

**Congratulations
to Norwegian
for qualifying for
inclusion in the
2018 report.**
(See page 5 for details)



Worldwide Report of Reward Availability – 2018

The global assessment of reward seat availability
for 25 major frequent flyer programs

Researched and written by Jay Sorensen
Edited by Eric Lucas



Contents

General Commentary and Analysis.....	4
Introduction to the Report.....	4
The Survey Measures Saver-Style Reward Availability.....	6
Long-Haul Reward Availability Shows Nearly 4-Point Improvement.....	6
Members Find Fewer Reward Seats during July.....	7
Reward Payback Provides a Common Benchmark.....	8
Frequent Flyer Programs Can Be Responsive to Consumers.....	9
This Report Compares Online Booking Experiences.....	9
Carriers Included in the Analysis.....	10
Components of the Reward Booking Data.....	11
Reward Survey Methodology.....	12
Airline Data Section Notes.....	12
Graph: Overall Reward Availability.....	14
Graph: Long-Haul Flights – Reward Availability.....	15
Graph: Flights 251 to 2,500 Miles – Reward Availability.....	16
Graph: 3+ Flights Offered for Reward Travel.....	17
Graph: Overall Reward Availability by Month.....	18
Graph: Reward Payback for Selected Member Types.....	19
Graph: Reward Availability – June 2018.....	20
Graph: Reward Availability – July 2018.....	21
Graph: Reward Availability – August 2018.....	22
Graph: Reward Availability – September 2018.....	23
Graph: Reward Availability – October 2018.....	24
AirAsia – BIG Loyalty.....	25
Air Canada – Aeroplan.....	29
Air China – PhoenixMiles.....	34
Air France/KLM – Flying Blue.....	38
Alaska Group – Mileage Plan.....	42
American – AAdvantage.....	47
Avianca – LifeMiles.....	52
British Airways – Executive Club.....	57
Cathay Pacific – Asia Miles.....	62
China Eastern – Eastern Miles.....	66
China Southern – Sky Pearl Club.....	70
Delta – SkyMiles.....	74
Emirates – Skywards.....	79
GOL – Smiles.....	83
JetBlue – TrueBlue.....	87

Korean Air – Skypass.....	92
LATAM Airlines – LATAM Pass.....	96
Lufthansa/SWISS/Austrian – Miles & More.....	100
Norwegian – Norwegian Reward.....	104
Qantas Group – Frequent Flyer.....	108
SAS Scandinavian – EuroBonus.....	112
Southwest – Rapid Rewards	116
Turkish – Miles&Smiles.....	121
United – Mileage Plus.....	125
WestJet – WestJet Rewards	130
Appendix – Table of Query Dates Used in the Survey.....	134
Appendix: 2017 Graph – Overall Reward Availability.....	135
Appendix: 2017 Graph – Long-Haul Flights Reward Availability	136
Appendix: 2017 Graph – Flights 251 to 2,500 Miles Reward Availability.....	137

Disclosure to Readers of this Report: IdeaWorksCompany.com LLC makes every effort to ensure the quality of the information in this report. Before relying on the information, you should obtain any appropriate professional advice relevant to your particular circumstances. IdeaWorksCompany cannot guarantee, and assumes no legal liability or responsibility for, the accuracy, currency or completeness of the information.

Terms of Use for this Report: You may not disseminate any portion of the Report through electronic means, including mail lists or electronic bulletin boards, without the prior consent of IdeaWorksCompany. You may make one hard copy by downloading and printing it. You may store the document as a file on your computer. Please contact IdeaWorksCompany if you require multiple downloads for use within your company, and for all other uses.

Except as expressly permitted in this Terms of Use, the Report may not be reproduced, transmitted, or distributed without permission. You may not commingle any portion of the Report with any other information and shall not edit, modify, or alter any portion.

