

# NEVER MISS A GLITCH FARE AGAIN

Travel Noire's step-by-step guide to consistently snagging **dirt cheap** flights

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People often ask us how we're consistently able to snag these glitch fares:

For the past year, we've perfected the formula for consistently finding glitch fares and dirt cheap flights. If you follow the content of this guide, you'll learn the exact alerts to set, where to look, the rules of engagement, the optimal times to find these fares and how to book them upfront with no strings attached.

Keep this pocket guide handy & you'll find yourself consistently catching amazing glitch fares at a fraction of the cost.

Let's begin!

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'Z' followed by a period.

Zim Ugochukwu  
CEO, *Travel Noire*

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# Glitch Fare 101

From time to time, an airline or a flight search engine (think Kayak, Priceline, etc) will mess up and publish low or mistake fares that are hundreds or even thousands of dollars below the normal cost of the ticket.

Glitch fares can happen for a number of reasons, but the most common is a technical glitch on an airline's website.

For example, in late 2013, a Norwegian flight search engine system didn't include the "fuel surcharge" portion in the final ticket price, resulting in tickets \$500-700 less than market price.

A month after the Norwegian booking engine glitch, Delta Airlines accidentally posted prices of \$20 to \$90 for a variety of round-trip flights. This glitch priced tickets like a New York to LA flight (valued at \$400) for just \$47.

A few months earlier, United had a similar issue when an unspecified error on the airline website's ticketing system resulted in a brief window of time where tickets were sold for \$0 (plus taxes and fees). Individuals capitalized on this deal before United shut things down, but the airline ultimately decided to honor the free tickets, a decision likely driven by legal and PR concerns (we'll get to this later).

Sometimes, you'll also find that airlines will purposely release a small amount of super-low fares as a promotion or to win new business. This can often start what is known as a fare war between airlines as they try to match or beat the lowest fare on a certain route.

Because these deals are ridiculously time-sensitive (glitches can be snuffed out within the hour), you won't have enough time to visit your cadre of sites to proof check.

Let's roll over to the next section to catch a glimpse of recent glitch fares.

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# Glitch Fare Examples

Over the past few years, there have been some epic glitch fares:

Airline	Date	The Trip	Flight Deal	Honored?
United Airlines	2007	LAX to New Zealand	<b>\$1,062</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Missing 'Os' in the price. \$1,062 instead of \$10,062				
United Airlines	July '12	NYC to Hong Kong	<b>\$43</b>	<b>No</b>
Purchased at a discount, but full price displayed				
United Airlines	Sept '13	Washington to Hawaii	<b>\$10</b>	<b>Yes</b>
\$0 fare, only charged taxes & fees				
United Airlines	Oct '13	New York to Dublin	<b>\$49</b>	<b>No</b>
MileagePlus account tricked into thinking customer has enough miles for award				
United Airlines	Nov '13	New York to Milan	<b>\$250</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Widerøe Booking Site Drops YQ (fuel surcharge)				
American Airlines	2010	US to Australia, 1st Cl.	<b>\$1,100</b>	<b>No</b>
Dropped a 'O'				
Korean Airlines	2011	US to Seoul	<b>\$500</b>	<b>No</b>
Dropped a 'O'				
Delta Airlines	Dec '13	US to Hawaii	<b>\$7</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Price Tweak Gone Awry				
Etihad Airways	Dec '14	To Middle East, India, Africa and Asia	<b>\$187</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Fare Mistake				

Here's the million dollar question: Do you have that one friend or the same select group of people who always manage to find and book glitch fares? How are they doing it?

