

## BURKHALTER TRAVEL NEWS: MARCH 2020

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## LATEST NEWS

- The World Health Organization declared that **the Wuhan coronavirus outbreak is a global health emergency**, acknowledging that the disease now represents a risk beyond China, where it emerged last month. The **US State Department raised the travel warning for China to Level 4**, the highest, which means **Do Not Travel to China**. See **CDC prevention recommendations [here](#)**.
- **American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, and United Airlines have suspended all flights between the U.S. and mainland China**, after originally limiting service due to the coronavirus outbreak. Due to decreasing demand, flights to other highly impacted countries such as South Korea, Iran, and Milan have also been cancelled by the airlines.
- Flight cancellations and changes to airline policies about change fees is changing hour by hour. Here's one of **[the latest breakdown](#)** of what airlines are offering in waived fees to help you change your plans now or in the future.
- Along with flight suspensions, **airport passenger screenings for virus symptoms are increasing**. Airlines recommend that travelers **arrive at airports earlier than usual**, as new enhanced screenings will apply to tens of thousands of travelers a day. According to the **San Francisco Chronicle**, San Francisco International Airport passengers said they waited hours to get through immigration due to the new sweeping restrictions.
- **Air Italy closed its doors on February 25**, two years after the brand was launched following an investment by Qatar Airways. The Milan-based carrier's flights were "operated by other carriers" at their scheduled times through February 25, with its first domestic departures and those from the Maldives (MLE) and Dakar, Senegal (DSS) on February 26 being its last flights. According to Air Italy's website, its U.S. flights to Miami (MIA) and New York John F. Kennedy (JFK) from Milan Malpensa (MXP) ended February 25.
- **Pay attention to this** if you're holding a lot of **Marriot reward points**: Twenty two percent of Marriott hotels **increased their award prices on March 4**. (Only seven percent went down). This article from The Points Guy details a long list of properties by location that are moving out of reach of current point levels. Look for it **[here](#)**.

## TOOLS, TIPS AND TECHNOLOGY

- Learning a new language from the ground up is an admirable goal, but sometimes you just need enough to get by. The suitably named **Travel Phrasebook** ([Android](#), [iOS](#)) features commonly used phrases for 18 languages, categorized by scenario: greetings, dining, emergency, and more. When you tap on the phrase you need, the app will speak it aloud for you so you don't have to worry about nailing the accent perfectly. There's an ad-supported version with a handful of common phrases. You can pay \$5 to unlock the entire phrase list for one language, or \$20 for everything.
- **Starbucks alert!** Starbucks and airport supplier HMSHost will no longer have an exclusive agreement for U.S. airport locations. This means that HMSHost can introduce more local coffee options at airports, and Starbucks is said to be exploring innovations that "move with the crowds," such as pop-ups near gate locations during peak arrival and departure times.
- Travelmole reports that **Eurostar will upgrade its London to Amsterdam and Rotterdam services to operate direct high-speed trains in both directions beginning late spring**. Tickets for the direct return journeys went on sale on February 11 with fares starting at about \$38 each way. Eurostar launched its London to Amsterdam and Rotterdam service in 2018, but currently there is no direct return service, requiring passengers to connect in Brussels. Direct trains from Amsterdam to London will start on April 30 and there will be a direct service from Rotterdam to London beginning May 18.
- **Could a taxi be cheaper than Uber** for a ride from **John F Kennedy International to Manhattan**? This traveler says "Yes!" Details [here](#).
- **It's a fact:** Your visas expire with your passport — even if your visas are still valid. The only countries that allow you to travel with both your new passport and old passport containing your still-valid visa, as long as your identifying information hasn't changed, are China, India, Saudi Arabia, and Brazil. There is no way to transfer a valid visa from your old passport to your new passport. **Another fact?** The last two blank pages of the U.S. passport are *not* qualifying visa pages. Make sure that you have an empty page with "visa" at the top. You'll want to renew your passport before those visa pages are gone. And keep in mind that many countries require that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your arrival date.
- Reuters reports that **airlines are scrambling to book time in 737 MAX training facilities** as far afield as Fiji, Iceland and Panama, after Boeing recommended pilots be trained in one of the few simulators replicating the latest model. That means thousands of pilots from more than 54 airlines need to squeeze into about three dozen 737 MAX simulators around the world before they can fly the plane.
- Travel writer **Chris McGinnis** wants to **educate you about germs and avoiding them** when you travel. Look for his advice [here](#).

