



Travel Tips & Frequent Flier Hacks

Travel and Adventure Show
Washington, D.C.
January 2026

Introduction

- Scott Mayerowitz, founder of [GlobeTrotScott Strategies](https://www.globetrotscott.com)
- Longtime travel journalist and points junkie. (*ABC News, AP, The Points Guy*)
- scott@globetrotscott.com
- Social media: @GlobeTrotScott

Elite status with multiple airlines, hotels, car rental companies and Amtrak.

- **Two dozen-plus credit cards.**
- **\$7,000+ in annual fees.**
- **Annually: ~\$15-20k in value.**



Booking Flights

- Cheapest isn't always the best!
 - Start at [Google Flights](#).
 - Search for one ticket at a time.
 - Keep a kid with an adult on each ticket.
- Avoid restrictive "Basic Economy."
 - No **changes or refunds**.
 - United doesn't allow carry-on bags.
 - Board last = **no overhead bins**.
 - No advance **seat assignments**.
- Look and see if the flight is daily or not.
- Understand the cancellation policies and vouchers.
- Consider loyalty programs and any elite status.

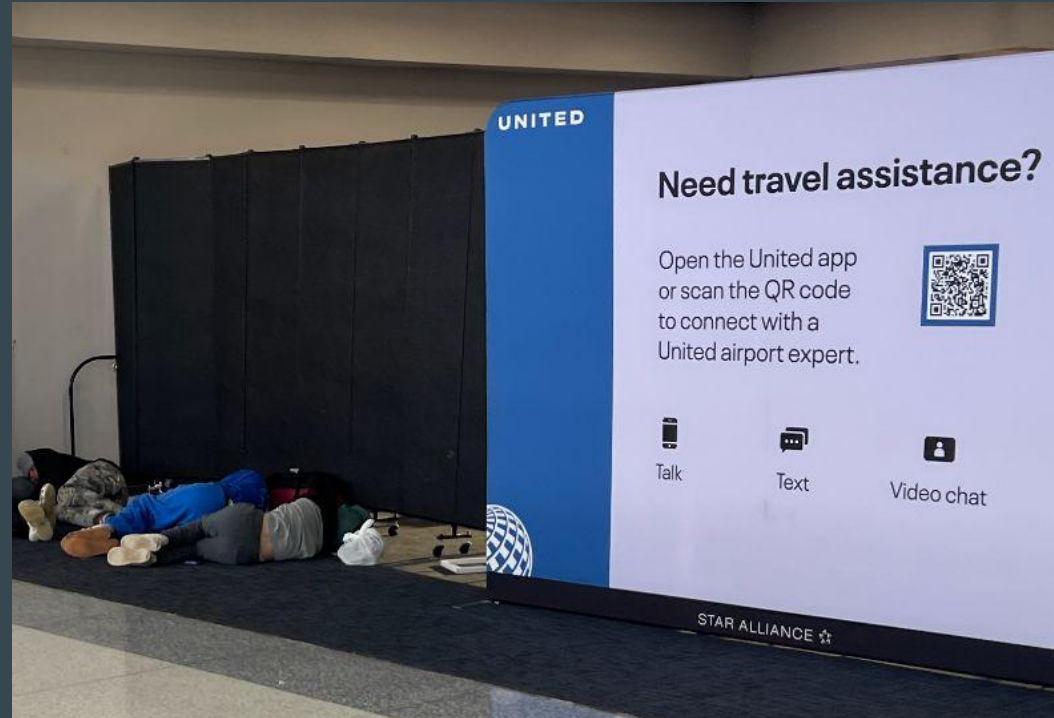


Award Flight Booking Tools

- [Points Path](#)
 - Browser extension that lets you search itineraries on Google Flights. Compares cash to mileage tickets and suggests the better value.
- [Point.me](#)
 - Real-time award-ticket inventory searches on 30+ airlines; offers suggestions on how to transfer points to those programs.
- [Expert Flyer](#)
 - For advanced users. Shows seat availability for both cash and award tickets. Doesn't support all airlines. Has "seat alerts" allowing you to get out of the dreaded middle seat.
- [Seats.aero](#)
 - More powerful subscription tool but for true expert users.

