



Buy Frozen Alaska Miles, Then Thaw with a Range of Partners for Up to 87% Off First & Business Class

May 2022

New sale opens discount premium flights with Iberia, Japan Airlines, Qatar Airways, and many other carriers

That previously *un-allianced* rebel, Alaska Airlines, is at it again, offering up another golden [miles sale through May 23](#) that's of particular value to flexible travelers.

So your first thought might be, *where do they fly?* But that would be wrong. Let me explain.

The idea is *not* to use the miles on Alaska's flight network, which is rather limited, but instead to cash them in for flights on Alaska's partners: **Iberia, Japan Airlines, Qatar Airways and 18 other carriers — for up to**

87% off premium flights. The miles can also be used for itineraries that don't kick off in the U.S., and even for **amazing round-the-world deals.**

ALASKA'S BAKED-IN OFFER

Alaska is offering a bonus of up to 60% on mile purchases, which is about as good a bonus as it gets with this program. [The promo](#) brings the cost down to 1.85¢ per mile, including taxes. Sometimes different Mileage Plan members are targeted for different bonuses, so you'll have to log into your account to see what bonus you're eligible for. The maximum purchase *per transaction* is 100,000 miles, but there's no limit on the number of transactions you can make. Alaska Mileage Plan non-elite members can purchase up to 150,000 miles per calendar year, which includes miles gifted to you. But that limit doesn't include the bonus miles. Alaska Mileage Plan elite members can purchase as many miles as they want.

If you need more miles and [need to get around mileage-purchase limits](#), most airlines allow you to redeem miles from your account for *someone else's travel*. Aha. So open an account for your mom, brother, or hairstylist, *pouff* it up with miles, and then use them for your trip.

BE READY FOR A KLONDIKE GOLD STRIKE

Two things to note: **sales are only open to Mileage Plan members residing in North America and who have been in the program for at least 10 days.** For example, American has a 30-day waiting period. Some airlines, including British Airways and Qantas, require you to sign up for their mileage program to check award space online. Alaska does not, so **you can check availability for your dates before investing in any miles if you're buying them for a particular trip.** If you're really keen to dig for nuggets, open an account with Alaska's Mileage Plan, so when miles go on sale, you've already met the waiting-period requirement and you're ready for the next gold strike.

GOLD DIGGERS: ALASKA'S MILEAGE REDEMPTION PARTNER AIRLINES

Aer Lingus, American, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Condor, Fiji Airways, Finnair, Hainan Airlines, Iberia, Icelandair, Japan Airlines, Korean Air, LATAM Airlines, Malaysia Airlines, Qatar Airways, Qantas, Ravn Alaska, Royal Air Maroc, Royal Jordanian, Singapore, and SriLankan Airlines.

87% SAVINGS TO ASIA IN FIRST CLASS

OK, watch this: Using Alaska miles, Cathay Pacific First Class from the U.S. to Asia is 140,000 miles round-trip. The lowest published fare from New York to Hong Kong is \$19,857 round-trip. Booking a partner award during this mileage sale through Alaska reduces the price to \$2,653 round-trip (including taxes and about \$67 in award tax), a staggering, shiny savings of \$17,204 or 87%. Note that to check availability on Cathay Pacific you will have to call (800) 252-7522. Plus, availability is limited — no “booking backwards” with this one.

Japan Airlines First Class from the U.S. to Tokyo also takes 140,000 Alaska miles round-trip. The lowest published fare from Los Angeles to Tokyo is \$20,171 round-trip. So, booking a partner award through Alaska

during this sale reduces the price to \$2,642 round-trip (including \$239 in taxes), a savings of \$17,529, or 87%.

SAVE 34% TO ASIA IN BUSINESS CLASS

Using Alaska miles, Singapore Airlines Business Class from the U.S. to Asia is 160,000 miles round-trip. The lowest published fare from Los Angeles to Tokyo is \$4,413 round-trip. Booking a partner award during this mileage sale through Alaska reduces the price to \$2,891 round-trip (including taxes of about \$120), giving you a savings of \$1,522 or 34%. See FCF's recent Sweet Redeems alert for Singapore Airlines Business Class [mileage availability](#) using Singapore miles, which is loosely indicative of availability with Alaska miles, although less.

SAVE 30% TO EUROPE IN FIRST CLASS

British Airways First Class from the U.S. to Europe takes 140,000 Alaska miles round-trip. The lowest published fare from Seattle to London is \$6,270 round-trip. So, booking a partner award through Alaska during this sale can reduce the price to \$4,370 round-trip (including taxes), a savings of \$1,900, or 30%.

SAVE 31% TO EUROPE IN BUSINESS CLASS

Finnair Business Class from the U.S. to Helsinki takes 140,000 Alaska miles round-trip. The lowest published fare from Dallas to Helsinki is \$3,853. So, booking a partner award through Alaska during this sale reduces the price to \$2,646 round-trip (including \$60 in taxes), a savings of \$1,207, or 31%.

SAVE 50% TO THE MIDDLE EAST IN BUSINESS CLASS

Qatar Business Class from the U.S. to Doha takes 170,000 Alaska miles round-trip. The lowest published fare from Chicago to Doha is \$6,391 round-trip. So, booking a partner award through Alaska during this sale reduces the price to \$3,221 round-trip (including \$80 in taxes), a savings of \$3,170, or 50%.

SAVE 57% TO THE PACIFIC IN BUSINESS CLASS

Fiji Airways Business Class from the U.S. to Fiji takes 110,000 Alaska miles round-trip. The lowest published fare from San Francisco to Fiji is \$4,917. So, booking a partner award through Alaska during this sale reduces the price to \$2,092 round-trip (including \$60 in taxes), a savings of \$2,825, or 57%.

WHEN TO BUY MILES

Get them when published premium fares are high: \$3,500+ for Business and \$5,500+ for First Class international tickets, as a general rule. Published international First and Business Class fares are often highest when booked on short notice, the perfect time to use miles.

If you don't fly often and are looking to buy miles for a specific trip with firm dates, make sure there's availability BEFORE YOU BUY ANY MILES.

ANOTHER REASON TO DIG THIS GOLD RUSH

We said it before but it really must be reiterated — Alaska boasts a generous stopover rule for its partner awards, allowing a **free stopover** in the partner's hub city. Many other carriers don't allow stopovers at all with mileage awards. Even better, you get one stopover for a one-way ticket (which is gold enough) and two stopovers on a round-trip.

Use this opportunity to [book round-the-world tickets cheaply](#).

By the way, American and Qantas are also partners but because they don't have nonstop Business or First Class awards available at the moment, we haven't highlighted them.

