

BURKHALTER TRAVEL NEWS: OCTOBER 2017

SCROLL DOWN FOR THESE SECTIONS:

AIRLINE UPDATES – AIRPORT NEWS – HOTELS – TOOLS, TIPS AND TECHNOLOGY – BURKHALTER TOURS
BURKHALTER OFFICE LOCATIONS

LATEST NEWS

- **IMPORTANT!** As of October 8, both the U.S. and Turkey have suspended non-immigrant visas for travel between the two countries. The suspension includes online e-visas and physical “sticker” visas at border points. Read more [here](#). **Ask your Burkhalter agent for details** if you have a flight to Turkey scheduled.
- **TRAVEL BAN UPDATED:** The U.S. has added North Korea, Venezuela and Chad to the list of nations facing travel restrictions. New restrictions apply to eight nations, including five that were covered by President Trump's previous ban: Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Somalia. (The African country of Sudan was subject to the original ban but dropped under the new version). The new version continues restrictions on the five countries that were already covered by the existing rules, but it doesn't take effect for the newly targeted nations until Oct. 18. The new rules vary by country, with some nations facing outright travel bans and others subject to more limited restrictions. Look for more details [here](#).
- **A PASSPORT APPLICATION BACKLOG** is looming and it's expected to last well into 2018. If yours is about to expire, we recommend that you renew it now. And be aware of the 6-month validity rule that many countries have adopted, including almost all countries in Europe. If you arrive in one of these countries and your passport is set to expire in the next 6 months, you may be denied entry. There are stricter rules for application too. Glasses are no longer allowed in passport photos---and make sure that your photo is good quality. Poor quality photos are routinely rejected. Look for application details [here](#).
- **EXPECT SECURITY CHANGES** at resort properties in Las Vegas. At entrances to the Wynn resort in Las Vegas last week, guards scanned visitors with metal-detector wands and inspected their bags, creating a 10-minute wait to get inside. The new security protocol put in place after a recent mass shooting is likely to become the norm on The Strip.
- United Airlines launched a new voluntary overbooking compensation system last week that will notify passengers upon checking in if they might be on a flight with potential oversold problems. The notification will give passengers several compensation options, and if the gate agent chooses to rebook one or more passengers, travel vouchers will be issued.
- **DON'T MISS DETAILS in the Delta section that follows** about the carrier's big change to its iOS Fly Delta app. There are several unanswered questions, but the new feature is likely to be a popular one.

AIRLINE UPDATES

ALASKA AIRLINES

- It is official: Alaska Airlines will operate all Virgin America flights as its own effective April 25, 2018. Alaska has posted the new Airbus schedule for flights after April 24, according to an internal memo to employees. **Ask your Burkhalter agent for details.**
- Basketball superstar Kevin Durant is teaming up with Alaska Airlines to support youth and education programs in the San Francisco Bay Area. Between Durant's NBA championship win with the Golden State Warriors last year and Alaska's expansion into San Francisco with its purchase of Virgin America, Durant and the airline share a common purpose of making a difference in Bay Area communities. Durant will assume the official title "Advisor to the CEO".

AMERICAN AIRLINES

- American Airlines will offer nonstop flights from Philadelphia International Airport to San Antonio, Texas; **Madison, WI**; Des Moines, IA; and Omaha, NE. beginning May 4. The routes will be operated with EMB-175 regional jets. American says they offer more nonstop flights than all other airlines combined at PHL.
- American will be offering free text messaging “soon” and they will include free drinks and dedicated overhead bin access in Main Cabin Extra Class (added charge) beginning in the first half of 2018. They also plan to boost the availability of frequent-flier seats at the lowest award levels. Travelers have complained that it's harder to book free travel using AAdvantage miles since the merger with US Airways, and the airline is addressing those concerns.
- The American Airlines First Class Lounge at the end of Concourse K at Chicago/O'Hare has closed. The facility has been replaced with a new Flagship Lounge located below the existing Admirals Club between Gates H6 and K6. The new lounge is opened to AAdvantage platinum or higher elites flying internationally, business class passengers and Concierge Key members.
- American Airlines is realigning its fleet to put Boeing 767s in fewer East Coast cities, creating the possibility of more flights to Europe from North Carolina's Charlotte Douglas International Airport.
- Mattress maker Casper will provide branded sleep products for use in American Airlines' first class, business class and Premium Economy cabins. The items include mattress pads, duvets and slippers and will debut in December.

