

Best Use of Starwood Points for travel to Israel

by S.B.S. – EXCLUSIVELY FOR **DANSDEALS.COM**

A) Introduction:

1) Starwood allows the transfer of Starwood points to a myriad of airlines on a 1:1 basis with a 5000 bonus when transferring 20000 in one transfer, which means that for every 20000 points you transfer to an airline you get 25000 airline miles in their frequent-flyer program. For that end, you have to have a frequent-flyer membership in that specific airline.

2) Each of the airlines has a different set of redemption options, based on various factors, either by zone or by distance. Most of the airlines are partnered in one of the three big airline alliances (Star Alliance, One World & Sky Team), and therefore you could redeem their miles for a ticket on a airline of their alliance. Some airlines also have partners besides their general partnership on an alliance, and usually the mileage amounts are less for an award flight on their partner airlines.

For Example: When you transfer 20000 Starwood Points to “American Airlines AAdvantage” you get 25000 AA Miles which could be used for AA travel or for travel on any of the OneWorld partners (since AA is a member of the OneWorld alliance) or for travel on any of their partner airlines (which include some airlines such as Brussels Airlines, Turkish Airlines & El-Al which aren’t members of any airline alliance). Once those points are in the AAdvantage account you can use 75000 miles for a round-trip coach ticket to Israel on any of the OneWorld airlines or the partner airlines. This gives you the option of flying thru London (with BA), thru Brussels (with Brussels Air), thru Istanbul (with Turkish Air), direct (with El-Al), thru Madrid (with Iberia), thru Amman-Jordan (with Jordanian Air) or thru Budapest (with Malev).

3) The following article is divided into two parts:

The first part is a list of the various airlines which fly to Israel, divided by Alliances, with the routing of the flight, and a calculation of the miles / kilometers flown on a one-way segment, or a round-trip segment. This is needed for those airlines which have their awards based on a distance chart.

The second part is a list of most of the airlines which you can transfer starpoints to, with a brief explanation of the option (or options) to redeem those points for a ticket to Israel. After each option is the link to the reward page where that option is present. I have only included those airlines which have a good value for the starpoints. Some airlines require an outrageous amount of miles for a flight, and those aren’t mentioned in this article.

4) **General Rule:** All North American airlines require a higher amount of mileage for their award flights, probably due to the fact that they give away miles very easily (churnable credit-card bonuses, etc.) On the other hand, International airlines require a lesser amount of mileage for their award flights, probably because in their eyes, the miles are more valuable...

B) The list of the various airlines which fly to Israel, and the distance.

For all calculations THE GREAT CIRCLE MAPPER was used (<http://gc.kls2.com>).

EXAMPLE:

Air Canada: LGA – YYZ (Toronto) – TLV – YYZ – LGA 6145 9890 12290 19779

This means that the shortest Air Canada route to Israel, from NYC is: From La Guardia (LGA) to Toronto (YYZ), From Toronto to Tel-Aviv (TLV), and back the same way. This trip is 6145 miles or 9890 kilometers one-way, and 12290 miles or 19779 kilometers round-trip.