Related Reads:

[Beginner's Guide to Playing the "Buy Miles to Fly In Style" Strategy](#)

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



How to Survive 2022's Premium Fare-Demic to Europe

May 2022

In an Emergency, FCF's Fare Department Puts Out Those High Fare Fires...

We're currently in the midst of a perfect storm for high fares. Travel is picking up like crazy after the global lockdowns – flights are full, fuel prices are high, oh, and there's that other thing everyone keeps talking about: inflation. But, remember all those deals we told you about when fares were low [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)? And how we said, "get 'em quick"? Well did you? If so, awesome. Our work wasn't in vain. But if you *didn't* book them, well then read on.

So before you call 911 for emergency assistance, here are some preventive measures to help you circumvent all those blazing high fares and douse the fires with cool deals, instead.

INFLATION FRUSTRATION

As you've seen, **many fares are higher now than they've been over the last several years** on major airlines such as American, Air France, British Airways, Delta, Emirates, Iberia, KLM, Lufthansa, SAS, Singapore, SWISS, United and Virgin Atlantic to most destinations. But you can see similar forces at work in your local grocery store, right? Food prices have skyrocketed. Then there's the price of gas. Airlines need fuel too – lots of it. Many say inflation is at a 40-year high.

Fare inflation typically happens when demand outpaces supply, so I guess there's some joy in seeing demand for travel after Lockdown, only now airlines aren't able to ramp up supply fast enough. Let's look at all this in the context of how fares are trending.

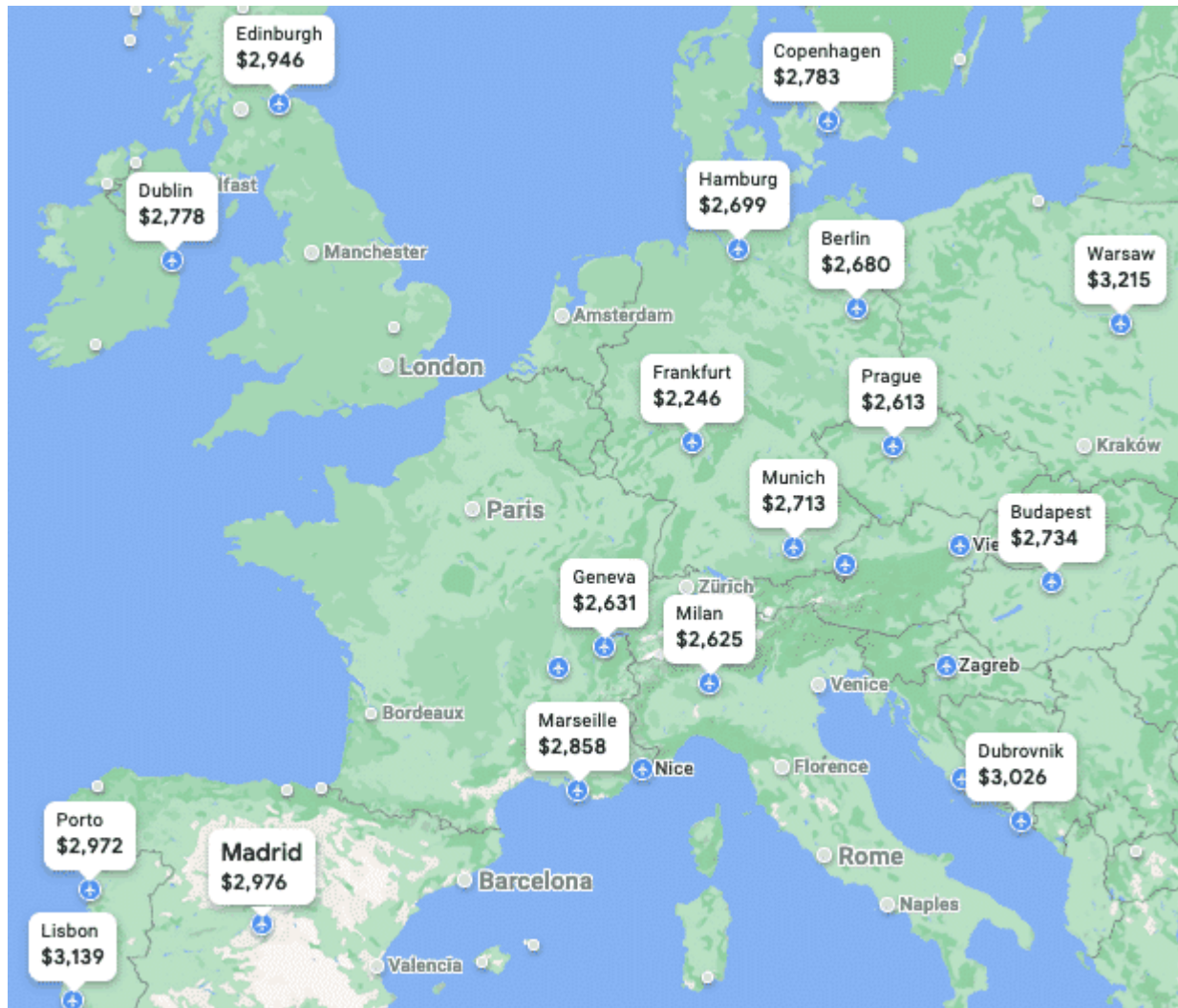
To this end, here's a special FCF survey of recent observations we've made that'll help you start thinking outside your traditional fare box. Think of them as your ladder to fare safety. And if you don't spot the perfect deal, try to apply the general airline, route, and/or date trends to your particular trip to find your deal.

BUSINESS CLASS HIGH- AND LOW-FARE OBSERVATIONS

Delta Nonstops: Detroit to Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Munich and Paris \$3,408+; New York-Milan starts from \$3,296; Rome from \$3,759; and Venice from \$3,293 if you can time it right. Lock yourself into the wrong dates and/or routes and you're looking at Atlanta-Athens for \$5,901 or Venice at \$5,193.

JetBlue Comes to Town: Boston-London/Gatwick has a couple of days at \$2,116 in September, otherwise \$3,766+; to London/Heathrow \$2,964 a couple days in August otherwise \$3,814+. Compare that to \$2,364 on American, British Airways, Delta, and United for travel September to March on Tuesday through Friday, otherwise \$3,564+. So much for JetBlue's transatlantic entrance bringing fares down.