IdeaWorksCompany provides the Report and services “as is” and without any warranty, or condition, express, implied or statutory. IdeaWorksCompany specifically disclaims any implied warranty of title, merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose, and non-infringement. In no event shall IdeaWorksCompany be liable for lost profits or any special, incidental, or consequential damages arising out of or in connection with the Report (however arising, including negligence).

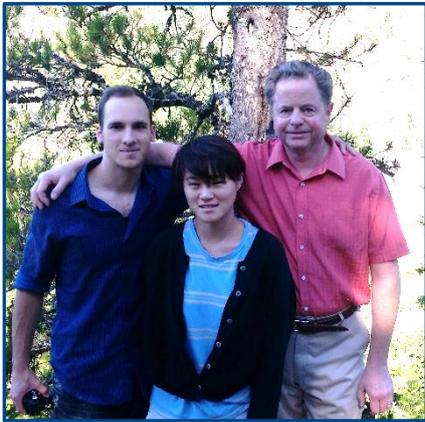
Distribution of this Report is protected by the Economic Espionage Act of 1996 of the United States and the data protection laws of Europe.



Issued May 2018 by IdeaWorksCompany.com LLC
Shorewood, Wisconsin, USA
IdeaWorksCompany.com

About Jay Sorensen, Writer of the Report

Jay Sorensen's research and reports have made him a leading authority on frequent flyer programs and the ancillary revenue movement. He is a regular keynote speaker at the annual MEGA Event, spoke at IATA Passenger Services Symposiums in Abu Dhabi and



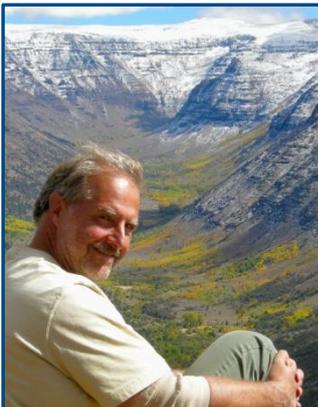
Jay, with son Aleksei and daughter Annika, in North Cascades National Park in Washington.

Singapore, and has testified to the US Congress on ancillary revenue issues. His published works are relied upon by airline executives throughout the world and include first-ever guides on the topics of ancillary revenue and loyalty marketing. He was acknowledged by his peers when he received the Airline Industry Achievement Award at the MEGA Event in 2011.

Mr. Sorensen is a veteran management professional with 34 years experience in product, partnership, and marketing development. As president of the IdeaWorksCompany consulting firm, he has enhanced the generation of airline revenue, started loyalty programs and co-branded credit cards, developed products in the service sector, and helped start airlines and other travel companies. His career includes 13 years at Midwest Airlines where he was responsible for marketing, sales,

customer service, product development, operations, planning, financial analysis and budgeting. His favorite activities are hiking, exploring and camping in US national parks with his family.

About Eric Lucas, Editor of the Report



Eric Lucas is an international travel, culture and natural history writer and editor whose work appears in Michelin travel guides, Alaska Airlines *Beyond Magazine*, *Westways* and numerous other publications. Founding editor of *Midwest Airlines Magazine*, he is the author of eight books, including the 2017 *Michelin Alaska* guide. Eric has followed and written about the travel industry for more than 25 years. He lives on San Juan Island, Washington, where he grows organic garlic, apples, corn and beans; visit him online at TrailNot4Sissies.com.

Eric, at his favorite summer retreat, Steens Mountain, Oregon.

General Commentary and Analysis

Introduction to the Report

The *Worldwide Report of Reward Availability* answers the question, “How easy is redemption for the basic and most popular reward type offered by the world’s top airlines?” The 25 carriers in the survey remained almost the same as 2017, with China Eastern, Norwegian, and WestJet as newcomers for 2018. The following describes key findings from this year’s report:

- The currency of frequent flyer programs is rapidly changing.
- Reward pricing is being influenced by cash fares and market forces.
- Some airlines are making dramatic improvements to improve reward availability and value.

Earning miles or points is rapidly switching to spend-based methods rather than distance flown. Of the 25 airlines in the 2018 report, 11 now use ticket prices to determine mileage and points accrual. The momentum of this movement is boosted by Air France/KLM and the Lufthansa Group switching to euro-based accrual during 2018.