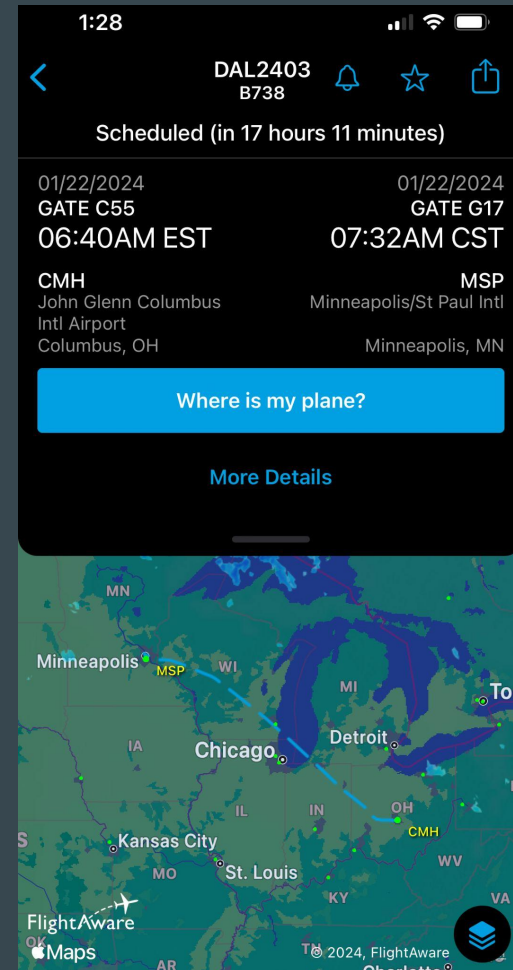
Be Proactive

- Book with the right credit card for trip delay protection.
- Register your phone and email with the airline.
- Save 1-800 numbers in your phone.
- If booking via Expedia, Orbitz etc., get your airline's confirmation number.
- Log in directly to the airline's site and confirm your contact information is entered correctly.



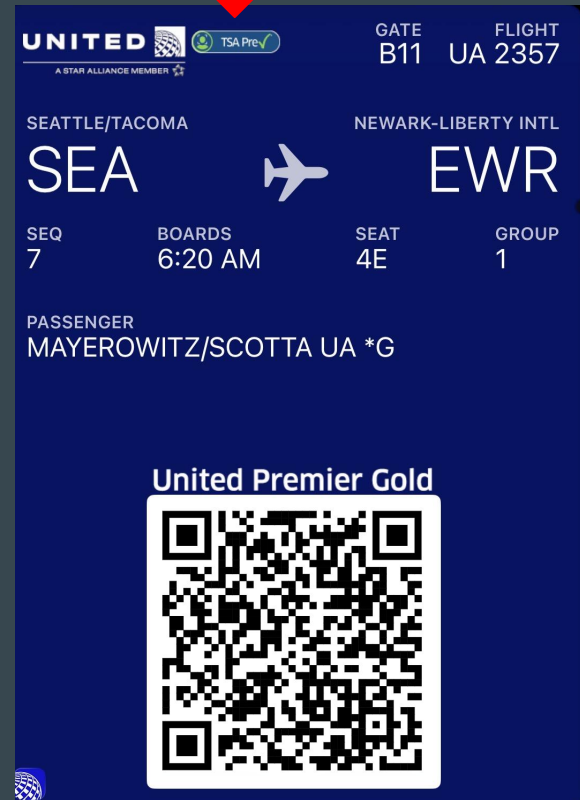
Travel Tips & Hacks

- Set **flight alerts** (FlightAware, FlightRadar24, Flighthy).
- Also track your **inbound plane**. If it is delayed, depending on the route, most likely you will be too.
- Research your own **alternatives**. Make a specific ask of the airline.
- Lounges are packed these days but have the best agents – especially during delays.
- If your flight is cancelled, you get a full **CASH refund** for the remaining parts of the trip.
- Know your EU 261 rights.



