



Travel Tips & Frequent Flier Hacks

Travel and Adventure Show
Seattle
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.

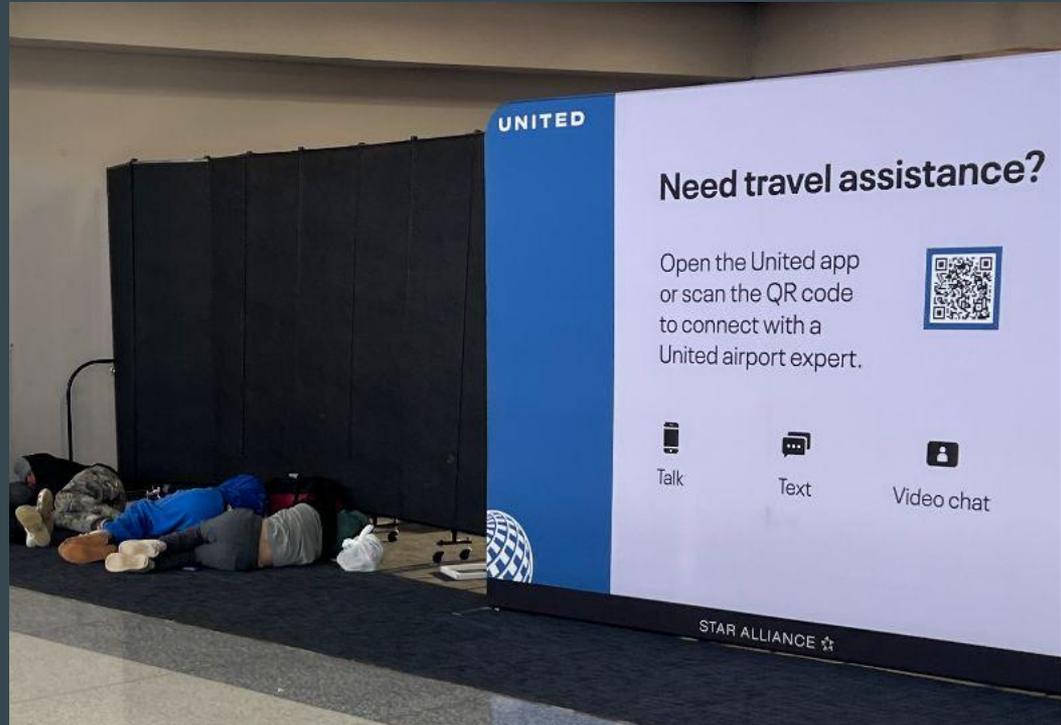


Award Flight Booking Tools

- [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.

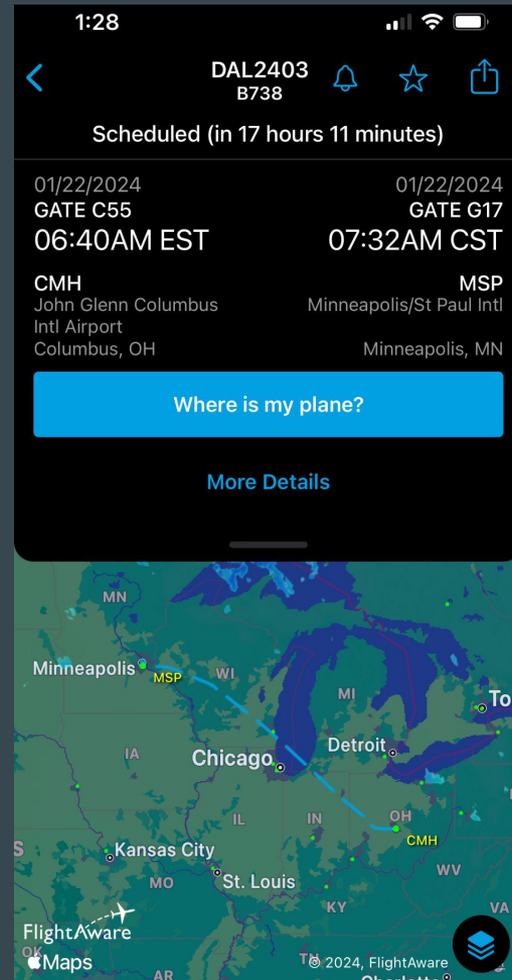
Be Proactive

- 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?

