



CHRIS SORENSEN

PLANNING A
HOLIDAY SKI TRIP?
YOUR FRACTIONAL
PROVIDER MAY
NEED MORE
ADVANCE NOTICE.

beating the holiday rush

'TIS THE SEASON WHEN YOUR FRACTIONAL INVESTMENT CAN BE ESPECIALLY VALUABLE—BUT ALSO A BIT HARDER TO TAP THAN USUAL_by James D. Butler

ONE OF THE JOYS OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON is getting together with friends and family from around the country—particularly when you can avoid the hassles of commercial air travel and fly privately. This is the time of year when many of our fractional-share clients get the most out of their private jet investments. Family vacations, for example, can be stretched so that you can be out on the ski slopes or on the beach the day you arrive and the day you leave rather than losing those days to flying on crowded, often delayed commercial aircraft and connecting through inconvenient hubs.

Of course, this is a busy season for the fractional providers as well, so it pays to plan ahead to ensure that your holiday travel is trouble free and all that you bargained for. These tips should help:

Play the slots. Some popular airports like Aspen-Pitkin and Eagle County/Vail have limited landing slots. Your provider may require more advance notice for flights into these airports. (Early morning and Saturday/Monday arrivals may be easier to slot.) Some providers will fly into mountain

airports only during daylight hours. Other popular destinations like Florida and the Caribbean may suffer air traffic control delays. The bottom line: work with your provider to cover all your bases in scheduling flights to give yourself the best chance of averting hassles.

Avoid peak travel days. Many of your designated “peak travel days” occur during the holiday season. On these days, access to aircraft is more restricted, your provider can delay your flight by several hours, and upgrade and other concessions are not guaranteed. Whenever possible, schedule flights on nonpeak days. You’re much more likely to avoid a charter and to fly on your preferred schedule.

Take advantage of guaranteed upgrades. If you’ve negotiated well, your contract may include a guaranteed upgrade to a larger aircraft. This can be most helpful when you want to fly your whole family together to a vacation spot. You also may need an upgrade to accommodate all your luggage, particularly for ski and golf vacations. Again, request the upgrade well in advance and avoid peak travel days.

Consider simultaneous use. If you're flying family members in from various locations, take advantage of benefits in your contract to use two aircraft on the same day. This capability usually is granted to owners of larger shares on larger aircraft, but sometimes can be negotiated on smaller shares.

Say no to charter. During busy periods, providers rely more than usual on subcontracted charter aircraft. If you're averse to flying charter, let your provider know up front and insist that a note to that effect be included with your request. That way, when fleet aircraft are stretched thin, they'll be more likely to send one to you and pass the charter on to the next guy.

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Build a relationship. For most fractional leisure travelers, holiday time is make or break for this investment. If you can avoid flying commercially and get the most out of your vacation or family gathering, the investment seems worth the cost. If, however, at the very time that you need it most, your fractional jet share doesn't pay off, its purchase is hard to justify. Make sure your provider understands this. If you have a continuing relationship with a salesperson or senior manager, communicate with that person early on. He or she has a stake in making sure your trip goes well and so can be an additional voice advocating on your behalf, making sure that the stress on the system doesn't adversely affect you.

Flying privately is a lifestyle choice intended to make your travel more enjoyable and stress free, never more so than during the holiday season when you want to make the most of time with family and friends. These tips should help you and your provider deliver on that promise.

Here's wishing all the readers of this column safe and trouble-free holiday flights and a healthy and prosperous new year. ■

*James Butler welcomes comments and suggestions at:
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