

## BURKHALTER TRAVEL NEWS: JANUARY 2018

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## LATEST NEWS

- **HEADS UP!** Important if you keep **proprietary information on electronic devices**: “Our electronic devices are being seized and searched in record numbers ... U.S. Customs and Border Protection inspected 30,200 phones, tablets and laptops in 2017, up about 60 percent from 19,051 devices in 2016. If you refuse to surrender your password, the government decided last week that [Customs can keep your device.](#)”
- **The ban on “smart” suitcases** (those containing lithium batteries) is now officially in place on many domestic and international carriers. Here’s an update from the [Washington Post](#).
- The TSA is also reinforcing its rule that **all electronics larger than a cell phone must go into screening bins**. (TSA Pre-Check members are exempt from this rule).
- The **Real ID Act deadline** has been delayed---the “official” date for full compliance or state extensions was January 22. Now, all 50 states are either compliant or have applied for extensions, according to the Department of Homeland Security/DHS. The TSA now lists Oct. 1, 2020, as the final deadline for Real ID compliance when all travelers must provide a compliant drivers license or another acceptable form of identification, which includes U.S. passports, trusted traveler cards and permanent resident cards.
- **Hyatt has revised its standard cancellation policy** effective January 1, 2018 that applies to reservations made or changed after that date. The new minimum cancellation policy is **48 hours** to avoid a cancellation fee. They add: “Because each Hyatt hotel may continue to set its own cancellation policy based on local market dynamics and expectations, we always encourage guests to check the cancellation policy at the time of booking.” **Ask your Burkhalter agent for details.**
- **The U.S. State Department has revamped its warnings** about the risks of traveling to other countries, in an effort to make them easier to understand. The department changed the phrasing from previous warnings and alerts, which some travelers found confusing, to a colored-number [system of advisories](#) with more specific descriptions and rankings. The dynamic mapping application is updated daily.
- Effective April 2018, **American Express will no longer require signatures** for Amex purchases. There’s more [here](#).

# AIRLINE UPDATES

## ALASKA AIRLINES

- **Virgin America** is now officially dead. Alaska Airlines, which bought the 10-year-old carrier in 2016, now has a single operating certificate for the two entities. All former Virgin flights are now marketed as Alaska Airlines, though you'll still see Airbus aircraft in Virgin livery and with Virgin's distinctive white seating for some time.
- Alaska Airlines recently launched new nonstop service between San Francisco International Airport and Hawaii's Kailua-Kona International Airport.

## AMERICAN AIRLINES

- What can a flight attendant do when confronted by an unhappy traveler at 30,000 feet in the air? American Airlines just came up with a solution, empowering flight attendants to dole out frequent flier miles on the spot to passengers who run into problems, such as an entertainment system that isn't working or a meal that's not available as ordered. The number of miles depends on the severity of the problem and the length of the flight. Passengers who don't have AA frequent flyer accounts will have to give the flight attendant their email address to receive some other form of compensation. Delta has had a similar program for about five years.
- On December 15 American Airlines launched seasonal service from Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport to Rio de Janeiro. The flights are available on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays through Feb. 11, 2018.
- If you think main/main+ cabin airline seats are too tight now, you won't be happy to learn that American Airlines is going to 10-abreast seating (from nine) in Main Cabin Extra on its 777-300s. This is in addition to the deployment of their tightly configured Boeing 737 MAX aircraft.

## DELTA AIR LINES

- Delta Air Lines was named the **world's most on-time airline in 2017** with an on-time performance of 85.9 percent – the first U.S.-based airline to win the global airline category since the awards were created.
- Delta expanded code-sharing with its transpacific partner Korean Air on January 10, [putting the DL code](#) onto **Korean's flights to Seoul Incheon** from **Los Angeles** and **Las Vegas**.
- **Delta CEO Ed Bastian** discusses the airline's **priorities for 2018** as well as the "whys and whens" of routes and alliances. Read it [here](#).

