

The Airfare Watchdog

Professional Travel agents now need to not only secure the best value airfares and routes aligned with or without Frequent flyer advantages-but they also now need to understand, consider and then explain the myriad of Airline Fees and conditions like never before.

"Buyer-Beware" now should be re-worded "Buyer - Be Scared!"

Leave it up to the advice, services and expertise of your trusted Travel Agent! Read on....

Airline Fee Charts

Posted on Saturday, July 25, 2009

Here we list some of the various fees that airlines use to line their coffers while they continue to keep many airfares ridiculously low. These fees are subject to change and you should always contact the airline directly before planning a trip to be absolutely certain what they'll be charging you. We do our best to keep these charts up to date.

Frequent Flyer Fees

It used to be that free frequent flyer tickets were really free. But not anymore. Not only are airlines increasing the number of miles required, but they're constantly adding new fees for issuing tickets, changing them, not using them, requesting them on short notice, and flying confirmed same day stand by.

As usual, the airline with the fewest fees in this regard is Southwest. Southwest issues frequent flyer awards as soon as you earn them and you have up to a year to use the award. If an award has expired, you can pay \$50 to extend its validity up to one additional year as long as the award isn't more than one year past its original validity.

In addition to the fees listed here, you can expect to pay taxes, passenger facility charges, and the September 11 security fee, along with other government imposed surcharges. And if you're flying internationally with a child age 2 or under, even if it's sitting in your lap, you may be hit with a charge of 10% of your fare plus even fuel surcharges, and that's even if you're traveling on a "free" ticket (on a business class ticket to Australia, that might make you think twice about flying "free").

Fees listed were accurate at time of posting but can change at any moment, and probably will.

Keep in mind, too, that depending on your frequent flyer membership level, some of these fees may not apply to you, or they may be lower than shown. Updated July 25, 2009.

Airline Program	Standard Processing fee	Phone or in person fee	"Close in" Processing fee	Redeposit/ Change fee	Confirmed same day standby	Mileage reactivation
AirTran A+ Rewards (888-898-4782)	\$0	\$10 otherwise	\$0	\$60	N/A	N/A
Alaska Mileage Plan (800-252-7522)	\$25 on partner airlines	\$15 for reservations over the phone (mileage award levels are the same over the phone and on the internet)	\$0	\$0 if canceled or changed within 24 hours from booking. Otherwise \$100 each time a change is made on Super Saver	Standby is allowed on the same day of travel at the airport ticket counter only on both the outbound and return portion of a ticket.	\$75 for one year

				and Choice awards. Change fee does not apply to Full Flex award in Coach and First class.	Standby is also permitted on one way awards.	
American AAdvantage (800-882-8880)	\$5, or up to \$150 to upgrade awards on most discounted domestic fares, up to \$600 for foreign routes	\$20 by phone, \$30 in person	20 to 7 days prior: \$50; 6 days to 2 hours: \$100	Redeposit: \$150 for first ticket, \$25 each for additional tickets on same account; Change: \$150 (MileSAAver tickets only; no fee if only date or time is changed)	\$35	\$50 per 5000 miles plus \$30 fee
Continental OnePass (800.621.7467)	\$0 (up to \$300 RT for non elites to upgrade to domestic first; up to \$1000 to upgrade to international businessElite)	\$25 by phone (airport booking not allowed)	20 days or fewer prior: \$75 (less for Platinum)	\$50 \$150 (\$0 for Platinum)	Not allowed on OnePass tickets	N/A
<u>Delta SkyMiles</u> (800-323-2323)	\$0 additional \$25 for partner airline award	\$25 \$20	8-20 days prior: \$75; 4-7 days: \$100; 3 or fewer days: \$150 (waived for Platinum members)	Changes: \$150 if 3 or fewer days before dep; \$100 4-7 days; \$75 8-20 days; \$0 21 days or more prior to dep; Redeposit: \$100; most fees waived for Platinum members	\$50 (waived for Gold/Platinum)	N/A
Frontier Early Returns (866-263-2759)	\$25 \$0	\$25	14 days or fewer: \$75 \$0	\$75	Passenger pays the difference between their	\$50 1 - 4,999 miles \$100 5,000 -

