

Hidden city ticketing

Hidden city ticketing occurs when a passenger disembarks an indirect flight at the connection node. Flight fares are subject to market forces, and therefore do not necessarily correlate to the distance flown. As a result, a flight between point A to point C, with a connection node at point B, might be cheaper than a flight between point A and point B. It is then possible to purchase a flight [ticket](#) from point A to point C, disembark at the connection node (B) and discard the remaining segment (B to C).

Using the hidden city tactic is usually practical only for one-way trips, as the airlines will cancel the subsequent parts of the trip once a traveler has disembarked. Thus, round-trip itineraries need to be created by piecing two one-way flights together. This tactic also requires that the traveler have [carry-on luggage](#) only, as any [checked baggage](#) items will be unloaded only at the flight's ticketed final destination.^[1] Exceptions to this requirement are when re-entering a country where luggage must be processed by [customs](#) agents or when changing [airports](#) or [train](#) travel is involved in the flight ticket. This allows for a traveler to reclaim their luggage but before rechecking for their final destination, the traveler can simply leave the airport.^[2] Hidden-city ticketing also carries the risk of the initial flight being overbooked or cancelled and the airline changing the passenger to a different route that bypasses the hidden city.^[3]

While technically legal, this strategy violates most airlines' fare rules.^[4] (A notable exception is Southwest Airlines, whose fare rules do not specifically prohibit the practice.)^[citation needed] Someone doing it infrequently is unlikely to be pursued by the airline, but some frequent fliers have reported losing their [frequent flier](#) accounts, or at least being threatened with such a loss.^[citation needed] Experienced fliers recommend that if doing it more than very occasionally, passengers not associate their frequent flier numbers with reservations using the hidden city trick. Alternatively, one could consider crediting the miles to a partner airline.^[5] In 2014, [United Airlines](#) and [Orbitz](#) have filed a lawsuit against search engines dedicated to finding hidden city tickets alleging damages from lost revenues.^[6]

Fuel Dump

Fuel dump is the process of removing fuel surcharge from paid tickets by combining the main route with one or more "strike" flight that is not intended to fly. The most useful and wide-used strike, 3X, or third strike, is a flight that you tack onto the end of your itinerary that you don't actually fly. The 3X eliminates the fuel surcharge - YR/YQ (by some airline oversight), so if you find a 3X cheaper than the YR/YQ, you save the difference between the two.

Throwaway ticketing

Throwaway ticketing is the practice of purchasing a ticket with the intent to use only a portion of the included travel. This situation may arise when a passenger wants to travel only one way, but where the discounted round-trip excursion fare is cheaper than a one-way ticket. This can happen on mainline carriers where all one-way tickets are full price. For instance a passenger only intending to fly from [Los Angeles](#) to [New York](#) may find the one-way ticket costs \$800, but that the round-trip fare is \$500. The passenger therefore purchases the round trip from Los Angeles to New York and back to Los Angeles, boards the flight to New York, but stays in New York and "throws away" the second half of the ticket by not showing up for the return flight. It is advised that passengers throw away the *second* half, because throwing away the first half by not showing up for the outbound trip will often lead to the airline canceling the entire reservation.^[7]

Back-to-back ticketing

Back-to-back ticketing is a type of **nested ticketing** where a traveler tries to circumvent minimum stay requirements. For example, say a traveler wants to make two round trips midweek. At one time, airlines typically charged more for midweek round trips than trips that involved a [Saturday-night stay](#). This ploy allows the traveler to book two round-trip tickets with Saturday stays even though the actual travel is all midweek. If a business traveler wanted to make two round trips from New York to Los Angeles in two consecutive weeks, the traveler could book a round trip leaving New York Monday of week 1 and returning to New York Friday of week 2. Then the traveler could book a second round-trip ticket in the opposite direction, leaving Los Angeles on Friday of week 1 and return to Los Angeles Monday of week 2. In week 1, the traveler flies the first leg of the first ticket, then returns home on the first leg of the second ticket. The following week the traveler flies from New York to Los Angeles again, this time on the second leg of the second ticket, and finally returns to New York on the second leg of the first ticket.

Within North America, the usefulness of this strategy has diminished materially, as most airlines have abandoned the discount for a Saturday-night stay-over for these types of trips. However, many intercontinental round-trip tickets still have minimum length of stay requirements. Back-to-back ticketing is useful with tickets when there is a minimum length of stay on the discount (e.g. 7 days), and the traveler needs to stay only in the destination for a shorter period of time.

Legal status

Airlines are strongly opposed to booking ploys for financial reasons. Other reasons cited by airlines include "public-safety" concerns, but these are usually not explained.^[8] Many airlines have established means of identifying and penalizing travelers who take advantage of such tactics, most notably through their [frequent flier programs](#).^[9]

When a traveler is shown to have practiced such methods, airlines may respond by confiscating tickets, canceling frequent flier status, and billing travel agents for the fare difference.

Airlines contend that booking ploys are an unethical practice. However, even though booking ploys might be a breach of contract and against airline rules, such endeavors are not considered illegal.^[1]