

BURKHALTER TRAVEL NEWS: MARCH 2019

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LATEST NEWS

- **UPDATE:** What is the **current status of Brexit**, the UK's plan to leave the EU on the "official date" of March 29? UK Prime Minister Theresa May met with EU leaders in Brussels to request a departure delay to June 30. Late last night leaders said they would be "prepared to defer Britain's departure to May 22, IF the government's deal is approved." If not, a deadline of April 12 has been set. Theresa May insists there will not be a "no deal" Brexit---others say it could happen. The impact on travelers? Recently, Eurostar customs officials in France staged slowdowns at Paris's Gare du Nord to "give travelers a taste of a post-Brexit world"---one with intense border checks. **Our advice** if your travels take you to the UK and beyond: **Allow extra time** and **expect the unexpected**.
- If you are following Brexit or want insight into the historic process: read [this synopsis](#).
- **Also related:** The **UK and the EU signed a deal** to allow flights to continue during a no-deal Brexit (if there is one) earlier this month, and last November, the UK and the United States signed an "open skies" agreement that will govern air travel between the two countries post-Brexit. That deal replaces the existing aviation agreement between the EU and the U.S. as it relates to the UK, guaranteeing the continuation of transatlantic travel routes.
- Recently announced: It's going to start costing more to enter some European countries in a couple of years. **In 2021, the Schengen group of 26 European countries** will require citizens of over five dozen countries to fill out an electronic form to enter this group of countries in the EU. There's [more here](#)
- Russia's state Duma (Parliament) introduced a bill that would **allow foreigners to stay in the country for two weeks without an entry visa**, with the curious twist that those visa-free visitors must be from "friendly" states. Qualifying countries will be decided by Russia. Currently they have added Austria, Germany and Italy to the 'approved' list because they recently supported a Russian pipeline project.
- The Brazilian Government announced that Brazil would allow **visa-free entry for citizens of The United States, Canada, Australia, and Japan, effective on June 17, 2019** (until then, the current e-visa will be required).
- **A traveler at Newark Liberty International Airport may have exposed other people to measles on March 4**, officials said. The infected passenger was at Terminal C and may have visited other parts of the airport, according to the New Jersey Department of Health. He traveled from Aruba to Newark. Anyone who was at the airport between March 4 at 9 p.m. and March 5 at 9:30 a.m. may have been exposed.

AIRLINE UPDATES

ALASKA AIRLINES

- Alaska Airlines has outfitted an A321neo with the Gogo Vision wireless inflight entertainment system and Gogo's 2Ku high-speed Wi-Fi, which offers near-global connectivity. The airline expects to roll out the satellite Wi-Fi service throughout its mainline fleet by the end of 2020.
- Alaska is rolling out new cabin designs on planes acquired in its merger with Virgin Airlines. The new style features a palette of blues and greens, and seatback screens have been eliminated in favor of seatback shelves and hooks to accommodate personal electronic devices.
- Alaska's recently announced new routes include flights from El Paso, TX International Airport to San Diego International and Seattle Sea-Tac.

AMERICAN AIRLINES

- Although unpublished, American has had a '**Late Arrival Standby Policy**' that passengers arriving at the airport within two hours of departure aren't charged to standby on the next flight (unless the flight that was missed was the last of the day). American Airlines updated their policy on February 15 for passengers who miss their initial flight. They currently allow customers traveling on American flights (not codeshares), to stand by free of charge for the next itinerary as long as one of the following situations applies: 1. They arrive after check-in cut-off, but within 2 hours of their posted departure time, or 2. They don't have proper travel documents and miss their flight, or 3. They haven't applied for or received an ESTA to travel to the U.S., or 4. They have mobile boarding passes but turned up at the wrong airport (only for Washington National/Dulles and Houston Intercontinental/Hobby)
- Aside from the 737-Max 8 automatic pilot issue, American Airlines recently took more than a dozen of its Boeing 737 jets out of service after some newly installed overhead bins wouldn't close, leading the airline to cancel about 40 flights. The carrier is in the process of remodeling the interiors of its Boeing 737-800 planes to add **more seats** as well as bigger overhead bins and electrical outlets at each seat, a plan known as "Project Oasis." The airline is one of several carriers adding more seats to planes in order to increase revenue for each flight.
- American Airlines and Hyatt announced a partnership that allows AAdvantage elites and World of Hyatt elites to earn points for both programs simultaneously. Elite members will also have reciprocal access to benefits like free checked bags, priority boarding, room upgrades and late check-out times.
- American Airlines will increase its average number of daily flights at North Carolina's Charlotte Douglas International Airport from 664 to 700 by the end of 2019. Additional flights are planned for destinations including Chicago, New York City, Los Angeles and Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