Check-in 24 hours in advance

- Ensures that your ticket is valid.
- Gives you time to fix any issues.
- Did PreCheck show up?
- Touchless ID
 - Biometric program with American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, United Airlines, Alaska Airlines, and Southwest Airlines.
 - Need to opt-in; faster lines.
- Airport have CLEAR?
- International
 - Passport saved?
 - Global Entry?
 - Mobile Passport?



Real ID

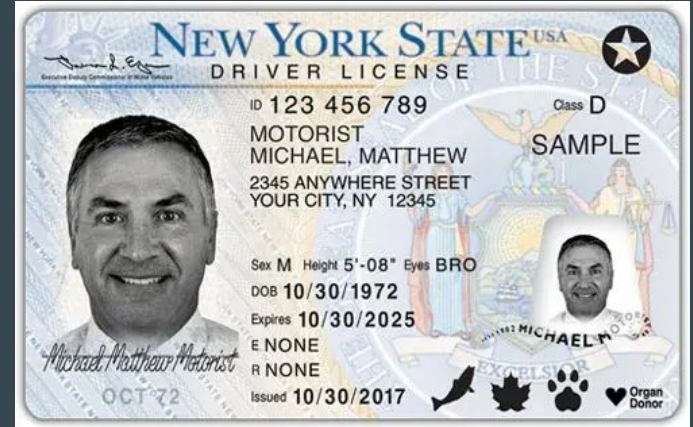


- U.S. travelers must now have a REAL ID to board flights.

- Real ID driver licenses have one of these logos:



- Need to bring Social Security card and several other documents to DMV.
- Can also travel with your passport, military ID or some other federal government ID cards, like a Global Entry card.
- More info: <https://www.dhs.gov/real-id>



Real ID



USA
TODAY

COUPLE TRAVEL

Turbulence test

PLANE CLASS

Cabins explained

WHY CRUISE?

7 reasons to sail

U.S. Politics Sports Entertainment Life Money **Travel** Opinion Crossword

TSA will charge you a \$45 fee if you travel without REAL ID

Zach Wichter and **Eve Chen** USA TODAY

Dec. 1, 2025 | Updated Dec. 3, 2025, 1:25 p.m. ET



Live

Video

Shows



TSA announces \$45 fee for travelers with no REAL ID

Traveling without a REAL ID? You'll have to pay fees starting in February.



Reuters

World

Business

Markets

Sustainability

More

My News



US agency will charge \$45 fee for air passengers without REAL IDs

By David Shepardson

December 1, 2025 1:09 PM EST · Updated December 1, 2025



Aa



Checking luggage

- How to protect your bag from the airlines
 - Know the minimum **cutoff times** for check-in.
 - **Avoid tight connections.**
 - Check the bag tags and the **three-letter code**.
 - Remove **prior tags**.
 - Print out a copy of your itinerary and put it inside.
 - Invest in Apple **AirTags**.



When the “Window Seat” lacks a window

- [areoLOPA](#)
- Seat alerts at [Expert Flyer](#)

DELTA COMFORT +

15	A	B	C	D	E	F
16	A	B	C	D	E	F
17	A	B	C	EXIT		
18	EXIT			D	E	F
19	A	B	C	D	E	F
20	A	B	C	D	E	F
21	A	B	C	D	E	F



Booking Hotels

- Save your points for hotel bookings. You don't pay those expensive **lodging taxes**.
- With Hilton and Hyatt, you also avoid **resort fees** when using points!
- Transferable credit card points are usually a better value transferred directly to the chain vs. booked via the portal.
- Use Google Maps satellite and street views to see what's around the hotel.
- Premium credit card or a travel advisor. You get free breakfast and often a \$100+ resort credit.



Connecting rooms

- Hilton is the only major brand to guarantee connecting rooms at the time of booking.
- Other chains just lack the technology to do so.
- Why? Most hotels in a chain are actually independently owned, with their own reservation system.

