

BURKHALTER TRAVEL NEWS: AUGUST 2019

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LATEST NEWS

- **Hong Kong protests** that were sparked two months ago moved from city streets to **Hong Kong International Airport/HKG** earlier this week, delaying, then shutting down all flights. As of Wednesday August 14, flights were operating, with tighter check-in procedures in place. Passports and travel documents are closely scrutinized before passengers are allowed access to departure halls. Read the U.S. Hong Kong Travel Advisory [here](#).
- There are **new U.S. passport photo rules**. Check them out [here](#).
- **Global grounding of the Boeing 737 MAX continues**. Speculation on lifting the ban ranges from “sometime in the fourth quarter” to “not until early next year.” A number of carriers have cut back on flights to compensate for lowered capacity. Southwest is pulling it flights out of Newark to redeploy the aircraft in other markets, including more lucrative Hawaii.
- National weather service **NOAA** is now expecting **10-17 named storms this summer** (winds of 39 mph or greater), with 5 to 9 of them becoming hurricanes (winds of 74 mph or greater), including 2 to 4 major hurricanes (winds of 111 mph or greater). This updated outlook is for the entire six-month hurricane season, which ends November 30.
- The **U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)** has released its final statement on its **enforcement priorities regarding service animals on flights**, following a couple of years in which airlines have updated their policies on emotional support and service animals following a series of high-profile, in-flight incidents. The statement provides guidance about the DOT’s interpretation and enforcement of the existing service animal rules. The support and service animal policies for the “big three” airlines, all of whom have issued updates over the past few years, are available here: [American Airlines](#); [Delta](#); [United Airlines](#). The full DOT statement is available [here](#).
- In Europe, **Ireland’s low-cost carrier Ryanair** pilots are planning to strike for 48 hours, starting on August 22, and again on September 2 until September 4 unless talks between the airline and the union are successful in resolving issues. The strike dates were announced after the British Airline Pilots’ Association/BALPA said 80 percent of those who voted in a ballot were in favor of industrial action, based on a turnout of 72%.

AIRLINE UPDATES

ALASKA AIRLINES

- The **Alaska Airlines Mileage Plan** already has 17 partners, part of Alaska's "Switzerland strategy" of aligning with airlines, not airline alliances. It added **Aer Lingus** as a code-share partner last year and now it also allows award redemptions on the Dublin-based carrier. Effective immediately, coach awards on Aer Lingus start at 30,000 miles each way. Business class awards start at 60,000 miles each way. Intra-Europe coach travel on Aer Lingus starts at 8,000 miles. Complete details are [here](#). Aer Lingus last year launched service to Alaska Air's Sea-Tac hub.

AMERICAN AIRLINES

- American Airlines has raised its trans-Atlantic capacity by 5.2 percent after drastically reducing underutilized routes to Latin American and Asia. The carrier has debuted summer-season service from various U.S. cities to Berlin, Italy, Croatia, London, Athens and more, and it will start five trans-Atlantic routes next summer. Ask your Burkhalter agent for details.
- American Airlines says it's dropping service to **Bolivia**, joining several other international carriers that have recently left. The airline says the three daily flights to Miami will halt on November 27. Airline spokesperson Luren Ruotolo says the step was taken for commercial reasons, to assure the company's routes are profitable in a competitive market. Most visitors arriving by air now must transfer in Lima, Peru.
- American is launching flights to **Africa** for the first time. The airline, which made the announcement as part of the release of its summer 2020 international schedule, will begin operating flights from **Philadelphia** to **Casablanca, Morocco**, starting June 4, 2020. The new Morocco flight will mark the airline's first entrance into Africa, and it will make it the only U.S. carrier with nonstop service to Casablanca, American said. The flight will be operated three times per week on a Boeing 757.
- **American Airlines** has expanded its Five Star Service to four additional airports. The new service began August 1 at **Austin-Bergstrom International Airport/AUS** in Texas, **Nashville International Airport/BNA** in Tennessee and **Newark Liberty International Airport/EWR** in New Jersey, followed by a recent rollout at **Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport/ATL**. The service is a personalized airport experience available to customers traveling in a premium cabin that offers priority check-in, expedited security screening, access to the Admirals Club, an escort to their gate and other customizable experiences tailored to their interests.