					original ticket and the new ticket at its price that day	19,999 miles \$200 20,000 - 49,999 miles \$300 50,000 - 99,999 miles \$400 100,000 or more miles
JetBlue TrueBlue (800-538-2583)	\$0 (N/A award sent automatically when earned)	\$10 by phone	N/A	Change: \$100; Redeposit fee: N/A (unused awards are forfeited)	\$40	N/A
<u>Northwest WorldPerks (800-447-3757)</u>	\$0	\$20 by phone; \$40 \$45 in person Waived for Platinum and Gold Elite members.	See Delta	Redeposit: \$50 \$100; Change: \$50 \$100(includes travel date, time, origin, destination, and other changes) The award ticket reissue and redeposit fee for Platinum Elite members will be waived for any two reservations per year. Platinum Elite members will be charged \$50 for any additional award ticket changes.	\$50	N/A
Southwest Rapid Rewards (800-435-9792)	N/A (reward sent automatically)	N/A (reward sent automatically)	N/A	\$0	\$0 (if fare has increased, passenger must pay difference)	\$50 (for awards that have been expired for fewer than 24 months)
Spirit Airlines Free Spirit	N/A (online only)	N/A (online only)	N/A (requests)	Redeposit: \$70; Change:		N/A

			must be made at least 7 days prior to travel); Mileage discounts for tickets booked 21 or more days in advance of travel	\$70 if more than 7 days from departure; not permitted within 7 days		
United MileagePlus (800-421-4655)	\$0 (eff. July 1, 2009, Jan 12, 2010, up to \$50 from most discounted fares to upgrade on domestic routes; up to \$500 RT on international routes)	\$25 by phone, \$30 in person	Under 6 days: \$100; 7-20 days: \$75	\$150 (route change or redeposit); \$75 change of flight number or travel date only within 7-20 prior to departure; \$100 6 days or less prior; free otherwise	Domestic: \$150; International \$150-\$250	.125 cents per mile plus \$25 fee
US Airways Dividend Miles (800-428-4322)	\$25 domestic, \$35 Mexico/Caribbean, \$40 international	\$25 by phone, \$30 in person (\$40 for international tickets excl. Canada)	\$50 online, \$75 otherwise	\$150 domestic, \$250 international	\$25	\$50-\$400
Virgin America elevate (877.359.8474)	\$0			Redeposit: not allowed	\$75	N/A

Checked Bag Fees

Here we list, airline by airline, fees for checked bags on major US airlines. These fees are for domestic economy class travel (which in some cases includes Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, and Canada) only and may be higher on international flights.

There are all kinds of exceptions to these fees, especially for certain classes of frequent flyers and military personnel. These fees are cumulative and are double for round-trip travel. They are subject to change and were accurate to the best of our knowledge as of July 25, 2009.

If you're a heavy packer, you'll want to fly with Airtran, Alaska, Frontier and Southwest, even if there's a cheaper fare on another airline.

Airline	First checked bag	Second checked bag	Additional bags	Overweight bags	Oversized bags
Airtran	\$0 \$15	\$10 paid	\$50	51-70 lbs	62-70 total linear inches: \$29

		online, \$20 at airport \$25		(23-32kgs): \$29 \$39 71 to 99 lbs: \$69 \$79	\$39; 71-80 inches \$69 \$79
Alaska	\$0 (\$15 if ticketed on or after May 1 for travel on or after July 7)	\$0 \$25	3rd-6th bags: \$100; 7th or more: \$150	51-100 lbs: \$50	63-80 inches: \$50; 81-115 inches: \$75
American	\$15 (\$20 effective Aug 14)	\$25 (\$30 effective Aug 14)	Bags 3-5: \$100; 6th or more: \$200	51-70 lbs (23-32kgs): \$50; 71- 100 lbs: \$100. These fees may be higher on international routes	63 inches and over: \$150
Continental	\$15 (\$20 if not paid online beginning Aug 19)	\$25 (\$30 if not paid online, beginning Aug 19)	\$75 nonstop/\$100 connecting	51-70 lbs (23-32kgs): \$50 Over 70 lbs not accepted.	63 inches and over: \$100
Delta	\$20 (\$5 discount if paid online)	\$30 (\$5 discount if paid online); \$50 for travel to Europe	Third bag: \$125; Bags 4 to 10 \$200 each (For travel outside US, no fee for 2nd bag, \$200 for 3rd bag, \$350 for 4th and 5th, \$600 for bags 6-10).	51-70 lbs (23-32kgs): \$90 (\$150 for travel outside US) 71 to 100 lbs: \$175 (\$300 each outside US)	63-80 total linear inches: \$150 \$175
Frontier	\$0 \$15	\$25	\$50	51-100 lbs: \$75	63-80 inches: \$75
JetBlue	\$0	\$20	\$75	51-70 lbs: \$50; 71-99 lbs: \$100	63-80 inches: \$75
Northwest	See Delta	See Delta	See Delta	See Delta	See Delta
Spirit	\$19 online/\$25 at airport	\$25 (online or at airport)	Bags 3-5: \$100 (online or at airport)	51-70 lbs: \$50 71 to 99 lbs: \$100	62-79 inches: \$100; 80 inches and over: \$150

