

The Booking Process

Do your research

Before booking, do some preliminary research. Check the rewards chart with the airline you have points with. See how many you need. Do some itinerary checks to see what flights are available and what options you have for stopovers and open-jaws (if applicable). Note: Just because a stopover you want isn't on the given itinerary doesn't mean it's not possible.

Check multiple websites for potential itineraries

Do a search on popular flight search engines (Kayak, Skyscanner, etc) as well to see different options and if there is a seat sale. If there is a crazy seat sale, consider paying for the flight and using the points for a later, more expensive flight. Note: Kayak allows you to search by airline alliance, which can help you figure out flights that match your airline reward system.

Try to book it yourself

Before calling the airline, try booking it yourself. Many trips are simple to book using the airlines online reward booking system. Many of them allow you to also include a stopover. However, if the trip is complicated (open-jaws, multiple stopovers, etc), you will need to call in.

Know your options

If you can't book it online or if the flight you want isn't available, try calling in. However, you should know all (or most) of your

options. Have your dates in mind, nearby airports, and different connections and potential stopovers before making the call. This will help save you time.

Always be polite

The airline agent can make or break your travel plans so it's always a good idea to be polite. Let them know that your trip is important but always be patient. If the agent seems unhelpful, simply thank them for their time and call back. I've done this many times and eventually, you'll land an incredible agent who can probably make your trip happen.

Consider other options

If you're looking for an economy seat, try looking for business or first class. Sometimes there might be availability in one class and not in the other. You could also consider one-ways if one segment of your desired trip just isn't working out. Another option is flying into a less popular airport and then taking a cheap flight or other transportation to your desired location.