Room 1 of 2

Select a Room

Room 1 Room 2 Payment

Your stay with Hilton Hotels & Resorts includes

✓ Non-smoking rooms ✓ On-site restaurant ✓ Outdoor pool ✓ Fitness center ✓ Business center

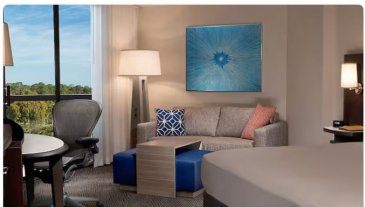
Special Rates ☐ Use Points & Money ☒ Accessible Rooms

Filter By: ☒  Connecting Rooms ☐ 1 bed ☐ 2 beds ☐ Suite

Daily Resort Charge includes: Internet access; Disney Parks shuttle; daily sun-care product; float lagoon access including inner tubes; DVDNow rentals; notary services; 10% off food & beverage (excludes room service); 10% off cabana rentals.

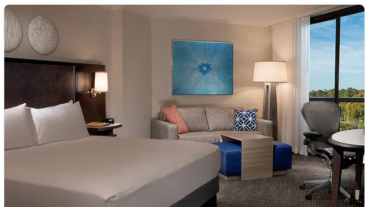
 We're showing Confirmed Connecting Rooms prices and availability.

15 rooms found. We're showing the average price per night. Prices include fees Select Currency  USD - US Dollar



1 King Mobility / Hearing Accessible W/ Tub 

[Room details >](#)



1 King Mobility/ Hearing Accessible W/ Ri Shw 

[Room details >](#)



Hilton Orlando Buena Vista Palace Disney Springs Area
1900 E. Buena Vista Drive Lake Buena Vista, Florida 32830 USA 
[Hotel details >](#)

Reservation summary

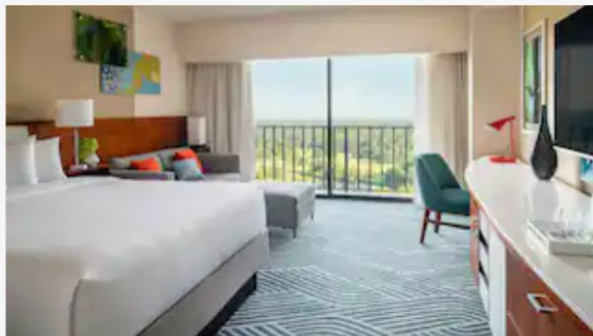
Room 1  2 adults	\$0.00
Room 2  1 adult and 2 kids	\$0.00
Total for stay:	\$0.00

Best Use of Points:

Direct with Hotel vs. Chase, Amex or Capital One

- Example: Chase points transfer 1:1 to World of Hyatt
- When booking directly with a hotel's points, you don't pay nightly taxes!
- Hyatt and Hilton waive resort fees on award bookings.
- Hilton and Marriott give you a 5th night free when using points.
- Booking with points via Chase, Amex, Capital One etc. means paying the room rate + taxes + resort fees.

Example: Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress Resort



Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress Resort

1 King Bed
Mon, Apr 6, 2026 - Thu,
Apr 9, 2026
1 Room, 2 Guests

Price Summary

Total Cash **\$1,127.59**

3 Night Stay **\$852.30**

Mon, Apr 6 \$323.10

Tue, Apr 7 \$296.10

Wed, Apr 8 \$233.10

Taxes & Fees **\$275.29**

*Changes in taxes or fees will affect the total price.

State tax \$55.40

County tax \$51.14

Resort fees \$150.00

Resort fee tax \$18.75

Example: Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress Resort

Booked with Chase Points ↓

Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress

3 nights, 2 guests

\$1,234.14 or  **64,569 pts + \$168.75**

was 106,538 pts + \$168.75

Includes taxes/fees

[Remove hotel](#)



[Hotel details](#) ▼

Check-in: Mon, Apr 06, 2026, 04:00 pm

Check-out: Thu, Apr 09, 2026, 11:00 am

Room, 1 King Bed

Free cancellation until Fri, Apr 03, 2026 11:59 pm (property local time)

[Rules, policies and cancellations](#)

Fees due at check-in: \$168.75

Total price includes fees for hotel-specific services and amenities that are due when you check in. For more information on these fees, read the rules, policies and cancellations.

