

BURKHALTER TRAVEL NEWS: APRIL 2018

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LATEST NEWS

- **Passengers flying to and from London airports** are being warned to expect some delays as Britain upgrades its outdated air traffic control system. Since April 4, National Air Traffic Services (NATS) has completed two out of five planned transitions to EXCDS, a more efficient digital system affecting arrivals, departures and holding areas north of London, including aircraft heading to and from Heathrow, Luton, Stansted and London City airports. Check out Heathrow disruptions [here](#).
- Since April 4, **Eurostar** has been forced to [cancel a number of trains](#) to and from Paris, Lille and Brussels as French railway workers begin three months of **rolling strikes**. The industrial action, called in protest at French president Emmanuel Macron's attempts to modernize the country's economy, are also likely to disrupt services throughout the rest of the spring and into early summer. Unions plan to strike for two days in every five.
- **Air France** has also been on/off strike this month, with the last "scheduled date" on April 17th. Given the carrier's long-running propensity for strikes in various versions, it's best to check their website for current information. Also check out [this website](#) for the latest strike news affecting both air and trains.
- **In other strike news** Europe has been facing significant air travel disruption because of public-sector workers' strikes in Germany and France that affect some of the countries' main airports. Bottom line, check your international carriers' websites for news on the latest travel disruptions.
- **Great Lakes Airlines**, a once-robust regional carrier providing passenger service between Denver International Airport and airports across the West and Midwest, **suspended all of its scheduled flights** at the end of March. Great Lakes also connected Los Angeles International Airport and Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport to the Arizona cities of Prescott and Page.
- **US Customs and Border Protection** is making it easier to apply for its **Global Entry** programs by allowing travelers to undergo enrollment interviews on arrival in the U.S. The **Enrollment on Arrival program** doesn't require appointments though all application documentation must be done in advance, with notice received from Global Entry that the applicant is eligible for an interview. Details are [here](#).
- The **flu season** is waning, but advice for air travelers continues to post. [Read this](#).

AIRLINE UPDATES

ALASKA AIRLINES

- On April 25 Alaska will integrate Virgin America's reservation system with its own, providing "a single Alaska Airlines experience." With luck, the transition will be snafu-free, but to be on the safe side if you're flying Alaska that day/week, plan to arrive at the airport with time to spare.
- Alaska is decreasing the maximum dimensions allowed for carry-on baggage. Beginning June 4, carry-on items must measure 22 x 14 x 9 inches (including wheels and handles), a significant decrease from current measurements of 24 x 17 x 10 inches.
- Alaska Airlines edged out Delta to top the Annual Airline Quality rating. The study looks at four factors: percentage of bags mishandled, on-time arrivals, denied boardings and complaints to the Department of Transportation

AMERICAN AIRLINES

- American Airlines launched its new branded shuttle service on the 90-minute flight between [Chicago O'Hare and New York LaGuardia](#). AA has long operated more than a dozen flights a day in the market, but with no special treatment for passengers. Now, passengers will find dedicated check-in kiosks and ticketing desks at the airports, as well as special signage. The 15 daily weekday flights will use close-in gates at O'Hare's Terminal 3 H Concourse, and at the D Concourse in LGA's Terminal B. All flights use two-class 737s and all passengers can get free beer and wine.
- American Airlines and Columbia Metropolitan Airport, South Carolina, announced that the airline will double aircraft size and seating capacity on its flight between CAE and Dallas/Fort Worth beginning on June 7. AA will replace their 76-seat regional jets with 140-seat mainline aircraft for the two daily flights - usually flying in the afternoon and evening between CAE and Dallas.
- Golfers take note! American Airlines and the Hilton Head Island Airport/HHI are partnering to offer new 76-seat jet service aboard the Embraer 175 from Charlotte, NC beginning July 5, cutting down on travel times and offering passengers a more luxury option. The upgrade is possible because of a 5,000 foot runway extension project over the last three years. Town officials hope the runway project will allow for more direct flight services in the future. Current service via propeller planes will end July 4.

DELTA AIR LINES

- Last month, Delta [started working with DHS](#) to begin facial scans of passengers departing Atlanta/ATL as they board flights to Paris out of Gates E10 and E12, allowing travelers to decide whether or not they want to participate.