Singapore Airlines: If you're flying to or via Frankfurt, Singapore offers \$2,248 Business Class fares from New York nonstop for travel in August departing Mondays through Thursdays. Choosing their superior seat seems like a no-brainer if you can make the scheduling work. Also notice that there are many connecting routes with Star Alliance partners under \$3,000, as you can see [here](#):

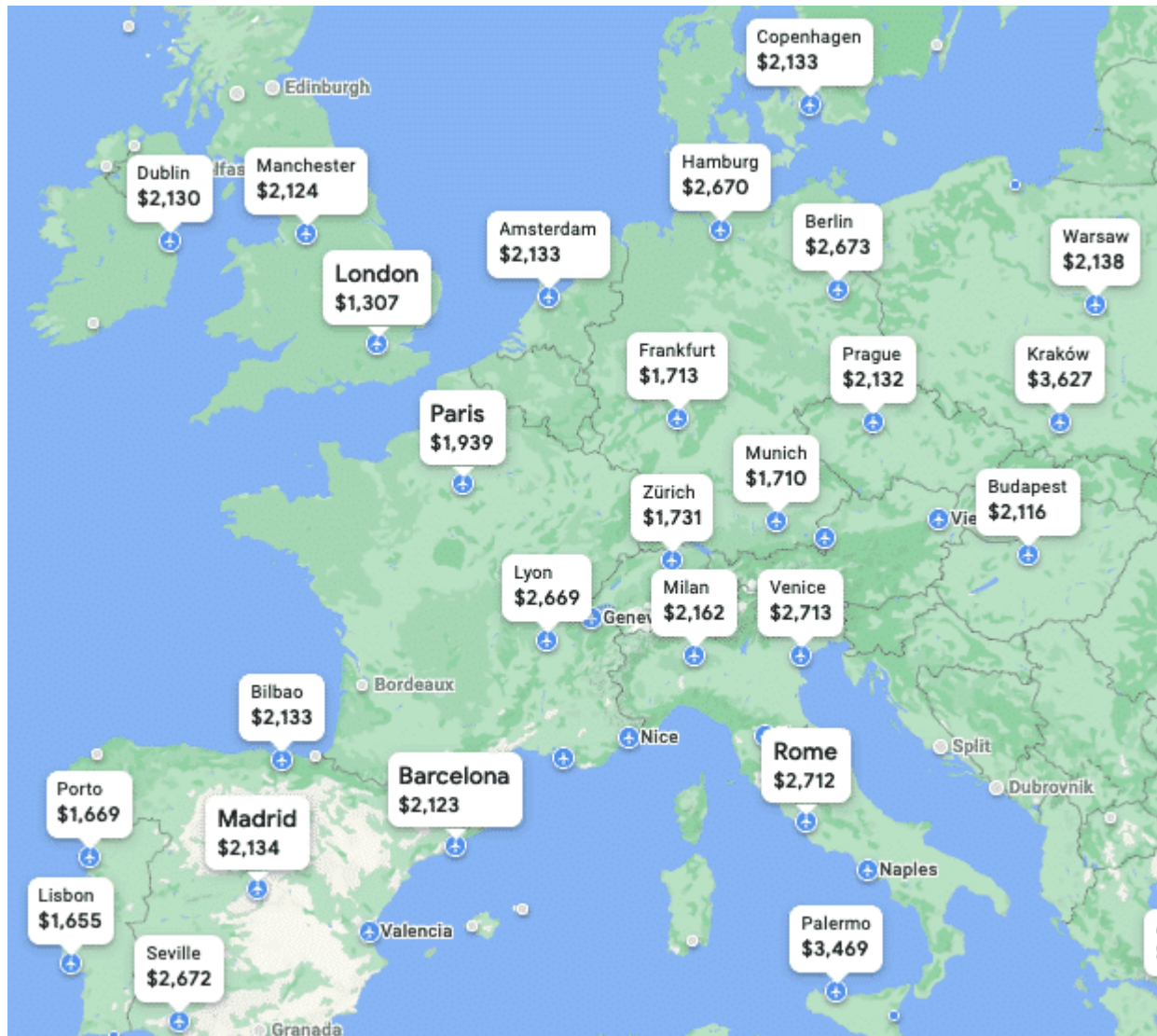


Emirates Fare Scene: Scattered dates available from September to December for New York-Milan from \$3,926 otherwise brace yourself for \$6,000 to \$11,000 summer fares. Get Newark-Athens from September to March from \$4,214, otherwise fares are much higher, even as high as \$12,600.

One-Stop Leaders: American and British Airways offer more low one-stop Business Class fares, while Delta offers the least.

Low Fares on TAP: Business Class New York-Milan via Lisbon for \$2,162 for travel September to March. Miami-Milan or Rome for travel October to March on TAP goes for \$1,732 versus \$2,479 on Air France, American, British Airways, Iberia, and Lufthansa for travel May to March.

Other good TAP fares include San Francisco to Lisbon from \$2,603, New York-Madrid via Lisbon for \$2,134 for travel from September to March, and **New York to London from \$1,462 from September to October, November, and January to March.** Lowest fares if you're flexible:



Low-Cost Portugal: New York-Porto is \$2,250 on SWISS via Frankfurt for travel July to March on Sundays through Thursdays versus TAP via Lisbon from \$1,669 June, July, and September to March.

Alitalia's newly rebranded ITA: Has a mixed bag of Business Class nonstop fares to Europe: New York-Milan from \$3,200 to \$3,497 and New York-Rome from \$3,300 to \$3,760, while Boston-Rome starts from \$3,110 and Miami-Rome from \$2,464, October through March.

Iberia: New York-Madrid for \$2,713 for travel September to March mid-week only, otherwise \$3,493. The lowest fare from Chicago and Miami is \$3,501.

More High-Fare Nonstop / Low-Fare Connecting Routes: Boston-Edinburgh ranges from \$3,421 to \$15,100 on Delta nonstop, June to September versus British Airways via London from \$2,482 for travel September to March on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Low & High Fares to Greek Isles: Washington, DC-Santorini or Mykonos via London on British Airways is \$2,420, May to October, versus Lufthansa via Frankfurt from \$4,324 for travel August to October.

Paris: Miami-Paris non-stop on Air France \$3,486 a few dates in July and August, otherwise \$3,700-\$4,600+; New York-Paris via Dublin on Aer Lingus is \$2,998, August to March versus United's nonstop from \$6,829; San Francisco-Paris nonstop on Air France and United \$3,379 in August, otherwise \$4,200+.

Playing the Star Alliance: Washington, DC-Athens nonstop on United ranges from 4,124 to \$17,000(!) versus one stop on Air Canada, Air France, American, British Airways, Brussels, Delta, Lufthansa and United for \$2,377.

Nonstop Hub Hogs: Atlanta-London for \$3,564 on Delta or British Airways; Dallas-Paris for \$3,987 or Rome for \$4,009 on American; Chicago to Vienna \$4,106 Austrian Airlines; Houston-Frankfurt or Munich on Lufthansa and United for \$4,377; Washington, DC to Zurich \$4,046 to \$6,696.