Direct via
Hyatt ↓

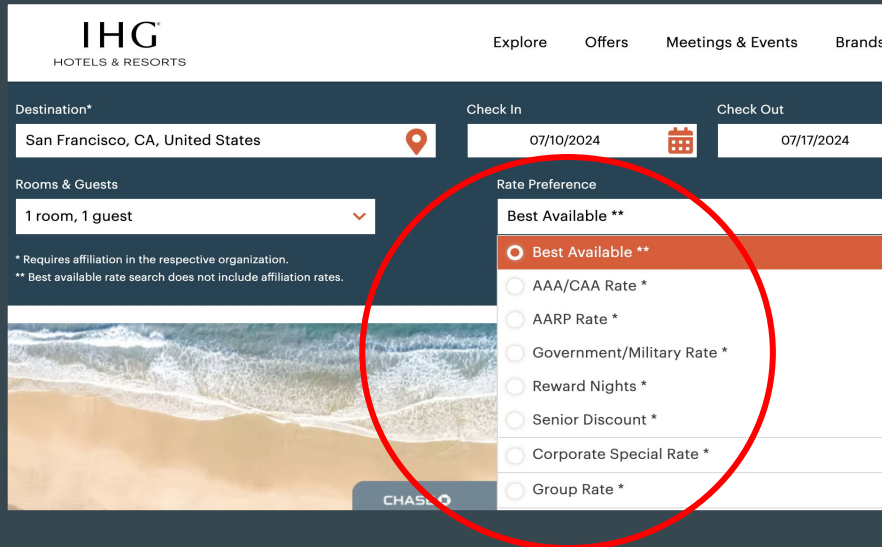
Price Summary

Total Points†	51,000 Points
3 Night Stay	51,000 Points
Mon, Apr 6	15,000 Points
Tue, Apr 7	18,000 Points
Wed, Apr 8	18,000 Points

Additional charges for valet parking (\$52/night plus tax) or self-parking (\$37/night) will apply.

Leverage discounts

- Anybody can join AARP.
- Check corporate discounts, AAA, packages or other promo codes.
- This is especially true with car rentals.



The image shows the IHG Hotels & Resorts booking interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Explore', 'Offers', 'Meetings & Events', and 'Brands'. The main booking form has fields for 'Destination*' (San Francisco, CA, United States), 'Check In' (07/10/2024), and 'Check Out' (07/17/2024). Below these is a 'Rooms & Guests' section with a dropdown set to '1 room, 1 guest'. A 'Rate Preference' section is visible, with a red circle highlighting the 'Best Available **' option. Other rate options listed include AAA/CAA Rate *, AARP Rate *, Government/Military Rate *, Reward Nights *, Senior Discount *, Corporate Special Rate *, and Group Rate *. A small banner at the bottom left shows a beach scene with the text 'CHASO'.

