

BURKHALTER TRAVEL NEWS: SEPTEMBER 2019

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LATEST NEWS

- If you are booked to fly to or from **San Francisco International Airport** between now and September 27 during a massive runway resurfacing project, it's likely that you'll face a flight delay or cancellation. Currently, the airport says that 400-500 flights per day have experienced delays or cancellations-- that's out of about 1,250 flight operations per day.
- The most recent **British Airways pilot strike** just ended, stranding thousands of passengers and upending the placement of aircraft. Issues are unresolved and **pilots plan to strike again on September 27**. British Airways has already canceled flights ahead of the next strike "to give passengers more certainty."
- **Heads up!** Multiple airlines have imposed **flight restrictions on MacBook Pros (and Apple laptops in general)** after Apple's voluntary recall of 15-inch MacBook Pros. The recall due to faulty batteries was followed by [bans and warnings](#) from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the **European Union Aviation Safety Agency**.
- **United Airlines** announced recently that effective immediately its **MileagePlus award miles will never expire** — giving members "a lifetime to apply their miles to flights, experiences, hotels, and more".
- **737 Max groundings continue**. **Southwest** has removed the aircraft from its schedule **through January 5**; **United** followed, delaying **through December 19**; **American**, through **December 3**. As we've seen since the original groundings, these dates could be pushed out even further.
- Because of an ongoing backlog in renewal applications from members of the Customs & Border Protection **Global Entry program**, the agency will allow member to **keep their benefits for 12 months after expiration instead of the previous six-month limit**. The extension of benefits is available **ONLY** to members who have applied for renewal prior to their expiration date.
- Some travelers **crossing the Chinese land border** from **Hong Kong** are **being asked to [unlock their smartphones](#)** so Chinese agents can examine chat messages and social media. There are also indications **China may be restricting travel** from **Hong Kong** to the **mainland**. The **U.S. Department of State** has updated its Hong Kong Travel Advisory. You'll find it [here](#).

AIRLINE UPDATES

ALASKA AIRLINES

- In late August, Alaska implemented some previously announced **cutbacks at Dallas Love Field, trimming San Francisco/SFO flights** from four a day to two, San Jose from three a day to two, and San Diego from two a day to one, with **plans to end all service on those three routes effective November 5**.
- Alaska Airlines recently **moved to Terminal C at Missouri's Kansas City International Airport**.
- Alaska Airlines is **adding another destination from Paine Field**, the reliever airport north of its Seattle-Tacoma hub. **Effective November 4**, it'll launch a daily EMB-175 roundtrip between Paine and **Spokane, Washington**. To accommodate the new route at slot-controlled Paine Field, Alaska says it'll **drop one of three daily flights to Los Angeles**.
- Alaska travelers who use their **airport lounges** have been surprised at **new signs at the bar**. "It's our pleasure to serve you. Please, no tipping."

AMERICAN AIRLINES

- American Airlines will **update its first-class cabins** on some short-haul aircraft with expanded leg room, power outlets, cup holders and other amenities. Don't look for anything similar in Economy; no changes are planned.
- Speaking of American's First Class cabins, **this is getting a lot of attention**: American is serving **chorizo hot dogs as International First Class Meals**. Apparently not all passengers are thrilled. A few reminded AA that "It's FIRST CLASS, not a ballpark!" and "This isn't a Costco food court!" American's response to the criticism? *"This has been flying onboard since 2017 and is popular with our First Class customers, consistently receiving high marks. This was designed by one of our former celebrity Chefs, Mark Sargeant, created around the time BubbleDogs in LHR was a craze."*
- American Airlines **retired its final McDonnell Douglas MD-80** recently, ending a 36-year run operating a plane affectionately called the Super 80. Most of American's 26 remaining MD-80s were slated to take their final flights to the **aircraft boneyard in Roswell, NM**.
- American has started using **facial recognition technology**, allowing passengers to board planes without a boarding pass. American said that the system, now in use in parts of Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, is opt-in and doesn't save the photos.

