

CheapAir.com Study: The Best Time to Buy Airline Tickets

Analysis of 1.3 billion airfares identifies 5 booking “zones” to save money on travel

Calabasas, CA (March 9, 2016) – CheapAir.com’s latest airfare study has not only revealed the best time to buy airline tickets, but also for the first time identified 5 booking zones to help travelers plan trips and save money. In addition, for the first time ever, [CheapAir.com](#) has made this airfare analysis and Prime Booking Window™ data available for nearly all U.S. cities in an industry-first, interactive “[When to Buy Flights](#)” page.

After analyzing 1.3 billion airfares from 2015, CheapAir.com found that, on average, the best time to buy a domestic flight is 54 days in advance. The study included 1,336,030,117 airfares for roughly 3 million different trips across every day of the year. The team defined a “trip” as an itinerary going from Point A to Point B on a specific date with a specific return date. For each trip, CheapAir identified the lowest fare offered every day from 320 days in advance until 1 day in advance.

“54 days is a good number to start with, but it’s important to know that every trip is different,” said Jeff Klee, CEO of CheapAir.com. “That’s why we have what we call the ‘Prime Booking Window’ which is between 21 and 112 days before departure. For most domestic trips, the best time to buy will be somewhere in that range. But because different markets have different dynamics, we now also provide the Prime Booking Window for the specific city you want to visit.” CheapAir’s analysis includes thousands of popular markets.

Klee added, “Generally, a trip price starts off high, slowly drops and then starts to climb a few weeks before the flight. People ask all the time if it’s true that at the last minute the airlines have unsold seats that they practically ‘give away’, but that’s rarely the case. Fares usually go up dramatically within 14 days of the flight.”

To help travelers navigate the airfare market, CheapAir.com has divided the 11-month booking window into five “zones.” Here’s what travelers should know about each one.

First Dibs (197 - 335 days out): Most airlines begin selling tickets 335 days before the flight. First Dibbers get their pick of flight times, nonstop options and seats. However, they pay an average of \$50 more than they would during the “[Prime Booking Window](#).”

Peace of Mind (113 – 196 days out): The Peace of Mind zone offers a balance between flight options and price. Travelers pay an average of \$20 more per ticket than they would in the Prime Booking Window, but also have more flight options to choose from.

Prime Booking Window (21 – 112 day out): This is the zone for bargain hunters. During these 90 days, fares fluctuate a lot, sometimes day to day. Travelers are urged to check for [cheap airline tickets](#) frequently during this period and to buy when a bargain pops up.

Push Your Luck (14 – 20 days out): In the period between two and three weeks out, fares can vary dramatically. Depending on how full flights are, travelers may get a fantastic deal, or they may pay

significantly more. Popular flights during peak seasons are less likely to have low fares in this zone.

Hail Mary (0 – 13 days out): On rare occasions, the Hail Mary zone offers the best rate. However, 7-13 days out, travelers pay an average of \$75 over the Prime Booking Window. 1-6 days in advance, that premium shoots up to \$200.

Visit the CheapAir.com blog for more details on the study, and the [When to Buy Airline Tickets](#) page for an interactive look at the Prime Booking Window for your city.

About CheapAir ®

Headquartered in Calabasas, CA, CheapAir and its team of 90 travel enthusiasts use cutting edge technology, a boatload of airfare data, and superior customer service to make it easier and less stressful to buy affordable airline tickets. Our proprietary airfare shopping engine uses a patented algorithm that scours the web for the lowest prices on the planet. We show fares and flight options in a simple, easy to navigate display that includes which flights have which inflight amenities. For expert travel advice, deals and inspiration connect with [CheapAir on Facebook](#), [CheapAir on Google+](#) and [CheapAir on Twitter](#). CEO Jeff Klee started CheapAir in 1989 from his college dorm room after getting a crash course in the airline industry trying to plan a backpacking trip through Europe on a student's budget. CheapAir.com still takes a creative approach to fare finding and, along with its sister company, Amtrav for Business Travelers, has helped over three million people buy plane tickets with confidence.

###