		One Way		Round Trip	
		Miles	KM	Miles	KM
Star Alliance:					
Air Canada:	LGA – YYZ (Toronto) – TLV – YYZ – LGA	6145	9890	12290	19779
Austrian:	JFK – VIE (Vienna) – TLV – VIE – JFK	5707	9185	11415	18370
BMI*:	JFK – LHR (London) – TLV – LHR – JFK	5684	9148	11368	18296
LOT Polish:	ORD – WAW (Warsaw) – TLV – WAW – ORD	6243	10047	12486	20095
Lufthansa:	JFK – FRA (Frankfurt) – TLV – FRA – JFK	5693	9161	11385	18323
Swiss:	JFK – ZRH (Zurich) – TLV – ZRH – JFK	5678	9139	11357	18227
OneWorld:					
British Airways:	JFK – LHR (London) – TLV – LHR – JFK	5684	9148	11368	18296
Iberia:	JFK – MAD (Madrid) – TLV – MAD – JFK	5795	9327	11591	18654
Royal Jordanian:	JFK – AMM (Amman) – TLV – AMM – JFK	5806	9344	11612	18689
Malev:	JFK – ZRH – BUD (Budapest) – ZRH – JFK	5778	9299	11556	18598
Sky Team:					
Air France:	JFK – CDG (Paris) – TLV – CDG – JFK	5678	9138	11356	18275
Alitalia:	JFK – MXP (Milan) – TLV – MXP – JFK	5679	9139	11357	18278
	JFK – FCO (Rome) – TLV – FCO – JFK	5695	9165	11390	18330
Continental:	EWR (Newark) – TLV – EWR	5692	9160	11384	18320
Czech Airlines:	JFK – PRG (Prague) – TLV – PRG – JFK	5719	9204	11438	18408
Delta:	ATL (Atlanta) – TLV – ATL	6437	10360	12874	20720
	JFK – TLV – JFK**	5677	9137	11355	18274
KLM:	JFK – AMS (Amsterdam) – TLV – AMS – JFK	5703	9178	11406	18357
Other Airlines to Israel which have a mileage sharing agreement:					
Turkish Air***:	JFK – IST (Istanbul) – TLV – IST – JFK	5720	9205	11440	18410
Brussels Air****:	JFK – BRU – TLV – BRU – JFK	5689	9156	11378	18311

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* BMI will start flying from LHR (London) to TLV March 13, 2008.

** Delta will start flying directly from JFK to TLV March 10, 2008.

*** Will join Star Alliance on Apr. 1, 2008

**** It is rumored that it might join the "OneWorld" alliance at a later stage.

For an in-depth explanation of the Airline Alliances, see the following DansDeals article:

<http://www.dansdeals.com/archives/2137>

C) The list of the airlines that you can transfer points to, and the award price.

Star-Alliance Airlines

1) ANA Mileage Club

Explanation: The reward options work on a round-trip mileage distance system, all Star-Alliance flights from NYC to TLV fall into the 10,001 - 14,000 mile range, hence the mileage amounts listed below.

The amount of miles needed to fly from NYC to Tel-Aviv on any Star Alliance airline is:

Coach:	60.000 miles
Business:	90.000 miles
First:	120.000 miles

http://www.ana.co.jp/amc_e/guide/tokuten/star_hd.html

2) Lufthansa Miles & More

Explanation: The reward options work on a zone system, which places the whole USA & Canada in one zone, and Israel in another zone. Lufthansa places Israel in the Middle East zone making the ticket cost more miles. **But if you live in Israel AND the flight originates from Israel, then Israel is considered as Europe**, and the ticket costs less miles. Therefore I only mention the option of flying from Israel to the USA & Canada. If you want to “live” in Israel, you can just change your address to an Israeli address... Lufthansa has a partnership also with **Turkish Airlines**, which means that you can use Lufthansa miles to book a reward flight from Israel to USA on Turkish Air...

Lufthansa gives a 3000 mile discount for flights booked online. I have included the discounted amount in parenthesis after the total.

The amount of miles needed to fly from Tel-Aviv to USA & Canada on Lufthansa or any Star Alliance airline is:

Coach:	60.000 miles (57.000)
Business:	90.000 miles (87.000)
First:	140.000 miles (137.000)

http://www.lufthansa.com/cdautils/mediapool/media_459543.pdf

3) Singapore Air Kris Flyer

Explanation: The reward options work on a zone system, which places the whole USA & Canada in one zone (except for California which is placed in a different zone), and Israel in a different zone.

