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Airlines offer unusual perks to frequent fliers

By Nancy Trejos, USA TODAY

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Who needs a free bag of peanuts when you can get a \$3.5 million yacht from Etihad Airways?

Travelers are demanding more from their frequent flier programs, and airlines are responding with unique merchandise, personal services, and travel package rewards, according to [IdeaWorks](#), a consulting firm that works with airlines and other travel industry firms.

Not only can frequent fliers now book hotel accommodations and car rentals with their miles and points, but now they can get some unusual perks, according to a [Los Angeles Times](#) story on the study.

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IdeaWorks studied rewards programs for more than 150 airlines and came up with a list of 40 of the most unusual. Here are a few examples:

- You can get that \$3.5 million yacht for flying about 386 million miles on Etihad Airways.
- Icelandair lets frequent fliers shop on board with miles. For instance, 650 miles will purchase a "happy marriage cake."
- For 13,574 points on airBaltic, you and a guest can go dog-sledding for about three miles in Latvia.
- For 8,000 points on Finnair, you can go bowling, play pool or have a sauna evening with friends.
- On AviancaTaca, banking 8,250 miles will get you a hot lather shave in New York City.
- American Airlines will reward frequent fliers who fly 14,700 miles with a beer-tasting tour in Brussels.
- For 30,000 miles on Cathay Pacific, you'll get a package of pampering at the Chuan Spa in Hong Kong's Langham Palace Hotel.

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IdeaWorks also determined that frequent fliers realized nearly a penny of retail value for every mile redeemed. Values ranged from a low of \$0.003 per mile for a 45-minute flight on a DC3 offered by Air France KLM to a high of \$0.029 per mile (nearly 3 cents) for Virgin Atlantic's 7-night Necker Island holiday.

Readers: Do you think these perks are worth what you'd pay traveling all those miles?

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