

## BURKHALTER TRAVEL NEWS: NOVEMBER 2019

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## LATEST NEWS

- Effective since November 1, passengers flying in **United's premium Polaris class** from **Newark to London Heathrow** can have their bags shipped straight to a **Marriott property in the British capital, free of charge**. Calling it an industry first, United said the service lets fliers drop their bags at a special desk as soon as they clear immigration and customs in London, and the luggage will be sent to one of five hotels under the Marriott banner. Complete details are [here](#).
- **Are you susceptible to falling ill when you're on the road?** Chances are you've contracted something from one of the offenders on this [list of the germiest places](#) you encounter when traveling. **Our advice:** Stock up on hand sanitizer and anti-bacterial wipes!
- **Violence in Hong Kong protests has escalated substantially.** The **U.S. raised the travel advisory warning** for Hong Kong to level two, calling for visitors to exercise "increased caution." For ongoing reporting on what's happening and where, look for the South China Morning Post [here](#).
- According to Reuters, **the U.S. FAA has downgraded Malaysia's air safety rating**. Malaysia was code-sharing with American, and as a result of this regulatory ruling by the FAA, **American Airlines has had to terminate codeshares with that carrier**. That change was made effective on November 11. Read about it [here](#). Booked on an affected flight? **Contact your Burkhalter agent for details!**
- **O'Hare's ATS system---also known as the "people mover"--- is still out of service**, now until at least early next year. The reason? "Unspecified performance issues." Look [here](#) for alternative options for travel between ORD terminals.
- **A federal court in Boston has ruled that warrantless U.S. government searches of the phones and laptops of international travelers at airports and other U.S. ports of entry violate the Fourth Amendment.** The recent ruling in U.S. District Court came in a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and the Electronic Frontier Foundation on behalf of 11 travelers whose smartphones and laptops were searched without individualized suspicion at U.S. ports of entry.
- The **New Orleans airport's passenger terminal** opened last week and apparently there are **still a few glitches** in the system. There are the predicted traffic jams due to the lack of access roads plus lots and lots of lines: at the TSA security checkpoints, at taxi stands and at ride-sharing points. "The airport itself is beautiful," one flyer said. "But right now it's **like a Mercedes with flat tires.**"

## TOOLS, TIPS AND TECHNOLOGY

- **Check out ten of the best ways to earn airline miles – compliments of Johnny Jet:** Airline miles are one of the most valuable tools to reduce travel costs. There are several creative ways you can earn airline miles besides buying plane tickets. You can easily turn your daily purchases into frequent flyer miles. [Here are some of the best ways to earn airline miles.](#)
- **Expedited security program Clear** opened lanes at Houston's **George Bush Intercontinental** Airport's terminals B and E and in **Newark's Terminal C**, which means Clear is available at six of United's seven mainland U.S. hubs. Clear lanes at O'Hare, as well as Houston's Terminal C, are coming "very soon."
- **Lyft's new membership program -- Lyft Pink service --** offers **priority airport pick-up for subscribers**, along with a 15 percent discount off all rides. The service is \$19.99 per month, and also includes **other perks and upgrades**, including free bike and scooter rides and less stringent cancelation rules.
- **Clearing security at JFK International Terminal 1** can be a daunting experience. Here are a few **VIP tips** that help [dial down the angst](#).
- *The Washington Post* is the latest to visit **a commercial kitchen that produces airline food**. Their visit to the [132,000-square-foot Gate Gourmet facility at Washington/Dulles](#) doesn't make you crave the chicken or the fish.
- It's not really a travel topic, but definitely timely for our readers as we launch into the buying season. Tech guru Phil Baker spills the beans on Amazon reviews. Bottom line: Baker says we should [be skeptical of Amazon reviews](#).
- Speaking of holiday shopping, **consider this for a frequent flyer on your list:** [Airline Maps: A Century of Art and Design by Mark Ovenden and Maxwell Roberts](#) is a nostalgic and celebratory look back at one hundred years of passenger flight.
- **The grounding period for the Boeing 737 Max** is nearing the one-year mark as both American Airlines and Southwest Airlines announced a further pushback of their return to service. **See Airline Updates below for carrier details.**
- This **GQ article** tells you about **every tech gadget you need** to stay connected, organized and productive on the road. Find it [here](#).

# AIRLINE UPDATES

## BOEING 737 MAX GROUNDING -- UPDATE

**United Airlines** has removed the grounded Boeing 737 Max from its flight schedule until early March, joining **Southwest** and **American** in taking another round of proactive steps to reduce last-minute flight cancellations if the plane's return continues to be delayed.