These changes are now affecting how airlines deliver reward travel to members. In obvious and subtle ways, the prices of reward tickets are being influenced by cash fares. That’s because the global expansion of low cost carriers has created pricing disruption. Global network airlines are realizing the old binary method of using reward tables based on distance creates unreliable reward value. Members increasingly believe low fares should provide lower reward prices. For example, reward prices as low as 12,000 miles roundtrip were found on select Delta routes in the US, where the previous price was 25,000 miles roundtrip.

Member expectations and satisfaction are important for airlines seeking success. Happy members buy more tickets and use their co-branded credit cards more often. Perhaps this is why 11 airlines improved their reward availability for 2018, while seven airlines had declines. Among the most significant changes are a huge 27.8 point increase of overall reward seat availability for American’s AAdvantage program and a giant 31.4 point increase for the Turkish Miles&Smiles program for long-haul reward availability. Southwest Rapid Rewards held its first place position with an outstanding 100% score; every flight queried provided reward seats below the domestic saver-style level of 12,500 points/miles.

Overall reward availability for the group of 25 airlines increased to 73.6% for 2018, which is a marginal increase above last year’s level of 72.4%. Norwegian and WestJet are compelling additions to the 2018 survey because these carriers operate pay-with-points programs. Norwegian represents a first-time opportunity to survey a long-haul network which uses the pay-with-points method.

The following table summarizes the overall reward availability results of the 2018 survey, reflecting the combined results of medium-haul routes (251-2,500 miles) and long-haul routes (2,500+ miles) as applicable by frequent flyer program:

Reward Availability Survey
Overall Reward Availability
Seat Availability June through October, 2018

Rank	% Total Availability	Airline	Program Name	Change from 2017 to 2018
1	100.0%	Southwest	Rapid Rewards	No change
2	96.4%	Air Canada	Aeroplan	↑6.4 points
3	95.0%	Turkish	Miles&Smiles	↑15.7 points
4	94.3%	JetBlue	TrueBlue	No change
5	91.4%	Lufthansa/SWISS/Austrian	Miles & More	↑0.7 points
6	90.7%	Qantas Group	Frequent Flyer	↑9.3 points
7	89.3%	China Eastern	Eastern Miles	New for 2018
8	84.3%	Norwegian	Norwegian Reward	New for 2018
9	82.1%	American	AAdvantage	↑27.8 points
10	80.0%	Air China	PhoenixMiles	↑5.7 points
	80.0%	China Southern	Sky Pearl Club	↓5.0 points
11	77.1%	AirAsia Group	BIG Loyalty	↑1.4 points
12	75.7%	United	MileagePlus	↑10.7 points
13	72.1%	Delta	SkyMiles	↓2.2 points
14	69.3%	Alaska Group	Mileage Plan	↓12.1 points
15	68.6%	Korean Air	Skypass	↓2.8 points
16	65.7%	Emirates	Skywards	↑1.4 points
17	62.9%	Air France/KLM	Flying Blue	No change
18	62.1%	British Airways	Executive Club	↓12.2 points
19	61.4%	Cathay Pacific	Asia Miles	↑6.4 points
20	57.1%	Westjet	Westjet Rewards	New for 2018
21	55.0%	LATAM Airlines	LATAM Pass	↑6.4 points
22	54.3%	GOL	Smiles	No change
23	47.9%	Scandinavian	EuroBonus	↓7.8 points
24	27.1%	Avianca	LifeMiles	↓11.5 points

*% of Total Availability = Percent of queries that result in outbound and return reward seats.
For tied results, carriers appear in alphabetical order.*

The Survey Measures Saver-Style Reward Availability

Worldwide Report of Reward Availability is based upon 7,420 booking and fare queries made by the IdeaWorksCompany at the websites of 25 frequent flyer programs to assess “saver style” reward seat availability. Saver-style rewards are an important benefit for most members and the primary topic of this report. The “% of Total Availability” column (see prior page) represents the frequency of queries which produced one or more available flights for a roundtrip pair of travel dates. A minimum of two seats was required for each outbound and inbound reward booking query.