DELTA AIR LINES

- **JUST ANNOUNCED!** Delta passengers who use the Fly Delta app **on an iOS device** will automatically be checked in for flights and sent a boarding pass 24 hours in advance of travel. Travelers with more than one flight on the same day will see all flights listed with the ability to toggle between flights. There are unanswered questions: What if you want to change your seat assignment? What if you want to check a bag? When will Delta launch a similar update to the Android Fly Delta app?
- Delta Air Lines is now offering free inflight text messaging.
- **This will be a shock to some:** Delta flyers who want to reach SkyMiles' ultra-elite Diamond Medallion status have to fly 125,000 qualifying miles or 140 segments annually, and they have to spend at least \$15,000 (i.e., Medallion Qualifying Dollars or MQDs) on Delta and its partners. Or they can avoid that last requirement by spending a certain amount on a Delta American Express credit card. But that so-called "MQD Waiver" for Diamond status will soon be a lot harder to achieve. Currently, the waiver requires spending \$25,000 a year on a qualifying credit card. But as of January 1, that minimum spend will jump to \$250,000 in a calendar year for aspiring Diamond Medallion elites. The minimum annual card spending level for earning a MQD Waiver toward its other elite levels (Platinum, Gold and Silver Medallion) will remain at \$25,000. And it reminded members that the change will not affect their 2017 efforts to gain Diamond status for 2018. Read details [here](#). For more detail at that site about MDQs, click through to "general program updates."

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

- Southwest Airlines is looking into additional markets to serve from Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, given the success seen there in recent months. Where will they fly next? They're not saying, claiming they need to gather at least six months' worth of data before making a decision. Watch this space for updates.
- After much speculation, Southwest Airlines has finally announced that they WILL begin service to Hawaii from California. But don't pack your bags just yet---dates and routes are still TBD and it's unlikely that things will officially start to happen until late 2018/early 2019.
- Southwest is celebrating Disney/Pixar's all-new, big-screen adventure "Coco" in style this fall with a comprehensive program that includes a Boeing 737-700 aircraft emblazoned with the vibrant "Coco" logo and artwork inspired by the film. The aircraft will fly among the carrier's nearly 100 destinations throughout the United States, Mexico, Central America, and Caribbean through the end of 2017. With Disney/Pixar's "Coco," Southwest says they connect their customers to an all-new story that's both exciting and inspiring. The film opens in U.S. theaters on Nov. 22, 2017.

UNITED AIRLINES

- United continues to tweak its international route map. It will drop the seasonal route between Chicago/O'Hare and Shannon, Ireland, and downgrade its Newark-Shannon route to seasonal status. Also eliminated: daily flights between Guam and Sapporo, Japan. Other routes from its Guam hub are being reduced in frequencies or flown with smaller aircraft. United is also permanently cancelling previously suspended Brazil service and flights to Hangzhou, China.
- United MileagePlus members will want to know that award seats on some Singapore Airlines flights can once again be booked on United.com. United pulled Singapore Air availability four years ago and now.....it's back.
- United is having problems with its proposed Polaris lounges. After opening its first Polaris business class lounge earlier this year at its Chicago hub—which has no international routes with the new Polaris seats---progress has stalled. The four airports that were supposed to get Polaris Lounges this year--San Francisco, Los Angeles, Newark and London/Heathrow--have been pushed into next year.
- United recently announced new transatlantic routes, including two to destinations that they don't presently serve: Newark to Porto, Portugal between May 4 and October 4, 2018; Newark to Reykjavik, Iceland between May 23 and October 4, 2018, San Francisco to Zurich between June 7 and October 26, 2018, Washington to Edinburgh between May 23 and October 4, 2018.
- United Airlines final Boeing 747-400, known as "The Queen of the Sky," will fly into the sunset on November 7, operating a special final flight between San Francisco and Honolulu. The Chicago-based carrier is retiring the 747 after a nearly half century in its fleet. It took delivery of its first 747-100 in June 1970.

INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

- **Austrian Airlines** is adding a premium economy section on transatlantic flights beginning March 6. It will use the same premium economy seat used by its parent, Lufthansa, and offer a nearly identical experience: 38 inches of legroom, 12-inch monitors and at-seat power and USB ports.
- **Aer Lingus** is adding another U.S. gateway. Effective March 25, it will fly four weekly non-stops between **Philadelphia and Dublin** using Boeing 757s. Aer Lingus is also going to daily service on both its Los Angeles and San Francisco routes.
- **Azul**, the Brazil-based airline, is resuming its Orlando-Belo Horizonte route after a gap of more than 18 months with three weekly flights starting December 3. Meanwhile, the Brazilian division of Star Alliance member **Avianca** is boosting its U.S. service to Sao Paulo. It launched a daily A330 flight from Miami in June and will add a daily nonstop from New York/JFK on December 15.

AIRPORT NEWS

- New security rules and procedures went into effect at the **Copenhagen Airport** on October 7. Now all travelers leaving the 26 nation Schengen Area must have passports scanned by the police. The new line reportedly moves slowly as officials verify identities against relevant data bases. Travelers are advised to allow extra time for the new procedure. Look for Schengen Area information [here](#).
- Health care has arrived at **Dallas/Fort Worth/DFW**. An "urgent care" center and pharmacy has opened in Terminal D opposite Gate D24 upstairs from the Cool River restaurant. Code 3, the medical company that runs the Terminal D center, is also planning to open a free-standing "emergency room" on the grounds of DFW at Southgate Plaza. Travelers are advised to know the difference in costs associated with each facility. Emergency room rates are typically higher than urgent care centers.
- **Dubai International Airport** has come up with a novel way for departing travelers to clear security. They'll do it by walking through a virtual aquarium lined with facial recognition cameras. The project is being developed in a partnership with the Emirates. Dubai International plans to install the first of these virtual walkways by the end of summer 2018 at Terminal 3, with other terminals following in phases until 2020. Read about it [here](#).
- American Express Platinum Card and Centurion Members now have exclusive access to that company's network of popular **Centurion Lounges**. Non-platinum card members will no longer have the option of paying a \$50 fee for day passes. According to a spokesperson, "Access is an exclusive benefit for American Express Platinum Card and Centurion Members. In an effort to support Card Member's questions surrounding overcrowding concerns, American Express has updated its policy to no longer offer day passes to other American Express Card Members."
- At **Chicago O'Hare**, **American Airlines** has cut the ribbon on [its second new Flagship Lounge](#). The first was opened at New York JFK some months ago. At ORD, the lounge, open 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily is in Terminal 3, in the crosswalk between Gates H6 and K6. Targeted for AA's international travelers at its primary gateway airports, the 17,000 square foot O'Hare Flagship Lounge is open to qualifying first and business class passengers, AAdvantage Executive Platinums, Platinums and Platinum Pros; AAdvantage ConciergeKey members; and Oneworld Emerald and Sapphire travelers.
- **Minneapolis-St. Paul/MSP** is the latest airport to install those new automated security lanes that some say speed up the TSA screening process by as much as 30 percent. MSP now has four of the new lanes [at the Terminal 1 south checkpoint](#), and will expand them to the north checkpoint next year.
- **Houston/Intercontinental** lost its **Korean Air** nonstop to **Seoul, South Korea** on October 10.

HOTEL UPDATES

- High-tech personalization of features, ranging from room lighting to TV choices, is accelerating as hotels strive for an edge against home-sharing options like Airbnb. More than 20 percent of hotels plan to incorporate "smart" conveniences, many involving voice commands.
- The DoubleTree by Hilton in downtown Atlanta will be renamed and redesigned in homage to the building's 1962 origins. The Americana will feature fluorescent-colored Igloo refrigerators, an Airstream trailer serving as a poolside restaurant and other touches reminiscent of the Americana Motor Hotel and its 1960s era.
- Awwwww. International travel can be lonely, which is why the Hotel Charleroi in Gosselies near the Brussels South Charleroi Airport provides guests with an optional companion: a pet goldfish, rented on a nightly basis for around \$4 US. Apparently the hotel has offered goldfish rentals for several years. "The idea was to surprise our guests," hotel manager David Dillen explained. "It's brilliant to see how people react to it. They smile, they take pictures to put on social media. We rent a few fish every week."

