

Fly More Pay Less

7 ways to save money on airfare

There are a lot of myths to buying cheap airline tickets and they are just that, myths. Such tales include buy on Tuesday, searching incognito by clearing your cookies, and booking direct will give you the best price. There is no absolute rule to follow other than do your homework.

Cheaper does not always equate better value. When looking for cheaper airfare you have to consider what is important to you. If you are miserable on an early morning flight in a cramped seat, it's not worth saving \$30. When shopping for airfare, you want the best value and that is defined differently for everyone.

Algorithms have replaced humans in determining when and how much to discount a flight. These specialized computer programs are impossible to predict. There is no magic secret, however, the more you know about airlines and travel the more you can save.

Be Flexible

Being flexible can save you a lot of money. When booking a trip, you should consider traveling during the shoulder seasons, after a major holiday, and flying early morning or late evening.

Find the perfect time to book your flight. This depends on your destination, what time of year you are traveling, and how flexible is your travel schedule. This sweet spot can vary from 3-6 weeks out for domestic flights and 5-6 months for international. Google flights has a great feature where you can plug in your arrival and departure locations and scroll along the calendar to get an idea when prices drop.

Having flexibility with your destination can allow you to travel much more often. Google flights will allow you to explore prices from your selected departure city, using a map for cities all over the world. You can adjust your dates to be specific or anytime in the upcoming 6 months. Also, it is helpful to check other airports regionally from you desired departure and arrival cities. Often flights to or from less popular airports are less money and depending on your country, public transportation is readily available. For example, most flights arrive to London Heathrow but there are other options available including London Gatwick or London Stansted.

In the know

Know the carriers out of your local airport and their hubs. This information is found on the carrier's flight map or route map page of their inflight magazine or website. Often you can find a cheap flight to a hub and hop to a larger more desired destination cheaper than booking it direct from your departure city.

Know the international hubs and which airlines use which hub. International flights are often cheaper when you originate from an international hub such as JFK, MIA, FLL.

Know the international budget carriers. Budget carriers are plentiful worldwide and utilizing these flights for smaller jaunts, particularly in Asia and Europe, can decrease your transit time. Be sure to read the fine print. Often budget airlines will charge for everything including carry-on and checked bags, printing your boarding pass, and using a credit card. Compare the fare and extra fees to the other airlines that include the fees in their ticket.

Their price maybe higher but will include your carry on, 1st checked bag for international flights, free alcohol, etc. It's about the best price for the best value.

Search.....then search again

Using multiple search engines allows you to approach your flight search from a variety of angles. The best angle may not be the first one you find. Each search engine provides different features and has access to different sites.

Momondo has a plethora of choices. You can select a departure or destination, set your timeline, budget, and length of travel. Another feature allows you to search travel within your budget. The budget airlines are included in Momondo searches.

Google Flights has all kinds of flexibility. You can select a departure and destination then shop for cheapest flights based on dates of travel. Alternatively, just select a departure city, your timeline, and explore destinations on a map. This website allows you to track specific destinations and get email notifications when flight prices change. Certain airlines are not included in Google flights searches such as Southwest, RyanAir, and other budget carriers. This is where knowing your local airlines and the domestic and international hubs can help.

Skyscanner is similar to Momondo but has a great app format.

Do the airline tango

Knowing the airline industry helps you to mix and match your airlines. Search your desired destination and look at the carriers. Booking separate segments can sometimes be cost effective. Here's an example.

Rome.....CHS to FCO is \$1500/ however flying round trip CHS to JFK then booking a ticket round trip from JFK to FCO (\$200 + \$605 = \$805) is \$695 saved to eat more pizza and drink more wine.

Guatemala City.....CHS to GUA is \$600/ however flying round trip CHS to FLL is \$161 and FLL to GUA is \$209. This saves \$230 but luggage on the segmented option is \$80 leaving only a savings of \$150. The first option is with Delta and includes my carry on. A bit less headache and a perfect example of cost vs value.

It is a bit more complicated and you need to make sure you allow a bit of a buffer in for flight delays. Consider adding the trip insurance if using this method as it will provide you some assistance in the event of a mishap. Also, if you check luggage, this method can be a bit trickier and you will have to allow for extra time to retrieve your luggage between each individual segment.

Here are some recommended websites to help with booking your flight in segments.

Kiwi.com

AMEX travel

Google Flights

Sales

There are hundreds of websites on the web that will notify you of airline sales and some of them are not as good as others. Remember, the middle man has to get his cut of the pie.

Some good website to subscribe to are:

Airfarewatchdog

The Flight Deal

Holiday Pirates

Scotts Cheap flights

Secret Flying

Next Vacay

Many offer free and paid versions. You get what you pay for and the paid versions allow you to customize your profile.

When an airline offers a sale, they usually send out an email to their frequent flyers or email subscribers. The duration to purchase is short, often only 24 hours. It is helpful to sign up for airlines that you may have not flown in the past so that you receive notifications of sales via email without becoming a frequent flyer.

With all the email notifications from search engines, travel websites, and airlines, your inbox can get cluttered. Open an email account for your travel notifications. When you are planning travel, you can access it as often as you need. Just remember to clear it after planning a trip or on a regular basis to avoid a zillion emails.

Get more for you flight, Book a Stopover

A stopover allows the traveler to experience 2 or more destinations on the same trip, breaking up the flight. There are a couple different ways to do this. You can book each segment separately or use the multi-city feature on your preferred search engine. There are search engines designed to help plan stopovers such as Sky Scanner and AirWander.

