

# Flight Reward Booking Cheat Sheet

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Here's a step-by-step cheat sheet you can refer to when booking award flights. If you're new to travel hacking, this will make more sense once you've gone through Lux Travel Hacks.

But once you have a basic understanding of how things work, this will be a great quick reference for you.

Remember to NEVER (under any circumstance) book your flight directly with credit card companies like Chase and Amex.

The only way to get up to 10x the value for your points is by following the strategies I teach inside Lux Travel Hacks.

## Step #1 - Find out cash price for your trip


Using Google flights ([flights.google.com](https://flights.google.com)), check a few airports around you and use the "dates" or "date matrix" tool to determine cash price for your flight. This will be useful later to know if it's worth it to use points or not, and also just in case there's a crazy cheap deal that is worth just booking cash and saving your points.

Dates		Price graph					
Departure							
Sat Jul 22	Sun Jul 23	Mon Jul 24	Tue Jul 25	Wed Jul 26	Thu Jul 27	Fri Jul 28	Sat Jul 29
\$7,754	\$7,754	\$7,754	\$7,554	\$7,554	\$7,554	\$7,754	<sup>+</sup> \$6,354

## Step #2 - Investigate routing for your trip

Using Google flights, investigate what routing looks like for your ideal trip. For example, if your trip is Cleveland to Milan, you might find stops in DC or New York, or maybe stops in Frankfurt or London on the Europe side.


These are useful to know so you know what big airports are the most ideal to search to/from, if your airport is too small to have an ideal flight.


 **Departure · Wed, Aug 9**

**2,597 kg CO<sub>2</sub>**  
+11% emissions ⓘ

[Select flight](#)

**\$6,408**






- 7:12 PM · Cleveland Hopkins International Airport (CLE)
- 7:45 PM · O'Hare International Airport (ORD)

Travel time: 1 hr 33 min

American · **Business Class** ▲ · Embraer 170 · AA 4170  
Plane and crew by Envoy Air as American Eagle · Ticket also sold by British Airways

- Standard recliner seat
- In-seat power outlet
- Stream media to your device
- Carbon emissions estimate: 141 kg ⓘ

1 hr 30 min layover · Chicago (ORD)




- 9:15 PM · O'Hare International Airport (ORD)
- 11:00 AM\*<sup>1</sup> · Heathrow Airport (LHR)

Travel time: 7 hr 45 min · **Overnight** ▲

British Airways · **First Class** · Airbus A380 · BA 296  
Ticket also sold by American  
**Often delayed by 30+ min**

- Lie flat seat
- Wi-Fi for a fee
- In-seat power & USB outlets
- On-demand video
- Carbon emissions estimate: 2,313 kg ⓘ

4 hr 30 min layover · London (LHR)



- 3:30 PM\*<sup>1</sup> · Heathrow Airport (LHR)
- 6:35 PM\*<sup>1</sup> · Milan Linate Airport (LIN)

Travel time: 2 hr 5 min

British Airways · **Business Class** ▲ · Airbus A319 · BA 568  
Ticket also sold by American  
**Often delayed by 30+ min**

- Average legroom (30 in)
- In-seat power & USB outlets
- Carbon emissions estimate: 144 kg ⓘ

### Step #3 - Search for award availability

Search for your flights (and make sure to search from the big hubs/stops you identified in the previous step too for your best chances) using the following sites. I've also put the alliance they're part of for reference in the next step:

- a. [Air Canada](#) - Star Alliance (make sure to check the "book with points" checkbox)
- b. [British Airways](#) - Oneworld (make sure to go through "book > book with avios")
- c. [Air France](#) - Skyteam (make sure to click "book with miles") tab
- d. If you found any routing on [Singapore Airlines](#) or [Emirates](#), check their individual sites (make sure in "points mode" there too) for those routes
- e. If any of these US-based "fifth-freedom" routes work for you, search them at the site in parentheses
  - i. JFK-FRA (Singapore Airlines)
  - ii. IAH-MAN (Singapore Airlines)
  - iii. LAX-NRT (Singapore Airlines)
  - iv. JFK-MXP (Emirates)
  - v. EWR-ATH (Emirates)
  - vi. MEX-BCN (Emirates)

Journey summary

Outbound

21:15


9 Aug

[ORD](#)

11:00

10 Aug

[LHR](#)



Inbound

You have selected a one way journey

Total Price (Including all taxes, fees, and carrier charges)

68000 Avios + \$ 881.20

[More pricing options](#)

(You will see exact cost after you click 'Continue')

## Step #4 - Quote on various partners for the best price

Generally, if the flights you found are priced somewhere around 50-110k one-way, then that indicates “true, partner-level availability.” For those, use the table below to find partners you can quote the flights you found with.