- Delta recently announced that payment-card information for about “several hundred thousand” airline customers **might have been exposed by a malware breach between September 26 and October 12, 2017** that also hit Sears and other companies. The malware attack might have exposed customer names, addresses, credit card numbers, card security codes and expiration dates. **NOTE:** The breach was restricted to transactions on Delta’s website. The carrier learned of the breach on March 28, 2018. There’s more [here](#).

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

- Southwest Airlines reports that the ongoing \$508 million makeover of its **Terminal 1 at Los Angeles International Airport** should finish up this year, tripling the retail and dining space and bringing 20 new eateries and stores to the facility. New concessions include LA-based vendors like Cassell’s Hamburgers, Trejo’s Tacos, and Urth Caffè. National brands opening in the terminal include Chick-Fil-A, Einstein’s Bagels and Pei Wei Asian Diner. New retail outlets include Kiehl’s skin care products, MAC Cosmetics, and The New Stand, which sells coffee, snacks, travel goods and new media. More [here](#).
- Southwest recently launched flights from Indianapolis International Airport to Austin, Texas.
- Consumer Reports readers — more than 52,000 of them that fly regularly — have voted. The respected consumer magazine’s new survey of the nation’s best and worst airlines ranked Dallas-based Southwest Airlines the best carrier in the survey for its economy class product, which is the only product it offers. Southwest scored an 85 for its economy cabin.

UNITED AIRLINES

- United Airlines is improving its personal device entertainment lineup by adding at least one free choice among its streaming options. The airline is also continuing to install in-seat power outlets and adding more "Accessible Entertainment" options for travelers with disabilities.
- United will reportedly discontinue its twice-daily United Express service between **Milwaukee and Cleveland** effective June 6.
- United is due to begin new United Express flights twice a day starting July 1 between [Newark and Presque Isle](#), Maine; and has just started new daily United Express service [to Lewisburg, West Virginia](#) — near the **Greenbrier Resort** — from both Chicago O’Hare and Washington Dulles.
- Several airlines, including United, are offering healthy living amenities, including access to the digital meditation service Headspace. Read about it [here](#).
- Consumers can now **earn and use United MileagePlus award miles at BP retail stations**. The program, launched in early March, is the only program in the U.S. that allows customers the ability to earn and use U.S. airline miles at the pump for gasoline purchases. More [here](#).

INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

- **Air Canada is the latest airline to [overhaul its fare structure](#) on North American routes**, adding a new “Basic” fare level as well as intermediate “Comfort” fares. Passengers buying Basic fares will have to pay extra for a checked bag, advance seat selection, and food and alcoholic drinks, and won’t be eligible for upgrades, changes or Aeroplan miles. Air Canada’s regular economy prices, previously called Tango fares, are now called Standard. The new Comfort fare category is just above the “Flex” fare level. Like Flex, it includes one checked bag and advance seat selection, but it also makes “preferred” seats available at no extra cost and includes free alcoholic drinks (food is extra), and allows buyers to change to another flight on the same day at no charge.
- **Mexican low-cost carrier Interjet** will introduce new service [from Leon/Guanajuato](#) on June 22 to both Houston Bush Intercontinental and San Antonio, offering daily flights on both routes.
- Beginning Sept. 1, **Qantas** passengers arriving in San Francisco from Sydney and Melbourne will be able to continue their journeys on codeshare partner Alaska Airlines, allowing them to use a single booking itinerary and earn frequent flyer points for the entire trip.
- Passengers on some **Cathay Pacific Airways** flights will face narrower economy class seats beginning as early as this month, as Hong Kong’s biggest carrier squeezes in more people to boost profits. They expect six retrofits to be completed by end of summer, starting with three-cabin aircraft, and all of their 777s including those that offer a first class cabin are expected to be updated by end of 2019. On the plus side they’re saying that the new tighter seating will offer bigger (11.6”) seat back video screens.
- **Etihad Airways** has collaborated with the Abu Dhabi department of health to introduce ‘Weqaya,’ a range of healthy food items, on-board its flights and in its lounges in the emirate. Starting this month, Etihad Airways will offer a number of dishes on menus in first and business class long-haul and ultra-long haul outbound flights from Abu Dhabi, as well as in its lounges in Abu Dhabi International Airport.
- Larger passengers and parents with infants have been **banned from flying business class on Thai Airways'** new Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners. The new 'Zodiac Cirrus' seats in Thai's Royal Silk class have been fitted with new airbag systems and safety belts that cannot extend around waists more than 56-inches. Typical safety belt extenders won’t work because the new airbags must be centered over the traveler's waist. Thai Airways took delivery of the two 787-900s in September to operate flights from Bangkok to Auckland and Taipei. The airline also plans to use the larger Dreamliner on longer flights to destinations including the U.S.
- A rumor is floating around Seattle that **Japan Airlines** is planning to start flying from **SEA to Tokyo Narita** late this year or early next year, using a 787 Dreamliner. Watch this space for details as they become available.

