

BURKHALTER TRAVEL NEWS: DECEMBER 2019

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LATEST NEWS

- **Transport for London (TfL)** has announced that it **will not grant Uber a new license to operate in the capital** after it concluded the ride-hailing giant is "not fit and proper". The news follows more than two years of uncertainty for the firm, which originally had its license revoked in 2017. Look [here](#) for suggestions on getting around London without Uber.
- **HEADS UP!** If you use public USB power charging stations at airports, hotels, and other locations, you need this USB data blocker to **protect from hacking**. Read about it [here](#).
- According to View From The Wing, **Super Shuttle is going out of business on December 31**. They've been [pulling out of several airports](#) in recent weeks. Now they're pulling the plug worldwide. The shared rides that were cheaper than a taxi but took longer because you might make several stops along the way, suffered reduced ridership thanks to Uber and Lyft.
- The New York Times reports that **strikes in Paris continue** and Union leaders have vowed to continue marching until the government withdraws its plan to merge the 42 different state-managed pension plans into a single system. Apparently President Macron is standing pat. For Paris and its region, protests are causing transportation chaos as rail and subway workers continue striking. There have been hundreds of miles of traffic jams, streets in Paris have been thick with cars, and desperate commuters crammed into the few packed trains available. Look [here](#) for information on current and future strikes in France.
- In more strike news, **British Airways has reportedly reached an agreement with their pilots union BALPA to increase pay for BA pilots after negotiations that have stretched through much of 2019 and escalated in several strikes**. If BALPA members accept the proposal this week it would avert yet another round of possible British Airways disruptions through strike action in the upcoming Christmas holiday period.
- We thought the debate about **what qualifies as an acceptable emotional support animal** on flights was resolved earlier this year. Apparently, NEW federal rules are coming from the U.S. Department of Transportation soon. Read about it [here](#).
- **This alert comes from the Manchester, England airport, but it can apply globally**. Passengers should **wait to wrap Christmas presents on arrival at their destination** because security staff might unwrap gifts to check the contents.

They're also telling passengers to "pack Christmas puddings" (a British favorite) in hold baggage, not hand luggage, to avoid them being "mistaken for bombs at airport security." Snow globes and condiments such as jam must be in a clear sealable bag, along with other hand luggage items containing liquids, gels or pastes. It's **OK to bring the (cooked!) holiday turkey onboard. Gravy** if over 3.4 ounces **goes in checked bags.**

TOOLS, TIPS AND TECHNOLOGY

- **What's the latest with the UK's Brexit**, now that Boris Johnson has been elected Prime Minister to replace Theresa May? The UK was recently granted (another) extension, this time to January 31, 2020. Johnson has pledged to meet the deadline, but it still needs to be progressed through Parliament to move from "bill" status to law.
- **Hertz and Air France** have joined forces to offer passengers of the French flag carrier **a new airport transfer service with private driver at more than 300 airports globally**. Air France customers opting for the new Hertz DriveU service "will get the peace of mind of having seamless transportation to and from the airport, arranged ahead of their flight." Air France customers and Flying Blue members traveling onboard partner airlines' flights can pre-book Hertz DriveU up to 3 hours before the transfer. More [here](#).
- **American Express** has been slashing benefits on its premium cards, but here's a bit of good news. Effective January 1, Platinum cardholders will now have trip-cancellation, trip-interruption and trip-delay coverage. Gold cardholders get the trip-delay coverage. Of course, you must charge your travel to the card to be covered.
- **British Airways staff** 'decked the arrival halls' at London Heathrow with holiday carols for travelers in a **surprise flash mob**. Watch it [here](#).
- **Frequent travelers may who neglected to heed the warning on the last page in their passport** ---the one that reads in bold type, "This document contains sensitive electronics. For best performance, do not bend, perforate or expose to extreme temperatures," may have broken the chips.
- A reminder for those **clearing TSA airport security** this holiday season: Tablets, e-readers, smartwatches, electronic game consoles, and blue tooth speakers can all come on board in your carry-on bag. **If the device is larger than a cell phone**, you'll need to remove the item from your carry-on bag for further screening at the security checkpoint. Need more information? Look [here](#).
- **If you're heading to New York City during the festive holiday season**, plan to explore the **newly-renovated 80th Floor of the Empire State Building**. After marveling at the stunning views, assemble a personalized list of recommendations at the **NYC: Above and Beyond exhibit** for attractions and sites throughout Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and Staten Island. You can capture your customized itinerary via e-mail or scanned by QR code directly to your handheld devices for reference during your stay.