DELTA AIR LINES

- Delta Air Lines has received final federal approval to launch [flights from Atlanta to Tokyo's Haneda Airport](#), which will replace its service to Tokyo Narita. The new Atlanta-Haneda flights will launch in March 2020, the start of Delta's summer schedule, on Boeing 777-200ER jets.
- Delta Air Lines is set to get the green light for an upgraded **three-way transatlantic joint venture with Air France-KLM and Virgin Atlantic**. U.S. transportation secretary Elaine Chao gave tentative approval to the new joint venture which would replace two previous separate agreements with Air France-KLM and with Virgin. The airlines say the joint business arrangement will offer 'the most comprehensive route network, convenient flight schedules, competitive fares and reciprocal frequent flyer benefits.'
- In onboard entertainment news, Delta announced plans to add a number of **Hulu** shows to its offerings, including **The Handmaid's Tale**, **The Act** and the **Fyre Fraud** documentary. The airline reports it also recently equipped its 700th aircraft with in-flight entertainment screens.
- Flying with a bike just got a lot less expensive for Delta Airlines travelers. The company announced that they have **eliminated additional fees for bikes, as well as all oversized sports gear**. "Delta customers traveling with surfboards, bicycles, golf clubs, scuba gear and other large-sized sporting equipment will now be allowed to check them as part of their standard baggage allowance." The airline eliminated the \$150 specialty sports bag fee previously charged for these items, effective for travel worldwide on tickets purchased beginning July 17, 2019. Travelers will instead pay a first, second or third checked bag fee according to the fare rules associated with their booking and/or SkyMiles Medallion status.

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

- Southwest Airlines said it will **exit the Newark Airport market in November**. Lacking planes because of the prolonged Boeing 737 MAX grounding, Southwest said it is ceasing service from weak-performing Newark Liberty International airport, where it had up to 20 daily departures, to consolidate its New York City service at nearby LaGuardia and focus growth on Hawaii. The airline says it's not abandoning the New York Metro area, however, and will continue to fly to LaGuardia and Islip, a regional Long Island airport east of Kennedy.
- Southwest is set to further expand its service to Hawaii. The airline will "provide details of the next phases of Hawaii flying in the coming weeks and months, as we put new flights out for sale," said Gary Kelly, board chairman and chief executive officer.
- Southwest Airlines offered a new Human trafficking awareness curriculum for employees, stating statistics suggest that a large percentage of victims are transported via airplane during some portion of their experience. Tips on how to identify Human Trafficking, and suggested actions that should be taken, if necessary, are part of the training.

UNITED AIRLINES

- United Airlines **has canceled its first route** as a result of the ongoing grounding of Boeing's 737 MAX. The carrier's said its daily service from **Chicago to Leon, Mexico** will be suspended beginning September 2019. United has 14 of the aircraft in its fleet.
- **To increase capacity**, United is adding 19 used Boeing 737-700 aircraft. They plan to take delivery in December.
- United Airlines is **increasing the number of Polaris seats** available on flights between Newark Liberty International Airport and London's Heathrow Airport, and it expects to offer at least five daily nonstop flights with the premium seats by September.
- United is testing a service that will **allow domestic first-class passengers to pre-order inflight meals**. Passengers who are selected to participate in the test will receive emails directing them to a website where they can select meals five days and up to 24 hours before their flights.
- A luxury **United Club recently opened in Raleigh-Durham International Airport**, offering area favorites like biscuits and Carolina-style barbecue. The luxury club is the first new location in more than 15 years.
- United is making good on its promise to **help travelers with tough flight connections** by further expanding its ConnectionSaver Tool to even more airports around the country. Available through the United Airlines smartphone app, ConnectionSaver sends users personalized text messages with directions to the gate for their connecting flight, information about expected travel time between the two gates, nearby amenities, and will even hold the flight for a few minutes for members who need a little extra time.

INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

- **Air France** will introduce **RFID bag tracking technology at Paris-Charles de Gaulle airport** beginning in 2020 to improve efficiency and give passengers more information about their luggage. The French carrier has struck a deal with Paris Aeroport to introduce tags equipped with radio frequency identification (RFID) chips to about 8 million pieces of baggage a year. The airline says the technology will gradually be deployed to its other airports. In addition to addressing the growing demand by passengers to know where their bags are, the companies say the tags will improve baggage identification and tracking.
- **Hong Kong Airlines** will suspend flights between its **Hong Kong hub and San Francisco/SFO** after October 4, 2019. For the last year and a half, the carrier brought fresh competition to the busy SFO-HKG route, and fares dropped precipitously. With it ending, travelers could see airfares between SFO and Hong Kong increase from record lows.

- **Qantas** is launching new flights that will help travelers significantly cut down their travel time between the U.S. and Australia. The Australian carrier has begun ticket sales for **new nonstop routes to Brisbane from Chicago and San Francisco**. The listed flight time for the Chicago to Brisbane flight is 17 hours, 20 minutes, compared to the current 20-hour-plus routes with stops. The new schedule is set to launch February 9, 2020, under the flight numbers QF85/86. **Ask your Burkhalter agent for details**
- **Lufthansa** will split its A380 fleet evenly between **Munich and Frankfurt** beginning the summer of 2020, operating the superjumbo from the Bavarian city to two new destinations. The addition of two A380s will increase the fleet based in Munich to seven, matching the seven Lufthansa superjumbos based in Frankfurt. The new A380 routes include **Boston and San Francisco** year-round.
- **British Airways** has begun adding schedules that include **flights with its new business class**. **Newark** flights get the new cabin beginning January 21; **Chicago** launches a week later and **Boston** a week after that. **Seattle** schedules start in January, then **Philadelphia** in March.
- Beginning May 4, 2020, **Lufthansa** will launch five weekly flights between Munich and Detroit that will complement Lufthansa's existing Frankfurt to Detroit flight. The flights will operate on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.
- **Cathay Pacific** records passengers via closed-circuit video surveillance on aircraft and in its airport lounges. The Hong Kong-based carrier revealed the existence of the cameras in its customer privacy policy, which it updated online on July 23. In a statement, Cathay spokeswoman Julie Jarratt said the cameras are used to protect customers and frontline staff. On aircraft, the lone camera is positioned near the cockpit door for security purposes.
- **Air Italy** has signed Special Prorate Agreements with Finnair and El Al. The interline agreements enable passengers to buy tickets across multiple legs on both carriers.
- **Mexican low-cost carrier Interjet** has joined TSA's Pre-Check program.
- **Air France** plans to operate 11 weekly flights from **Washington/Dulles** to **Paris/CDG**—an increase from the current seven—beginning on October 28.

AIRPORT NEWS

- Chicago's Midway International ranks as the country's worst airport, and San Diego International Airport is the best, according to a recent study. Airports in Phoenix; Portland, Ore.; Atlanta and Sacramento also rated high, while Detroit and Orlando, Fort Lauderdale and the Southwest Florida airports slipped toward the bottom of the list.

- For several years in the Burkhalter Travel News we've shared updates of construction "progress" at the **Berlin Brandenburg Airport**, a saga that began in June 2012 when the then-new facility was weeks away from opening. That's when German authorities found fault with the fire-suppression systems. Then another problem and another and another. Seven years later, the airport opening is still at least a year away and the BBC reports that [there were actually 550,000 faults](#) turned up by various regulatory bodies. The latest update reveals that the airport, which now has a second terminal too, [will open "on schedule" in October, 2020](#).
- Airports never seem to run out of lines. Security lines, restrooms lines, and even quick-service restaurants can have anxiety-inducing waits. One Houston company is working to make that sandwich a true grab-and-go experience. The **Grab app** (available on Google Play and the App Store) allows travelers to pre-order their food, and it recently raised a multi-million-dollar fundraising round to expand into additional airports. www.getgrab.com
- **Austin-Bergstrom International Airport/AUS** in Austin, Texas, is in the public testing phase of an autonomous transportation technology pilot. The airport's Easy Mile EZ10 driverless shuttle is available to transport passengers going between the Barbara Jordan Terminal and the rental car facility/ground transportation area. Operating on the upper level of Garage 1, the electric, driverless and ADA-compliant vehicle represents another mobility alternative for transporting travelers on the airport's campus.
- A \$1 billion project is adding a terminal with restaurants and 14 gates at **Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport** in Arlington, Va. Domes will serve as skylights, and extensive glass will offer views of Washington, D.C.
- American Express has rolled out **mobile check-in for Centurion lounges**. Platinum and Centurion card members can begin the check-in process up to 30 minutes prior to lounge arrival **using the "Find a Lounge" tool in the American Express app**. Card members still have to stand in line to show their photo ID and boarding pass at the desk when they arrive, so there are mixed thoughts about whether this new check-in option is really a time-saver.
- Tennessee's **Nashville International Airport** is in the midst of a major project to improve facilities and better serve travelers. In addition to a recently completed parking garage, the airport is adding a new ticketing counter and pedestrian plaza and also expanding the baggage claim area and Concourse D.
- Here's useful airport information for American and Delta travelers: You'll find **American Airlines Admirals Club** locations and details [here](#). Look for **Delta Sky Club** locations and amenities [here](#).
- **San Francisco International Airport** will become the first airport in the U.S. to **ban plastic, single-use water bottles** starting on Aug. 20 when restaurants, cafes, and vending machines will become water-bottle free zones.