West Coast High-Fare Nonstops: Los Angeles-Vienna for \$5,384 on Austrian versus Lufthansa via Frankfurt for \$4,008; San Francisco-London for \$3,564 on United or \$4,164 on British Airways; Seattle-London on Delta for \$3,564; Phoenix-London for \$3,964 on American and British Airways.

West Coast Lower-Fare Nonstops: Finnair's Seattle-Helsinki for \$2,911 for travel on Wednesdays July through October and San Francisco-Copenhagen has a short travel window in August on SAS for \$2,918.

HIGH FARE-BEATER INSIGHTS

Given how easy it is to run into a \$3,500 to \$5,500 Business Class fare to Europe, here's a list of strategies to improve your odds of snagging one.

1. Stay on top of the best flash fares. Save money and time with [FCF's flash fares](#).
2. With the elimination of change fees, the ability to upgrade continues even after you have your ticket in hand, as covered in depth [here](#) and [here](#). This also works for you First Class flyers as mentioned [here](#) and [here](#).
3. A fare hold means just that — you can freeze a good deal in time to see if the dates work out for a trip. You can buy several tickets on different days and on different airlines to see what works best, without the worry of cancellation fees. More here: [Hold Your Fare, Not Your Breath: A Look at 2022 Fare Lock-In Policies](#)
4. Many airlines are currently offering "travel fee waivers," including for award flights. That means it won't cost you anything to cancel or change your ticket. Read more about it [here](#).
5. When booking, check for refundable fares for the same cost or a little more in case you want to make a change later. FCF has written more on that [here](#).
6. Save [hundreds of dollars \(and sometimes even thousands\)](#) on many premium fares on 26 airlines, thanks to Amex's International Airline Program (IAP).
7. A Star Alliance strategy we call the [Destination Double Down](#) works for those traveling to Asia who'd like to visit Europe for free or even less than free. Or, for those heading to Europe who would like to visit Asia for free. FCF calls it the "Destination Double Down," because it gets you to an extra world-class destination for barely any additional cost.

8. It's a similar story with Oneworld member Finnair. From their U.S. departure cities – Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, and New York — you can fly to Asia with a stop in Helsinki for half the price (more or less) of a nonstop from the U.S. to Asia. FCF has the story [here](#).
9. If you're on a budget, why would you pay a lot for a lie-flat seat when you'll be working on your laptop or watching a movie? Don't select the default option of flying both ways in the same cabin when you can maximize your value on long-haul flights. FCF has covered this strategy using normal published fares, [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#), and found opportunities by mixing cabins with American, Delta, and United to Europe [here](#).
10. If you dream, *then* plan, *then* buy your ticket, you're doing it wrong. See how a world of opportunity opens up when you think laterally, as evidenced [right here in this special report](#).
11. So much of travel involves default thinking, and that's just how the airlines like it. One of FCF's foundational pillars is to be an "opportunity traveler." We show you why and we show you how [right here](#).
12. FCF's [Fishing for Fares](#) special report shows you how to reel in Business Class return fares.

So, don't let those fiery high fares scare you away and burn up your travel dreams. You can escape the blaze with cool deals — and still live your best travel life.



Spite Flights Need Nights: Luxury Hotel Discounts Up to 59% Off from the ABA Is Just the Ticket

May 2022

**Frustrated about being locked out of travel for years?
Get a room.**

“Bennett, are you kidding me? You want to make the
?!”

Bennett: “Have you priced high-end hotels lately? The way I see it, if you can save a fortune on your hotel, you can add to your budget for upgrading to a better flight. Plus, at the moment these **deals are too BIG and prevalent** to risk going unnoticed.”

TAKEN A SPITE FLIGHT LATELY?

That's our name for feeling utterly jubilant and just a bit vengeful about booking some well-deserved travel after being locked out of many places for the past two years. Talk about a valve that needs a pressure release. And when you follow our advice, you'll be sure to get the full emotional liberation.

However, with so many people taking Spite Flights these days, hotel beds are suddenly in high demand, driving up prices like crazy. Many regions, such as South Florida for example, are doing exceptionally well and the luxury sector, in general, is disproportionately in demand.

Either way, high hotel prices isn't the kind of pillow talk we want to hear, and yet it's the subject of this special FCF report.

LEGAL FINE PRINT NETS A HOTEL DISCOUNT WITHOUT THE LAW DEGREE

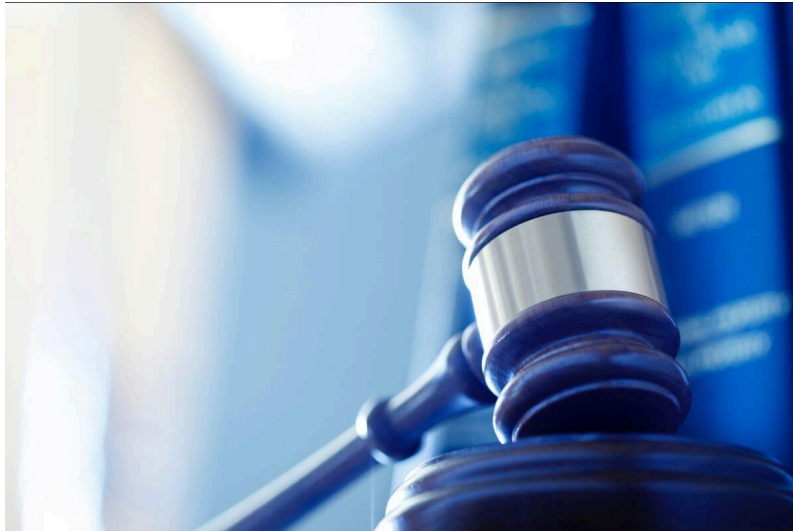
The ABA is the American Bar Association, but you don't need a law degree to partake in its discounts. Nor do you need to know how to make cocktails. That's right, anyone can be a member for a \$150 annual fee, just like I have for many years, under [the ABA Preferred Rate Hotel Program](#).

Here's the best part: the ABA is able to offer hotel discounts because they've negotiated special rates with a number of luxury hotels around the world. It's a similar dynamic to the annual negotiations that take place regarding vacation packages that we reported about [here](#) and [here](#). [For just \\$150](#), this membership can be incredibly lucrative for the savvy traveler.

IS ABA MEMBERSHIP WORTH IT? THAT'S FOR YOU TO JUDGE

It's not perfect, as some of you have reminded me over the years when no deals were available for a particular trip. So even though it's a bit of a lottery, it's worth buying a membership because when it works, it can work very well. **With the high rates we're seeing at high-end hotels right now, this is the prime time for this strategy to shine.**

For example, we found **savings of up to 59%** on some [great hotels](#). Although you can't expect your membership to lower the price at every luxury hotel, we've found that this strategy works primarily at higher-end hotels.