IHG
HOTELS & RESORTS

Explore Offers Meetings & Events Brands

Destination* San Francisco, CA, United States

Check In 07/10/2024

Check Out 07/17/2024

Rooms & Guests
1 room, 1 guest

Rate Preference

☒ Best Available **

☐ AAA/CAA Rate *

☐ AARP Rate *

☐ Government/Military Rate *

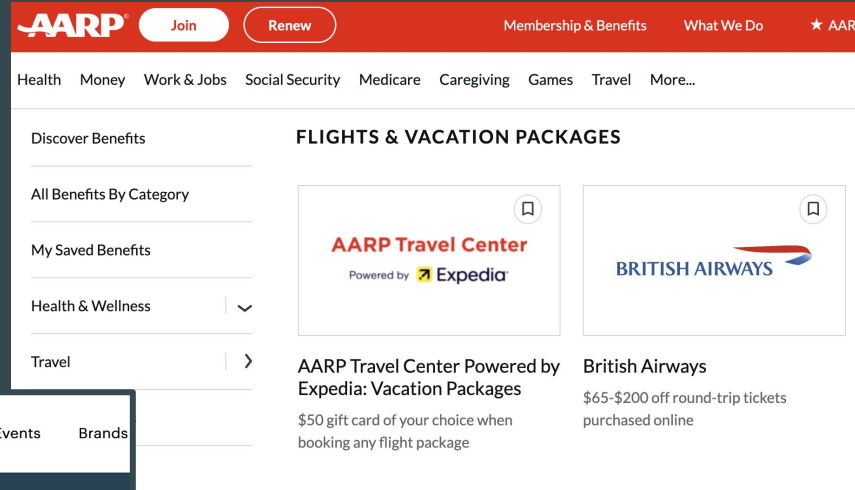
☐ Reward Nights *

☐ Senior Discount *

☐ Corporate Special Rate *

☐ Group Rate *

* Requires affiliation in the respective organization.
** Best available rate search does not include affiliation rates.



The image shows the AARP website interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Join', 'Renew', 'Membership & Benefits', 'What We Do', and 'AARP'. The main content area is titled 'FLIGHTS & VACATION PACKAGES'. It features two main sections: 'AARP Travel Center Powered by Expedia' and 'BRITISH AIRWAYS'. The AARP Travel Center section offers a '\$50 gift card of your choice when booking any flight package'. The British Airways section offers '\$65-\$200 off round-trip tickets purchased online'.

AARP Join Renew Membership & Benefits What We Do ★ AARP

Health Money Work & Jobs Social Security Medicare Caregiving Games Travel More...

Discover Benefits

All Benefits By Category

My Saved Benefits

Health & Wellness

Travel

FLIGHTS & VACATION PACKAGES

AARP Travel Center
Powered by Expedia

BRITISH AIRWAYS

AARP Travel Center Powered by Expedia: Vacation Packages
\$50 gift card of your choice when booking any flight package

British Airways
\$65-\$200 off round-trip tickets purchased online

Sleeping Well & Blocking Light

- Clothing over alarm clocks (are they off?)
- Bathroom night light: press “test”
- Hanger blind trick



Staying Cool... or Warm



<https://www.instagram.com/reel/CikXCyNgJz5/>

Check the shower!

- Is there hot water?
- Are the shampoo, conditioner and body wash full?



Always Pack a Bathing Suit



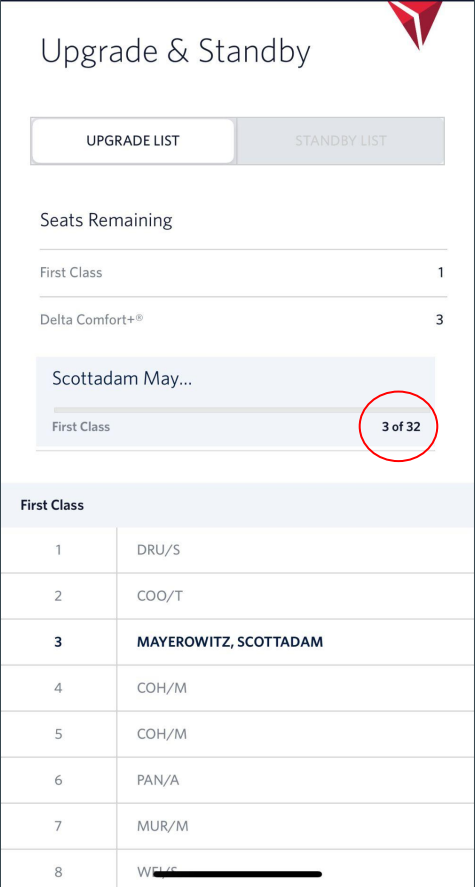
Elite Status

- It's all about the spend!!!
 - Flight base fare, excluding taxes and fees.
 - So does most award travel.
 - Credit card spend.
 - American counts shopping partners + others.



What Does Elite Status Get Me?

- First class upgrades (much harder to get these days.)
- Free upgrades to extra legroom seats.
- Free checked bags.
- Earlier boarding = overhead bin space.
- Shorter waits for the call center, with better agents.
- Priority in being re-booked during cancellations.
- Higher tiers get choices of upgrade certificates, extra miles, lounge membership, gifting status to a friend.



