

Airlines Deliver Strong Passenger Experience, Despite Industry Challenges, JD Power Finds

JetBlue Airways, Delta Air Lines and Southwest Airlines Each Rank Highest in Customer Satisfaction in Respective Segment

- Overall satisfaction with airlines in North America rises sharply across all segments
- On-board experience, day of travel experience and value for price paid help drive improvement
- Recent increases in ticket prices and fees may negatively affect passenger satisfaction

TROY, Mich. : 6 May 2026 – During the course of a year that saw heavy flight delays and cancellations, crowded airports and rising ticket prices and baggage fees, airlines in North America still managed to deliver stand-out passenger experiences. According to the JD Power 2026 North America Airline Satisfaction Study,SM released today, overall satisfaction rises 8 points (on a 1,000-point scale) year over year, with improvement occurring across all segments. However, as airfares have begun to skyrocket in 2026, airlines may soon find it difficult to offset high costs with great service.

“Despite many challenges, the airlines returned to basics of passenger communication, friendly service and providing slightly better value for money compared to past years,” said **Michael Taylor, senior managing director of travel, hospitality, retail and customer service at JD Power**. “The big question now is how long that can continue. With airfare prices for some routes tripling over the past few weeks and baggage fees increasing to cover rising fuel costs, it is becoming increasingly difficult for airlines to continue to drive the high levels of customer satisfaction in this year’s study.”

Following are some key findings of the 2026 study:

- **Overall satisfaction rises across all segments:** Overall passenger satisfaction for North America airlines is up 8 points from 2025. That improvement is driven by a 17-point increase in satisfaction among passengers flying in first and business classes; a 14-point increase in satisfaction among passengers flying in the premium economy class; and a 6-point increase in satisfaction among passengers flying in the economy and basic economy classes.
- **Controlling the controllables:** Overall improvements in the passenger experience are driven by strong scores for on-board experience; day of travel pre-board and post-flight experience; and perception of value for price paid, underscoring how airline efforts to deliver on the basics of customer service and clear communication have succeeded in mitigating many of the frustrations travelers have encountered as a result of travel delays and rising costs.

- **Gap narrows between top performers in economy/basic economy segment:** Just three points separate the highest-ranked (Southwest Airlines) and second highest-ranked (Delta Air Lines) airlines in the economy/basic economy segment. Southwest has dramatically changed its operating processes at the behest of shareholders. The introduction of fees has traditionally had a major effect on satisfaction with airline performance.

Study Ranking

JetBlue Airways ranks highest in customer satisfaction in the first/business segment for a second consecutive year with a score of 759. **Delta Air Lines** (750) ranks second and **Alaska Airlines** (720) ranks third.

Delta Air Lines ranks highest in customer satisfaction in the premium economy segment for a fourth consecutive year, with a score of 736. **Alaska Airlines** (720) ranks second and **JetBlue Airways** (701) ranks third.

Southwest Airlines ranks highest in customer satisfaction in the economy/basic economy segment for a fifth consecutive year, with a score of 670. **Delta Air Lines** (667) ranks second and **JetBlue Airways** (655) ranks third.

The North America Airline Satisfaction Study measures passenger satisfaction with airline carriers in North America based on performance in seven core dimensions on a poor-to-perfect 6-point rating scale. Individual dimensions measured are (in alphabetical order): airline staff; digital tools; ease of travel; level of trust; on-board experience; pre/post-flight experience; and value for price paid. The study measures passenger satisfaction in three segments—first/business; premium economy; and economy/basic economy.

The 2026 study is based on responses from 10,914 passengers. Passengers needed to have flown on a major North America airline within the past month of completing a survey. The study was fielded from March 2025 through March 2026.

For more information about the North America Airline Satisfaction Study, visit <https://www.jdpower.com/business/resource/jd-power-north-america-airline-satisfaction-study>.

About JD Power

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As an objective source of deep insight into real-world customer interactions with brands and products, JD Power provides the independent intelligence organizations need to anticipate

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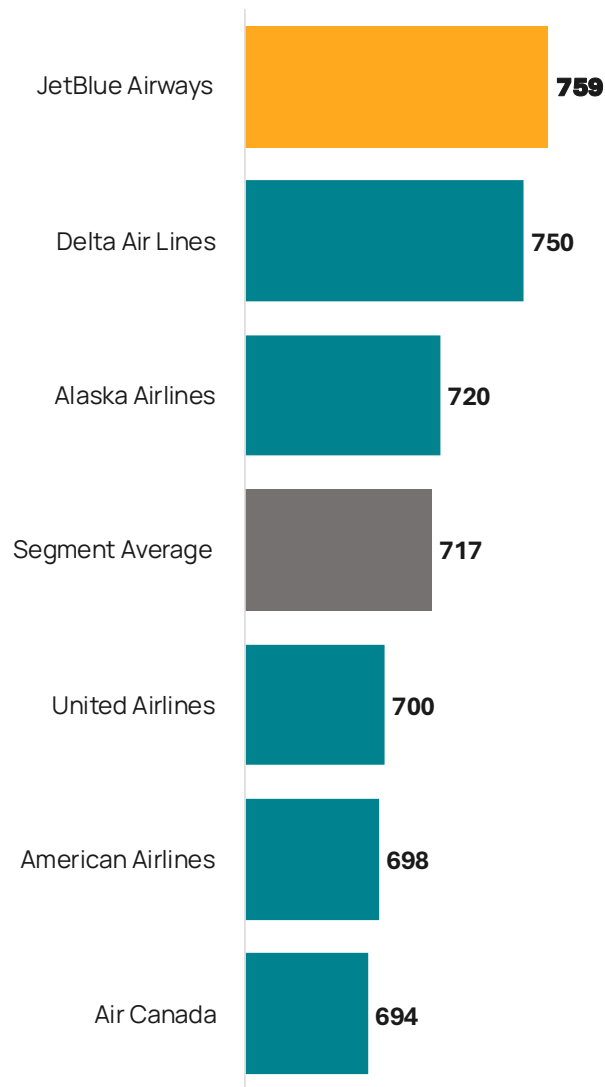
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Note: Three charts follow.