DELTA AIR LINES

- Delta announced a number of new transpacific options out of its **Seattle** gateway. The airline is expanding its premium seat products on flights to **Shanghai, Seoul-Incheon** and **Tokyo-Narita**, allowing customers to choose from 29 **Delta One Suites**, 28 **Delta Premium Select** seats, 56 **Delta Comfort+** seats and 168 **Main Cabin** seats on new, wide-body aircraft: the low-carbon-footprint **Airbus A330-900neo**. The new options will be available starting July 1 on flights to Shanghai; August 1 for flights to Seoul; and August 31 for flights to Tokyo.
- European Union anti-trust regulators have given the go-ahead for a proposed **acquisition of joint control over Virgin Atlantic** by Air France-KLM, **Delta** and Virgin Group. The European Commission said its investigation showed that there would still be strong competition in the market after the deal, which involves Air France-KLM buying 31% of Virgin Atlantic from Virgin Group. The deal would give Air France-KLM joint control of the airline, along with **Delta** and Virgin Group.
- Delta has also confirmed its engagement in discussions with low-cost carrier EasyJet about a possible partnership that would be aimed at keeping Alitalia alive. Also involved is the Italian state-owned railway, Ferrovie dello Stato, which would guarantee that the country's government would continue to have a stake in its flag carrier. **For Delta**, the prospect of joining with the Italian legacy line would be just the latest of a number of international partnerships and investments. The airline has a close partnership with Air France/KLM and a stake in Virgin Atlantic; it has also invested in airlines in Mexico and China.

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

- Southwest Airlines celebrated its **inaugural Hawaiian flight** from Oakland, California, to Honolulu with a blessing, hula dancers, new snack packs and more. Southwest Airlines' Hawaii service debuted Sunday, March 17.
- Southwest recently announced the return of previously-operated seasonal service between **Milwaukee and Seattle, Des Moines and Phoenix**, both **beginning Aug. 10, 2019**. Ask your Burkhalter agent for details.

UNITED AIRLINES

- United Airlines has filed an application with the U.S. Department of Transportation for a total of **six daily nonstop flights to Tokyo Haneda Airport/HND**, from Newark Liberty International Airport/EWR, Chicago O'Hare International Airport/ORD, Washington Dulles International Airport/IAD, Los Angeles International Airport/LAX, Houston George Bush Intercontinental Airport/IAH and Guam's A.B. Won Pat International Airport/GUM. Pending completion of an aviation agreement between the U.S. and Japanese governments later this year, and slots awarded by DOT, the flights are expected to begin service by the summer of 2020.

- United Airlines recently launched service between Denver International and California's Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport.
- United flight attendants can now add a bit of personality to flight announcements, starting April 1. The change reflects "a lighter and more conversational tone, as part of our larger effort to improve the customer experience,"
- United Airlines CEO Oscar Munoz said the carrier will unveil its updated plane livery around April. The update will include some colors from the carrier's new color palette. Planes will be re-dressed as they come into service.
- As part of its plan to upgrade existing United Clubs, United Airlines will inaugurate a new United Club at LaGuardia Airport during that airport's renovations. The airline also added a club at the airport in Fort Lauderdale, FL last week and plans to open clubs in New Orleans and Raleigh-Durham airports this year.
- United Airlines is launching an art contest crafted to discover two female artists to design plane liveries representing California and the New York/New Jersey region. "When we heard the statistics about how underrepresented women are when it comes to displaying their art, we thought what better way to contribute to changing this narrative than by offering the biggest canvas we have access to -- an aircraft," said Jill Kaplan, United's president for New York and New Jersey.

INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

- **British Airways** unveiled its new "Club Suite" business class product recently, which will debut on the A350-1000 in July. One reviewer says the seat is better than the current *first class* seat British Airways offers. Read about it [here](#).
- **TAP Air Portugal** is growing their transatlantic route network significantly this year, thanks to the airline acquiring new aircraft, including 20 Airbus A330-900neo aircraft plus 14 Airbus A321LR aircraft. In 2019 alone, the airline is adding service from Lisbon to Chicago, San Francisco, and Washington. TAP is also adding flights from Porto to Newark, which will be the carrier's first transatlantic route with the A321LR.
- Gulf carrier **Qatar Airways** has unveiled an "enhanced" economy seat with a semi-fixed back shell design that will allow it to recline 19 degrees without annoying the passenger behind. The new seat will also allow passengers to recline 6 degrees on take-off and provides a new slim-line design that gives "enhanced legroom", a 13.3-inch high-resolution 4K screen and USB C ports with high power fast charging capabilities.
- **KLM** turns 100 this year, making it the oldest airline still in operation. Year founded: 1919, First flight: May 1920. Passengers transported in the first year: 440. Passengers transported in 2018: 34.2 million.

- Longtime Star Alliance partners **Air Canada** and **Air New Zealand** plan to form a joint venture.
- **British Airways** is tweaking its first class cabins. Beginning March 31, there will be new in-flight pajamas in both male and female versions, new duvets, blankets and mattress toppers; a new amenity kit featuring Elemis products; a reimagined menu focused on British-sourced products; and a new afternoon tea service.
- Virgin Atlantic is expanding its codeshare offerings with the addition of Air France-KLM flights on routes from the UK to the U.S. via Paris and Amsterdam. [Read the story](#)

AIRPORT NEWS

- **Paine Field (PAE) in Everett, Washington** is the newest dot on the USA's commercial aviation map. Alaska Airlines recently became the first commercial carrier in decades to fly from Everett, located about 25 miles north of downtown Seattle, launching service from the nation's newest passenger terminal. Southwest had also planned to fly from Paine Field but relinquished its gates to Alaska Airlines. [Alaska Airlines offers a sneak-peek video of Paine Field](#) showcasing the new commercial terminal. The airline recently launched 18 nonstop flights to eight destinations from Paine Field.
- **Toronto Pearson** has been named **Best Large Airport in North America** by the Airports Council International (ACI) for the second year in a row. This recognition is part of ACI's Airport Service Quality (ASQ) program, which is considered the gold standard for measuring passenger satisfaction. The ASQ index is the only global benchmarking survey that assesses passenger satisfaction across 34 key performance indicators while at the airport on their day of travel.
- **Amsterdam/Schiphol** now has a Star Alliance lounge accessible by qualifying flyers of United, Lufthansa, TAP Air Portugal and others. **The problem for U.S. and Canadian flyers?** The lounge is located airside in the Departures 2 Schengen Area. That means it's not accessible for travelers to/from North America without a separate security clearance.
- **Ohio's John Glenn Columbus International Airport** is partnering with the American Association of Airport Executives to provide access to the Aira app for travelers with visual impairments. The app connects users with a live person who helps them navigate the airport without assistance from airport personnel. Look for details [here](#).
- **Charlotte, NC/CLT** has an **Admirals Club on Concourse B** again. **American Airlines** reopened the lounge after an eight-month closure for renovations.
- A new concourse in **New York's LaGuardia Airport's Terminal B** is scheduled to open fully this year, with much improved facilities and new gates. The **Western Concourse** will feature a central hall, pedestrian bridges and a better flowing departure and arrival area.

