

## Bargains In The Air: Ten Interesting Airfares That May Save You Money

IF you're travelling overseas, there's never been a wider range of airfare options.

While the number of airlines servicing Australia and the different styles of service they offer are taking off by the day, there's no need to wing it when it comes to finding a fare that suits your needs and budget.

Flight Centre's airfare experts have compiled a list of interesting airfares that have traditionally flown under the radar, but may be tailor-made for your next holiday – particularly if you plan to visit multiple destinations.

Ask your agent about ...

### "Open-jaw" airfares

Open-jaw tickets allow you to fly in to one location and to fly-out from another. You can also return to a different city to the one you initially departed from.

An open-jaw ticket is a great option if you're embarking on a cruise or overland journey that does not return to its departure city or if your trip takes in more than one city.

A hypothetical example would be a fare from Australia to Athens, linking with a one-way Mediterranean cruise and returning to Australia from London.

### Circle fares

The Oneworld and Star Alliance airlines offer a range of "circle" fares that allow you to visit multiple destinations within particular regions.

Examples include Circle Pacific and Circle Asia fares, both of which are tailor-made for travellers planning to stopover in several cities.

Oneworld's Circle Pacific fare allows travellers to fly with American Airlines, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Japan Airlines, Mexicana, LAN or Qantas and their affiliates.

Travel must be via the North or Central Pacific in one direction and via the South Pacific in the other direction or vice versa.

Prices depend on the country where your journey starts and ends, the class you fly in and the distance (mileage) that you fly.

### Airpasses

The Star Alliance offers a range of regional airpasses, including a flexible South Pacific pass that covers more than 35 destinations in 10 countries.

In addition to seven Australian cities, you can visit Auckland, Christchurch, Hamilton, Queenstown, Rotorua and Wellington in New Zealand and Niue, Tonga, Fiji, Cook Islands, Western Samoa, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and French Polynesia.

Flights are with Air New Zealand.

### Packaged airfares

When you're weighing up the price of an airfare, it pays to also consider package deals that include flights and accommodation.

The package may include a heavily discounted airfare that is not available separately and can only be sold with an accommodation or other land component.

### Companion fares

Companion fares are on offer at various times and are available to two passengers travelling together.

Generally, these discounted fares must be booked and paid for at the same time.

### Senior fares

If you're aged over 55 or 60, you may be eligible for special seniors' airfares that some airlines offer.

Fares of this kind are popular options for business class travellers.

### Mixed class fares

You don't have to spend your entire journey in economy class – mixed class fares that allow travellers to divide their flying time between the various cabins are available.

Mixed class fares are on offer on some long-haul journeys and include an economy and a business class sector on the way to and from the ultimate destination.

These fares are great options for travellers taking off to Europe or the UK in particular because they allow you to fly economy class for the shorter part of your journey and to then stretch out in business class for the longer leg of the trip.

### Constructed fares

You don't have to buy airfares off-the-shelf.

Travel agents can use their skills and experience to build itineraries that suit your individual travel requirements.

This is particularly relevant for round-the-world fares and other complex journeys.

Fares that are available off-the-shelf and online will typically be limited to one airline or one alliance's offerings.

By contrast, constructed fares can draw on a combination of airlines – including low cost, hybrid and traditional carriers – and the major alliances.

If you're building a number of international cities, a constructed round-the-world fare may be cheaper than point-to-point options.

### Back to back flights

The cheapest way to get from A to B is not always the direct route.

Sometimes, you can get a better deal by travelling via a different location and effectively buying two separate tickets.

For example, Flight Centre recently advertised a return flight from Sydney to London for less than \$1300, a price well below other fares that were in the market at the time.

The fare combined a heavily discounted fare to Paris with a separate discounted ticket on to London.

You may also find a cheaper international fare if you travel to another city in Australia to link with an international service or if you travel from A to B, via C. For example, the cheapest way to get to an Asian city, could be to travel to a different city and to catch a separate flight back.

#### Stopovers and sidetrips

If you're travelling to Europe or the UK, you may be able to have a holiday within a holiday by taking advantage of stopovers or sidetrips that are included in some fares.

For example, Flight Centre recently offered a range of Malaysian Airlines fares that included a free sidetrip to various destinations in Malaysia.

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