

Google Flights aims to save air travelers money with new alerts on nearby airports, travel dates

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Credit: Petr Kratochvil/public domain

Google Flights is trying to make the process of booking a flight a little easier—and less stressful—with some new updates.

Google rolled out a new feature in November for all users that notifies them when cheaper flights are available at nearby airports, Craig Ewer, a spokesperson for Google, confirmed to U.S. Today. Google also now offers a similar feature that notifies you if altering your travel dates could mean saving a significant chunk of change.

"We want people to trust that Google Flights helps you find the best flights that best fit your needs," Thijs van As, product lead for the Google Flights team, told U.S. TODAY. For example, if you're flying from New York to Washington and there is a [flight](#) available that's half the price or cheaper than what you're looking it, the site will inform you about changes to your itinerary.

Travelers don't buy tickets from Google (though they can book on the platform). The portal partners with airlines and travel agents to collect flight information. Effectively, it's a one-stop shop with insights and purchasing convenience.

A host of other providers, such as Kayak and Scott's Cheap Flights, provide similar listings. Expedia, Kayak, Travelocity and others let you set up price alerts via email to stay on top of your flights (as does Google Flights). Some of these services include options of adding nearby airports or including flexible dates when booking.

Google has been examining what the biggest problems travelers face when booking flights. The biggest? "People don't know what is a good price for a flight," nor do they know the right time to book, van As added.

The airport and price notification service is part of a series of changes Google has made to best help travelers. Earlier this year, it launched a new type of price insight that tells you whether the flight price you found is relatively high, low or typical. The service compares trips of

similar length and time of year.

Google Flights is also trying to predict whether a flight's price will remain stable or if it could increase in the next few days. When the platform has high confidence one of these two will happen, it will inform the user.

Other tips for getting the most out of Google Flights

- Use the Explore feature. Find deals all over the world by mentioning your home airport, where you want to go and when as well as budget limitations.
- Filter. If you want to avoid layovers or early morning flights, mark that when searching.
- See different fare options. Check out basic economy or main cabin fares, for instance.

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