



# Southwest Airlines Playbook

For Travel Hackers

## What makes Southwest Airlines Different?

Southwest is a domestic US carrier that specializes in continental US, Hawaii and Caribbean destinations. They feature a fleet of 747 Aircraft with only economy seating. They are also the only airline that does not show up on search engines and has a unique boarding process.



## Why do travel hackers like Southwest?

Southwest has unique change and cancellation rules that make manipulating your ticket prices easier than other airlines, plus a lucrative companion pass program.



## What is a companion pass?

A program Southwest offers that allows you to book a companion on every SW flight you take for up to two years, with no black out dates or restrictions.

## Is earning Southwest Status right for me?

That depends on a lot of factors, which we will cover in this Playbook. Southwest has lucrative prices, policies and perks that make it a great program for many travel hackers.





# Southwest Basics

## Where does Southwest Fly?

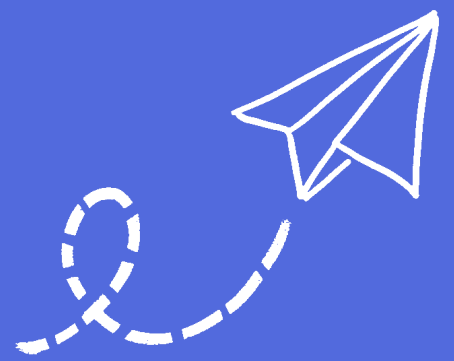
Southwest only flies in the Continental US, Hawaii and some Caribbean and Central American Destinations.



The list of Southwest Destinations can be found [Here](#).

## What does Southwest Fly?

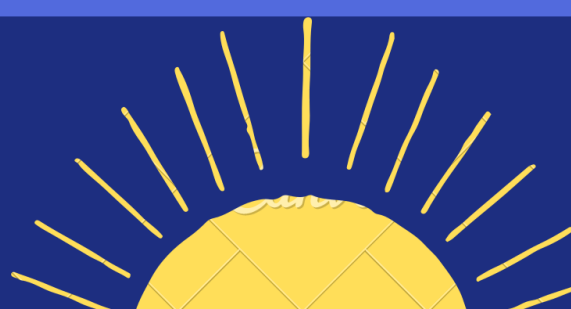
Southwest Airlines' entire fleet of planes are Boeing 737s, though some of the fleet is made of the older 737-700s, while the rest are the 737 MAX 8 and 737-800s.



## What is most unique about Southwest?

- ✓ They are not searchable on search engines
- ✓ They offer two free checked bags on every flight.
- ✓ They do not have change or cancellation fees ever.
- ✓ They do not have a business or first class.
- ✓ They do not offer airport lounges.
- ✓ Their boarding/ seat selection process.