TOOLS, TIPS AND TECHNOLOGY

- **Uber and Lyft** have made some **changes at four California airports**: San Francisco International, Oakland International, Mineta San Jose International and Los Angeles International. They've rolled out a program called "Rematch," a new functionality that allows drivers to drop off AND pick up passengers simultaneously at the airport. In the past they could do one or the other, not both. Rematch requests will only be issued within the airport, to vehicles with confirmed drop-offs.
- This Forbes article suggests a number of apps that can help keep you safe as you travel. Read about them [here](#).
- [WeWork Companies](#) operates rental space worldwide for business travelers who need a desk, high-speed Wi-Fi, printers, and meeting rooms in 228 buildings in 53 cities and metro areas, including 23 in the U.S.
- If you're wondering about international tipping policies and practices, read [this](#).
- Even ultra-veteran travelers can fall victim to pickpockets. Here's [advice](#) from longtime travel writer Rick Steeves who learned what that's like in Paris.

BURKHALTER TOURS

*One of several cool things about the diverse travel offerings from our Burkhalter Tours staff is just that: The tours ARE diverse, with something for everyone. Another: the **Tour Previews** that typically take place at our Mineral Point Road headquarters. We've scheduled a couple of Previews featuring exciting destinations that definitely merit "bucket list" designations. Brief details below...don't wait to sign up!*

BEST OF GREECE - April 20 - 30, 2018

Step back in time in this country of ancient history and stunning archeological sites. Discover the origins of Greek gods and goddesses; explore their roles in early Greek culture. Learn how Greek civilizations laid the foundations for modern times. Tour highlights showcase the ancient best of this splendid country: Epidaurus, Mycenae, Sparta, Mystra, Olympia, Delphi, and Meteora—and much more! You'll find more and in-depth details by clicking on the brochure link below.

\$2,619 including air from Chicago, 9 nights hotel accommodations, several meals, admissions and extensive sightseeing, professional Cosmos Group Leader, luxury motorcoach and SO much more! See brochure details [here](#), call any Burkhalter office today (see phone list below) or e-mail Tours staff at [Burkhalter Tours](#). **Ask about \$50 off per person until October 18---Hurry!**

CALIFORNIA RAIL DISCOVERY - April 25 – May 1, 2018

This is a fascinating way to experience the beauty and vitality of California---on several popular train excursions---and more! Begin with two nights in always-exciting San Francisco: Fisherman's Wharf, Chinatown, Golden Gate Bridge and much more---including a San Francisco Bay Cruise. Explore Sausalito on your way to the Napa Valley on the Wine Train, and then explore the capital city, Sacramento, rich with Gold Rush stories. Board Amtrak to travel through the snowcapped Sierra Nevada Mountains on your way to Lake Tahoe. This tour is about beautiful scenery, fun modes of transportation, and lots of the best California has to offer along the way!

\$2,850 including air from Chicago, 6 nights first class accommodations in 3 locations, several meals, admissions and extensive sightseeing (plus an optional excursion to Muir Woods on Day 2), professional tour director and SO much more! See brochure details [here](#), call any Burkhalter office today (see phone list below) or e-mail Tours staff at [Burkhalter Tours](#). **Ask about \$100pp cash discount!**

UPCOMING TOUR PREVIEWS at 6501 Mineral Point Road, Madison:

South African Safari Adventure: Show date: **Tuesday, Oct. 24, 6:30pm** – Tour departs Sept. 2018.

Polar Bear Discovery – Show date: **Thursday, Nov. 9, 6:30pm** – Tour departs Oct. 2018.

Reservations are required: 800/566-9286; 608/833-1525 ext. 211 or 260 or 261 or email us at tours@burkhaltertravel.com

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, 17550 W.
Bluemound
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

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