- **By carrier: United** is removing the plane **until March 4**, resulting in 1,600 advance flight cancellations in February and 168 in early March. **American** last week took the Max out of its schedule **until March 5**, resulting in 140 daily flight cuts. **Southwest** has scrubbed the Max **until March 6**, resulting in cutting 175 daily flights from its schedule. All three carriers previously only had the 737 Max out of their schedules through early February.
- Travelers holding tickets for travel in February and early March will be notified by the carrier if their flights have been changed and will have the option of rebooking or a refund, even if it's a non-refundable ticket. Ask your Burkhalter agent for assistance with delays and cancellations.

## ALASKA AIRLINES

- Alaska, (along with American, Southwest and United) is offering bonus miles to frequent flyers that do their holiday shopping through the companies' online portals. Shoppers who **make purchases through November 21** at retailers partnering with the airline websites stand to pick up thousands of extra miles.
- **Sports enthusiasts take note!** To make sporty travel easier, Alaska waives oversize and overweight fees for [sports equipment](#) so guests can fly with their surfboards and lots of other stuff for just \$30 (the price of a regular checked bag). For MVP Gold 75K, MVP Gold, MVP, First Class and Alaska Airlines Visa Signature Card holders, this equipment counts toward their free checked baggage allowance.

## AMERICAN AIRLINES

- American's CEO Doug Parker [was talking up a new change the airline would be making to reduce the overbooking compensation they pay out](#), essentially following Delta and United which have been ahead of American with advance bidding. The new system is here, and they're calling it "Pay What You Bid." American will no longer announce dollar amounts soliciting volunteers, and customers will no longer all receive the same amounts when they volunteer. The airline will pay each person the lowest amount that person bid.
- American announced that they're closing their Tokyo Narita Admirals Club "around late March 2020," with premium services agents moving over to Tokyo's Haneda airport. They're shifting much of their flying to Tokyo Haneda, and will be down to just one daily flight at Narita.

- **American Airlines and Australia's Qantas** are planning to operate new codeshare routes between the U.S. and Australia and offer their frequent flyers enhanced mileage accrual opportunities. The US Department of Transportation approved a joint venture partnership in July.
- [According to Routesonline.com](#), American plans to discontinue a daily Los Angeles-Narita flight as of March 29 and to cancel its three weekly Chicago O'Hare-Narita flights effective January 2. At Dallas/Ft. Worth, AA will drop one of its two daily Narita flights starting March 29. The airline's new Haneda service includes a second daily Los Angeles/LAX-HND 787-9 flight and a daily Dallas/DFW-Haneda 777-300ER flight, both starting March 29.
- We recently revealed that American Airlines serves hot dogs in first class on some flights. Now, View From The Wing does a deep dive into the testy topic of **American's onboard cookies**. Read it [here](#).

## **DELTA AIR LINES**

- Delta is calling **its new boarding platform Sky Miles Select**. Passengers who pay \$59 annually will have access to Delta's Group 1 boarding, allowing them an earlier chance at bin space. (They'll also receive eight free drink vouchers, worth about \$70, along with a snazzy luggage tag). Group 1 is actually the sixth group, boarding after active duty military members, business and first class customers, and many higher-level frequent flyers.
- Delta is **ending two of its seasonal European routes**. Summer non-stops from its New York/Kennedy hub to Malaga, Spain, and Ponta Delgada in the Azores won't be back in 2020.
- Delta unveiled the first of its **newly constructed concourses at LaGuardia Airport** earlier this month, offering visitors a glimpse of the new 105,000-square-foot facility, and giving them an idea of what developments are planned for the future of the airport. Travelers will soon be able to walk into the "bright and spacious concourse in what will become Delta's Terminal C," marking a major landmark in the \$8 billion transformation project designed to transform LaGuardia into a world-class airport. The seven new gates in the Delta concourse — which runs 60 flights per day to Boston, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. — started serving passengers on November 4.
- Delta has put the first of its **newly refitted 767-4** into service, first on the Atlanta-London Heathrow route, followed by New York JFK-Heathrow on November 16 with Boston-Heathrow starting November 20.
- **Other routes that will get the aircraft** in the next few months include JFK-Zurich December 8, JFK-Brussels January 30, and Atlanta-Brussels February 22. The overhauled aircraft will feature all four of Delta's international seating products – Delta One, Delta Premium Select (its new premium economy cabin), Delta Comfort+ extra-legroom seats, and Main Cabin.

## SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

- Southwest Airlines has been testing dual boarding and deplaning (from front and rear doors) in Sacramento and a couple other cities on and off for the past few years to gauge how much faster it can board and deplane passengers and reduce the turnaround time between flights.
- Joe Brancatelli reports that Southwest Airlines has **increased the price of its Companion Pass next year to 125,000 points**. That's 15,000 points more than in recent years. He says Rapid Rewards points have been devalued in other ways as well and there are many fewer methods that Southwest permits to count toward earning a Companion Pass.

## UNITED AIRLINES

- United Airlines' new **Star Wars plane**, painted with characters and spacecraft from the series, made its first flight recently. The sendoff at George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston included a marching band and storm troopers parading through the terminal.
- United CEO Oscar Munoz said the company's goal for 2020 is "changing how you feel about flying us." One of the announcements to generate the most buzz and questions was the carrier's plans to install new overhead storage on 80 percent of its mainline fleet by 2023. They said the bins will have the capacity for every passenger to store one large carry-on bag. That will speed up the boarding process, as the scarcity of space is the big driver of passengers massing around the boarding area to get on board first to avoid the "dreaded gate-checked bag," The new bins will begin appearing next year.
- United's two-cabin, 50-seat Bombardier CRJ-550 aircraft began flying recently, with service out of Chicago O'Hare to Allentown, Pa.; Bentonville, Ark.; Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Cincinnati; Columbus, Ohio; Des Moines; Grand Rapids, Mich.; Greensboro, N.C.; Harrisburg, Pa. Indianapolis: **Madison, Wisc.**; Oklahoma City; Richmond, Va.; St. Louis; and Tulsa. **More cities will be added out of Chicago, Newark and Washington Dulles in the coming weeks.**
- United is working on **technology enhancements at its hub airports**, including an indoor GPS network at Chicago O'Hare, with which passengers can map out step-by-step directions to their gate via United's app.
- United Airlines is **revamping its onboard food service program**, with a particular focus on adding vegetarian and vegan options like red beet hummus with roasted vegetables and stuffed grape leaves. Technological improvements in logistics and in the galley have made it possible to dramatically elevate the quality of in-flight cuisine, said Executive Chef Gerry Gulli, who manages more than 2,500 catering employees serving up 55 million meals a year.

## **INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES**

- On March 29, **Japan Airlines will expand its service to San Francisco with two daily flights from Tokyo's Narita International Airport.** The new service, part of JAL's transpacific joint venture with American Airlines, is in addition to its daily flight between San Francisco and Tokyo's Haneda Airport. The carrier also is adding new daily service between Narita and Bengaluru, India, beginning March 29; service three times a week between Narita and Vladivostok, Russia, beginning Feb. 29, which will increase to daily from March 29 throughout the summer; and a second daily flight between Narita and Guam beginning July 1.
- **Air Canada's first A220 was unveiled by Airbus** as it [rolled out of the painting hangar](#) for the first time. The jet was completed at the Bombardier final assembly line in Mirabel (Quebec, Canada). With Air Canada as the first and only Canadian operator of the A220, the aircraft will be delivered to the airline next month. The goal for the new jets: to become operational by Spring 2020. The fuel efficiency and range of the A220 will allow its operators to connect its large hubs with smaller cities while still ensuring load factors that keep the route profitable.
- After recent strikes that affected over 180,000 passengers, **Lufthansa has agreed to arbitration with cabin crew**, averting further strikes, at least for the time being. The cabin crew union said they are open to discussions but that further action would be taken if crew needs weren't met.
- **Air France** is adding its version of business class on domestic routes to and from its Paris/CDG hub. That's good news for U.S. and Canadian flyers claiming Delta SkyMiles or Air France/KLM Flying Blue points to French cities beyond Paris.
- **Hong Kong Airlines is dropping its last U.S. route.** Nonstops from Los Angeles end on February 6.
- **Austrian Airlines** is launching its **first flights from Boston/Logan on March 29.** The Vienna nonstop begins with four weekly flights and builds to six starting April 22. They'll be flying Boeing 767-300ERs configured with business, premium economy and coach cabins.
- **Iberia** says it will **resume flights from Washington/Dulles to its Madrid hub** after a ten-year absence. **Service begins on May 1** with four or five weekly runs using Airbus A330s configured with business class, premium economy and coach.
- Next year, **Lufthansa will begin determining loyalty program status** on a new points-based structure rather than mileage flown. Beginning Jan. 1, Lufthansa will give a flat number of points per flight based on the class flown and whether the flight was intercontinental or intracontinental.
- **An update---sort of: Lufthansa's airline and cabin crew have settled a recent strike** and they say there are no new strikes on the horizon.