Southwest	\$0	\$0	First additional bag: \$25; bags 4-9: \$50; 10 and more: \$110	51-70 lbs: \$25 \$50; 71-100 lbs: \$50	62-80 inches: \$50
United	\$20 (\$5 discount if paid online)	\$30 (\$5 discount if paid online)	Bags 1-4: \$125; 5th or more: \$250	\$100	63-115 inches: \$125
US Airways	\$20 (\$5 discount if paid online)	\$30 (\$5 discount if paid online)	Bags 3-9: \$100	51-70 lbs (23-32kgs): \$50 71 to 99 lbs: \$100	62-80 total linear inches: \$100

Other Airline Fees

Here we list, for most airlines, fees for ticket changes (non refundable fares); booking fares in person or by phone, kids flying solo, bringing a pet into the cabin, and booking fares other than online. As you can see, Southwest has the lowest and fewest fees, followed by other low cost carriers such as Airtran and Spirit. Note that most of these fees, unless otherwise noted, are for domestic flights; fees for international services may be higher. **Last revision: Mar 2 2009.**

See also: New airline [frequent flyer program fees](#)

Airline	Ticket change fee domestic/international	Booking fares on phone/in person	Unaccompanied minors (double for round-trip)	Pet in cabin (double for round-trip)	Advance or premium economy domestic seat selection (double for round-trip)
Airtran	\$75 (free if within 4 hours of booking)	\$15	\$39 for nonstops; \$59 for connections	\$69	\$6 (advance seat assignment); \$20 (exit row)
Alaska	\$75 on line/ \$100 otherwise	\$15/\$15	\$75	\$100	not applicable
American	\$150/\$150-300	\$20/\$20	\$100	\$100	not applicable
Continental	\$150/\$150-\$300	\$25/\$20	\$75 nonstop/\$100 connecting	\$95 \$125	not applicable
Delta	\$150/\$200+	\$25/\$25	\$100	\$100 \$150	\$5-\$25
Frontier	\$100 \$150	\$25	\$40 \$50 per segment	Not allowed	not applicable
JetBlue	\$100	\$15	\$75	\$100	\$10-\$20 (first 4 and exit rows)
Northwest	\$150/\$250+	\$25	\$100	\$80 \$150	\$5-\$30 per flight (exit row and bulkhead)
Spirit	\$100 80 online (\$110 90 otherwise)	Lowest fares	\$75 \$100	\$85 \$100	not applicable

		available online only			
Southwest	\$0 (you get a credit good for a year)	Lowest fares available online only	\$25	\$75	not applicable
United	\$150/\$200+	\$25/\$30	\$99 \$150 \$99	\$100 \$175	varies
US Airways	\$150/\$150-\$250	\$15/\$20	\$100	\$100	\$5-\$30 per flight (aisle and window at front of economy cabin), although some passengers will be assigned these seats without paying by "luck of the draw"