# AIRLINE UPDATES

## ALASKA AIRLINES

- Alaska Airlines launched a new program that allows frequent flyer members to earn miles with their Mileage Plan program when flying airlines from all over the world. The program launched March 1. Check it out [here](#).
- Alaska Airlines will add a **fourth daily flight between Fresno and San Diego** in May 2020. The airline will also increase service capacity by deploying one of its own larger planes on some of its flights from Seattle to Fresno and Missoula, Mont.
- Do you have an **Alaska Airlines Visa card**? Here's [useful information](#) about how to use the companion fare.

## AMERICAN AIRLINES

- **Heading to South America on American Airlines?** The carrier has [changed its baggage policy](#) so that main cabin travelers can no longer check two bags for free. Instead, passengers headed to South American destinations (except for Ecuador, Guyana and Colombia) will now face a \$65 fee for the second checked bag. Premium economy passengers will still get two bags free, and all economy flyers will get one checked bag free (except for basic economy ticket purchasers, who will pay \$45 for the first bag and \$65 for the second).
- American has reached a **tentative collective bargaining agreement** with the union representing its more than **30,000 mechanics and maintenance workers**. If the \$4.2 billion agreement is ratified by the Transport Workers Union of America (TWU-IAM) membership, it would end a contentious negotiating process that has taken more than four years and eventually made its way into the court system.
- **American Airlines** is adding flights **on two routes to Cleveland** that United Airlines is cutting this spring. The Oneworld alliance carrier will add a fourth daily flight between Cleveland Hopkins International Airport (CLE) and Washington Reagan National (DCA) on June 4. The same day, American will shift two of its three existing Washington National flights, as well as its four daily New York LaGuardia (LGA) flights to either Bombardier CRJ700 or Embraer E175 jets — both have first class and economy cabins — from smaller all-economy Embraer ERJ-140s.
- American and **Brazilian carrier Gol** have reached a reciprocal code-sharing agreement giving American a new partner in Latin America after its planned joint business agreement with LATAM fell through. The agreement, pending regulatory approval, would give flyers on American connections to 53 Gol flights.
- **American AAdvantage** has dropped the \$75 close-in booking fee on awards. But watch for it to reappear in a different form: higher award prices within 21 days of departure.

## DELTA AIR LINES

- **One of the things that make Delta credit cards unique** is that they can be **used to earn status**. Delta lets you spend your way towards status, and in theory, you could even earn top tier status with Delta exclusively through credit card spending. Many [changes were made to Delta Amex cards](#) early in 2020, including changes to earning status through credit card spending. (Note: The link will take you to lots of details about the changes.)
- **Delta has placed orders for up to 200 Airbus A321neos** for delivery starting by the end of this year, and it said recently that those planes will feature a [new first-class seat](#). Its most notable feature is a new wraparound headrest design that Delta says will provide more privacy and easier sleeping. The seats will also provide 25 percent more tray table space and three times more storage volume than comparable A321s in Delta's fleet. Other new touches include memory foam seat cushions, customer-facing power ports and large seatback video screens. The new A321neos will have 20 seats in first class, 42 in Comfort+ and 132 in the main cabin.
- Delta employees have won the fight to **get the airline to redesign its 'toxic' uniforms**. Since the uniforms were launched in 2018, workers complained about a variety of health problems. Flight attendants and other workers sued maker Lands' End last year alleging issues such as skin blisters, rashes, blurred vision and migraine. The airline conducted tests on the material and deemed them safe but separate tests organized by workers themselves found 'chemicals and heavy metals far in excess of industry accepted safe levels for garments.' The airline still maintains the uniforms are safe but is 'going back to the drawing board' with a new design.

## SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

- Southwest Airlines recently launched **four-times-a-day flights between Honolulu and Hilo on The Big Island**. Daily service between **Kailua-Kona and Maui** also launched, along with alternating daily service **from Kailua-Kona to San Jose and Oakland, CA**.
- Southwest has added **Valentine's Day themed movies** and other new releases to its complimentary in-flight entertainment options. **For the month of February**, Casablanca; Crazy, Stupid Love; Definitely, Maybe; and The Notebook will be available on Wi-Fi enabled aircraft.
- Southwest Airlines **posted this on Oscars Sunday**: “And the Best Performance in an Aisle Seat goes to.... \*opens envelope\* .... “The Passenger who pretended to be on a phone call during boarding so nobody would take the middle seat.” \*applause\*”

## UNITED AIRLINES

- What do you do when you want to hire 10,000 pilots over the next decade? United is meeting the challenge by buying its own flight academy to speed up training. The academy, located in Phoenix, is expected to produce 300 graduates its first full year.

- Gary Leff of View from the Wing reports that United Airlines, a founding member of the Star Alliance, has **limited Star Alliance Gold access to lounges across much of its network to those who are flying Business Class.**
- **United Airlines** is promoting flights between **Washington/National** and **Newark** as a "shuttle service." Effective March 29, United is scheduling **13 daily roundtrips** between the two airports. Ten roundtrips will operate with United's unique 50-seat [CRJ-550 regional jets](#).

## INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

- **South African Airways is making substantial route cuts** as it winds its way through a bankruptcy and restructuring. The carrier's two U.S. routes -- Johannesburg-New York and Johannesburg-Washington Dulles via Accra, Ghana -- were spared. SAA will continue transoceanic service from Johannesburg to Frankfurt, London Heathrow and Perth, Australia. Flights to Hong Kong, Munich, Sao Paulo and Guangzhou will be terminated. The carrier also will cancel numerous routes within Africa as well as the majority of its domestic flights. SAA will continue to fly from Johannesburg to Cape Town at reduced levels, but will discontinue flights to Durban, East London and Port Elizabeth on Feb. 29. Going forward, SAA will rely on its discount subsidiary Mango to replace the canceled domestic routes.
- Star Alliance carrier **All Nippon Airways** is moving around flights at **Haneda**, the airport closest to downtown Tokyo. **Effective March 29**, the airline's flights to six North American gateways--New York/Kennedy, Washington/Dulles, Los Angeles, Houston/Intercontinental, Vancouver and Seattle--will operate from Terminal 2. Terminal 3 will service flights from Chicago, San Francisco, San Jose and Honolulu.
- **Passengers flying British Airways can avoid long lines** by checking their luggage the night before the flight. At London Heathrow Terminal 5 and London Gatwick, passengers must be flying before 1:00 pm the following day to use the service. Travelers can head to the airport to surrender their bag between 4:00 pm and 10:00 pm the day before. The service is also available at Edinburgh, but there are differences. There, travelers need to be flying the following day before 9:30 am. The window of opportunity at Edinburgh the day before is substantial-- 4:00 am to 10:00 pm except Saturday, where the option ends at 6:00 pm.

## AIRPORT NEWS

- The final modernization of **Phoenix Sky Harbor Terminal 3** is complete. United Airlines, Air Canada, Alaska Airlines and commuter carrier Boutique Air all move to Terminal 3 from Terminal 2, which will eventually be closed. **The downside:** United Airlines travelers who will no longer have access to a United Club.
- **The Indianapolis Airport** has a newly built hotel. A 240-room branch of **Marriott's Delta Hotels** has opened seven miles from the airport and eight miles from downtown.....making it a "sort of"

airport hotel? There *is* shuttle service.