HOTEL UPDATES

- **WorldHotels** has been acquired again, this time by **Best Western Hotels & Resorts**, exactly two years after it was bought by Associated Luxury Hotels. The acquisition will give Best Western a position in the upper upscale and luxury segments that it never had. Frankfurt-based WorldHotels' collection of more than 300 hotels and resorts were recently re-classified in three categories, distinctive, elite and luxury. Current intentions are for WorldHotels to maintain its identity and to be marketed separately from Best Western.
- The newly opened **Hotel Otilia in Copenhagen** features self-disinfecting rooms that use an odorless antibacterial spray called CleanCoat. "The technology is expensive, but we've reduced the labor load by 50 percent," said Karim Nielsen, Brockner Hotels CEO.
- When **Marriott** launched their new loyalty program last August they came out with new elite levels and benefits. When they renamed their program 'Bonvoy' in February they also renamed the top two published elite levels. Marriott's public elite tiers are: **Silver, Gold, Platinum, Titanium, and Ambassador. There's also a "secret elite" status: Cobalt. More [here](#).**
- New York's **Benjamin Hotel** offers guests their choice of pillows and access to a dedicated "sleep team" headed by a sleep expert from Cornell University. The hotel's Bedtime Bites gives guests special snacks by Iron Chef Geoffrey Zakarian.
- **World of Hyatt** routinely evaluates their hotels [within their award categories](#) and will generally make changes once a year. Hyatt announced their latest round of changes which went into effect on March 18.
- Newly renovated and reopened, the historic **Hotel Northland in Green Bay** is offering public tours on a schedule hinting at football history in Green Bay. The community is welcome to attend hotel tours on the first and 10th of every month at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. (The reason for the scheduling is to highlight the football reference "first and 10"). General Manager John Williams said the hotel has a long history of housing Green Bay Packers players and coaches, while hosting NFL rival teams since 1924.
- The **InterContinental Shanghai Wonderland hotel** has 18 stories, but only two are above ground. The other floors are in the cliffs of an abandoned quarry -- making Wonderland the first subterranean hotel. According to the architect, the inspiration was the natural environment itself ... the quarry, the cliffs, the green hills around it, the lake. Despite it being an industrial site surrounded by industrial buildings, it was very pretty," said Martin Jochman, architect of Wonderland.
- Nashville, Tenn., is home to the **first tri-branded Marriott**. A 21-floor building houses a **SpringHill Suites, Residence Inn and AC Hotel**.
- A new **tattoo shop** has opened inside the **Moxy Times Square Hotel**.

TOOLS, TIPS AND TECHNOLOGY

- It can be a challenge to schedule an in-person appointment to **apply for Global Entry**. [Look here](#) for tips on speeding up the process.
- U.S. airlines, including Delta, United, American, Southwest and JetBlue will soon offer **additional options for gender-neutral passengers** booking tickets. The airlines said they will be updating their systems to provide additional gender options other than 'male' or 'female'. The new options for travel will start June 1, although the decision when to roll it out is left up to individual airlines.
- **Good news for Starbucks fans!** The company has confirmed much-anticipated changes to its rewards program. The new program **starts on April 16**, and it changes the flat-rate reward system to a new tiered structure in which customers can spend their points, or Starbucks Stars. [Details here](#).
- A Virgin Atlantic Boeing 787-9 flight from Los Angeles to London reached **an eye-popping 801 mph** Feb. 18---35,000 feet over Pennsylvania. [Read this](#) to learn how it happened.
- Tech writer and [Joe Brancatelli Newsletter](#) regular contributor **Phil Baker** educates us about a diverse **collection of products**, from a multi-device charger to a new line of wallets. Read Phil's column [here](#).
- Have you ever wondered which frequent flyer program has the best award rates, specifically for the destinations you are interested in? The Milez.biz engine allows you to **calculate and compare flight redemption rates of different frequent flyer programs**. Milez.biz is the only air miles calculator that allows you to compare awards across multiple frequent flyer programs. Check it out [here](#).
- **Are you looking for fitness options on the road?** Here are several:
 - [Gym & Fitness Club Finder](#)
 - [Golf Course Finder](#)
 - [Pilates Studios](#)
 - [Yoga Finder](#)
 - [Spas at the Airport](#)
- For decades, researchers studied **how eating patterns could help or hinder jet lag**. One study was found to be the most conclusive of all. So much so, it's been widely used by CIA operatives, as well as the US Army, Navy and presidents – not to mention a-listers from your favorite movies. Here's a breakdown of the [Argonne anti jet lag diet](#) developed by Charles Ehret, and the [simplified update it received](#) from Dr. Clifford B. Saper of the Beth Israel Medical Center in Boston.
- Southwest Airlines has **partnered with Netflix** to show "**The Kindness Diaries**," a series that documents and rewards the kindness of strangers, on its inflight entertainment system.

