

How to Book Group Flights for 10+ Passengers

Locked fares, deposits, name-change deadlines and airline-by-airline perks — everything you need before you request a group quote.



You can book group flights for ten or more people, but the process differs significantly from buying air tickets on a website. Most airlines offer locked rates, deposits, flexible name changes, seating coordination and dedicated group service — though exactly what you get depends entirely on the airline and its program. Hesitate too long, or fall below the required minimum group size, and you may lose your deposit or find seats sold out. This guide covers how to make group reservations, which documents and deadlines matter, and when chartering becomes an option.

What Counts as a "Group Booking" for Airlines?

Major airlines are remarkably consistent about the number that separates a group from other passenger categories. Ten travellers on the same route is the smallest group almost all major carriers agree on — Delta, American, United, JetBlue, Frontier and Southwest all apply this rule consistently.

- **Travellers usually must take the same flight segment:** if ten people book flights at different times, major airlines generally won't treat them as a group.
- **Some airlines require higher minimums:** certain international carriers set the bar at 12–15 passengers instead of the commonly accepted ten.

- **Falling below the minimum may cancel the booking:** if a group has fewer than ten passengers confirmed before the reservation is completed, airlines typically cancel it — along with the deposit already paid.
- **American Airlines treats business and leisure groups differently:** under AA's policy, business groups receive a better discount than leisure groups of the same size.

Given the uniformity in this regard across the entire industry, ten has become the threshold that travellers need to consider when determining whether they even want to make a group reservation.

Benefits of Group Flights vs. Individual Tickets

The decision to book group flight instead of individual flights comes with numerous benefits, although the actual benefits differ from airline to airline.

Benefit	What It Typically Means
Locked group fare	One agreed price applies across the whole group, protecting against fare increases before final payment
Deposit-based holding	A partial deposit secures seats while passenger names are finalized closer to departure
Flexible name changes	Substituting one traveller for another is often easier and cheaper than on individual tickets
Seating coordination	Groups are more likely to be seated together or nearby, subject to availability
Dedicated support	Many airlines offer a group travel desk or coordinator separate from standard customer service
Bonus tickets on some airlines	Certain carriers offer a free ticket for every 15th, 30th, or similar milestone passenger

Apart from the above mentioned advantages, American Airlines' "Zone Fare" includes the additional benefit of fixed pricing and automatic seat assignment. To parties of ten people or more coming from several countries to the same destination. Southwest Airlines, on the other hand, provides complimentary ticket to every 30th person and does not charge any fees whatsoever for booking and changing of tickets.

The group discounts for flights definitely offer stability of costs that cannot be offered in case of individual bookings. Due to the fact that the price is stated in one lump sum, there is no way the price of each flight can be changed.

How to Book Group Flights (Step-by-Step)

Booking a group trip works differently from booking an individual flight, because most airlines route group requests through a special form rather than their standard checkout.

1. Confirm your total passenger count and a joint itinerary, making sure everyone travels on the same flight and the same dates.

2. Find the airline's group travel page, usually listed under "Group Travel" or "Groups" in the travel information section of the website.
3. Fill out the group travel request form with your travel dates, passenger count and itinerary to receive a personalized quote.
4. Wait for the fare quote from the airline's group desk — most group fares are calculated manually based on demand, not quoted automatically online.
5. Check the quote's validity window and fare carefully, since group quotes typically expire within 24–72 hours due to fare fluctuations.
6. Pay the deposit to lock in your seats at the group rate while you wait for passenger confirmations.
7. Submit final passenger names by the airline's deadline, then complete full payment ahead of the flight date.

Because so many airlines require a live quote rather than an instant online purchase, building in extra time before your intended travel date is essential.

Group Booking Documents and Deposit Requirements

Deposit structures differ between carriers, and knowing these differences upfront makes budgeting for a group trip far easier.

