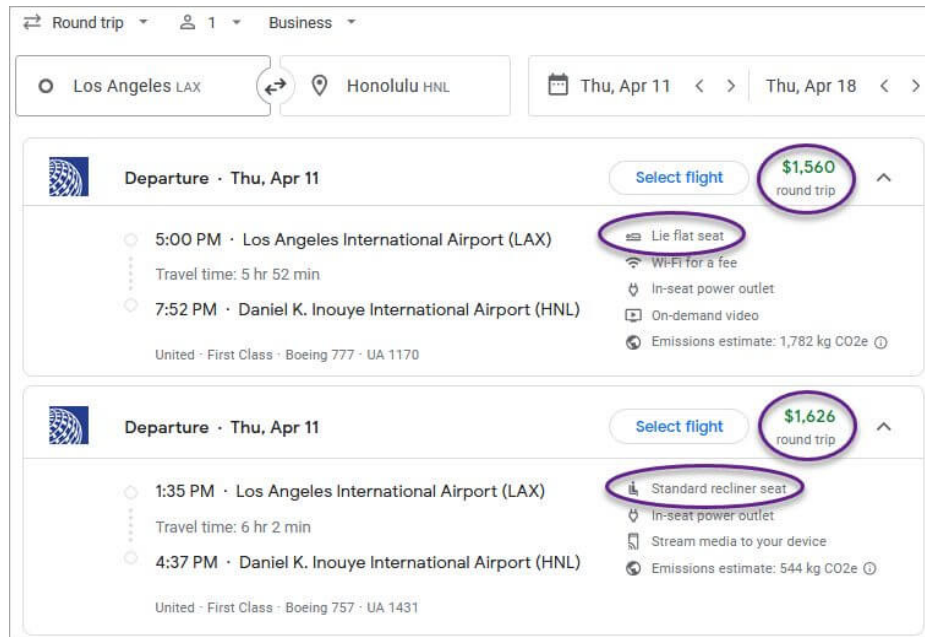


I'm feeling so good about this that I'm going to bring out my trusty stamp.

There are a lot of different [ways to upgrade](#), i.e., [improve your flight experience](#). And this one is such an easy get. In the airline business, Seat 1A doesn't always equal Seat 1A. Let's look at examples that show how you can win with this approach.

WEUP AND AT 'EM: FREE DOMESTIC IN-CLASS UPGRADES TO HAWAII

United Airlines' Los Angeles-Honolulu service operates B757s and B777s where fares are close to the same, but the seats are certainly not. First Class seats on the B777s recline to 180 degrees, whereas on the B757, they only recline a few inches. Not only that, in this case, the B777 international aircraft with the lie-flat seat is \$66 less. In other words, the airline is paying you \$66 for a much better seat.



BAD NEWS: WIDEBODY AIRPLANES ARE SHRINKING

Unfortunately, finding a widebody aircraft to Hawaii is harder than ever. It's because airlines began shifting their aircraft back to fast-growing international routes and away from former domestic routes during Lockdown when there was little demand for international flights.

Back then, there were many more widebody routes to Hawaii than you can find now.

In 2022, **American Airlines** had five widebody flights while in 2023 they only had two. Now there are three: Dallas to Honolulu and Maui; and Phoenix to Honolulu.

Delta had 11 in 2022, seven in 2023, and now they have eight: Atlanta, Detroit, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New York, Salt Lake City, Seattle to Honolulu; and Salt Lake City to Maui.

United had 16 in 2022, 10 in 2023, and they now have 12: Chicago, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco and Washington, DC, to Honolulu; Chicago and Denver to Kona; and Chicago, Denver, and San Francisco to Maui.

That's a 40%+ decrease in widebody routes to Hawaii since before Lockdown. For that reason, we're giving you a comprehensive guide to current widebody flights to the warming isles of Aloha.



Take your wide-angle lens on your widebody flight to Hawaii.

CONNECTIONS AND UPGRADES

Mainland Connections: If you live in Memphis, you have to make a connection en route to Kona. **This is a critical decision!** Why not book United via Denver *instead* of American via Phoenix? If you do, you'll get an international Business Class seat instead of a domestic First Class seat — that's a free in-class upgrade.

ABOUT THE SEATS

There are currently 15 nonstop routes from the U.S. mainland to Honolulu, five to Maui, and two to Kona with widebody aircraft. If you don't fly in these aircraft, you will get a relatively low-fi seat on all other flights.