AIRPORT NEWS

- **Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International** is considering a **relocation of Uber and Lyft** passenger pick-up locations sometime later this year. Apparently many travelers are not pleased with the current long walk to access a ride service car in an economy parking lot. The airport moved Uber and Lyft to the distant pick-up spot to reduce vehicle congestion close to the terminals during construction of new curbside canopies currently ongoing at the Terminal North side. Airport officials said they expect to move Terminal North ride-share pick-ups closer in by this fall. The new location hasn't been determined.
- Skytrax has announced the **top 10 airports in the world** (there's not a U.S. airport among them):
1. **Singapore** Changi Airport; 2. Incheon International Airport (**Seoul**, South Korea); 3. **Tokyo** International Airport (Haneda); 4. **Hong Kong** International Airport; 5. Hamad International Airport (**Doha**, Qatar); 6. **Munich** Airport (Germany); 7. Chubu Centrair **Nagoya** (Japan); 8. **London** Heathrow Airport; 9. **Zurich** Airport (Switzerland); 10. **Frankfurt** Airport (Germany).
- If you're a traveler who likes to know what to expect at an airport lounge before a first visit, [this site](#) is a good resource. It's especially useful for international flights.
- The growing network of **American Express Centurion Lounges** is expected to add a location in the C Concourse at **Denver International**. AmEx currently operates the lounges, which are available free to its Platinum and Centurion Card holders, at Dallas/Ft. Worth, Houston Bush Intercontinental, Miami, Las Vegas, LaGuardia, San Francisco, Seattle and Philadelphia. AmEx has also opened a Melbourne, Australia location in its Global Lounge Collection – an American Express lounge in the airport's Terminal 2 at Satellite Level Departures.
- **Indianapolis International Airport** is adding new routes. As noted above, Southwest recently launched flights to Austin, TX; and Frontier Airlines will offer service to Philadelphia and Austin.
- **Stone Arch at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport** is a full-service restaurant with beers on tap that have been recognized by the Minnesota Brewer's Guild of craft brewers. Read about it [here](#).
- Following 2017, the busiest year in history with more than 1.8 million passengers, **Dane County Regional Airport/MSN** recently announced the kick-off of a multi-year project to update and expand the airport's terminal and infrastructure. Focus areas will include gate seating areas, restrooms, security, safety and access systems, and eco-responsible HVAC systems for bridges, seating and common areas, and additional jet boarding bridges.
- **Memphis International Airport has shut down most of its B Concourse** except for international arrival gates, requiring the relocation of Delta and Allegiant Airlines. Delta is now using six gates in the airport's A Concourse, while Allegiant has two gates in the C Concourse. More [here](#).

HOTEL UPDATES

- Speculation continues on what the combined **Marriott and Starwood loyalty programs** might look like. Here's recent information and best-guesses from [Business Insider](#). Marriott officials claim they're nearing an unveiling for a wholly unified loyalty platform. See that interview [here](#).
- Nearly a year after [Hilton revamped its loyalty program](#) to emphasize member spending, changes to Hilton Honors are ongoing. Hilton plans to increase point bonuses for elite members and add further incentives for super-elite travelers, among other changes.
- The opening of the **Radisson Gwalior** last month is touching off a string of Radisson hotel developments in **India** this year. Radisson will have in excess of 200 properties open or in its South Asia pipeline by 2022.
- **Marriott International's Moxy** is expanding its urban, cutting-edge brand in New York City with the upcoming openings of Moxy Downtown and Moxy Chelsea.