BURKHALTER TOURS

From one coast of North America to the other, this month's tours showcase the breath-taking beauty and fascinating history of both. Your challenge: deciding which one to choose! You'll find the links below for both brochures---call or email our Burkhalter Tours team for more information!

JULY ALASKA YUKON

July 12 - 24, 2019

This exceptional itinerary takes you deep into the Alaska wilderness where in just 13 days you will enjoy double-night stays at both Denali National Park and colorful Dawson City, experience the heart of the Yukon's wild frontier and the center of the famed Klondike Gold Rush. Ride the domed McKinley Explorer rail car and roll through Alaska's wildly beautiful interior, spend a day cruising stunning Glacier Bay National Park, immerse yourself in onboard activities---Alaska lectures by an onboard naturalist and so much more! The tour is the perfect balance between Alaska's Great Land's must-see and seldom-seen wonders, all combined with an elegant four-night Holland America cruise!

From **\$4,477** double per person, including round trip air from Chicago with included pickup from Madison, luxury McKinley Explorer Domed Rail Car from Anchorage to Denali, two nights Denali National Park with 6-8 hour Tundra Wilderness Tour, Klondike Spirit Yukon River cruise, White Pass and Yukon Route Railroad to Skagway, 4 night Inside Passage cruise on Holland America's ms Volendam, \$75 per cabin onboard spending credit, and SO much more! Look for trip and brochure details [here](#), call any Burkhalter office or e-mail [Burkhalter Tours](#). Ask us about Specials!

NOVA SCOTIA and the CANADIAN MARITIMES

August 14 - 22, 2019

This is a wonderful opportunity---and a perfect time of the year---to immerse yourself in a beautiful east coast Maritime province! You'll travel through Prince Edward Island National Park with its varied landscapes and wildlife along the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Visit the College of Piping to learn about traditional Celtic music. Tour Cavendish and the Green Gables Farmhouse and Museum, the setting of Lucy Maud Montgomery's popular novel, Anne of Green Gables. With two-night stays in scenic maritime locations, other highlights include the Alexander Graham Bell National Museum, Peggy's Cove, a Halifax city tour, the spectacular landscapes along the historic Cabot Trail---one of the most spectacular highways in North America, a lobster dinner and lots more!

\$3,675 including roundtrip air from Chicago, (**Cash Discount Price: \$3,517**), 8 nights first-class accommodations, several meals: admissions and extensive sightseeing per itinerary, Professional tour director & expert local guides, deluxe motorcoach transportation on tour, and lots more. Look for trip and brochure details [here](#), call any Burkhalter office or e-mail [Burkhalter Tours](#).

BURKHALTER TRAVEL COMPANIES OFFICE LOCATIONS

Madison West

6501 Mineral Point Road
608-833-5200/800-556-9286

Fitchburg

3050 Cahill Main
608-441-0151/888-522-4269

Stoughton

Chalet Travel, 226 S. Forrest
608-873-8133/800-733-6970

Madison East

615A North Sherman Avenue
608-241-7500/800-414-7166

Prairie du Sac

180 Washington Street
608-643-4599/800-242-8457

Brookfield

Olson Travel, 200 S. Executive Dr.
Suite 101
262-782-0110/800-847-5921

Oregon

763 N. Main Street
608-835-8474/800-537-0419

Baraboo

141 Third Avenue
608-356-4999/800-660-8359

Dubuque IA

Travel Headquarters, 2095 JFK Rd
563-588-3456/800-383-0563

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