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Southwest Airlines Policy Changes Effective May 28, 2025 [1]

May 28, 2025 by Staff [2]

Southwest Airlines is implementing several major updates starting today that may impact how you book, manage, and pay for your travel. Here's what you need to know:

Checked Bag Fees Now Apply to Most Fares

- Checked bag fees apply to Basic, Wanna Get Away Plus, and Anytime fares.
- **Business Select** passengers and **Hawaii residents** (inter-island travel only) still receive **two free checked bags**.
- **A-List Preferred Members** get two free bags; **A-List** and **Credit Cardmembers** get one.
- Reservations booked or changed before May 28 remain eligible for Southwest's former "bags fly free" policy.
- Group reservations booked or changed before January 26, 2026 remain eligible for Southwest's former "bags fly free" policy.

Credit Card & Tier Member Benefits Updated

- **Rapid Rewards Credit Cardmembers** now receive **one free checked bag** for themselves and up to **8 companions** on the same reservation.
- **Companion Pass holders** will have their baggage benefits extended to their Companion traveler when flying together.

Fare Structure Changes (Phased Rollout)

- **May 28, 2025**: A new Basic fare launches. Like all basic economy fares, this is **not recommended** by the university due to its strict limitations. (Cannot transfer credits and credits expire 6 months after purchase date.)
- **Later in 2025:** New fare tiers will become available:
    - Choice Extra (currently Business Select)
    - Choice Preferred (currently Anytime)
    - Choice (currently Wanna Get Away Plus)

Flight Credit Expiration Changes

- Flight credits created **on or after** May 28 will now have **expiration dates.** Typically one year after purchase date, with the exception of Basic fare which expires 6 months after purchase date.
- Credits issued **before** May 28 will continue to **never expire**, unless applied toward a post-May 28 booking and then canceled.

Assigned Seating Coming Soon

- Assigned seating will roll out in late 2025 for travel in 2026.
- New fare options will include Standard, Preferred, and Extra Legroom seating choices.

More detailed information can be found in this Southwest help center article [3]. If you need assistance navigating the changes or updating your department's travel guidance as a result of these changes, please reach out to PSC@cu.edu [4].

Travel and Expense [5]
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