

2026's Best & Worst Airlines

Airline ticket prices had a slight drop last year, but have started to rise again this year. Cost isn't all that matters when picking what company to fly with, though. Comfort and safety also matter, especially with recent incidents in the news about plane malfunctions. For those traveling with a pet, how well the airline treats their companion is key, too.

Finding the most affordable airfare is now quite easy for anyone with an internet connection, so this report examines other, overlooked aspects of air travel to help

consumers make more-informed decisions.

WalletHub compared the 9 largest U.S. airlines, plus two regional carriers, across 16 important metrics. They range from cancellation and delay rates to baggage mishaps and in-flight comfort. We also considered costs in relation to in-flight amenities for the sake of fairness. For example, it wouldn't be right to penalize an airline that charges for drinks if its tickets are far cheaper than those from an airline with free in-flight refreshments.

W BEST AIRLINES ✈️			
RANK	AIRLINES		SCORE
01	SPIRIT AIRLINES		74.33
02	SOUTHWEST AIRLINES		64.44
03	SKYWEST AIRLINES		63.58
04	ALASKA AIRLINES		59.48
05	HAWAIIAN AIRLINES		57.95
06	JETBLUE AIRWAYS		55.46
07	DELTA AIR LINES		52.01
08	AMERICAN AIRLINES		50.92
09	FRONTIER AIRLINES		45.37
10	UNITED AIRLINES		44.81
11	ENVOY AIR		44.46

Best Overall: Spirit Airlines earned the highest overall WalletHub Score (74.33) for the second time in eight years, followed by Southwest Airlines (64.44).

Most Reliable: Spirit Airlines has the lowest overall rate of cancellations, delays, mishandled luggage and denied boardings. The next most reliable company is United Airlines.

Safety: Frontier Airlines is the safest, with a low number of incidents and accidents per 100,000 flight operations, no fatalities and fewer than 15 people injured between 2020 and 2025. Frontier Air-

lines also has a relatively new fleet of aircrafts. The safety runner-up is Spirit Airlines.

Most Pet-Friendly: Two airlines tied for being most pet-friendly - SkyWest Airlines and Envoy Air - with no incidents.

Most Comfortable: JetBlue Airways, Hawaiian Airlines, American Airlines and Southwest Airlines lead the pack in terms of in-flight experience, offering free amenities such as Wi-Fi, extra legroom, and complimentary snacks and beverages. Alaska Airlines & Delta Air Lines are tied for the fifth position in this category.

THE CLASSIFIEDS

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MISC.

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I can't end my messages with Love, Shaq, because the B-52s ruined that for me." - Shaquille O'Neal

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(ANSWERS ON PAGE 4)

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Spruced up
- 5 Comedian Margaret
- 8 Arduous journey
- 12 Taj Mahal city
- 13 Unprocessed
- 14 Conceal
- 15 Buffets with Mexican food
- 17 Rocker — Pop
- 18 Yoko from Tokyo
- 19 Astern
- 20 Unravels
- 21 Blaster's need
- 22 Tease
- 23 Neighbor of Chad

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- 26 Wilma and Fred's kid
- 30 Piglet's pop
- 31 Author Fleming
- 32 Ethereal
- 33 Rabbi's religion
- 35 Fall bloom
- 36 Buddy
- 37 Canonized Fr. woman
- 38 Prima donnas
- 41 Carnival city
- 42 Co. that created Watson
- 45 Pizza cooker
- 46 Home to the Buccaneers
- 48 Social standing

- 49 Wall St. wheeler-dealer
- 50 Deadly septet
- 51 Picnic invaders
- 52 Pot pie morsel
- 53 Whispered "Hey!"

DOWN

- 1 Post-WWII alliance
- 2 "The Candy House" author Jennifer
- 3 Not pizzicato
- 4 Eastern "way"
- 5 Make by hand
- 6 Male red deer

- 7 Pained sounds
- 8 Baseball diamond stop
- 9 Latvia's capital
- 10 Jittery
- 11 Lock openers
- 16 "Troy" actor Eric
- 20 Little lie
- 21 "America's Next Top Model" host
- 22 "Community" actor Jeong
- 23 JFK's veep
- 24 Chit
- 25 Abysmal
- 26 Shriver of ten-

- 27 Topsy
- 28 Before
- 29 Aleppo's land (Abbr.)
- 31 Equi-
- 34 1040 org.
- 35 On
- 37 "The Lion King" lion
- 38 TV explorer
- 39 Author Turgenev
- 40 Air outlet
- 41 Scarce
- 42 Nile wader
- 43 Proscribes
- 44 Island in a computer game
- 46 Spigot
- 47 Nile biter

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