HOTEL UPDATES

- **Marriott International** is launching **airport hotel shuttle tracking** through its app. Already in use at 15 hotels at four airports, with 200 hotels planned by the end of the year, travelers can watch a van icon move along its route and get an estimated arrival time at your stop, just like waiting for your Uber, Lyft or package delivery.
- The **Saint Kate Hotel** in **downtown Milwaukee** is carrying out its mission to serve as an art center and not just an art-friendly lodging site. Art-themed guest rooms, a drama theater, lectures, classes and an artist-in-residence studio are among the features of the 219-room property, which houses a satellite program of the Museum of Wisconsin Art.
- **DoubleTree by Hilton's** newest hotel is now open for business in **Chandler, Arizona** after the 160-room property underwent a comprehensive refurbishment program. Before Hilton stepped in, the hotel was independently operated under the name Chandler Southgate Hotel. The DoubleTree brand now has 10 other locations in Arizona spread throughout Flagstaff, Phoenix and Tucson.
- Another **new brand** is in the works **at Hilton**. No name has been disclosed but it will fit in the upscale segment and target urban markets. It's described as "a notch above Hilton Garden Inn for a more urban, mixed-use, higher-end development opportunity," according to the CEO who sees potential for 'hundreds' of locations globally.
- **In-room fitness amenities** ranging from exercise equipment to healthy snacks and meditation headbands are getting a workout from hotel operators in response to guests' desires and willingness to pay. A leading example is equipment-stocked **Five Feet to Fitness rooms**, launched by Hilton Hotels in recent years and carrying a \$45 surcharge.
- A hotel near **Seattle** has taken the **room-service robot** trend to a serious level, employing a machine named Hazel to **deliver marriage proposals with engagement rings**. The **Hotel Interurban** in **Tukwila, WA** adds a one-night stay, a bottle of champagne and a \$100 dining credit.
- **Marriott's invitation-only elite tier** is in the process of rolling out throughout the Marriott system. They say **Marriott Cobalt Elite** status is available exclusively through Marriott's CEO. (Marriott employees can allegedly nominate members, though they have to be approved by the CEO). Look for more details [here](#).
- The **Raffles Singapore** has reopened following an extensive, multiyear revitalization project. Restoration of the luxury property, opened as the first Raffles hotel back in 1887, began in February 2017. And yes, they still serve the Singapore Sling.

- [Sleepbox](#) is a new micro-hotel concept, recently opened at Washington Dulles with plans to expand to more airports soon. Travelers can rent a room either hourly or overnight. **Sleepbox is located airside in Concourse A, near gate A15. It's open 24/7. Priority Pass members receive a complimentary room for a one hour stay.** If members want to spend more time there, they can add an extra hour at the rate of \$24.