As in previous years, survey findings indicate frequent flyers are better served by the reward programs at low cost carriers (LCCs). The average among the six LCCs (AirAsia, GOL, JetBlue, Norwegian, Southwest, and WestJet) was 77.9%, while the more traditional carriers in the survey registered 72.3%. Among the LCCs, JetBlue, Norwegian, Southwest, and WestJet use pay-with-points redemption that requires a distinct method to conduct reward queries, necessitating additional explanation.

Credit cards are a universal method to earn significant quantities of points. For many members, cards represent the largest source of point accrual. Credit card earning rates for these LCCs were compared to more traditional programs such as United (for JetBlue and Southwest), Air Canada (for WestJet), and Scandinavian (for Norwegian). For example, one United MileagePlus mile was found to equate to one Southwest Rapid Rewards point because of identical card accrual rates. Similarly, 100 Scandinavian Eurobonus points were found to equate to 10 Norwegian CashPoints.

Saver-style reward prices posted by Air Canada, Scandinavian, and United were then converted to each LCC’s pay-with-points currency to determine the maximum reward levels permitted for reward queries. For example, a 10,000-point reward for Scandinavian was determined to represent 1,000 Norwegian CashPoints. This method creates a bridge by which very different reward methods can be compared.

Long-Haul Reward Availability Shows Nearly 4-Point Improvement

Airlines generally operate more flights on short-haul routes. For example, an airline might offer 16 daily nonstop departures from Frankfurt to Munich, whereas nonstops between Frankfurt and Bangkok are limited to a single daily operation. Traditionally it has been difficult for airlines to offer reward availability on long-haul flights that compares favorably to shorter routes. But some airlines are becoming better at this task, as demonstrated by an overall availability result which increased to 64% for 2018 from 60.3% in 2017.

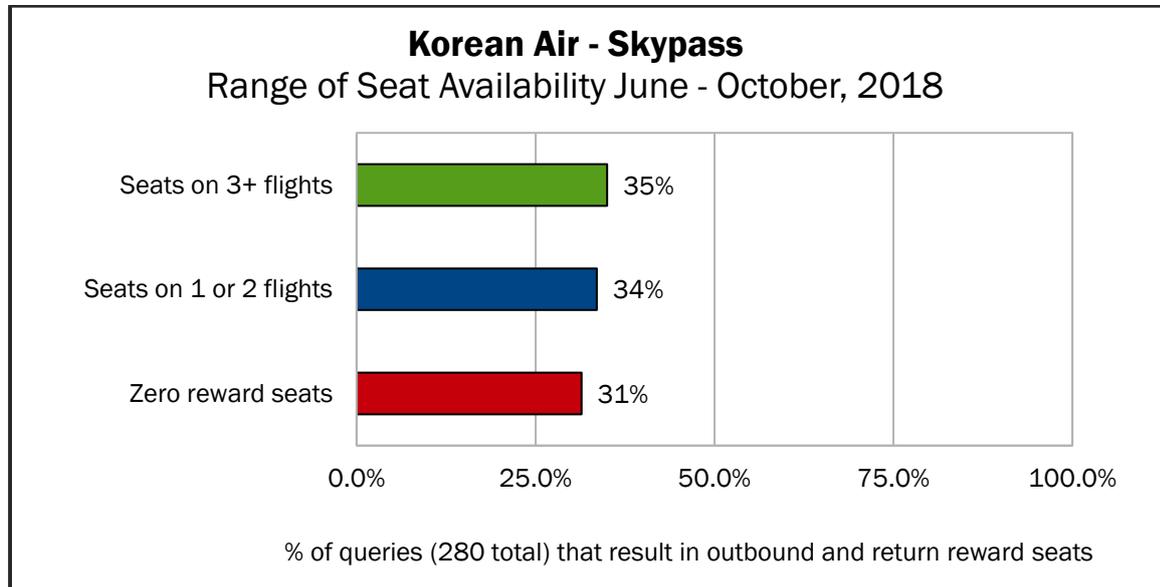
Turkish Airlines and its Miles&Smiles program sits at the top of the long-haul reward availability table (see following page) with a nearly perfect 98.6% result. Out of 70 long-haul queries (2,500+ miles) only one roundtrip did not provide reward seats at the saver level. This result reflects a more than doubling of the 41.4% long-haul reward availability scored by Turkish for the 2015 survey. Two other programs saw big jumps for 2018: American AAdvantage and LATAM Pass. As one of the world’s largest airlines, American has obviously made big changes to reward capacity. The airline has come a long way from the 17.1% long-haul reward result posted in 2012.