RYAN AIR Table of Fees

(UK Pounds/Euro or local currency equivalent)	Booked on www.ryanair.com		Booked via a Call Centre* or Airport	
	UK Pounds	Euro	UK Pounds	Euro
Online Check-In*	£5	€5	£10	€10
Visa Electron - As a special offer to Visa Electron card holders, Ryanair, for a limited period only, will not apply a Debit Card charge	Free	Free	Free	Free
Payment Handling Fee - Per passenger/ Per One Way Flight	£5	€5	£5	€5
Priority Boarding Fee* - Per passenger/ Per One Way Flight	£3	€3	£4	€4
Airport Boarding Card Re-issue -	n/a	n/a	£40	€40
Infant Fee* - Per Infant/Per One Way flight (must be under 2 years for both outbound and return flight)	£20	€20	£20	€20
Checked Baggage Fees* - (Each passenger is permitted to check-in up to 3 bags with a maximum combined weight of 15kgs)				
1st Bag – Per bag/ Per One Way Flight	£10	€10	£20	€20
2nd & 3rd Bag – Per bag/ Per One Way Flight	£20	€20	£20	€20
Excess Baggage Fee - Per Kilo	Not Available	Not Available	£15	€15

Fee can only be purchased at the <i>airport ticket desk</i>	Online	Online		
Infant Equipment* (car/booster/travel cot) <i>Fee charged per Item/ Per One Way Flight (1 pushchair carried free of charge)</i>	£10	€10	£20	€20
Sports Equipment* <i>Per Item/ Per One Way Flight</i>	£30	€30	£40	€40
Musical Instrument* <i>Per Item/ Per One Way Flight</i>	£30	€30	£40	€40
Flight Change Fees* - <i>Per Passenger/ Per One Way Flight</i>	£35	€35	£55	€55
Name Change Fee* - <i>Per Passenger</i>	£100	€100	£150	€150

But here are **11 fees** we *won't* be surprised to be paying as US airlines continue to lose millions. and learn from foreign-based low cost carriers.<!

In person airport check in. Ryanair will soon be charging you if you need human intervention to get a boarding pass at the airport (in fact, they're [getting rid of](#) airport check agents entirely). Ditching check in counters would allow US airlines to eliminate staff and save millions. So you'd get a boarding pass online before heading for the airport, pay for your bags online, put them on the conveyor belt yourself, then head for gate.

Online check in. Ryanair already charges £5 (about \$8) for this, and since you'll soon have to check in online, there's no way around it. Or how about a "discount" for using an airport kiosk to check in, which would amount to paying a fee if you don't?

Paying with a credit card. Several European airlines charge a fee for this already, and also charge (albeit a bit less) for debit card purchases. Only way around this is to pay with cash (not so hard to do with those \$2 Ryanair fares). Maybe no fee if you use the airline's co-branded credit card?

Priority boarding fee. Pay a little bit extra (maybe \$5) and after the parents with small children and elite frequent flyer members get boarded, you're next, with early dibs at the overhead bins.

Booking on line. One US airline, Allegiant, already charges for online bookings, as well as for phone bookings (only way to avoid a fee is to pay at the airport). They call it a convenience fee. Whose convenience, exactly?

Advanced seat selection. Several US and foreign discount carriers, including [Allegiant](#) of course, already charge for this perk. We wouldn't be surprised to see other airlines follow suit. British Airways [limits](#) advance selection on its cheapest fares to 24 hours in advance (essentially charging a fee in the form of a much higher fare).

More frequent flyer fees. You already pay to cash in miles on short notice, to redeposit those miles if you don't use them, to change your frequent flyer ticket itinerary and for other "services". How about a fee to preserve frequent flyer miles when there's no activity in your account (say per mile fee to protect miles from expiring, although you can do this if you make a purchase with the airlines' [online shopping malls](#) or use an airline credit card among other methods). Next year, United will [start charging](#) co-pays for upgrading with miles, even on domestic fares.

Name change fees. As long as you give notice far in enough in advance, might the airlines let you transfer a ticket you can't use to another person for a fee (\$100? \$150?). Ryanair, surprise, charges for this.

Carry on bag fee. They charge for checked bags, so why not for cabin luggage? This might actually help flights board faster, and save airlines money from time lost on the ground.

Infant fee. No more free rides on domestic flights for those lap riders 2 years and under. Ryanair currently charges £20 (about \$33) per child. Airlines already charge 10 percent of the adult fare for infants on international flights.

Surcharges for musical instruments. Anyone who has seen [that video](#) about the broken guitar will understand why Ryanair charges £30 (about \$50) for checking a musical instrument. Probably has something to do with the liability of transporting these fragile items. Or maybe, just maybe, it's to boost the bottom line.