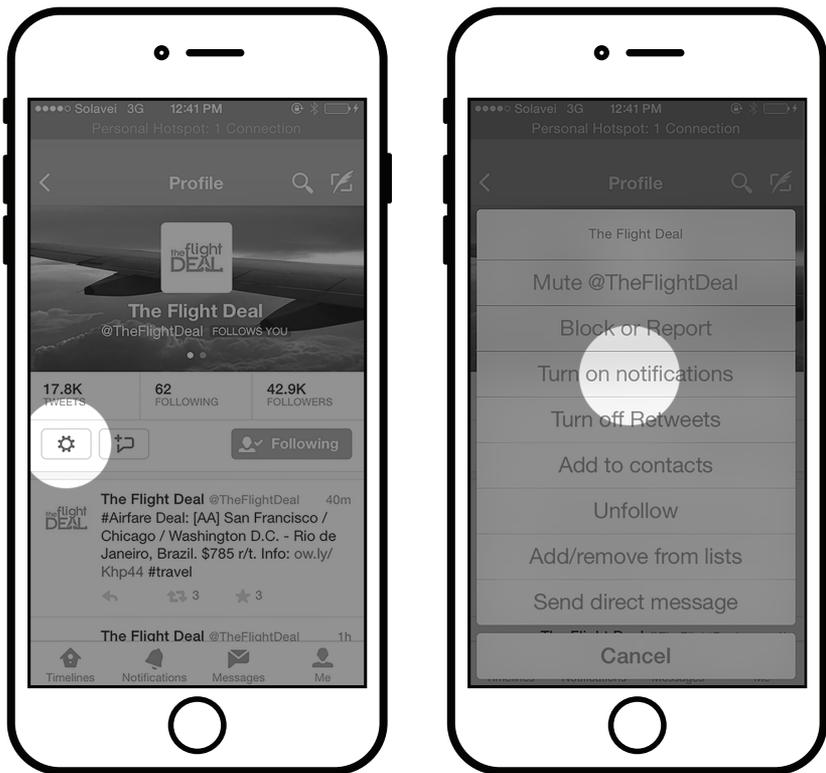
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# How to Find Them

While we've found that quite a few glitch fare alerts come in the wee hours of the morning & during mid-week, glitch fares are largely unpredictable. Here's how to exponentially increase the odds of snagging a glitch fare.

## THE TN FIVE-POINT SYSTEM

### 1. SIGN UP FOR MOBILE NOTIFICATIONS.



### 2. SIGN-UP TO FLYERTALK.

Almost every pricing glitch is leaked on the Flyertalk forum first. The Mileage Run Discussion thread is where a lot of these leaks happen.

**3. CREATE AN IFTTT ACCOUNT AT IFTTT.COM.**

This program allows you to make internet applications talk to each other. We've created an exclusive recipe that says: for every thread created in The Mileage Run Discussion forum on Flyer Talk, you will get a personal email. You can replicate this Travel Noire recipe by visiting <https://ifttt.com/recipes/269100-glitch-fare-alerts-from-flyertalk>; you'll instantly receive emails every time a new thread is created in Flyer Talk.

**4. JOIN OTHER DEAL FORUMS.**

These forums often catch these mishaps early on in their exposure. Forums like Fat Wallet, Slickdeals, and MilePoint are great for staying in the know.

**5. GET EMAIL ALERTS.**

Websites like Airfarewatchdog or Farecompare will send email alerts when a flight you are interested in drops in price--sometimes catching the major glitches in time.

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# Glitch Fare Rules of Engagement

When it comes to finding these fares however, time is the name of the game. It is a race against the clock to place your order before the company wises up and shuts things down. It's crucial to roll in the right circles. Now that you know how to find glitch fares, below are instructions to book them:

## 1. DO NOT CALL THE AIRLINE

As crazy as this dirt cheap fare may sound, you don't want to alert them to the error. Low or mistake fares are often the result of data entry errors or miscalculations of fuel surcharges, discounts, or promotional fares. The airline will eventually discover their mistake and correct it.

## 2. BOOK YOUR TICKET IMMEDIATELY.

Don't spend a lot of time thinking about hotels, car rentals or waking up your friends. Ask your friends in advance if you can book glitch fares on their behalf. If the answer is yes, book your tickets simultaneously and bill them for their portion. Time is of the essence.

This can be incredibly difficult for folks who like to plan and organize everything before booking, but because these deals do not last long, if you continue to wait, you'll lose the opportunity. These fares only last hours. If you aren't 100% sure you can travel, book anyway. Most major airlines will allow you to cancel within 24 hours without penalty. Below are some policies for some major US airlines:

Alaska Airlines	No cancellation fee for changes at least 60 days prior to departure.
American Airlines	Cancel and get a full refund within 24 hours of booking as long as departure is more than 7 days away.
Delta	Cancel and get a full refund by midnight the day after you bought your ticket.
Southwest	Cancel and get a full refund within 24 hours of booking
United Airlines	For tickets purchased through United.com or the United Customer Contact Center, cancel and get a full refund within 24 hours of booking.
US Airways	Cancel and get a full refund within 24 hours of booking.