Singapore Air gives a 15% mile discount for flights booked online. I have included the discounted amount in parenthesis after the total. **I doubt that it will work, because I wasn't able to find a online redemption option for partner airlines.**

The amount of miles needed to fly from the USA & Canada (except CA) to Tel-Aviv on any Star Alliance airline is:

Coach:	60.000 miles (51.000)
Business:	100.000 miles (85.000)
First:	140.000 miles (119.000)

http://www.singaporeair.com/saa/en_UK/docs/krisflyer/Redeem_Miles/Awards_Charts/StarAlliance_Roundtrip_14Nov.pdf

4) US Airways Dividend Miles

Explanation: The reward options work on a zone system, which places the whole USA & Canada in one zone, and Israel in the another zone. US Airways is a part of Star Alliance, and therefore you can use their miles for an award ticket on any Star Alliance flight. **Also**, they are partnered with **Royal Jordanian** (a part of the OneWorld) alliance, so you can redeem US Airways miles for a flight on Royal Jordanian.

Amount of miles needed to fly from USA & Canada to Tel-Aviv on any Star Alliance airline (or Royal Jordanian) is:

Coach:	75.000 miles
Business:	115.000 miles
First:	140.000 miles

http://www.usairways.com/common/resources/_downloads/dividendmiles/partnerawardtravel.pdf

5) Air Canada Aeroplan

Explanation: The reward options work on a zone system, which places the whole USA & Canada in one zone, and Israel in the another zone. Air Canada has regular pricing for reward tickets on its own airline, but has outrageous prices for partner airlines, therefore I have only mentioned the reward options on Air-Canada.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Air-Canada does **not** allow Starpoints earned via a Credit-Card to be transferred to Air-Canada, therefore you have to call the service center and try your luck.

Amount of miles needed to fly from USA & Canada to Tel-Aviv on Air Canada is:

Coach:	75.000 miles
Business:	115.000 miles

http://www.aeroplan.com/use_your_miles/travel/flights/air_reward_chart.do

6) United Airlines Mileage Plus

Explanation: The reward options work on a zone system, which places the whole USA & Canada in one zone, and Israel in the another zone.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The transfer rate from Starpoints to United is 2:1 officially, which means that you get 1 mile for every **2 (two)** starpoints transferred. This is circumvented by using the "Direct-Deposit" system, that you set up your Starpoints account to transfer your points automatically to your airline of choice (including United), but you don't get the 5,000 bonus when transferring 20,000 points (**FOR MORE INFO SEE THE FOLLOWING DANSDEALS ARTICLE: <http://www.dansdeals.com/archives/2726>**)

Amount of miles needed to fly from USA & Canada to Tel-Aviv on any Star Alliance flight is:

Coach:	75.000 miles
Business:	115.000 miles
First:	140.000 miles

<http://www.united.com/page/article/0,6722,1142,00.html#MiddleEast>

OneWorld Airlines

1) American Airlines AAdvantage

Explanation: The reward options work on a zone system, which places the whole USA & Canada in one zone, and Israel in the another zone. American Airlines is a part of OneWorld, and therefore you can use their miles for an award ticket on any OneWorld airline flight. **Also, they are partnered with El-Al, Turkish Airlines & Brussels Airlines**, so you can redeem American Airlines miles for flights on those airlines too!

Amount of miles needed to fly from USA & Canada to Tel-Aviv on any OneWorld airline or partner airline is:

Coach:	75.000 miles
Business:	135.000 miles
First:	180.000 miles

http://www.aa.com/apps/AAdvantage/ViewMileageProgramsPartnerDetail.jhtml?fileName=All_Airline_Award_Chart.xml&repositoryName=AAdvantagePartnersContentRepository&repositoryId=6100052&itemDescriptor=AAdvantagePartnersContent#1

2) British Airways Executive Club

Explanation: The reward options work on a zone system, which places the whole USA & Canada in one zone, and Israel in the Europe zone.

Amount of miles needed to fly from the USA & Canada to Tel-Aviv on British Airways or OneWorld airlines is:

Coach:	65.000 miles
Business:	130.000 miles
First:	195.000 miles

On British Airways: http://www.britishairways.com/travel/ecredeemcalculator/public/en_us
On Partner Airlines: http://www.britishairways.com/travel/partnertable/public/en_us

Stay Tuned! On Jan. 1st we will announce a new Starwood promotion which will give you 65.000 British Airways miles for only 40.000 Starpoints!