- **Minneapolis/St. Paul** has a fancy new bar and restaurant. **The Cocktail Room**, located in **Concourse A of Terminal 1**, is a collaboration between airport-food giant HMSHost and Tattersall Distilling, a Minneapolis craft operation that makes vodka, whiskey, gin, brandy and liqueurs.
- It looks like **the lounge experience for paid Air Canada business class passengers in Vancouver is about to get much better. The carrier plans to open a Signature Suite in Vancouver around mid-March 2020** on top of their existing international Maple Leaf Lounge, by gate 52 in Pier D. **Who's allowed?** "Long haul" only includes intercontinental flights; "Paid" business class only includes those paying cash for tickets, not those redeeming miles or upgrading. There's no elite status that will get you in, and passengers on Star Alliance partner airlines also don't get access.
- The **Plaza Premium Group** plans to open its first **independent lounge at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport** this spring, with a second to follow later in the year. The lounge, which will offer food, showers and spa services, will be marketed to individual "walk ups" as well as through partnerships with airlines and financial services companies.
- **Not everyone knows this about the Austin Airport: There's an outdoor deck anyone can use.** The Salt Lick serves beer to go, and you can pick up a sandwich---BBQ is tops here---and sit upstairs on an outdoor picnic bench [overlooking airport operations](#). Follow the signs to the Delta Sky Club.
- **Paine Field**, opened last year to serve travelers in North Seattle, loses one carrier and gains one. **United Airlines** is ending flights to its **San Francisco** hub next month. **Alaska Airlines**, the dominant carrier at Paine, will add a daily flight from Paine to **Boise**, Idaho. Embraer 175 flights begin June 18.

## HOTEL UPDATES

- **Game company Atari is planning to build video game hotels** in Phoenix, Austin, Chicago, Denver, Las Vegas, San Francisco, San Jose, and Seattle, offering "retro favorites as well as modern touches," including both virtual and augmented reality games, an eSports studio, and Atari gaming centers in addition to traditional meeting spaces, food and beverage outlets and a gym. In a nod to modern work-play trends there will be co-working spaces - and even a movie theater.
- **Marriott International** announced the opening of a new **Marriott hotel** and a **refurbished Sheraton hotel** at **Frankfurt Airport** that is located directly in Terminal 1. The renovated Sheraton has 779 rooms and the new Marriott has 233.
- **Accor Hotels** says it is following **Marriott, Hyatt** and **InterContinental** and eliminating single-use bathroom amenities. The switchover at the 5,000-property chain, which operates brands such as **Fairmont, Sofitel, Novotel, Raffles** and **Ibis**, will be complete by the end of the year.

- **San Jose** has a new airport hotel. A 165-room Hyatt House opened across US 101 from the airport grounds. Located on North 1st Street, the hotel offers a free airport shuttle.
- **Add this to your Bucket List: Rosewood Little Dix Bay**, one of the Caribbean's original grande dames, **has reopened** after a four-year closure. As Travel + Leisure reports, Little Dix Bay opened in 1964, the pet project of billionaire philanthropist Laurance Rockefeller, who first spotted this half-mile stretch of sand while sailing the British Virgin Islands. Rockefeller bought the beach - and the surrounding 500 acres - turning the estate into one of his famously low-footprint, low-tech Rockresorts. The resort, managed by Rosewood since 1993, closed for a much-needed renovation in 2016. Then Hurricanes Irma and Maria tore through the British Virgin Islands, setting the reopening back further. Two hundred million dollars later, Little Dix has returned, its rustic-luxe balance intact.