## **SOUTHWEST AIRLINES**

- Southwest Airlines joined the movement to **restrict smart bags with non-removable lithium batteries**, following similar guidelines announced by fellow U.S. carriers Delta Air Lines, American Airlines, United and Alaska Airlines in December. Effective Jan. 15, 2018, Southwest no longer accepts smart bags if the lithium battery cannot be removed. Smart bags are recently introduced luggage products that utilize integrated lithium batteries that power embedded electronics, such as USB ports for recharging personal electronic devices (PEDs), self-weighting technology and even motors that power the bag's wheels and allow it to keep up with its owner.
- According to news reports, Southwest Airlines is settling a class-action lawsuit that accused the company and three of its competitors of collusion. A federal judge has approved a \$15 million settlement between Southwest Airlines and members of a class-action lawsuit who allege that the company, along with three other airlines, conspired to limit the number of seats available to customers and keep ticket prices high.

## **UNITED AIRLINES**

- Likely to choruses of “Finally!” United announced to staff on January 18 that they have an **international Premium Economy Class** in the works. The staff memo reads: “International premium economy is coming. Later this year, we’ll begin to introduce United’s Premium Plus. Available on select international flights, United® Premium Plus will give you more space, comfort and amenities. The seats will be more spacious and you’ll enjoy upgraded dining on china dinnerware, free alcoholic beverages, a Saks Fifth Avenue blanket and pillow, an amenity kit and more.” Unlike domestic premium economy cabins, United's Premium Plus will be a full scale international premium economy product with extended leg room, unique seats and upgraded service.”
- In keeping with plans to expand service to “hundreds of destinations,” the carrier announced several new routes, including daily Madison/MSN to San Francisco/SFO and Appleton, WI/ATW to Denver/DEN. Flights launch June 7.
- In addition to the new Wisconsin flights, United Airlines recently announced it will begin service between domestic hubs and destinations in California, Ohio, North Dakota, South Dakota and Virginia. Details are [here](#).

## **INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES**

**Hong Kong Airlines**, a Hong Kong-based sister company of China’s Hainan Airlines, this week started service to the U.S. for the first time. The carrier is using a new Airbus A350-900 on the **Los Angeles-Hong Kong** route, configured with 33 lie-flat business class seats, 109 premium economy seats with 34-inch pitch, and 193 regular economy seats with 31-32 inch pitch.

- In October, **Kenya Airways** will begin daily service between **Nairobi** and **New York/JFK**, the carrier's first nonstop service to the Americas. The FAA granted Kenya a Category 1 safety rating last year, signifying the country's aviation authority meets international standards.
- **Lufthansa** is rolling out its new Airbus A350s on three North American routes to **Munich** and that will also mean the end of first class service on those routes. Effective March 25, the A350 will fly the **Newark-Munich** route. The **Denver-Munich** and **Vancouver-Munich** routes get the plane later in the year. Lufthansa's A350s don't have first class cabins. They are equipped with 48 business class beds, 21 premium economy seats and 224 coach seats.
- **Qantas Airways'** latest Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner is under construction at Boeing. It will be the fourth Boeing 787-9 for the carrier. Registered as VH-ZND, it will celebrate Australia's indigenous peoples with a new special livery. It is due to be unveiled in February and will arrive in Australia in March. Check out photos of the colorful new and past Qantas liveries [here](#).

## AIRPORT NEWS

- **San Francisco International Airport's** new 3,241-square-foot Manufactory Food Hall, located in the international terminal, will feature dining options offering some of the same dishes available in local three-star restaurants. Read the details in this [Forbes article](#).
- Since construction began in 2010, we have reported on the status of **Berlin, Germany's Brandenburg Airport**. Is it finally open? Nope, it's still under construction. But if you're in Berlin and curious enough, you can now take a tour of the work-in-progress facility. Or check out an audio report of that experience [here](#). The current projected opening date? Sometime in 2020. Airport officials are currently discussing a "soft opening" that would not include the main terminal. There's more about that [here](#).
- **St. Louis/Lambert** has opened its first common-use airport club. The Wingtips Lounge is located in Terminal 2 across from Gate E31. It accepts **Priority Pass** for entry; otherwise single visits cost \$38.
- **If Scotch is your thing**, you're in luck if you're transiting Concourse D in **Miami International Airport**, the location of the first Johnnie Walker store in the United States. The 1,100-square-foot shop near Gate D14 sells the rainbow of Johnnie Walker-branded labels, plus several single-malt brands owned by Diageo, the parent company of the globally famous blended Scotch. The shop also offers custom labeling and engraving services. Note: You can only purchase bottles if you are leaving the country on an international flight. Domestic travelers? Sorry---tastings only.
- **Phoenix/Sky Harbor** has added a branch of a local dining favorite. [Pita Jungle](#) is now open near the B Gates in Terminal 4. **Hint:** Check out the jalapeno cilantro hummus.

