

AVIATION

Southwest Airlines details benefits of new fare category

By Donna M. Airoidi, Business Travel News | Mar 24, 2022



Southwest plans to begin rolling out the Wanna Get Away Plus fare late in the second quarter. Photo Credit: Stephen M. Keller/Southwest

Southwest Airlines' upcoming new fare category will credit Southwest Rapid Rewards loyalty members with eight points for each dollar spent on a ticket.

It will also offer benefits like same-day confirmed changes and standby lists at no cost.

The new fare category, announced in December, will sit between the Wanna Get Away and Anytime categories and will be called Wanna Get Away Plus.

"We are not taking anything away from the Wanna Get Away product," Southwest COO Andrew Watterson stressed during a media briefing. "The outcome is to have four quality fare products with sell-up in between them."

Southwest still plans to begin rolling out the Wanna Get Away Plus fare late in the second quarter, but executives would not specify further nor release price points for the fare.

Fare benefits				
	Business Select*	Anytime	NEW Wanna Get Away <i>plus</i> .	Wanna Get Away*
Rapid Rewards® earning formula	12x fare	10x fare	8x fare	6x fare
Two bags fly free ¹	✓	✓	✓	✓
No fees to change ² or cancel ³	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flight credit if you cancel (for up to 12 months) ⁴	✓	✓	✓	✓
Transferable flight credit for Rapid Rewards members ⁵	NEW ✓	NEW ✓	NEW ✓	N/A
Same-day confirmed change ⁶	✓	✓	NEW ✓	Fare difference may apply
Same-day standby list ⁶	✓	✓	NEW ✓	Fare difference may apply
Refundable ⁷	✓	✓	N/A	N/A
Priority and Express Lanes ⁸	✓	NEW ✓	N/A	N/A
Automatic check-in ⁹	A1-A15 Priority boarding	NEW EarlyBird [®] included	\$	\$
Premium Drink (on flights 176 miles or more) ¹⁰	✓	\$	\$	\$

The eight points per dollar falls between the six points per dollar awarded for Wanna Get Away and the 10 points per dollar for Anytime fares. Wanna Get Away fares also offer same-day confirmed changes and standby lists, but a fare difference could apply.

As with the Wanna Get Away fare, the Plus fare will include two free checked bags, no change or cancellation fees, and a flight credit for up to 12 months for a cancellation.

An additional benefit for Rapid Rewards members using Wanna

Get Away Plus is the ability to transfer the flight credit one time to another Rapid Rewards member, said Jonathan Clarkson, Southwest's vice president of marketing, loyalty and products.

"It's a unique benefit as part of a bundled fare," he said, adding that "there are occasions for businesses where an employee is taking a trip and the company now wants another person to go, so they can give that credit."

Southwest also has added such transferability to the Anytime and Business Select fares. The airline currently does not plan other changes to the Business Select product when the Wanna Get Away Plus fare launches.

New Anytime benefits, however, will include priority and express lane access. Southwest also will build its EarlyBird early check-in product into Anytime fares as opposed to offering it for purchase as an ancillary. EarlyBird usually is priced between \$15 and \$25, depending on the route, Clarkson said.

Watterson added that Southwest believes the combination of the Wanna Get Away Plus and Anytime fares will be attractive to business travelers.

"Obviously they are available to everyone, but business travelers will get a lot of utility out of the upgrade stuff," he said. "It fits our overall investment in the [GDSs] and managed travel business. These initiatives build upon each other." Southwest in recent years has increased its participation in GDSs.

When asked if Southwest was concerned about business travelers buying the Anytime or new Plus fares instead of Business Select, Watterson replied, "We are happy for people to choose what product fits them best. If there are buy-downs, so be it. But there also will be buy-ups. We are confident there will be more people buying up than down."

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