



Fly Private for Less

The luxury of having a plane to yourself will always be pricey. But with some creativity and flexibility, you can still save big. **BY DIANE TEGMEYER**

► **Take an empty leg.** Full-paying clients often book one-way flights, and that means a plane has to return to its home base with no one aboard (these unoccupied flights are known as “empty legs”). Some boutique charter services, such as Talon Air, will send empty-leg e-mails to those requesting them. (E-mail your information to info@talonairjets.com, and ask to be included.) Typically you’ll get a savings of 50% to 60%. XOJET recently offered a 30% discount from anywhere in Western Europe to anywhere in the U.S. because it had an aircraft that needed to get back in a hurry. Also check out Virgincharter.com, which has an online clearinghouse for empty legs.

► **Fly on low-demand days.** According to Alison McCauley, senior director of marketing for XOJET, Saturday is typically the slowest day for on-demand charter, so you may be able to get as much as a 25% discount. The same is true of flying a redeye. Recently a late-night flight from San Francisco to West Palm Beach was marked down 20% on

XO. Holidays are also good times to find deep discounts. Most people don’t want to fly on Thanksgiving or Christmas, but planes may need to go then in order to pick up clients the next day.

► **Fly against the grain.** According to Jason Kaufman, vice president of Talon Air, if you travel north from South Florida to New York on a Thursday or Friday, for example, or fly south on Saturday or Sunday, you could secure a 50% to 60% discount.

► **Be flexible about the airport.** Bigger airports have higher costs. If you’re willing to fly into or out of Oakland as opposed to San Francisco, you can save 15% or more.

► **Fly with people you don’t know.** Talon Air, for example, has an affinity group program open to anyone. Sign up, and it will notify you when a plane is flying

with open seats. A flight from New York to Miami aboard a mid-sized Hawker 800 would typically cost \$5,000 per hour. If there were three passengers traveling and an extra seat was available, you would end up paying only \$1,250 per hour. ■

*Fly south
on a Saturday
or Sunday
and you could
SAVE 50-60%.*