

# Hidden city ticketing flight hack can save money, but comes with risks

Some airline customers have found deep discounts if their destination is a stopover, skipping the final leg of their trip.



Passengers using hidden city ticketing are limited to carry-on luggage, as checked bags will end up at the final destination, and airlines typically cancel return flights for passengers who are no-shows. (DREAMSTIME)

By **ALEXANDRA POSADZKI** The Canadian Press  
Thu., July 20, 2017



When Kevin, a Toronto-based entrepreneur, travels to San Francisco for work, he often books a flight to Santa Ana, Calif., instead. Then he disembarks the plane during the stopover in San Francisco and skips the last leg of the flight to Southern California.

Kevin — who didn't want his last name used to avoid any repercussions from airlines — says the travel hack, often referred to as hidden city ticketing, has saved him thousands of dollars over the past two years.

He says he has found flights to Santa Ana that stop in San Francisco for as little as \$190 (U.S.), compared with \$450 for a regular flight to his destination.

"It is somewhat infuriating that if an airline can get you from point A to point B for hundreds of dollars less, it does seem unfair," Kevin says.

Hidden city ticketing is not new, but its popularity has grown thanks to some travel websites that make it easier to find these sorts of flights.

But while the savings may be appealing, experts caution that the practice can be risky.

First off, the plane could be rerouted and not stop at the desired destination, leaving you scrambling to arrange another flight or mode of transportation.

Passengers using hidden city ticketing are also limited to carry-on luggage, as any checked bags will end up at the final destination, says personal finance and travel expert Barry Choi. And airlines will typically cancel return flights for those who are no-shows, he adds.

Choi says in some cases it may violate the contract between the airline and the passenger.

"Some of them state that you cannot purchase these types of tickets," he says. "So if you do, buyer beware."

According to Choi, it's more common to find such deals when flying across the border or within the U.S. than within Canada.

The Canadian Transportation Agency says the federal government does not have a stance on hidden city ticketing as the matter is addressed in most airlines' contracts with their passengers.

Air Canada says its terms and conditions require all segments of a trip to be flown as booked.

"Should a customer not take one of the flights, it is considered as a 'no-show,' and as per standard industry practice described in our tariff rules, the rest of the flights in the itinerary could be cancelled," spokesperson Angela Mah said in an email.

WestJet says it has no policy regarding hidden city ticketing because it is very rarely used on its flights.

"Due to how we price our fares, hidden city ticketing would be a very rare occurrence on WestJet as it would usually cost less to fly to A to B than from A, B, to C," spokesperson Lauren Stewart said in an email.

"We would, overall, discourage this as it can cause operational delays and disruption to the second leg of the journey should the guest choose to no-show after checking in."

Russell Hannon, a budget travel expert, says he hasn't heard of any instances where airlines have taken action against passengers for hidden city ticketing. But if it becomes a major issue for the companies they may do so in the future, he says.

Choi says it's important to keep in mind that skipping a connecting flight can cause delays for other travellers, as the airline will usually try to ensure that all passengers are on board before taking off.

He also says the travel hack could end up hurting consumers in the long run. If airlines see their profits eroding, they will likely pass those costs on to customers in the form of higher ticket fees, he says.

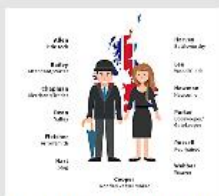
"That means you may save \$200 now, but when airlines realize those losses, they're going to start charging more."

#### More from the Toronto Star & Partners



##### Cheap Beer Nights

Toronto.com



##### The Meaning Behind Your English Surname

Ancestry™  
Sponsored Links ▶



##### Women in Alberta are Flocking to New Shoppin...

Tophatter  
Sponsored Links ▶



##### There Are 10 Types of Irish Last Names - Which One...

Ancestry™  
Sponsored Links ▶



##### We are Canadians But it's complicated



##### Baby racoons Couple find home for motherless cubs



##### The Dish Chicken gyro with fries calorie count



##### Yoga Moves Downward-facing dog at Niagara Falls



##### Canadian cowboy Spectacular journey through South America



##### Genetic treatment Muscular dystrophy breakthrough?

#### thestar.com

[Feedback](#)  
[Site Map](#)  
[Newsletters](#)  
[Insurance Hotline](#)  
[New in Homes](#)  
[Star Store](#)  
[StarAuctions](#)  
[Corrections](#)  
[Behavioural Targeting](#)  
[Today's News](#)  
[Flyers](#)  
[CanadaStays](#)  
[Contests](#)

#### Toronto Star Newspaper Ltd.

[About](#)  
[Atkinson Principles](#)  
[Statement of Principles](#)  
[Get Home Delivery](#)  
[My Subscription](#)  
[Contact Us](#)  
[Contact Webmaster](#)  
[FAQ](#)  
[News Releases](#)  
[Star Internships](#)  
[Careers @ the Star](#)  
[Star Advisers](#)  
[Star ePaper](#)  
[Reprint and License](#)

#### Advertising

[Advertise with Us](#)  
[Advertising Terms](#)  
[Special Features](#)

#### Initiatives

[Santa Claus Fund](#)  
[Fresh Air Fund](#)  
[Speakers Bureau](#)  
[Classroom Connection](#)  
[Toronto Star Archives](#)  
[Report on Community Giving](#)