AIRLINE UPDATES

ALASKA AIRLINES

- USA TODAY reports **passengers can wear their ugliest holiday sweater on December 20th and receive priority boarding on all Alaska Airlines flights**. That day is National Ugly Holiday Sweater Day and it is the third year in a row that the self-described “merrier carrier” airline has celebrated the day. Passengers are encouraged to tweet photos and videos of themselves getting into the holiday spirit with the hashtags #UglySweaterDay and #iFlyAlaska.
- If you frequently fly on Alaska Airlines, access to one of the carrier’s airport lounges can significantly improve your preflight experience. The Points Guy takes a look at the different ways to gain access to Alaska lounges. [Read this](#).

AMERICAN AIRLINES

- Though most airlines allow passengers headed to destinations in other countries to check in on their devices, an in-person passport check was still often required prior to boarding. American Airlines has announced **an update to its app that would eliminate that step**. Passengers can now scan the data chip embedded in their passports using the built-in reader on iPhones or Android's devices. Using the app to scan the chip, technically known as the Near Field Communication (NFC) chip, means travelers can self-verify their passport and won't have to have it checked at the airport. The updated app provides on-screen instructions to help passengers complete the scan correctly. 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 will **end service to Cordoba in Argentina** in May in the face of continued demand weakness in the South American country. The Oneworld carrier will end flights between its Miami/MIA hub and Cordoba/COR on May 6, according to Cirium schedule data. The airline operated the route with a Boeing 767-300ER for just over a year.
- American Airlines is **putting Israel back on its destination map** with non-stop daily service to Tel Aviv from its hub at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport starting September 9, 2020. They discontinued service to Tel Aviv in 2016 that originated from Philadelphia.

DELTA AIR LINES

- Will Delta offer onboard free Wi-Fi anytime soon? CEO Ed Bastian said “Yes!” awhile back. Mr. Bastian even reiterated he’s a “firm believer we need to make Wi-Fi free.” Unfortunately, the technical capability isn’t in place yet. He even referred to Gogo as “NoGo” and “SlowGo.” Apparently the airline has tested free internet but the service is “not where it needs to be.”

- Delta Air Lines announced **Pre-Select Meals**, a service that will allow passengers traveling in Delta One business class and domestic first class to specify an entrée selection in advance of the flight via a new version of the Fly Delta smartphone app. Delta is the third U.S. airline to offer the option to preorder meals. The option is available 21 days prior to checking in via version 5.1 and newer of the app.
- Delta opened a new, 'state-of-the-art' concourse at LaGuardia and all shuttle flights including Boston, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., will relocate to the concourse at Terminal C. New gates at the terminal will include gates 92 through 98 with views of Citi Field. The check-in terminal will be open via walkway in Terminal D, until the central lobby opens in 2022.

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

- Southwest Airlines has **announced new and expanded flight schedules** from Atlanta, Baltimore/Washington, D.C., Chicago, Denver, Houston and Nashville, TN. New destinations include Charleston, SC, Portland, ME, Panama City and Pensacola, FL., Nassau, Bahamas and Norfolk, VA.
- Southwest Airlines will be expanding its impact on Denver International Airport after the carrier received \$12.5 million in tax credits. According to [The Associated Press](#), Southwest will receive the credits for a major expansion over the next eight years that could bring 1,000 new jobs to the Denver airport. The airline chose the Colorado city over Nashville and Houston.

