



## How to Travel Around the World With 150,000 Aeroplan Points

### Description

This past summer, many of us were shocked (in a good way) when **American Express** offered 150,000 Aeroplan points as a welcome bonus on some of its [rewards credit cards](#). Just to give you perspective, 150,000 points amounts to \$1,500 to \$2,200 when you redeem your points for flights, which means you could have saved a crazy amount of money just by signing up for a new card.

Of course, once you have 150,000 points (sign-up bonus or not), you have to think — what's the *best* way to spend them? Some might hoard them for domestic flights, but here's what I would do: I'd use those points to travel around the world.

### Can you really travel around the world with 150,000 points?

Yes! You just have to take advantage of Aeroplan's *stopover* option.

Ever since Aeroplan revamped its rewards program last November, travelers can add stopovers to international flights for an extra 5,000 points. Your stopover could be on route to your final destination, such as a flight to Moscow that stops in Bangkok. Or it could be slightly out of the way, as in a flight to Sydney that stops in Cape Town. Stopovers can last 45 days in duration, which gives you plenty of time to explore a new city in another part of the world.

### How do you use stopovers?

To create an around-the-world trip that costs you 150,000 points or less, you have to learn how to read Aeroplan's [reward chart](#). Fortunately, the chart is fairly intuitive. Aeroplan separates the world into four zones, and in each zone, you'll pay a certain number of miles for the distance you travel.

For instance, if you're traveling 7,000 miles to Asia, then you'll look at the Pacific zone. For trips under 7,000 miles, you'll pay around 60,000 miles for a partner airline. This is for one-way tickets only, so if we double that number, we're left with 120,000 miles for a round trip ticket.

But now let's add a stopover. Let's say you want to stop in Europe on your way to Asia. You calculate that it will take you, say, 4,000 miles to travel to a new city in Europe. It will also take you around 4,500 miles to travel from Europe to your final destination in Asia. So, for your first ticket, you will travel 8,500 miles, putting you in the 7,501 to 11,000 range on the Pacific chart. That will cost you 60,000 points, plus 5,000 for the stopover for a grand total of 65,000 points.

That's for the first ticket. For your return flight, you calculate that it will take you 8,000 miles to return to Canada. Again, this puts you in the same range (7,501 to 11,000), and your return ticket will cost you 60,000 points. For your trip to Europe and Asia, you spend only 125,000 points, which isn't much more than a round trip ticket to Asia alone.

Not bad, right? Well, let's look at a more specific example to help you see how stopovers work.

## Toronto to Hong Kong via Moscow: 125,000 points

Let's say Hong Kong is your final destination. But instead of flying directly to Hong Kong, you take a slight detour and land in Moscow.

First, let's calculate the distances. From Toronto to Moscow, it's 4,636 miles, and from Moscow to Hong Kong, it's another 4,432 miles. That's a total of 9,071 miles, which will put you in the 7,501 to 11,000 range on the Pacific chart. For a partner airline (economy), you'd cough up 60,000 points, plus 5,000 for the stopover for a total of 65,000 points.

But, of course, that's only one way. Now, let's calculate the return flight, which is Hong Kong to Toronto, or 7,792 miles. That mileage puts you in the 7,501 to 11,000 range, which will cost you 60,000 points on a partner airline.

So, from Toronto to Moscow to Hong Kong back to Toronto, you spend around 125,000 points, putting you far below the 150,000 threshold.

## Bottom line

One important thing to note: flying to one zone over another could cost you fewer points. For instance, flying 9,000 miles from North America to the Atlantic would cost you around 70,000 points on a partner airline. Flying the same distance between North America to the Pacific would cost you only 60,000 points.

If you have 150,000 Aeroplan points, don't settle for less — use a stopover to see more of the world. In fact, Aeroplan will let you add *two* stopovers per round-trip ticket. For the example, you could stop in Bangkok after Moscow, which would still put you under the 150,000 threshold.

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