jetBlue® FLIGHT 961 GATE 58

NEW YORK, NY (LGA) WEST PALM BEACH, FL

LGA  PBI

DATE 12/24/25 BOARDS 9:40 AM DEPARTS 10:27 AM

CUSTOMER NAME SCOTT MAYEROWITZ GROUP M4 SEAT 22D

TSA Pre✓ 



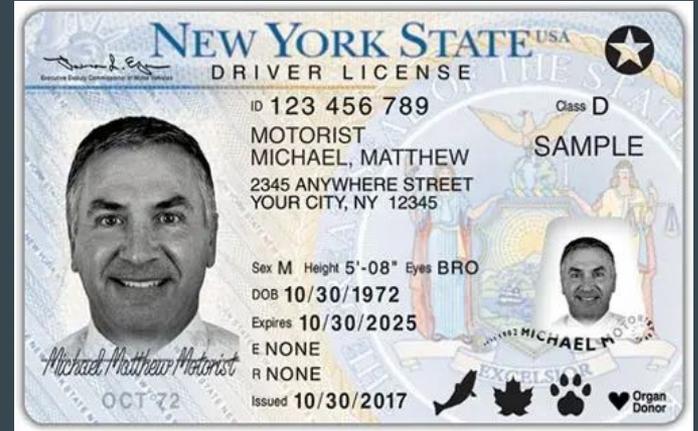
Real ID

- 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

abc NEWS 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



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	男女		
EXIT			18	D	E	EXIT
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

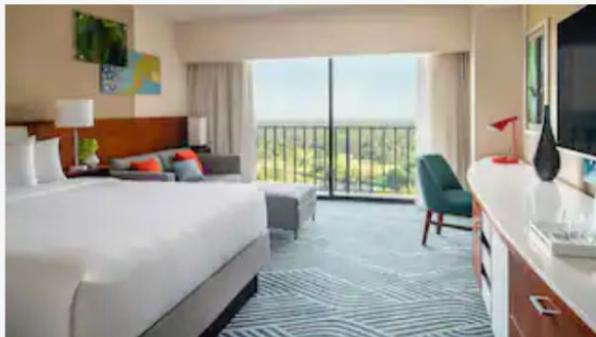
Room 1  2 adults	\$0.00
Room 2  1 adult and 2 kids	\$0.00
Total for stay:	\$0.00

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 ↓

Direct via
Hyatt ↓

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](#)



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](#)

[Hotel details](#) ▾

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.

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 screenshot shows the IHG Hotels & Resorts website search interface. The search criteria are: Destination: San Francisco, CA, United States; Check In: 07/10/2024; Check Out: 07/17/2024; Rooms & Guests: 1 room, 1 guest. The 'Rate Preference' dropdown menu is open, showing several options. A red circle highlights the 'Best Available **' option, which is currently selected. Other options include AAA/CAA Rate *, AARP Rate *, Government/Military Rate *, Reward Nights *, Senior Discount *, Corporate Special Rate *, and Group Rate *.

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 screenshot shows the AARP website's travel benefits section. The header includes 'AARP' with 'Join' and 'Renew' buttons, and navigation links for 'Membership & Benefits', 'What We Do', and 'AARP'. The main navigation bar lists 'Health', 'Money', 'Work & Jobs', 'Social Security', 'Medicare', 'Caregiving', 'Games', 'Travel', and 'More...'. The 'Discover Benefits' section is active, showing 'All Benefits By Category', 'My Saved Benefits', 'Health & Wellness', and 'Travel'. The 'FLIGHTS & VACATION PACKAGES' section features two cards: 'AARP Travel Center Powered by Expedia' and 'BRITISH AIRWAYS'. The AARP Travel Center card offers a '\$50 gift card of your choice when booking any flight package'. The British Airways card 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

FLIGHTS & VACATION PACKAGES

All Benefits By Category

My Saved Benefits

Health & Wellness

Travel

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



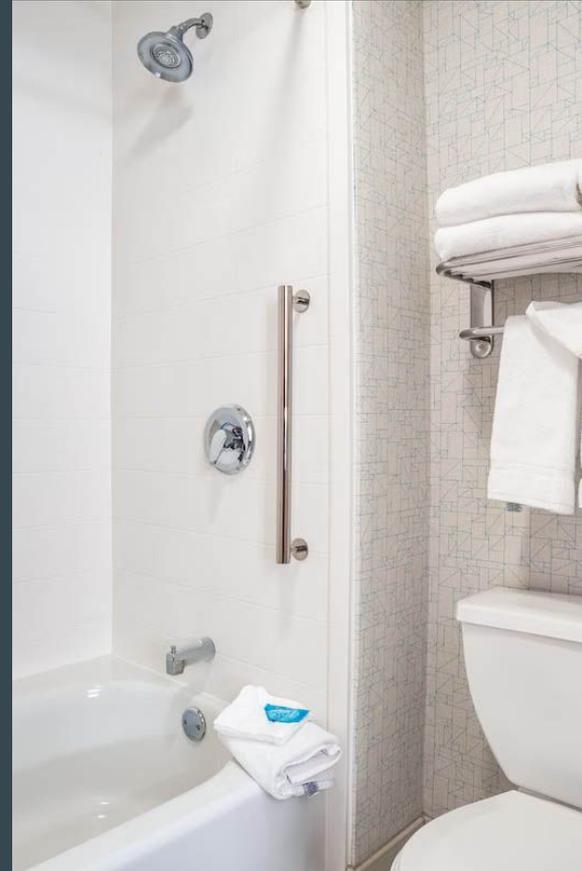
Staying Cool... or Warm



<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.