## NEW THIS MONTH: VACATION TRAVEL TIPS

- Paris-based **Nannybag** is a **collaborative luggage storage network** that allows travelers to entrust their belongings to local hotels and stores. Since launching in 2016, the company has grown to more than 4,000 partner hotels in 30 countries and 300 cities. Nannybag has stored more than one million pieces of luggage. They recently were awarded about \$2 million in new funding which will be used to launch its new door-to-door service where luggage will be collected from a user's address of choice and delivered to any location in the world. Nannybag hopes to introduce the service soon on its website. Check them out [here](#).
- Mark your calendar: **Mothers Day** is **May 10 this year**. Then, consider this: **Momcations** are becoming **"A Thing."** Hotels and tour operators across the globe are rolling out vacation packages designed specifically to give women a break from their children and spouses/partners/significant others. Contact your Burkhalter leisure agent for suggestions and help creating the perfect gift for yourself or the special "Mom" in your life. Need ideas? Check out the great possibilities at our [Burkhalter website](#).
- **A cautionary tale** (shared by Chris Elliot, columnist and Travel Advocate): Trevor Seamon made a devastating passport mistake during the recent holidays, and it ruined his family's dream vacation. In the hubbub of preparation for their journey to Italy, Trevor neglected to check the validity of their passports. (Italy requires that your passport be valid for at least three months following your **departure** from Italy). That error led the Seamons to arrive at the airport with passports expiring within 90 days — invalid for travel. Denied boarding, they missed their long-anticipated trip and were forced to return home. **Our advice:** Check your and family passports *well* in advance of a planned departure date. And know the rules for your destination.

## BURKHALTER TRAVEL SPECIALS

*There are a couple of travel quotes that we especially like: “Traveling – It leaves you speechless, then turns you into a story teller” (Iban Battuta) and “Oh the places you’ll go!” (Dr. Seuss). Thoughts like these define why our Burkhalter Travel advisors enjoy the process of helping create extraordinary experiences, fine-tuning the smallest details that free our travelers to marvel at all those places they’ll go, and the stories they’ll share when they return home.*

### Experience the Canadian Rockies - **Book now!**

It’s no surprise that the Canadian Rockies continuously rank as one of the top travel destinations in the world. From the awe-inspiring vistas of towering snow-capped mountains and sparkling lakes to the incredible wildlife and friendly Canadian hospitality, there’s simply no better way to experience this unique part of the world than by train. Traveling aboard the Rocky Mountaineer, well-known for its award-winning service, custom-designed, glass-domed railcars with magnificent panoramic views, locally inspired cuisine---it’s a picture-perfect experience! You’ll sight-see by day and sleep in a beautiful hotel at night! Five, eight and twelve night packages are available on various dates from April to October. **Get up to 2 free perks per couple—ask for details! [Contact us](#)** today for more about this memory-making experience! Look for information [here](#) and then click [here](#) to call or email any of our offices!

### New Zealand - North Island, South Island – **or Both!**

Did you know that New Zealand is one of the first countries to see the sun? That in itself is a reason to go! And there’s so much more to see and do: New Zealand is perfect for nature lovers, foodies, adventurers, romantics, cultural explorers and active travelers. You’ll discover beautiful, rugged, breathtaking scenery — from glaciers to tranquil lakes, magnificent gorges, mountains, rolling hillsides and miles of splendid coastline in this compact country’s north and south islands. Explore a national park, sip on local wines or jump out of a plane. There are endless choices for first-time visitors and unique, off-the-beaten-path itineraries for repeat guests. [Contact us](#) today for details. Look for more information [here](#) and then click [here](#) to call or email any of our offices!

### Discover Portugal and Spain - **Book by March 31 and save!**

This SITA tour offers the best of Portugal and Spain! Portugal is a beautiful country, full of life, spectacular beauty, splendid architecture, fascinating history and more UNESCO World Heritage sites per capita than any other country. Spain wows visitors with historic cities, stunning coastlines and charming, fun-loving people. Spend five days in Portugal visiting Porto, where you’ll sample famous “port wine,” travel to Fatima with its impressive Basilica and on to beautiful Lisbon. Then visit Cordoba, Seville, Costa del Sol, Granada and Toledo, ending in historic Madrid. [Contact us](#) today for details. Look for more information [here](#) and then click [here](#) to call or email any of our offices!



## 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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