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What Miles & Points are Worth: Airline Miles

MARCH 14, 2013 BY LUCKY

61 COMMENTS

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Welcome to what will undoubtedly be the most controversial part of this series. There's nothing quite as fun as valuing airline miles on the internet, because I'm about to be called an idiot by people that value their miles somewhere between 0.5 and 12.5 cents each. So I'll once again make reference to my disclaimer in the introduction of this series by saying that these are my subjective valuations based on what I typically redeem my miles for, and based on what I value those flights at (*not* their retail value because in virtually all cases I wouldn't otherwise pay for first or business class). I've also added several programs below that I didn't value last time, which I hope you guys find useful.

Since there's a lot of information below, I figured I'd summarize my valuations upfront, which are as follows:

- Air Canada Aeroplan – 1.3 cents/mile
- Air France Flying Blue – 1.1 cents/mile

Loyalty 2031

Delta, et al. v. Loyalty

CBM2014-00096

- American AAdvantage – 1.8 cents/mile
- AviancaTACA Lifemiles – 1.2 cents/mile
- British Airways Executive Club – 1.3 cents/Avios
- Delta SkyMiles – 1.3 cents/mile
- Korean Air SkyPass – 1.4 cents/mile
- Singapore Airlines KrisFlyer – 1.6 cents/mile
- Southwest Rapid Rewards – 1.4 cents/point
- United MileagePlus – 1.8 cents/mile
- US Airways Dividend Miles – 1.6 cents/mile
- Virgin America Elevate – 2.0 cents/point
- Virgin Atlantic Flying Club – 0.8 cents/mile

With that in mind, here are my explanations:

Air Canada Aeroplan – 1.3 cents/mile (previously 1.3 cents/mile)

Going back a couple of years Air Canada Aeroplan miles were hands down the single most valuable mileage currency out there. Then after a [devaluation of their award chart](#) and [the addition of fuel surcharges](#) for travel on most of their partner airlines, they took a big hit.

There’s still some value in their program, though. Business class between the US and much of Europe, for example, costs just 90,000 miles roundtrip, and you’re allowed either one stopover and one open jaw or two stopovers. If you travel on Brussels, Swiss, United, and US Airways there won’t be any fuel surcharges either. So while Aeroplan miles aren’t what they used to be, they are still a good option for those with a Membership Rewards balance they’re looking to redeem for premium cabin travel.

MY TRIP		90,000 MILES	SUMMARY		1 Passenger
DEPARTURE	New York Newark (EWR) → Brussels (BRU)	Tue Dec 3, 2013	FLIGHT REWARD	90,000 Miles	
	Departure : EWR 18:15 → Arrival : BRU 07:50 ⁺¹ Direct Duration : 7h 35min Change flight		Miles to Redeem	90,000 Miles	
RETURN	Brussels (BRU) → New York Newark (EWR)	Tue Dec 10, 2013	Taxes, Fees & Surcharges	Details	
	Departure : BRU 10:00 → Arrival : EWR 12:50 Direct Duration : 8h 50min Change flight		Amount (taxes included)	\$95.90 USD	
			TOTAL :	<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 2px;"> 90,000 Miles + \$95.90 USD </div>	

Great use of Aeroplan miles without fuel surcharges

Best credit card(s) for earning Aeroplan miles: [American Express® Premier Rewards Gold Card](#), which offers 3x points on airfare, 2x points on gas and groceries, and 15,000 bonus points for any year in which you spend \$30,000 on the card. Also the [Starwood Preferred Guest American Express Personal Card](#) and [Starwood Preferred Guest American Express Business Card](#), which offer one

transferred you get a 5,000 point bonus, meaning you're essentially earning 1.25 Aeroplan miles per dollar spent.