EVIDENCE BEFORE THE COURT

The screenshot below shows prices for the Ritz-Carlton, Chicago. The price per night is \$1,079 or \$4,319 for four nights **BEFORE** the ABA discount, and **just \$440 per night or \$1,760 for a four-night stay AFTER the discount is applied.**

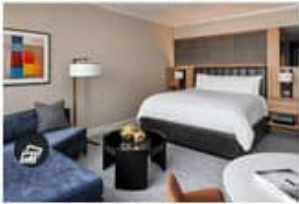
That's a savings of \$2,559, or 59%. Just think of applying that amount to an upgraded airline ticket.

The Ritz-Carlton, Chicago
160 East Pearson Street at Water Tower Place, Chicago, Illinois 60611 USA | +1312-266-1000 | 4.6 897 Reviews | Currency Calculator

EXCLUSIVE AMENITIES: Mobile Key, Digital Check-In, Service Request, Spa, Fitness

Dates: Wed, May 18, 2022 – Sun, May 22, 2022 | Rooms & Guests: 1 Room : 2 Adults | [EDIT](#)

Lake View, Guest room, 1 King [Room Details](#)

	Member Rate Flexible Rate Details	1,079 USD Avg./night 4,319 Total per room Taxes and all fees included	SELECT
	Flexible Rate Rate Details	1,102 USD Avg./night 4,409 Total per room Taxes and all fees included	SELECT

Now, check this out. Once you apply the ABA membership discount code, the prices drop dramatically to \$440 for The Ritz-Carlton.

That's a savings of \$639 at The Ritz-Carlton, per night.



The Ritz-Carlton, Chicago

160 East Pearson Street at Water Tower Place, Chicago, Illinois 60611 USA

+1 312-266-1000

4.6 897 Reviews

Currency Calculator

EXCLUSIVE AMENITIES

- Mobile Key
- Digital Check-In
- Service Request
- Spa
- Fitness

Dates

Wed, May 18, 2022 – Sun, May 22, 2022

Rooms & Guests

1 Room : 2 Adults

EDIT

Lake View, Guest room, 1 King



American Bar Assoc. Rate

Rate Details

440 USD Avg./night

1,760 Total per room

Taxes and all fees included

SELECT

And here is some more evidence to present before the court, right across the USA. We predict a very short jury deliberation on whether it represents good value.

MORE EXAMPLES OF ABA DISCOUNT OPPORTUNITIES FCF FOUND FOR FOUR-NIGHT STAYS

Hotel	Room Type	Dates	Normal Cost	ABA Member Cost	Savings
Ritz Carlton, Chicago	Lake View, King	May 18 - May 22	\$4,319	\$1,760	\$2,559 / 59%
The Carlyle, New York	Superior King	July 12 - July 16	\$4,833	\$1,964	\$2,869 / 59%
Trump International Hotel & Tower, New York	Superior Guest Room	July 12 - July 16	\$3,467	\$1,681	\$1,786 / 52%
Ritz Carlton, Dallas	Deluxe, King	June 8 - June 12	\$3,673	\$1,897	\$1,776 / 48%
Four Seasons Hotel St. Louis	Riverfront Studio Suite	July 17 - July 21	\$3,654	\$1,941	\$1,713 / 47%
The Chatwal, New York City	Junior Suite, King	June 28 - July 2	\$5,097	\$2,882	\$2,215 / 43%
Four Seasons, Houston	Premier, King	June 1 - June 5	\$3,170	\$1,883	\$1,287 / 41%
Ritz Carlton, New York Central Park	Deluxe, City View, King	May 4 - May 8	\$5,512	\$3,249	\$2,263 / 41%
The Nines, Portland	Corner Studio Suite, City View, King	June 20 - June 24	\$3,127	\$1,851	\$1,276 / 41%
Ritz Carlton, Los Angeles	Deluxe, City View, King	July 6 - July 10	\$3,492	\$2,089	\$1,403 / 40%

Hotel	Room Type	Dates	Normal Cost	ABA Member Cost	Savings
St. Regis, Washington, DC	Metropolitan Suite, King	June 1 - June 5	\$3,466	\$2,085	\$1,381 / 40%
The Phoenician, Scottsdale	One Bedroom Executive Suite, King	July 12 - July 16	\$4,993	\$3,106	\$1,887 / 38%
The St. Regis, New York	Superior - Butler Service, King	July 12 - July 16	\$4,558	\$2,882	\$1,676 / 37%
The Whitley, Buckhead	One Bedroom Executive Suite, King	June 15- June 19	\$2,951	\$1,879	\$1,072 / 36%
W Seattle	Corner Studio Suite, City View, King	June 20 - June 24	\$1,958	\$1,350	\$608 / 31%

In addition to the [preferred rate discounts](#), ABA offers its members exclusive [quarterly promotions](#) at certain properties, such as special negotiated rates, fixed rates, upgrades, early check-in, and numerous other freebies.

The defense rests.



Good Luck Booking Backwards in a Post- Lockdown World

May 2022

Use FCF's forward-thinking deals to book dream trips every time

We should all be happier, right? The Lockdown is ending all over the place and everyone is jetting off to... well just about anywhere.

But just as hopes rise, other factors are conspiring to turn our smiles upside down, like inflation. Jeepers, that's not good. And it's causing fuel prices to rise, and therefore airplane tickets (read about what we said about high fares on major airlines [here](#)). At the same time, there's "revenge travel"—everyone is looking to fly right now, so **demand is high, airlines can't scale back fast enough, and mileage availability is low**

(more about scarce award and upgrade seats [here](#)), and suddenly a post-lockdown world has lost some of its shininess for premium travelers wishing to use miles for premium flights or find low fares.

Phew, this is a depressing read, right? Well, we can only control what we can control here at FCF, such as informing you about certain commonly held travel mindsets that hold you back. One such default mindset is how you approach travel in the first place by “booking backwards,” which might be stopping you from securing those dream trips that move you forward.

We have updated the report below that originally ran last year because it's especially apropos today in light of skyrocketing fares and low mileage award availability in the post-lockdown era. So these concepts should be front and center for you right now. Plus, we've added 20 routes you can book now with your miles / points on top flights around the world.

FCF's Recommended Mindset for Spring 2022

FLIP THE SCRIPT AND RAMP UP YOUR UPGRADE-ABILITY

Ever heard of Douglas “Wrong Way” Corrigan? Although he was a skilled aircraft mechanic (a builder of Charles Lindbergh’s famed Spirit of St. Louis plane), his sense of direction was questionable. After flying from California to New York in 1938, he hopped in his plane for the return flight and promptly flew the wrong way — straight to Ireland.

ARE YOU FLYING THE WRONG WAY?