Finally, there are airlines that offer free stopovers. These often come with free hotel rooms, free tours, or special pricing.

Points and Miles

Points and miles can be confusing. It can feel like you have to be a combination of a finance major and magician to figure it out. Start small and you will learn as you go. Learn your frequent flyer programs and which ones allow you to link accounts to earn points. Delta allows you to link LYFT and AirBNB so you earn points with purchases.

Credit card rewards are the big hype. Chase Sapphire, American Express Premier Rewards Gold Card, and Capital One Venture are the top 3 offering the most bang for your buck. All of these cards come with a fee but tout what you save far exceeds their service fee. Most air carriers offer a partner credit card and award points based on purchases, sometimes double or triple and discounts for specific purchases.

Here are some additional resources to broaden your knowledge:

[How I earn 1 million frequent flyer miles every year](#)

[Is travel hacking really a scam](#)

[The ultimate guide to travel hacking](#)

How a person travels is very individual to his or her person. What makes for an ultimate adventure for one may ruin a trip for another. The most challenging part of traveling is the getting to and from and in a way that is pleasant and affordable. These tips have been helpful for me and my travel colleagues and hopefully will guide you in planning your next journey. After all, the less we spend on getting to and from our destination, the more we have to enjoy it while we are there; or better yet travel again in the near future.

Ciao!

Carriers from Charleston

Alaska Air

Frontier

Delta

Jet Blue

American

Southwest

British Air (April 2019)

Budget Carriers of the World

Canada	United States	Asia	Europe
Flair Airlines	Southwest	Air Asia	Vueling
Swoop	Allegiant Air	Tiger Air	Ryanair
Jetlines	Frontier	Jeju Air	Easyjet
Air Canada Rouge	Spirit	Jetstar	Aigle Azur
Wow Air	Sun Country Airlines	Hong Kong Express	Wow Air
Porter	Virgin	Scoot	Eurowings
Air Transat	Jet Blue	Peach Air	Flybe
		Dragon Air	Norwegian Air
		Spice Jet	Wizz Air
		Spring Airlines	
		Vietnam Airlines	
		Nok Air	
		Tway Airlines	
		Vanilla Air	
Australia/NZ			
Jet Star			
Tiger Air			

Hubs for International Travel

Airport	City	Average Price
Logan	Boston	\$187
JFK	New York City	\$100-160
Dulles/Ronald Reagan. IAD/DCS	Washington DC	\$100-120
ATL	Atlanta	under \$200
FLL	Fort Lauderdale FL	less than \$120
MIA	Miami	Less than \$200
HOU	Houston	Less than \$240
SEA	Seattle	average \$230
LAX	Los Angles	average \$300
ORD	Chicago	\$50-200

Stopover Information

Airline Name	Nuggets	Web address
AirCanada	Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver Reduced hotel 1 city each way	https://www.aircanada.com/ca/en/aco/home/book/travels/hotels/stopover.html
FinnAir	Helsinki 1-2 days each way	https://www.finnair.com/us/gb/stopover
Iceland Air	Reykjavik Up to 7 days	https://www.icelandair.com/flights/stopover/
Wow Air	Reykjavik	https://wowair.us/flights/wow-stopover/
TAP Portugal	Libson or Porto Up to 3 days	https://portugalstopover.flytap.com/USA/enus/stopover?anetwork=PAIDSEARCH&ds_rl=1244656&ds_rl=1250263&ds_rl=1251914&gclid=EAlaIqObChMIh9SB24HK3gIVi42zCh1m3g9bEAAAYASAAEgLSUfD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds
Air China	Beijing Shanghi 72 hours No visa fees	http://www.airchina.com.cn/vaservice/view/homepage/hotel/hotels.jsp
China Southern	Beijing Guanghou Shanghi 72 hours No visa fees	https://www.csair.com/en/tourguide/transit_flow/flightsTwo_hub/free_accommodations/
Singapore Airlines	Singapore	https://www.singaporeair.com/en_UK/us/plan-travel/packages/singapore-stopover-holiday/
Thai Airways	Bangkok	https://www.thaiairways.com/en_AU/plan_my_trip/Special_event/BKKStopoverSeptoDec.page
Turkish Airways	Istanbul Free tour/hotel	https://www.turkishairlines.com/en-tr/flights/stopover/?gclid=EAlaIqObChMIwey1r4bK3gIVj4uzCh0LiQcaEAAAYASAAEgluevD_BwE
Ethiopian Airlines	Addis Ababa	
Emirates	Dubai	https://www.turkishairlines.com/en-tr/flights/stopover/?gclid=EAlaIqObChMIwey1r4bK3gIVj4uzCh0LiQcaEAAAYASAAEgluevD_BwE
Etihad	Abu Dhabi BOGO hotel	https://www.etihad.com/en-us/plan-and-book/book-stopovers/essential-stopovers/

Qatar Airways	Doha Up to 96 hours Visa fees waived	https://discoverqatar.qatarairways.com/us-en/stopover/
Virgin Australia	Abu Dhabi	https://www.virginaustralia.com/us/en/bookings/travel-extras/abu-dhabi-stopover/complimentary-stopover/
Hawaiian Airlines	Honolulu	https://www.hawaiianairlines.com/legal/domestic-contract-of-carriage/013-stopovers
Japan Airlines	Tokoyo Osaka	http://www.jal.co.jp/en/inter/reservation/multi-city/index.html
Royal Air Maroc	Casablanca	https://www.royalairmaroc.com/us-en/content/download/4749/396158/file/TRANSIT.pdf
Swiss Air	Switzerland	https://stopover-switzerland.com/us/en/