DELTA AIR LINES

- Delta recently announced the launch of **SkyWatch Daily Outlook**, a customer-focused version of the carrier's internal operational outlook. It will be **published each morning** at **delta.com** and the **Fly Delta app**. SkyWatch provides behind-the-scenes information directly from Delta staff at its Operations & Customer Center, providing customers with **added transparency into potential impacts to travel plans**. Weather and airport operations information will be displayed on the SkyWatch page which will be updated twice a day on weekdays and once a day Saturday through Sunday.
- **Delta has officially put their new U.S. to Tokyo Haneda flights up for sale**, departing from Atlanta, Detroit, Honolulu, Portland OR, Seattle, Los Angeles, and Minneapolis. This does NOT represent new capacity, but a shift from farther-out Narita. Ask your Burkhalter agent for details.
- According to The Points Guy, the great debate about **whether to recline your seat or not** is getting pushback from Delta Air Lines. They've been **testing a reduced seat recline** this summer on its fleet of 62 Airbus A320 jets. The goal: to see if passengers on shorter flights are able to do more work and can better watch seatback TVs. Now, Delta is expanding the smaller seat recline to its 91 Boeing 717 jets – planes that don't have TVs and are used for flights averaging about an hour. That includes routes such as Chicago to New York, Minneapolis/St. Paul to St. Louis and Atlanta to Panama City, Florida. In total, 153 of Delta's 904 mainline planes will now have **two fewer inches of recline in both coach and first class**.
- Delta is **enhancing its boarding process by expanding its use of facial recognition technology at four new airports**. Delta has been testing facial recognition boarding for over three years, and last year started using it in **Atlanta**. Since then, the process has been introduced at **Detroit, Los Angeles, Minneapolis and Salt Lake City**. The technology can shave two seconds off the boarding time per passenger. That doesn't sound like much, but for a fully loaded wide-body plane it ends up cutting nine minutes off the boarding time.
- **Delta Air Lines** and **Bombas**, a sock company, have a promotion going on during the month of September. Business class customers in Delta One cabins will receive a pair of Bombas dress socks and Bombas will donate 300,000 more pairs to charity.
- **San Juan**, Puerto Rico will get a weekly Boeing 737-800 Delta Air Lines flight from its **Detroit/Metro** hub beginning December 21.

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

- Southwest **will no longer offer nonstop flights** between the following destinations, effective January 6, 2020: Austin and San Francisco, Boston and Atlanta, Boston and Kansas City, **Boston and Milwaukee**, Columbus and Oakland, Dallas Love Field and Jacksonville, Dallas Love Field and Oklahoma City, Dallas Love Field and San Francisco, Fort Lauderdale and Jacksonville, Los Angeles and Cancun, Los Angeles and Omaha, Los Angeles and Pittsburgh, Los Angeles and Puerto Vallarta, New York LaGuardia and Orlando, Orlando and Oakland, Orlando and Sacramento, and

Orlando and San Jose. The airline will continue flying **one-stop service between these destinations**.

- Southwest's new Sacramento-Honolulu flights will operate daily, while Oakland to Kona on the Big Island and San Jose to Lihue on Kauai will each be offered four days a week. Oakland-Lihue and San Jose-Kona will operate three days a week, all using 737-800s. As for the new inter-island routes, Honolulu-Hilo and Honolulu-Lihue will each get four daily roundtrips, while Kona-Kahului (Maui) will get one.
- **January 19 is Southwest's launch date** for daily Sacramento-Honolulu, Oakland-Kona and San Jose-Lihue service, followed on January 21 by Oakland-Lihue and San Jose-Kona flights. The three new inter-island routes will also start January 19.
- Southwest Airlines recently **moved from Boston Logan International Airport's Terminal A to a new space in Terminal B**. The move is part of the airport's \$200 million Terminal B Optimization project.
- **Do you miss Southwest's peanuts?** Southwest Airlines is offering limited quantities of its trademark **peanuts for sale online**. (The carrier no longer serves them on flights due to peanut allergies.) Check out the website [here](#) --- (but don't rush: They're so popular they're sold out until September 26).