If you're like most people, you typically go through these three steps to book a vacation:

1. **The Dreaming Phase:** Whether you're inspired by a TV ad, a glossy travel magazine, a movie set in an alluring location, a well-written travel story, or simply by hearing about the incredible travel experiences of your friends or family, the dreaming phase is usually what gets the process going.
2. **The Planning Stage:** Once you've made your decision to go *somewhere* using the aforementioned sources, the planning phase begins. This is typically a very time-consuming process for most people. There are tons of details to hammer out: When *exactly* should we go? Where *exactly* should we go? What airlines fly there and what are their schedules like? And so on. **According to a report by Expedia, most travelers typically visit a whopping 38 websites — yes, 38 — to book their vacation.**
3. **The Booking Step:** Now that you've chosen your destination, set your travel dates, and booked your hotel, you finally start thinking about flights.

But here's the thing: **If you're value-conscious at all, you're going about it the wrong way.**

THE RIGHT WAY TO FLY

Listen, it's time to ditch that old-school way of thinking that leaves the airline booking for last. Trust me, if you stop doing it like everyone else, your entire booking (and travel) experience will improve — and you'll save

money too.

Here's the problem with conventional wisdom: You've spent weeks planning a specific trip around specific dates, but you haven't once considered your options for premium air travel — which **could end up having the biggest impact on your budget.**

By the time you're ready to book the airline ticket, you won't be able to find any deals because you've already boxed yourself in by the dates of your hotel, tour, or cruise.

Yes, the mindset we're talking about here is a fundamental shift away from what you're probably used to doing (and you're not alone). But once you come around to it, your travel life (and your wallet) will improve immeasurably. So...

IF YOU HAVE A FINITE BUDGET...

Most people don't have an unlimited travel budget, so when you're able to save thousands of dollars on premium airline tickets it allows you to:

- Take longer vacations
- Explore more side trips and adventures
- Treat yourself to more and/or upgraded tours, better accommodations and/or suites, and finer dining experiences

Let FCF find the best flight deals for you, then plan the rest of your trip around those opportunities. All you have to do is **keep a broad wish list of destinations on hand**, so when those crazy-amazing premium opportunities surface – as they always do – you'll be ready to pounce.

HOW TO UNBOX YOURSELF

Rather than fixating on one place to go next, consider keeping a few different continents and regions (or a few different places within a given region) on your wishlist. Then choose the one that offers the best travel opportunity during your time frame. I have a gazillion places on my bucket list. I just pick 'em off as the opportunities arise – and they always do. The last thing I do is pick a spot and pay through the nose for it.

Consider other cities/destinations: Have New Zealand on your list? If you don't see a deal to Auckland in the [FCF newsroom](#), but there's a First Class seat for less than the price of Business Class to Sydney, why not check out Sydney for a day (or three) on your way? Then you can easily tack on Auckland. You may never be Down Under again, so it's the perfect time to take advantage of the opportunity. That's what we call an [Opportunity Traveler](#).

I was once planning to fly to Sydney, but there were only flights available to Melbourne, so I checked out what was going on there the day I was en route. Lo and behold, the Australian Open was happening and I got to

see Serena Williams crush it in the semifinals (an unforgettable experience), all because I didn't have my travel blinders on.

When you open yourself up to multiple continents, regions, or cities, dream trips will fall in your lap.

Staying flexible allows you to pounce on truly great opportunities when they come up. You'll start seeing them everywhere.

EXAMPLES OF EXOTIC HIGH-END DEALS YOU CAN BOOK RIGHT NOW THAT OFFER STRONG VALUE

Emirates has one of the world's best First Class seats and a [vast route network beyond Dubai](#). [Now they're resuming their majestic A380 service](#); see FCF Sweet Redeem alerts [here](#) and [here](#). But flying Emirates doesn't just mean going to Dubai. The airline also flies [New York-Milan using the A380](#). They also have a [Newark-Athens](#) service, which uses a B777 -- and countless routes to Africa, the Middle East, and India.

Doesn't this offer an unforgettable flight experience that will kick off your trip in the right direction, big time? Looks like it to me. All accomplished by thinking about your flights first, as you'll seldom find great deals on the exact dates you need to pair with your locked-in itinerary.

WHEN ELITE STATUS MATTERS...

If you're a United loyalist *and* elite status is important to you *and* you want to go to Asia *and* you don't want to pay \$5,000+ for Business Class *and* you refuse to fly coach, the option that ticks all those boxes is using a **mileage upgrade**.

In December we scoured [23 United routes to Asia](#) and found just two routes with a little availability for upgrades to Business Class that you can easily tack onto a flight beyond the long haul for free much of the time [more on that here](#). Since then we recently scoured 24 routes and found six routes, with outbound award availability but no seats on the return, to Tokyo from Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Newark, San Francisco, and Washington, DC routes.

Or you're a United loyalist *and* you want to go to Europe, we recently scoured 45 United routes to Europe and found [six routes with a little upgrade availability](#), since then the same 45 routes yielded just two routes with upgrade availability as seen [here](#) and [here](#).

Is this the difference between a miserable long-haul trip and a nice one for elite-focused travelers not willing to spring for a Business Class fare? Looks like it to me. **All by thinking about flights first** because [your odds of finding United upgrades are extremely low otherwise](#).

WHEN DOLLARS OUT OF POCKET MATTER...

The New York-Rome nonstop flight for travel Monday, June 6, through Thursday, June 16, costs \$5,060 on United. Compare that with traveling *a month later*, Monday, July 18, through Thursday, July 28, for a cost of \$3,359. What a difference a month makes. In other words, don't lock in your resort or cruise for June without checking your flight options first.

Round trip · 1					Total price from
Newark ↔ Rome					\$5,060
	Mon, Jun 6 · 8:35 PM – 10:55 AM* ¹ United · Lufthansa, Brussels Airlines	8 hr 20 min EWR–FCO	Nonstop	3,134 kg CO ₂ +18% emissions ⓘ	▼
	Thu, Jun 16 · 11:00 AM – 2:30 PM United · Lufthansa, Brussels Airlines	9 hr 30 min FCO–EWR	Nonstop	2,839 kg CO ₂ +7% emissions ⓘ	▼
Round trip · 1 · Business Class					Total price from
Newark ↔ Rome					\$3,359
	Mon, Jul 18 · 5:25 PM – 7:45 AM* ¹ United · Lufthansa, Brussels Airlines	8 hr 20 min EWR–FCO	Nonstop	2,839 kg CO ₂ +7% emissions ⓘ	▼
	Thu, Jul 28 · 11:00 AM – 2:30 PM United · Lufthansa, Brussels Airlines	9 hr 30 min FCO–EWR	Nonstop	2,839 kg CO ₂ +7% emissions ⓘ	▼

WHEN GETTING THE MOST BANG FOR YOUR POINTS MATTERS

What's more, using the wrong mileage "currency" can also cost you big time. For example, booking a flight to Europe [using Delta Miles costs 180,000 one way, while using Virgin miles on the same Delta flight is only 50,000 one way when availability is there](#). That's a crazy-big difference. You can brag about that to the passenger sitting next to you and you might start a fight.