Airline	Typical Deposit Structure	Final Payment Timing
JetBlue	\$50 per person (North/South America), \$150 per person (Trans-Atlantic)	30 days before departure (domestic), 60 days (international)
Frontier	\$5 per passenger at acceptance, plus \$40 per person within 5 business days	Varies by booking window, generally well ahead of departure
Industry-wide general range	25% to 40% of total group fare at confirmation	30 to 45 days before departure, 60 days during peak season

Submission deadlines for passenger names tend to have a similar structure as well. For domestic trips, the deadlines for names would usually be 7-14 days before departure, and for international trips the deadlines would usually be 14-21 days before departure. Making changes to passengers' names after this period can result in a charge being made per passenger per flight segment, thus it is better to submit names early and avoid these costs later on.

What happens if your group shrinks:

- Delta and JetBlue both cancel the group reservation if fewer than ten passengers remain before payment is completed.
- The deposit already paid is typically forfeited.
- Rebuilding the reservation usually means paying whatever the current published fare happens to be.

Airlines That Offer Group Booking Deals

Almost every major American carrier runs some form of group travel program, but the benefits and procedures differ meaningfully between them.

1. **Delta Air Lines** — sets ten people as the minimum group size on a given flight, with all details spelled out in a Group Contract. Changing the contract means renegotiating both terms and pricing.
2. **American Airlines** — offers standard group pricing plus Zone Fare, which applies to multinational groups of at least ten flying to the same destination. Zone Fare includes refundable tickets and automatically confirmed seats.
3. **United Airlines** — gives group customers a deposit-based hold of up to 14 days, allowing adjustments before full payment, along with airport coordination service.
4. **JetBlue** — handles group bookings through an online application form, with a small per-person deposit payable within 14 days of booking.
5. **Frontier Airlines** — offers the same fare to all group members on non-stop flights, with a choice between carry-on and checked bag.
6. **Southwest Airlines** — quotes group rates manually through a dedicated group travel desk rather than online, and offers free tickets while waiving booking and name-change charges.

Comparing these programs against your specific route and passenger count is worth the effort before committing, since group travel offers vary significantly from one airline to the next.

Can You Change Passenger Names After Booking?

Yes — and in most cases this flexibility is precisely what makes group reservations so much more forgiving than individual tickets. Since group itineraries frequently change due to illness, scheduling conflicts or last-minute cancellations, most airlines apply more liberal name change rules.

- Most carriers allow names to be added or changed free of charge until the final name submission date, unlike the steep fees typical of individual tickets.
- After that deadline, a fee generally applies per passenger per flight segment.
- United Airlines ties name changes to the group ticket contract, so terms vary depending on what was negotiated at booking.
- JetBlue follows its own group policy, which may be tied either to final payment or to the airline's own timeline.

Given how often group rosters shift between booking and departure day, negotiating flexible name-change conditions upfront is well worth the conversation.

Final Words

Arranging flights for ten or more people calls for careful attention to group minimums, deposits, name deadlines and the airline contract itself. Since each carrier offers its own perks, comparing locked rates, flexibility, seating support and waived fees will spare you unpleasant surprises later. Nail down your passenger count before requesting a quote, review every condition, then pay the deposit. Contact the airline's group booking department to get the best deal.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is it cheaper to book flights as a group?

Generally yes. Group airfare discounts apply one fixed rate across all ten or more travellers, which typically comes in lower than booking each flight independently.

What's the cheapest way to get a group fare?

Request quotes directly from airline group travel desks and compare them against the cost of booking separately. Going direct usually surfaces the best available group rates.

Which airline is best for group travel?

It depends on your priorities — Southwest for fee waivers and bonus tickets, American for Zone Fare, or United for its deposit-based holds.

Can you cancel one ticket from a group booking?

Sometimes, but it depends on the terms of your group contract and whether the cancellation drops you below the ten-passenger minimum.

How many passengers count as a "group" for airlines?

Most airlines define a group as ten or more travellers on the same itinerary, though some international carriers set the minimum at 12 to 15.

How much cheaper are group flight fares?

Discounts vary by destination and airline, but block fare rates combined with waived fees can cut costs considerably.

Are group fares refundable?

It depends on the specific group rate. Some fares, such as American Airlines' Zone Fare, are fully refundable. With others, only the deposit is non-refundable.

Do group bookings guarantee seats together?

Not guaranteed, but airlines usually try to seat group members in close proximity or together where availability allows.