UNITED AIRLINES

- United Airlines announced a significant **upgrade of its smartphone app** for both Apple iOS- and Android-powered devices. Version 4.0 brings significant new functionality to the app including a completely new mobile boarding pass design. The home screen has been completely redesigned and the app will open to display the most relevant information. Once boarding has started, the app will show the boarding end time on the home screen, and it will alert the user to possible available seats in the event one becomes available.
- United Airlines' **ConnectionSaver app** has helped 40,000 passengers connect to flights while delaying flights an average of four minutes to accommodate them. The app compares passenger itineraries with flight databases and alerts flight crews about passengers who will be late, allowing them to adjust takeoff times.
- United Airlines is **expanding its international offerings** to include year-round daily service between Chicago and Zurich, seasonal service from Newark, N.J., to Curaçao; Nice, France; and Palermo, Italy. Some seasonal flights serving London and New Delhi will convert to year-round service.
- **United's new India route** from **San Francisco to New Delhi**, which starts December 5 with a 787-9, is being changed from a seasonal to a year-round schedule.

INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

- **United's Star Alliance partner Lufthansa** has set its [summer international schedule for 2020](#), and it includes new routes from Munich to both Seattle and Detroit. The airline will use Airbus A350-900s on both routes, with six weekly flights from Seattle beginning June 1 and five from Detroit starting May 4. Lufthansa already serves both cities from its Frankfurt hub. **Lufthansa's Swiss subsidiary** will introduce daily A330-300 service on March 29 between Washington Dulles and Zurich, supplementing partner United's existing daily service on that route.
- **South African Airways** adjusted its **Johannesburg-Washington Dulles route**, with a stopover in Accra, Ghana instead of Dakar, Senegal, and increasing the frequency from five flights a week to seven.
- **Air China** terminated its **Honolulu-Beijing service**, citing weak demand due to the U.S.-China trade war.
- **TAP Air Portugal** will add 15 more flights between its existing North American gateways and Portugal next year. That will give the carrier 71 daily flights next summer, up from 14 in 2015.
- In a move to reduce flights between **Amsterdam** and **Brussels**, **Royal Dutch Airlines (KLM)** and **NS Dutch Railways** are **joining forces to replace flights between Brussels and Amsterdam Schiphol** through an Air&Rail service. Currently, KLM offers five flights a day between the two cities. One of three flights will be dropped, with the seating capacity instead being made available on a Thalys rail service. The new service will roll out **beginning March 29, 2020**.
- **Singapore Airlines** launched a **new non-stop flight** earlier this month **between Seattle-Tacoma Airport and its home base at Singapore's Changi Airport**. The Seattle flight operates three times a week on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. In October, Singapore will add a fourth weekly flight that will operate on Sundays.
- **Turkish Airlines** continues to **deploy new Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners** on its **U.S. routes**. The airline recently started flying a 787-9 between Atlanta and the new Istanbul airport. It first introduced the aircraft on its Washington Dulles route last month and plans to start using it to New York JFK on February 10 of next year. The 300-passenger Turkish 787-9s have 30 business class seats and 270 in economy. Turkish is a member of United's Star Alliance.
- **Air India's New Delhi to San Francisco route** got a **big change last month** that trims about an hour and a half off the flight time. Previously, the flight from Delhi traveled east over the North Pacific to the U.S. West Coast, while the return leg from San Francisco to India was routed east over the North Atlantic, in order to take advantage of prevailing tailwinds in both cases. But now the airline is flying its 777 directly [over the North Pole](#). The new routing will also save fuel and reduce carbon emissions.

AIRPORT NEWS

- **Delta Air Lines** announced plans to **open a Sky Club lounge at Tokyo's Haneda Airport**. The 9,000-square-foot lounge will offer travelers a variety of Japanese and international foods options including "healthy options." The lounge will also feature a bar with a variety of cocktails and wine selected by Delta's Master Sommelier Andrea Robinson. Other amenities will include shower suites, Wi-Fi, and power outlets at most every seat. Delta said the lounge is currently in the initial design phase and **will open next summer**.
- Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport was the first to use the mobile Passport app five years ago. Mobile Passport now [works at 26](#) U.S. airports nationwide, as well as three Florida seaports (Miami, Palm Beach and Port Everglades). By contrast, the similar Global Entry program from Customs and Border Patrol — authorization for which involves an in-person interview and background check — is available at [75 airports](#), including 59 in the U.S. and 16 sites abroad. More [here](#).
- **The Bad news:** Lots of flight delays. **The Good news:** There are more airport lounges to wait out the delays. United Airlines has opened a **United Club** at **Raleigh-Durham** in Terminal 2 across from Gates D1 and D3. **Charleston, South Carolina** is the latest location of **The Club**, a common-use lounge network. It's on the second level of the main concourse. Priority Pass has added three new options at **Beijing/Capital Airport**: The **HNA Club** in Terminal 1 and two **China Southern** clubs in Terminal 2.
- **Bambuza** at **Seattle-Tacoma International Airport** joined **Priority Pass'** network of more than 1,200 restaurants and lounges. Priority Pass will reimburse the restaurant when its members dine there. They **also recently added Point The Way Café at Los Angeles/LAX in Terminal 6**.