The screenshot shows the 'Upgrade & Standby' section of a Delta flight management system. It features two tabs: 'UPGRADE LIST' (active) and 'STANDBY LIST'. Below the tabs, a 'Seats Remaining' section shows 1 First Class seat and 3 Delta Comfort+ seats. A specific upgrade for 'Scottadam May...' is highlighted, showing 'First Class' with '3 of 32' seats available, circled in red. Below this is a table of First Class upgrade candidates.

First Class	
1	DRU/S
2	COO/T
3	MAYEROWITZ, SCOTTADAM
4	COH/M
5	COH/M
6	PAN/A
7	MUR/M
8	WELF

What is the best credit card?

- *Where do you live?*
- *What kind of rewards do you want?*
- *How deep do you want to go in the world of points & miles?*



Cash, check,
debit card

Simple,
fixed-value
credit cards

Travel credit
cards

Flexible,
transferable
cards

Why I still pay \$895 for this credit card

- \$200 in Uber credits.
- \$200 in airline credits.
- \$600 in credits for upscale hotels via Amex.
- \$400 in Resy credits.
- \$300 in Lululemon credits.
- \$300 digital entertainment credits (*New York Times, WSJ, Peacock, Hulu, Disney+, Paramount and YouTube.*)
- \$100 in Saks Fifth Avenue credits.
- \$300 credit for Equinox gym membership.
- Access to Centurion Lounges and Delta SkyClubs.
- Walmart+ membership.
- CLEAR membership.
- Amex Offers.
- 5X earnings on airfare.





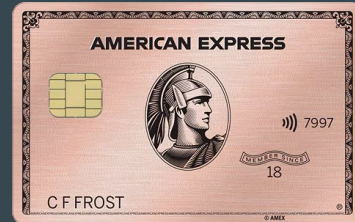
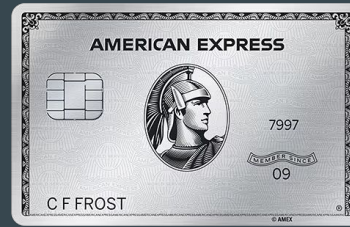
**ALWAYS PAY YOUR CREDIT
CARD BALANCE IN FULL
AND ON TIME**

CREDIT SCORE



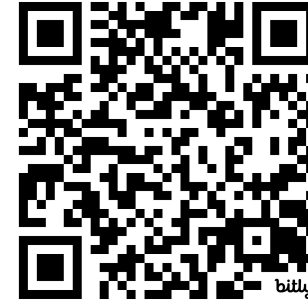
- **Ranges from 300 to 850**
 - 740+ considered “very good” or “excellent.”
- **Applying for a new card**
 - Short-term, small drop to score.
 - Long-term, positive impact.
- **One card, \$10k limit, \$3k balance**
 - Amount of debt: 30%
- **Add a second card with a \$20k limit**
 - Amount of debt: 10%

Favorite credit cards: No fee to very high fee

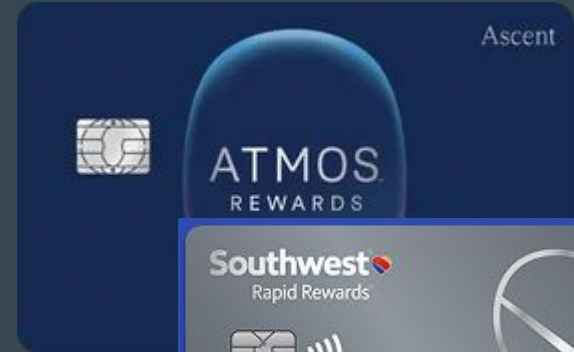
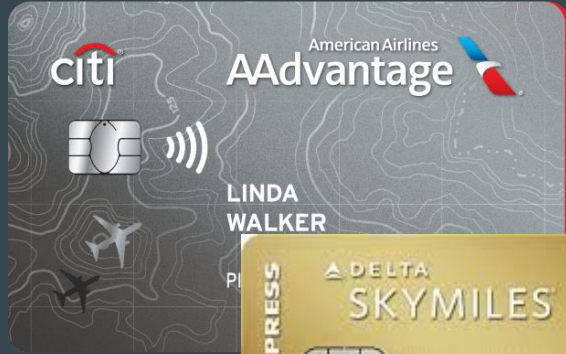


Learn more at:
globetrotscott.com/cards

or scan the QR code:



Do \$95-\$99 airline cards make sense?