Korean Air – Skypass

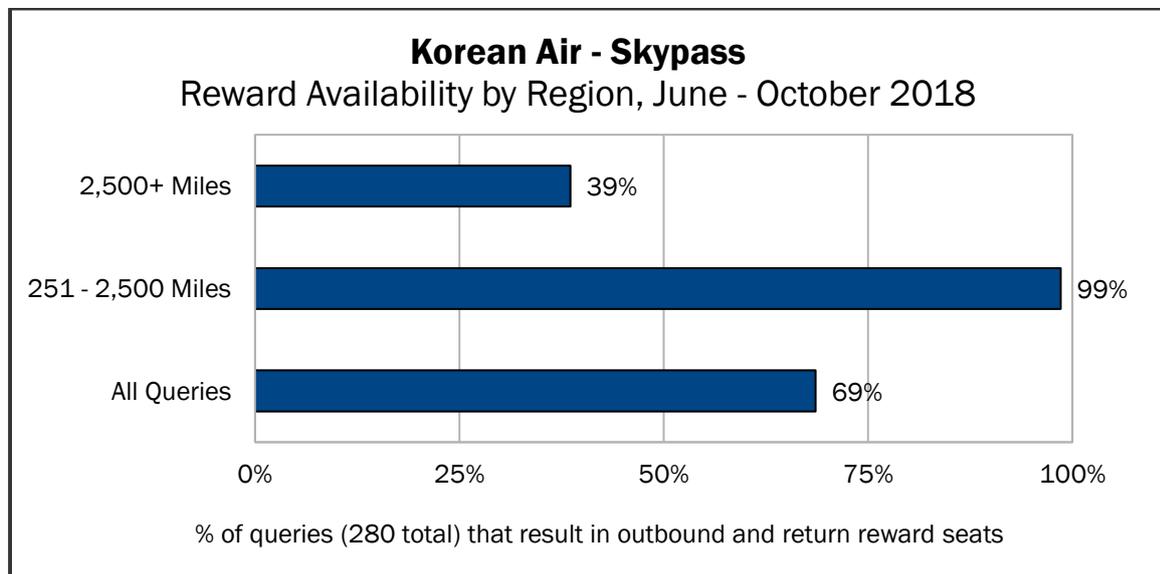
Overview of Reward Availability																						
Reward ranking:	#15 (total availability is 68.6%)	City Pairs Queried																				
Reward level queried:	Economy reward	<p style="text-align: center;">251 - 2,500 Miles (10 total)</p> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;">CJU</td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;">GMP</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">ICN</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">HKG</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">ICN</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">BKK</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">GMP</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">HND</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">ICN</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">NRT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">KIX</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">ICN</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">FUK</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">ICN</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">ICN</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">PVG</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">ICN</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">MNL</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">ICN</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">SGN</td> </tr> </table>	CJU	GMP	ICN	HKG	ICN	BKK	GMP	HND	ICN	NRT	KIX	ICN	FUK	ICN	ICN	PVG	ICN	MNL	ICN	SGN
CJU	GMP																					
ICN	HKG																					
ICN	BKK																					
GMP	HND																					
ICN	NRT																					
KIX	ICN																					
FUK	ICN																					
ICN	PVG																					
ICN	MNL																					
ICN	SGN																					
Summary of reward structure:	One single reward level is available in economy, business (Prestige), and first class. Reward prices vary by travel season with peak and off-peak levels. One way rewards are 50% of the roundtrip price.																					
Airline partners observed at online booking engine:	Air France, Alitalia, China Airlines, Czech Airlines, Delta, Garuda Indonesia, KLM, Vietnam, Xiamen.																					
Alliance:	SkyTeam Alliance																					
Date queries made:	March 2018																					
Pay with points/miles (same as cash)	None offered.																					
Key non-air redemption opportunities:	See note below.																					
Search conditions:	None selected.																					
Observations:	<p>The airline assesses a fuel surcharge for reward travel, but it is not separated from the tax amount.</p> <p>Members may redeem for accommodations at 5 hotels (Korea and USA), Seoul airport shuttle, car rental (Jeju only), and airport coat storage. Miles may also be redeemed to pay excess baggage fees and for admission to 15 domestic and international lounge locations.</p> <p>The Family Plan allows up to 5 family members to pool their miles for reward redemption.</p> <p>Members of the Morning Calm Premium Club (top elite tier) qualify for off-peak mileage redemption for award travel during peak season.</p> <p>Booking site was easy but very slow to respond. The booking result displays how many reward seats remain in inventory.</p>	<p>First market underlined is intra-Korea; others are international</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2,500 + Miles (10 total)</p> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;">ICN</td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px;">LAX</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">ICN</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">JFK</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">SIN</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">ICN</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">ICN</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">SFO</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">CDG</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">ICN</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">HNL</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">ICN</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">DPS</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">ICN</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">ICN</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">LHR</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">FRA</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">ICN</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">ICN</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">SYD</td> </tr> </table>	ICN	LAX	ICN	JFK	SIN	ICN	ICN	SFO	CDG	ICN	HNL	ICN	DPS	ICN	ICN	LHR	FRA	ICN	ICN	SYD
ICN	LAX																					
ICN	JFK																					
SIN	ICN																					
ICN	SFO																					
CDG	ICN																					
HNL	ICN																					
DPS	ICN																					
ICN	LHR																					
FRA	ICN																					
ICN	SYD																					