Upgrade & Standby

UPGRADE LIST STANDBY LIST

Seats Remaining

First Class 1

Delta Comfort+® 3

Scottadam May...

First Class 3 of 32

First Class

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

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.





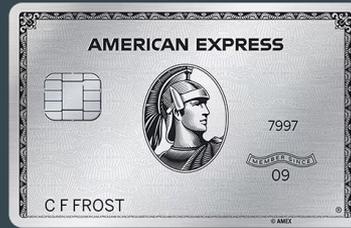
**ALWAYS PAY YOUR CREDIT
CARD BALANCE IN FULL
AND ON TIME**

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



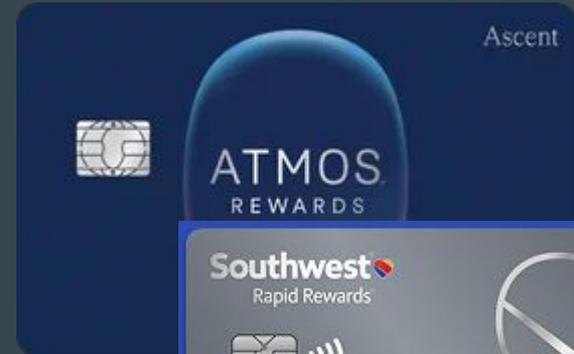
Learn more at:

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

amazon
music
UNLIMITED

\$5 back
30 days left

SHOPPING



American Airlines
AAdvantage

eShopping

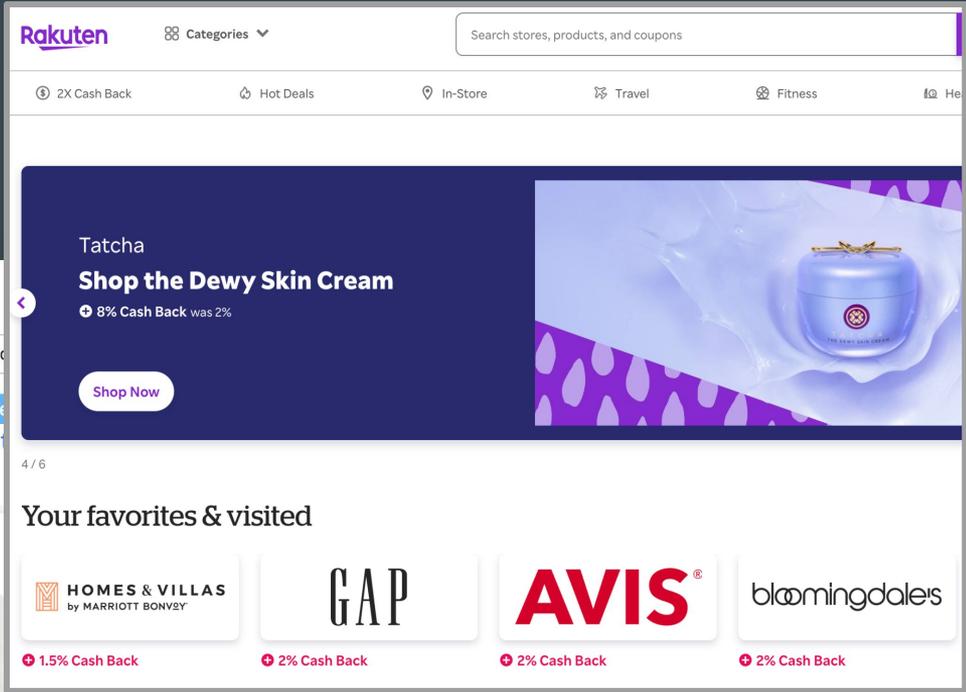
Categories Offers Stores **Extra miles** Mother's day How it works

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

Tatcha Shop the Dewy Skin Cream

8% Cash Back was 2%

[Shop Now](#)

4 / 6

Your favorites & visited

 1.5% Cash Back	 2% Cash Back	 2% Cash Back	 2% Cash Back
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[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