## HOTEL UPDATES

- Maryland-based Marriott International has opened **Delta Hotels by Marriott Shanghai Baoshan** in **China**. The 339-room hotel is the first of Marriott's fast-growing Delta brand to open in the Asia-Pacific region, bringing the brand's motto of "Simple Made Perfect" to the thriving market.
- **Wyndham** and Nebula Infraspaces have agreed to develop at least 20 **Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham** properties in **India** over the next decade.
- Hotels are testing **Amazon's Echo digital personal assistant device** in rooms as an automated way to provide information that was once provided by staff, such as dining recommendations. "We have tested Amazon Alexa in-room at the W Austin, and the consumer feedback was overwhelmingly positive," says Marriott.
- The newly renovated **Hutton Hotel in Nashville** features a music venue and bar called Analog that exudes a living-room feel with space for 300 people and visits by standout performers. Analog joins other distinctive Hutton amenities, such as two songwriter rooms and a three-bedroom suite designed with musicians and their families in mind.
- First Hospitality Group Inc. (FHG) is bringing a Curio Collection by **Hilton hotel** to **Chicago's** iconic **Navy Pier**, the popular destination's first-ever hotel in its 100-year-plus history. Set to begin construction this month, the 222-room property is slated to open in 2019 adjacent the 170,000-sq.-ft. Festival Hall exhibition space at the eastern end of the pier. More [here](#).
- Last year saw the greatest increase in hotel rooms in the **Madison, Wis., area** since 2008, the Greater Madison Convention & Visitors Bureau reported. Growth has been steady over the period, and the 401 rooms added in 2017 brought the region's total to 9,821.
- **World of Hyatt** is improving benefits for elite members. Effective immediately, award stays now qualify toward elite status. Moreover, the free night award you receive when you reach the 50,000- or 100,000-point level in a year are now valid for 180 days instead of 120 days.
- More technology, fees and the loss of the traditional turn-down service are among **hotel trends to watch** in 2018, according to a panel of industry insiders. Read the Bloomberg article [here](#).
- Hotels are increasingly partnering with food-delivery services such as Grubhub, DoorDash and UberEATS, bringing additional meal options right to guests' doors. "There's a tremendous amount more variety available through delivery than a hotel could possibly hope to match or offer," said industry consultant Aaron Allen.
- Beginning April 1, general **Hilton Honors members** will see significant changes to the points system (among them, "double dipping" is out). The changes are detailed [here](#).