\*\* An important exception here would be if you found Emirates or Etihad flights, those can be quoted with Air Canada as well, even though they’re not part of any alliance. Also LATAM flights can be quoted with British Airways

	Star Alliance	OneWorld	SkyTeam
<b>Chase</b>	United, Air Canada, Singapore	British Airways	Flying Blue, Virgin Atlantic
<b>AMEX</b>	Air Canada, Avianca Lifemiles, ANA, Singapore	Asia Miles, British Airways	Flying Blue, Delta, Virgin Atlantic
<b>Capital One</b>	Air Canada, Avianca Lifemiles, Singapore, Turkish	Asia Miles, British Airways, Etihad (for AA flights)	Flying Blue, Virgin Atlantic
<b>Citi</b>	Avianca Lifemiles, Singapore, Turkish	Asia Miles, Etihad (for AA flights)	Flying Blue, Virgin Atlantic

*\*The left-hand side is the type of points you own and the top row indicates that you can book any flight on any carrier in that entire alliance once you’ve transferred points to the partner in the cell below*

book.cathaypacific.com/CathayPacificAwardV3/dyn/air/booking/availability

Depart 09 Aug 2023 21:15 (ORD) → 11:00 + 1 (LHR) [Flight details](#)

**First**  
FROM A\$70,000  
[View full details](#)

Recommended ☐ Direct flights ☐

BA296 [Flight details](#) Only a few seats left!  
21:15 ORD — 7h 45m — 11:00+1 LHR A\$87,000

For airlines that don't offer online flight awards redemption, please fill out the [Flight Award request form](#).

Total Amount (1 Adult) A\$87,000 Taxes/fees/surcharges HKD 1,853 [Next](#)  
Currency converter (for reference only) USD 249

*\*The pic above shows another quote from Asia Miles for the same exact British Airways, Oneworld, flight. You can see British Airways had less points cost, but much higher taxes (\$881 vs \$249 on Asia Miles).*

Here, redemption value is great in both situations, so the decision will depend on personal preference spending more points vs more cash, or if you have limited points, it's an even easier decision.

Another deciding factor will be if you only have Chase points available, for example, then you wouldn't be able to transfer to Asia Miles. This is why diversification into multiple good currencies is important like Chase and Amex

## Step #5 (Optional) - Call and see if they'll hold the award for you to prevent any issues while points get transferred in

Some will and some won't. Of the commonly used partners, the ones that usually agree to do this are: Air France, Singapore, and Virgin.

## Step #6 - Calculate points redemption value to ensure you're getting a good deal and not wasting points

The formula for this is: cash cost divided by amount of points needed

We're looking for a 2.5 cent per point value, bare minimum. Usually, good flight redemptions will be closer to 3-4 cents on average.

Here's an example for a theoretical one-way flight to Europe:  $(\$6,500 \text{ cash cost} - \$881 \text{ tax}) / 68,000 \text{ points} = 0.08 = 8 \text{ cents per point}$

The second quote from Asia Miles would work out to this:  $(\$6,500 \text{ cash cost} - \$249 \text{ tax}) / 87,000 \text{ points} = 0.07 = 7 \text{ cents per point}$

Either would be a great redemption!

## Step #7 - Once you've found the best quote, factoring in both points and tax cost, book!

You'll need to open an account with the partner that had the best quote (if you don't have one already), take that account number, link it to your amex/chase/cap1/citi transfer to partner area, then transfer points in!

The points will clear either in a few minutes or might take a whole day, depending on the partner.

## Step #8 - Enjoy your trip and I'll see you in first class 😊