JD Power 2026 North America Airline Satisfaction StudySM

Overall Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking
(Based on a 1,000-point scale)

FIRST/BUSINESS



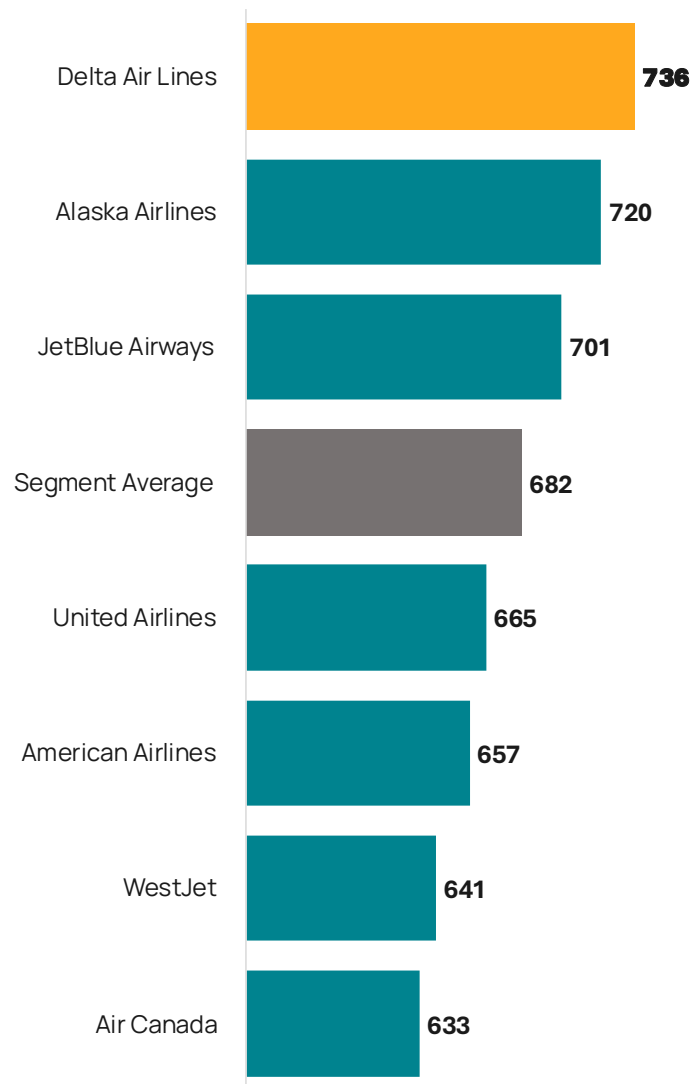
Source: JD Power 2026 North America Airline Satisfaction StudySM

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Overall Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking
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PREMIUM ECONOMY



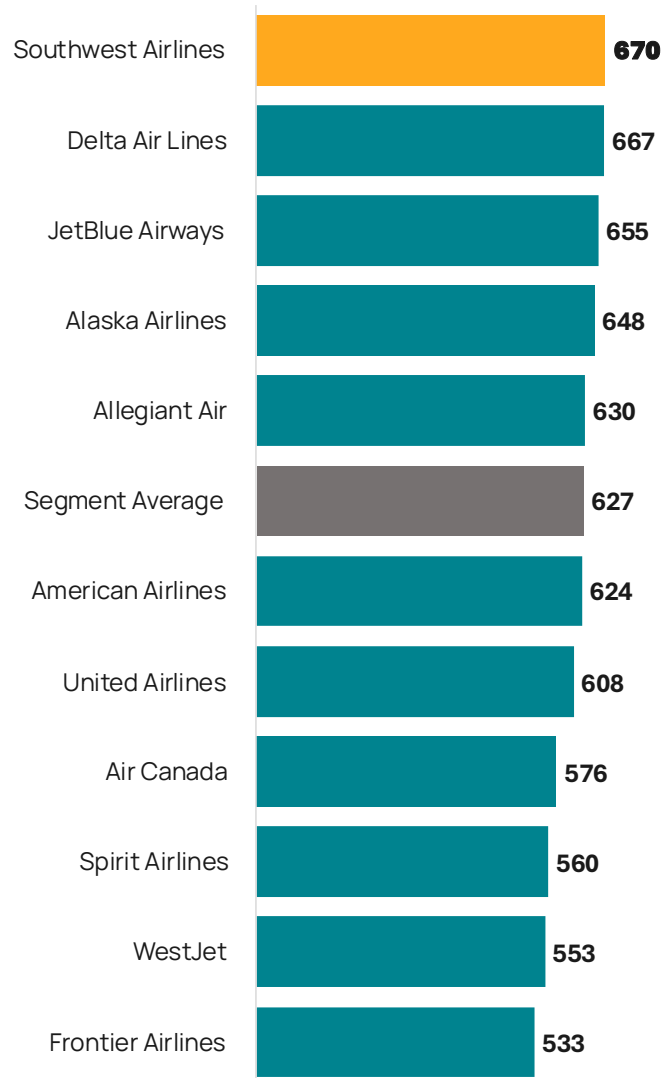
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Overall Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking
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ECONOMY/BASIC ECONOMY



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