Southwest's  
Airline code is  
WN

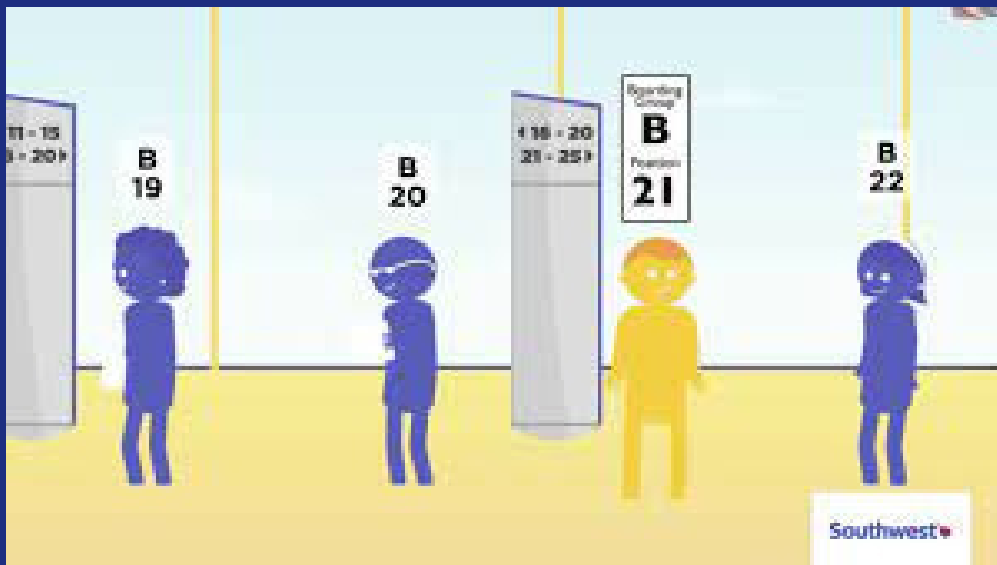




# Southwest Boarding Process

## What is Open Seating!?

Southwest has a very unique boarding process. The planes are open seating, which means that your seat is NOT assigned. Instead, everyone lines up according to the letter and number on your boarding pass. The letters range from A to C and numbers from 1-60 with A1 being the first to board and C60 being the last. (With the exception of pre-boarders).



Boarding position is assigned at checkin unless you are Alist or Alist preferred

## Boarding Order

**Preboarders:** People with medical conditions that require additional assistance, military personnel in uniform.

**A 1-15:** These seats are for A-List preferred members, Business select tickets or can be purchased as an upgrade.

**A 16-60:** These are A-list members. Then all remaining A listers will be allowed to board after A60.

**Family Boarding:** Families with children under 5.

**B followed by C groups.**



## Checking In:

Set an alarm to remind yourself to check into your flight online **exactly 24 hours** prior to your scheduled flight. You can also purchase '**Early bird**' which will complete this process for you, giving you a slight edge, but still behind A-listers.



# Southwest Status Programs

## A-List and A-List Preferred

A List is Southwest Airline's Status Program. It is hard to achieve but the perks are very advantageous. A listers get assigned to board in the A group, always. If you are A-list and book a same day flight you will still get to board at the end of A group. This means if traveling in a group you will always be able to sit with your friends and family.

### Benefits

**Fly By Priority:** Check in counter line just for Alist and Alist preferred.  
Expedited Security Line at some airports.



**A-List Preferred Boards A1-15.**



**Priority Boarding:** Board in A group, or just after A group if it's a same day flight booking.

### Same Day Standby when:

- ✓ Traveling prior to departure
- ✓ Between same city pairs
- ✓ On same day of travel
- ✓ Where a seat is available



**A-List preferred also gets free Wifi!**

### More Points:

A List: 25% bonus earn  
A-List preferred: 100% bonus  
Earn

### How to Earn A-List

- ✓ Fly 25 qualifying segments.
- ✓ Earn 35,000 points from flying

#### Preferred

- ✓ Fly 50 qualifying segments
- ✓ Earn 70,000 points from flying

Only Cash Flights count, not points flights.

**Must be earned in a calendar year.**

One way flights count, but layovers still count as one segment



A-List Customer service:  
1-888-737-1005



# The Companion Pass

## What is it?

Companion Pass allows you to book a free companion on every flight, for the year you earn it and the following calendar year.  
[Taxes are charged on companion ticket]

**No  
Blackout  
dates!**

Earn 125,000 qualifying points in a calendar year

**OR**

## How do you earn it?

Fly 100 qualifying segments in a calendar year.

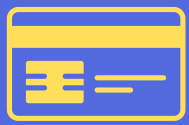
## How to Earn 125,000 Rapid Rewards



**Credit Card spend: Maximize your spend using the following portals.**

[Shopping Portal](#)  
[Dining Portal](#)  
[Hotel Portal](#)  
[Rocket Miles](#)

**Also earn points for flying!**



## Credit Card Sign Up bonuses:

Chase Southwest Rapid Rewards Plus, Premier, priority and business cards offer bonuses. You can open a personal and business card at the same time if under 5/24.

**Offers  
subject to  
change!**



### **Personal Cards:**

75,000 Bonus Points

### **Business Card:**

80,000 Bonus Points



## Credit Card Promotions:

Southwest offers bonus point categories to select accounts. Check for promos on the Southwest website under My account > My Promotions



# The Companion Pass

## Is it right for me?

Earning the companion pass means directing a lot of your spend and 5/24 spots on one goal. How to you determine if it is worth it?

### Do you live near a hub?

BWI, BNA, LGA, MDW, DAL, LAX, MSP and TPA are examples.



