



## ROME2RIO UNVEILS THE WORLD'S CHEAPEST AIRLINES

- **Travel planning site reveals Middle Eastern and Asian airlines provide best value for travellers, with European carriers amongst the world's most expensive**
- **Primera Air top Transatlantic airline, with Ryanair best for European travel**

*15 May 2018* - Leading travel planning platform [Rome2rio](#) today unveiled its new Global Flight Pricing report. The third edition of the popular report, this year's study analysed over 1.5 million economy-class prices from 200 airlines, finding the best value airlines for travellers.

Kirsteene Phelan, Chief Operating Officer at Rome2rio, commented: "There has never been more choice in how holidaymakers can travel to their destination. As flight prices look set to continue increasing, balancing your holiday budget with the experience of travelling becomes a key booking motivation. Paying less for a seat may mean travelling without luggage or being left with a middle seat on a long-haul flight. Travellers are increasingly being asked what price they will put on comfort and convenience."

The report covered 200 airlines, with the average cost per km across the full list rising from 17.75 US cents in 2016 to 18.8 US cents in 2018.

"Since our 2016 report, we have seen some significant shifts in pricing and ranking," continues Phelan. "Airlines who have ventured into the budget scene - such as British Airways - as well as those such as Norwegian who have a reputation as Budget Stars - need to pass on higher fuel and operational costs to the customer. Sadly, the romance of air travel, whilst not dead, is certainly waning, with more airlines tipped to scale back their inflight offerings in favour of pay-to-play service to help boost profits. We anticipate those seeking to enjoy their journey will look for other options including rail to boost their travel experience."

Key findings of the Global Flight Pricing report include:

### **Dominance of Middle Eastern and Asian airlines**

A staggering 24 of this year's top 30 international airlines are based in Asia or the Middle East, with **AirAsia X** (US\$0.07), **Air India Express** and **Indonesia AirAsia** (both US\$0.08) forming the top 3.

Says Phelan: "The AirAsia Group is particularly dominant with three of its airlines in the top 20. Although Qantas (#8) ranks highly for value, we are often seeing travellers from the UK to Asia and Australia booking with carriers such as Etihad (#6), Royal Brunei Airlines (#19), China Southern (#20) and Emirates (#25). This suggests that whilst overall value may be high for one airline over another, specific route pricing can vary greatly and travellers need to be vigilant for deals to ensure the best price to their destination."

Newcomer Primera Air (#4), Ryanair (#7), Qantas (#8), WOW air (#9), Virgin Australia (#10) and Jetstar (#22) are the best from the rest of the world.

### **European airlines**

Flying into the top ten, **Ryanair** proves the best value airline for travel within Europe (ranked #7, up from #16 in 2016), despite an average price increase from US\$0.09 to US\$0.10 per km, comparable to some of the budget Asian carriers. Aside from **WOW air's** routes to Iceland (#9; US\$0.10), European based airlines are struggling to keep pace with their Middle Eastern and Asian counterparts - the next highest entry is **Wizz Air** at #53, costing US\$0.13 per km (2016 - #20; US\$0.10).

Says Phelan: "British travellers seeking the best value for money may need to forgo any loyalty they may have to particular airlines and investigate new or charter airlines to secure the best price. **TAP Portugal** (#83), **Iberia** (#123) and **easyJet** (#124) all cost US\$0.19 per km, with British Airways (#139) at US\$0.20 whilst **Iberia Express** (#61) and **Thomas Cook** (#62) are just US\$0.14. Particularly for routes within Europe, if you are happy to spend a little bit of extra time travelling and connect via cities such as Madrid, you should be able to save on airfare."

### **Transatlantic travel**

For Brits seeking a budget flight across the Atlantic, newcomer **Primera Air** (#4; US\$0.09 per km) trumps its established competition, with fellow new entry **WOW air** (#9; US\$0.10) also providing consumers with a low-cost option between London and the USA. **Virgin Atlantic** was one of the few airlines showing a significant reduction in cost per km versus 2016 (down 4 cents to US\$0.13; rising

from #100 to #42 in the global rankings) - following its recent rollout of new economy options, Rome2rio is tipping Virgin Atlantic to consolidate this position in the next few years.