Air France Flying Blue – 1.1 cents/mile (not previously rated)

Flying Blue miles can be quite valuable in a limited set of circumstances. You can redeem them for one-way travel on Delta at half the price of a roundtrip (which you can't do directly through Delta's program), and as long as you're originating in the US there are no fuel surcharges. Furthermore, they can be redeemed for travel on Aeromexico without fuel surcharges between the US and South America, which is another great option given how much award space they release. They even have lower pricing than Delta in many cases. For example, roundtrip business class on Delta between the US and Israel costs just 100,000 miles, assuming there's award space at the saver level (while Delta would charge 120,000 miles for the same award).

These miles have also become more valuable for travel on Air France. Previously Air France gave their own Flying Blue members and Delta SkyMiles members access to the same saver award space. Nowadays they only [give Delta access to a part of that inventory](#), to the point that they've blocked off Delta award redemptions for travel on Air France for just about the entire summer. So while Flying Blue does charge hefty fuel surcharges, it may just be the only practical option for redeeming on Air France.

Monday, June 17, 2013 Washington, Dulles International (IAD) DC - > Paris, Charles de Gaulle (CDG) - France United States of America

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
June 17 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	June 18 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	June 19 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	June 20 no flight available	June 21 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	June 22 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	June 23 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*
June 24 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	June 25 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	June 26 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	June 27 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	June 28 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	June 29 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	June 30 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*
July 1 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	July 2 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	July 3 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	July 4 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	July 5 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	July 6 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	July 7 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*
July 8 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	July 9 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	July 10 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	July 11 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	July 12 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	July 13 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	July 14 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*
July 15 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	July 16 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	July 17 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	July 18 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	July 19 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	July 20 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*	July 21 from 50 000 Miles + 447.70 USD*

Flying Blue business class award space between Washington and Paris for this summer (none of the space is being released to Delta SkyMiles members)

Though a word of caution — Flying Blue’s call center is indescribably useless and excruciatingly painful to work with. You’ve been warned.

Best credit card(s) for earning Air France Flying Blue miles: [American Express® Premier Rewards Gold Card](#), which offers 3x points on airfare, 2x points on gas and groceries, and 15,000 bonus points for any year in which you spend \$30,000 on the card.

Alaska Mileage Plan – 1.6 cents/mile (previously 1.5 cents/mile)

Mileage Plan is one of those programs that’s sooo close to being awesome. They partner with many airlines across multiple alliances, so the flexibility of the miles is great, in theory. Unfortunately they have some rules that really prevent these miles from being more valuable. One of those rules is that you can’t mix partner airlines on an award ticket. This can be really tough to do given that multiple airlines are needed to get to some destinations, and that can require multiple award tickets. Furthermore as of now they don’t allow one-way awards on partner airlines, though [rumor has it](#) that one way awards will soon be possible on select partners.

That being said, Alaska recently [unveiled their mileage redemption chart](#) for travel on Emirates, and while it's not amazing, it certainly adds some value to the program. First class to the Middle East or India is 180,000 miles roundtrip, while first class to Africa or Asia is 200,000 miles roundtrip.



Emirates onboard shower suite

Those are decent redemption rates though they aren't amazing, Then again it's one of Emirates' few mileage redemption partners, so it'll have to do. So I think the miles deserve a bit of a boost compared to last year, though I really can't value them at over 1.6 cents each.

Best credit card(s) for earning Alaska Mileage Plan miles: [Starwood Preferred Guest American Express Personal Card](#) and [Starwood Preferred Guest American Express Business Card](#), which offer one Starpoint per dollar spent on all purchases, and two Starpoints per dollar spent at Starwood properties. Points can be transferred to Mileage Plan at a 1:1 ratio, and for every 20,000 points transferred you get a 5,000 point bonus, meaning you're essentially earning 1.25 Mileage Plan miles per dollar spent.

American AAdvantage – 1.8 cents/mile (previously 1.8 cents/mile)

The value of American miles remains unchanged for me over the past year, which is a great thing. For me their most useful single partner is Cathay Pacific, which continues to release a good amount of

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