

Redeeming Flights (57%) Most Popular Reward Among Travel Reward Credit Card Holders

*But Four in Ten (40%) Say There Were No Reward Seats
Available for their Preferred Flight or Dates*

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their Preferred Flight or Dates***

Toronto, ON – By a two to one margin over its nearest competitor, redeeming travel points for flights is the most popular type of travel reward among Canadians who hold a travel reward credit card, according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of RBC. Six in ten (57%) cardholders say they redeemed points for flights in the last three years, well ahead of the proportion that redeemed points for merchandise (30%), gift cards (27%), hotels, rental car or other travel-related rewards (22%), financial rewards (4%), or some other (3%) type of reward. Fifteen percent (15%) say they haven't redeemed any of their points in the last three years.

While flights are hands down the most common type of reward redeemed in the past three years, for many travellers the process was not without aggravation. Eight in ten (81%) 'agree' (48% strongly/34% somewhat) that 'it's frustrating to book many months in advance to get the reward flights' they want. Furthermore, four in ten (40%) say that when they were trying to book using their points there were no reward seats available on the flights/dates they wanted.

But the problems don't stop there. One in three (31%) wanted a direct flight but had to book a flight with a stop-over instead, and three in ten (29%) had to fly on different dates than they wanted. Others say they couldn't get enough reward seats for their family or travelling

companion (9%), the number of points needed was more than they were willing to use (32%), there were restrictions or blackouts on the dates they wanted (20%), that their preferred airline wasn't available (9%), or that they found out their points had expired (3%). Interestingly, virtually all (99%) 'agree' (90% strongly/9% somewhat) that it is important to them that their points don't expire after a set period of time.

Fully one quarter (25%) of cardholders say that in the past three years they've tried to book a flight using their reward points and have been unable to do so for some reason.

Canadians appear to adopt different strategies when it comes to their point-saving and redemption habits. While most (50%) save up their points for years for very big rewards like a big vacation or a new TV, others use their reward points for smaller vacations once a year (24%), for gift cards, movie tickets, and smaller items to treat themselves throughout the year (18%), to buy gifts for special occasions like birthdays, weddings and anniversaries (5%), to save for their future by contributing to an RRSP or TFSA (2%), or to pay down their debt on a line of credit or mortgage (2%).

When it comes to activities they would like to try on their next vacation, four in ten (44%) would like to take a boat tour, while others would like to visit a winery (39%), schedule a massage or spa appointment (33%), go snorkelling (26%), sailing (16%), take cooking lessons (15%), or even go skydiving (6%). Just one-in-five (19%) wouldn't want to do any of these activities.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted by Ipsos Reid on behalf of RBC between April 15-26, 2011. For this survey, a national sample of 2,086 premium travel reward card holders from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. All respondents held a credit card with an annual fee of at least \$50 that rewarded use with travel points or miles. A survey with an unweighted



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probability sample of this size and a 100 per cent response rate would have an estimated margin of error of ± 2.2 percentage points 19 times out of 20 of what the results would have been had the entire population of card holders in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to, coverage error and measurement error.

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