- Yes, if you check a bag once a year
 - Read fine print
 - Some require you to pay with the card
 - Others are only for domestic trips

Simple steps you can take today

- Online shopping offers

- Amex Offers
- Chase Offers
- Citi Merchant Offers
- Capital One Shopping



Get +5 Membership Rewards® points per eligible dollar spent. Up to 1,500 points

[Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



Get 20% back on purchases, up to a total of \$50

[Marriott Bonvoy®](#)

Uber

Uber

\$5 back

42 days left

Enrolled ✓

[Details](#)

Uber
Eats

Uber Eats

\$10 back

42 days left

Enrolled ✓

[Details](#)



PAY AT PUMP ONLY

5% back

29 days left



20% back

26 days left



\$5 back

30 days left

SHOPPING

American Airlines

AAdvantage



 eShopping

Find a product

Categories

Offers

Stores

Extra miles

Mother's day

How it works

Buy

Welcome to the

AAdvantage eShoppingSM mall

Earn AAdvantage[®] miles at 950+ stores
and enjoy deals exclusively for members

Sign up

Already an AAdvantage eShoppingSM member? [Log in »](#)

Rakuten

Categories

Search stores, products, and coupons

2X Cash Back

Hot Deals

In-Store

Travel

Fitness

He

Tatcha

Shop the Dewy Skin Cream

8% Cash Back was 2%

Shop Now

4 / 6

Your favorites & visited

**HOMES & VILLAS**
by MARRIOTT BONVOY

1.5% Cash Back

**GAP**

2% Cash Back

**AVIS**[®]

2% Cash Back

**bloomingdale's**

2% Cash Back

[Enroll in Rakuten here](#)

Airline or Hotel Dining Programs



[Sign in / Join now](#)

Limited-time offer:

Earn 2,000 bonus miles for your first dine

[Learn more](#)



Baires Grill Las Olas

★ 4.8 (179) \$\$\$ Argentine/Steak

Fort Lauderdale (Ft Lauderdale)

📍 0.9 mi

✈️ 3 miles/\$1 spent

+ 50 bonus miles with reservation



The Hummus House

★ 4.9 (64) \$\$\$ Israeli/Middle Eastern

Fort Lauderdale (Ft Lauderdale)

📍 1.6 mi

✈️ 3 miles/\$1 spent



Wild Thyme Oceanside Eatery

★ 4.6 (134) \$\$\$ American (Traditional)/Italian

Fort Lauderdale (Ft Lauderdale)

📍 1.5 mi

✈️ 3 miles/\$1 spent

+ 50 bonus miles with reservation

Gift cards

- Use bonus categories to buy gift cards, then shop online
 - Ink Cash: 5x points at office supply stores.
 - I needed to spend \$1,000 at Home Depot.
 - Could've earned 2x points per dollar on my Amex Blue Business Plus Card (2,000 points, worth \$40.)
 - Went online to Staples, bought 2 x \$500 Home Depot gift cards (5,000 points, worth \$100.)
 - Amex Gold: 4x at supermarkets.



The Pudding Guy

- Earned 1,253,000 frequent flyer miles from a Healthy Choice promotion.
 - You could earn up to 1,000 miles for every 10 product barcodes mailed to the company.
 - David Phillips found 25-cent individual cups on pudding.
 - For \$2.50, he could get 1,000 miles (worth at least \$10-\$15) plus some pudding.
- Purchased 12,150 cups of pudding — a total cost of \$3,150. He negotiated with store managers to get bulk discounts.
- But he and his wife couldn't cut out all the barcodes in time for the promotion deadline.
- Enter the Salvation Army. He got a local food bank to help cut them out in exchange for the donation of the pudding. And he got a \$815 tax deduction.



QUESTIONS?



globetrotscott.com

scott@globetrotscott.com

[@GlobeTrotScott](#) on social media