## AIRPORT NEWS

- When **Los Angeles International Airport** implemented its new pickup policy for taxi and passengers of **ride-hailing services** such as Uber and Lyft, the scene was described as totally awful. Passengers complained about hour-plus wait times for a ride after long flights, and drivers griped about being in line for even longer. But a couple of weeks later, the new system — which requires arriving travelers who get picked up by taxis, Uber, Lyft and other ride-hailing services to board a shuttle bus or walk to a new area just east of Terminal 1 to catch their rides — is far from a disaster. It seems the "swift adjustments in real-time," that LAX has touted in press releases are working, including extra signage and additional shuttles.
- **Milwaukee International** has opened a new **Cousins subs** shop and a **Starbucks in Concourse C**, the third Starbucks location at MKE. The new Concourse C Starbucks will offer passengers a full menu of blended hot and cold coffees, breakfast sandwiches and pastries, as well as the popular Nitro Cold Brew.
- **Boston/Logan** expects to open an airport version of the **Boston Public Market** in Terminal C before the end of the year. That should bring interesting local concepts to the airport. In the meantime, a branch of local favorite **Davio's Northern Italian Steakhouse** opened in Terminal C, and **Trade**, from local celebrity chef Jody Adams, opened in Terminal B.
- **Cincinnati** has a new club. **Located in Concourse B**, the **Escape Lounge** is the latest outpost of the small chain created by the operators of Manchester International Airport in England. **American Express Platinum cardholders get free entry. Otherwise the fee is \$45 a visit.**
- **Atlanta/Hartsfield** finally **opened a food court on Concourse C**, after five years of contracting delays. The first three shops in the new concourse sell salads, wraps and Krispy Kreme doughnuts.
- **San Francisco International Airport** has a new on-site hotel that offers rooms with **a stellar view of the airfield**. The **Grand Hyatt at SFO** even places a "Plane Spotter Guide" in the rooms.
- **We are not making this up:** Pigs might not fly, but **LiLou the therapy pig** wants to make air travel less stressful. The five-year-old Juliana pig and her owner, Tatyana Danilova, are **part of San Francisco International Airport's "Wag Brigade"** - a program that brings therapy animals to the airport to cheer passengers up and help ease travel anxieties. Dressed in a pilot's cap and with toenails painted bright red, LiLou breezes through the metal detector at airport security and trots to the departure gates. She raises a hoof in greeting, poses for selfies and entertains departing passengers with a tune on her toy piano. For all the Reuter's details, look [here](#).

## HOTEL UPDATES

- The largest hotel in downtown Dallas, the 1,840-room **Sheraton Dallas Hotel on Pearl Street** has been getting a multimillion-dollar makeover. The redo includes five new food and beverage outlets and a remodeling of public areas and 230,000 square feet of meeting and convention space. The skyscraper complex was built starting in the 1950s as an office tower for Southland Life Insurance. In the 1990s, the mostly vacant buildings were converted to the Adam's Mark Hotel. Sheraton took over the property in 2007.
- **The Conrad New York Midtown**, a rebranding and refurbishing of The London NYCA, features a two-story penthouse suite offering private concerts, and all 562 suites provide a home-like ambiance. The 54-story hotel is Conrad's second in the city.
- **Arrive Hotel** opened recently at 477 S. Main St in **Memphis**, featuring 62 rooms among five floors and a super-swank lobby that calls to mind "glamorous old movies involving dames with great hair and men in rumpled suits and fezzes."
- **A Tokyo hotel, Henn na Hotel**, known for its staff robots, had to scramble to patch vulnerability in 100 egg-shaped bedside assistants that could let hackers spy on guests using the in-room camera and microphone. The Tapia devices provide guests with online shopping, streaming video and have a smartphone.
- **Hyatt** has opened a 226-room **Hyatt Place** hotel at the Pena Station stop **on the A Line commuter train that runs between downtown Denver and Denver International**. Pena Station is just one stop from the airport's own station and is slated to be developed into mixed-use project of homes, offices and retail. One of Denver International's long-term parking lots is also there.
- **Marriott Autograph Collection** is adding a prime Berlin hotel. The Hotel Berlin Gendarmenmarkt, which recently left the Sofitel chain, will join Marriott's soft brand in the spring after a renovation.
- **Have you been holding your offsite business sessions in boring hotel meeting rooms with four walls and a door?** That concept is definitely "out." What's in? "Experiences," like twisting pretzels at the Kimpton Hotel Monaco in Pittsburgh, taking a road trip in a Bentley at the Gateway Canyons Resort & Spa in Colorado, or touching a moon rock at the Royal Sonesta Houston. For great ideas on how to turn your business meeting into a memorable experience, contact [Wendy Bartnick](#), Burkhalter Group Operations Manager.
- According to Bloomberg, **Hyatt Hotels** has joined the list of potential buyers of **Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants**.