Korean Air – 2

Overall Reward Seat Results. The results from each booking query were analyzed to determine flight availability based upon the number of flights offered.

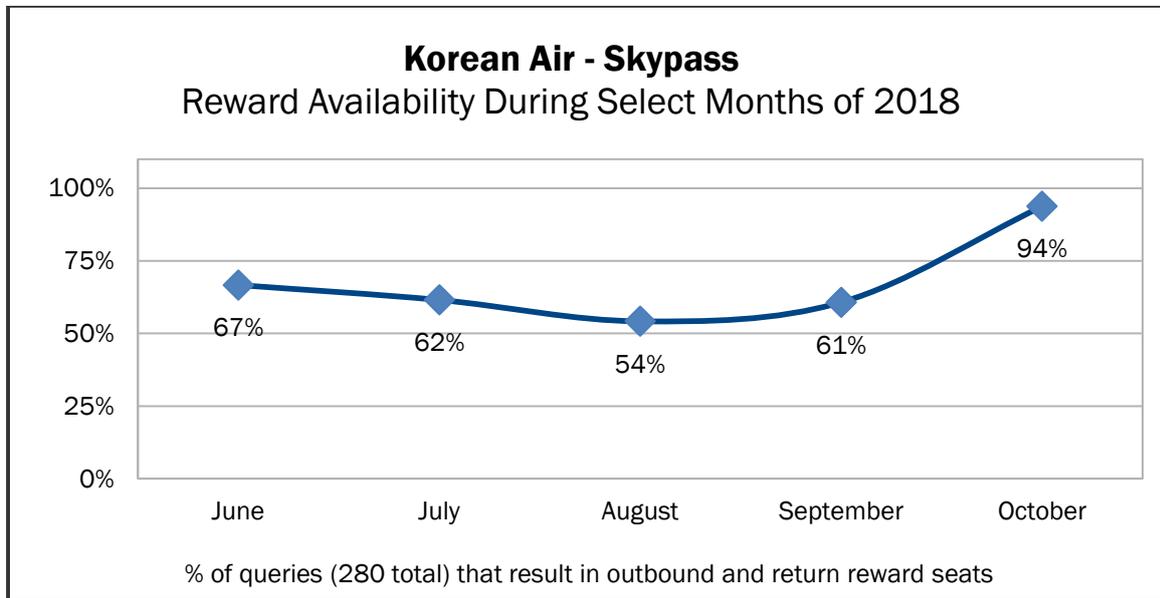


Reward Availability by Region. This graph displays the reward queries grouped by geographic regions and length of flight. 50% of the queries were 251 - 2,500 mile city pairs and 50% were for city pairs at 2,500 miles or more.