Widebody Aircraft Configuration by Airline

Airline	Aircraft	Version	Number of Seats	Seat Width
American	B777-200	1	37	21.9
	B787-800		20	21
	B787-900		30	
Delta	A330-200		34	19.7
	A330-300			
	B767-300ER (L)		36	20.5
	B767-300ER (K)		26	
	B767-300ER (Z)			
	B767-400ER		34	20
United	B767-300ER		46	20.6
	B767-300ER	2	30	20.4
	B767-400ER	1	39	20.6

Airline	Aircraft	Version	Number of Seats	Seat Width
	B777-200	2	34	20.36-22.18
		1	50	22
		2	28	
		3	32	19
	B777-300	1	60	22
	B787-800		28	20.5
	B787-900		48	
	B787-1000		44	

* Aircraft subject to change

Widebody Opportunities from U.S. Mainland to Hawaii

AMERICAN AIRLINES

American is primarily using the 787-800 and the 787-900 to Honolulu and Maui.

Travel Between	Flight numbers*	Days of Operation	Aircraft	Return	Days of Operation	Aircraft
Dallas-Honolulu	AA115	Sun. through Sat.	787-900	AA114	Sun. through Sat.	787-900
	AA123			AA102		
Dallas-Maui	AA119		787-800	AA116		787-800
Phoenix- Honolulu	AA692			AA693		
				AA675		

* Schedule through February 29. Flight numbers and aircraft subject to change.

DELTA AIRLINES

Delta uses their A330 and B767 to Honolulu and A330 to Maui.

Travel Between	Flight numbers*	Days of Operation	Aircraft	Return	Days of Operation	Aircraft
Atlanta-Honolulu	DL0837	Sun. through Sat.	A330	DL0836	Sun. through Sat.	A330
Detroit-Honolulu	DL0797			DL0969		
Los Angeles-Honolulu	DL0480		B767	DL0368		B767
	DL0465			DL0495		
	DL0443			DL0658		
Minneapolis-Honolulu	DL0435			DL0309		
New York - Honolulu	DL0317			DL0312		
Salt Lake City- Honolulu	DL0397			DL0347		
Salt Lake City-Maui	DL0316			DL0316		
	DL0971					
Seattle-Honolulu	DL0310			DL0522	Sun. through Sat.	B767

* Schedule through February 29. Flight numbers and aircraft subject to change.

UNITED AIRLINES

United generally uses the B767 on their Newark- and Washington, DC-to-Honolulu routes; B777 on Denver to Kona; Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, and San Francisco to Honolulu; Denver and San Francisco to Maui; and B787 on Chicago-to-Honolulu, Kona, and Maui routes.

Travel Between	Flight numbers*	Days of Operation	Aircraft	Return	Days of Operation	Aircraft
Chicago-Honolulu	UA219	Sun. through Sat.	B787	UA218	Sun. through Sat.	B787
Chicago-Kona	UA66	Fri.		UA67	Fri.	
Chicago-Maui	UA202	Sun., Wed. through Sat.		UA203	Sun., Wed. through Sat.	
				UA348		
Denver-Honolulu	UA384	Sun. through Sat.	B777	UA383	Sun. through Sat.	B777
Denver-Kona	UA1758			UA1731		
				UA1758		

Travel Between	Flight numbers*	Days of Operation	Aircraft	Return	Days of Operation	Aircraft
Denver-Maui	UA1736	Sun. through Sat.	B777	UA1430		
				UA1735		
Houston-Honolulu	UA253	Sun. through Sat.	B777	UA252		
Los Angeles-Honolulu	UA1158			UA1157		
	UA1170			UA1169		
				UA1231		
				UA534		
Newark-Honolulu	UA363	Sun. through Sat.	B767	UA362		B767
San Francisco-Honolulu	UA1175		B777	UA1141		B777
	UA1509			UA1176		
	UA300			UA396		
San Francisco-Maui	UA1630			UA1722		
	UA2025			UA1726		
Washington, DC-Honolulu	UA3545	Sun., Tues., Thurs. through Sat.	B767	UA344	Sun., Tues., Thurs. through Sat.	B767

* Schedule through February 29. Flight numbers and aircraft subject to change.

There's no better time than right now to consider a trip to Hawaii. Most Americans only need to look at their thermometers for incentive. So, dial it up even further in a nice comfy widebody cabin. Getting an upgrade — the world's easiest upgrade — is simply an intel play, and all that intel is above.

See you up front, in comfort.



Double Hotel Upgrade Strategy

February 2024

Apply the Upgrade Mindset to get a five-star hotel, a suite upgrade, AND pay up to 30% *LESS* than the cost of a regular room

We've often talked about [The Upgrade Mindset](#) and how to apply it to all facets of life. So what makes a double upgrade? In this case, it's getting a better class of accommodation (Upgrade 1) for less money (Upgrade 2). That's two ways to upgrade your baseline.

As an ex-baseball player, I love a good double play. But these days, I *adore* a double upgrade in travel! Let's get to it.

HOTEL HIJINKS AND LOW ROOM RATES

Everyone likes a nice hotel, but we've seen post-lockdown prices climb faster than the elevator at the Shanghai Tower (the world's fastest at almost 50 mph, now that you ask).

This brings me to a favored hotel strategy that regular readers may have seen [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#), and that you newbies will flip your fluffy white bathrobes about.