TOOLS, TIPS AND TECHNOLOGY

- A recent industry 2018 midyear update indicates that **airfare prices are moving up**, especially in high-demand markets. Meanwhile, the outlook for global hotel rates in 2018 remains largely unchanged.
- **Turbcast** is an iOS app designed **for people with a mild fear of flying**, as well as anyone looking for a better understanding of turbulence. It's one of several apps that can help calm nervous flyers. Read more [here](#).
- Because the **cleanliness of airport bathrooms** is important to travelers, Los Angeles International Airport officials are launching a pilot program that uses new technology to manage a restroom in one of its terminals. LAX officials are teaming up with two technology companies — Infax and Tooshlights — to install lights and digital gadgets that keep track of how often bathrooms are cleaned and let travelers know when a stall is in use or vacant.
- **Your phone has gone missing**. Now what? Here's a list of the five things you should do immediately if your phone is lost or stolen. [Read this](#).
- This inexpensive gadget can help **make long flights more tolerable**, especially when it's too hot in the aircraft. Check out the **Arctic Breeze Mobile Fan** [here](#).

BURKHALTER TOURS

Could there be two more diverse destinations? Branson, MO, the “Live Show Capital of the World” and Argentina with its intense beauty, enticing tango and gaucho cultures, and the mighty Andes. Both destinations are fascinating, beautiful, fun, and well worth visiting. Our Tours staff encourages you to explore the brochures (links are below) and decide which Tour---perhaps both??—to add to your Fall 2018 travel calendar. Questions? Call our Tours staff or any of our nine offices for details. You’ll find email links below and phone numbers on the following page.

ARGENTINA HIGHLIGHTS - October 31 - NOVEMBER 9, 2018

From the cosmopolitan capital of Buenos Aires to the grand glaciers of Patagonia, Argentina offers diversity and absolutely stunning beauty. In Buenos Aires, “the Paris of South America,” you’ll discover a city alive with European-influenced culture and the vibrant sounds and colors that reflect its distinctly Latin vibe. Revel in the city’s world-class museums, amazing architecture and lively nightlife---tango, anyone? For complete contrast, you’ll experience the incredible beauty of Bariloche, an impressive settlement in the Patagonian Andes often compared to the Swiss Alps, and the spectacular scenery in Los Glaciares National Park. Explore and experience the land of the gauchos. Argentina is a vibrant, diverse country. Memories of its remarkable beauty will linger long after you return home.

\$4,350.00 including (estimated) **air from Chicago**, three inter-country flights, 8 nights first class accommodations, buffet breakfast daily, loads of sightseeing, Monograms local hosts at each location, amazing photo ops, and SO much more! See brochure details [here](#), call any Burkhalter office TODAY or e-mail [Burkhalter Tours](#). **Ask about special offers and a Journeys Club discount!**

BRANSON HOLIDAY - November 14 - 18, 2018

Branson is back! By popular demand, we are bringing back this holiday-themed getaway! In addition to six great shows, you’ll also ride the rails on the Branson Scenic Railway, enjoy a lovely dinner cruise on beautiful Table Rock Lake aboard the Branson Belle, and explore the Dogwood Canyon Nature Park on a guided tram tour. Live entertainment features the Clay Cooper and Brett Family morning shows, an afternoon program headlined by Daniel O’Donnell, and evening entertainment featuring the Hughes Brothers, the Duttons, and the always-hilarious Jim Stafford. Branson is fun!

\$1,015 including deluxe motorcoach and professional tour manager, 4 nights at a downtown Branson hotel, several meals, extensive sightseeing, six live shows, and so much more! See brochure details [here](#), call any Burkhalter office TODAY or e-mail [Burkhalter Tours](#). **Ask us about discounts!**

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Fitchburg

3050 Cahill Main
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Prairie du Sac

180 Washington Street
608-643-4599/800-242-8457

Baraboo

141 Third Avenue
608-356-4999/800-660-8359

Stoughton

Chalet Travel, 226 S. Forrest
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Brookfield

Olson Travel, 17550 W.
Bluemound
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Dubuque IA

Travel Headquarters, 2095 JFK Rd
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