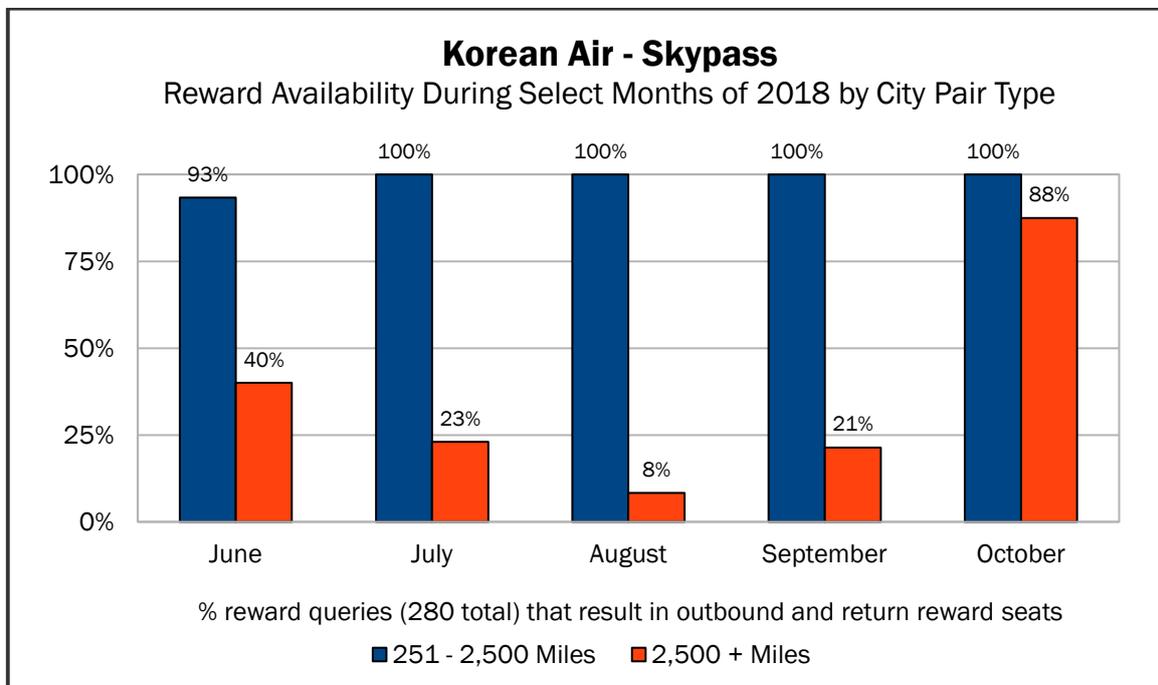


Korean Air – 3

Reward Availability During Select Months. This graph displays the reward queries grouped by departure month. June represents seat availability with a 3 month booking window, as queries were made March 2018. October statistics provide longer term results with a 6 – 7 month booking window.



Reward Availability by City Pair Type. This graph displays the reward queries grouped by departure month and city pair type.



