

NOMAD UPFRONT

Business Class & Beyond

The 2026 Award Sweet Spots

Ten redemptions worth the seat — for the traveller based anywhere but America.

A working list, not a brochure. Each of these is bookable through a currency you can actually earn from London, Dubai, Singapore, Hong Kong or Frankfurt — no US credit card required, no Chase Sapphire to chase.

How the seat is won

The best of premium travel is rarely told to you by the airline. It sits in the seam between a partner award and a transferable currency — the routing the booking engine buries, the chart not yet devalued, the window that opens for the half of the world that does not bank in dollars. Ten redemptions that still earn their miles in 2026: eight in business, two in first.

THE MILES	THE RATING	THE CATCH
One-way unless marked. Program-rule figures; availability and surcharges vary by date and season.	Our own — value against effort, cabin against cost. Five is a redemption we plan a trip around.	What the chart will not tell you. Read it before you book.

BUSINESS — THE CABIN YOU BOARD

Hong Kong → Tokyo 33,000

ASIA MILES · J

CATHAY PACIFIC · ASIA MILES ★★★★★

Strong Saver value across near Asia, off-peak — the short-haul redemption Hong Kong keeps to itself. No US guide covers it; their reader cannot earn the currency.

Abu Dhabi → Singapore 44,000

ETIHAD GUEST · J

ETIHAD · ETIHAD GUEST ★★★★★

Fair, not spectacular, after a run of quiet devaluations — but the cabin holds up and the route is convenient from the Gulf. One to watch: the chart has moved before, and may again.

Singapore → Tokyo 54,500

KRISFLYER · J

SINGAPORE AIRLINES · KRISFLYER ★★★★★

Singapore's own business at the Saver level — among the best-value seats in near Asia, and no fuel surcharge on SQ metal. Saver space is limited, so book early.

Istanbul → Tokyo 65,000

MILES&SMILES · J

TURKISH AIRLINES · MILES&SMILES ★★★★★

Star Alliance value through a generous chart. The catch is the booking itself — the website is temperamental, and partner space sometimes lives only on the phone line. Worth the call.

Sydney → Singapore 72,000

QANTAS · J

QANTAS · FREQUENT FLYER ★★★★★

A fixed-chart Classic Reward with award seats guaranteed at schedule open — the antidote to dynamic pricing. Earnable far from the US, on Qantas and its oneworld partners.

Frankfurt → Tokyo 80,000

AEROPLAN · J

AIR CANADA · AEROPLAN ★★★★★

A distance-based chart with no fuel surcharges on most partners — where the real saving hides. A stopover costs almost nothing; Aeroplan rewards the traveller who plans the routing.

BUSINESS — THE LONG-HAUL

London → Bangkok · off-peak

85,000

AVIOS · J

QATAR AIRWAYS · AVIOS / PRIVILEGE CLUB

★★★★★

The Q-Suite is the best business cabin flying, and Avios through Privilege Club is the discreet door to it — about 42,500 a leg off-peak, via Doha. No fuel surcharge on Qatar metal; taxes and a per-segment fee apply.

Tokyo → London · return

88,000

ANA · J · ROUND TRIP

ANA · MILEAGE CLUB

★★★★★

ANA issues round trips only, and the round-trip price for long-haul business is exceptional. Watch the seasonal bands — the low window is where this becomes the best redemption here.

FIRST — THE OCCASIONAL REACH

First is what business is to economy: a tier up, taken now and then, earned with miles rather than cash — and, increasingly, gated. Both seats below ask for status or patience. We make first dreamable. We never make it the default.

Dubai → London

85,000

SKYWARDS · F

EMIRATES · SKYWARDS

★★★★★

The A380 shower suite, and the most sensible use of a Skywards balance for the Gulf-based reader. Two catches now: Emirates limits first-class awards to Skywards elites, and the surcharges out of Dubai are steep. With status, the maths still works.

Singapore → Sydney

100,000

KRISFLYER · F

SINGAPORE AIRLINES · SUITES (A380)

★★★★★

Suites at the Saver level — a private room at thirty-eight thousand feet. The price is fair; the availability is the wall. Saver Suites are waitlisted on most dates, so you plan a year out and pounce the night the window opens.

A sweet spot is a moving thing. We keep watch so you don't have to.

Every figure on this sheet is a program-rule estimate, checked against the source before each edition. Charts devalue, windows shift, surcharges creep. The list you are holding is a snapshot — useful for months, not forever.

That is what the newsletter is for. Once a week, three or four notes: a window that opened, a quiet partner change worth knowing, the occasional hotel that earns its rate on an unfashionable detail. No deal pumping. No US credit cards you cannot get. Written by someone who flies these cabins, from a global hub — for the half of the world the points media forgot.

Keep the list current. Read the weekly.

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