## NEW THIS MONTH: VACATION TRAVEL TIPS

- US News & World Report has released its **annual list of the world's best cruises**. The report evaluated 176 ships in 17 of the top cruise lines to determine the rankings in six categories including best cruise lines for the money, best for families, best for couples, the best luxury cruise lines, and more. The good news? Burkhalter offers lots of cruise options on world-class ships!
- **If you're heading to The Big Apple during the holiday season, read this!** Getting a ride from New York LaGuardia/LGA to any destination in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens will be easier during the upcoming holiday season. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey—the government agency that runs the airport—has teamed up with ride-share app Via to offer a new affordable (and less stressful) option for leaving the airport. For a \$15 flat-rate fee, arriving passengers can take a car pool ride to any destination in Manhattan, Brooklyn, or Queens. For the farther boroughs of Staten Island and the Bronx the flat fee will be upped to \$20. The service, called LGA Connect, is currently in a pilot program phase and available for passengers arriving in Terminals C and D. The rides can be booked through Via's [app](#), which will have a special LGA Connect option in its menu. The Via app will provide passengers with information to identify their vehicle and an ETA at their destination. According to Via, all rides will leave within 10 minutes of booking. Look for more information [here](#).

## BURKHALTER TRAVEL SPECIALS

*As much as we hoped for it to happen, we never did see any evidence of lovely warm autumn days here in the Heartland---we went right from summer to UGH! And the Farmers' Almanac paints a glum picture of what we'll endure in the months ahead. Obviously, the time for strategizing a winter escape is NOW! Our Burkhalter leisure travel experts are ready to share a bonanza of great getaways that will take you away from snow drifts to warm sandy beaches. Cruise discounts and deals, family all-inclusives, couple's getaways,. .all that and lots more!*

### Celebrity Cruise Deals! - *Booking deadlines apply!*

We have an exclusive Celebrity Cruise offer that gives Burkhalter clients **FREE prepaid gratuities** for the first two guests in an Oceanview or above cabin! This is a savings of \$203 - \$504! (Cruise must be booked by 11/23/2019 for the prepaid gratuities offer that applies to Oceanview and above staterooms departing 1/10/2020 to 4/30/2021). Combine our FREE prepaid gratuities with Celebrity's offer of onboard credit of up to \$200 per person, plus Suites get three Perks free! [Contact us](#) today for details on this and other Celebrity offers! Click [here](#) to call or email any of our offices! Don't wait on this one!

## Spa? “Say Ahhhh!” - *Book now to December 31, 2019 for 2019-2020 travel*

We LOVE this message: **“Not every vacation should be spent checking things off your bucket list!”** The Le Blanc Spa Resort is Los Cabos, Mexico ‘s only adults-only all-inclusive resort to offer a perfect balance of natural beauty and pampering service. From premium accommodations, haute cuisine to celebrated chefs and premium beverages, blissful spa experiences and serene views of the Sea of Cortez--- oh, and did we mention access to a 27-hole golf course? ---PLUS a \$1,500 Resort Credit to use for spa services, tours and other indulgent luxuries! Look for more information [here](#) and then click [here](#) to call or email any of our offices!

## We have ‘Insider Tips’ for Insider Travel! – *Some deadlines apply!*

Question: Have you ever wondered how some people score discounts, upgrades and free items anywhere they go? Chances are they’re part of an inner circle, eligible for a world of VIP treatment. That’s exactly what Funjet Insider Circle is all about — insider tips, tricks and experiences that make vacations truly unforgettable. Let Burkhalter Travel’s resort partnerships bring you exclusive perks like free private transfers, separate check-in areas, VIP service and exclusive gifts in your room, access to private beaches and more! Explore more [here](#) then click [here](#) to call or email any of our offices for more details. 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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