3) Cathay Pacific AsiaMiles

Explanation: The reward options work on a one-way mileage distance system. All OneWorld flights from NYC to TLV fall into Zone D (5,001 - 7,500 mile range), hence the mileage amounts listed below.

The amount of miles needed to fly from NYC to Tel-Aviv on any **single** OneWorld airline is:

Coach:	60.000 miles
Business:	120.000 miles
First:	180.000 miles

<http://www.asiamiles.com/en/redeem/flights/charts/1,,117516,00.html>

For an in-depth explanation of the AsiaMiles system, see the following DansDeals article:

<http://www.dansdeals.com/archives/2245>

4) Japan Airlines Mileage Bank

Explanation: The Japan Airlines mileage redemption system is a bit complicated. They are a part of the One-World alliance, and as such they present an option to redeem miles for OneWorld flights. But, they also have a special deal with British Airways (which is also a part of OneWorld) which makes the mileage prices for British Airways less than the other OneWorld airlines. **Also**, they have different award systems, for British Airways the reward goes by zone (and Israel is part of the EUROPE zone), but for OneWorld rewards the miles work on a mileage distance chart. Therefore they are mentioned separately.

The reward chart for British Airways works on a zone chart, therefore the amount of miles needed to fly from the USA & Canada to Tel-Aviv on British Airways is:

Coach: Off-Peak (10/15 - 5/15): 40.000 miles * Peak (5/16 – 10/14): 60.000 miles

Business: 80.000 miles

First: 100.000 miles

<http://www.jal.co.jp/en/jalmile/baatc.html>

The reward chart for flights on Iberia, Malev or any other OneWorld airline is based on a round-trip mileage distance chart, the flights from NYC to TLV are less than 12,000 miles (therefore it falls into Zone 7 of the Iberia Chart, into Zone 9 of the Malev chart and into Zone 5 of the OneWorld chart), hence the mileage amounts listed below.

The amount of miles needed to fly from NYC to Tel-Aviv on Iberia, Malev or any other OneWorld airlines is:

Coach: 60.000 miles

Business: 90.000 miles

First: 120.000 miles

Iberia: http://www.jal.co.jp/en/jalmile/jal_ibtk.html

Malev: http://www.jal.co.jp/en/jalmile/jal_matkt.html

OneWorld: http://www.jal.co.jp/en/jalmile/jal_owmile.html

For an in-depth explanation of the Japan Airlines system, see the following DansDeals article:

<http://www.dansdeals.com/archives/3016>

5) LAN LanPass

Explanation: The LAN frequent-flyer program is based on kilometers rather than miles. Therefore most awards are a higher amount of kilometers. **But**, Starpoints get transferred at a 1:2 ratio, which means that for every Starpoint you get 2 LAN kilometers, and when you transfer 20,000 Starpoints you get 50,000 LAN Kilometers. The LAN redemption chart works on a round-trip kilometer distance chart, all OneWorld flights from NYC to TLV fall into Range 4 (10,001 - 20,000 kilometer range), hence the kilometers amounts listed below.

The amount of kilometers needed to fly from NYC to Tel-Aviv on any OneWorld airline is:

Coach: 95.000 kilometres

Business: 140.000 kilometres

First: 190.000 kilometres

http://plane.lan.com/lanpass/canjee_kms/tabla_premios-en-us.html#ow

For an in-depth explanation of the LanPass system, see the following DansDeals article:

<http://www.dansdeals.com/archives/2390>

SkyTeam Airlines

1) Alitalia MilleMiglia

Explanation: The reward options work on a zone system, which places the whole USA & Canada in one zone, and Israel in the Europe zone.

The amount of miles needed to fly from the USA & Canada to Tel-Aviv on Alitalia or any other SkyTeam airline is:

Coach: 50.000 miles

Business: 80.000 miles (To fly Business on Continental it costs 100.000 miles)

http://www.alitalia.com/US_EN/millemiglia/redeem_miles/other/nam.htm

2) Delta Airlines SkyMiles

Explanation: The reward options work on a zone system, which places the whole USA & Canada in one zone, and Israel in the Europe zone. Delta is a part of OneWorld, and therefore you can use their miles for an award ticket on any SkyTeam airline flight. **Also**, they are partnered with **El-Al** so you can redeem Delta miles for flights on El-Al! **But**, hurry! Because El-Al is terminating the partnership with Delta due to the fact that Delta is starting to fly direct-flights from NYC to Tel-Aviv in mid-March.