It's simply becoming a member of the ABA, the American Bar Association. You don't have to be a lawyer or a judge or have any "legal" connection for that matter. [Anyone can join](#) this lucrative association to take advantage of its quite spectacular discounts at premium hotels such as the Four Seasons, Luxury Collection, Ritz-Carlton, Rosewood, St. Regis, W Hotels, and many more.

They're able to offer these discounts because they've negotiated special rates with many luxury hotels around the world.

PLUSH, BUT NOT PERFECT

An ABA membership doesn't guarantee a great price every time. But given that the investment is only a \$150 annual membership fee and the [five minutes it takes to join](#), I think it's well worth it. Especially when you consider the discounts you can score amidst the high hotel prices we're seeing.

For example, we recently found **savings of up to 30%** on some [great hotels](#).

AN EXAMPLE

The screenshot below shows prices for the Ritz-Carlton, St. Louis. The price for a standard king guest room *before* the ABA membership discount is \$764 for one night. Compare that to a suite for **just \$533** *after* the ABA membership discount is applied. **That's an upgrade and a savings of \$231, or 30%.**

The Ritz-Carlton, standard king guest room screenshot before the ABA membership discount...



The Ritz-Carlton, St. Louis

100 Carondelet Plaza, St. Louis, Missouri 63105 USA

STAY DATES

Mon, Apr 15, 2024 - Tue, Apr 16, 2024

TOTAL STAY

764.16 USD



1 King Bed, Standard Room

Mon, Apr 15, 2024 - Tue, Apr 16, 2024

1 Room, 2 Adults

[Member Flexible Rate](#)

[Summary of Charges](#)

764.16

USD Subtotal

...and after the ABA membership discount rate.



The Ritz-Carlton, St. Louis

100 Carondelet Plaza, St. Louis, Missouri 63105 USA

STAY DATES

Mon, Apr 15, 2024 - Tue, Apr 16, 2024

TOTAL STAY

533.52 USD



1 Bedroom Executive Suite, 1 King, Sofa bed, Balcony

Mon, Apr 15, 2024 - Tue, Apr 16, 2024

1 Room, 2 Adults

[American Bar Assoc. Rate](#)

[Summary of Charges](#)

533.52

USD Subtotal

MORE EXAMPLES OF ABA MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNT OPPORTUNITIES

Upgrade to a suite for less than the cost of a regular room and up to 30% savings as seen in the chart below.

Hotel	Regular Room Type	Regular Room Rate Booked Through Hotel	Upgraded Room Type	ABA Discounted Upgraded Room Rate	Savings	
The Ritz-Carlton, St. Louis	Standard Guest Room, King	\$764	Executive Suite, King	\$533	\$231	30%
The Ritz-Carlton Georgetown, Washington, DC	Deluxe Guest Room, King	\$975	One Bedroom Suite	\$714	\$261	27%
The Ritz-Carlton, Dallas		\$853	Deluxe Suite	\$670	\$183	21%
The Rittenhouse, Philadelphia		\$839	Executive Suite, King	\$669	\$170	20%
Four Seasons Hotel, St. Louis	Standard Guest Room, King	\$540	Riverfront Studio Suite	\$435	\$105	19%
Hotel Colonnade Coral Gables, Autograph Collection		\$436	Jr. Suite, King	\$360	\$76	17%
The Ritz Carlton Coconut Grove, Miami		\$616	Executive Suite, King	\$529	\$87	14%
The Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner, Virginia	Deluxe Guest Room, King	\$567		\$489	\$78	
The St. Anthony, a Luxury Collection Hotel, San Antonio	Standard Guest Room, King	\$543	Deluxe Suite, King	\$508	\$35	6%

ELEVATOR GOING DOWN: BAD NEWS FIRST

ABA membership rates are not available at all hotels. Nor is it available on all dates, and some dates have better deals than others. We've just highlighted the best savings we recently found to give you an idea of how good it *can* be. To give you an idea, I use this strategy about three to five times a year.

ELEVATOR GOING UP: GOOD CAN GET GREAT

When the ABA membership strategy does work, it works awesomely! With Marriott.com (St. Regis), for example, it only takes a moment to get a rate. Add another few minutes if you search for a range of different dates.

If you're up to speed with our [booking backwards strategy](#), you'd choose the dates of your trip based on when the ABA membership rate was available at a good discount. If you start with specific dates, your savings may

not be as high.

In addition to the [preferred rate discounts](#), ABA membership offers exclusive [quarterly promotions](#) at certain properties, such as special negotiated rates, fixed rates, upgrades, and other benefits.

NOTE FOR GUESTS

For some hotels such as the Fairmont, Jumeirah, Mandarin Oriental, Savoy, and Shangri-La, ABA membership discount rates are not available online. You'll need to call or email the hotel directly to book using the ABA membership discount.

I love the ABA membership strategy. A measly \$150 that can save you literally thousands at top-rated luxury hotels. Check me in!