Is that a three-for-one? Looks like it to me. All by thinking about flights first.

Here's another one: Fly in First Class on All Nippon using 150,000 All Nippon miles (get easy from Amex points transfer) round-trip versus United's typical Business Class mileage cost of 350,000. You will literally be miles ahead of your peers.

Inspiration of JAPAN

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[Logout](#)

ANA MILEAGE CLUB

1 Flight Search

2 Passenger Information

3 Payment Method

4 Complete

Itinerary

	Departure/Arrival	Flight	Seat	Class	Status	Service
Feb 7 Monday 12h25min	00:05 Los Angeles(LAX) Terminal: 8	NH105 ANA 77W	--	First	OK	Lounge Meal Movie Duty Free
	05:30 +1 day Tokyo(Haneda)					
Feb 19 Saturday 9h50min	17:00 Tokyo(Narita) Terminal: 1	NH006 ANA 77W	--	First	OK	Lounge Meal Movie Duty Free
	09:50 Los Angeles(LAX)					

Payment

Required mileage	Total
150,000 Miles	USD 196.05
Adult x1	

TIME TO LOCK IN THE DEAL

Just grab the deal now.

You don't have to figure it all out right away. [If you do need to change later](#), that change fee — if any — is peanuts compared to the huge savings you've already scored.

The point is that deals disappear quickly, so you need to be prepared to jump on 'em before they're gone.

The key is to book the most important part of your trip — the flight — whenever that amazing deal surfaces at a place on the top of your bucket list.

A MENTION OF REDEMPTION

If you haven't already, check out our ["Sweet Redeems" alert page](#). It's packed with routes and airlines with low-cost Business and First Class mileage award availability. Forget Disneyland, THIS is the happiest place on earth.

RELATED STRATEGIES TO KEEP IN MIND

- **Know when to pay** with cash or miles. You can find more on that [here](#).
- **Know how to [freeze and hold fares](#)** (because snap-frozen fish tastes just as good when cooked).
- **Check for refundable fares** for the same cost or slightly more. More on that [here](#).
- **Be aware of "travel fee waivers"** that many airlines are currently offering, including for award flights. That means it won't cost you anything to cancel or change your ticket. Read more about it [here](#).
- **Scout out local events**, which can enrich your travel experience further. For example, if you see an amazing FCF deal to Melbourne, but you really want to go to New Zealand, why not hit the Melbourne Cup horse race on the way? (It's known locally as "the race that stops a nation.") Then you can add on

a flight to Auckland and enjoy two destinations instead of one. Major events are one of my favorite ways to experience other cultures.

20 ROUTES YOU CAN BOOK NOW WITH YOUR MILES / POINTS ON TOP FLIGHTS AROUND THE WORLD

ASIA

[Loads of Japan Airlines Business Class Opportunities from Chicago to Tokyo and Beyond](#)

[Wide Open Singapore Airlines Business Class Opportunities from Los Angeles to Tokyo](#)

[Scads of Japan Airlines Business Class Opportunities from Dallas and Many Other U.S. Cities to Tokyo](#)

[Loads of Japan Airlines Business Class Opportunities from San Francisco & Los Angeles to Tokyo](#)

[Handful of All Nippon Airways Business Class from Washington, DC to Tokyo and Beyond in 2023](#)

[Handful of All Nippon Discount Business Class Availability to Tokyo from Los Angeles in 2023](#)

EUROPE

[Lots of Single-Seat *First Class* Discount Award Seats to Europe with Emirates from Newark to Athens](#)

[Cheap Forward Planning Business Class Seats from Boston to Madrid for 49,000 Amex Points R/T](#)

[Many Cheap Forward Planning Business Class Seats from Los Angeles to Madrid for 61,000 Amex Points R/T](#)

[Scads of Cheap Forward Planning Business Class Seats from New York to Madrid for 49,000 Amex Points R/T](#)

[Wide Open Singapore Airlines Business Class Opportunities from Houston to Manchester](#)

[Handful of Cheap Delta Business Class Opportunities New York to Iceland this Fall](#)

[A380 *First Class* Discount Opportunities to Europe with Emirates from New York to Milan](#)

[Handful of Cheap Delta Business Class Opportunities from New York to Brussels this Fall](#)

MIDDLE EAST

[Handful of Qsuite Business Class Opportunities from Chicago and Many Other Cities to Doha and Beyond with Miles & Points](#)

[2023: Handful of Qatar Qsuite Business Class Opportunities from Atlanta and Many Other Cities to Doha and Beyond with Miles & Points](#)

[Emirates A380 *First Class* Discount Single Seat Opportunities from Washington, DC to Dubai](#)

[Where Qatar Qsuite Business Class Opportunities are from New York to Doha and Beyond with Miles & Points](#)

[Good Emirates *First Class* Single Seat Discount Opportunities from Orlando to Dubai and Many Other Cities](#)

[Forward Planning Qatar Qsuites Business Class from Dallas to Doha Save 57% with Amex Points](#)



Award Tickets Are More Expensive Than Ever. Here's How to Score Hidden Gems Now

May 2022

FCF's Spring 2022 perspective on beating high mileage award costs

You may have noticed that mileage award ticket prices have been increasing in altitude lately thanks to the current supply/demand environment and “dynamic” pricing. Well, that’s what the airlines call it. I’m sure these prices are all dynamic and exciting for them. For us it’s become harder than ever to plan because prices are jumping around like kids at a trampoline center, and for the most part, they’re more expensive.

And on top of that, there’s a scarcity of low-cost award seats because of the high demand curve caused by people jumping back onto planes. That’s a lose-lose situation *at first glance*.

But here at FCF we pride ourselves on second, third, fourth, and fifth glances (even 12, see below). Meaning we'll look real hard to find a way to beat high prices, whether it's for cash fares or miles.

USING MILES TO EUROPE: A BLOW-BY-BLOW DESCRIPTION

If you want a specific route on a specific airline on a specific date in Business or First Class to Europe using miles, you're just not being realistic — and you're just cooking up the perfect recipe for depression. Depression typically comes from unmet expectations. Mileage travelers who are accustomed to getting upset with airlines that charge really **high rates** are going to be especially cranky for the foreseeable future as very few seats are being released at low rates. Let's review the good, the bad, and the ugly over the last year:

For flights to Europe:

June 2021: American, Delta (using Virgin miles), Iberia and United [showed availability aplenty](#).