HOTEL UPDATES

- **The end of an era?** A debt fund controlled by real estate investment firm Walton Street Capital has assumed ownership of the troubled **Waldorf Astoria Chicago** and plans to sell it.
- Do you sometimes wonder whether your hotel room has **a hidden camera**? Here's [how to find out](#).
- **Marriott San Diego Airport/Liberty Station** has opened within walking distance of the airport and 10 minutes from downtown. It also offers convenient access to Liberty Station, a new mixed-use community featuring numerous dining, shopping and entertainment options.

- Another change: The venerable **Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, Michigan**, a landmark dating to 1887, may be changing hands. The Musser family, owners since 1933, announced a tentative deal for an undisclosed price with private equity firm KSL Capital Partners.
- **Marriott International has modified its Bonvoy loyalty program** to allow adjustment of award night prices upward and downward according to demand. Rates could rise as much as 33 percent in peak summer season and fall by a similar degree at off times.
- Two new properties and two extensive makeovers comprise the **hottest hotel activity in downtown Houston** since the Super Bowl in 2017. AC Hotel, Cambria Hotel, C. Baldwin and The Magnolia carry room rate minimums ranging from \$126 to \$159.
- In December the **Mandarin Oriental, Santiago** will officially open its doors after a rebranding of the Hotel Santiago. This will be the first Mandarin Oriental hotel in South America. The Hong Kong-based luxury hospitality group took over management of a 310-room luxury hotel in 2017.
- **Doubletree by Hilton Yangzhou** has opened with 186 rooms in the business development district of this city, 35 miles from Yangzhou Taizhou International Airport and four miles from Yangzhou Railway Station. The property has several restaurants and bars, a fitness center and 10,764 square feet of meeting space.
- **GLō Brooklyn, a Best Western brand**, has opened in Brooklyn's Sunset Park neighborhood with 81 rooms. The hotel is designed for connected travelers with digital keys, a digital concierge, communal workspaces and in-room work stations. Amenities include free breakfast and Wi-Fi and a business center.

TOOLS, TIPS AND TECHNOLOGY

- **Poland will join the U.S. Visa Waiver Program.** As part of the program, Polish citizens will be granted access to travel to the U.S. for tourism or business stays for up to 90 days without obtaining a visa.
- **The long tumultuous journey to a UK Brexit continues.** New Prime Minister Boris Johnson favors a no-deal Brexit (which could happen by the October 31 deadline if the UK doesn't approve another extension). What does no-deal mean? According to a British government internal policy paper, it means "food shortages, higher fuel costs and chaos at the border". Johnson was recently in Brussels trying for an extension; apparently without success.
- Here is a recap of the [DOT denied boarding rules](#) as they stand today. Read more [here](#) about this sometimes confusing topic.