Amount of miles needed to fly from the USA & Canada to Tel-Aviv on Delta, any SkyTeam airline or El-Al is:

Coach: 80.000 miles

Business: 120.000 miles

On Delta or SkyMiles: http://images.delta.com.edgesuite.net/delta/pdfs/skymiles/multi_airline_awards.pdf

On El-Al: http://www.delta.com/skymiles/use_miles/award_upgrade_mileage/partner_airline_awards/index.jsp

3) Air France & KLM FlyingBlue

Explanation: The reward options work on a zone system, which places the whole USA & Canada in one zone, and Israel in the Europe zone.

Amount of miles needed to fly from USA & Canada to Tel-Aviv on Air-France, KLM or other SkyTeam airlines is:

Coach: 50.000 miles

Business: 90.000 miles

First: 100.000 miles

http://www.airfrance.us/cgi-bin/AF/US/en/common/util/forwardClusterAction.do?url=fblue_profiter_skyteam.htm

6) Continental Airlines OnePass

Explanation: The reward options work on a zone system, which places the whole USA & Canada in one zone, and Israel in the another zone.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The transfer rate from Starpoints to Continental is 2:1 officially, which means that you get 1 mile for every 2 (**two**) starpoints transferred. This is circumvented by using the "Direct-Deposit" system, that you set up your Starpoints account to transfer your points automatically to your airline of choice (including Continental), but

you don't get the 5,000 bonus when transferring 20,000 points (FOR MORE INFO SEE THE FOLLOWING DANSDEALS ARTICLE: <http://www.dansdeals.com/archives/2726>)

Amount of miles needed to fly from USA & Canada to Tel-Aviv on Continental Airlines or any SkyTeam flight is:

Coach: 70.000 miles

Business: 100.000 miles

http://www.continental.com/web/en-US/content/onepass/rewards/travel/charts/chart_10b.aspx

Other Airlines (Not in Any Alliance)

1) Emirates & Sri-Lankan Airways Skywards

Explanation: Both Emirates and Sri Lankan Airways are not affiliated with any airline alliance, but their frequent-flyer program allows redeeming awards on Continental airlines. The reward options work on a zone system, which places the whole USA & Canada in one zone, and Israel in the Europe zone.

The amount of miles needed to fly from USA & Canada to Tel-Aviv on Continental Airlines is:

Coach: 60.000 miles

Business: 125.000 miles

http://www.skywards.com/partner_details.aspx?id=tcm:136-81447

2) Qatar Airways Privilege Club

Explanation: Qatar Airways is not affiliated with any airline alliance, but their frequent-flyer program allows redeeming awards on Alitalia and Lufthansa flights. The reward options work on a round-trip mileage distance system. The Alitalia & Lufthansa flights from NYC to TLV fall into the 8,001 - 12,000 mile range, hence the mileage amounts listed below.

The amount of miles needed to fly from JFK to Tel-Aviv on Alitalia or Lufthansa flights is:

Coach: 65.000 miles

Business: 115.000 miles

First: 200.000 miles

http://www.qmiles.com/calculator_partner_redeem.html?linkpt11

3) Virgin Atlantic Flying Club

Explanation: Virgin Airlines is not affiliated with any airline alliance, but their frequent-flyer program allows redeeming awards on Continental airlines. The reward options work on a zone system, which places the whole USA & Canada in one zone, and Israel in the Europe zone.

The amount of miles needed to fly from USA & Canada to Tel-Aviv on Continental Airlines is:

Coach: 70.000 miles

Business: 100.000 miles

<http://www.virgin-atlantic.com/en/us/frequentflyer/fcpartners/airlines/continentalairlines.jsp>