

TRAVEL | CHASING THE DEAL

Airlines Step Up Stopover Options

By ELAINE GLUSAC JUNE 3, 2017



The Cathedral of Porto in Porto, Portugal.
Daniel Rodrigues for The New York Times

Travelers with ambitious travel plans may find additional multicity routes at bargain rates as international airlines add free stopovers and other incentives to make the midway hub a second destination.

[Qatar Airways](#) has introduced a summer promotion offering a free overnight and complimentary transit visas in Doha, the capital of Qatar, through Sept. 30. Travelers booking a flight through Doha can stay for up to 96 hours on the same ticket. On the first night, passengers can choose complimentary accommodations from a list of several luxury hotels including the [Four Seasons Hotel Doha](#) or the [Marriott Marquis City Center Doha Hotel](#), with a second

night at \$50 (beyond that, travelers must pay for their own hotel expenses).

The low-cost carrier [Wow Air](#), based in [Iceland](#), started its free stopover service in Reykjavik for travelers flying from the United States to Europe last year. This summer, Wow will introduce flights from Chicago and Pittsburgh with stopover options in the Icelandic capital on tickets to European destinations including Barcelona, Paris and Stockholm. There is no limit on the length of a stopover.

Last summer, [Tap Portugal](#) introduced its one-to-three-night stopover program in [Lisbon](#) or Porto on Tap flights to other destinations in Africa and Europe, including the Azores. Passengers may take advantage of discounted offers from hotels, restaurants and attractions found on the airline's Stopover app.

[Finnair](#) has also introduced free stopovers, in [Helsinki](#) for up to five days on flights between North American and Europe or Asia.

Travel Dispatch

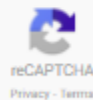
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Other airlines with more longstanding stopover programs include [Icelandair](#) with stopovers of up to five days in Reykjavik. [Hawaiian Airlines](#) offers free stopovers in Honolulu for fliers with international itineraries. [Emirates](#) stopovers in Dubai include shuttle transportation between the airport and hotels, buffet breakfasts and 24-hour check-in.

“It used to be that stopovers were expensive because you had to pay for the privilege,” said George Hobica, the founder and president of Airfarewatchdog.com. Now, he explained, they are commonly found on airlines owned or partially owned by the governments of the countries they serve in an effort to increase business at the airport and in tourism.

“You can see two cities often for less than the price of one,” Mr. Hobica said.