TOOLS, TIPS AND TECHNOLOGY

- **United is taking an equity stake in Clear**, a technology company that uses fingerprints and iris scans to verify a traveler's identity at security check points. United's investment will help Clear expand into some of the airline's largest hubs. Initial launches are slated for Newark Liberty International and Bush International in Houston. The company is also seeking approval to open lanes at O'Hare International.
- **Amtrak** plans to add a nonstop **Acela** weekday train between **New York Pennsylvania Station** and **Washington Union Station**. The once-daily roundtrips will be in addition to existing Acela trains that make other stops in the Northeast Corridor. The nonstop is due to launch on September 23 and make the New York-Washington run in about 2.5 hours, about 15 minutes faster than stopping trains.
- What's open, what's **closed on Labor Day**? Read [this](#)
- Even seasoned road warriors can **learn more about becoming a better world traveler**. There are plenty of sites and travel tools out there telling you what to do in a new destination. But what about what *NOT* to do? Dondoo is a first-of-its-kind search engine for travelers who want to avoid travel *faux pas*. The site is organized by region, country, state, city, and even airport. To find your destination of interest/concern, you can either search for it or scroll the interactive map. Check it out [here](#).
- [Google Lens](#), an image recognition technology which enables you to "search what you see," is essentially a way for users to point their phone at anything that catches their attention and look it up on Google. With five functions (Auto, Translate, Text, Shopping, and Dining) Lens is a useful and convenient tool. Android phone users can download the Google Lens app from the [Google Play Store](#). iPhone users can find Lens in the [Google app](#) for iOS.
- **What are your options** when a TSA agent says "NO way!" to something you'd planned on taking onboard? A company called **Airport Mailers** located at several airports can help you mail prohibited items rather than letting TSA confiscate them. Check out Travel + Leisure [here](#).

New This Month! **BURKHALTER TRAVEL SPECIALS**

As we experience evening temperatures that are a little less summer-like, and observe roadside sumac turning brilliant reds and oranges, it occurs to us that Fall, and then WINTER, will be here before we know it! (And who can forget the dreadful Winter of 2019?) The message is this: NOW is the time to book a getaway to a warm place with palm trees and beaches that will make you say "Ahhhhh....!"

Early Booking Sale – Funjet Vacations - Sale ends August 21!

There is no better way to start 2020 than with an unforgettable getaway and exclusive savings from Funjet Vacations and Burkhalter Travel during our Early Booking Sale. Picture this: You're starting the New Year relaxing beneath swaying palms on a soft sand beach, or snorkeling in brilliant blue waters, all while indulging at spectacular resorts! From countless tropical resorts in Mexico and the Caribbean---adults only or family-friendly---there is a perfect resort for you. Plus, with exclusive savings of up to 60 percent, AND additional amenities, there has never been a better time to book. To start your New Year in paradise, contact us today---**sale prices end August 21**--- for expert advice and exclusive savings for your Funjet Vacations tropical resort getaway. With exclusive savings like these, that beach you dreamed about last winter just got a lot easier to get to. Look for destination and resort options [here](#), and then click [here](#) to call or email any of our offices!

Beach Vacations – SO Many Choices! - Travel now to December 31, 2020

Whether you want to travel close to home or journey to far-distant lands, your Burkhalter agent can help you choose the perfect beach experience: Playa del Carmen, Cancun or Puerto Vallarta in **Mexico**; Destin, Naples or tucked-away Sanibel Island in **Florida**; Anguilla, British Virgin Islands or the Cayman Islands in the **Caribbean**; Maui, Oahu or Kauai in the **Hawaiian Islands**; or (add these to your bucket list, then go!) Bondi Beach, Byron Bay or Whitehaven Beach in **Australia**---every beach is unique, every grain of sand is one-of-a-kind. Our Burkhalter agents can help you decide, and they'll plan every detail. Look for more information [here](#) (be sure to mention Vacation Code: BEACH) and then click [here](#) to call or email any of our offices!

Family Vacations – Travel now to December 31, 2020 (but why wait?)

A well-planned family vacation ensures an escape from the hustle of everyday life, quality time together and exciting adventures. You've daydreamed long enough.....it's time to get away together and make memories. Whether the young ones are toddlers, teens or somewhere in between, your Burkhalter travel advisor can help you plan *all* the details---including special celebrations that might include other generations, mile-marker birthdays, a significant anniversary or an entire family reunion. It's the stuff memories are made of, and that's our specialty! Explore more [here](#) (mention Vacation Code: FAMILY), 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
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