- A U.S. appeals court has found that airline [passengers passing through TSA checkpoints can sue the government over mistreatment by TSA](#). The ruling found that airport screeners are liable because they can act like law enforcement officers, including when they conduct invasive searches. Federal preemption does not apply to these workers. The 9-4 decision Friday by the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned earlier rulings and is a setback for the Transportation Security Administration and its screeners. The government is generally immune from lawsuits, but a federal law lets people sue over the actions of officers who can conduct searches and arrest people.
- **Second tier cities** that are predicted to be **in demand for meetings and events** next year include Minneapolis, as well as Indianapolis; Austin, Tex.; Houston; and Portland, Ore. The report notes the relative affordability of these cities when compared with the top-tier destinations, combined with an increasing number of **competitive meeting facilities**. **Contact Burkhalter's Group Department** for details about these and other high-demand meeting locations.
- The **REAL ID deadline** for U.S. domestic air travelers is approaching. Here's what business---and all air travelers---[need to know](#) to get ready for it.
- Passengers on U.S. airlines should **avoid drinking any water** that doesn't come from a sealed bottle (that goes for coffee and tea drinkers, too). Those are the conclusions of the New York City Food Policy Center at Hunter College, which recently released its 2019 Airline Water Study in partnership with DietDetective.com. Airlines were graded on a five-point scale, with a score of 3.0 or higher indicating relatively clean drinking water. Among mainline airlines, Alaska and Allegiant airlines led the way with a score of 3.3. Hawaiian was in third place with a 3.1. Regional U.S. airlines fared even worse in the water-quality study. The lone bright spot was Piedmont Airlines, a wholly-owned American Airlines subsidiary that operates American Eagle flights. Look for details [here](#).
- Travelers driving a rental car--or their own car--not equipped with an electronic toll pass mechanism **can be subject to electronic toll collection penalties** if they enter and drive a toll road system with no toll plazas or means of making payment. This article offers insight into the problem and how to prevent issues. Read more [here](#).
- Those **free companion tickets** offered when you sign up for a new credit card? They often are not "truly" free. Check the fine print to see if you'd be required to buy an expensive full-fare ticket to get the free ticket. Other fees might also apply.
- The MISSLO 43-inch Gusseted Travel Hanging Garment Bag for Suits Jackets Coats, jackets and more is getting rave reviews on Amazon. Check it out [here](#).
- Travel industry publisher Northstar offers ways to [help the Bahamas recover](#) from hurricane Dorian devastation.

New This Month! **BURKHALTER TRAVEL SPECIALS**

Now that we've made it past Labor Day weekend and the start of the school year and three Green Bay Packer wins and the prospect of Halloween hovering in the near-distance and then Thanksgiving and....whew! Where has the year gone!? NOW is the perfect time to plan a winter getaway, and Burkhalter has SO many terrific Featured Promotions! Here are just a few---don't wait!

All-Inclusive Vacations - *Travel through 12/31/20*

What's not to love about the "Aaaahhh" factor that makes all-inclusive resorts so appealing? You arrive, settle in to lovely accommodations, and then enjoy the freedom of vacationing in lush surroundings at your own relaxed pace. Choose from multiple dining options, book a spa treatment, make new friends, explore the surrounding area on optional tours, learn to dive, take a tennis lesson, enjoy evening entertainment, and then slip into late night slumber. Or do mostly nothing at all. There's no agenda, other than relaxation. Look [here](#) for all the reasons an all-inclusive is THE answer, and then click [here](#) to call or email any of our offices!

Deck the Holidays! (but Hurry!) - *Book now to September 30, 2019!*

The holiday season might seem weeks away, but we all know how fast that time will fly. And are you REALLY looking forward to shopping...and gift wrapping...and cleaning the house...and cooking and...on it goes! Why not make this the year you start a new tradition? Enjoy an unforgettable family holiday at sea, or ring in the New Year on a 4, 5 or 7-night Royal Caribbean cruise to lovely warm places with palm trees and beaches and not a snow shovel in sight. Book your sailing NOW and save 50% off your second guest — + Kids Sail for Less---get up to \$100 in instant savings! Look for more information [here](#) and then click [here](#) to call or email any of our offices!

Are you looking for Luxury?

We've got you covered! At Burkhalter Travel we offer so many options that the challenge—and the absolute pleasure—will be making a final selection. Names that personify luxury: Silversea Cruises, Ponant Cultural Cruises and Expeditions, Classic Vacations, Le Blanc Spa Resorts, Oceania Cruises, Paul Gauguin Cruises...and more. We can help you discover The North Pole. Or immerse yourself in the adults-only luxury of a Cabos resort. Or experience 'sleek and nimble' small-ship luxury and unmatched, up-close views of French Polynesia and the South Pacific. So many choices—we can't wait to share them with you! Explore more [here](#) then click [here](#) to call or email any of our offices. Some offers are time sensitive—don't wait!

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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