## TOOLS, TIPS AND TECHNOLOGY

- **Apple Maps** now includes detailed indoor maps of more than 30 airports around the world, including most major U.S. cities, London, Hong Kong and Berlin. Look [here](#).
- Most business travelers do not follow their **fitness and wellness routines** while traveling for work, according to a Business Travel News survey. Forty percent of respondents tried to stick to their fitness routines, and 54 percent of those acknowledged their exercise and wellness routines were disrupted when traveling. [Keep Reading](#)
- Scientists at Stanford University in California are **researching light therapy to counteract jet lag** and its effects. They say “Using exposure to brief flashes of light during sleep, we can rapidly change the timing of this [circadian] clock, both during travel and in advance of travel, greatly reducing the number of days it takes to adapt to a new time zone.”
- If you were not among the 180,000+ who attended the **Consumer Electronics Show (CES)** in Las Vegas earlier this month, here’s travel/technology columnist David Rowell’s take on the [highlights](#).
- President Donald Trump's administration is cracking down on the [visa waiver program](#) that allows citizens of 38 countries to travel to the U.S. for less than 90 days without needing to apply for a visa. The U.S. will require countries to screen their travelers for potential threats by using U.S. counterterrorism data in addition to their own national data. Participating countries will also need to screen their airport workers for potential threats, according to a [press release from the Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\)](#).
- Airlines have a lot of rules, and several of them can make travel a lot more difficult. Columnist Christopher Elliott took advantage of an opportunity to **ask several airline executives** why they do what they do. (Our favorite: The “non-answer” on boarding procedures). Look [here](#).
- **British Airways passengers** will no longer be able to recline their seats on short-haul flights. The national flag-carrier is planning to emulate budget airlines later this year with a fleet of 35 planes that do not have reclining seats in economy class. The new planes will be used for flights of up to four hours, which means that passengers traveling as far as North Africa may have to sit upright for the duration of their journey. The seats will be set at an angle described by the airline as a "gentle recline."
- According to the BBC, there are four ways you can **train your brain to cope with heavy travel**. Read about them [here](#).

## BURKHALTER TOURS

### ON-STAGE ALASKA SHOW - WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31!

The always popular On-Stage Alaska Show will take place **Wednesday, January 31** at the Marriott on Greenway Blvd. in Middleton! Reception at 6:00 pm (\$5 at the door). Special limited-time show offers! Presentation begins at 6:30 pm sharp. Space is Limited and **RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED. RSVP by Friday, January 26.** Call Kelly at 608/833-9339 or 800/556-9286 ext. 211 or email [tours@burkhaltertravel.com](mailto:tours@burkhaltertravel.com). **Note:** Travelers in southwest Wisconsin and the greater Dubuque, Iowa area are invited to attend our **Tuesday, January 30** Alaska Show – Dubuque, IA Diamond Jo Casino, 301 Bell Street. Contact Kelly for reservations!

### GEYSERS TO GLACIERS - July 4 - 14, 2018

On this exceptional journey through national parks in Wyoming and Idaho you'll explore breathtaking glacial lakes, rugged mountains, stunning waterfalls. You'll overnight in beautiful cities like Salt Lake City, Utah; Jackson, Wyoming; Helena, Montana (the heart of "Big Sky Country") and Spokane and Seattle, Washington. Discover wildlife—bison, bighorn sheep, elk and antelope, and marvel at the unsurpassed beauty of nature in places like Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. A trip for all the senses!

**\$2,850** including air from Chicago, 10 nights first class accommodations, extensive sightseeing and outstanding photo ops, several meals, a professional Cosmos Group Leader, luxury motorcoach, and lots more! See brochure details [here](#), call any Burkhalter office TODAY or e-mail [Burkhalter Tours](#). **Ask about single pricing, special offers, and a Journey's Club discount!**

### BEST OF NORWAY - July 15 - 22, 2018

It's everything that makes Norway a must-see destination! Deep-blue fjords, breathtaking mountains, glistening glaciers and tumbling waterfalls. Our tour begins in Oslo with a city tour that reveals treasures like Frogner Park and the Royal Palace. We'll drive through the world's longest road tunnel before arriving in the picturesque village of Flam. Ride the Flam Railway through 20 tunnels with an ascent of 2,833 feet into the mountains. Ride a local ferry across Hardangerfjord—the fourth longest fjord in the world---and stay in the historic hotel where Edvard Grieg wrote his most famous works. Our grand finale includes two nights in Bergen!

**\$3,830** including (estimated) air from Chicago with taxes and fees, six nights accommodations, several meals, *lots* of sightseeing, Professional Tour Director and local guides in every city---and SO much more! See all the brochure details [here](#), call any Burkhalter office TODAY or e-mail [Burkhalter Tours](#). **Ask about single pricing, special offers, and a Journey's Club discount!**

## 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

### **Dubuque IA**

Travel Headquarters, 2095 JFK Rd  
563-588-3456/800-383-0563

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*Burkhalter Travel News is researched, edited, and written by [Betty W. Stark](#)*

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