July 2021: more good news with some [great deals using miles](#) on American, Delta and United in Business Class.

August 2021: We were happy to highlight [Unprecedented United upgrade availability](#).

November 2021: We found [opportunities](#) on 27 American Airlines Business Class routes and five First Class routes.

November 2021: We reported that United upgrade availability using miles [went from 45 available routes in August to just six](#). Now there are virtually no United upgrade seats when booking in advance using miles. What a beat-down.

December 2021: We looked at 50 nonstop United routes using awards to Europe and found that yessiree, United had their ["dynamic" pricing model cranking at full speed](#) making just two routes available at the lowest cost and increases of 39%.

January 2022: We reported on [how to add on stops, depart from your hometown—and still save miles or dollars](#).

February 2022: We reported that [American followed suit with dynamic pricing](#) increases of their own, leading to almost no award seats at the lowest cost and pricing increases of 30% to 85%+.

March 2022: We escalated our recommendation on [burning your miles before they burn you](#).

April 2022: We showed you that [availability had opened up in First Class for close-in bags-packed and already-booked travelers](#).

What does booking award flights in spring 2022
to Europe look like for the next YEAR?

Our global team spent hundreds of hours surveying many routes; let's start with the bad news.

Routes To Europe Recently Surveyed For Lowest Award Cost

Airline	Routes Checked	Routes Available
American*	43	10
United*	50	2
Delta using Virgin Atlantic miles	56	1

*Availability based on awards that are 78K or lower each way

Airline	Routes Checked	Routes Available
United upgrade with miles	50	0

**THE GOOD NEWS:
THERE ARE HIDDEN ROUTES TO EUROPE
TO SCORE NOW**

AMEX TRANSFER PARTNERS

Oneworld:

British Airways, Iberia

Spain Deals: [Boston to Madrid](#), [Los Angeles to Madrid](#), [New York to Madrid](#)

SkyTeam:

Virgin Atlantic

Belgium Deals: [New York to Brussels](#)

Iceland Deals: [New York to Reykjavik](#)

Star Alliance:

Air Canada, LifeMiles, Singapore

United Kingdom Deals: [Houston to Manchester](#)

Non-Alliance:

Emirates

Greece Deals: [Newark to Athens](#)

Italy Deals: [New York to Milan](#)

CAPITAL ONE TRANSFER PARTNERS:**Oneworld:**

British Airways

Spain Deals: [Boston to Madrid](#), [Los Angeles to Madrid](#), [New York to Madrid](#)

Star Alliance:

Air Canada, LifeMiles, Singapore

United Kingdom Deals: [Houston to Manchester](#)

Non-Alliance:

Emirates

Greece Deals: [Newark to Athens](#)

Italy Deals: [New York to Milan](#)

CHASE TRANSFER PARTNERS:**Oneworld:**

British Airways, Iberia

Spain Deals: [Boston to Madrid](#), [Los Angeles to Madrid](#), [New York to Madrid](#)

SkyTeam:

Virgin Atlantic

Belgium Deals: [New York to Brussels](#)

Iceland Deals: [New York to Reykjavik](#)

Star Alliance:

Air Canada, Singapore, United

United Kingdom Deals: [Houston to Manchester](#)

Non-Alliance:

Emirates

Greece Deals: [Newark to Athens](#)

Italy Deals: [New York to Milan](#)

CITI TRANSFER PARTNERS

Oneworld:

American

Spain Deals: [Boston to Madrid](#), [Los Angeles to Madrid](#), [New York to Madrid](#)

Star Alliance:

LifeMiles, Singapore

United Kingdom Deals: [Houston to Manchester](#)

Non-Alliance:

Emirates

Greece Deals: [Newark to Athens](#)

Italy Deals: [New York to Milan](#)

ALASKA, AMERICAN, BRITISH AIRWAYS OR IBERIA MILES

Spain Deals: [Boston to Madrid](#), [Los Angeles to Madrid](#), [New York to Madrid](#)

VIRGIN ATLANTIC MILES

Belgium Deals: [New York to Brussels](#)

Iceland Deals: [New York to Reykjavik](#)

AIR CANADA, LIFEMILES, SINGAPORE OR UNITED MILES

United Kingdom Deals: [Houston to Manchester](#)

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Tips & Tricks to Keep In Mind

We're equally optimistic and tenacious here at FCF. When the news looks bad, we look harder to fix it. Here are our 12 tricks for what you can do in times like these.

Know when to pay with cash or miles. These are the golden days to shop for sweet deals. But now you must decide between two seemingly equal bargains? Need to choose between a discounted low fare or a low-mileage award ticket? Check out [this report](#).

If you do have **flexibility**, don't play into the airlines' hands. Be an opportunity traveler instead, and let them play into yours. There's a more successful path available when you can [Be an Opportunity Traveler](#).

There are built-in bargains to be had simply by knowing the perks airlines offer, such as **free flights to hubs both here in the U.S. and in Europe**. Learn about [the Art of Skipping Stones](#).

[Stop “Booking Backwards”: Use FCF’s Forward-Thinking Deals to Book Dream Trips Every Time](#). Are you dreaming, then planning, then booking? Well stop it. That’s backwards thinking and you can flip it on its head for a *real* opportunity.

Did you know you can **upgrade your ticket even after you’ve booked?** Check out our special report, [Overtime Winner: Why the Upgrade Game Doesn’t End When You Book a Flight](#). Oh, and this works in First Class too as we told you [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

The art of upgrading goes way beyond merely moving “up” a cabin. We like to think of ourselves as experienced in the art so let us show you how with, [We’re Upgrade Open-Minded. Are You?](#)

The two segments of a “round-trip” flight are rarely equal. For starters, the times are different. So how can you improve your travel experience by booking the two flights separately? We’ll demonstrate with [Is the Value of a Mile the Same on Overnight Flights as on Daytime Flights?](#)

Our [Sweet Redeems](#) show you where you can find discount Business and First Class award seats including the airlines, routes, and months with availability for miles at low rates. It’s all outlined for you [here](#) and [here](#).

When fares skyrocket and award seats are scarce as we’re seeing now, package deals make for big wins for travelers in the know. Check for [vacation packages](#) as they can be a surprisingly great value when fares are high.

Many airlines offer free cancellations, including for award flights. That means **it won’t cost you anything to cancel or change your ticket**. Read more about it [here](#).

When you don’t find availability for EXACTLY what you want, don’t give up. Break free from old-school travel thinking with [10 Common Mistakes Most Travelers Make](#).

Last but not least:

Instead of overpaying, check out one of **the cheapest ways to get to Europe in Business Class** with miles, points, or dollars [here](#) and [here](#).