Some glitch fares can be booked directly on the airline's website, and others require that you book through an online booking engine like Orbitz or Expedia. Most (not all) booking engines also have a courtesy cancellation for a full refund (quickly double check before you book).

### **3. BE FLEXIBLE.**

Let's say you live in San Francisco & find a glitch fare that departs from New York. If it will cost you less money overall to book a ticket from San Francisco to New York, book the glitch fare! You're better off booking a separate ticket than waiting for an unpredictable glitch fare to depart from San Francisco. On the flipside, if the glitch fare is landing in Abu Dhabi but you've always wanted to go to Istanbul, book the glitch fare and then book a separate ticket from Abu Dhabi to Istanbul for a few hundred dollars.

### **4. FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS.**

If you've found your glitch fare via The Flight Deal, follow their instructions to book the fare. If you need to use the ITA Matrix to price out your flight, do that. If they tell you that the ticket is only bookable through Kayak, don't go to Priceline. Again, time is of the essence.

### **5. WAIT.**

This might be the most important task of all. Again, do not call the airline. Depending on the airline or booking engine, you may receive two emails.

- An email with a PNR code (six digits) or a reservation acknowledging your trip reservation. Once you receive this, know that it is not yet a confirmed ticket.
- An email with your itinerary and confirmation number stating that your reservation is confirmed with a ticket number (this number is much longer than the PNR code). After this, wait a while before booking your hotel, Airbnb or rental car. You want to be 100% sure that the airline will honor the fare. To find out whether the airline will honor the fare, you can either scroll through comments in the Flyer Talk Mileage Run Deals thread or tweet @theflightdeal.

But hold on just a second. Why do some glitch fares leave customers jetsetting to Tokyo for the price of a food combo, while other glitch fares leave customers with voided tickets?

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# Honoring Glitch Fares

## **COMPUTER GLITCH VS. HUMAN MANIPULATION**

A few years ago, United Airlines made an epic mistake.

This mistake involved setting up a MileagePlus award account, opening separate tabs and tricking the system into thinking you had enough miles for a reward flight. Customers grabbed flights for virtually nothing. How does NYC to Dublin sound for \$49?

For Team United, this didn't sound so good. Unlike the airline's massive glitch a few months earlier that left thousands of passengers scooping up \$0 fares, this glitch didn't go off without a hitch. The airline refused to honor it, saying that customers intentionally scammed the system.

## **THE CUSTOMERS "SHOULD HAVE KNOWN" EXCUSE**

In 2009, Aer Lingus published outrageously low \$7 Business Class fares, but soon after, cancelled the tickets reporting that customers would have known that "something was up."

## **FEAR OF THE US DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

For airlines, violating the DOT's rules and regulations can mean serious fines or even permanent grounding.

The Department prohibits false advertising and "post-purchase price increases," stating that all airlines must honor any mistake fare offered or face hefty fines. Since the US Transportation Department's recent crack down on false advertising, more airlines are opting to honor glitch tickets.

In short, if you've booked with a US Airline, your fare will likely be honored. The DOT states:

*"If a consumer purchases a fare and that consumer receives confirmation (such as confirmation email and/or the purchase appears on their credit card statement or online account summary) of their purchase, then the seller of air transportation cannot increase the price of that air transportation to that consumer, even when the fare is a "mistake."*

On the flip side, there may be some changes coming to this policy. A recently published document states:

*The Enforcement Office has become concerned that increasingly mistaken fares are getting posted on frequent-flyer community blogs and travel-deal sites, and individuals are purchasing these tickets in bad faith and not on the mistaken belief that a good deal is now available. We solicit comment on how best to address the problem of individual bad actors while still ensuring that airlines and other sellers of air transportation are required to honor mistaken fares that were reasonably relied upon by consumers."*

If you've booked your glitch fare with an airline not based in the US (or with significant US routes) you aren't protected by the US Department of Transportation's rules, and your glitch fare may not be honored.

## **ANGRY CUSTOMERS**

Airlines don't want to make their customers angry. Angry customers are bad for business. When an airline is deciding whether or not to honor a glitch, they have to factor in customer satisfaction alongside potential lawsuits and measure it against their overall financial hit.

Now that you've learned how to consistently find and book glitch fares, tell us what you think! Tweet us or take a photo of your Quarterly box & guide and send it to us on Instagram using the #TNQ01 and #travelnoire hashtags.

Bon voyage & happy glitch fare hunting!

[travelnoire.com](https://travelnoire.com)