**Air Canada** (#84) and **United Airlines** (#90) both offer an average price of US\$0.16 per km, whilst for those considering a flight to the West Coast, **Air New Zealand** offers good value despite falling from #40 to #55 (average price US\$0.13, up 2 cents). The star of the budget world, **Norwegian Air**, fell from #86 to #102 following an increase in price from US\$0.15 to US\$0.17, whilst **American Airlines** (#108; US\$0.18) just beats **British Airways** (#139; US\$0.20).

“Travel between the US and UK has been one of the hot markets in the last two years, driven by the arrival of Norwegian Air,” says Phelan. “New kid on the block, Primera Air, seems to have snatched Norwegian’s crown, whilst the traditional flagship carriers of United Airlines, American Airlines and British Airways continue to struggle to keep pace with their newer competition.”

### **Movers and shakers**

Smaller airlines were the big winners in 2018, particularly those affiliated with larger international airlines. **SunExpress** (owned by Lufthansa and Turkish Airlines) managed to drop their price from US\$0.37 per km to US\$0.17 per km, taking its ranking from #174 in 2016 to #84 in 2018. Mexican airline **Interjet** saw a fall in average price per km from US\$0.29 to US\$0.17, rising from #165 to #93, while **Meridiana** (as of March 2018, rebranded Air Italy following investment from Qatar Airways) rose from #134 to #80 in the rankings, with average price per km falling 6 cents to US\$0.15.

Of the household names, **Virgin Atlantic** dropped its average price by 4 cents to US\$0.13, rising from #100 to #42 in the rankings, with **TAP Portugal** (3 cent drop to US\$0.16; ranking change from #119 to #83) and **United Airlines** (2 cent drop to US\$0.16; ranking change from #112 to #90) also entering the top 100.

At the other end of the table, **easyJet** fell from #71 to #124 following an average price increase per km from US\$0.14 to US\$0.19, with **AirAsia** and **Hong Kong Express** the big casualties from 2016’s top ten: the latter dropped from second to #79 with their average price more than doubling from US\$0.07 to US\$0.15 per km, whilst AirAsia dropped from #5 to #43 following a price increase from

US\$0.08 to US\$0.13 per km. However AirAsia claimed the top place in 2018 with its AirAsia X brand (average price per km US\$0.07) and third with Indonesia AirAsia (average price US\$0.08).

New entries for 2018 also include **Primera Air**, entering in fourth place courtesy of its low average price of US\$0.09 per km. Offering flights from London to New York, Boston, Washington DC and Toronto, the budget airline will be a welcome arrival to the market for Brits given **British Airways'** average price of US\$0.20 per km (ranked #139 in 2018, down from #116 in 2016) and **Norwegian's** recent price increase (from US\$0.15 to US\$0.17 per km, falling from #86 to #102).

The full Global Pricing Report - including analysis of domestic markets - is available at [www.rome2rio.com/labs/2018-global-flight-price-ranking/#ranking](http://www.rome2rio.com/labs/2018-global-flight-price-ranking/#ranking)

To plan your next trip, visit [www.rome2rio.com](http://www.rome2rio.com)

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#### **Notes to editors**

Unless otherwise stated, prices shown are US\$ per km, based on international routes.

Data is based on a two month analysis conducted by Rome2rio, looking at 1.5 million price points of economy class fares across a variety of routes, international and domestic carriers.

#### **For more information**

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#### **About Rome2rio**

Rome2rio is a comprehensive global trip planner that helps customers find all the options for travel between any two points on the globe. Enter any town, address or landmark as your destination and Rome2rio will instantly display flight, train, bus, ferry and driving options, with estimated travel times and fares. Founded in 2011, Rome2rio is based in Melbourne, Australia. The company won the People's Choice Award at the 2012 Phocuswright Travel Innovation Summit, Traveltech's 2013 website of the year, the Data Specialist Award at WITovation 2015, Best Compare Award at WITovation 2016 and Best Metasearch at the 2016 Travolution Awards. With over 100 million unique visitors in the last 12 months, Rome2rio is a recognised leader in the multi-modal space.