

Frequent flyers: have your wedding cake and eat it too

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By Simon Webster
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Earn points on almost anything - even your wedding

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When Hazal Alkac said her vows with her beau Nathan, amid the rolling hills of Kangaroo Valley, New South Wales last June, she looked understandably happy about proceedings. She was marrying the love of her life, but what's more, she'd put the wedding expenses on credit cards that in return, earned lots of Qantas Points.

The honeymoon was going to be a bit more luxurious than it might have been.

"We got two credit cards with high points returns and used them to pay for most of the wedding expenses," says the 31-year-old Sydney-based PR senior account director. "The venue, his suit, my dress, accommodation and flowers... we put as much on the credit cards as we could.

"We used our savings to pay off the cards without having to pay any interest and used the Frequent Flyer points to upgrade a couple of honeymoon flights."

Thanks to those points, one of the legs of the honeymoon trip from Sydney to London became business class. And the return, from Turkey to Sydney, was in business class too.

"It was so needed, especially on the way home," Hazal says. "It's a long way, you're exhausted, and it's a last bit of luxury before you get back to the real world and are no longer in your wedding bubble. I highly recommend it."

Great strategy



Roland says, "You should only use rewards cards for things you can afford."

Hazal and Nathan still have plenty of points left and are adding to them by continuing to put expenses on their rewards credit cards, while paying their credit card bills in full before they attract any interest.

It's a strategy that makes a lot of sense, says Roland B. Bleyer, founder of comparison site, creditcard.com.au

"It's fantastic," he says. "In theory, you should pay for everything on rewards credit cards, as long as you don't get penalised for using them. If there are fees associated with credit card usage that are worth more than any points you would earn, then don't use them.

You should only use rewards cards for things you can afford. Not for what you can't afford."

Accumulating points certainly works for Roland, who has four credit cards and puts every expense he can on them, as well as taking advantage of any bonus points available, either in introductory offers (signing up for a new card can earn you enough points for a return flight to Europe), or by shopping with cards' retail partners.

"I haven't paid for a flight in 10 years," he says. "Last year I flew to Amsterdam, Vienna and Lombok return. And in previous years I've taken the family to Europe on points."

Fiji festivities



Travel writer Anthony Bianco paid for his Fiji wedding with points.

Another credit card user who has made the connection between wedding bells and Qantas Points is travel writer and blogger Anthony Bianco. The man behind thetravelart.com says he puts every day-to-day expense that he can on his Qantas Points earning credit card.

As a result, when he flew to Fiji to get married, and then went onto the US for a honeymoon, all the flights, with the exception of taxes, fees and carrier charges, were paid for with points.

"I use a credit card to pay for all my living expenses, every single bill," Anthony says.

He also has a few tactics for increasing his points earn. "If I go to a sporting event with mates, I buy all the tickets on my card and get my mates to pay me back," Anthony says. "In the past I've paid for corporate functions with my card, then claimed it back on expenses. When the time comes, I pay off my credit card balance every month, automatically, so it never accrues interest."

Next up is a family holiday. Eight years after their Fiji wedding, Anthony and his partner, Carla, have two kids who are also in need of frequent flyer points.

"We've got about 460,000 points at the moment," he says. "We're looking at going to South Africa, on safari in Kruger National Park."

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