Korean Air – 4

Screen shot of reward booking page from the carrier's website.

Seoul/Incheon (ICN) → Hong Kong (HKG)

10/02 (Tue)	10/03 (Wed)	10/04 (Thu)	10/05 (Fri)	10/06 (Sat)
2018.10.04(Thu) 08:10-11:00 3h 50m Non-Stop +				
<input type="radio"/>	KE603	Seoul/Incheon(ICN) → Hong Kong(HKG)	9 Seats (X)	08:10 → 11:00 A330-200
15,000 Miles / Adult				
2018.10.04(Thu) 09:50-12:50 4h 0m Non-Stop +				
<input type="radio"/>	KE613	Seoul/Incheon(ICN) → Hong Kong(HKG)	9 Seats (X)	09:50 → 12:50 B787-9
15,000 Miles / Adult				
2018.10.04(Thu) 13:40-16:30 3h 50m Non-Stop +				
<input type="radio"/>	KE601	Seoul/Incheon(ICN) → Hong Kong(HKG)	9 Seats (X)	13:40 → 16:30 A330-300
15,000 Miles / Adult				
2018.10.04(Thu) 19:45-22:30 3h 45m Non-Stop +				
<input type="radio"/>	KE607	Seoul/Incheon(ICN) → Hong Kong(HKG)	9 Seats (X)	19:45 → 22:30 B777-300ER
15,000 Miles / Adult				

Hong Kong (HKG) → Seoul/Incheon (ICN)

10/09 (Tue)	10/10 (Wed)	10/11 (Thu)	10/12 (Fri)	10/13 (Sat)
2018.10.11(Thu) 00:45-05:25 3h 40m Non-Stop +				
<input type="radio"/>	KE608	Hong Kong(HKG) → Seoul/Incheon(ICN)	9 Seats (X)	00:45 → 05:25 B777-300ER
15,000 Miles / Adult				
2018.10.11(Thu) 12:15-16:55 3h 40m Non-Stop +				
<input type="radio"/>	KE604	Hong Kong(HKG) → Seoul/Incheon(ICN)	9 Seats (X)	12:15 → 16:55 A330-200
15,000 Miles / Adult				
2018.10.11(Thu) 14:05-18:45 3h 40m Non-Stop +				
<input type="radio"/>	KE614	Hong Kong(HKG) → Seoul/Incheon(ICN)	9 Seats (X)	14:05 → 18:45 B787-9
15,000 Miles / Adult				
2018.10.11(Thu) 17:55-22:35 3h 40m Non-Stop +				
<input type="radio"/>	KE602	Hong Kong(HKG) → Seoul/Incheon(ICN)	9 Seats (X)	17:55 → 22:35 A330-300
15,000 Miles / Adult				

Adult 2

Air Transportation Charges

Base Fare 0 Miles

Fuel Surcharge/Taxes KRW 0

Subtotal 0 Miles KRW 0

Total For All Passengers

0 Miles

KRW 0

Change payment currency Ⓞ

KRW ▼ Change

Continue

Korean Air also provides rewards for excess baggage, airport lounge access, and for checked pet carriers (see below):

Redeemable mileage table for pet companion

When traveling with a pet, you can redeem miles to pay for the fare of your pet.

[International] (Unit : Per Cage, One-way)

Weight / Validity	-32kg	33kg-45kg
Japan / China / Northeast Asia	10,000 miles	20,000 miles
Guam / Palau	10,000 miles	20,000 miles
Southeast / Southwest Asia	15,000 miles	30,000 miles
North America / Oceania / Europe / Middle East / Africa	20,000 miles	40,000 miles
South America	25,000 miles	50,000 miles

* The redemption miles on this chart are based on departure from Korea.

[Korea Domestic] (Unit : Per Cage, One-way)

Weight / Validity	Until Apr.15 th , 2018	From Apr.16 th , 2018
-5kg	200 miles per kg	2,000 miles
6kg-32kg	200 miles per kg	3,000 miles
33kg-45kg	6,000 miles	6,000 miles