UNITED AIRLINES

- United Airlines recently **opened Clear lanes at Chicago O'Hare International Airport**. United took a stake in Clear in July, joining Delta Air Lines which is also a Clear stakeholder. The service promises no more than a five-minute wait at a security checkpoint. Clear uses biometrics including fingerprint and iris identification technology to confirm a traveler's identity at the entrance to the checkpoint. Side note: If you're not already a member of Clear, the wait to join is long.
- United Airlines is rolling out a feature that allows premium cabin passengers to **pre-order inflight meals**. Advance selection is available on some flights originating at United's hubs in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., with the goal of eventually expanding the service across the airline's network.
- **United is eliminating Regional Premier Upgrade (RPU) and Global Premier Upgrade (GPU) coupons**, replacing them with a new program called PointsPlus. The regional and global upgrades were provided as a benefit to flyers who reach the top tiers of MileagePlus, including Platinum, 1K and Global Services. Effective December 4, the accounts of those top elite members gained a new bank of PlusPoints that can be applied to upgrades across United's network without geographic limitations. Under PointsPlus, one RPU will be converted into 20 points, and one GPU will be worth 40 points.

INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

- **South African Airways** has been given a lifeline with a recently announced rescue plan. The **airline** has been placed into a local form of bankruptcy protection while money is injected from the country's government and from existing lenders.
- **A major "Oops!" for Lufthansa:** TravelMole reports Lufthansa is facing a \$6.4 million fine from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration for operating hundreds of unauthorized flights to the U.S. The FAA alleges Lufthansa operated nearly 900 flights between Frankfurt and San Diego and between Frankfurt and Philadelphia without the necessary permits. It claims Lufthansa operated 600 flights between Frankfurt and San Diego and 292 flights to Philadelphia without authorization. The U.S. airports were not listed in Lufthansa's FAA-issued Operations Specifications.
- **Caribbean carrier Silver Airways has announced an agreement with American Airlines.** That means travelers can book tickets that combine segments on American Airlines and Silver on a single ticket. It also means travelers can check their bags right through to their final destination.
- **Air Italy and Oman Air** have begun codesharing out of the carriers' hubs in Milan and Muscat. Air Italy has put its code on Oman Air's flights between Milan and Muscat, while Oman Air has added its code on Air Italy flights between Milan and Rome, Naples, Cagliari, Palermo, Catania and Lamezia Terme. Pending government approval, Oman Air also will add its code to Air Italy's flights between Milan and both New York and Miami.
- **New York/Kennedy** travelers take note: **Qatar Airways** completed its move to Terminal 8 on December 15. That puts it fully under the same roof as Oneworld Alliance partners American Airlines, Cathay Pacific and Finnair.
- **San Francisco** was home to the only **United Airlines international arrivals lounge**, but **not anymore. The facility closed on December 1.**

AIRPORT NEWS

- We have reported on this quirky Berlin, Germany airport news for years---nine of them. In the latest update, [officials announced that Berlin's new BER airport will open October 31, 2020](#), NINE YEARS later than previously scheduled. Flights to and from **Berlin Tegel** are scheduled to end November 8, 2020, but airlines will continue to use the **Schoenefeld** terminal for some time.
- Apparently Singapore's Changi Airport has some arbitrary, inconsistent rules when it comes to accepting boarding passes---especially mobile boarding passes. Read about one traveler's two-hour saga [here](#).

- This article about the “**Twelve Most Beautiful Airport Terminals in the World**” is a bit subjective, but the winners ARE.....dazzling! Check them out [here](#).
- SkyTeam, the global airline alliance, has officially **opened the doors to its seventh branded lounge**, adding to more than 790 members' and affiliated lounges worldwide. **Located in Istanbul's new airport (IST)**, the facility is served by seven alliance members: Aeroflot, Air France, KLM, Korean Air, Middle East Airlines, Saudia and TAROM.