### Do you travel consistently with the same person?

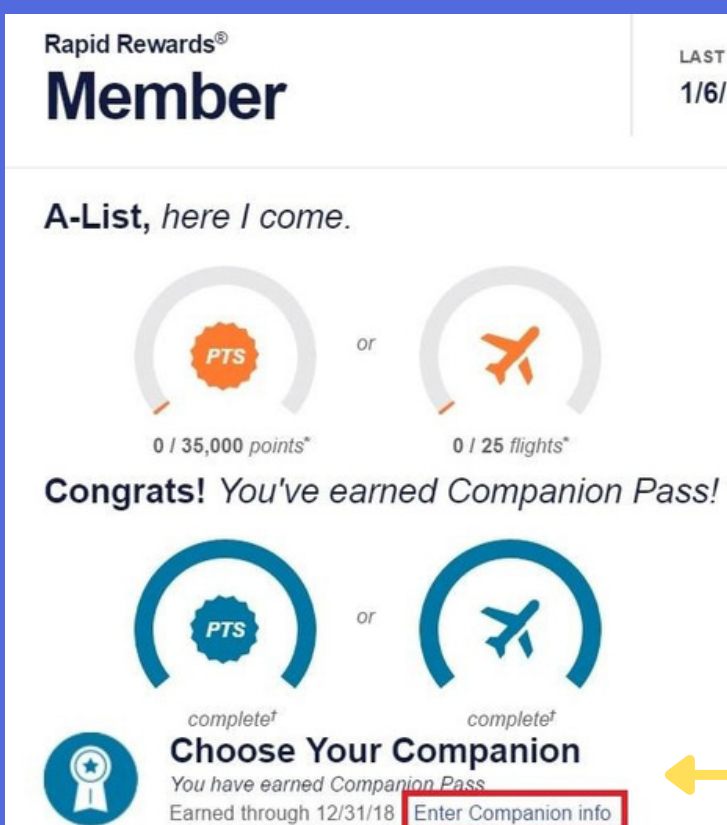
You can only change companions 3 times in a calendar year, and your companion needs to be listed at time of travel.

### Do you have several domestic/ caribbean trips in mind for the next year?

Make a list of how many times you will use the pass



## Tracking Pass status



Go to "My Account" in the App

You can track your pass status here and add your companion information



REMINDER

**Card opening strategy:** [If opening new cards] It is important to earn the pass as close to the **beginning of the year** as possible. You can apply for a new card (s) in late November so your first statement posts in January.



# Booking your Ticket

## Fare Classes

### Wanna Get Away

Flight Credit if you cancel.  
Credits are non-transferable  
Earn 6 RR points per \$\$

### Wanna Get Away Plus

Flight Credit if you cancel.  
Flight credits are transferable  
Earn 8 RR points per \$\$



### Anytime

Refundable  
Early Bird check in  
Earn 10 RR points per \$\$  
Priority and express lanes

### Business Select

Refundable  
Early Bird check in  
Earn 12 RR points per \$\$  
Priority and express lanes  
Complimentary Drink  
A1-15 boarding position

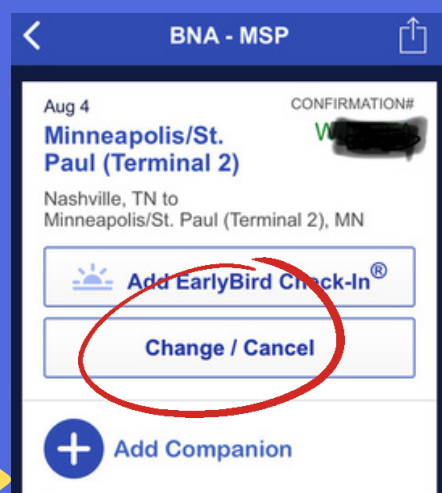
## Booking Strategy

You can cancel and rebook your flight anytime, so book as early as possible. You can change your flight if it lowers in price.

If you have a companion on your ticket you have to cancel the companion ticket first, then change the flight and rebook.

Can't remember how much you paid? Check your email for a receipt from Southwest, the sender will be Southwest Airlines.

You can also add your companion here



## Benefits for all fare types:

- ✓ 2 Checked bags free
- ✓ No Change or Cancel fees