HOTEL UPDATES

- **Hyatt** is making changes to its award program. Read about it [here](#).
- **W Hotels has partnered with Rent the Runway** to offer a new service that allows hotel guests to pack lighter by **paying \$69 for four curated outfits that will be delivered to their room and can be left behind upon checkout**. The service is available in Aspen, CO.; Hollywood, CA. Miami Beach, FL.; and Washington D.C.
- More than 20 key metrics reviewed for **WalletHub's annual Hotel Rewards Report** reveal that **Wyndham Rewards** has the best hotel loyalty program, with **Radisson Rewards and Choice Privileges** also near the top. "Smaller players in the travel space often provide more incentives because they have to do so in order to compete with bigger names," WalletHub CEO Odysseas Papadimitriou says. You can read the Wallet Hub report [here](#).

NEW THIS MONTH: VACATION TRAVEL TIPS

- Ski resort behemoth **Vail Resorts Inc.** has added to the already packed lists of on-mountain guest experiences across its wide collection of mountain resorts for the upcoming ski season with a series of major capital improvements, including terrain expansions, new lifts and expanded restaurant experiences. Scroll through the new options [here](#), **and then call your Burkhalter Leisure Travel Advisor!**
- **Has this happened to you?** You get distracted by the sights and suddenly realize one of your valuables is missing? You can quickly locate lost items with a tracking device like **Tile**. The tracking device will ring when in range of a member of the Tile community, and its location will be shown on [the Tile app](#) even if you're out of range. Attach a tracking device to your luggage, camera, keys, phone, wallet, purse, and anything else you'd be hard-pressed to replace. Available at the App Store.

BURKHALTER TRAVEL SPECIALS

*With the holidays mere days away, many of you will gather with those near and dear to celebrate and reminisce about things you did together in 2019---places you traveled, sights seen, memories made. What better time to plan a wonderful trip to celebrate not just the New Year, but---this is special!---a NEW DECADE! 2020 is a perfect year to travel somewhere amazing---take that **Bucket List Trip** that you've thought about for....years? As we like to say here at Burkhalter Travel, "The options are as endless as your wanderlust." Hint: A Burkhalter Travel Gift Certificate is perfect for holiday giving!*

The Heart of Thailand - Departures through June 2020

Mix luxury adventure in the Heart of Thailand with a special tour that will immerse you in the very center of this amazing destination. You'll enjoy world class accommodations, a luxurious hotel in amazing Bangkok, a private tour of stunning temples, two nights at a luxury tented elephant camp, three nights in Phuket, a rain-forested mountainous island in the Andaman Sea with some of Thailand's most popular beaches and luxury resorts, memory-making natural experiences and so much more! Seven days from \$1,665 per person. [Contact us](#) today for details on this Bucket List Experience! Look for more information [here](#) (scroll to "Thailand") and then click [here](#) to call or email any of our offices!

A Taste of Bordeaux - River sailings March – November 2020

River cruising on Europe's waterways is an adventure onto itself. On AmaWaterways you'll venture through the legendary Spanish Basque country and its capital Bordeaux, experience chateaux, vineyards, and distinctive wines. Visit Saint-Emilion, the former residence of a French philosopher, experience charming Bourg with an exclusive wine festival, French music and dancing, and of course--wine! This trip is a must for anyone interested in the best of French culture, lifestyle, wine and food. Seven nights from \$2,349 per person. Other fees apply. Look for more information [here](#) (scroll to "France") and then click [here](#) to call or email any of our offices!

Peru and Ecuador - 13 Unforgettable Days in 2020!

No Bucket List is complete without Machu Picchu, the amazing architectural marvel high in the Andes that checks off every superlative: beautiful, captivating, stunning, spell-binding...and on and on. We cannot do justice with a brief paragraph! Thirteen days from \$8,190 per person including all accommodations, air and ground transfers, train to Machu Picchu, four nights on a Galapagos cruise, all meals and SO much more! You'll definitely want to explore more [here](#) and then click [here](#) to call or email any of our offices for more details.

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
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